PENTECOSTALISM AND NIGERIA: NEW FORMS OF RELIGIOUS LIFE.

Gabriel Olumide Apata

Goldsmiths College
University of London

Doctor of Philosophy

Declaration

I declare that this research is the result of my own independent research except where I have indicated my indebtedness to other sources. I certify that this work has not already been accepted in substance for any other degree, nor is it being submitted concurrently for any other degree.

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For Anjola.

ABSTRACT

Pentecostalism is on the rise in various parts of the world, particularly in Africa. Several studies have emerged in recent years that have attempted to explain the reasons for the movement's proliferation. The focus of this thesis is on the Pentecostal revival in Nigeria, which, it is argued, can be seen as a new form of religious life that revolves around three central themes. The first is a new form of religious attitude that I describe as the Pentecostal experience that is generated by the 'collective effervescence'. This experience is achieved through the rites and rituals of worship that consists in prayer, praise-worship and other forms of religious performance underpinned by feelings of spirituality. I argue that a consideration of the Pentecostal experience not only offers greater insight into the African religious attitude, but also marks an improvement on the religious experience theories of thinkers like William James. The second theme is the vehicle through which the Pentecostal experience is achieved: the body. The thesis discusses the role of the body and argues for its centrality to Nigerian Pentecostalism through its dynamic expressivity and sacred performance. The third theme of the thesis is the Nigerian Pentecostal approach to the scriptures. I contrast the oral aspects of African cultures with Western literary culture of the scriptures to argue that the dynamism of ecstatic performance that we find in the oral culture has informed the Pentecostal approach to biblical texts. Additional insights into these themes are provided by an ethnographic study of a Nigerian Pentecostal Church in London.

The thesis also argues against the highly influential social deprivation explanation that has been advanced by a number of authorities. Overall it builds on existing studies of African Pentecostalism and breaks new ground in Pentecostalism scholarship.

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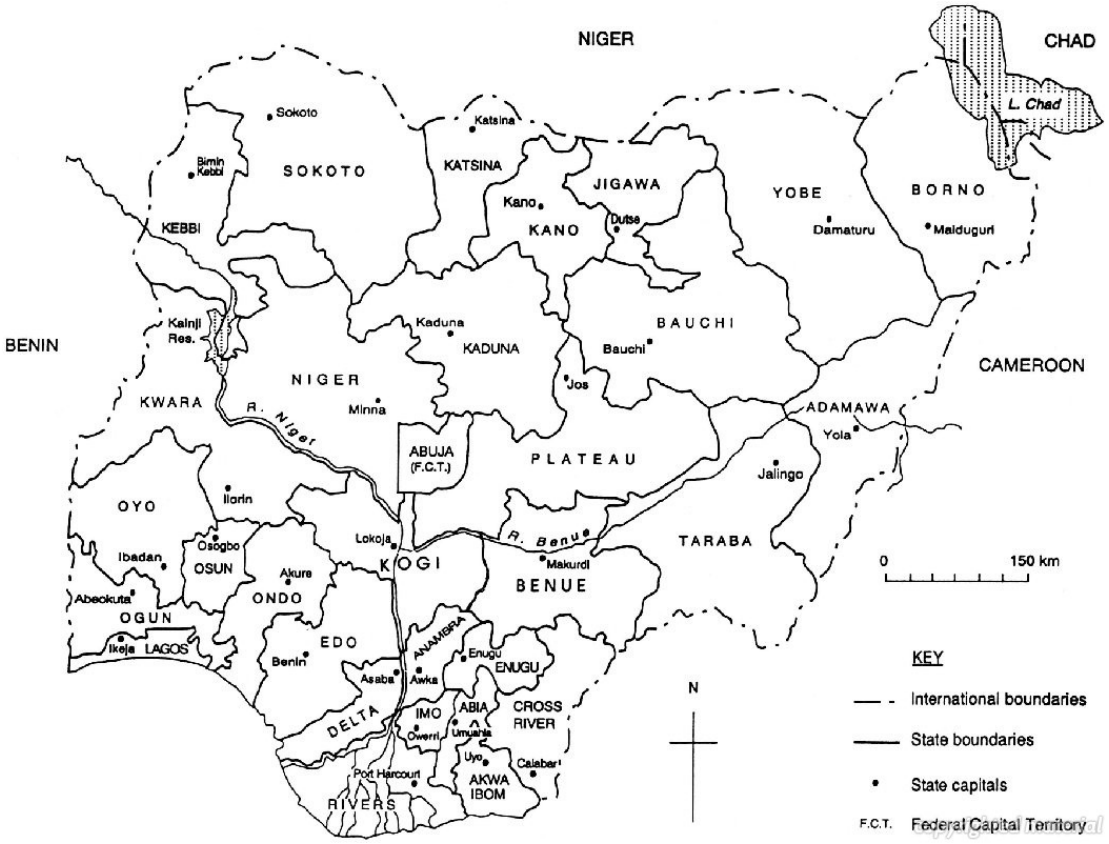
List of Pentecostal and Neo-Pentecostal Churches in Nigeria

Abundant Life Gospel Church
All Nations Evangelical Church
Apostolic Faith Church
Christ Apostolic Church Worldwide
Christ Chapel International Churches
Christ Embassy
Christian Brethren Church
Church of God Mission International
Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion)
Christ Foundation Ministries International
Christian Central Chapel International (CCCI) City of Testimonies
Christian Pentecostal Mission International (CPM)
City of Life Christian Centre
Covenant Of Grace Bible Church International Incorporated
Daystar Christian Centre
Deeper Life Bible Church
Dominion City
Doxa Cathedral
Father's House Bible Church
Fountain of Life Church
Foursquare Gospel Church
Glorious King Christian Centre
Glory Christian Ministries
God's Kingdom Centre International Incorporated
God's Kingdom Society (The Church of the Living God)
Gospel Light International Ministries (New Covenant Gospel Church)
Grace Family International Churches
His Purpose Church
Household of God Church
House on the Rock
International House of His Presence
Kingdom of Light Ministries
KingsWord Ministries International
Latter Rain Assembly
Liberty Foundation Gospel Ministries
Livingspring Chapel International
Living Word Ministries
Living Witness World Outreach Christian
Lighted Church
Logos Aflame Ministries
Logos Ministries Incorporated
Methodist Church Nigeria
Ministry of Life international (City of Life Church)
Mountain of Fire And Miracle Ministries
Powerline Ministries International Incorporated
Redeemed Christian Church Of God
Redeemed Evangelical Mission(TREM)
Royal House of Grace International Church

Salem International Christian Centre
The Salvation Army.org
Sure Word Assembly
Sword of the Spirit Ministries International
This Present House
United Church of God Nigeria
Victory Christian Church (Faith Revival Ministries World Outreach)
Winners Chapel (Faith Tabernacle)
Word of Life Bible Church
World Evangelism Bible Ministries

(Source: Noble Iwuoha Christian Avenue
christianavenue.blogspot.com/p/churches.htm)



Map of Nigeria

Christians predominate in the South and South East of Nigeria up to the middle belt regions, including the Niger areas right across the Plateau States. The Northern areas of the country are the Muslim heartlands from the Niger areas including Kwara and upwards to the far north. Although religious affiliation appears to map precisely onto ethnicity and geography; however, this seemingly tidy divide between the Muslim North and the Christian South hides the complexities of religious distribution that cuts across the various ethnic divide. It is therefore perhaps an error to view ethnicity mainly through the lens of religion, which is an error that complicates the religious and ethnicity identity discourse on Nigeria. Yet, it is through the tropes of ethnicity that the religious divisions are played out.

INTRODUCTION

0.1 Religions on the Move

Contemporary Nigerian society is in the grip of religious resurgence the kind that the country has never experienced in its history. On the Christian side is the rise of Pentecostalism, a neo-fundamentalist movement that appears to have come from nowhere to become the largest Christian body in Nigeria. On the Muslim side is the rise of Islamic fervour, which some might describe as of a fundamentalist kind; and indeed the rise of the group known as *Boko Haram* (Western education is forbidden) in Nigeria might also be viewed as evidence of the growing tide of religiosity in that country. Although the doctrine and tactics of *Boko Haram* do not reflect the religious sentiments of the majority of the Muslim population in Nigeria, but prior to its emergence, some within the country had been advocating for the introduction Sharia Law in certain states, against the secular provisions of religious neutrality that is guaranteed by the Nigerian constitution, (Ben Nwabueze, 1981). But whether the rise of both religious faiths are connected, arising perhaps out of tension generated by what Simmel (1904) describes as outgroup/ingroup conflict or whether the religious phenomenon is a mere coincidence is not exactly clear; what is clear is that religion is everywhere in Nigeria. Perhaps this religious resurgence, although localised must also be seen within a global context. Not only in Nigeria through Christian Pentecostalism and Islamic conservatism are we witnessing the religious flourish, there is the rise of neo-Confucianism and Buddhism in China and Hindu nationalism in India. There is therefore a global dimension to the religious proliferation that needs to be addressed. The focus here though is Nigeria and Pentecostalism, and perhaps some of the arguments presented here might shed light on the rise of religion around the world.

A 2004 BBC survey titled: *What The World Thinks of God*, concluded that Nigeria is the most religious country in the world and the *Pew Forum on Religion &*

Public Life, Spirit and Power, which is a 10-Country Survey of Pentecostals (2006:86) lists Nigeria's Pentecostal movement as the largest in Africa with approximately three-in-ten Nigerians identifying themselves as Pentecostal or Charismatic Christians. Evidence of the growth of Pentecostalism in Nigeria is inescapable. The many Pentecostal crusades and revivals held over weekends in various parts of the country attract estimates of well over a million people prompting Hamid Ismailov (2010), a Nigerian social commentator to remark that, 'in Nigeria there are more churches than there are schools.' The questions that this thesis sets out to address are these: (1) why has Pentecostalism flourished in Nigeria and within a short space of time; (2) why Pentecostalism in particular and (3) how do we characterise this religious phenomenon?

0.2 Nigerian Pentecostalism as a new African religious reformation.

I propose that Nigerian Pentecostalism and by extension African Pentecostalism must be seen as a modern-day African Christian reformation, a view endorsed by Allan Anderson (2005:64) when he notes that African Pentecostalism is the 'African Reformation of the twentieth century'. This reformation also marks a new form of religious life in Africa. But in what way or ways is Pentecostalism an African religious reformation and how is it a new form of religious life?[1]

[1] Although Nigerian Pentecostalism is a new form of religious movement (NRM) having taken off in the twentieth century but can it also be described as a new social movement (NSM? Is Pentecostalism the same kind of movement like the Civil Rights movement in America of the 1960s or an environmental movement like Greenpeace? Authors like Alain Touraine (1981, 1983) Melucci (1990, 1996) for example argue that religious movements cannot be described as social movements, perhaps because they arise out of different modes of experiences: the one being sacred and the other, secular. James Beckford and T. Luckmann (1989), locate the rise of religious movements like Pentecostalism within the context of the decline in established religious order, which has created a space for new religious movements to step in. As he puts it, 'Religion has come away from its former point of anchorage and is increasingly becoming of use in bewildering varieties of ways' (p.170). Elizabeth Arweck (2007:253) believes that '…religion constitutes a large part of the globalizing process, being both subject to and a significant factor effecting change, plurality, and transformation.' Arweck thinks that to describe these movements as 'new' is misleading because in many cases they are not new at all. This is true of Nigerian Pentecostalism, which has emerged partly as a reaction to the

The first thing to say is that Nigerian Pentecostalism has its roots in Nigerian culture, where it first emerged as a reaction to missionary intolerance of local tradition and practices, which they did so much to suppress. This intolerance led eventually to the schism that established the African Independent Churches (AICs), (Turner, 1967; Daneel, 1987). But the independent African Churches were a mixture of different shades of Christian beliefs and practices and certainly none of them were known as Pentecostal churches. However, looking back in history one could now see that some of these churches were indeed the forerunners of present day Pentecostalism in Africa. This is partly because in examining the rituals of the present day Pentecostal phenomenon in Nigeria one can detect many of the core practices that served as the bedrock of ritual services of some of the Independent African Churches. With newfound freedom (after the break with Orthodox churches like Catholic and Anglican churches) and with renewed vigour and intensity of worship, the movement began to spread its brand of Christianity all over the country and further beyond. Over the years, through the vicissitudes of the colonial experience and the difficulties of the modernization process, Pentecostalism finally burst onto the Nigerian scene as a new religious movement. However, in many cases it was not new; only the name was new.

But to return to pre-missionary Nigerian culture, one would find that Nigerian traditional religions were never about the individual or the private or a personal religious attitude. They were never geared towards the self, either as a form of self-help or self-improvement activity of a therapeutic or meditative kind, but were always about the collective or the community experience. Such a religious life was always high in emotional content and expressivity, as exuberant as it was dynamic. Within this emotional exuberance or what Riis and Woodhead (2010:10) describe as 'emotional regime', where such 'regimes persist over time, and transcend individuals, shaping what they can feel, how they can feel it, the way they can express their feelings…' Religious worship is therefore group-based, a collective that is participatory and highly expressive in an ecstatic and orgiastic sense from which ultimately the religious

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dominant missionary and colonial repressions. But it is also new in the sense that it is not the exact reproduction of the old traditions. They are new as a result of new sets of circumstances.

(spiritual) experience emerges. This is essentially a Durkheimian view (which I shall shortly discuss).

Therefore, the religious life in Africa being organized around the collective participation and through which certain rituals and practices are performed, is in many ways the expression of 'feelings' or emotional responses (rather than belief). *Belief* being a contentious word in religious discourse, as Abby Day (2011) and others have pointed out, and like Riis and Woodhead, I use the word *feeling* - in this context - rather than *belief* to indicate an emotional religious response, which is central to the African religious attitude. Just as they were never about the individual, such religious attitudes were also never about belief *per se*. With its cognitivist or rationalist implications, *belief* suggests a certain mental state that seeks to explain or rationalize human existence or the quest to rationalize the problem of theodicy. But this is not to suggest that such emotional attitudes or feelings are altogether devoid of explanatory content or elements of rationality. The point is that they do contain elements of rationality only that this was not their primary purpose or the way that they came into being. Their primary purpose was experiential and only later, after the emotions have been expressed did rationality look back to explain what has happened and why. Like Hegel's Owl of Minerva that takes flight at dusk, rationality or cognition merely looks back upon feelings or action after it has been expressed. Riis and Woodhead (2010:14) allude to this point when they write that, '…sensory and emotional experience is prior to conceptual and linguistic classification and abstract reasoning: we do not first conceptually map the universe and then act in it and experience it, but the other way round'.

Therefore the twin concepts of the collective rather the individual and affect (which some might equate with feelings, - this is discussed in Chapter 4) provide a firmer basis for a proper understanding of Nigerian Pentecostalism and it is upon these bases that I propose the three main themes on which this thesis will argue.

a) *The Pentecostal Experience*

I argue that the appeal and motivation for Nigerian Pentecostalism centres around what I describe as the Pentecostal experience. This experience (which I argue in Chapter 3) differs from the classical religious experience of thinkers like Friederich Schleiermacher, Soren Kierkegaard, William James, Rudolf Otto, Marcia Eliade and others and is achieved through the expressive generative process of religious worship in the forms of: prayer, praise-worship and performance all formed of: music, dancing, singing, clapping and drumming and all of which is underpinned by a feeling of spirituality. I believe that the Nigerian Pentecostal experience succinctly captures what Robert Mapes Anderson (1979) says about Pentecostalism in general that it provides an insight into the 'religious impulse' in its most elementary form. Equally, Riis and Woodhead (2010:11) also note that 'to join a religion is to experience a new way of feeling about self, others, society, and the world'.

Nimi Wariboko's new book *Nigerian Pentecostalism* (2014) is another work that has attempted to locate the place of experience within Nigerian Pentecostalism. In many of his writings on Pentecostalism, Harvey Cox (1996, 1997) has alluded to this experiential motivation for Pentecostalism in general, as has Allan Anderson (2000), Stephen Bush in *Visions of Religion: Experience, Meaning, and Power* (2014), and going back a few decades the works of Walter Hollenweger (1974, 1997, 2000) must be viewed in the same vein. But the Pentecostal experiential will be empty without the body and I suggest that the body is crucial to the Pentecostal experience.

b) *The body in Nigerian Pentecostalism*

The role of the body in Nigerian Pentecostalism, as the vehicle through which the Pentecostal experience is expressed and generated is just as significant as the experience itself. There was, however a period, from the early part of the nineteenth century through much of the twentieth century when the African body underwent much denigration derision and subjugation, particularly within Christian religious practices. As I have mentioned, the early Christian missionaries in Nigeria saw the African body and its expressive activities: clapping, dancing, drumming, trancing and other emotional forms of expression as repugnant. They repudiated these practices and did as much to suppress them

and the instrument of controlling and suppressing the African body and its naked emotionality was the 'civilising process' (Elias, 2000, Scheff, 2000). They did this by introducing shame, guilt and sin into the culture and associating these with the body and emotional expressiveness. For example, perceived indulgences such as dance - that might suggest sexual desire or sexual pleasure - or polygamy that was deemed to be shameful and unworthy of the Christian life. Many Africans subjected themselves to the control of the Western Christian authorities but with varying levels of success. But the colonial project and its modernity thesis merely intensified the pressure on Africans to be more Western in their outlook, particularly in the way that they conducted themselves: to restrain the body particularly within religious performance. But this attitude did not last very long. Therefore in many ways present day Nigerian Pentecostalism can be seen partly as a process of reinstating the body back to the centre of the religious worship, as an unfettered, spontaneous instrument for the expression of the sacred in what Durkheim (1912[2001]) calls 'collective effervescence'. This is the context in which the body must be seen as highly important and necessary for generating the Pentecostal experience. However, instead of speaking about the body as a single entity, we must now speak of bodies and of belonging. This idea of bodies and belonging to the group, the community, and other forms of social organization extends to religious communities such as a sect or the church. This group worship therefore engenders the (community) spirit in collective performance. As Lisa Blackman (2008, 2012), AnneMarie Mol (2002) and others have argued, it is more appropriate now to speak of bodies (as in collective bodies) rather than *the body*, and this idea of bodies as a collective is quintessentially an African phenomenon. But the role of the body as a vehicle for the Pentecostal expression is seldom discussed within Pentecostalism scholarship and I argue for its equal importance in the rituals of worship and performance. What is also new is that in Nigerian Pentecostalism the notion of sacredness does not revolve around (sacred) objects and things or even church buildings or vestments but around the body, which is the ultimate sacred vehicle for the religious performance. This discussion is taken up in Chapter 4. Both the Pentecostal experience and the body are but two aspects of a threesome of related ideas upon which this thesis argues. The third is the oral approach to scriptures.

c) *Nigerian Pentecostalism's approach to scriptures*

The origins of the Nigerian Pentecostal approach to the scriptures lies in the African oral tradition. Lacking a sacred text, traditional Nigerian religious practices relied on performance and orality. Even with the introduction and influence of Western literary culture, first through the missionary incursion and latterly through the bureaucracies of the colonial enterprise, Nigerian cultures remained essentially oral; and it is from within this deep-seated culture of orality that we must view African Christianity. But how do we reconcile an oral with a literary culture; or rather: how does an oral culture approach the scriptures? The answer is that such a culture approaches literary text through the spontaneity and dynamism of orality, through forms of stories, myths and legends. Oral cultures also tend to be more performance based and collective rather than individualistic. Traditionally, hardly any single person is ascribed the authorship or ownership of a text or even the spoken word or poetry, as we find in the West, in much the way that Foucault has argued in *What is an Author* (1969[1998]). For example, African proverbs or wise sayings are collections of philosophies that have been handed down through generations with no clear idea of individual authorship; neither is this important in such a culture. But more importantly, just as the dynamism of the performance culture, particularly through the vehicle of the body, brings religious worship to life so does the dynamism of the oral culture free the text from its rigidity and formality, turning it into a flexible living object. The oral approach to literary text therefore entails the injection of *vitalism* the kind that we see in the spiritedness of bodily expression (the performance). I argue therefore that oral culture liquidizes or 'defrosts', - as Walter Hollenweger puts it, - the 'frozen' or rigid format or formalism or the bureaucratic structures that is inherent in literary cultures. This speaks to the contemporary Nigerian Christian attitudes in which the text is brought alive not only through being read, but through the intonation and enunciation of the spoken word.

These three themes - the Pentecostal experience, the body and the oral approach to the scriptures constitute what I describe as a new African reformation, a new form of the Christian religious life in Nigeria and Africa in general. But much of this 'new' religious attitude is in a sense not new at all as much of it goes back to early religious traditions. What is new is the way that those traditions have re-

emerged with a modern twist, having undergone a period of abeyance and now a metamorphosis that gives it its newness, which is now positively affirmed or reaffirmed as a counter-narrative to the prevailing Western idea of modernity. It is also crucial to note that these themes are not separate or independent of each other but are interdependent and mutually re-enforcing and in their interdependence they together form the essence of this new form of the African religious life, each of which I discuss analytically and descriptively in chapters 3, 4 and 5, which is supported by an ethnographic research. But are there other possible views on the African Pentecostal phenomenon?

0.3 Socio-economic disadvantages as explanation for religious attitude.

The sociology of religion often shies away from religious doctrine, theology and other modalities of religious expressions such as the belief in the Holy Spirit, healing, salvation and redemption, (Macchia, 2006; Anderson, 2014). One possible explanation for this state of affairs is the disproportionate focus on social disadvantages as the prime motive for the religious response. This emphasis on material disadvantage is no less prevalent in Pentecostal scholarship, upon which many authors have sought to explain the rise of Pentecostalism around the world. But social deprivation as explanation for religious attitude has been around for a long time. Marx (1844[1970]) and Engels (1894) are just two of its nineteenth century exponents and in the twentieth century to the present day are authors like R. Richard Niebuhr (1929) Bryan Wilson (1973), Malcolm Calley (1967), Paul Gifford (2004), Matthew Ojo (2006), Norris and Inglehart (2004), David Maxwell (2006) Phillip Jenkins (2006, 2008, 2011) and many others who have advanced the socio-economic deprivation argument as explanation for the religious proliferation. The idea is that religion thrives on the fertile ground of poverty, upon the promise of prosperity on earth as the reward for the religious devotion. I examine some of these theories in chapter 2 where I argue that although there is some merit to this argument but it is an argument that covers only a fragment of the explanatory ground. However, the argument fails in substance on several counts, partly because it takes its source from a Western categorical framework that views Pentecostalism as originating in the United States where it is seen as an extension of the American capitalist and consumerism culture. It is a narrative

that has become omniscient, omnipresent and omnipotent within the Pentecostal discourse.

Yet my analysis prompts a further question: is Nigerian Pentecostalism any different from Pentecostalism elsewhere; if so, in what way is it different? Or is Nigerian Pentecostalism just one of many Pentecostalisms sprouting over the world? The scope of the thesis does not extend to answering these questions, but I do address them in the text, particularly the conclusion in respect of the global rise of the Pentecostal phenomenon. But how did we get here, where suddenly religion appears to be the pre-eminent subject confronting this age, the age of modernity, of secularization and technological progress?

0.4 Modernity/secularism versus religion

Almost no one predicted the rise of religious development in the modern age, at least not in the form that it has flourished in recent times. The prodigiousness of the current religious proliferation is all the more surprising, given its resurgence at a time when religion was meant to be in decline. The modernity thesis for so long predicated upon the power of reason to triumph over religious faith, was meant to usher in a period of progress in all areas of human intellectual and social life, when religion was meant to have been confined to the margins of society as secularism and modernity continue their upward march towards the end of history. But the modernity thesis with its attending humanism, agnosticism and indeed the atheism being propounded by the likes of Richard Dawkins (2006), Christopher Hitchens (2007) and others, has not taken roots in other culture as they have in the West. For example, Auguste Comte *(*1798-1857) in *The Course in Positive Philosophy* (1853[2009]) saw a three-stage development of society that begins with the irrationality of fetishism through monotheism and finally culminating in the positivist stage where the scientific method (at least a method of positivism) becomes the pinnacle of man's progress. But Comte's positivist end-stage is actually what he calls the 'religion of humanity', (Wernick, 2001). This religion of humanity or its post revolutionary version might perhaps be described as a secular religion, which sounds like a contradiction but which consists in romantic ideas about religious systems that are organized around

different sets of doctrines and worship but stripped of God and certain tenets of Christian beliefs. It is 'religion' that focuses on moral conducts, principally altruism, and certain formal rituals such as are found in Catholicism. For Wernick (2001:2) Comte's religion of humanity's '… full establishment required a doctrine (*dogme*), a moral rule (*regime*) and a system of worship (*culte*), all organised and coordinated through a Positivist Church.' Durkheim (1960) says of Comte that he, Comte, saw 'sociology as the science of civilization'; and similarly, C Wright Mills in *The Sociological Imagination* (1959:32-33) observes that:

> Once the world was filled with the sacred – in thought, practice and institutional form. After the reformation and the renaissance, the forces of modernization swept across the globe, and secularization, a corollary of the historical process loosened the dominance of the dominance of the sacred. In due course, the sacred shall disappear altogether except in the private realm.[2]

But the 'sacred' has not 'disappeared altogether' from society, at least in many societies around the world, neither has its current flowering been confined to the margins or the 'private realm'. The humanism or atheism or agnosticism which secular modernity bred in the West has not taken roots in other parts of the world, even where secularism has been introduced. Yet the end of the Cold War was instrumental in shaping the thoughts of thinkers like Francis Fukuyama (1992) who elucidated the neo-Hegelian idea of history as the teleological workings of human progress towards a synthetic end where the battle of ideologies are finally resolved with victory for Western liberal democracy and capitalist systems. The Fukuyamanian thesis must therefore be read as pronouncing the death knell of religious traditions in most societies, since secularism would one day take over and establish itself as the supreme ideology for world progress. But Samuel P Huntington (1996) in a counter-argument (also with the end of the Cold War in mind) saw the battle of the future not as one that

[2] Various authors have attributed this statement to different authorities. Some attribute it to C. Wright Mills and others to Jeffrey Haddon, while some say that Mills was summarizing Talcott Parsons and in yet another twist, there is a Weberian sentiment in the quotation, which is not surprising given Mills' work on Weber together with Hans Gerth. But the majority of scholars attribute to Mills.

is waged between competing ideologies but between civilizations: the clash of 'culture or civilizations' as he calls it. Then 9/11 2001 happened and religion was suddenly and prominently thrust upon the world stage as perhaps the most pressing issue of the age. This is not to suggest that Huntington was right or that succeeding events have vindicated his idea of the clash of civilizations because his own analysis did not successfully track the religious growth in the way that they have unfolded.

But why did many thinkers fail to foresee or predict the recent global rise of religion? As early as the nineteenth century, as though addressing himself to contemporary times as he was to his fellow enlightenment thinkers, Alexis Tocqueville (1835[1969:295]) warned that the view that religion would decline was as hasty as it was mistaken. He wrote that 'Religious zeal they said was bound to die down as enlightenment and freedom spread. It is tiresome that the facts do not fit this theory at all.' For Peter Berger (1996:3),'The key idea of secularization theory is simple and can be traced to the Enlightenment: Modernization necessarily leads to a decline of religion, both in society and in the minds of individuals. It is precisely this key idea that has turned out to be wrong.'

Several reasons may be attributed to the failure of many thinkers to predict the religious resurgence; but perhaps the most important is the failure to recognize the nature and role of religion in many cultures. The Comtean and Millsian views, which many Enlightenment thinkers also shared is based largely on the supposition that religion is a social construct, a development that occurred in the early phase of human history, born of primitive ignorance and blind faith when knowledge about the world was basic, crude and unsophisticated, when people believed a host of irrational superstitious 'nonsense' chief amongst which was the existence of a God that no one had ever seen and no evidence had ever been produced for his existence. But as human knowledge advanced, so the thinking went, and man began to gain better understanding of the world, particularly through philosophic reasoning and scientific discoveries, religion would begin to decline both in its power and influence. Thus the linearity of human progress now assured, the Comtean stages would begin to unfold towards modernity and the 'rationalization' process would eventually free society from the grip of blind unquestioning religious dogma, superstition, magic, sorcery, witchcraft and occult practices.

Perhaps for such reasons as these has an author like Steve Bruce (2002) declared that 'modernization presents problems for religion' but it could be said in response that religion poses a more serious problem for modernity. The decline of organized religion long predicted by many has not happened (except perhaps in places like Europe or France for example where church attendance is very low, but the secularization of the world was meant to bring about the demise of religion in these places) yet the modernity thesis has not halted the global religious flourishing. Rather, religion appears to be the titanic that cannot be sunk by the secularization and modernity forces. Since beneath the evolution of societies, through the different stages of fashionable developments in politics, economics, science and other social movements, religion continues to lurk, stalking every progress, ever ready to resurge. As Bellah (1973:191) observes, 'If religion has given birth to all that is essential in society, it is because the idea of society is the soul of religion.' This is a very Durkheimian statement and one that I believe is apt under present circumstances. But is there really a battle between reason and faith or religion and secularism that must result in victory for the one and defeat for other? Let us look briefly at the religious theories of two of sociology's founders, which might provide useful pointers to this discussion.

05. Weber's 'rationalization' versus Durkheim's 'Collective effervescence'.

It is worth noting that religion and its role in society was central to the works of Emile Durkheim (1858-1917) and Max Weber (1864-1920). Both thinkers recognised the importance of religious beliefs and practices within society as motivation for actions or as driver of social cohesiveness. For example, Weber sees 'elective affinity' between religion and capitalism while Durkheim saw religion as the very foundation of society. But perhaps more importantly in Weber we see one of the origins of the modernity thesis as an intellectual model, the workings of the rationalization process. In *Science as Vocation* (1919[1946:155]) Weber states that, 'The fate of our times is characterized by rationalization and intellectualization, and above all by the disenchantment of the world.' By disenchantment, Weber appears to mean secularization or the hollowing out of certain aspects of religious belief and practices. Earlier in the same work (2009:139) he wrote that, 'there are no mysterious incalculable forces

that come into play, but rather that one can, in principle, master all things by calculation.' This then is the 'rationalization and intellectualization' process that characterizes our modern world and one that logically leads to disenchantment of mysticism and religion. Although Weber is not saying that the entirety of religious beliefs and practices are irrational and therefore ripe for the evacuative process of rationalization, but that rationality plays a role in the service of the religious impulse.

Equally, in *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1905) and *The Sociology of Religion* (1920) Weber again advances his theory of rationalization. As law and order or what Weber describes as 'legal-rational authority' replaces charismatic authority – a subjective defective kind of authority – and bureaucracy and specialization replaces chaos and disorder and rationality replaces irrationality, religion itself undergoes processes of modification. In his commentary on Weberian rationalization, Jurgen Habermas (1985:2) remarks that, 'What Weber depicted was not only the secularization of Western *culture*, but also and especially the development of modern *societies* from the viewpoint of rationalization. Weber understood this process as the institutionalization of purposive-rational economic and administrative action.'

One of the logical developments of Weberian rationalization thesis is the move towards individualism and consumer culture, (Featherstone, 2007) a theme that George Ritzer (1993:372) picks up when he observes that, 'A society characterized by rationality is one which emphasizes efficiency, predictability, calculability, substitution of nonhuman for human technology, and control over uncertainty. In an even more recent book by Sam Han, *Technologies of Religion: Spheres of the Sacred in a Post-secular Modernity* (2016), the author extends this rationalization thesis to include technological advance and stresses the significance of technology in the rise of new forms of religion. Just as Weber (2009:139) notes with regards his idea of rationalization that '…one need no longer have recourse to magical means in order to master or implore spirits, as did the savage for whom such mysterious powers existed. Technical means and calculation perform the service. This above all is what intellectualization means'. But Han's 'religious technologies or even Weber's 'intellectualization' has not replaced the religious yearning or the dynamism of face to face religious congregation upon which, as I argue, the new religious forms thrive; it has only

added an extra instrumental layer on top. Technology may have speeded up and facilitated religious contact, but religion's primary rise is not necessarily or fundamentally technological. After all, technological advance was itself the continuation of the secularization process that was meant to engage mankind as a pastime that appears to have replaced time devoted to religion. This then was the logical end of the rationalization process. In the last century, Norbert Elias (2000) had turned Weber's rationalization process into a 'civilizing process'. Indeed, Bryan Turner, in "Norbert Elias and The Sociology of Resentment" in *Emotions and Social Change* (2014) draws a parallel between Weber and Elias in this respect.

Weber believed that primitive religion as exemplified by the belief in magic and the irrationality of superstitious beliefs is that through which (primitive) people made sense of the world. As such the charismatic personality or authority of the religious leader or healer or magician holds the people in their thrall. For Weber (1978:244) such '…charismatic authority is sharply opposed to rational and particularly bureaucratic authority, and to traditional authority…charismatic authority is specifically irrational in the sense of being foreign to all rules.' In other words, rationality strips the world of its mysteries and reins in the overreliance on superstitious beliefs and practices. Charisma is spontaneous and improvisational and lacks specific rules, both of which are characteristics of the Pentecostal movement. Indeed a strand of neo-fundamentalist Christian movement similar to Pentecostalism calls itself The Charismatic Church.

Then comes the gradual transition from the sect and the charisma of the leader or the healer or miracle worker into a more sophisticated and mature religious beliefs, under the 'sovereignty of reason'. This transition is linear as well as genealogically singularly sourced, growing like an arborescent the logical end of which is 'disenchantment', and which might provide grounds for the re-emergence or 're-enchantment' of the world through religious beliefs and practices. Bryan Turner's preface to *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology* (2009:xxix) sees the problem in the sense that '… modernization disrupts the traditional order and the ideology by which traditional authorities made the world intelligible and legitimate. Modernity questions everything and measures everything against a unitary unit of rationality.' But is Weber not right? Is the aim of every culture or society not to develop and grow and eventually break free

from such beliefs and practices? Europe no longer burn witches, Nigerians no longer throw new-born twins into the river in the belief that they are a bad omen and the Suttee in India is a practice of the past. Are these developments not to be welcome and do they not owe their emergence to something like the Weberian rationalization process? The problem though is that this rationalization process can be taken to an extreme that ends in a cul-de-sac, an 'iron-cage' with nowhere else to go, much like when water chokes and there is nothing to wash it down with. This is the 'despair' that Turner speaks of when he quotes Weber that 'the future would be an icy night of polar darkness' (2009:xxx). But for Weber (1958[2003]) the 'iron cage of rationalization' is not entirely sealed off and self-contained as may appear to be the case because religion in its old forms might reappear (re-enchantment') since: 'No one knows who will live in this cage in the future, or whether at the end of this tremendous development entirely new prophets will arise, or there will be a great rebirth of old ideas and ideals…This brings us to the world of judgments of value and of faith...'(p.18). But this is Weber in a brief summary.

However, Emile Durkheim (1858-1917) saw religion differently, at least, in certain important respects. Durkheim was perhaps the first of the sociological thinkers to recognize that religion is no mere social construct or a post-societal afterthought that produced certain beliefs and practices that we now call religion. Rather, Durkheim saw religion not as an individual but a collective activity, the very foundation of society. The individual does not live in complete isolation but within a group, a clan, a tribe, or a collective of some description that binds him to other human beings. It is an idea best encapsulated by the very definition of religion in its original Latin term, *religare*: that which binds, which is the basis or the essence of religion. In *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* (1912[2001:127]) Durkheim defines religion as: '… a unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things, that is to say, things set apart and forbidden - beliefs and practices which unite in one single moral community called a Church, all those who adhere to them.' This does not imply that sacred practices must be expressed through the medium of a particular church or denomination or a faith, since Durkheim in *Individualism and the Intellectuals* (1973:51) goes on to say that '… a religion does not necessarily imply symbols and rites, properly speaking, or temples and priests. This whole exterior

apparatus is only the superficial part. Essentially, it is nothing other than a body of collective beliefs and practices endowed with a certain authority.' But this is prior to the *Elementary Forms*.

Similar analysis of the conditioning or determining nature of religion is to be found in Dobblelaere (1987), Luckmann (1967), Mellor and Shilling (1997) and Robert Orsi (2005). For Orsi religion is what people make and people make religion by engaging in a series of connections or 'network of relationships.' The church is just one example of such 'networks' while others include schools or the family, community or civil society associations. Luckmann also reaffirms Durkheim's main thesis by arguing that there is a face of religion that is 'invisible' or one that is not represented by outward appearance of a recognizable kind such as church attendance or external display of religiosity yet maintains a subterranean presence in people's lives. But as religion fragments into different 'segments' and disperses in different directions in society through Weberian bureaucratization specialization this should not necessarily imply that religion in society is waning. Therefore, Durkheim's (2001:46) idea of religion rests on the notion that religion arose out of necessity of group dynamic and represents the collective consciousness of society. He encapsulates his idea of religion when he says in what turns out to be one of his most canonical statements on religion Durkheim (2001:11) points out that:

> religious representations are collective representations that express collective realities; rites are ways of acting that are born only in the midst of assembled groups and whose purpose is to evoke, maintain or recreate certain mental states of those groups.

Although Durkheim uses the term 'representation' perhaps 'expression' might just as well serve his purpose, given that 'representation' (at least in some sense, not all – there is representational art) might entail cognition. But Durkheim has good reason for employing the word 'representation', since he was referring to totemic objects that symbolically *represent* the sacred 'consciousness' of the collective or group. But the word 'expression' also captures the spontaneous expressivity of the performance that is generated by the 'collective' ritual activity.

As shall later become clear, the term 'collective effervescence' is central to Durkheim's theory of religion. Durkheim's 'collective effervescence' may be seen through Schopenhauer's famous analogy of the Porcupines.[3] According to Schopenhauer, a group of porcupines gather together in winter to keep warm from the freezing cold. And just by huddling together they are able to generate the heat that warms them against biting cold. In the same vein, Durkheim (1912:162) asserts that 'The very act of congregating is an exceptionally powerful stimulant.' It is bodies touching even when inactive, - like the huddling porcupines - that still generates heat, a current that runs through the group, which cannot be generated individually. This warmth of feeling, now generated by dynamic participatory group activity is what Durkheim calls the 'collective effervescence', or the 'ritual chain' as Randall Collins (2004[2014]) describes it. Therefore if static porcupines can generate collective warmth just by huddling together, how much heat or 'effervescence' could active humans who are engaged in ecstatic participatory group activity produce? This is where the Nigerian Pentecostal story begins to make sense. As Peter Brown (2000) observes with regards to early form of Christianity, ([quoted in Phillip Jenkins (2011:97):

> The appeal of Christianity still lay in its radical sense of community: it absorbed people because the individual could drop from a wide impersonal world into a miniature community, whose demand and relations were explicit. [...] The Christian community suddenly came to appeal to men who felt deserted. At a time of inflation, the Christian invested large sums of liquid capital in people; at a time of increased brutality, the courage of Christian martyrs was impressive; during public emergencies, such as plague or rioting, the Christian clergy were shown to be the only united group in the town, able to look after the burial of the dead and to organize food supplies... Plainly, to be a Christian in 250 brought more protection from one's fellows than to be a *civis Romanus.*

[3] In his book of essays titled the *Parerga and Paralipomena* (1851) Schopenhauer used this analogy to illustrate a slightly different point, but I have applied it relevantly here as it provides a useful illustration of the Durkheimian collective religious need.

Therefore the term *religion* as applied even to non-religious activity such as devotion to football club and its many attending rituals, must not be seen as a mere metaphor but as a retention of the description that once applied to sacred ritual practices. As religion grows, divides and subdivides it continues to grow but in different directions much like the rhizome of Deleuze and Guattari (1978), until it reaches a point where it ceases to be a sacred activity in the original meaning of the term; yet it retains certain forms of sacred sentiment. This is why despite the metamorphosis of group activity in society, even the Weberian rationalization process cannot completely dislodge the religious essence from society, since from time to time a need arises that necessitates a return to the sacred group activity in its 'elementary' ritualistic form. This is perhaps what Mike Featherstone (2007:119) means when he says that:

> ... modernity with its processes of rationalization, commodification, secularisation and disenchantment does not lead to the eclipse of religious sentiments, for while formal religions may decline, symbolic classifications and ritual practices which embody sacred/profane distinctions live on in the heart of secular social processes.

Although Featherstone's point relates to the distinction between the profane and sacred; however for Durkheim the sacred is not a specific thing but anything that society deems to be sacred. As he puts the point, 'sacred things are simply collective ideals that have fixed themselves on material objects.' (1973:159). Instead of the individual psychology of knowing, our epistemological framework or the spacio-temporal furniture of perception and the classificatory method of ordering of things (the categories) have their origins in religion. This is Durkheim's social epistemology that is shot through the external categories of space and time, contra Kant.

But what the trigger for a return to religious activity might be will depend on a variety of complex factors. This then is the problem of explanation, the problem of explaining the triggers for the current religious resurgence in places like Nigeria. But what is certain is that any explanation, however powerful can hardly be uni-causal and must derive from a process such like the idea of the rhizome of Deleuze and Guattari (1978).

Therefore on the whole, both Weber and Durkheim's theories of religion may be read as representing different stages of the religious evolution in society. Where Durkheim depicts religion in its 'elementary form' of effervescent collective rites and rituals that are fashioned around totemic objects, Weber's developmental ideas capture religion in its evolutionary rationalization process. However, both Weber and Durkheim have their critics but I shall not engage with those criticisms here. But one objection worth mentioning is Roger Bastide's (2003) criticism of the exteriority of Durkheim's conception of religion. Bastide argues that religion does not function quite in the way that Durkheim describes it since Durkheim reduces religion to a matter of 'social fact'. For Bastide, religion is also a matter of internal individual spiritual experience, which is prefigured in William James theory of religious experience, which is an essentially internal and individualistic form of experience. (This discussion is taken up in chapter 3). Although Durkheim insists that religion is 'eminently social' this does not rule out the individual experience, only that the individual dimension derives from the group experience. As Durkheim (1960) also notes, 'society can exist only if it penetrates the consciousness of individuals and fashions it in its "image and resemblance". Similarly, Peter Berger (1967:3) sees a paradox or a 'dialectic' process involved where although society is the product of man yet man is at the same time a product of society, pointing out that 'it is within society … that the individual becomes a person, that he attains and holds on to identity… Man cannot exist without society.' As Durkheim also asserts in the *Dualism of Human Nature and Its Social Conditions* (1973:159) says, '...sacred things are simply collective ideals that have fixed themselves on material objects.' This means that the material around which the sacred is constructed could either lose its sacredness or gain it for any number of reasons.

But how does Weber and Durkheim and the whole modernity and secularization discussion relate to Nigerian Pentecostalism? The first thing to say is that this discussion provides the theoretical basis upon which the rise of Pentecostalism in Nigeria may be located, described and explained and which in turn furnishes a framework within which the entire thesis is better understood. As Harvey Cox (1997:89) notes, '…it is difficult to believe that nearly half a billion people have become Pentecostals because they are pushovers. There is something else happening here.' The 'something else that is happening here' and by 'here' I mean

Africa in general and Nigeria in particular, is that which this thesis seeks to explore.

0.6 Methodology

Two methodological approaches are employed in this research. The first is theoretical or desk-based. This involves the application and critique of the social scientific analysis upon which African Pentecostalism may be explained and better understood. The second methodology is the ethnographical research carried out in a Nigerian-led Pentecostal church in South West London. It might be wondered why an ethnographic study of Nigerian Pentecostalism was carried out in a church in London and not in Nigeria. The reasons are two-fold. The first is that having attended Pentecostalist churches in Nigeria and in the UK I find that many similarities between the UK and Nigerian churches in terms of systems of belief and styles of worship. The second is that numerous ethnographic studies of Pentecostalism in Nigeria have been conducted but very few on Nigerian Pentecostal churches in the UK and the UK study provides an added dimension to the research, particularly regarding the spread of the movement outside Nigeria. Also the ethnographic study has been employed as a way of testing out my theoretical assumptions from which I have formulated a theory of Pentecostalist experience, drawing inspiration from William James and others. Therefore the ethnography offers an ideal opportunity to observe the performance and experience of the Pentecostal worship, which is bolstered by interviews with members of the congregation, church ministers and the pastor. The questions that the theoretical discussions raise are answered or supported by the ethnographic study just as the theoretical discussions provide a working framework for arguments on which this thesis relies.

0.7. Structure of the thesis.

Chapter 1 – Pentecostalism, the makings of a movement

The chapter opens with the discussion of the emergence of modern day Pentecostalism and sets it in historical context, tracing both the North American and the Nigerian origins of the movement to the present day. It argues that Nigerian Pentecostalism arose independently of its American version but also that African culture strongly influenced the American version.

Chapter 2 – Poverty, prosperity and African Pentecostalism

This chapter is a critique of the dominant explanation for the proliferation of Pentecostalism in Nigeria and Africa in general, which is the economic deprivation thesis and this chapter, examines the arguments. The chapter also examines the concept of poverty as a category construct and the prosperity or wealth and health doctrine of Pentecostalism in Africa.

Chapter 3 – the Pentecostal experience.

This chapter argues that that the appeal of Nigerian Pentecostalism is to be found in the Pentecostal experience. It compares the classical theories of religious experience with the Pentecostal experience and argues that the latter improves on the former, but more importantly presents the Pentecostal experience as the main appeal of the of Nigerian Pentecostalism. The argument in this chapter is supported by the ethnographical research.

Chapter 4 – the Body and Pentecostalism

The role of the body in Pentecostal performance is explored in this chapter and again I show how African Pentecostalism is reversing the historical negative perception of African body from object of shame to an object of celebration through the re-instatement of the body at the centre of the religious rituals and worship.

Chapter 5 – Pentecostalism and the Scriptures

This chapter examines Nigerian Pentecostal approach to the scriptures from an oral perspective and continues with the theme of the dynamic approach to the scriptures. Such an approach, we argue must in turn, concern itself with the Pentecostal experience as a theological basis.

0.8 Notes on Terminological Usage

First, it is worth mentioning that the subject of religion in Africa cuts across the various academic disciplines of the humanities and social sciences – from anthropology through sociology to cultural, African, Post-Colonial and religious studies and each discipline approaches the subject from within its own systems of thought. As Allan Anderson *et al* (2010:5) have noted 'With each of these disciplines producing a particular type of approach and thematic interest, academic work in the field is still more multidisciplinary than interdisciplinary. It is not uncommon for scholars to be unaware of what their colleagues in other disciplines are doing or publishing.' Yet each discipline is not intellectually sealed off from the others and the concept of religion permeates each of them to some degree. It is important to stress therefore that this thesis reflects the multi-disciplinary nature of the subject matter of the research.

Secondly, Western academics and commentators have often been accused of treating Africa as a homogenous entity by applying sweeping generalizations in their discussions of Africa. But certain cultural similarities among African nations do exist in terms of styles of religious worship and belief in spirituality and also

socio-economic fortunes that allows for certain references to Nigeria be extendable or applicable to other African countries. Equally, some Nigerian Pentecostal churches have branches in many African countries. But there is no African essence other than African culture or cultures and we must understand how far cultural practices permeate thought, practice, attitude and belief. Therefore, the term 'Africa' or 'the African' is used here to refer both to Nigeria and also to the generic Africa where appropriate. For example, when I speak of the African body, I mean by this the concept of the black African body.

Finally, Nigeria is a nation of some 250 ethnic groups, each with its own systems of belief, custom and traditions. To speak of a Nigerian culture also runs the risk of making generalizations; however there are certain cultural affinities among many of the Nigerian peoples, particularly with regards to spiritual worship and the orality of the cultures, which justifies the use of the term Nigerian culture in certain areas. But where there are cultural differences, this is made clear in the discussion.

All biblical quotations are from the King James Version.

CHAPTER 1

PENTECOSTALISM: THE MAKINGS OF A MOVEMENT

1.0 Introduction

What is Pentecostalism; how did it begin; when did it begin; where did it begin and how has it come to spread so rapidly around the world in such a short space of time? These questions have engaged Pentecostalism scholars for several decades now – (Walter Hollenweger, 1965,1972; Allan Mapes Anderson, 1979; Donald Dayton, 1987; Allan Heaton Anderson, 2000,2006, 2014; William Faupel; 2001; David Martin, 2002; Harvey Cox, 1995; Vinson Synam, 1987; Grant Wacker, 2001; Ogbu Kalu, 2006; Phillip Jenkins, 2004, 2006, 2011; Paul Gifford, 2004; Ruth Marshall, 2010; David Maxwell, 2006; Joel Robbins, 2002; Matthew Ojo, 2006) and many others and these questions will be engaged in this and the chapters that follow. I start with these questions also as a way of gaining an Archimedean foothold on the subject of this research. Nigerian Pentecostalism is one of several Pentecostalisms now growing around the world and the dominant explanation for their proliferation is an American-centred version. This chapter challenges this orthodoxy and argues that Nigerian Pentecostalism emerged independently of the American version through indigenous Nigerian culture and if anything, African culture must be seen as largely responsible for the rise of American Pentecostalism. This discussion is largely historical and traces the histories of both the American and Nigerian Pentecostalism from their earliest beginnings. What is at stake is not a mere historical account of the origins of modern day Pentecostalism but that such histories, as presented here provides a basis for a better understanding of the movement's emergence, particularly in contemporary Nigerian society. The objective is to demonstrate the complex factors and the multi-dimensional origins of the movement and to show how much of the black African cultural influence has shaped American Pentecostalism.

Equally, the claim that America is the cradle of modern day Pentecostalism furnishes a single genealogical origin (the US) and a linearity of the movement's growth around the world. Within that context the movement is seen as an American cultural export that carries with it strong neo-liberal capitalist or enterprise inflections, (Finke and Stark, 2005; Paul Gifford, 2004; Brower *et al*, 1998). Although packaged as religion by its charismatic practitioners or 'clerical men in spiritual drag', as Harvey Cox (1997) refers to them; it is economic necessity that is thought to drive the movement in contemporary times, as it did in the early days of American Pentecostalism.

The first section examines the argument that Worldwide Pentecostalism originated in the US while the second section looks at the origins of American Pentecostalism. The third section addresses the question of Pentecostal doctrine and the fourth section examines briefly the socio-economic arguments that have been advanced for the rise of American Pentecostalism. The fifth section discusses the African cultural influence on the movement in America while the rest of the sections look at the historical background to Nigerian Pentecostalism and the colonial experience, which has helped to shape Nigerian Pentecostalism.

1.2 Decentering the Pentecostal Discourse

Many authorities writing on Pentecostalism share the view that modern day Pentecostalism began in the United States in 1906 on a street called Azusa Street in a Los Angeles suburb from where it has spread to the rest of the world, (Frank Bartlemann, 1925[2008]; Vinson Synam, 1975; Robert Mapes Anderson, 1979; Donald Dayton, 1987; Harvey Cox, 1996; Grant Wacker, 1995; David Martin, 2002, Goff, 2004; Roebuck, 2006; Hayford et al, 2006). This locating of the origins of modern day Pentecostalism in America has dominated Pentecostalism studies to the near complete exclusion of any other versions, with implications for the sociology of knowledge. As Allan Anderson (2004:166) has noted, 'Historians of Pentecostalism have often reflected a bias in their interpretation of history, seen from a predominantly white American perspective, neglecting (if not completely ignoring) the vital often more significant work by Asian, African, African American Latino/a Pentecostal pioneers.' Wolfgang Vondey (2013:12) makes a similar point by asserting that, 'The origins of these local manifestations of

Pentecostalism cannot be easily traced back to Pentecostalism in North America, but are instead the results of unexpected and unpredictable events in distinct locations.'

The history and the sociology of Pentecostalism have become the history and sociology of American conceptualization of the movement, or what Michael Bergunder (2004) refers to as the 'American-centred history' of Pentecostalism. However, not all scholars agree that the Azusa Street event marked the very beginnings of worldwide Pentecostalism. Scholars like Hollenweger (2004), Anderson (2010), Kalu (2006) and others disagree with this view. There is also evidence of the presence of Pentecostalism in other places, for instance in Latin America about which Eloy H. Nolivos (2014:94) claims that, 'In 2009, Latin American Pentecostalism celebrated its centennial after the first Pentecostal revivals in Chile and Brazil (1909 and1910) gave birth to the movement, practically independent of the Azusa Street revival of 1906 in North America.' The dominance of American culture aided by the domination of American academics within Pentecostalism studies, has shaped the discourse. Allan Anderson (2014:12) alludes to this development when he notes that the Pentecostal 'documentary source' favours Western or American historical perspective on the origins of the movement. Such rich historical 'documentary sources' is sadly lacking in places like Africa, which appears to place its own historical account at a disadvantage. Therefore Nigerian or any other kind of Pentecostalism is subsumed under the American version.

This narrative has implications for the sociology of knowledge of the kind that we find in C Wright Mills (1959), Mannheim, (1936), Berger and Luckmann (1967). The idea reinforces the belief that significant cultural products, including knowledge, travel in a single linear direction – arising from the global north to south. This is a view once expressed by Hugh Trevor Roper in *The Rise of Christian Europe* (1965:11), where he writes that:

> It is European techniques, European examples, European ideas which have shaken the non-European world out of its past – out of barbarism in Africa, out of a far older, slower, more majestic civilisation in Asia; and the history of the world, for the last five centuries, in so far as it has significance, has been European history. I do not think

> that we need to make any apology if our study of history is European-centric.

Yet this same 'European techniques and ideas' argues Gilroy, (1993) was also responsible for the trans-Atlantic slave trade or 'the complicity of reason' as Gilroy describes it; a history that modernity skips as though it never happened. Criticisms of the dominant America-centric narrative are growing and are to be found in the works of Raewyn Connell, (2007), Andre Gunder Frank (1998) Walter D. Mignolo (2009, 2011) Gurminder Bhambra (2007), Jack Goody (1996, 2004, 2006), G. Spivak (1988), Hountondji (1997), Naoki Sakai (1997). As Featherstone and Venn (2006:2) write:

> If we examine the social sciences and humanities, there has frequently been the assumption that they were producing universal generic knowledge - valid for human beings at all times and places. But it was clear that knowledge was the product of a particular place – historically Europe.

But what are the possible factors responsible for the founding of American Pentecostalism? Many authors have proposed one main explanation for the rise of Pentecostalism in America, which is the socio-economic disadvantage argument, which I shall address here only briefly since the same discussion is engaged in greater detail in chapter 2.

1.3 The socio-economic explanation

Like Methodism before it, - rising in Britain - Pentecostalism is thought to have emerged in the United States as a reaction to the socio-economic disadvantages of the time, (Niebuhr, 1929; Dayton, 1987; Robert Mapes Anderson, 1979). The philosopher and theologian H. Richard Niebuhr's (1929) study of Protestantism in America in the 1920s, distinguished between the established Churches and sects where he saw sects as the "churches of the disinherited", that is, the less privileged and disadvantaged in society needed religion the most as a form of escape from their material disadvantages, (Swatos, 1998). Niebuhr argues that

whilst preserving its wealth and worldly status the Church had lost its way and its moral authority and compassion for the poor. For Niebuhr, (1929:21) 'The division of the churches closely follows the division of men into the castes of national, racial, and economic groups… The domination of class and self-preservative church ethics over the ethics of the gospel must be held responsible for much of the moral ineffectiveness of Christianity in the West.' This would also explain why Pentecostalism is not a church, at least not in the traditional sense of the meaning of the term - an established monolithic institution of a bureaucratic kind, highly organized with a hierarchical chain of command and distribution of offices held by a professional class. The sect in comparison may be described as a much smaller group that appears to be spontaneously created and dynamically functioning, as well as reactionary against the established church order. The established churches had become 'world affirming' while sects were largely 'world rejecting'. Mapes Anderson (1979) believes that Millenarianism was significant to many of the poor and the disenfranchised because it offered hope of Christ's imminent return that would put an end to their earthly suffering. Equally, Charles Glock (1964), Bryan Wilson (1973), Bainbridge and Stark (1987) all see the rise of religious movements such as Pentecostalism as having roots in social problems. What then is Pentecostalism?

1.4 Pentecostalism – belief and Doctrine

The 1982 edition of World Christian Encyclopaedia defines Pentecostalism as:

> A Christian confession or ecclesiastical tradition holding the distinctive teaching that all Christians should seek a post-conversion religious experience called the Baptism with the Holy Spirit, and that a Spirit baptised believer may receive one or more of the supernatural gifts known in the early church: instantaneous sanctification, the ability to prophesy, practise divine healing, speaking in tongues (glossolalia), or interpret tongues.' Cited in J. Goff (1988)

Pentecostalism is perhaps the best known of a group of neo-fundamentalist Christian movements that share broadly similar doctrinal beliefs. Others include

the Charismatic Church, the Christian Fundamentalists and the Evangelical Christians. The text upon which Pentecostal belief relies is the Acts of Apostles 2:1-4 and central to Pentecostal doctrine are two messages. The first is the manifestation of the Holy Spirit, which Christ had promised the disciples before his death that would come, as teacher, guide, the comforter, strengthener as such the day of Pentecost was the fulfilment of the promise, John 14:6-26. The second is glossolalia, which is a gift of the Holy Spirit that empowered the Apostles to speak in tongues and to perform healing and miracles. Christ also promised the disciples that he would return, a promise known as the Second Advent or day of rapture; (John 14:3) this second coming or *parousia* would signal the end of times or Christian eschaton when Christ will return to establish his church and reign thereafter for a 1000years, a millennium. But not all Christian denominations hold to this doctrine. The Pentecostal doctrine rests largely on the following sets of belief: (1) A stress on the authority of the Bible and crucially biblical inerrancy, - every word in the bible is the word of God and no part of the bible is dead but alive and speaks to man in the present as it did in the past; (2) a rejection of modernist theology and of revisionary New Testament scholarship; (3) salvation and redemption through rebirth (born-again) and the immersion or baptism, symbolically in the blood of Jesus; (4) a belief in the gift of the Holy Spirit and miracles (that miracles have not ceased happening) and healing, and (5) glossolalia.

Joel Robbins (2004) and others distinguish among these three and the so-called Christian fundamentalists. The charismatics, a term with obvious etymological origins in the word 'charisma' believe in blessing or the gift or the grace of the Holy Spirit, which provides the receiver with the ability to speak in tongues (glossolalia) and the enabling power that was received as a gift at Pentecost. The Christian Fundamentalists do not subscribe to glossolalia but it is glossolalia that serves as an important doctrinal strand of Pentecostalism. I shall shortly show how glossolalia, a key part of Pentecostalism was strongly influenced by African culture.

For Robert Mapes Anderson (1979), speaking in tongues, is the 'distinctive feature' of Pentecostalism and perhaps this is the sense in which Pentecostalism has been considered to be an orally based movement as well as an ecstatic and

orgiastic kind that is thought to lack a theology (Dayton, 2007) and for this reason it is quintessentially the religion of the body. But how did American Pentecostalism come into being? This question will be addressed in the next section.

1.5 Birth of American Pentecostalism

On April 14 1906, a group of men and women, some white but most of them black gathered in a 'tumble down shack' in a suburban area of Los Angeles California on a street called Azusa Street where they began to pray and sing and speak in tongues in an act of worship reminiscent of the events described in the Acts of the Apostles. The event of that day and the name of that street have since passed into the annals of Pentecostal history as the day and the place where worldwide Pentecostalism born. But the events of that day was the culmination of a growing movement within American Protestant movement that began with Methodism and the Great awakenings that swept through the United States in the nineteenth century (Dayton, 1987, 2011; Robbins, Hayford). According to Vinson Synam, 'American Pentecostalism started at Topeka; worldwide Pentecostalism started at Azusa Street'.[4] But the difference between Topeka and Kansas is no mere geographical detail in the history of American Pentecostalism because what was absent in Topeka Kansas was present at Azusa Street and that was the difference. Charles Parham, a white preacher led the Topeka chapter, while a black preacher William J. Seymour led the Azusa Street revival. The significance of Topeka and Parham on the one hand and Azusa Street and Seymour will soon become clear. [5] As far as American religious history is concerned, the Azusa Street revival marked a turning point from the preceding protestant beliefs and styles of worship.

Previously, belief in the second work of grace – sanctification or the cleansing of sins and dedication to the purity of existence-, salvation through grace and baptism in the Holy Spirit, reputed to be the Third work of grace, had been the

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[4] Vinson Synam was speaking in a Documentary titled *The Azusa Street Revival of 1906* Youtube

[5] There is a useful discussion of these points by Randal J. Stephen in *Assessing the Black Roots of Pentecostalism*: *are.as.wvu.edu/pent**root**.htm*

core beliefs within the Holiness group. But at Azusa Street something different happened: glossolalia. Although this was not the first time that glossolalia had been introduced into worship. As early 1901, Charles Parham had introduced glossolalia in one of his services when a woman was reported to have spoken in tongues, (Roebuck, 2008; Synam, 1978). But the difference at the Azusa Street was the spontaneous eruption of glossolalia among the many, as the Holy Spirit was reported to have descended and taken hold of the entire hall under whose power many fell into a trance or to the ground as the spirit seized them. Reports of testimonies of miraculous happenings and healing, followed, (Hayford, 1995) the likes of which had never been witnessed before, not even in Methodism or in the Holiness Church that preceded it. However, a second important difference between Topeka Kansas and Azusa Street California relates not only to the leaders of both chapters but also to the racial dimension of the membership. This racial dimension is significant to the birth of American Pentecostalism and that discussion will be engaged in the next section.

1.6 Race and culture in American Pentecostalism.

Much of Pentecostal scholarship has not sufficiently addressed the black cultural influence on the movement in America; instead the narrative has favoured white contribution and its supposed influence around the world. James Goff (1998) sees Parham as the 'real' founder of Pentecostalism and not Seymour. Although Parham's critical role as one of the founders of the movement in the early days leading up to Azusa Street cannot be denied, but it was Seymour that took the movement to its height in 1906 and presided over the event that the world now recognizes as the Azusa Street revival. Seymour had served under Parham, but as Anderson (1979) argues '… Seymour … not Parham must be considered the originator of present-day Pentecostalism, while Synam (1987) describes Seymour as the 'Martin Luther or John Calvin' of Pentecostalism, a man who changed the course not only of American but worldwide Pentecostalism. Others agree with Synam, (Alexander, 2011; Hollenweger, 1999) and a host of other authorities situate William J Seymour at the heart of the founding of American Pentecostalism.

A son of former slaves, Seymour rose against the odds – the prevalent racial discrimination and segregation in American society at the time - to become the leader of the movement, (Synam, 2004; Roebuck, 2008). Weber's idea of 'routinization of charisma' is relevantly applicable here, in terms of the transformation of the movement from one that was built around one leader to a more established Church. According to Weber (1968:1146-47), 'As' Charismatic authority, 'domination congeals into a permanent structure, charisma recedes as a creative force. After the routinization of charisma, its very quality as an extraordinary, supernatural, and divine force makes it a suitable source of legitimate authority for the successors of the charismatic hero.'

But significantly Seymour and his fellow black members brought aspects of African heritage to the movement in many respects. James S Tierney's *Black Origins of The Pentecostal Movement* (1971) and Arthur Paris' *Black Pentecostalism: Southern Religion in an Urban World* (1982) were some of the first books to deal with the black influence on American Pentecostalism. More recent works such as that of Estrelda Alexander (2011) have joined a growing body of works like those of Walter Hollenweger, Allan Anderson, Ogbu Kalu, Roswith Gerloff who have attempted to redress this imbalance and draw attention to the important black contribution to the emergence of the movement in the US.

Both Paris's and Tierney's work have sought to bring black Pentecostalism from the ghettos of rural Southern parts of the US where it began and where it had always been seen as a religion of indulgence and carnality. Mapes Anderson (1979) agrees that there is something of the 'old time religion' of the South within American Pentecostalism that appeals and by black influence I suggest the African culture and tradition particularly in style of worship – which I will soon spell out. Although American Pentecostalism began at a time of racial segregation but the Pentecostal movement is thought to have been a rare exception to the racial discriminatory attitudes of the time. As one writer puts it: 'Pentecostalism is a movement that has democratized charisma… so the movement have been energised by the common experience of the baptism of *the Holy Spirit,* (Poloma, 2010:62) while Synan and Fox (2012), state that 'The Azusa Street revival under the leadership of Seymour stood in opposition to racial segregation as black and white worshipped together under a black pastor.' A white member was reported

to have remarked that, 'the 'colour line' was washed away by the blood.' But these sentiments do not suggest the absence of racial prejudice within the movement since the Azusa Street congregation was not an oasis of racial harmony that the racial mixture of the membership might suggest. Allan Anderson (2006) points out that some of the white members were not entirely comfortable with their fellow African American members with regards their methods and rituals. Robert Mapes Anderson (1979) reports that Parham was not entirely a racial integrationist and haboured [sic] racist tendencies, noting that Parham, '… was sick to the stomach …to see white people imitating the unintelligent, crude negroism of the Southland' (p.190). Walter Hollenweger adds that Parham had sympathies with the *Ku Klux Klan* and one prominent Holiness member, Alma White, published in 1910 a book titled *Demons and Tongues*, in which she denounced the Pentecostal movement as made up of those that have '… caught the Satanic Tongues delusion...', by which she meant the black members and the white people that appeared to imitate their methods. Quoting Faupel, Allan Anderson writes that 'A local white Baptist Pastor described church services as a "disgusting amalgamation of African voodoo superstition and Caucasian insanity.' And one Dr. G Campbell Morgan was said to have described Pentecostalism as 'the last vomit of Satan' (cited in Michael Brown (1996:197-198). Even a reputable organ of the press, The *Los Angeles Times,* had this to say about the movement.

> Meetings are held in a tumble-down shack on Azusa Street, and the devotees of the weird doctrine practice the most fanatical rites, preach the wildest theories and work themselves into a state of mad excitement in their peculiar zeal. Colored people and a sprinkling of whites compose the congregation, and night is made hideous in the neighborhood by the howlings of the worshippers, who spend hours swaying forth and back in a nerve racking attitude of prayer and supplication. They claim to have the "gift of tongues" and be able to understand the babel. *Los*

Angeles Times April 18 1906 quoted in Robert Owens (2005:64)

Descriptions like 'fanatical rites', 'mad excitement', 'peculiar zeal', 'howling', 'swaying', 'gift of tongues', essentially, glossolalia, were aimed at the black cultural influences. But what form did the black cultural influences take? Hollenweger (1999:36) identifies five of them: (1) Oral tradition; (2) 'theology and witness narrative'; (3) 'maximum participation'; (4) inclusion of dreams and visions' and (5) 'an understanding between the body and the mind.' But to these we may add, particularly a style of worship that is peculiarly African and each of these elements will be fully explored later. Hollenweger believes that the roots of American Pentecostalism lie in black slave religion, saying that '…their liturgy is oral, unlike other churches whose liturgy is written and sounds written too. It is clearly structured and is not chaotic, but like a Jazz concert, which also originates from black oral culture, it has its structure in music.' The 'theology of witness' takes orality further by combining it with a peculiar kind of listening where the narrative is not written down or programmed, nor the prayer or the music but as spoken testimony of personal or group experiences in what Mapes Anderson (1979:7) describes as the 'testimony of the ear.'

Hollenweger' s idea of 'maximum participation' is discursive, communitarian and reconciliatory in a particularly African way. His explanation of the 'inclusion of dreams and visions' is brief and inadequate; but the little he says is useful in the context of our discussion where imagery plays a part in African religious practices. Cecil Roebuck Jr. (2006:33) perhaps captures this idea better where he writes that 'There are many 'slave narratives going back to the eighteenth century, in which slaves talked about receiving guidance through visions and dreams, hearing voices, and experiencing different states of altered consciousness such as trances.' But there is also the vehicle through which the various black religious emotions are expressed, which is the body, (the subject of chapter 4) through movement: the dance, the song, the clapping, trancing, noise-making, jumping up and down and the entire performance act, was for many a form of hysteria and a thing of vulgarity and shame that required suppression through something like Norbert Elias's *Civilizing Process* (2000).

For Alexander (2011) the African belief in spirituality has had the most influence on American Pentecostalism, as is the belief in gods, the songs and the dance, but these claims have proved controversial. One reviewer of Alexander's book, Frederick Ware (2012), wonders if there is the evidence to support this view, considering the passage of time between the transporting of the slaves from Africa, through the middle passage and the years of enslavement up to emancipation, and whether blacks retained their culture intact, without dilution or amalgamation with other American cultures. Wilson Moses (1998) is also critical of this kind of afrocentric view that seeks to privilege black cultural influence in this distinctive way and Sidney W. Mintz and Richard Price (1992) also argue that it is a myth to suggest that transported African slaves to the Americas brought their culture with them and retained it intact over the period of slavery and later came to influence American society. For Mintz and Price there was no unique set of African culture to speak of but a mixture or diluted confluence of several cultural influences in one melting pot that was eighteenth and nineteenth century America. In this great melange of cultural hybridity some aspects of cultures were lost, abandoned or forgotten as the blacks were integrated into their new environment albeit as slaves and whatever remained of 'black culture' was essentially creolised. Therefore to attempt to trace particular cultural practices to specific places in Africa was now near impossible.

But the African oral culture: dance, music and song remained, as most of the slaves could not read or write and so told their stories and sang their songs and engaged the body in performance, (Livio Sansone, 2003; Roger Bastide, 2007). For example, Petrine Archer (2000) documents the black influence on the cultural life in Paris just after the First World War, fashioned by artistes like Josephine Baker. For Gilroy (1993:4) both the slave ships and the middle passage of the journey represent not just a physical journey but also the transportation of culture and ideas. As he puts it, 'Ships immediately focus attention on the circulation of ideas and activists as well as the movement of key cultural and political artifacts: tracts, books, gramophone records, and choirs.' This echoes Foucault's sentiments in *Other Spaces* (1967[2013:22]) that:

> The boat is a floating piece of space, without a place that exists by itself, that is self enclosed and at the same time is given over to the infinity of the sea and that, from port to port, from bank to bank…it goes as far as the colonies in search of the most precious treasures they conceal in their garden. The ship is the heterotopia par excellence.

But others have dismissed the creolisation thesis of American culture. Melville Herskovits (1941) for example criticises what he sees as the denial of black African heritage and its cultural influence on American society. James H. Sweet (2003) echoes this criticism, while Raboteau (2002:16) goes as far as to claim that 'the gods of Africa were carried in the memories of enslaved Africans across the Atlantic,' but this is not to suggest that memories of every aspect of African culture were retained pure and unaltered or unmodified in the new environment. Raboteau acknowledges as much when he continues by asserting that, 'To be sure, they underwent a sea change. African liturgical seasons, prescribed rituals, traditional myths and languages of worship attenuated, replaced and altered, or lost; but much still remained…' Lawrence Levine (1978) takes this argument further by insisting on the notion that there were distinct elements of African culture that could be attributed to African slaves and these include African proverbs, jokes, songs, music etc., which Levine described as 'toasts'. Although some of this African heritage did varnish or were altered in some way many were preserved over time. The fact that many of the slaves were placed in same groups from the same culture from which they had been removed in Africa also shows that they were able to retain as much as possible aspects of that culture as a way of 'making sense of their new surroundings', argues Anthony B. Pinn (2009). Similar historical detailing of black culture brought to the West Indies can be seen in Vincent Brown (2010) with regards to the ways that Jamaican slaves applied ancestral (African) beliefs in the supernatural power of death to regenerate the soul and applied this belief to the struggles against the slave masters.

John Thornton (1992) sees the attempt to deny black African cultural influence on American society as an effort to erase black influence and see blacks only as victims or passive inheritors of white culture and values when in truth they were active participants and innovators in American society. Under extreme and

severe conditions, African Americans still asserted themselves through their distinct culture. Contra Mintz and Price, Thornton believes that we can fairly determine the parts of Africa from which most of the slaves had been taken - parts of West and Central Africa and from this geographical location we could infer the kind of culture that the slaves brought with them to the New World. However, it must be conceded that some cultural mixing must have taken place during this period. These authors: Thornton, Herskovits, Sweet, Levine, Alexander, Brown, Raboteau and others argue that the emphasis on the creolisation of African American culture does not sufficiently appreciate the distinctive African cultural influence on American society, such as can also be witnessed in Brazil where the religion of the Candoble has known Yoruba cosmological roots and Quimbanda, (Roger Bastide's, 2007; Livio Sansone, 2003). Also in Brazil there is the god Ogum of Nigerian (Yoruba) origin - *Ogun* as it is known in Nigeria, the god of iron, within the Orisa religious cosmology, (Olupona, 2008) which is prominent in the Bahian region of Brazil and about which Sandra Barnes (1997:XIII) writes that 'The African Heritage is producing …innovations, borrowing and blendings, and it appears not only in religious contexts, but also in the arts, popular culture and public discourse.' She goes on to say of this period that:

> …mass intercontinental migration of people brought with them religious knowledge – strands that would merge and give rise to a variety of new faiths –Traditions that coalesced and flourished in Brazil included, Candomble, Macumba, Umbanda. The Caribbean gave birth to a diverse range of religious groups: Voudou in Haiti, Santeria and Lukumi in Cuba, Shango and spiritual Baptists in Trinidad, Tobago and Grenada, Kele in St Lucia and Santerismo in Puerto Rica. (P.XV)

However African Americans do not have a monopoly on spirituality, as Monica Reed's (2014) review of Alexander's book has noted, stating particularly that the '…similarities between African traditions and Pentecostalism does not allow us to draw a direct line of influence between the two...', It is perhaps this difficulty that stymies any attempt to see how exactly both cultures influenced each other. But

perhaps this difficulty has been exaggerated given that aspects of black culture did survive in one form or another through the years of slavery through to the Emancipation and after. We can therefore reasonably speak of black cultural influence on American cultural life, even if that culture is not easily or accurately traceable to specific African roots. Loss of ethnic identity or the dilution of culture does not entail total loss of cultural traits. For instance, nobody questions the black roots of Jazz music, even if, as was the case it emerged out of cultural hybridity.

The ethnographic study of Nigerian Pentecostalists in London for this thesis appears to suggest similar retention of African culture within Pentecostalism that has been brought by Africans to Britain. Although these are early days and only time will tell how much and in what shape or form these cultural influences would be retained further down the line. But the similarity of Pentecostal styles of worship such as fervent prayer sessions, speaking in tongues, miracles and testimonies that is found among Africans, African Americans, West Indians and Brazilians demonstrate the longevity and survivability of culture even in modified forms across places and time. With regards to music Kimberley Sambol-Tosco writes in *Slavery and the making of America* (2004:NP) that*:*

> …slaves engaged in singing and dancing. Though slaves used a variety of musical instruments, they also engaged in the practice of "patting juba" or the clapping of hands in a highly complex and rhythmic fashion. For slaves, music and dance held both a secular and spiritual meaning.[6]

Robert Palmer (1980), William Barlow (1989), E. Genovese (1974:XV) all trace African cultural influence on American society, particularly with regards to religion and music. For Genovese 'the slaves… laid the foundation for a separate black national culture while enormously enriching American culture as a whole.' The slave songs and dance such as the Juba dance or patting the juba, which is engaged by stamping the feet and patting the arms and legs or the 'field hollers' which are forms of work songs that the slaves sang in the cotton fields. Or the 'ring shouts' or 'cries', which are forms of religious performance that also

[6] Kimberley Sambol-Tosco Slavery and The Making of America. PBS *www.pbs.org/wnet/slavery/experience/education/history.htm*

involves stamping the feet and clapping while moving around in a circle while building towards an ecstatic exuberant end. Barlow reports that many slave masters encouraged singing on plantations because it aided productivity. Robert Palmer also traces black musical styles such as ragtime, Jazz, blues and others to the rhythms of the 'shouts'.

The point is that the music and the dance of the slaves and their obvious African roots cannot be denied and it is these roots that Seymour and other blacks brought to the Azusa Street movement. As Allan Anderson (1991:27) explains, 'Many early manifestations of Pentecostalism were found in the religious expressions of the slaves and were themselves a reflection of the African religious culture from which they had been wrenched.'

Emancipation and the end of the American Civil War followed by the Reconstruction witnessed an explosion of culture in the United States, including black culture, much of which had previously been repressed by slavery and the prohibitive laws of the *post bellum* years. The World Trade Fair of 1904 in St Louis Missouri witnessed notable contribution of black culture. The *Ragtime* style popularized by musicians like Scott Joplin had began to influence popular American culture, as was Jazz, another musical style made famous by Louis Armstrong, Duke Ellington and count Basie. Pioneering developments by African Americans began to emerge in all areas of life, including sports, academia and business. In education and science, black intellectuals like Frederick Douglas, W.E.B. Dubuois. Booker T. Washington, George Washington Carver and others were emerging as notable thinkers as were entrepreneurs like Sarah Breedlove Walker. This is the context in which the emergence of American Pentecostalism must be viewed and in which William J Seymour must be seen as one of a set of pioneering African American leaders of a new style of religious doctrine and worship. Had slavery lasted another hundred years in the United States, it is conceivable that Pentecostalism would not have taken the shape or form that it did in 1906, or perhaps not have emerged at all. Having now sketched the origins of American Pentecostalism, let us now examine the origins of Nigerian Pentecostalism, where similar cultural factors would be seen to have been responsible for the emergence of the movement.

1.7 Origins of Nigerian Pentecostalism

Several accounts of the origins of Nigerian Pentecostalism are to be found in the growing literature on the subject; however, many scholars now agree that Nigerian Pentecostalism is an indigenous product and not an import from the US, (Kalu, 2006; Ojo, 2006). For example Kalu (2008:3) believes that the African origin of Pentecostalism is often underplayed in favour of the American history. Writing thus, 'The African religious achievement is often dismissed by emphasizing external influences and the African voice is imaged as an echo lacking the strength of the *arokin* and the *griots.*' He goes on to say that, 'African Pentecostalism did not originate from Azusa Street and is not an extension of the American electronic church . . . it is one of the ways that Africans responded to the missionary structures and appropriated the message.' Matthew Ojo (2006:31) also writes. '…until the 1930s Nigerian Pentecostalism was unrelated to the world-wide, which originated from Azuza [sic] Street in Los Angeles in 1906.' According to Allan Anderson (2014) 'The phenomenon of African Pentecostalism is largely of African origin, and has its roots in a marginalized and under privileged society struggling to find dignity and identity in the face of brutal colonialism and oppression in Africa, and marginalization in Europe and North America' (p.173).

Historically, the emergence of Nigerian Pentecostalism was a gradual evolutionary process with roots in Nigerian culture syncretistically mixed with Western Christianity. However, the progress appeared to have stalled during the colonial period partly as a result of the pursuit of secularism and modernity but its resurgence began in the late 1960s and early 1970s, first as a sect among the young, mostly university students and subsequently grew into the phenomenon that it is today (Freston, 2001; Ojo, 2004; Adogame, 2005; Kalu, 2006). The discussion that follows looks at both the makings of what must now be described as the forerunner to the contemporary Pentecostalism in Nigeria and the revival of the movement in modern times.

1.8 Pre-colonial Nigerian Cultures

When the missionaries first brought Christianity to Nigeria in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries they found a thriving indigenous religious culture, (Ajayi, 1966; Ayandele, 1967). These cultures were rooted in animism and totemism, which Edward Burnet Tylor (1871:258) sees as prevalent among 'primitive' people who lack an understanding of reality. He claims that 'To the lower tribes of man, sun and stars, trees and rivers, winds and clouds, become personal animate creatures.' This belief that objects and humans have spirits, Tylor thought was the result of 'underdevelopment' and childishness on the part of the 'lower tribes', principally Africans, who found it difficult to distinguish living things from non-living things. But Durkheim is critical of Tylor's animism, writing:

> For Tylor, this extension of animism was due to the particular mentality of the primitive, who, like a child, does not know how to tell the animate and the inanimate. [...] Now the primitive thinks like a child. So, he too, is inclined to endow things, even inanimate things, with a nature like his own. (1912{2001:51)

But Durkheim rejects the distinction between the soul and the body. Equally, in an essay, co-authored with Hubert *Outline of a General Theory of Magic* (1902) Mauss sees 'manna' as a form of the sacred source bearing the capacity to generate strong emotional and social bonds through collective rituals which provide a strong charge of cultural identity. This is similar to the Nigerian form of animism that engages a single ontology in which nature and man are part of the same world as against the post-modernist separation of the two. Bruno Latour (1993) for example rejects the separation of subject from object, seeing scientific development as presenting the illusion of detachment from nature. If this ontological separation is untenable, as Latour maintains, then 'we have never really been modern'. Senghor (1964:73) in the same vein: 'The Negro African does not draw a line between himself and the object; he does not hold it at a distance, nor does he merely look at it and analyze it. … He touches it, smells it. The Negro is like one of those third day worms, a field of sensations'.

For Scott Lash (2010) to have never been modern implies that we have always been metaphysical. Or to put the point another way, the distinction between

primitive and modern man is a false distinction, (Haraway, 1990; Barad, 2007). Deleuze & Guattari (1987:503), talk about 'assembling' not as an organically developing but as symbiotic form and in much of the works cited here very few of the authors draw on African ideas or cultural practices, even though their arguments fit certain aspects of African beliefs and customs. For example Marcel Mauss in his book *The Gift*- (1954[1990]) sees gift as an act of social exchange that acts as a cordage or instrument of social bonding. In her foreword to that book, Mary Douglas points to occasions in which gifts are exchanged in Polynesian culture such as birth, marriage, funeral and so on, which equally applies in Nigerian cultures. In Nigeria, as well as a means of cementing the communitarian spirit, gifts are expressions of respect, veneration, love, affection and generosity (I shall return to this theme later). Such sentiments must also be viewed as spiritually driven, as in the spirit of love, affection and so on. Gift therefore falls under the category of animism, the emotions and vitality that represent the core religious belief among the various Nigerian cultures.

The three main ethnic groups of Yoruba, Igbo and Hausa have words for spirit: *emi, chi* and *Iskoki*, respectively. Indeed it is this idea of the spirit – *Iskoki* – of the Hausa that laid the basis for the assimilation of Islamic Sufism in Nigeria with its emphasis on 'mysticism' among others, (Suleiman, 2013). For the Yoruba, life itself is spirit/*emi* and the verb *mi* means to breath. But *emi* is also not the mere act of breathing but the force behind the act of breathing. For example, the Yoruba would say: *Emi ni Olorun*: God is spirit since he is invisible, supernatural, but a force that is felt. *Emi* therefore is life and it is also the force that keeps life in the form of the body, alive. God therefore is *emi*, the spirit that created life *emi* and in this sense the Yoruba would also say, life ultimately belongs to God: *Oluwa ni o ni emi.* The spirit inhabits the body and keeps it alive and while in the English there is talk of spirit as liveliness or activity, just as people speak of being spirited, the *emi* is a life force as well as the source of life, an active dynamic essence, a movement – animation - and it is from this idea that springs the African belief that behind every living thing is a spirit. Therefore the dance is spirited movement, as is the act of falling into trance in what is known as spirit possession and this idea of animatedness or vitalism that springs ever forward can also be found for example in Goethe, in what Scott Lash (2006:324) describes as 'Life', as opposed to mechanism. As Lash further puts it, 'The primary distinction between

mechanism and vitalism may be seen in terms of vitalism's self-organization. In mechanism, causation is external… In vitalism causation is largely self-causation.' This is vitalism or the *Lebensphilosophies*, as Lash argues, which we find in Goethe, Dilthey, Simmel, Bergson, Deleuze and others. For example, Ronal Gray (1967:113) reports in a letter to Kathrina Fabricious where Goethe writes 'When I say I love, I understand by that the rocking emotions, in which our hearts float, moving backwards and forwards on the same spot, whenever some stimulus shifts it out of its usual path of indifference' This is Bergson's (1907) *Elan Vital* or vital force/impulse or Schopenhauer's the world as will. Simmel's (1908 [1992]) theory of crowds is predicated upon this idea of vitalism – the dynamic 'movement or flux' of the collective group, the 'life force' in movement. Expressive art is also a form of vitalism the kind that is found in Benedetto Croce' *Aesthetics* (1902) and R.G. Collingwood's *Principles Of Art* (1938) to which Scott Lash also includes Walter Benjamin and Friedrich Schiller (see Chapter 3 on Pentecostal Experience) where art is expression and not representation since representation invokes elements of Platonic imitation, a copy with a hint of cognition. Poetry therefore is not thinking but the expression of feeling, as is the act of praying, singing and dancing and clapping. The Lashian self-generating vitalism is the spontaneous dynamic movement and expressionism that we find in Nigerian Pentecostalism. It is an idea of spirit as a stimulating activity that spins on its own axis to produce excitement and exuberance in worship. This therefore is the sense in which the Nigerian and African cultural expressionism that was fed through the African American culture was celebrated at the turn of the twentieth century Europe, particularly in Parisian society, as a counter-rationalist movement to Western civilizational models. As Bascom and Herskovits (1959:3) write:

> Despite the intensity of Christian missionary effort and the thousand years of Muslim proselytising which have marked the various parts of Africa, African religions continued to manifest vitality everywhere. This is to be seen in worship of African deities, the homage to ancestors, and the recourse to divination, magic, and other rituals...

And so the Nigerian spirit as vitalism can be likened to the wind. Indeed the Hausa word *iskoki*, (spirit) literally means the wind. Like the spirit, the wind has several qualities: it can be still, calm, serene and balmy or hot or cold or cool; it can also be harsh or fierce, and has the power and strength to twist and turn and whirl into a gale or hurricane and wreak destruction and death. Yet the face of the wind remains unseen, the ultimate non-corporeal substance. It should be noted that in Acts of the Apostle Chapter 2 - the Holy Spirit is said to have come down 'as of a rushing mighty wind', and the metaphor of the spirit like a wind echoes the many Nigerian traditional beliefs in the spirit as the wind. This notion lends validity to the idea that Western Christianity was appropriated into Nigerian culture, (Kalu, 2006). It could also be argued that contrary to the assumption that Africans converted to Christianity, Africans rather adapted certain tenets of Christian doctrines that fitted local cultural beliefs. I shall not dwell on this claim since it requires a proper and sustained argument to be justified, which cannot be engaged here but rather in another project. The point to make is that pre-missionary traditional Nigerian culture was already Pentecostalist in its practice and observations long before the arrival of the missionaries.

So when Nigerian Christians read Ephesians 6:12: 'For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual *hosts* of wickedness in the heavenly *places,*' this passage appears to support the belief in evil spirits, demons, sorcerers, forces of wickedness and darkness. As mentioned earlier, instead of abandoning their beliefs and practices the natives seamlessly channelled them into the service of the Christian God and the Holy Spirit. The table below shows how Western Christianity was assimilated into African cultures to form the hybrid of African Christianity that is now evident in Nigerian Pentecostalism.

Nigerian traditional religious beliefs and practices.	Nigerian Pentecostal beliefs and practices derived from Western Christianity
The belief in Spirit • Traditional belief in spirits. Characteristically, spirit is supremely powerful. • Spirits are invisible but powerful and the quintessential idea of spirits is the wind, whose power is felt even though unseen. Spirits guide and protect the individual from evil spirits. • Mankind is at the mercy of the spirits through demonic attacks. But there are also good spirits such as spirits of ancestors.	**The belief in Spirit** • Christian belief in the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is sovereign and supremely powerful. • It is unseen but the power is felt. On the day of Pentecost the spirit descended like a gust of a wind. The spirit empowered the Apostles, and was also their guide and comforter. • Empowerment by the Holy Spirit against demonic attacks
Ecstatic utterance and performance • Traditionally, incantations are spoken to summon the spirits, thus: spirit possession. • Rituals of worship – drumming, singing, clapping, dancing, falling into trance, etc.	**Ecstatic utterance and performance** • At Pentecost the disciples began to speak in tongues – Glossolalia, falling into trance • Rituals of Pentecostal worship: Prayer, praise-worship – music, singing, dancing, clapping,
Sacrifice • Routine animal sacrifice to appease the gods for transgressions of local customs and taboo. • Sacrifice was also to supplicate, to petition for favour or to give thanks for favour received. • Blood is shed as atonement, to purify (wash away transgression) or to celebrate – a good harvest for example). In extreme	**Sacrifice** • Jesus was sacrificed for the sins of mankind; the shedding of his blood was the ultimate sacrifice, the source of redemption and salvation. • But it was the ultimate sacrifice to end all sacrifice. • Therefore the blood of

cases humans were sacrificed as the ultimate form of atonement or purification depending on the severity of the transgression.	Jesus washed away sins and provided a bridge to God.
Problem of evil or demonic spirits. • Evil spirits or spirits of darkness are everywhere and are out to cause harm. This underlines the belief in witchcraft • Only the local medicine men can help protect against and to ward off evil spirit.	**Problem of evil or demonic spirits** • Ephesians 6:12 'We wrestle not against flesh and blood but against principalities, against powers, against rulers of darkness of this world… • Isaiah 54:17 'No weapon formed against you shall prosper…'
• How can mankind's perennial problems be resolved? Through constant sacrifices and petition to the gods.	• How can the problem of sin be resolved? Through salvation and redemption gained by grace and not by works.

As can be seen from the above table, which shows the similarities between certain aspects of Western Christianity, and the assimilation of the former into the latter was evidently seamless. (Later in chapter 5, I discuss the manner in which Africans interpreted the bible through the trope of local culture). However, as mentioned earlier, tension began to surface when the missionary worldview began to clash with native practices. But much of the Christian dogma, which the missionaries wished to impose on Africans, was not entirely successful. Barrett (1968:267) points out that these traditional practices revolved mainly around:

> '…worship –sacrifices, food offerings, libation, native beer or palmwine, drinking customs, possession cults, religious joy, ecstacy, emotionalism, singing, dancing, and drumming, the immediacy of the spiritual world; and the vernacular language itself in which was enshrined the tribe's soul, together with vernacular songs, histories and traditions.

Barrett further reports that '…many missions refused baptism to husbands, wives and children…. Christians who lapsed into polygamy were excommunicated or otherwise disciplined', and all missions '… without exception rejected the ancestor-cult as pagan superstition' (p. 119). Baptism could only take place upon the renunciation of these practices, which many refused to abandon. As such Africans became uneasy about this perceived assault on their culture, (Gaiya, 2002; Ukpong, 2006) and as for the cult of ancestor worship, – the veneration of the dead (Brown, 2010), to give it its proper term, – it was a way of preserving the family lineage that links the spirit of the dead with that of the living. But this idea was and continues to be wrongly perceived as the worship of ancestors. In any case Africans could not and would not give up this part of their culture because both polygamy and ancestor veneration were important traditions of community life, and one that begins with the family life that grows and extends in ever-increasing circles to the community and society at large. Therefore on matters of core traditional practices the indigenous people remained cleft, even after conversion. Also of

concern to Nigerian Christians was the failure of the white church authorities to pay due regard to its African members and to promote from their rank qualified Africans to positions of authority within the church, which was contributory to the schism that followed, (Barrett, 1968). African Christian 'converts' served only in menial or junior roles within the church, (Gaiya, 2002). As Jesse Page (1931) also explains, it took a long time for the distinguished Nigerian Anglican clergy Samuel Ajayi Crowther (1809-1891), the translator of the Bible into Yoruba, whose services to the Anglican Church had been exemplary, to be made Bishop. Racism was therefore perceived as a factor in the schism that helped to establish the African Independent Churches, (Turner, 1967; Daneel, 1987; Gaiya, 2002; Ajayi, 1967; Barrett, 1968). Norbert Elias (1987) discusses the tension or conflict that arises between established and outsider groups, which was a characteristic of the revolt against the European outsider by the African native groups. L.N. Mbefo (2001:107) sums up the African dissatisfaction thus:

> The missionaries of the older churches failed to address the type of questions the African situation raised for them: witchcraft, demon possession, haunting by evil spirits, the cult of ancestors; the use of protective charms, talisman; sorcery and the traditional dancing form of worship at the shrines. The tendency among the missionaries was to dismiss these questions as due to ignorance arising from a pre-scientific mentality.

Finally, Isichei (1995), Ojo (2008) report that the epidemic of disease and famine that took hold in certain regions of Nigeria in the early part of the twentieth century and which claimed many lives, was a catalyst for the search for local alternatives to the main Western systems of worship. Ojo (2006) cites the case of a woman, Sophia Odunlami, who was reported to have '… seen a heavenly vision of using only water that Many renounced their membership of the established churches such as Christian Missionary Society (CMS) in order to revive latent beliefs in the power of the spirit. But rather than renounce Christianity completely and return to traditional African religions – which some

did, - others combined aspects of African spirituality with aspects of Christianity in a happy syncretic blend, which revolved particularly around the Holy Spirit and the events of the Acts of the Apostles. Features of this syncretism can be seen in the *Aladura* churches like the *Cherubim and Seraphim church*, the *Celestial Church of God*, and the *Christ Apostolic church.* These churches believe in miracles, prophesy and healing, fasting and the power of prayers, (Peel, 1999). The word *Aladura* is a Yoruba word that means *the praying people* but it is rather the way and manner in which they conduct prayer - with its fervent feverishness and high-energy expressionism - that marks them out from other Christian churches in Nigeria. Prayer sessions were noisy affairs, highly charged and would last for long periods of time, reminiscent of the events of the Acts of Apostle. This form of prayer has survived and remains an integral part of Pentecostal worship. (I shall discuss the nature of prayer within Nigerian Pentecostalism in greater detail in Chapter 3 in our discussion on the Pentecostal experience.) But Ojo (2008:31) notes that:

> Pentecostalism in Nigeria had over the years centred on the following emphases: efficacy of prayers, prophetic revelations, divine healing in all its various aspects, and baptism of the Holy Spirit with speaking in tongues. Divine healing, visionary experiences and efficacy of prayers however attracted greater attention in the first wave of Pentecostalism in Nigeria, which could partly be associated with the Aladura movement.

Although these churches were never called or known as Pentecostal churches they were in many ways Pentecostalist in doctrine and belief. For example, the Aladura group, as M.A. Gaiya (2002:5) writes '… adopted the African religious spirituality and charisma without the traditional cultic paraphernalia. They were puritanical; they preached the importance of prayer and fasting and renunciation of all forms of idolatry.' So how did this form of religious experience begin in Africa? Donatus Ukpong (2006) examines the history of Nigerian Pentecostalism from the indigenous cultural perspective. As Cox (1998:91) notes: 'The same assimilation is going on in sub-Saharan Africa, where dancing, drumming, and ancestor veneration, generally discouraged or forbidden by Protestants and Catholics, are welcomed into Pentecostal services.'

Also Bryan Turner (1983) discusses how Western conception of religion has sought to relegate the body and its various expressiveness beneath the rational, has influenced the sociology of religion.

1.9 The Post- colonial space

Nigeria's post-colonial history could be described as one long preparation for the religious resurgence now sweeping across the country. Although the Pentecostal movement in Nigeria only exploded in the early 1970s and 1980s, the seeds of its flourishing were sown long before the missionary and colonial adventure began. It must also be noted that the sweep of religious revivalism taking place in Nigerian society is not confined to Christianity alone but includes the Islamic faith and as such must be seen as the recrudescence of the cultural beliefs and traditions that appeared to have been lost in the fog of colonialism, modernity and secularism. In order therefore to understand the recent flourishing of Pentecostalism in Nigeria, a brief account of recent Nigerian history is necessary and this brief history will be engaged in this section and the rest of this chapter.

The country we now know as Nigeria did not exist before 1914: the British invented it. The Berlin Conference of 1895 had ratified British claims to this part of West Africa and thus began the process of state creation, (Toyin Falola et al, 2008). With this process also began the formal history of Nigeria, as a rational, secular project. Yet, if Nigerian history is mainly about the colonial presence in that country then perhaps Hugh Trevor Roper would be proved right after all that Africa has no history but the history of the West in Africa. It is a history that takes us on a journey whose beginnings start at the point where the West (the British in particular) entered the picture, a history that is thought to have brought the peoples of Nigeria out of a backward age, through the dark tunnels of primitivism and barbarism and finally out into the open light of Western rationality, liberal values and capitalism. This is the process of state formation, also one of a process of civilization in the Weberian and Eliasian senses that introduced law, order, peace and stability to an otherwise primitive land. The *failed state* syndrome so often applied to many post-independent African

nations also derives from this belief that African irrationality is to blame for the failure of the modern African state, resting on the assumption that it is the inability of the African mind to manage a highly sophisticated and efficient as well as a civilized administrative machine that the Colonial powers left behind. Consequently, after the departure of the colonial powers, the peace, stability and prosperity that they left behind quickly began to unravel. But this neat and tidy and very rational seeming argument must be challenged. First of all it is a narrative that omits or sidesteps the uncivilized manner by which African states were acquired: the forced acquisition of land through conquest and coercion, the oppression, subjugation, denial of rights and the brutal suppression of dissent, (Goody, 2003, 2012; François Dépelteau et al, 2013). As Arthur Lewis (1965:68) has observed:

> Any idea that one can make different peoples into a nation by suppressing religious, tribal, or regional or any other affiliations to which they themselves attach the highest political significance is simply a non-starter. National loyalty cannot immediately supplant tribal loyalty: it has to be built over tribal loyalty and by creating a system in which all the tribes feel that there is room for self-expression.

British Imperial rule in Nigeria no doubt dislocated Nigerian cultures, as Chinua Achebe aptly depicts in his novel *Things Fall Apart*. The British cultural influence was everywhere, including language, currency, education system, the military, politics (parliamentary democracy), judiciary and other administrative systems including the Nigerian civil service, (Crowther, 1980). But resistance to British rule never wavered until the struggle for independence was finally achieved on 1 October 1960.

But there is no such thing as objective history since history is written from particular subjective perspectives, or, as Weber (1949:81) puts it, 'All knowledge of cultural reality, as may be seen, is always knowledge from particular points of view', as such the history of 'Western civilization' in Africa has always taken its starting point from the singular belief that Africa, the dark continent, was uncivilized. Yet the rejection of such single-source genealogies

that we find in Nietzsche (1887[2007]), Lash (1991) and others has done little to halt the dominance of this discourse. The idea that historical processes are the result of contingent factors working in concert or contrast to produce particular results or developments appears to be a more tenable concept. In an interesting paper by the Cambridge historian J.B. Bury, *Cleopatra's Nose* (1916), Bury posits a counterfactual conditional by citing the shape of Cleopatra's nose, which he maintained that had it been differently shaped (the allure or beauty of Cleopatra, her nose in particular, which had seduced the Caesars occasioning their incursion into Egypt) - the course of Western Civilization, would have been different. Bury's argument, which is a rejection of Hegelian teleological process of world history (zeitgeist) is that chance or accident or seemingly inconsequential trivial events rather than 'logical development' are often the more responsible factors in historical development. Foucault also asserts this point in *Nietzsche Genealogy and History* (1984:78) stating that '… he who listens to history finds that things have no pre-existing essence, or an essence fabricated piecemeal from alien forms." and so he argues against the view that '… knowledge of historical reality can or should be a presuppositionless copy of objective facts." (1949: 92).

For Walter Benjamin *On the Concept of History* (1940) Marxist historical materialism is in essence disguised theological anti-thesis to the capitalist project. Let us look for a moment at the process of state formation in France out of which modernity and secularism has emerged – *laïcité* – which many have been deemed to be a classical example separation of religion from the state. This spontaneous 'bottom-up' eruption of republican fervour against the church and the monarchy produced citizens rather than subjects, unleashed democratic freedom, equality and fellow feeling – *Liberté, égalité, fraternité*, (Kuru, 2009). This contrasts with the carefully and formally constructed colonial top-down model in Nigeria and indeed Africa the kind that produced subjects, ethnicities and latterly citizens. But both models (spontaneously erupting and carefully planned) disguise a religious underbelly. For example, the *French Revolution* and the festivals that followed was underpinned by a religious fervour since it represented a collective group feeling about a shared cause around which people bonded together and about which they mobilized collectively. It could also be read as a reassertion of the ties that bind in a fundamentally sacred

sense. Lynn Hunt (2001) sees this religious dimension in the Revolution in France, writing that, 'The sacred therefore has its origins in a surplus of energy created by an extraordinarily high level of social interaction. The energy tapped by this intense social exchange is then invested in some object taken to represent collective ideals' (p.76). Hunt sees the festivals of the French Revolution as essentially religious in the sense of constituting a collective ideal around which the revolutionists gathered. She continues in this line of thought by suggesting that 'the festivals and federations that were convoked to celebrate important revolutionary events were the rituals of the new religion.' Hunt (2001:77) quotes Alexis De Tocqueville's *The Old Regime and the French Revolution,* where Tocqueville writes that '…the French Revolution ostensibly political in origin, function on the lines and assumed many aspects of a religious revolution.' Mona Ozouf's *Festivals and the French Revolution* (1991) also details much of the post-revolutionary festivals and their significance in French Culture and society. She notes that '…the festival is … therapeutic, a reconstruction, as in the Utopias of the eighteenth century, of the social bond that has come' (p.10). Similarly the British rule in Nigeria might be viewed as the *Ancien Regime* and independence as marking a break with the British *Ancine regime* and the overthrow of much of the symbols of that past and to establish an indigenous political, cultural, social, economic and religious identity. Upon the departure of the British the new Nigerian republic began to strip the nation of its colonial past. Public structures and monuments that had borne English names were soon replaced by indigenous names and this policy went on long after independence. It was an approach summed up by the undisputed leader of the Hausa/Fulani Muslim at the time, the Saudana of Sokoto, Sir Ahmadu Bello - the great-great-grandson of Usman Dan Fodio, the great Muslim warrior leader that did much to spread Islam in Nigeria – when he described what independence meant for him:

> …the restoration of the pre-1900 era, modernized, polished, democratized, refined but not out of recognition, reconstructed, but still within the framework and on the same foundations, less comprehensive by all and appreciated by all. The train, the car, the lorry, the aeroplane, the telephone, the dispensary, the school, the college, the fertilizer, the

> hypodermic syringes, have transformed Uthman dan Fodio's world, but the basis still remain. (1962:223) Quoted in Enwerem (2005)

This sentiment may be interpreted as modernity with an indigenous cultural twist but one that rests largely on religious culture. As the culture appeared to move towards a Western model its advance is checked by the values of indigenous tradition. It could also be argued that all festivals are essentially religious in their nature, whether they declare themselves to be so or not, precisely because through their ritualized expressionism they celebrate the preservation of the collective values, ideals and identities that binds. Thus, these festivals become 'eminently social' events and therefore religious at heart. As Ozouf (1991:17-18) again observes,

> The festival was a victory over rationality…over space and over time. It was an effortless victory, to the accompaniment of singing. It was also a victory over solitude. The festival brings about an emotional contagion hitherto unimaginable without it; it restores harmony in the world. "To believe that the world is in harmony" Michelet writes in *No Fils*, to feel oneself in harmony with it, that is peace; that is the inner festival. This is a thoroughly religious definition: there is a festival when what was isolated is reunited with its own kind.

Equally, Laura Mason (1996:2) picks up this sentiment when she notes that 'singing was a fluid and highly improvisational means of expression that moved easily between oral and print culture'. Ozouf also observes that 'This religion' also had its symbols: the crowds, the dance in a ring or farandole, and of course the banquet…(p.18) and finally adding that 'like the Revolution, the festival is an imperious, almost instinctual creation (p.20).

Therefore history is to be looked at from the present and not from the past where the search for historical sources, not source (as a single factor) might explain the present. Deleuze and Guattari (1987) have shown that the rhizome

has no single origin yet a single-source genealogical narrative remains resistant and breeds linear trajectories and also binary dichotomies: superior versus inferior, civilized versus primitive, modernity versus native tradition, the fair versus the exotic, and so on. As Featherstone (2002) argues, it is a discourse that reflects upon its own 'rhetorical devices' and invents history through figurative or poetical imagination and indeed imagery under which the indigenous culture and traditions are subsumed, (Said, 1978; Bann, 1984; Hayden White, 1973; Clifford and Marcus, 1992). The ensuing sociology of knowledge then has its handle on the levers of cultural power with an elevated perspective on the world that it has created. And this created imaginative world is presented as an objective, linear and singular world and the only world that exists and against which there are no alternatives. Consequently, the discourse shapes our view of history and in doing so imposes our 'fantasies and desires' upon our subject. What is required, argues Featherstone is recognition of competing narratives or 'multiple modernities' instead of singular modernity. But it is not even clear that 'multiple modernities' is what is required but something much subtler, complex and more nuanced and one that engages a mixture of the old and the new, the traditional and modern and so on, which is what the rhizome offers.

Nigerian history cannot exclude the colonial presence since that presence helped to shape part of its history; but what must be acknowledged is a hybridity of the indigenous combined with the colonial in making that history. This turns into the history of inbetweeness that began with the missionary and the colonial incursion within which Africans have been caught. This dilemma is what Eisenstadt, describes as being caught in modernization's 'web' where, 'Most nations are nowadays caught in its web – becoming modernized or continuing their own tradition of modernity.' Or as Homi Bhabha (1994:56) asserts '…we should remember that it is the 'inter' … the in-between space that carries the burden of the meaning of culture. It makes it possible to begin envisaging national and anti-nationalist histories of the 'people'. And by exploring this Third Space, we may elude the politics of polarity and emerge as the others of ourselves.' This point is crucial and worth making because colonialism did not completely dominate the Nigerian landscape. A great deal of indigenous cultures survived and their emergence and current flourish must be

explained in part by their very resistant and reaction to Western attempts to strip them of their essences and to be replaced by Western culture as that which alone is historically and contemporarily viable.

In his new book, *Returns* (2013) James Clifford looks at how indigenous people in certain societies, particularly Western societies are now returning to their tradition. The idea of the indigenous or *indigeneity* that once connoted primitiveness and backwardness is now turning into the 'home' that pulls the people back to it, or as Clifford puts the point, in returning, people '… reach back selectively to deeply rooted, adaptive traditions: creating new pathways in a complex postmodernity. Cultural endurance is a new way of becoming.' And this is because '…decolonization' is an unfinished historical process. More than the national liberation movements of the 1950s and 1960s that were initially successful and then co-opted, decolonization names a recurring agency, a blocked, diverted, continually reinvented historical force' (p.6). Clifford goes on to say that:

> Indigenous people have emerged from history's blind spot. No longer pathetic victims or noble messenger of the lost worlds. They are visible actors in the local, national and global arena. On every continent, survivors of colonial invasions and forced assimilation renew their cultural heritage and reconnect with lost lands. They struggle with dominant regime that continues to belittle them and misunderstand them, their very survival a form of resistance. (p.13)

Nigerian Pentecostalism is therefore the story of that 'survival and resistance' and indeed recrudescence that forms part of the process of 'reconnecting' with a lost world; but in so many ways it is a world that was never entirely lost, only dislocated or displaced yet remained active and dynamic like the Deleuze and Guattari's rhizome that grows even when broken, mutating in a series of connections, emerging finally in a hybridity that is now evident in a new style of religious worship. It is also, as mentioned earlier, a story that rejects a uni-linear writing of history or what Clifford describes as the '…rejection of the monological authority' of narrative (2013:5). As Mike Featherstone (2001:490)

also writes, 'Hence modern social and cultural forms become extended across the globe to create common institutional forms, modes of experience and identity problems'. Featherstone further claims in the same work that global 'Marketization is associated with the general goal of 'emptying out of culture.' It is this marketization process that Lash (2010:3) refers to as extensive culture, which he contrasts with intensive culture, making the distinction in this way: 'Extensive culture is the culture of the same: a culture of *equivalence,* while intensive culture is a culture of *difference*, of *inequivalence.* The intensive, in contrast, consists of units of difference, of the one off, of the singular.' The new religious phenomenon must therefore be seen as participating in Lash's idea of 'intensive culture'. The extensive culture privileges the modern over what Featherstone (2002:485) describes as 'the lesser tradition of history, the suppressed histories of outsider groups … that is being 'contested'. I shall now proceed to examine how this dominant narrative is being contested.

The struggle for independence in Nigeria, as in other African nations, was hard fought and hard won; but the euphoria that greeted its triumph was short-lived. Many in Africa had dreamed of a post-colonial African utopia that they believed lay beyond political emancipation. Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana, famously said to his people to 'seek ye first political kingdom and all else would be added onto you' – quoted in Guy Martin (2012). He was rephrasing the passage in Matthew 6:33; but it soon became clear that political independence alone was never going to deliver the utopian world that he and many had imagined. Much of Franz Fanon's (2005) criticism of the Post Colonial approach by Western educated Africanists revolves around this point. As Mudimbe (1988:93) also observes:

> Negritude becomes the intellectual and emotional sign of opposition to the ideology of white superiority. At the same time it asserts an authenticity that which eventually expresses itself as a radical negation: rejection of racial humiliation, rebellion against the rationality and revolt against the whole colonial system.

The leaders of the Negritude movement had paradoxically ignored the very bases upon which their societies were founded and upon which their sense of identity and thought-world was derived by moving away from native traditions in their march towards modernity. Indeed, the word *tradition* became a dirty word with its connotation of backwardness, primitivism and a past that many wished to forget, as they sought to embrace the new. But as Featherstone (1991:484) observes with regards to this idea of newness, 'When a society calls itself modern, it marks its newness through a time line in which the old is relegated into the past.' Dipesh Chakrabarty, (2002:14) echoes similar sentiments when he writes that:

> Subaltern Studies …was in principle opposed to histories that portrayed nationalist leaders as ushering India and its people into some kind of precapitalist stage and into a world-historical phase of 'bourgeois modernity' modernity properly fitted with the artifacts of democracy: the rights of citizenship, a market economy, freedom of the press, and the rule of law. There is no doubt that the India political elite internalized and used this language of political modernity but this democratic tendency existed alongside and interlarded by undemocratic relationships of domination and subordination.

However, it was not merely the 'relationships of domination and subordination' that was problematic it was also the wholesale attempt to clear out indigenous culture and tradition that was highly problematic, much like Schopenhauer's analogy of a man cutting off his legs so he could walk on crutches - he was referring to the stress on logical rule-following (overly-cognitive approach) rather than relying on one's own internal intuitive or instinctive feeling. So the African cuts off his own legs (tradition) in order to walk on the (Western) crutches. As Wole Soyinka (1976:126-127) notes:

> In attempting to refute the evaluation to which black reality had been subjected, Negritude adopted the Manichean tradition of European thought and inflicted it

> on a culture which is most radically un-Manichean. It not only accepted the dialectical structure of European ideological confrontation but borrowed from the very components of its racist syllogism.

Each attempt to advance the cause of modernity in Nigeria was stymied by the pull of indigenous culture, which then created a tension between the old and the new. Therefore not long after independence, six years after to be precise, the first crisis hit the new Nigerian republic when a group of young military officers (mainly Igbo) staged a military *coup de'tat* that toppled the elected government. The January 1966 coup eliminated important members of the Hausa military and political hierarchy and although its masterminds claimed ideological motives for their action, stating that they wished to rid Nigerian politics of its inherent tribalism, patrimonialism, factionalism, favouritism, mismanagement and corruption, which they believed had created the inequitable distribution of national resources among the regions and which had impeded Nigerian progress. They believed they were progressive idealists, like Ataturk of Turkey, with a view to turning Nigeria into a modern secular nation. But the Hausa population was unconvinced of this explanation since many believed that the coup was ethnically motivated, (Luckmann, 1971). Therefore, six months later, on 29 July 1966, a group of Hausa officers retaliated with a coup of their own that targeted Igbo army officers. Thus the civil war begun, and the ensuing campaign became the Biafran War.

But the post-colonial debacle was not confined to Nigeria. Similar crises were unfolding in other post-independent African nations. In Uganda, Ghana, Benin, Sierra Leone, Kenya, Zaire, latterly the Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda, Upper Volta (now Mali) Sudan, Libya and many others all of which had either experienced *coup de'tats* followed by military dictatorship or civil wars. But why were these crises a common feature of post independence African nations? The answer is to be found in the preceding analysis, namely: all were artificial constructs of the colonial powers, held together by force and control that lasted as long as the colonial power were still in place. Upon the departure of the colonial powers, the fetters were removed and a process of adjustment ensued; and the pressures of readjusting to new realities merely revealed themselves in

the ensuing crises. This same argument is to be found in Chatterjee (1986; 1994) in reference to the concept of nationalism, which he argues is a Western concept but that was thought to be universally applicable. Indian as well as African leaders adopted the concept and applied it to their different nations with severe consequences. This was because *nationalism* was a borrowed concept that was ill suited to these different 'nations', argues Chatterjee, and the idea quickly began to unravel. Paradoxically, the very idea of Western-style nationalism was one from which they had sought to escape.

In the case of Nigeria, the civil war dealt a blow to the idea of Nigerian nationalism and identity. It brought home to many Nigerians the distinct possibility of a disintegration of the Nigerian state. Yet the characterization of the war as an ethnic or tribal conflict (Luckmann, 1971; Crowther, 1980) can now be seen as mistaken. This mistake is due in part to the fact that the trope of *tribe* framed the political discourse of 1960s Nigeria. Indeed, *tribalism* was one of the charges levelled at the politicians by the January 1966 military coup plotters, but as Luckmann (1971) has noted they too now stood accused of the same charge by northern Nigerians who feared the establishment of Igbo hegemony. According to Luckmann, behind the façade of military discipline and de-ethnicized coherent force lay primordial ties that bound the military more strongly than the collegiate brotherhood of the infantry. Clifford Geertz (1963[1973]) explored this idea in his ethnographic study of the newly independent nations in some parts of the world in the 1960s. Geertz argues that the strength of primordial ties such as blood relation, kinship, tribe, language and religion overrode secularist sentiments. Incidentally, Nigeria was one of the countries in Geertz's ethnographic study where he writes that: 'One is bound to one's kinsman, one's neighbor, [sic] one's fellow believer, ipso facto; as the result not merely of personal affection, practical necessity, common interest, or incurred obligation, but at least in great part by virtue of some unaccountable absolute import attributed to the very tie itself' (1973:269-260). Geertz further notes that:

> It is a search for an identity, and a demand that the identity be publicly acknowledged as having import, a social assertion of the self as "being somebody in the

> world. This tension takes a peculiarly severe and chronic form in the new states, both because of the great extent to which their peoples' sense of self remains bound up in the gross actualities of blood, race, language, locality, religion, or tradition, and because of the steadily accelerating importance in this century of the sovereign state as a positive instrument for the realization of collective aims. (p.258)

Therefore, scratch the surface of the ethnic strife that characterized 1960s Nigerian politics, the military coups and the civil war that followed, and religion will be revealed as lying at its core. The religious underbelly of these tensions was hidden because religion was symbolically the mask that ethnicity wore and through which divisions in Nigerian society were played out.[7] The political culture of the time was set up to reflect ethnicity as the most visible form of cultural identity and political representation. Politics was tribal and the regions were ethnically constituted and tribal groupings mapped almost neatly upon the geography. But this neat categorization that reflect tribal groups was an invention. Just as with nationalism, *tribe or tribalism* in Nigeria was born of Western classificatory system, (Durkhheim & Mauss, 1963). In short, Europe tribalized Africa, and as Richard Reed (2012:219) explains, 'the "tribe", …was to a large part a European invention the idea behind the concept being that Africans did not live in anything near sophisticated as the nation state. …The colonial state required fixed delineated identities for administrative purposes.' These administrative purposes included indirect-rule through the chiefs or Emirs within an organized group, such as practiced by Frederick Luggard (Nigeria's first Governor General) in Northern Nigeria in the early part of the twentieth century, (Larkin, 2008). John Reader (1998:616) also observes that '… because Europeans believed Africans belonged to tribes; Africans built tribes to belong to.' For Donald Wright, (2015:53) '…Europeans assumed that Africans

[7] In a youtube comment, Jacob Olupona (professor of divinity at Harvard University), also makes this point when he states that '… it was assumed that ethnicity was the main critical issue in nation building, we now know fully well that religion is the most important in nation building in contemporary Nigeria.' *Religion at Crossroads In Nigeria.*
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=04bfTcgm6J0

had the same identity with a 'tribe' as Europeans had with Ethnic grouping - English, Irish, French, Italian and German.' Terrence Ranger (1983:250) echoes this sentiment when he writes that 'Tribes were seen as cultural units, possessing a common language, a single social system and an established common law.' But Africans never thought of themselves as Africans, as Ali Mazrui (1986:99) points out,

> One of the great ironies of modern African history is that it took European colonialism to inform Africans that they were Africans. Europe's greatest service to the people of Africa was not Western civilization, which is under siege, or even Christianity, which is on the defensive. Europe's supreme gift was the gift of African identity, bequeathed without grace or design—but a reality all the same. Islam and the Arabs awakened Africa's Black consciousness, but a continental identity was still dormant.

The Europeans invented an Africa that did not exist prior to their arrival, (Mudimbe, 1988; Mbembe, 2002), and so the idea of a distinct African cultural identity never arose before colonialism but only after it. This is what Kwame Anthony Appiah (1992[2008:90) describes as the 'idealising fiction' of African identities. It is an 'ideal fiction' because it was constructed in the imagination of the West, as 'responses to social, economic and cultural forces, almost always in opposition to other identities …' Mahmood Mandani (2002) writes similarly about how Western classificatory system in Rwanda was partly responsible for the inter-ethnic strife and the genocides that have arisen in that country since the Belgians departed.

With regards to religion, the Arabs had brought Islam into Nigeria through the northern parts as early as the seventeenth century while the Europeans introduced Christianity through the south of the country, but much later. By the time Christianity arrived Islam had already taken roots among the peoples of the north, an area that Christianity or the missionaries found difficult to penetrate, stopping around the middle belt areas up to the Benue and Plateau and the Niger towards Ilorin and surrounding areas. Pockets of Islamic faith can

be found in parts of the south, particularly among the Yoruba, but the southern population remained largely Christian. Just as pockets of Christianity could be found in some parts of the north, but the distribution of religious faith, either Islam or Christianity was spread across the country mainly through geography that also appeared to be tribal. But what both religions have done is to embed themselves within the culture of the different ethnic groups so tightly, as to become seemingly indigenous. Islam was particularly strong in weaving its tenets within the Hausa group in terms of its strict, and some might say rigid adherence to law, instructions (the Islamic strictures) and the customs and the traditional ways of living. Or as Weber (1978:625) puts it '…Islam imposed such requirements for ordinary day to day living as the wearing of distinctive clothing …the avoidance of certain unclean foods, of wine and of gambling…' Equally, much of the Hausa language derives from Arabic and the customs and traditions and the way of life of the Hausa became largely Islamic. But Christianity was more porous, more flexible, more schizophrenic and less law-like, even in its fundamentalist manifestation, yet it still managed to weave itself into the cultural fabric of the Southwestern parts of Nigeria.

In any case since identity is a temporal and evolving concept, once the Nigerian identity had shown itself to be fragile, ethnicity became the next means of identification that offered a semblance of security and protection. But ethnicity and the culture upon which it was built were strongly influenced by religion. Therefore ethnicity merely reflected religion as perhaps the most significant and most secure means of identification of all. But it took these crises to reveal this fact, as Mbiti (1969:2) writes with regards to how people revert to tradition in times of crises, noting that:

> In times of crises they often come to the surface, or people revert to them in secret... It is not enough to learn and embrace a faith, which is active once a week, either on Sunday or Friday while the rest of the week is virtually empty. Unless Christianity and Islam fully occupy the whole person, as much as, if not more than traditional religions do, most converts to these faiths will continue to revert to their old beliefs and practices

> perhaps six days a week, and certainly in times of emergency and crises.

The crises of the early 1960s Nigeria bred fear, uncertainty and insecurity into the collective Nigerian psychology. The retreat into the security of culture had begun and as I have argued, the bedrock of this culture was religion. This then is the history behind the religious revival that is now engulfing the Nigerian society.

1.10 The beginnings of the religious revival in Nigeria.

Looking back at the history that I have sketched above it is now clear that the Nigerian Civil War was essentially a religious war and ethnicity was a cover for the religious underpinnings. Just as the military coup that precipitated it and the ethnic politics that inspired it, they all had their origins in religious cultures. But at least one question, remains pressing, which is: in exactly what ways did this religious dimension finally reveal itself? The answer is again to be found in the recrudescence of culture.

For example, at the end of the civil war Nigeria staged the 2nd World Black & African Festival of Arts and Culture, known as FESTAC in 1977. Just like the World Trade Fair in the United States in 1904 that followed Reconstruction, FESTAC was the grandest cultural event ever staged on the African continent, which brought together Africans from within the continent and the diaspora to celebrate African history, culture and civilizations. Denis Ekpo (2012:150-151) describes FESTAC as 'a Black riposte to assaults of a Euro-centric modernity…FESTAC had ignited in most black Africa an intense cultural revivalist fire…So important was this self renewal spirit that culture (that is, essentially, traditional dance, music, and popular theatre) had almost replaced the flag as the symbol of our sovereignty and newfound international pride'. FESTAC was the Olympics of African culture with processions led by flag bearers, wearing traditional costumes, playing drums dancing and singing. For many black Africans in the diaspora FESTAC was a kind of homecoming. FESTAC was also a way of circumventing the ethnic or national identity in a supra-

national African community in the diaspora as a way of reconnecting with the indigenous African cultures and traditions that had been broken up by the artificial constructions of state. Against the rational construction of statehood and national identity, the religious traditions and their manifestations are, as Durkheim (1963) puts them more 'affective than intellectual'. The beginning of the abandonment of the idea of modernity had begun.

Therefore the various post-independent crises that befell Nigeria merely rejuvenated latent religious traditions, as Clifford (2013) maintains. It was during the Nigerian Civil War, in the mid 1960s that one Benson Andrew Idahosa, who many believe is the father of Nigerian Pentecostalism began to actively engage in a new form of religious revivalism. As, Olofinjana (2012:NP) writes:

> In June 1967 Idahosa lost his father during the Civil War riots. A year later, during one night, his room was filled with God's presence and he was awoken from sleep by a voice. It was the Lord speaking to him about his future mission; "I have called you that you might take the gospel around the world in my name, preach the gospel, and I will confirm my word with signs following. After this experience he began to do more evangelistic meetings and outreaches.

Idahosa had began to inspire groups of university students who organized themselves in groups that were then known as Scripture Union groups, and these Christian neo-fundamentalist community would meet to discuss the bible and evangelize the *New Testament* message of salvation and redemption. According to Ojo (2006:165) 'Nigerian Pentecostalism has its roots in the marginalized community of Christian revivalist in the second decade of the twentieth century. It expanded in the 1970s among the mobile, young educated elite, who though small in number, had immeasurable influence in the Nigerian society.' What is clear is that the war had been a major catalyst in bringing about the religious revival. Some like Osborne (2000:35) have argued that the fact that Idahosa studied under Gordon Lindsay at the Church for Nations institute in

Texas is evidence of American influence on the founding of Nigerian Pentecostalism. But this is misconceived. Idahosa's studies did not take place until 1971 by which time he had already began his evangelical ministry. Also, others like Ojo (2006) have argued that the rise of Islamic fundamentalism in Nigeria contributed to the rise of Christian fundamentalism but this is debatable. But which ever came first, Christian or Islamic fundamentalism no doubt created a tension that echoes Simmel's (1904, [1955]) ingroup/outgroup conflict, which has established clear 'boundaries and identity' between the groups and engendered intra-group solidarity as well as helped to foster greater dynamic activity between the ingroup. This is the sense in which the growth of Islamic fundamentalism in Nigeria could be said to have helped to create the growth of Christian fundamentalism. For example, Freston (2001) believes that the rise of Pentecostalism in Nigeria was partly a reaction by Christian associations to the encroaching Islamic agenda that was pursued by some of the military regime. Accordingly he writes:

> Under a succession of Muslim military dictators, the Association becomes increasingly political and functions almost as "an unofficial opposition to the regime". In 1979, the government proposes the creation of a Federal Sharia Court of Appeal, and in the 1988-89 Constituent Assembly, efforts are made to extend the jurisdiction of Sharia courts. Evangelicals and pentecostals in the Youth Wing of the Christian Association of Nigeria organize prayer sessions and pamphleteering campaigns against the Sharia proposal. By 1988, most Association publications challenging the policies of General Ibrahim Babangida's pro-Islamic administration are produced partly by its Youth Wing. (Freston, 2001:182-183).

There may be some truth to this assessment but this cannot be the entire picture. The current wave of Pentecostalism in Nigeria can also be traced to many of the Nigerian traditional cultures and the African Independent Churches such as the *Aladura* churches, which some like Ojo (2008) and Ekpong (2006), contend that had nothing to do with Islamic fundamentalism. There is therefore

an argument to be made for the separateness of the rise of both religions in Nigeria. For example, the evidence is clear that most Pentecostal churches have retained the styles of worship found the *Aladura* churches such as: prayer, thanks-giving, visions, the belief in the power of the Holy Spirit and healing. Islam in Nigeria has also returned to its roots. In both cases a rejection of secularism might be closer to explaining the rise of both religions. This is the idea of reterritorialization that Deleuze and Guattari (1980) speak about, which is the reoccupation of space once claimed by the West. The rise of Pentecostalism also fits Anthony Wallace's (1956) cultural Revitalisation process where a culture in a state of steady progress might encounter 'stress' of various kinds that causes it to revitalize its culture. Wallace's idea of stress is similar to Mbiti's 'crises', which motivates both Christians and Muslims to revert to traditional religious beliefs.

A useful paper on this subject is Birgit Meyer's *Make a Complete Break with the Past: Memory and Post-Colonial Modernity In Ghanaian Pentecostalist Discourse* (1998) in which Meyer sees Ghanaian Pentecostalism as claiming to break with the past by which they mean pagan past. But the idea of a break from the past may appear to contradict the idea of recrudescence of African culture. What has not changed is obviously what is being revived. According to James W. Fernandez (1964:105) 'Antecedent to the rise of nationalism and concurrent with it today has been another kind of search – this time in the religious realm – the so-called rise in protests movements. These movements have long been acting to restore to their participants autonomy and integrity in their social and cultural life.' For Gerlach (1974:674) 'Pentecostalism is not merely a sect activity or opiate for the deprived but a far-flung movement for change.' For Edith Blumhofer (1993:3) Pentecostalists wish to 'recapture in the last moments of time, the pristine purity of a long-gone era. …The end-time restoration of the apostolic faith.' And according to Allan Anderson (2014:166) 'African Pentecostals have found in their own context, both culturally and Biblically acceptable alternatives to and adaptations from the practices of their old religions and are seeking to provide answers to the needs inherent there. Any religion that does not offer at least the same benefits as the old religion does will probably be unattractive.'

Therefore the new African religious revival can be read as the revival of African culture, which first begun as a political reaction to Western colonialism and the struggle for freedom. In this sense Harvey Cox (1995:XXVI) has also noted the largely unconscious interaction of Pentecostalism with so-called 'primal' religions as helping people recover vital elements in their culture that are threatened by modernization.' It can be argued that Pentecostalism is the preeminent post-colonial cultural phenomenon of the last half of the twentieth century that has continued into the twenty-first century.

In conclusion, I have attempted in this chapter to trace the histories of the Nigerian and American Pentecostalism and to set the context in which the movement has emerged in both nations. In doing so I have tried to show that the emergence of the movement in both countries is independent of each other but also that the factors responsible for their development have roots in African culture. However, I do not claim that world wide Pentecostalism has its origins in Africa nor have I tried to explain worldwide Pentecostalism. That discussion is for another place and another time. But as Allan Anderson (2014:172) explains, 'The phenomenon of African Pentecostalism is largely of African origin and it has its roots in a marginalized and underprivileged society struggling to find dignity and identity in the face of brutal colonialism and oppression…' Quoting the Chilean Pentecostal scholar and pastor Juan Sepúlveda, Anderson claims that the reason why Pentecostalism has flourished in Chile is because of the movement's power '…to translate the Protestant message into the forms of expression of the local popular culture.' Therefore in setting the rise of Nigerian Pentecostalism in historical context, I hope to have shown how some of the factors responsible for its current revival in Nigeria go back to indigenous cultural practices and also to show the space that allowed for its proliferation. I shall address in detail some of these factors and their centrality to Nigerian Pentecostalism; but before I do so, I will, in the next chapter, examine perhaps the dominant explanation advanced for the rise of Pentecostalism in Africa, the socio-economic or deprivation argument.

CHAPTER 2

POVERTY, PROSPERITY AND AFRICAN PENTECOSTALISM

> To the deprived, those who feel they are not getting their lot in life, P/C' {Pentecostal/ Charismatic} 'offers ecstatic escape, hope for millennial redress, and an egalitarian environment in which everyone is eligible for the highest religious rewards (i.e. salvation and the gifts of the spirit). Many of the early classics in P/C history and ethnography convincingly deployed these kinds of disorganization and deprivation argument… and these arguments have become so much the common sense of the P/C literature that most works draw on them at least implicitly. Joel Robbins (2004:117)

2.1 Introduction

The Pentecostal discourse on Africa appears largely to be a conversation in the West about the West's own influence on African cultures and the manner in which those cultures have responded to Western influences. The idea of Africa as viewed through Western eyes has been largely a creation of the West's imagination (Said, 1978; Mudimbe, 1988; Spivak, 1988) one that has spun a great many misconceptions about African realities. Hugh Trevor Roper (1963) once remarked about African history that '…there is none, or very little: there is only the history of the Europeans in Africa.' In the same vein, the study of Nigerian Pentecostalism turns into the study of Western conception about

African Pentecostalism that takes its starting point from the African predicament, of poverty and social deprivation and ends with Western capitalism and modernity as the much-vaunted solution to the African plight. As Mbembe (2001:8) has observed, 'African politics and economics have been condemned to appear in social theory only as the sign of a lack, while the discourse of political science and development economics has become that of a quest for the causes of that lack.' But the West often exaggerates its cultural influence on other cultures, seeing its own civilization, (Elias, 2000) and systems of thought as the solutions to the problems of the other, the essential prescription or rescue package without which those cultures are fated to subsist in perpetual chaos, when in fact those very systems lie at the heart of those problems.

Notwithstanding these assertions, Africa's problems are many and well rehearsed, *ad nauseam*. It is a grim picture of endless poverty, political instability, wars, disease, civil strife, infrastructural decline, ethnic and religious conflict and the like. 'Poverty is at the heart of Africa's problems', reports the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) in its analysis of Africa's economy',[8] and for James Ferguson (2006:13), 'Africa has in recent years seen a proliferation of collapsed states or states whose presence barely extend beyond the boundaries of their capital cities.' George Caffentis in an aptly titled work, *Neolibralism in Africa: Apocalyptic Failure and Business as Usual and Practices: Alternatives* (2002) makes similar points. As such the narrative of deprivation has become the obligatory source from which most authors draw to explain the rise of Pentecostalism in Africa. Or, to put it another way, it is within the two stools of poverty and prosperity that many authors (Gifford, 2004; Maxwell, 2006; Jenkins, 2004, 2006, 2011; Ellis/Ter Haar, 2004) and others have located the rise of African Pentecostalism.

For Harvey Cox (1995:15) 'Sometimes the only thriving human communities in the vast seas of tar-paper shanties and cardboard huts that surround many of these cities are the Pentecostal congregations. In effect, Pentecostalism is a kind of communitarian counterforce within these bloated conurbations as they continue to swell and become less livable.' But Cox does not quite draw a

[8] *news.bbc.co.uk/2/shared/spl/hi/**africa**/05/**africa**.../html/poverty.stm.* Accessed 5 March 2004

poverty/prosperity correlation, since he also thinks that the phenomenon is an urban one.

But since the prosperity argument of Nigerian or African Pentecostalism is predicated on existential needs or material desires, it is an argument that essentially sees African Pentecostalism as fundamentally inspired by global capitalism and its cognate of Western consumerist culture and religion just happens to be a means to that end. This chapter challenges this claim on the basis that at best it is incoherent and at worst it fails see some of the important indigenous cultural factors (some of which are mentioned in the preceding chapter) that are responsible for its proliferation. I therefore aim to argue that:

1. The concepts of deprivation or poverty and prosperity are insufficiently clarified and so ambiguous and even when clarity has been achieved its analysis of deprivation remains too broad as to embrace almost every conceivable existential problem known to man: a catchall diagnosis for a particular religious response.

2. The prosperity argument conflates ideology (Western capitalist and consumerist culture) with theology (the prosperity of the scriptures that is not necessarily materialist) and marries both in one single explanatory exercise.

3. It assumes that poverty is a universal concept that means the same thing in the West as it does in Africa and as such it ties poverty too strongly and too narrowly to the lack of material goods and ignores other kinds of non-material desires such as spirituality. In this sense it assumes that African Pentecostalism is preoccupied solely with concern for the lack of material goods; and also the image of grinding poverty that is conjured by the deprivation thesis does not see the provision of mere necessaries as what is desired but a much more aspirational desire for consumer brands.

If the Durkheimian project in the *Elementary Forms of Religious Life* (1962:20), is to discover 'the ever-present causes upon which the most essential forms of religious thought and practice depend' mine is to discover the essential elements upon which Pentecostalism continues to proliferate in a place like Nigeria. So the question is, what exactly does deprivation mean in the context of religion in general and Pentecostalism in particular and how does poverty help to generate the Pentecostal impulse?

2.2 Religion and deprivation

The connection between deprivation and religious belief is as old as Christianity itself. Frederick Engels (1894) once wrote that 'Christianity was originally a movement of oppressed people: it first appeared as the religion of slaves and emancipated slaves, of poor people deprived of all rights, of peoples subjugated or dispersed by Rome' quoted in B. Morris (1987[2003]). However, eminent historian of antiquity, Peter Brown (2012) has shown how far from a poor man's religion Christianity was and how most of its patrons were among the wealthiest in ancient Roman society. Rodney Stark (1997) makes the same argument and even questions the fringe sect label of early Christianity. Yet great sociological store has been set by the notion of deprivation as the wellspring of the Pentecostal impulse.

But deprivation is a loaded term, a nebulous concept that needs unpacking. The *Encyclopaedia of Religion* (1998:136) sees deprivation as 'the discrepancy between what one expects in life and what one gets'. But this view is problematic since what one 'expects' is always contingent and the state of expectation is always going to be a state of unfufilment since expectation as a state of being may include unrealistic goals, wishes or dreams. But could the mere state of expectation really constitute deprivation?[9] For Glock and Stark (1965:246), deprivation is '…any of all of the ways that an individual or group may, or feel, disadvantaged in comparison to other individuals or to an internalized individual standards.' Ordinarily, deprivation means the lack of something that is considered necessary or essential for the sustenance of life.

A distinction is often made between relative and absolute deprivation; but this will not concern us here or now. In the preceding chapter I touched on Reinhold Niebuhr's (1929) social deprivation theory through his Sect-Church typology that he derived from Weber and applied it as a way of differentiating between the organized established churches and the new religious sects, and setting the

[9] An anecdote is told about the late JL Austin, Oxford Philosopher of language whose publishers asked when they should expect the manuscript of a book he was writing. Austin was reported to have replied: you can expect it anytime you like.

sects apart as 'the disinherited of the world' whose emergence was the result of social deprivation.

What is perhaps significant about deprivation here is the religious response that it provokes. People turn to religion for comfort in times of need, in which case religion compensates for people's various existential problems. Chris Hedges and Joe Sacco (2012) write about the plight of the poor in modern day America and how religion offers relief for some. But poverty does not always generate a religious impulse, as Steinbeck's similar depiction of poverty in America in *Grapes of Wrath* (1939:4} shows. Indeed there is an anti-religious response in this book where Casy, says: *I ain't preachin' no more much. The sperit ain't in the people much no more; and worse'n that, the sperit ain't in me no more…'* However, in order to gain an analytic grip on the concept of deprivation and its linkage to religion it is helpful to distinguish among three senses in which the concept of deprivation may be applied particularly in religious discourse.

1. Deprivation as a socio-economic phenomenon
2. Deprivation as a personal or individual experience
3. Deprivation as a collective experience
4. Deprivation as metaphysical concept

1. Deprivation as a socio-economic phenomenon

Here, deprivation is the sum of socio-economic disadvantages including financial poverty, social inequality, subjugation, slavery, sexism, racism, oppression or repression, persecution, discrimination, disenfranchisement, denial of human rights and more that leaves people bereft, diminished and deprived of life-enhancing fulfilment.

2. Deprivation as personal experience.

Deprivation here narrows to personal crises, such as bereavement, debt, anguish, penury, danger, loss of a job, lack of self-esteem, divorce, fear, anxiety and even imprisonment and how these experiences might induce a religious response. In such cases even non-religious people might turn to religion in

times of personal crises.[10] Fear, guilt and the need for security, drives the religious impulse says Freud, (1930, [2009]) since religious belief sees God as an exalted father figure' to whom some may turn in times of need to make us feel safe. Thus he writes that 'For once before one has found oneself in a … state of helplessness: as a small child, in relation to one's parents. One had reason to fear them, and especially one's father; and yet one was sure of his protection against the dangers one knew' (p.23).

3. Deprivation as collective experience

Bryan Wilson (1973) believes that two factors motivate people towards new religious movements particularly in the Third World: thaumaturgy- a kind of deprivation - and revolution - fear of the imagined or impending destruction of the world. But what exactly do these motivations entail is often not clear. What is perhaps clear is that thaumaturgy and revolution are collective group experience where people turn to a particular religious movement in numbers. Neil Smelter (1972) thinks that there is a collective religious reaction to crises that would explain the growth of certain religious movements occurring at certain times. Let us call this the Lemmings effect for want of a better word that is triggered by crises, occasioning a collective rush to religious conversion.

4. Idea of Metaphysical Deprivation

Metaphysical Deprivation does not strictly fall within the category of deprivation but is used here to describe human suffering or theodicy and the search for meaning. One does not have to be a pessimist like Arthur Schopenhauer to see so much suffering in the world, or Buddhists who also believe that the world is a place of suffering.[11] Many thinkers have long held the belief that religion provides meaning to people's lives and gives it a sense of

[10] During this researcher's undergraduate final exams, as we the students were about to file into the exam hall, the chattering subsided and a hush fell over the assembly; a fellow student, a noted atheist turned to me and whispered: 'it is now that you believe in God.'

[11] Buddhism rests on the belief in the four noble truths, which are: suffering, causes of suffering, cessation of suffering and the way to the cessation of suffering

purpose at the same time as it answers the great metaphysical questions about human existence. For Clifford Geertz (1973:70):

> As a religious problem, the problem of suffering is, paradoxically, not how to avoid suffering but how to suffer, how to make of physical pain, personal loss, worldly defeat, or the helpless contemplation of others' agony something bearable, supportable- something as we say, sufferable.

Christianity provides one kind of explanation for human suffering and theodicy, which it sees as punishment for original sin and for which Christ came to earth to die on the cross. Christians often quote Isaiah 53: 3-4 in this respect and on such reading the soteriological experience cannot take place without privation, voluntary self-denial or sacrifice, since human suffering is itself the result of sin, but redemption is the forgiveness of sin and salvation the gift, by grace, of eternal life. The Christian ideal is therefore not necessarily geared towards the reduction of pain or the alleviation of suffering, as we find in Peter Berger (1967) and Weber's idea of the problem of theodicy, (this is further discussed in Chapter 3), rather the Christian ideal embraces suffering and deprivation as atonement for sin: fasting or Weber's asceticism, abstinence and denial of the sexual impulse and renunciation of worldly possession as we find in St Francis of Asisi. Yet, the idea of metaphysical deprivation remains the most discussed within the context of African Pentecostalism, which relates to African belief in supernatural forces: evil spirits, demons, witchcraft and the rest, all of which are thought to be responsible for human suffering, (Gifford, 2004; Maxwell, 2006; Meyer, 1992; Geshiere, 1997). Here spiritual forces are thought to be responsible for most kinds of deprivation for which Pentecostalism offers deliverance.

The sociologist Charles Glock (1965) distinguishes among five kinds of deprivation that are worth mentioning here: economic (lack of financial means); social (lack of access to esteemed cultural activities of living within society); orgasmic (lack of health as in physical disabilities and illness); ethical (the discrepancy between individual morality and societal moral values and the tension arising from that which leaves the individual feeling less a part of the

moral community) and psychic (lack of intellectual or mental capacity to deal with or to understand the world). I shall not elaborate on these but mention them here merely to point out the need to distinguish among the different kinds of deprivation and the different kinds of religious responses to them. But as one commentator John Campbell in his blog usefully asks:

> How might Pentecostalism impact Africa? The most obvious answer to these questions – having critical intellectual roots in Marx, Nietzsche and Freud – is that religion, above all cultural forces, is uniquely able to mollify suffering, explain misfortune, justify misery, and provide hope. It can serve, in other words, as a panacea for all that ails.[12]

But this 'mollification' or compensation theory of religious response remains generalized and as a result hides certain saliences that need to be opened up. What exactly does the mollification or compensation idea of religious response mean and in what way or ways do these happen?

Broadly speaking there are three kinds of religious responses to deprivation in the various forms described above. The first sees religion as a means of coping with life's difficulties such as they are and offers explanation for misfortune and misery. The second sees religion not merely as a means of coping with difficulties but as offering a way of transforming those experiences, (Gifford, Meyer, Geshiere, Ellis/Te haar) and others. The third response is largely emotional and consists in the religious experience itself, which is a theory espoused by Schleiermacher, James, Otto, Eliade and others, which I shall deal with in the next chapter.

(a) Religion as compensation for existential problems

What does it mean to say that religion offers a coping mechanism for life's existential problems? The verb *to cope* implies the ability to deal with or manage difficult experiences, to draw consolation and make them bearable, to accept

[12] John Campbell African-Pentecostals-Globalization – Genealogy of Religion *genealogy**religion**.net/wp.../04/**African**-**Pentecostals**-Globalization.doc* (ND:2)

and come to terms with pain and suffering. As Kingsley Davis (1948:532) points out, '…the existence of goals beyond this world serves to compensate for frustrations they may inevitably experience in striving to reach socially acquired and socially valuable ends.' Just as Mapes Anderson (1979) sees the comfort of millenarianism as predicated upon the hope that earthly suffering will end upon Christ's return, followed by eternal bliss. For example, the belief that a recently deceased family member is now in heaven might mollify the bereaved or the belief that paradise awaits the faithful might offer hope of an afterlife. Therefore this idea of religious compensation rests on the notion that suffering in this life is not lost and reward in heaven awaits those that believe. This idea of compensation or reward is also found in the work of Stark and Banbridge (1987). However, this mollification/compensation idea does not alter the negative experience in any significant way. It only makes them bearable. The pain is still felt even if borne with fortitude and the scar remains even if the wound has healed. But the mollification idea of religious response is not quite the kind that the deprivation theorists of Pentecostalism have in mind. Rather, their focus is on the way that deprivation motivates more specifically towards prosperity as a kind of transformative exercise. But how does this idea of transformation work?

(b) Religion as a transformative force

The transformative religious response to deprivation consists not merely in coming to terms with pain and suffering but seeks a transformation or complete elimination of the pain. For example, it seeks a transformation from a state of poverty (material) to a state of wealth (material prosperity) but crucially through the belief in miracles and healing as the key, (Gifford, 2004). This kind of religious response is that, which is commonly associated with African Pentecostalism, where the doctrine of prosperity is thought to ride on the transforming power of the Holy Spirit, which constitutes its main appeal. Therefore when scholars like Gifford, Maxwell, Jenkins and others speak of deprivation they mean economic destitution linked to a change in fortunes, that is, prosperity.

There is therefore the need to distinguish among different types of religious responses if only to gain clarity and to avoid the confusion that arises when the term *deprivation* is used as an *omnium gatherum*, particularly in the sociology of religion. This is particularly necessary in the discourse on African Pentecostalism where all kinds of problems and predicament are funnelled through the economic deprivation and prosperity mill from which a particular kind of religious response is thought to be the result. Although both the mollification and transformative religious responses need not be exclusive of each other, but the narrower transformative idea of poverty to prosperity is the main focus of many scholars of African Pentecostalism, some of which I have mentioned. Yet, the human condition does not consist in one endless cycle of pain, suffering and a host of maladies. There are other experiences: joy and laughter, aesthetic beauty, love, friendship and so forth and African Pentecostalism in general celebrates life in all its various forms, but more through ecstatic and exuberant ways with little hint of the pursuit of material advantages. Many of those interviewed for this project speak of the transforming power of the Holy Spirit gained through Pentecostalism. 'Jesus has changed my life'; 'I am a changed person since I gave my life to Jesus' are common strains of sentiments that this researcher found in the Christ Apostolic Church. This transformative response is not one that derives from material prosperity but feeds off emotional religious experience that is often ignored by many scholars. The question therefore is why this disproportionate emphasis on deprivation and poverty? The next section addresses this question.

2.3 Pentecostalism and Prosperity

The term prosperity, like deprivation, is a term of art: complex, nebulous and made even more complicated when twinned with health and wellbeing or health and wealth, as is often the case within Pentecostal discourse. Indeed in a recent anthology edited by Katherine Attanasi and Amos Yong (2012:4) Attanasi writes:

> Health and Wealth teaching define prosperity as more than material well-being; prosperity includes, physical,

> emotional and spiritual health, although the material aspects are often disproportionately emphasized. Such teachings often equate prosperity with God's *Shalom* – a Hebrew word usually rendered 'peace' but entailing justice, equity, responsible governance and righteous acts. Prosperity teachings about *Shalom* also connote psychological, social, spiritual and physical wholeness; peace with the natural world, ancestors, God and fellow human beings and inner satisfaction, contentment and peace.

But who is speaking here and from what perspective? Is this the voice of a PentecostaIist believer or the voice of someone studying them? It is perhaps the case that the 'disproportionate' stress on prosperity reflects the perception of scholars rather than those of the Pentecostalists themselves since Pentecostalists do not self-referentially apply the term *prosperity gospel* or *health and wealth theology,* (Theron, 2011:2). The error here is not just one of labelling but one of extrapolating a doctrine that is associated with one strand of Pentecostalism and the liberal application of that doctrine to the entire movement. I describe this thesis as the iceberg syndrome of African Pentecostalism, which seizes upon a visible feature of Pentecostalism - the prosperity strand –, which it believes represents the baulk of the movement. But as ships hit icebergs because they fail to see the mass of the ice, these commentators miss the real appeal of Pentecostalism perhaps because they fail to see its main appeal, which is not exactly hidden from view.

But the difficulty with Katherine Attanasi's statement (quoted above) is its all-embracing definition of prosperity to which most people including non-religious people would subscribe. This definition is the very idea of the Aristotelian good life, eudemonia or human flourishing, which many would accept. The question is what distinguishes Pentecostalism's prosperity doctrine from any other kind of religious or philosophical idea of prosperity or human flourishing? Or, how does deprivation connect with prosperity in a way that is peculiarly and exclusively Pentecostalist? One possible answer is that which I mentioned earlier, which is that Pentecostalism's prosperity claim rests on the belief in miracles and upon which prosperity is to be delivered, which is uniquely Pentecostalism's best

selling point. But even the belief in miracles is not confined to Pentecostalism. Other neo-religious or spiritual beliefs or even secular beliefs such as capitalism also promise some kind of prosperity or healing and wellbeing. In which case, Pentecostalism is not unique in promising a better life. Therefore something is still missing in the Pentecostalist prosperity doctrine, or as Harvey Cox (1997) has noted that Pentecostalism's appeal must lie elsewhere.

But Amos Yong (2014:18) appears to offer an answer when he writes that 'prosperity thus involves not just wealth; it involves health and physical well-being'. Yong cites John 3: 1-2 as the passage upon which many Pentecostalist draw: *Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth.* The problem is that this passage does not refer to health as prosperity; it only says '...thou mayest prosper…' and does not say in what exactly this prosperity consists but it certainly does not mention wealth. The conjunction of 'thou mayest prosper' with 'and be in health' does not imply (a) wealth, particularly economic wealth and (b) prosperity of health. It only says, 'and in health' and even if these words were interpreted as good health, they still fall short of prosperity in the economic sense, which is the interpretation that many have drawn from it. But more importantly, this verse specifically mentions prosperity of the soul, a form of spiritual growth, (not financial or economic growth), which is a point that is often glossed over, as Yong appears to do here. The only sense in which prosperity of health might be valid (health and wealth) is where wealth affords the financial power to buy health, either to prevent or cure illnesses.

What we are left with from the preceding analysis is a much-reduced and narrower idea of prosperity than that with which we started, namely: basic economic (monetary) concept and health as a by-product. In which case scholars like Gifford (2004) believe that African Pentecostalists see Pentecostalism as a way out of poverty, or as the solution to the conglomeration of Africa's problems, whatever they may be: personal, collective, social, metaphysical, political, moral and spiritual. This is not to deny that some African Pentecostalists speak of prosperity mainly in economic terms, but many speak of prosperity in a context that is wider and beyond economic advantages. For example, according to David Martin (2011:40), '…pentecostalism [sic] finds its characteristic location among the aspiring poor, particularly women, seeking

moral integration, security, modernity, and respect, above all in Latin America and Africa.' But this statement is not strictly accurate since Pentecostalism's practitioners in these regions number the rich among their members, and even if poverty is common among many members, it does not follow that the motivation for joining the movement is causally or correlatively related to poverty. The argument still needs to be made. I have merely clarified the grounds for a proper discussion of the deprivation and prosperity argument, which follows next.

2.4 Poverty, prosperity and Pentecostalism.

Professor Paul Gifford in his influential book *Ghana's New Christianity*: *Pentecostalism in a Globalising African Economy* (2004*),* to which I have been referring, seeks to explain the rise of Pentecostalism in Ghana, an explanation that he believes applies equally to Nigeria and other sub-Saharan countries. He writes, and I quote him fairly extensively:

> I argue that the appeal of these churches is not that they constitute new communities providing support no longer provided by dissolving traditional structures; or that they perform social functions (like arranging marriages) that traditional procedures no longer accomplish; or that they give opportunity to the youth to exercise authority in a gerontocratic society... They do not flourish primarily because they are a place to feel at home, or home for the homeless, or because they meet the quest for belonging. Undoubtedly many do these in various ways and to various degrees, but they flourish mainly because they claim to have answers to Ghanaians' existential problems and especially to their most existential problem, economic survival. (p, Viii)

Phillips Jenkins (2002) raises similar arguments when he claims that '…If we want to visualize a 'typical' contemporary Christian, we should think of a

woman living in a village in Nigeria or in a Brazilian Favela' (p.2). By this assertion Jenkins appears to suggest that poverty is the connecting factor between the two women in these different and distant places. Inglehart and Norris (2004) have reached similar conclusion of a correlation between economic or material deprivation and religious belief, so did Malcolm J.C. Calley's work (1965) on Caribbean Pentecostalism in Britain and equally, Stephen Ellis and Gerrie Ter Haar, (1998:176) assert that: 'In the considerable number of African countries in which political institutions have largely broken down, religious discourse can be seen as an attempted remedy by means of a reordering of power.'

But David Maxwell (1998) takes a slightly different view with regards to the connection between African Pentecostalism and poverty, seeing the African belief in the 'spirit of poverty' as historically linked to demonic spirits and this he thinks Africans associate with a host of maladies and misfortunes. And so poverty being a kind of misfortune is tightly woven within the concept of the supernatural demonic or evil spirituality. Accordingly Maxwell (1998:358) writes that 'Africans stay poor, not because of structural injustice, but because of a Spirit of Poverty. … Ancestral spirits along with their pernicious influence remain in their blood. . . . Misfortune is passed from generation to generation via demonic ancestral spirits.' There is no doubt that an explosion of the movement in the 1970s and 1980s has coincided with the decline in the economic fortunes of most African countries but whether the two developments are causally related or a matter of coincidence remains a problem of explanation. For example, Brouwer et al (1996:3) claim that:

> For Christian fundamentalism, … the universalizing of the faith is intertwined with the homogenizing influences of global consumerism, mass communication, and production in ways that are compatible with creation of international market culture by global capitalist institutions. Christian fundamentalism represent only one part of the widespread of the European and North American cultural framework that has its roots in common Christian heritage, yet…their

> powerful evangelizing machinery has their origins in the United States.

Although Brower *et al* see global 'capitalism and consumerism' as 'intertwined' with religious faith, particularly where they claim that 'Even the poorest of the poor in the poorest of lands see images of consumer goods and want to buy articles with globally recognized names, often American ones' (p.9), both with roots in the US. I argued in the preceding chapter against the notion that worldwide Pentecostalism began in the US and here again I raise similar objection against the view that African Pentecostalism imitates the American version, particularly in its global consumerist manifestation. But here then is a conflation of two different concepts of prosperity, which I will now address.

Two concepts of Prosperity: The Conflation of ideology with theology.

The idea that Nigerian or African Pentecostal prosperity derives from American capitalist system is problematic. To see the prosperity doctrine as an extension of global capitalism merely conflates the ideology (capitalism) with theology. There is therefore the need to distinguish the one from the other since each speaks to a different narrative of prosperity. In doing so, a better handle may be gained on the concept that would provide insight into the concept within the Pentecostal discourse. For example, Roger Finke and Rodney Stark (2005) claim that the Churches in America are now essentially engaged in a market style economic activity in which they compete for business where the most successful churches are those that meet the people's needs. These 'religious economies function like commercial economies in the sense that they engage in a 'market; that is made up of current and potential customers and a set of firms seeking to serve that market' (p.9). But this assertion is merely metaphorical, which is to say that the religious pluralism produces new forms of movements within Christianity, ranging from charismatic, evangelical, Pentecostal and others, which 'function *like*' (my emphasis) 'commercial economies' with competition for worshipers like in a 'market place'. These new movements have broken the monopoly of the traditional churches by removing restrictions and offering choice and competition in the way that a free market or laissez faire economy works. But this idea is not new. Peter Berger (1969) and Thomas Luckmann

(1967) had argued that with the emergence of various religious sects or denominations, this pluralism has turned religious function into something like a marketplace, where supermarkets or different brands compete for customers. Luckmann and Berger also appear to apply the economic language, as an analogy, but because Pentecostalism is seen through the prism of global capitalism, particularly when terms like 'pluralism' are used for the new churches and 'monopoly' for the old established churches and 'customers' instead of membership, the analogy seems to disappear and the new religious movement become essentially a form of economic activity in their own right.

But why does capitalism need to travel down the religious route in the first place? Harvey Cox (1997:89) poses the same question when he says: '… why, one might ask, does a market economy require any kind of religious worldview at all? Why not just count on those sturdy old-fashioned virtues of greed and self-aggrandizement?' Perhaps because there is money to be made in religion just as there is money to be made in sex and charity and sports and any other human activity. But this reductionist idea is problematic because even if a religious activity attracts commerce this does not reduce its essence to mere economic transaction. As Cox (1997:88) also notes, 'If the market revolution is dramatically altering the world's economic landscape, the Pentecostal revolution is altering its spiritual topography just as radically.' This suggests that there is a difference between economic activity (secular and profane in the Durkheimian sense) and the religious or the sacred. But more importantly, with regards to prosperity, the conflation is the secular ideology of capitalism and the theology of prosperity, both of which spins off different models.

If American Pentecostalism has its roots in a secular capitalist ideology, which is thought to influence Nigerian Pentecostalism, then some Weberian protestant attitudes might have played a part in its development. In the *Protestant Ethics* (1958 [2003:64]) Weber says that 'We shall nevertheless provisionally use the expression 'spirit of capitalism' for that attitude which, *in the pursuit of a calling [berufsmäßig]*, strives systematically for profit for its own sake in the manner exemplified by Benjamin Franklin.' This is because 'Honesty is useful because it assures credit; so are punctuality, industry, frugality' (p.52). For Weber the origins of these virtues lie in the ascetic attitudes of self-denial, discipline, abstinence and world rejection but world rejection soon became world

affirming because, 'For when asceticism was carried out of monastic cells into everyday life, and began to dominate worldly morality, it did its part in building the tremendous cosmos of the modern economic order' (p.181). Weber is not making a causal connection between the Protestant Ethic and the spirit of capitalism only that the one is congruent upon the other, or as he famously put it, there is an 'elective affinity' between them, an affinity that acts as impetus for the capitalist spirit.

Note Weber's emphasis on systematicity and 'profit for its own sake', which is guided by rationality, 'calculation', sacrifice and the delay of gratification. Yet the spirit of religious faith is thought to emerge out of a different model, which is the instant gratification of desire through miracles, which many like Gifford see as the Pentecostal ideal. In which case Weber's *Protestant Ethic* might be seen as the very opposite of consumerism, since '… asceticism looked upon the pursuit of wealth as an end in itself as highly reprehensible; but the attainment of it as a fruit of labour was a sign of God's blessing' (p.172). Weber also talks about the 'evil' of 'possession and its temptations' and further writes: '…worldly Protestant asceticism …acted powerfully against the spontaneous enjoyment of possessions; it restricted consumption, especially luxuries' (p.170-171). The capitalist spirit is in many ways different from the belief in miracles. As Johan Norberg (2003:71) notes:

> The growth of world prosperity is not a "miracle" or any of the other mystifying terms we customarily apply to countries that have succeeded economically and socially. Schools are not built, nor are incomes generated, by sheer luck, like a bolt from the blue. These things happen when people begin to think along new lines and work hard to bring their ideas to fruition.

The point here is that the prosperity gospel is essentially theological and based on doctrinal beliefs that derive from the scriptures. This might include miracles or faith in Holy Spirit and providence, but capitalism is driven by a different set of belief system, (enterprise, the market, greed even) even if motivated by the protestant ethics, as we find in Weber. Both may be present in American Pentecostalism but they do not necessarily equate to the same thing,

particularly in African Pentecostalism. For example, scientists tell us that the tears that are induced by slicing onions are not the same as tears induced by emotional distress: the chemical constitution of the one is different from the other. Therefore just because some Pentecostalists speak of prosperity should not imply that they all mean the same thing by the use of the term. Some see prosperity in spiritual and not material terms. Equally, many Christians believe that religion or the sacred is separate from economic activity and are fond of quoting Matthew 21:12-13 where the moneychangers turned the temple into a market. Also, Christ is believed to have made this separation when he said in Mark 12:17'…Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's…' American capitalist attitude towards wealth creation may have influenced American Pentecostalism by relying on certain passages of the Bible but what is proposed is that African Pentecostalism rests on irrational belief in miracles and instant gratification of desire, rather than the ethics of hard work, dedication and commitment.

Yet, Nigerian Pentecostalists are a hardworking enterprising industrial people, a nation of traders, from agrarian communities to market traders. The industries may be few but commerce is big and as Jane Guyer (2004:5) has argued, African economy '…cannot be understood as directly a derivative of the interface with Europe, neither is it understandable in abstraction from the experiences that interface generated.'

But it is not difficult to see how this error has arisen. The mega Pentecostal churches in Africa such as *The Redeemed Church of God* in Nigeria appear to imitate American churches in the way that they generate large funds. They are the best known to Western researchers who might draw the conclusion that they represent the majority of the Pentecostal churches in Africa, thus leading to the fallacy of composition.[13] But most Pentecostal churches are small, a thousand blooms of them, (see list of Pentecostal churches), each representing a peculiar strand of Christian doctrine and practices.

Others have argued that global capitalism has created a shadow economic world that is populated by many of the world's poorest people, which has kindled a

[13]'A fallacy of composition arises when one infers that something is true of the whole from the fact that it is true of some part of the whole or even of every proper part of the whole.' *onlinephilosophyclub.com/fallacy-of-composition.php*

new religious impulse, such as Pentecostalism. Jean Comaroff (1985) elucidates this global economic conception in her work on South African Pentecostalism, which she sees as a product of world economic order. In their *Gluckman Memorial Lecture* (1998) Comaroff and Comaroff pursue the same line of argument as they do in their other work (2001) where they argue that the success of global capitalism has created 'unconventional' means of acquiring wealth by its victims through various 'enchantment' methods. For them 'A striking corollary of the dawning Age of Millennial Capitalism has been the global proliferation of 'occult economies.' These economies have two dimensions: material aspect founded on effort to conjour [sic] wealth… by appeal to techniques that defy explanation in the conventional terms of practical reason…'(p.19). Therefore 'neoliberal forces have eroded the capacity of liberal democratic states to provide education, health and welfare' (p.121). As such, 'alternative' spirituality' of which Pentecostalism is an example, has proliferated as a result. They go on to assert that 'occult economies, then, are a response to a world gone awry, yet again: a world in which the only way to create wealth seems to lie in forms of power/knowledge that transgress the conventional, the rational, the moral – thus to multiply available techniques of producing value, fair or foul.' (p.26).

But what are we to make of Comaroff and Comaroff's claim that the 'effort to conjour [sic] wealth… by appeal to techniques that defy explanation in the conventional terms'? One answer is to be found in Peter Geschiere's *Modernity of Witchcraft* (1997) where he develops the same argument in his study of witchcraft in Cameroun and arrives at similar conclusions. As the poor become increasingly disenfranchised and struggle for economic and political survival they turn to witchcraft as a way of escaping material deprivation. But witchcraft, this notoriously diffuse concept, which is so often applied to Africa but so little understood and so little explained, continues to drive the discourse on supernatural power in Africa.

But the 'occult economy' is not the same as the belief in miracles since both stem from different sources and maintain different dynamics. Miracle takes its roots from religion and magic from the profane. Belief in miracles is theological while belief in magic or the occult, sorcery, witchcraft and so on rides on a different set of cosmological belief. Durkheim deals with this distinction in the

Elementary Forms (2001, 41-44) and although he acknowledges the similarities between them, he nevertheless sees both as distinct from each other, noting that: 'Magic takes a kind of professional pleasure in profaning Holy things; its rites are the mirror image of religious ceremonies', (p.42). Referring to Hubert and Mauss, Durkheim continues: '…there's something basically anti-religious in operations of magicians.' The distinction, therefore, for Durkheim consists in the collective operations of religious rituals that 'unite the group. Since, 'A society whose members are united because they share a common conception of the sacred world and its relation to the profane world, and who translate this common conception into identical practices, is what we call a church…but magic does not bind its followers to one another and unite them in a single group living the same life' (p.42-43). This is not to suggest that magic does not function as part of the alternative recourse to the pursuit of prosperity only that to see both as part of the same religious belief system is to misunderstand their different origins and dynamics of their function.

I shall address the subject of miracles in the next chapter but it is sufficient here to mention that for many Nigerian Pentecostalists miracles do not function like magic even if both appear to revolve around the instantaneous resolution to existential problems. The lack of understanding of the African Christian belief in miracles leads Gifford (1991) to suggest that the Pentecostal response to socio-economic difficulties is evidently the wrong kind of response, writing that:

> By advocating the gospel of prosperity it [born-again Christianity] dissuades adherents from evaluating the present economic order, merely persuading them to try to be amongst those who benefit from it. With its emphasis on personal healing, it diverts attention from social ills that are crying out for remedy. Its stress on human wickedness and the fallen nature of the world is no incentive to social, economic and constitutional reform. By emphasising personal morality so exclusively, it all but eliminates any interest in systemic or institutionalised injustice. By making everything so simple it detracts attention from the very real contradictions in the lives of so many in Southern Africa.(p.65-66).

But the deprivation argument fails to address the core religious beliefs, practices or experiences that engage many Pentecostalists, which is to say that the important religious content of Pentecostalism. One consequence of this commodification of religion within a socio-economic conception, that is, a neo-liberal capitalist product, moves us away from the idea of religion as a Durkheimian conception that is characteristically African, which sees religion as consisting in social cohesive effort or collective spirit upon which the community is founded.

But Nigerian Pentecostalism has no monopoly on claims of faith-healing since dotted around most towns and villages in Nigeria are local medicine men, magicians, sorcerers, 'witchdoctors', faith healers, fortune tellers and others, all seasoned in the ancient arts of magic, faith-healing and sorcery; so why does Pentecostalism thrive above the competition? As Marshall (2009:19) wonders, 'we are still no closer to understanding why religion is seen as solution.' Secondly, membership of Pentecostal churches cuts across all sections of society, including class, gender, age or social status. They range from uneducated market women, to university students and professors, and a former president - Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria. If the poor are driven to Pentecostalism by reasons of poverty, what is the motivation for the rich? Something besides the pursuit of material wealth must be responsible. Ruth Marshall Fratani (1998:278) addresses the idea that Pentecostalism and identity in Africa where 'nation-states and nationalism no longer necessarily constitute the primary physical and ideological contexts in which identity and community are imagined and political allegiance expressed.' Fourth, Nigerian economic fortunes have ebbed and flowed in recent years and has recently overtaken South Africa as the continent's biggest economy, (Ogunlesi, 2014). Yet within the economic cycles of growth and depression, the highs and lows of economic fortunes, Pentecostalism has maintained a steady rise, which can only suggest that the economic/poverty argument cannot be the entire answer. As Harvey Cox (1997:92) notes that, 'If Pentecostalism thrives both when things are getting better and when they are getting worse, its appeal must come from a

deeper source'. It is this 'deeper source' that is often omitted in the poverty/economic explanation for the Pentecostal flourishing.

However, the economic survival argument cannot be dismissed completely. Gifford has shown from his analysis of Ghana's economic decline through the 1980s and in most of the countries in Africa where Pentecostalism has flourished in recent years that there has also been an increase in poverty levels. This needs to be explained. Also the connection between economic activity and religion cannot be dismissed as mere coincidence, particularly since in most cases, the economic decline seems to precede a rise in religious belief but hardly the other way round. At some level, Pentecostalism engages in practical ways with various problems that Gifford, Maxwell and others discuss. For example, Marshall (2010) explains that the new Pentecostal approach to Nigerian politics and the impact that the new religious perspective has on Nigerian democracy. However, caution must be exercised in drawing a tidy correlation between economic decline and religious growth. As Phil Zuckerman (2010) points out that, 'The United States is one of the wealthier nations but it is also one of the one religious.' Some might argue that the United States is an exception, but this exception is sufficiently significant to question its exceptionality.

For Norris and Inglehart (2004:69) the decline of religion in the West can be explained by the fact that 'Religion becomes less central as people's lives become less vulnerable to the constant threat of death, disease and misfortune.' They describe this as the 'existential security', which refers to the absence of fear or worry in respect of basic needs such as afflict many in the Third World. Norris and Inglehart's research is important in the sociology of religion as it offers evidential support to the view that religion declines as living standards rise, which makes the reverse possibly true. But could it be that Western liberal values with its emphasis on individuality, economic consumerism and technological advance has eroded the collective community bond that once held people together in the West? Industrialization dislocated communities, broke up extended family network and produced the working class, (E.P. Thompson, 1963) and the nuclear family. However, the community spirit or cohesion that have been lost in the West remains largely significant in most African societies. The consumer culture is alienating and depersonalizing since it turns material

objects into the medium of interpersonal or inter-human exchange or what Marx describes as commodity fetishism.

But the market economy does not inspire expressions of profound religious feelings: the one about which poems are written and songs are sung and music composed and dance danced and praises sang. This is what Peter Berger means when he says that capitalism has never generated 'mythoenergy' a point raised by Harvey Cox (1997). Walter Benjamin echoes this sentiment in his essay, *The Work of Art and the Age of Mechanical Reproduction* (1969:223) in which he notes that before the age of machines and technological advance, '…works of art originated in the service of a ritual - first the magical, then the religious kind' and this gave the work of art a certain 'aura'. The religiously inspired work of art is *sui generis* as opposed to the mechanically produced or reproduced. This is the kind of conception that Adorno and Horkheimer criticize in the *Dialect of the Enlightenment* (2002).

Scott Lash's (2010) contrast between two kinds of capitalisms is equally relevant here: these are physical and metaphysical capitalism and both fall within the categories of extensive and intensive culture. Physical capitalism consists in the world of commodities and exchange, of product and manufacturing. Metaphysical capitalism as the name suggests moves beyond the physical and in its physicality, causation is external as compared to the internally or self-generating metaphysical capitalism. According to Lash, physical capitalism cannot generate intensity but only extensity and this is because physical capitalism is obedient to certain laws under which it operates.

But the socio-economic deprivation theory has not gone unchallenged. A growing number of authors have criticised that explanation, including Archer (2004), Cox (1999), Robbins (2004) Marshall (2009), Hollenweger (1972). Could the phenomenal rise of a religious movement such as that sweeping across much of the African continent be reduced to the mere need for economic survival or material possession such as to own a car, the desire to find a husband, the search for a job or even the failure of the political process? As Joel Robbins writes:

> The rapid growth and the worldwide spread of P/c regularly inspire scholars to ask why it attracts so many

> converts. Their answers routinely deploy broad sociological arguments about the role of deprivation and anomie in fostering the growth of ecstatic, sectarian, and millenarian religious movements. … what such explanations overlook, suggesting that those who use them ignore important aspects of P/c culture and that their narrow emphasis on explaining the why of conversion leads them to disregard the question of how P/c transforms the culture into which it is introduced. (Joel Robbins, p.125)

Ruth Marshall (2009) also attacks this materialist argument as does Kenneth Archer (2011) and others. For example, Anderson (1999:214) writes: 'Looking at Pentecostalism from this global perspective makes the "prosperity gospel" and identification with capitalistic ideology somewhat inconsequential and only found in a fringe minority. It can never be construed as the core of global Pentecostalism – its essence is to be found elsewhere.' African Pentecostalists even those of the populist kind are well aware of this verse from the Bible, which is often quoted: 'It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. (Mathew 4:4) And it is to prosperity as a biblical doctrine that I now turn as the focus of our discussion.

2.5 The Gospel of wealth - From poverty to prosperity

The Christian faith has always maintained an ambivalent or equivocal attitude towards material wealth. Parts of the Bible condemn it while other parts appear to endorse it. Some see wealth as the entitlements of the faithful. It is God's promise that they will be rewarded both on earth and in heaven. However, others see the acquisition of material wealth as spiritually corrupting, a selfish avaricious act, fetishistic, idolatrous and ungodly. As St Paul wrote in his letters, particularly 1 Timothy 6:10 and also Christ himself is said to have led a frugal life. The Bible verse to which prosperity gospel teachers refer is 2 Corinthians 8:9, *For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.*

But whether one is for or against material acquisition might be down to biblical interpretation. The many passages that appear to endorse wealth and prosperity are thought to form the basis upon which some Pentecostalists rely. (Philippians 4:19) B*ut my God shall supply all your needs according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus. I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me*. (John 3:1-2) (Mark 11:24)*Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.* (Matthew 7:8) *Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: {8}*

These passages may be interpreted in a variety of ways; but not all Pentecostalists believe that these passages point specifically to material wealth. Even those that do, appear to do so as motivation for enterprise. Part of the problem with seeing prosperity as an important segment within Pentecostalism has to do with Western inclination to classifications as we find in Durkheim and Mauss (1963[2009]). This classificatory system seldom applies in Nigerian or indeed African traditional system and it speaks to the single ontological animism that I mentioned in the previous chapter and found in the work Bruno Latour (1993) and others. Prosperity as a material aspiration can hardly constitute a single pursuit for Africans but forms part of a holistic approach to wellbeing. As Matthew Sharpe (2013:166) has argued that '…critics can be too rash by focusing exclusively on Pentecostalism's sanctification of the pursuit of wealth. This is …only one feature of the prosperity gospel teachings… In fact this understanding is typically much more holistic than critics imagine.' This echoes Mbiti's (1991) suggestion that Africans do not make a distinction between 'the secular and the sacred' and as such the idea of prosperity encompasses the whole person, intellectually, materially and spiritually.

But Kate Bowler (2013) argues that the prosperity theology within Pentecostalism is nearer mainstream doctrines than is often imagined. But what is this mainstream? Bowler appears to refer to a belief that is probably shared by many Americans about prosperity. But she also believes that this branch of Pentecostalism is very much an American phenomenon, even if facets of it can be found in other cultures. But even she does not believe that the wealth and prosperity doctrine is all that matters to the prosperity preachers. In an

interview that she gave, as reported in the Washington Post[14] Bowler asserts that beyond the '… Rolexes, Mercedes, gold chains and monogrammed pocket squares, you might see something surprising. These pastors, bejeweled [sic] as they are, would never want their lifestyle to be a barrier to their evangelism. They still want their message and their ministry to transcend—and mediated through—their material "blessings.'

But as mentioned, there are passages in the Bible that appear to condemn wealth and worldly possessions. Matthew 19-21 narrates the story of a young man who encounters Jesus and asks what he could do to be perfect. Jesus replies, 'If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me'. Then it continues in verse 22, saying: 'But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions.'

The phrase *as poor as the church mouse* is as much a metaphor as it is a literal attempt to disassociate worldly or material possession from religious faith. The church building, as a sacred place, is not a bank or commercial house where material treasure is stored. In this context, Christians often quote Matthew 6:19-21 which says, 'Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal…' Or 1 Timothy 6:7-10, 'For we brought nothing into the world, and we cannot take anything out of the world. … Or Proverbs 11:28, 'Whoever trusts in his riches will fall, but the righteous will flourish like a green leaf. And Hebrews 13:5 'Keep your life free from love of money, and be content with what you have, for he has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you.'

Here any connection between religious faith and prosperity can only refer to spiritual wealth. So where did the doctrine of prosperity or health and wealth come from? One answer is that it comes from the Bible and from the United States. In recent times the media has helped to propagate the phenomenon of Tele-evangelism. Pentecostalist preachers such as Kenneth Hagin, Oral Roberts, Benny Hinn, Jim and Tanny Faye Baker, T.D. Jakes, and a host of others, use broadcast media – television, radio, the Internet and other social media network

[14] Kate Bowler in interview with CNN reported in an article title Bishop of Bling' by Michelle Singletary, Washington Post October 24 2013 *www.washingtonpost.com/.../74bc5c72-3cb1-11e3-a94f-b58017bfee6c_st..*

– to preach the gospel of wealth and health to millions. Kenneth Hagin's *Redeemed From Poverty, Sickness and Death* and Kenneth Copeland's *The Laws of Prosperity* (1974) have become the blueprint for this brand of Pentecostalism. But this is an American brand that is not exactly reflective of global Pentecostalism, as it is often presented. But in focusing mainly on the prosperity wing, Paul Gifford (2004) treats this brand of Pentecostal like a lottery to which people invest their hope for a change in their economic fortune. But Pentecostalism is not made up simply of a group of self-interested devotees (some might say charlatans and tricksters) but consists of many whose mission is to the change the world (Marshall, 2010). This evangelistic zeal is an integral part of their mission, as Allan Anderson (2000:NP) observes: '…Pentecostals are notorious for rather aggressive forms of evangelism and proselytism, and Africa is no exception. From its beginning, the Pentecostal movement was characterized by an emphasis on evangelistic outreach, and Pentecostal mission strategy placed emphasis on evangelism, to go out and reach the 'lost' for Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit.' Which is to say that there is more to Pentecostalism than even the idea of prosperity will suggest, but before I discuss this core aspect of Nigerian Pentecostalism there is one final subject to be addressed and that is the subject of the relation between the concept of poverty and consumer culture in Africa.

2.6 Consumer Culture and the concept of poverty in an African context

I have already discussed the idea that social deprivation in general and poverty in particular are the prime motives for the Pentecostal resurgence in Nigeria and Africa. In this section I look more closely at the concept of poverty, which is often thought to be a universal concept that means the same thing everywhere, particularly in Africa – the world's poorest continent – where the idea has spun an entire industry of aid and charity such as UNICEF, Oxfam, Save the Children and others. In exploring the concept of poverty within the context of religious resurgence in a place like Africa I hope to provide insight into the perspective from which this argument has been drawn. I argue that the way that poverty in Africa has been conceived particularly in the context of the Pentecostal movement is largely responsible for the failure of the poverty/deprivation

explanation for African Pentecostalism and the arguments revolve around the following.

1. It assumes that poverty is a universal concept that means the same thing in every society; an assumption that has shaped the Western discourse on poverty in the Third World and equally shaped the discussion on the motivation for the religious response.
2. It lays too strong an emphasis on material destitution (thus encourages what I call the politics of pity) and sees this as perhaps the most destructive force to human existence. In doing so it appears to neglect other kinds of poverty by which some people set more store (spiritual for example) and which they believe are more important for the religious impulse.
3. It makes too quick a jump from the concept of poverty to consumer culture.

1. *Poverty as a universal concept.*

The British sociologist Peter Townsend in his influential book *Poverty in the United Kingdom* (1979) claims that poverty is an objective concept that is universally applicable, writing:

> Poverty can be defined objectively and applied consistently only in terms of the concept of relative deprivation… Individuals, families and groups in the population can be said to be in poverty when they lack the resources to obtain the types of diet, participate in the activities and have the living conditions and amenities which are customary, or are at least widely encouraged or approved, in the societies to which they belong. (p.31)

But Mollie Orshansky (1969) sees poverty differently, stating that:

> Poverty like beauty, lies in the eye of the beholder. Poverty is a value judgement; it is not something one can

> verify or demonstrate, except by inference and suggestion, even with a measure of error. To say who is poor is to use all sorts of value judgements. The concept has to be limited by the purpose which is to be served by the definition. Quoted in P. Townsend (1979:37)

Orshansky's definition is significant for my arguments here not only because it claims that poverty is a subjective value judgment (we know that value judgments vary from person to person and culture to culture) and so it depends on who is making the judgment, on what basis and from what cultural perspective. What is clear is that the concept of poverty cannot be imposed but must take into account what the subject or group feels or thinks about their situation. Therefore Orshanky's definition calls into question the idea of an objective and universal concept of poverty, the kind that Townsend proposes. Yet the image of the poor in the Third World as exemplified by the favelas of Brazil, the slums of India and the shantytowns of Southern Africa all of which are characterized by the lack of basic means of sustaining life – food, water, shelter and so on, which impressionistically is what the popular mind considers poverty to be, and it is one that is difficult to dislodge.

I believe that Orshansky is right that poverty is in the eye of the beholder and the beholding Western eye reflects its own conceptualization of poverty based on a narrow economic factor, which it applies it as a universal concept, hardly ever stopping to consider what other cultures might think to constitute poverty. Western capitalist and consumer culture is geared most readily towards production and consumption and so it looks yonder to Africa where it sees scarce production and much scavenging and projects its own consumerism/poverty concepts on those societies.

But historically, pre-colonial Africans never regarded themselves as poor in a material sense until the West introduced the notion into the culture. For example, many Nigerian languages have no indigenous word for poverty, particularly in the way the term is conceived in the West. The three major Nigerian languages certainly have no word for it. What they have are approximate terms that have been appropriated to fit the Western description of poverty. For example, the Yoruba words *ise* (wretchedness), *iya* (suffering) or

aini (lack) are often used to refer to poverty, but historically these words refer to a different ontological worldview. The word *ise* has always connoted wretchedness and only over time has the concept been subsumed under the concept of poverty. For the Hausa, the word *talauci*, which is verb of the noun *talakawa*: the poor, does not strictly translate into English as the poor but more accurately refers to the lower classes or the common people; and the reference to class is a distinction between the nobility and the proletariat. The Yoruba also use the word *talaka*, derived from the Hausa to refer to the poor, but more appropriately it means the commoner, just as the Yoruba word *mekunnu* also refers to the underclass. For the Igbo, the terms *Umu ogbenyen* now taken to refer to the poor has the original meaning of the motherless.

Earlier, I discussed the idea of metaphysical deprivation, which has been associated with African spirituality and supernatural beliefs. For example, Maxwell (2004) explains how the African belief in the spirit of poverty or 'misfortune' is passed from generation to generation. But for many Nigerians, wretchedness, which is a root word, is the ultimate tragedy of human existence, since it encapsulates human suffering in all its various manifestations and experiences, which transcends circumstantial material destitution. Wretchedness or the human condition is that which ultimately connects with religious beliefs and creates the space for spiritual growth.

Also, traditional African societies were largely subsistent and remain largely so and were content with their subsistent lives with little pursuit of profit. Weber in the *Protestant Ethics* (2013) describes the way that traditional workers in Europe were content to work the required hours for pay that met their subsistent need and refused to be incentivized by more pay for longer hours. Weber (2013:60) writes:

> The opportunity of earning more was less attractive than that of working less. This is an example of what is here meant by traditionalism. A man does not "by nature" wish to earn more and more money, but simply to live as he is accustomed to live and to earn as much as is necessary for that purpose. Wherever modern capitalism has begun its work of increasing the productivity of human labor [sic] by increasing its

> intensity, it has encountered the immensely stubborn resistance of this leading trait of pre-capitalistic labor.

This is the same way that traditional Nigerian cultures viewed work and even trade, (during the period of trade by barter) long before currency and the pursuit of profit was introduced into the system. But unlike Europe, African societies, still largely pre-industrial, still largely subsistent have retained to this day that traditional attitude to work and pay. Within a communitarian pre-industrial society the idea of profit, particularly excessive profit was viewed not as a virtue, but greed at the expense of a friend or neighbour. And profit, when it came, was modest and low-scale, which indicates that it was not the prime motive for work or trade. As Veblen (1904[2005:17]) once wrote, 'A … feature of that pre-capitalist business situation is that business whether handicraft or trade was customarily managed with a view to earning a livelihood rather than with a view to profits on investment.' People's lives revolved not around work but around other pursuits.

Equally, Eloy H Nolivos (2014:97) quoting a Chilean labourer who said that 'In material things I do not hope for anything more than the little I have already. What I have at {the age of} fifty-seven is enough to live on for the rest of my days and to serve the Lord. If I had more I would be more concerned with earthly things than with the Lord.' In the same light Gunnar Myrdal (1968) writes that: 'A central claim is that people in Asia are more spiritual and less materialistic than westerners. They are other-worldly, selfless and disposed to disregard wealth and material comfort. They sustain poverty with equanimity and even see positive virtues in it' (p.23). Although Myrdal appears to be parodying this idea but there is truth to the idea of the materially rich West versus the materially poor but spiritually rich South.

We also find similar discussion of the way that the introduction of the concept of time played in post-industrial societies in Europe, in EP Thompson's *Time, work Discipline and Industrial Capitalism: Past & Present* (1967) and in Jonathan Crary's *24/7* (2013). Before the idea of time was introduced into capitalist industrial society people's attitude was pedestrian and leisurely but according to Thompson, time changed all of that. Time was now to be valuable in itself, as

the saying goes: 'time is money'. As for Crary, the '24/7 society' now has regards even sleep as a waste of time and money. But in traditional African societies, where time was measured by the workings of nature, for example sunrise was time to rise and the appearance of the moon was time to sleep. In such a context, the capitalist preoccupation with time as a 'commodity' did not arise and importantly some of those traditional attitudes remain even under growing Western influence. As will be discussed in chapter 5, just as the introduction of technology in the form of literary text into African culture did not altogether alter the orality of African cultures, so has the introduction of Western capitalist ideals not significantly altered attitudes regarding traditional African ideas about poverty and prosperity, particularly in the religious and spiritual senses.

(b) *It lays too strong an emphasis on material destitution and thus creates the politics of pity.*

But there is indeed the concept of self-imposed destitution or self-denial through the active renunciation of worldly possessions, such as the Weberian ascetic: the monk in the Abbey, the nun in the Nunnery or the kind that we find in St Francis of Assisi. These however are not the kind of the poor – the active or voluntary poor - that poverty theorists have in mind; rather they have in mind the unfortunate, the passive or pitiful poor. It is perhaps the fact that they are poor and pitiful that raises a particular kind of intellectual response and one of altruism. But those that make vows of poverty or renounce material comforts, like the vow of celibacy and chastity invite a different set of assumptions and response, at the very least not pity. As Agamben explains in his *The Highest Poverty: Monastic Rules and Form-of-Life* (2013), the monastic way of life in Europe was indeed a way of life rather than one derived from rules. It makes a virtue of living from which it derives fulfilment. But the emphasis on material poverty or even consumer aspiration in Africa appears to suggest that African Pentecostalists are incapable of ascetic living or self-denial or restraint or even spiritual contemplation. Such a view is plainly mistaken. The *Deeper Life Ministry* is a Pentecostal church in Nigeria practices strict ascetic living. Members actively renounce material possessions: jewellery and flashy adornments, make-up and expensive attires and eschew ostentation. It is a way

of life for this group. As one Pentecostalist that I spoke to said 'so long as I have my God, then I am rich'. This was no flippant optimistic remark but an expression of a deep religious conviction. Indeed for the Yoruba, the virtues of patience, forbearance, long-suffering and character are priced above material riches. Equally, they would say: *oruko rere o san ju wura ati fadaka loo*: a good reputation is more valuable than gold and silver. This then is the culture whose idea of poverty has been turned into the pursuit of material wants.

But what this conception of poverty has also done is to create an aid industry that is supposedly built on compassion and pity but one that has created the imaginary of helpless and hopeless victims and the politics of pity. Pity becomes the motivation for altruism, a kind of compassion that assuages the altruists own conscience. For example, Channel 4 (ITN) news [15] once carried a segment on *poverty tourism* in Kenya by Westerners who gawp at and photograph people living in deprived areas. But the locals objected to this poverty tourism. As one woman, Oloo, points out: 'These are people like other human beings. They (the tourists) should go to the park and look at the animals. They should tour animals there. We don't want people to come. They are pitying us when we don't need that.' Such adventures echo the Poverty Tourism of nineteenth century London and New York and in a recent research by Bo Ma (2010) the suggestion that the motivation for such tourist adventures are 'cultural curiosity and self-interests', which enables the tourists to compare their lives to that of the poor and feel better about themselves. By tossing a penny at the poor and feeling pity for their plight, this perhaps helps to assuage any feelings of guilt.

(c) *It makes too quick a jump from a state of desperate poverty to a consumer culture within the same discourse.*

As already mentioned, the popular image of the poor in Africa is that of the starving, the destitute and children drinking from polluted waters. This is often the narrative of African poverty where discussions about poverty in Africa often relate to absolute poverty but, which soon turns into questions about relative poverty. For example, David Jones in an article titled *The Bankruptcy of the Prosperity Gospel: An Exercise in Biblical and Theological Ethics* (2006:NP) writes

[15] *On tour with the slum tourists in Kenya* Jamal Osman Channel 4 News broadcast 22 April 2014

that some Pentecostals pray for 'everything from modes of transportation (cars, vans, trucks, even two-seat planes), [to] homes, furniture, and large bank accounts.' Also Gifford (2003:20) writes:

> Africa's popular Christianity seems personalized, not cosmic. It is not concerned with a renewed order, or any 'new Jerusalem', but with a job, a husband, a child, a car, an education, or a visa to the west. It is about succeeding in this realm through faith or (increasingly, at least in West Africa) through faith and deliverance from satanic blockages.

But this characterization does not bear out Gifford's own description of Africa's existential problems (that I quoted above, which refers to a plethora of Africa's problems) as the motivation for the Pentecostal revival. Here Gifford switches from chronic poverty to a consumerist set of desires that are more indulgent than necessary. Equally, Brouwer, Gifford et al (1998:9) see the influence of global capitalism at work and one that is so pervasive that 'Even the poorest of the poor in the poorest of lands see images of consumer goods and want to buy articles with globally recognized names, often American ones.' But notice the leap from need for necessaries to desire for consumer goods. The first leans towards basic needs: clean water, food and shelter while the other, leans towards desire for consumer goods: washing machines, a car or a Visa to the West. This is not to suggest that the poor cannot desire both (needs and wants), but in order for that to happen there must be a category shift in status. They cannot at once belong to the same category of needs and wants. No doubt within the Pentecostal movement in Nigeria are the absolute and the relatively poor but the image of grinding poverty upon which the Pentecostal explanation relies suddenly shifts to the desire for consumer goods. Thus, we are invited to see the Africa of serious material crisis, of starving children, endless conflicts and economic woes; or what Jean Francoise Bayart (1993) calls, 'paradigm of the yoke', as also the Africa of consumer aspirations, having been sucked into the global capitalist system, (Comaroff, 1989).

If consumer aspiration is the main motivation for the Pentecostal resurgence in Africa then it must not also lean on the convenient picture of grim lives that is often invoked. If bread is what the people *really* need, why prescribe cake as the solution to that need? - an idea that was attributed to Marie Antoinette. The poor may need bread and desire cake but beggars cannot be choosers and if they are choosers, then perhaps they do not really need to beg. [16] As George Bernard Shaw once wrote in response to a suggestion that the poor be introduced to classical music, Shaw said:

> What we want is not music for the people, but bread for the people, rest for the people, immunity from robbery and scorn for the people, hope for them, enjoyment, equal respect and consideration, life and aspiration, instead of drudgery and despair. When we get that I imagine the people will make tolerable music for themselves. (quoted in Rod Preece (2011:57)

Shaw's socialist sentiments may be read in a number of ways, but in the context of this discussion, it means that a distinction is to be made between needs and wants and that needs are primary while wants are secondary and only after immediate needs have been satisfied that second order desires may be addressed. This is not to suggest that the poor do not aspire or dream of wealth and material riches beyond the provision of food and shelter; it is however when basic needs like food and shelter are suddenly turned into second order aspiration for luxury items, as though they belong to the same category that becomes a problem. Although there are levels of poverty: absolute and relative poverty for example, but the needs of both are in many ways different. For example, in his book *The Affluent Society* (1958) Kenneth Galbraith points out that in an affluent society the line between necessity and luxuries become indistinguishable but this blurring of the lines between luxury and necessity

[16] Once as a student this researcher was walking down a London street and saw a man siting by a building with a large card that read: *homeless and hungry*. I had no money but I had some fruits in my bag, which I gave him. But to my surprise he threw the fruits back at me. I remember thinking that he was not really hungry and perhaps not even homeless.

applies in most Western society and for the rich in Africa, but remains firmly drawn for the very poor for whom luxuries remain out of their reach as it is unaffordable. Therefore, when Jenkins (2011) refers to the Favelas of Brazil it is not the image of the lack of consumer goods that springs to mind but of desperate poverty. Importantly, the consumer culture has more to do with Veblen's *Theory of The Leisure Class* (1899) while poverty has more to do with Steinbeck's *Grapes of Wrath* (1939).

If the Pentecostal ideal is geared towards the complete transformation of lives, why then must it be confined almost exclusively to material wellbeing? I suggest it is because Western culture is dominated by material wellbeing. For example, in America each year are published a great many self-help books that promise improved lifestyles or the good life or the body beautiful. Pentecostalism appears to feature as part of this acquisitive materialist and consumer culture that prescribes rules or certain instructions such as if you pray hard enough you will be rewarded with riches, just as if you exercise (practice aerobics) enough you can have the perfect body. This is the cultural prism through which the rest of the world is perceived as cultural imitators of the American paradigm.

But consumerism is also about knowledge, about aesthetic tastes, self-esteem, social status and identity, (Featherstone, 2006), all of which are secondary concerns for the poor in Africa who might have no idea from where their next meal will come. As such African societies cannot at once be described as consumerist, particularly against the backdrop of poverty and deprivation. This is not to suggest that Africans are ignorant of consumer brands or do not desire them but consumer culture works best where there is much to consume, which is not a culture that could be described as typically African, at least not yet. Therefore, it is either that the claim of absolute poverty in Africa as responsible for religious resurgence must be abandoned in favour of a consumerist argument or the consumerist argument be abandoned. But if both are to be retained then a clearer line of argument is required than has hitherto been proposed.

However, it could be argued that poverty – material destitution - is a reality for many Africans, whether one chooses to describe such a state as wretchedness, misery, misfortune or whatever else. This fact is not denied; what is denied is the idea that Africans see their predicament in the same way as those who might

wish to sympathize with their 'plight' and that both share the same frame of reference with regards to poverty. It is an idea that ignores the many other ways by which people measure wealth, success and fulfilment, and how they take pleasure in simple things, spiritual fulfilment, love, friendship, the joy of collective religious worship and other virtues. As Mbiti (1991) has argued, religion for Africans is a holistic experience that combines belief and practice in the believer's everyday life.

Therefore not all Pentecostalist set their store by material riches. A recent survey taken of 65 nations and published in *The New Scientist* in 2003 - quoted by Bim Adewunmi (2014) declared Nigeria to be the happiest place on earth and this is inspite of the poverty, sectarian violence and other problems that beset that country. The happy poor may be happy in their poverty but what the survey shows is the age-old dictum that money cannot buy happiness. Nigerian Pentecostalists do not say they are poor; they say that they are rich, partly because they believe in the power of what is described as 'prophetic utterance' a kind of self-fulfilling prophesy and also partly because many do not measure their lives' experiences in such materialistically reductive terms.

In conclusion I have sought to argue that the deprivation/poverty thesis fails as the main explanation for the rise of Pentecostalism in a place like Nigeria. This is partly because of the ambiguity in the use of the term poverty or deprivation upon which the explanation for the Pentecostal growth ultimately derives. Every African problem appears to serve as causative of the religious revival. With regards to prosperity, we find similar difficulties with regards to meaning and the conflation of secular capitalist ideology with the theology of prosperity and the concepts of miracles and magic upon which it is thought to derive, as the link between the two. The claim that American Pentecostalism or global neo-liberal capitalism has been the main influence on Nigerian and African Pentecostalism also does not succeed. This is because the movement's mode of operation does not appear to engage capitalist processes or the consumerist culture as we find in the West. Yet the instant transformation of lives through miracles, often attributed to African Pentecostalism is also misconceived, since many African Pentecostalists also believe in hardwork as a means to achieving certain ends. Lastly, the concept of poverty as a universal concept, particularly as it is linked with capitalism and consumerism is problematic when applied in the African

context. But with regards to prosperity, almost no Nigerian Pentecostalist defines him or herself as a prosperity Pentecostalist. This is a label that others apply to them, but just as important is the question of whether the appeal of a great religious revival that is sweeping across the African and other continents can be explained simply by a compendium of material wants. Could a consumer driven concept of prosperity be applied to a state of desperate poverty as motivation for religious devotion and does that idea of prosperity not diminish the desperate poverty argument upon which the religious appeal lie? Could there be more to Pentecostalism than the poverty or socio-economic disadvantages? As Harvey Cox (1997:89) questions the appeal of Pentecostalism based on the socio-economic deprivation argument and asserts that:

> … this theory also fails to persuade. The vast majority of the people who are drawn into Pentecostalism come not because of a televangelist but because a neighbor or relative has invited them. Once having sampled it, they obviously find something they have been looking for. There is something else happening here.

Indeed, 'there is something else happening here' and that 'something' is the subject of the next chapter.

CHAPTER 3

THE VARIETIES OF PENTECOSTAL EXPERIENCE

Life must be undergone.

John Keats Letter *To Benjamin Bailey, 10 June 1818* (1970)

Life is not a problem to be solved, but a reality to be experienced.

Soren Kierkegaard

3.1 Introduction

The classical religious experience theories of Friedrich Schleiermacher, William James, Rudolf Otto, Mircea Eliade and others continue to dominate the subject of religious experience, including those of Richard Swinburne; however very few theorists have devoted particular attention to the Pentecostal experience. This neglect is hardly surprising given that many authors writing on Pentecostalism have focused on economic/deprivation factors as discussed in the preceding chapter; and those that have focused on it, like Harvey Cox (1995, 1997) and Allan Anderson (2000, 2014) have not sufficiently explored this concept in any great depth. But as Robert Mapes Anderson (1979) has observed '…through the study of Pentecostal movement, we may gain an insight into the roots of religion as emotional experience and expression', since 'Christianity, no less than other religions, has been engaged in a perennial struggle to contain this primitive impulse without destroying its creative potential.' And 'the goal of this religious impulse is possession by this spirit, and the means to that end are often crudely mystical, enthusiastic, magical, and orgiastic' (p.8-10). Nigerian Pentecostalism in particular embodies this religious 'impulse' in its most fundamental and dynamic sense and provides a fertile ground upon which the movement currently thrives.

The aim of this chapter is two-fold: (1) to present and to challenge the classical religious experience theories of William James and others and (2) to argue that

the Pentecostal experience revolves around the expressive forms of religious worship around prayer, praise-worship and performance all of which are underpinned by the belief in spirituality. I argue that it is this experience that constitutes the main appeal of Nigerian Pentecostalism to its devotees.

The chapter has six sections but is divided into two parts. The first part examines and criticizes the classical religious experience theory, arguing that the Pentecostal experience offers a stronger set of arguments for the religious experience, which is sufficiently robust to withstand criticisms of the kind that have been levelled against the classical theory. The second part of the discussion is taken up by the varieties of Pentecostal experience, which deals with prayer, glossolalia, praise-worship and performance. This discussion is preceded by the ethnographic study conducted for this project upon which the Pentecostal experience relies. I begin by posing the question, namely: what is the classical religious experience theory?

3.2 The classical religious experience theorists and their critics

Classical religious experience theory is perhaps not a theory at all but a set of ideas and arguments that have coalesced under the descriptive term: *religious experience*. I refer to them as theories only because they constitute a distinct category of thought around which a set of arguments have been constructed and offered as explanation for certain religious attitudes and responses. I describe them as classical partly because they have been around for a period of time and within that time they have established themselves as canonical within religious discourse.

The idea of religious experience perhaps began as a response to the Enlightenment assault on religious beliefs and practices against which religion appeared unable to offer adequate response. With regards to questions about evidence or proof or verification for religious beliefs, religion appeared to have no answer except to offer dogma and unsubstantiated claims, and as a result the defeat of religion by philosophy and science appeared complete. Just as latterly, liberal values, modernity and secularism appeared to have triumphed over religious faith. Religion thus appeared to be in retreat or on the back-foot. However, thinkers like Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768-1834), in works such as *On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers* (1799) and *The Christian Faith*

(1830) began to defend religious belief on grounds other than that which science or philosophy had demanded. Religious belief, Schleiermacher argues, cannot be subjected to the requirements of scientific proof or evidence since its basis lie in what has now been described as the religious experience. It is perhaps also worth mentioning in passing that Schleiermacher was also one of the first to introduce the subject of hermeneutics. Other notable thinkers followed Schleiermacher in espousing the idea of a religious experience, (Kierkegaard, 1843[2005]; James, 1902; Otto, 1923; Eliade, 1959; Tillich, 2001; Stace, 1960). I shall not discuss every theory but focus instead on those of Soren Kierkegaard, William James and Rudolf Otto. The criteria for selecting these thinkers rest on the influence that each has exerted on the subject and because the collective views of these thinkers represent the broad sweep of the various versions of the religious experience theory.

So what is the religious experience; what is its nature; how does it feel; how does it manifest itself and under what circumstances is it produced? Perhaps a good way to begin this discussion is to see the problem through Kant's first critique. In the Introduction to that work, Kant (1929:29) famously declares that, *although all our knowledge begins with experience, it does not follow that it arises from experience*.' Certain truths are known prior to experience – (*apriori) s*uch as 2+2=4 or all bachelors are unmarried. These are analytical truths whose epistemological claims rest not on experience but on grounds that are prior to experience. However, the concept of God does not fall within *apriori* or analytical truths or indeed sense experience: we cannot see God in the way we see a friend. Therefore on the Kantian model, God cannot be known analytically or through sense experience - since God or the idea of him appears to transcend the world of experience. It therefore follows either (a) God does not exist or (b) God cannot be known or be proved to exist in the two main ways that knowledge is gained (analytically and through sense perception). In which case a different ground for accepting God's existence must be found, one that is not based on either kind of knowledge claims. Consequently, in the Preface to the Second edition of that work Kant concludes that, '… rendering all extensions of practical reason impossible. I had to deny knowledge in order to make room for faith.' The dilemma that the religious experience claimants face is how knowledge inaccessible to experience or that is not propositional can be

accounted for. Andrew Collier (2003) defends religious belief on rational grounds but even this rationality of belief or knowledge must surely derive from experience. Collier distinguishes among three uses of faith, (1) faith as belief based on grounds such as having authority for the belief; (2) faith as belief on no (evidential) grounds – blind faith, which Collier appears to accept is a contradiction since faith must rest on some grounds, whatever the grounds, which again has hints of experience; and (3) faith as '*trust*', which also derives from experience since to put trust in someone, as Collier alludes, is to have faith in them, as in '…to have faith in God is to trust him' (p.xiii). In each of these senses regarding faith experience remains integral to any knowledge claims. Therefore, for all of Collier's cognitive claims about religious faith his ideas effectively reduce to experience. In order to have faith in God there must be some grounds for believing in God, such as seeing God or hearing God, but for religious experience theorists, one may not be able to see God but can feel him or sense him in different ways. This view rides on a transcendental idea of God, one that is inaccessible to sense perception. For Nigerian Pentecostalists, God can be felt through experience that revolves around certain rites and rituals in which God's presence is felt. This idea of religious feelings or emotions is important in Nigerian Pentecostalism and needs to be contrasted with *belief,* which is a troublesome term in religious discourse.

I suggest that *belief* involves a three-way process: (a) the thing that is believed; (b) the grounds upon which the belief is justified; and (c) the act of believing itself, which might follow a different route. Belief may be expressed in propositional terms that invite judgments about truth or falsehood. Truth therefore becomes a matter of correspondence between the subject and the object of belief. But if someone were to say that they believe in God or *that God exists*, such a statement might read like a propositional statement that could either be true or false. This is where the word *belief* or *knowledge* within religious discourse carries cognitive or epistemological baggage. But such a statement need not be propositional. For example, Abby Day in *Belief in Belonging* (2010) appears to argue for a kind of stripping the term *belief* of its cognitive impressions and to see religious belief as more of a 'performative' concept that many apply to their everyday experiences, even religious ones. For Day, *belonging* is participatory or 'performative' activity that forms the essence

of the religious life for many, whereas *belief* speaks to a different and rather narrow narrative that entails aspects of cognition, which is to say, it demands proof for asserting belief. Robertson Smith's (1889[2004]) work also falls within this category of moving away from centralizing belief within the religious encounter, as is the work of Riis and Woodhead (2010) where the emphasis is on the religious emotions.

The religious experience theory therefore seeks a different basis for making judgments or statements about the sacred, which is not rendered in propositional form. So when Rodney Needham (1972) asks 'Is belief experience?' This is a question that could be turned around so it reads, *Is experience belief*? And to Needham's question we could return an answer that says: no, belief is not experience, since experience belongs to a different category. No doubt some element of belief might form part of experience but the baulk of it is experiential. Which is to say, experience precedes belief. It is worthy to note that Needham came to his thesis through his ethnographic study of the Penang people in Borneo who appeared not to have a way of conveying the notion of belief about their attitudes and practices regarding their god.[17]

This point is significant for any discussion of the Pentecostal experience since it coincides with the idea in favour of which I am arguing. Just as with the Penang people of Borneo so it is with most indigenous Nigerian cultures or languages where there is hardly a corresponding idea to the terms belief, particularly within the religious tradition. The introduction of Christianity into African societies brought with it the concept of belief, which those cultures assimilated into their traditional practices and worldview. So when the term *belief* is applied within African religious attitudes it refers largely to aspects of those attitudes and practices that are rightly designated as religious experience, but upon which belief has been fastened. It is mainly rites and ritual rather than belief.

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[17] I have benefited immensely from Jonathan Mair's June 30 2013's fascinating discussion on belief as cognition in his review of Abby Day's *Belief and Belonging* (2010) and related discussion on Needham and Robertson Smith. http://jonathanmair.com/abby-days-believing-in-belonging-review/

But the term belief is not the only concept that requires analysis, so is the concept of experience itself. What exactly is experience? Let us look at possible uses of the word *experience*. For instance, job advertisements often ask for experience, which could be skill, knowledge or expertise. There is also knowledge gained from experience. A third use is a practical encounter or to live through certain circumstances or be involved in some activity or endeavour that leaves a lasting impression on an individual. For many, experience is highly prized, even more than abstract knowledge as we find in Oakeshott's *Experience and its Modes* (1933[2016]) where he declares that 'It is not the clear-sighted, not those who are fashioned for thought and the arduous of thought, who can lead the world. Great achievements are accomplished in the mental fog of practical experience' (p.246). Although these usages are not exhaustive, they however take us to a stage where we might define *religious experience* as the practical encounter with the sacred that leaves an impression on an individual. But this definition merely prompts further questions, namely:

(a) What exactly is the nature of that experience and how does the experience arise?
(b) Is the experience pure and direct or is it indirect and mediated or is it both?
(c) Is the experience transcendental or immanent?
(d) Is the experience individual (subjective) or is it collective?
(e) Is the experience a universal kind or is it culturally specific?

For Christians, perhaps the best-known example of religious experience is that of St Paul of Tarsus. In Acts 9:1-19, we are told that on a journey he was undertaking to persecute Christians, there came a halting voice from heaven, accompanied by a shining light that caused sudden blindness, followed by three days of sequestration after which the scales fell from the eyes and a new man emerges. This at least was a kind of religious experience. But opponents of religious experience theories, (Katz, 1978; Scholem, 1969; 1978; Proudfoot, 1985; Sharf, 1998, 2000) and others might ask: what exactly is this voice: is it an inner or external audible voice? What evidence can be produced to support the claim that the experience is what it is reported to be and not something else:

hallucinations or madness for instance? Although hallucinations, madness and similar mental states are kinds of experiences, but they differ from religious experience because they are not derived from a sacred encounter. In which case it is the sacred source that informs the religious experience. These objections will be discussed later but perhaps the main objection by critics is that the concept of religious experience lacks observable, verifiable or evidential report. However, the classical religious experience is rooted in Western conception of the nature of religious belief and although the Nigerian Pentecostal experience is a form of religious experience, it differs from the classical conception in two important respects: the individuality of the experience and its transcendental nature both of which will be discussed shortly.

In *Fear and Trembling* (1843[2005]) Soren Kierkegaard propounds the idea that faith is the very essence of the religious experience and the basis upon which the believer must rely and accept what seems like the absurdity of religious dogma. Faith as '*trust*' as Collier believes Martin Luther takes the word *faith* to mean also applies to Kierkegaard's idea of faith, which is trust most typified by the story of Abraham, who agrees to slaughter his son Isaac, as sacrifice to a God that he cannot see. This story, for Kierkegaard, is an example of faith *per excellence*, which proceeds on the basis of a 'leap' into the unknown that the believer makes secure in the knowledge or trust that he or she will not fall. Christians cite Hebrews 11:1-3, which states that faith is '… *the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen'* and '*Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God… '* Kierkegaard defends religious experience not on evidential grounds, since not all experiences are objectively verifiable and certain states of being must be accepted on trust. For Kierkegaard, faith within the sacred is that upon which the religious experience relies. But importantly, he believes that the religious experience is the culmination of the different stages of human development (the highest stage of human existence) that begins with the aesthetic experience, moving on to the ethical and finally culminating in the religious stage. The Kierkegaardian religious experience refers to revelation or vision; it is also individual or subjective and transcendental, as exemplified by the case of Abraham. However, as the preceding discussion shows, the word *faith* does pose a problem for experience. But there is also the problem of the subjectivity or the individuality

of the experience, as well as for the transcendentalism of its claim. I will address these points after dealing with the other religious experience theorists.

Perhaps the best-known exponent of the concept of religious experience is the philosopher and psychologist, William James (1842-1910). In *The Varieties Of Religious Experience* (1902) James argues that there are peculiar kinds of feelings or emotions that are generated by religious beliefs and practices, which are meaningful to the believer but, which may not be verifiable in the way that science or philosophy demands. James mentions four kinds of such experiences: (1) the ineffable - difficult to describe; (2) the 'noetic' - which opens the door to profound insight about human existence although not intellectual knowledge of the 'discursive' kind; (3) the 'transient' - comes and goes as in a blinding light and (4) the passive - the experience is beyond the control of the individual. Something mysterious appears to happen to the individual undergoing these experiences during which he or she seems to lose control in what may appear like a fit of madness, but which it is not, since the experience is underpinned by religious belief. And as for evidence, James maintains that the experience is its own proof and it would be a mistake to apply the standard of proof that may be applicable in science to religious belief.

Also for James, as it is for Kierkegaard, the religious experience is individual as in the conversion of St Paul. James further identifies four states of religious conversion, which are themselves kinds of religious experiences or rather the consequences of such experiences. These are: (a) The loss of all the worry; (b) the sense that all is ultimately well with one; (c) the sense of perceiving truths previously unknown; (d) a sense of clean and beautiful newness within and without and lastly; (e) the ecstasy of happiness produced. Accordingly he writes 'In just the degree in which you realize your oneness with the Infinite Spirit, you will exchange disease for ease, inharmony for harmony, suffering for abounding health and strength' (1902:101). Thus James asserts that, 'The feelings, acts, and experiences of individual men in their solitude, so far as they apprehend themselves to stand in relation to whatever they may consider the divine there must be something solemn, serious, and tender about any attitude which we denominate religious' (p.36). Again we see the individuality and transcendentalism of the experience also in James.

As for Rudolf Otto (1923), the religious experience consists in profound

emotional feelings that are derived from the 'numinous' and they are: the *mysterium tremendum* and the *mysterium fascinans*. The *mysterium tremendum* refers to a feeling that arises from being in the presence of a sublime or tremendous sight that awakes passions of awe or fear in the individual, much like Kant's 'Starry heavens above me' or Edmund Burke's idea of the sublime. It is feeling that relates to scale, 'magnitude', danger, death 'vastness' all with capacity to overwhelm. This is characterized by a:

> …sudden, strong ebullitions of personal piety and the frames of mind such ebullitions evince, in the fixed and ordered solemnities of rites and liturgies, and again in the atmosphere that clings to old religious monuments and buildings, to temples and to churches. If we do so we shall find we are dealing with something for which there is only one appropriate expression, mysterium tremendum. The feeling of it may at times come sweeping like a gentle tide, pervading the mind with a tranquil mood of deepest worship. It may pass over into a more set and lasting attitude of the soul, continuing, as it were, thrillingly vibrant and resonant, until at last it dies away and the soul resumes its profane, non-religious mood of everyday experience. It may burst in sudden eruption up from the depths of the soul with spasms and convulsions, or lead to the strangest excitements, to intoxicated frenzy, to transport, and to ecstasy. It has its wild and demonic forms and can sink to an almost grisly horror and shuddering. (Otto, 1923:12-13)

This passage captures Otto's religious experience theory most succinctly; but particularly noteworthy for our discussion here is where he talks about '…the strangest excitements, ...intoxicated frenzy, …and ecstasy, which relates most closely to the Pentecostal experience. What is also worthy of note is the externality of the experience, which may 'cling to old building and monuments', as Otto tells us. Yet there remains an individual and transcendental dimension to Otto's conception of religious experience. And as for the *mysterium fascinans* on the other hand, this equally induces compelling fascination within the realm of the divine. Joachim Wach (1951[2013]) follows both James and Otto in situating the religious experience in the individual and the experience as one of ultimate reality.

Therefore, for Kierkegaard, James and Otto the religious experience is essentially an individual experience, which consists largely in an intensive emotional or passionate response to a sublime revelatory force such as cannot be gained in any other way, most of all intellectually. Such an experience is self-evidently true, invoking the 'immediate awareness of the Unconditioned' as Tillich puts it.

Three important points are to be delineated from these ideas: (1) the emotional response as subjective, individual, personal or private; (2) the experience as transcendental and (3) the experience as *apriori.*

But all three conceptions remain problematic. The first, the individuality of the experience has been criticized by some like Josiah Royce (1855-1916), (1912[2001]) who finds for example, a 'religious paradox' in James' theory of religious experience. Royce thought, much like Durkheim did that the religious activity is a collectively or socially generated process which cannot emerge from the individual's own powers alone, since he or she is too weak or limited to generate it on his or her own. It must be collective and it is essentially a collective activity that produces the religious experience. J Loewenberg's (1912:86) review of Royce's book makes a similar point when he notes that, '…men can only be saved together and not separately'. For Durkheim (1912[2008]) religious activity is 'eminently social' and rooted in ritualized 'collective practices'. As he puts it, '… whoever has really practiced a religion knows very well that it is the cult which gives rise to these impressions of joy, of interior peace, of serenity, of enthusiasm which are, for the believer, an experimental proof of his beliefs' (p.417). When James quotes Ralph Waldo Trine's sentiment that '… the degree in which you realize your oneness with the Infinite Spirit, you will exchange disease for ease, inharmony for harmony, suffering for abounding health and strength' (2008:101), it is perhaps to emphasize further the individuality of the experience. But Durkheim does not deny an individual dimension to religious experience only that such a dimension rides on the 'collective consciousness' of group performance.

The second and third problems relate to the idea that the experience is *apriori* and transcendental. As Lash (2010:173) writes, 'religious experience is *apriori* and transcendental. It presumes transcendental ideas working not on empirical, but on transcendental, objects.' But there is a contradiction here, or, at the very

least a dilemma. The religious experience as *experience* presupposes the existence of an object of an encounter within and not outside of experience. But experience is a post factum (*aposteriori*) phenomenon and not *apriori;* it is a mediated concept and not one that emerges from thin air or nowhere like a magician's rabbit from the hat, and must be constitutive of the possibility of being experienced in reality. Even thin air is an object of experience and the magician's rabbit is always hidden somewhere in the hat. So from where does *apriori* experience come? The answer must be from other experiences in whatever way or ways they are generated. For example, Durkheim had criticized the Kantian concept of space and time, which he argues, are not *apriori* structures of cognition but that they are sociological, that is are *aposteriori*. The dimensions of left and right, for example, are externally derived (experiential) and not formed of innate ideas or individual mental states, but socially constructed. Therefore, Durkheim appears to suggest that there is no such thing as pure or contentless reason and that all reason is mediated.

Equally, in "Experience" (2006) Lash distinguishes between *Erlebniß* – aesthetic experience and *Erfahrung* – cognitive experience and ontological knowledge. In this sense it could be said that knowledge and experience are two distinct concepts: the former being cognitive and the latter as acquired through being lived through. But such distinction even if valid does not entail strict exclusivity. Knowledge can be gained through experience as much as experience may be gained through knowledge. As Lash suggests, cognition or mentality entails distance from object whilst experience not only brings it closer but also entails no separation between subject and object, such as feeling-based experience or knowledge. The Kantian 'transcendental unity of apperception' brings both subject and object together in one single process of perceptual awareness and judgement. There is therefore a sense in which knowing something is different from experiencing it. For example, to possess knowledge of the distance between London and New York is to possess what might be called mere or abstract knowledge about two points (distance); but such knowledge is different from the *experience* of *actually* undertaking the journey. This is the kind of distinction between knowledge and experience that is picked up by Lash as the difference between Kantian and Husserlian ideas of knowledge and experience; where for Kant, knowledge or sense experience relates to an

'object's predicates and qualities' – 'world of appearances' - and never to the thing-in-itself (noumenon). But for Husserl, Lash (2006:340) believes that the 'Experience becomes intentional for us precisely in our latching onto the content of the thing itself.' In this sense experience is not mere knowing but the immersion within the deep, like baptism from which the individual emerges, though wet, but transformed. Experience therefore is never pure but diluted and brings about a rebirth, a renewal the kind about which Pentecostalists speak, which they refer to being 'born again'.

Lash further discusses this idea of experience, the aesthetic experience in Walter Benjamin, Goethe and Schiller. For example, Schiller, in his *On The Aesthetic Education of Man* (1794[2004]) argues that the aesthetic experience is the only place where we are humanised and free. But for Goethe, the experience transcends the aesthetic as he makes clear in his *Conversations With Eckermann and Soret*, (1850) where the constant refrain is that 'the deed is the thing' and not even philosophy. And so it is with religion, particularly Christianity about which Goethe has this to say, contra Hegel: 'Christianity has a might of its own, by which dejected, suffering humanity is re-elevated from time to time, and when we grant it this power, it is raised above all philosophy' (121). This 'power' of Christianity to 're-elevate' is, I believe, a religious experience of a profound kind, a feeling that transcends mere knowing, the 'deed' that Goethe also captures in the first Act of *Faust* (1962) where Faust's turmoil and exasperation sees him reject knowledge of 'the word', the 'senses' and 'power' before finally settling for the deed. Upon succeeding in his quest he finally claims most categorically in that famous opening line: 'In the beginning was the deed', and this idea of 'the deed' is Benjamin's 'creation' that spills over into language and naming and eventually carries on to 'destruction' or death, something that cannot be named. This thing that cannot be named is the ultimate human experience, a fate that eventually befalls *Faust*, (Redner, 1982:xv).

Therefore, it is experience that Faust seeks, not knowledge or philosophy or even science – since he has acquired these – and they have proved unsatisfactory, (a Weberian disenchantment) but a different kind of experience – the deed. Although in death all experience ends, yet leading up to death is one long preparation for it, as Schopenhauer claims, and it is this experience in its

most tragic sense that Keats alludes to when, as he lay dying of Consumption, affirms still that: 'life must be undergone.' Birth and death are empty without the intervening experience and perhaps empty still if they pertain merely to cognition. Many Christians believe that the trials and tribulations of Job must be seen as the necessary consequences of sin for which Christ was made flesh and died on the cross. But even as death approached, Christ still wished in Matthew 26:39 that 'this cup', this suffering, this experience 'might pass over me'. Yet, without the life and the sacrifice of Christ there would be no Christianity and his death was the ultimate experience that would unlock the door to man's redemption and salvation.

But what about visions, revelations and Saul's blinding-light: could these not constitute *apriori* religious experiences? For example, in James there are truths that we possess prior to experiencing them. But such *apriori* religious truths are not epistemologically grounded either in rationality or empirical enquiry but in feelings or the emotions. In which case it is not prior to experience since the meaning of *experience* is an encounter that lies within and not outside the known or experienceable world. As Proudfoot (1985:15) argues, experience 'that is independent of concepts, and beliefs and at the same time be intentional states that can be specified by reference to objects of thoughts and explanatory claims', is problematic. Nimi Wariboko (2014:3) believes that, 'Pentecostalism, whether considered care of the soul (eternal things) or care of external things (material-economic improvement) is a process, formation practice, for the production of truths and ethics of hope that converts *noumenal knowledges* into *phenomenal technologies* of existence.' It is not exactly clear what the author means by 'noumenal knowledges'. Presumably he is applying 'noumena' in a Kantian sense, in which case there is an inherent contradiction in his analysis since Kant believed that the noumenal world is epistemologically sealed off. Wariboko appears to suggest that Nigerian Pentecostalism provides a new form of knowledge in terms of 'visions' or 'spiritual insights' or revelation or what he calls 'spiritual intelligence' that informs practical life. The problem is that the epistemic conditions that would allow access to this world cannot ultimately be fulfilled. I have already argued that the term *knowledge* when applied in religious discourse is problematic partly because it carries epistemological connotations. What is ultimately offered by way of 'proof' in religious discourse

is nothing of the sort, but something like religious experience. Yet, religious experience cannot escape scrutiny by claiming justification upon its own assumptions or be exempt from justification on some criteria for assessing the validity of its claims, just because it is not science or philosophy. So when Wariboko asserts that 'The abiding longing to extract useable knowledge from the noumenal world to aid human flourishing in the phenomenal world is a kind of spell that hangs over the movement…'(p.4), his idea of Pentecostalism's 'direct access' to the spiritual realm from which Nigerian Pentecostalists draw 'knowledge' and instructions for the moral life must be questioned. This is partly because when words like 'spiritual knowledge,' 'vision', 'noumenon,' 'revelation' 'transcendentalism' and such-like are used without clear idea as to meaning they risk what Isaiah Berlin describes as 'stream of metaphysical free-association'.[18] Wariboko (2014:4) claims that his '… thesis is that the beliefs and practices of access to, and production of, certain religious knowledges as carriers of truth and hope is the key embodiment of Nigerian Pentecostalism', it is difficult to see how the 'religious knowledges are carriers of truth' and what truth means in this sense. It is perhaps because of the problem of claiming knowledge in religious discourse Kant had to 'abandon reason in order to make room for faith' and Kierkegaard also had to rely on faith.

My view is that the apriority of the religious experience contradicts the very concept of *apriority*. This is because apriori terms such as visions, revelation and so forth are no more than Archimedean or Newtonian type of inspirational moments like being struck by a sudden and profound insight. If so, then revelations or visions cannot emerge unbidden: Newton *saw* the apple fall and Archimedes *felt* the water move, and divine inspiration or vision or revelation must similarly emerge as the result of connections or practical associations within experience. Revelation or vision is the birth of an idea that has lain in gestation within a troubling mind, like in a dream that is revealed as an answer to a question that has been posed in a waking moment: Kekelu's dream, for

[18] Isaiah Berlin was criticizing Hannah Arendt's work, particular her book *The Human Condition* about which Berlin says, "…produces no arguments, no evidence of serious philosophical or historical thought. It is all a stream of metaphysical free association." Isaiah Berlin and Ramin Jahanbegloo, Conversations with Isaiah Berlin Scribner (1991: 82) cited in Arie Dunov (2014:3).

example.[19] The Yoruba have this concept of *fura* or *ara nfumi*; literally - the body knows or speaks to me or what in English might be known as premonition or a sixth sense. This idea of the body speaking or informing a person is different from the notion of body language. It is rather the awareness of, or the sensing of an impending event even before it has happened. But in what way is premonition a kind of religious experience? The Christian might see premonition as evidence of his or her relationship with God on a par with prophetic revelation and thus rely on Amos 3:7, that says that 'Surely the Lord GOD will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets.' But even this 'revelation' must have roots in experience and the idea of *apriori* knowledge of God before experience of him becomes problematic. For example, Richard Swinburne (1981, 2005) holds both a public and a private conception of religious experience. It is difficult to have a religious experience if one is not religious or if one is outside a religious space, even if one is against religious beliefs. Saul's conversion was made possible only because he was already part of a religious culture, even if he was persecuting Christians.

Yet, with the collective as opposed to the individuality of the experience, it is experience that is not formed of a utilitarian ideal, says Lash (2010), – greatest happiness of the greatest number – since the greatest number is merely an aggregate number. But we are not dealing with aggregation here. A chorus might begin with individual voices but collectively they carry beyond the individual, growing into a supra voice that amplifies above and beyond the voice of the sum of each individual voice. I describe this as the dialectic of religious experience that relates to the way that a third force is generated by the harmony of the collective. This thinking might help explain group action where individuals within a group become capable of acts that each is incapable of carrying out on their own. Something else takes over, the group dynamic, which superimposes itself on the individual, anonymizes him, emboldens him, protects and gives him confidence and power to perform acts beyond his individual capacity in normal circumstances. This is how the Pentecostal experience cannot be reduced to individual psychology. It is a group activity, a participatory

[19] August Kekelu had been working on the structure of Benzene and one night in a dream he saw a snake swallowing its own tail. The dream reportedly pointed him to the structure of benzene ring.

ritual of a collective kind that arises out of practices and customs, as such without the group there can be no experience.

Levy-Bruhl in his unfortunately titled book *How Primitives Think* (1911) (as if he really knew) formulates a collective participatory theory of the group experience that differs from the individual psychology of religious experience that we find in James. Levy-Bruhl points out that the application of Western conceptual framework to other cultures such as the African can only lead to error. Here the contrast is between Western scientific or intellectual method of looking at the world compared to the African 'primitive' ways. C Bracken (1985) believes that 'primitive representations have their own laws and cannot be measured against `the laws of a psychology based upon the analysis of the individual subject' (p.13). Randall Collins (2004) also proposes a neo-Durkheimian idea of group dynamic that generates a collective energy that sustains the group. Collins writes, '…interaction ritual…is a theory of momentary encounters among human bodies charged up with emotions and consciousness because they have gone through chains of previous encounters' (p.3)

For DZ Phillips (1993: x), 'In asking whether God is real, we cannot simply assume that we know what 'real' means in this context. Whether we believe in God or not, a task of conceptual elucidation awaits us'. Since any enquiry into whether a particular type of religious experience is real or not can only be formed of an external perspective and if the enquirer lacks that perspective he or she may not possess the requisite access to the nature of the experience. William Alston (1991) argues that the notion of religious experience is not only meaningful but also can indeed be epistemologically defended. But Alston's epistemic conditions are ultimately reducible to sense experience with the mystical tacked on top. Equally, Mark Web (2011) notes that 'it is a mistake to treat it' that is, religious statements 'like ordinary language, expecting evidence in the ordinary sense, in the same way that it would be a mistake to ask for the evidence for a joke. "I saw God" should not be treated in the same way as "I saw Elvis." Not all experiences are clear and distinct or fall into neat and tidy categories; some are messy and incoherent and bent out of shape, since 'Out of the crooked timber of humanity', says Kant (1784[1963]) 'no straight thing was ever made'. Yet the religious experience must be rooted in experience.

But critics of religious experience theories like Stephen Katz (1978), Wayne Proudfoot (1985), Robert Sharf (1998, 2000), Gershom Scholem (1969) and others maintain that the concept of religious experience is ultimately meaningless since it lacks evidential support. They ask, what exactly is this experience and how does it differ from any other kind of human experiences? Grace Janzten (1995) approaches the concept from a feminist perspective where she sees the idea of religious mysticism as embedded within a Foucauldian power play in which historically the question of who should count as a mystic is gendered: men and not women. She also criticizes the subjective or psychological idea upon which the religious experience relies, arguing that, 'Contemporary philosophers of religion have a clear idea that mystical experiences are private, subjective, intense psychological states…This is true in spite of the fact that it is commonplace among contemporary writers that the word is notoriously difficult to define' (1995:4). This observation is precisely the position against which I am arguing: the very idea of a 'private, subjective, intense psychological states'. It is a point about which Nelson Pike (1992) also expresses concern and questions what this experience of a union or harmony with God really entails, since he finds them to be no more than a mere description or exaltation of God. The idea of a pure unmediated transcendental religious experience remains problematic without being conditioned by or dependent on social or cultural factors, as Proudfoot (1985) argues. In other words, religion stripped of its attendant rites and rituals from which the experience derives leaves nothing but a hollow empty shell of non-activity. This is because such an experience cannot be independent of cultural factors, as Proudfoot has argued or as Robert Sharf believes that 'Pure experience' does not exist; all experience is mediated by intellectual and cognitive activity'. But I take issue with Sharf's 'mediated by intellectual or cognitive activity', claim, by arguing that the experience is more of an affective pre-cognitive kind. But Sharf (2000) also thinks that the term 'experience' is a linguistic device that is used to 'thwart' the religious debate about evidence and to cover the concept's inadequacy. Thus he argues that 'This use of the concept 'religious experience' is exceedingly broad, encompassing a vast array of feelings, moods, perceptions, dispositions, and states of consciousness' (p.268). Sharf further claims that, '… a potential problem for modern theologians, as many essential elements of

theological reflection are simply not amenable to empirical observation or testing. By emphasizing the experiential dimension of religion - a dimension inaccessible to strictly objective scientific mode of enquiry - the theologian could forestall scientific critique' (1998:95). But we have heard this line of criticism before, such as I have rehearsed above and the religious experience theorists need only respond by stating that religious experience is unlike scientific or philosophical propositions such as is demanded by Sharf and others. But such defence does not completely get rid of Sharf's objection since he responds by saying that:

> . . . it is ill conceived to construe the object of the study of religion to be the inner experience of religious practitioners. Scholars of religion are not presented with experiences that stand in need of interpretation, but rather with texts, narratives, performances, and so forth. Any assertion to the effect that someone else's inner experience bears some significance for my construal of reality is situated, by its very nature, in the public realm of contested meanings, (1998:111)

Sharf's criticism is directed at the private or inner reports of religious experience that is inaccessible to outside observation. It is in essence the individuality of the experience that Sharf attacks and in this sense he perhaps has a point. Wayne Proudfoot (1985) on the other hand believes that the idea of religious experience is a Western categorical construct that has been proposed as universally applicable. This idea rests on the subjective nature of the experience, its *apriori* nature, which both informs its ineffability and transcendentalism. However, there are internal experiences or mental states that may appear to be inaccessible but are not completely inscrutable to external assessment. *Verstehen* or empathetic understanding is one example, where actions may be traced to mental states (motives) through the observation of the actions, which is one way of understanding mental states. We find this in Wilhem Dilthey and Weber's probability and ideal types. It is working backwards from action to motivation.

However, one problem with *verstehen* is how we can be certain that we have accurately interpreted action. One answer lies in what the subjects themselves report or on what is given to observation. For Proudfoot, 'religious beliefs and practices are interpretations of experience, and they are themselves fit objects of interpretation' (1985:41). Martin Jay (2005) takes the notion of experience to be both public and private or subjective where for him the language of experience involves something we can say publicly even if it is something that is subjective or personal or individual and internal. Or as he puts it, the idea consists in 'expressible commonalities and the ineffability of individual interiority.'(pp.6-7). Terrence Tilley (1995:7) notes that '…the prima facie problem that modern philosophers of religion address is the rationality of religious beliefs. But given the context of early modernity, a period of profound social conflict, economic upheaval and religious strife the real problems were practical ones.' Which is to say that philosophic criticisms of religion sometimes ignores the question of what religion means to believers in their day to day lives. But the Nigerian Pentecostal experience not only achieves this end through the rituals of the ecstatic performance and what it means to believers, but it also meets with Proudfoot's demand for a 'public' observable and verifiable experience. As William Barnard's (1992:231) review of Proudfoot's book notes:

> Religion for Proudfoot is primarily a cultural, public, accessible phenomenon. According to him, those who claim that religious experiences are private, personal, or interior are mistaken. They simply do not understand the true nature of emotions and an undue respect for our ability to make authoritative judgements based on introspective evidence.

Many Nigerian Pentecostalists speak in terms of a transcendental religious experience but their religious attitudes point to a more immanent kind. They believe that God's presence, power and knowledge are manifest in observable phenomena such as in nature and he is transcendental in respect of the greatness of these phenomena. The Pentecostal experience therefore steers a middle ground between the transcendental and immanent ideas of God, since

the purity of religious experience is essentially without content and must be anchored in social or cultural activities. The idea of the *apriori* concept of religious experience cannot therefore be primarily private or personal or subjective but must result from an external source, within a group through which it generates the encounter with the sacred. In which case transcendentalism becomes immanentism, since the grounds for believing in transcendental experience (*apriori*) has been taken away and grounded in observable rituals. It is the 'collective effervescence' of the sacred that generates the religious experience. This is a Durkheimian point. The rest of this chapter will now deal with the various forms of the Pentecostal experience, starting with the ethnographic study.

3.3. Ethnographic study

The ethnography for this project was conducted at a Nigerian Pentecostal Church in Stockwell, South London. It is a medium size church that accommodates about 230 worshippers at a sitting. Two services are held on Sundays. The first service is the English Service that runs between 09:30-11am and the second 'native' Nigerian service starts at 11:30 and finishes at 13-45. Since the church effectively runs these two services, combined membership of the church is approximately about 350-400. More people attend the second service than attend the first.

The pastor-in-charge is Nigerian of Yoruba extraction, of medium build and middle-aged. He appears to possess what Weber describes as charisma and an easy smile. The members show respect and reverence towards him as I observed in the traditional Yoruba ways of according elders respects such as the tone of speech when addressing him, reverential genuflection in greetings and the fact that they refer to him as 'Baba' or 'Daddy' or Chairman. He was welcoming and easy to talk to and gave the impression that he was more of a servant than a leader. Other pastors assist the main pastor – there are 7 in all - but these are junior pastors. There are also deacons and evangelists who are effectively church managers. All the pastors sit in the front of the church facing the congregation. There is a church secretary, and women fellowship groups

and welfare committees. Sitting arrangements are mixed – men and women sit side-by-side and anyone can sit anywhere in the church except at the very front. There are ushers that see to the smooth running of the church services – they stand at the door and welcome visitors and show them to seats; they hand out leaflets and envelopes for tithes and offerings and pass messages to and from members. Tithes are members' donation of earnings, usually 10%, which it is said that God commands (Malachi 3:10) and ostensibly this donation is to God, but in reality it goes towards the costs of running the church. Offerings on the other hand are any amount that members can afford to give during the service, again towards the cost of running the church. The ushers are always smartly dressed and are swift about their tasks. A night vigil usually takes place on Friday night through to the morning.

To the side of the pastors is the choir with their musical instruments around them while the acoustic is reinforced by paddings covered in colourful decorations. Huge standing fans cool the hall in the summer months and central vents heat the hall in winter. Members greet each other: 'You are welcome in the name of the Lord', complete with handshakes. Services always begin with praise worship – which could last between 15-20 minutes. Praise worship starts slowly when some members, with eyes shut and arms raised aloft, as though in meditation and smiles on their faces, as they sing. Then it builds in intensity until the atmosphere is transformed into a festive orgiastic session and the energy fills the church hall. The dances are native Nigerian dance styles, which are rhythmic and free-flowing, bending, rising, swaying, particularly the hips as the entire body is perpetually engaged in movement. One crucial observation that I made was that when English hymns are sang, for example *Abide with Me* or *Amazing Grace* or *What A Friend We Have in Jesus* – a certain stillness descends and everyone stands in calm solemnity. Perhaps these Western Hymns are not meant for dancing.

The Pastor-in-charge would lead the prayer and at its completion the amens would follow and eyes would open. The pastor might shout: Amen? The congregation would respond, 'amen!' 'God did not hear you; if you want God to hear you, raise your voice to him. 'I said, Amen!' In a deafening response, the congregation would respond: Amen.' After praise-worship, prayer and Bible reading, announcements by the church secretary would follow. He would

mention upcoming events in the church calendar, significant developments, birthday celebrations, a birth and any other events. He would ask if anyone knows of job vacancies or accommodation that might be brought to the notice of the pastors.

Prayers for children follow the announcements after which another session of praise-worship led by the choir would follow – dancing, clapping and so on - after which comes the sermon. The sermon could be on any theme, ranging from 'divine abundance, 'being holy', 'doing the will of God' or being positive in life and 'removing negativity'. There is a lot of encouraging talk: 'speak to your neighbour and tell him, he is blessed' or 'you will not fail'. A lot of participation and interaction goes on in this way during the sermon, when the pastor would quote from the Bible. Prayer follows the sermon and the offerings and tithes are taken during which music and dance are engaged. Two baskets are placed on a table in front of the church: the offering basket and the tithes basket both clearly labelled. The tithe is 10% of earnings/wages. They would say: 'offering time! blessing time'! After the sermon there is then time for testimony. Testimony is a segment when members come forward to share news of positive developments in their lives. This could be gaining employment or getting engaged, a marriage, the birth of a child, safe arrival from a journey and so on.

Church services are hardly repetitive even though they appear to follow a format. Every service is unique and varied and one would not know what a service might turn out to be like. It is this aspect of spontaneity and perhaps unpredictability that appear appealing to members.

Interviews and findings.

In all, 12 people were interviewed. Almost all were Nigerians and almost all were born in Nigeria, which is to say that they brought Pentecostalism with them. Most were recent immigrants to the UK, which indicates that most were Pentecostalists before they arrived in the UK. The only conversion that took place, if this could be described as conversion, was from one Pentecostal church to another and for many this happened in Nigeria. There is something called the *prayer points*, which is a list of issues or concerns that guides aspects of prayer.

All the interviewees mentioned prayer as perhaps the most significant part of their belief. But what does prayer mean to them? One member, Bukky said that there are different types of prayers and supplication was just one kind of prayer. There is prayer as thanks-giving or praise worship. But she said something that I found striking and revealing about Pentecostalism. She said that 'prayer is communicating with God within the group and praying together or speaking to Him alone, as a child would speak to her father.' I asked if it is to make a request or a petition? She said that prayer may take the form of a request but not at all times. 'Sometimes I just want to speak to him. It is not every time you ask your father for something. You just want to speak to him.' What does she feel when she is praying? She said she feels the presence of God. But what does being in the presence of God feel like? 'I feel calm, relaxed, assured - I don't feel any fear or anxiety. Of course God answers prayers! I won't be here if God does not answer prayers. I don't know about anyone else but God has been faithful in my life.'

But could any of these experiences not happen in orthodox (Catholic, Anglican and so on) churches, I asked. They could but she said that Orthodox churches only talk about God but 'from the outside' and not from the inside. She also said that the appeal of Pentecostalism is analogous to seeing a beautifully braided hair on a fellow woman and asking where she had had it done. It is a form of recommendation from others, mostly by word of mouth. This is what Harvey Cox (1997) was referring to when he asserts that most are Pentecostalists because '…a neighbor had invited them'. Bukky went on to say that Pentecostalism has changed her life. In what way, I asked. 'I am not the same person anymore. I look at life differently. I am at peace with myself, God and man'. Many said that orthodox churches have not moved with the times and were routine and rigid. Another said that they were hierarchical and authoritarian.

There were echoes of this idea of different kinds of prayers in other responses: prayer as petition, as communication, prayer as praise or gratitude, prayer as personal devotional and silent act and prayer as collective group activity. Segun told me that orthodox churches 'do the same thing again and again and are not progressive. For example they recite the Lords prayer at every service and 'leave it there' whereas Pentecostal churches go further into the word of God. I

found that although there is a format to the liturgies, but paradoxically there is no repetition. Each time something different or new seems to happen. Then another member said that, 'In my old church if I need to pray for something I will probably go to a priest but with Pentecostalism I do not need the authority of a priest. I have the Holy Spirit within me, which enables me (gives me the power) to pray.

Funmi said, 'I love dancing and singing and glorifying God.' What about prayer: what does prayer mean to her? 'Prayer is asking God to perform wonders in your life'. What wonders? To make you a success in whatever you do, to make you a success as a human being. The Bible says that whatever you do, you will prosper. These are the same themes that I encountered among the members,

Analysis and Key findings.

One of the key finding is the importance of prayer and praise worship to members of the church. Every one of those interviewed mentioned these aspects of worship as important to their spiritual life and to their Christian belief. The collective exuberance, the ecstatic energy generated by this participatory style of worship that I observed appears to bear out their claims. There were constant smiles on their faces, sometimes laughter and what may be interpreted as joy that appears to be generated by positive collective energy by this style of worship. There is also the aspect of belonging to a sacred community of people from similar culture and background and the need to forge a community spirit, a network of help and assistance and an identity. However I did not get the impression that this is happening because they reside in a foreign land; this community spirit also happens back in their homeland of Nigeria. Another key point is that most of the church members appear to enjoy a reasonable standard of living in the UK. Many are professionals: doctors, civil servants, accountants, lawyers, nurses, teachers, social workers and others. There were a few smart cars in the car park that belonged to members. This appears to negate the suggestion that many Nigerian or African Pentecostalists are motivated by economic deprivation.

A fourth observation is the significance of testimonies during church services. This is a time when members come forward to give account of positive developments in their lives. Testimony is essentially sharing good news and creating a positive atmosphere, like saying: *see what blessings God has done for me.* There is also a system of welfare that exists within the church known as 'cells' which consists in little groups of members that look after the welfare of each other. In times of personal crises or bereavement members provide financial assistance and other kinds of help that is needed. I found little evidence of collective form of glossolalia or trancing during this research. The pastor-in-charge might utter words in a language that may be construed as glossolalic but there was no collective act of such utterances. Although I did witness a woman go into a trance in one of the services and she spoke in tongues - a language that was not familiar to my ears.

However, terms like: rigid, routine, repetitive, authoritative, hierarchical recitative, were used in many instances to describe orthodox churches, and the opposite words like: flexible, spontaneous, loose, equal and democratic might be applied to the Pentecostal style of worship. Unsurprisingly the recent arrivals appear to retain stronger ties with certain Nigerian culture compared with those that have been in the UK a lot longer. They felt that orthodox churches were not sufficiently spiritual. This stress on spirituality was a recurring theme in many of the interviews. I came to realize that this idea of spirituality embraced many things, including freedom within worship, egalitarian approach, empowerment and control. The spirit must be free, it seemed, because if regulated or controlled cannot and remain a spirit. The spirit speaks out of its own yearning and of its own needs – feelings - unmediated. I observed that dance was just as important as a form of expression or performance of worship.

One important discovery that I hadn't noticed before but one that I found during the course of this research is that most of those of the church members are Yoruba. The predomination of the Yoruba ethnic group in the Pentecostal movement in the UK and in Nigeria is perhaps reflected in Nigeria as well. A Nigerian Pentecostal website indicates that about 85% of the Pentecostal pastors are Nigerians and indeed many of the founders of these churches are Yoruba and so are the members of the church – Pastor E Adeboye of *Redeemed Church of God*, the largest Pentecostal church in Nigeria, Pastor William. F

Kumuyi of *Deeper Life Ministry* and Pastor David Oyedepo of *Winners' Chapel*. These three churches collectively represent the largest Pentecostal churches in Nigeria and all headed by founding fathers of Yoruba extraction. The UK's largest Pentecostal church, the Kingsway International Church of Christ (KICC) was founded and still headed by a Yoruba, Pastor Matthew Ashimolowo. The Yoruba traditional religious culture has also been influential in Brazil – Candoble whose origins can and has been traced to the Yoruba religion. The deity of the river – the *Yemeja* in Yoruba or Yemanja as it is known in Brazil with rituals performed at these ceremonies to the Orisa in Nigeria one finds replicated in Brazil. Also the forerunners of modern day Nigerian Pentecostalism, the African Independent Churches, (AICs) were all Yoruba-based churches such as the *Aladura* churches of the *Cherubim and Seraphim*, the *Celestial Church* and the *Christ Apostolic Church*. It is not clear why Yoruba predominate within these churches but one possible explanation is that the Yoruba tradition of religious worship and spirituality chimes with what we find in Pentecostalism today.

3.4 The Pentecostal Worship

I have alluded to the significance of worship in Pentecostalism but what exactly does worship entail and is the idea of worship exclusive to Nigerian Pentecostalism? To answer the last part of the question first, the rites and rituals of worship are not peculiar to Nigerian Pentecostalism but can be found in most religious (Catholic, Anglican and other churches) and even non-Christian religious groups. However, it is the peculiarity of style of worship in Nigerian Pentecostalism that differentiates it from any other kind of Christian denomination. For example, according to D. Miller et al (2007:23-24)

> The engine of Pentecostalism is its worship. Whether in a Store front building with bare Florescent tubes hanging from the ceiling or in a theater with a sophisticated sound system, the heart of Pentecostalism is the music. It touches the emotions. It is populist in tone and instrumentation. And the lyrics give voice to feelings—the pain, the joy, the hope for new life.

One of the main themes of Nigerian Pentecostalism is collective worship, but this does not necessarily mark it apart from other Christian denominations, since most are engaged in forms of collective worship. For example, Evelyn Underhill (1964[2004:68) has noted that 'Christian worship is never a solitary undertaking' and equally, Segler and Bradley (2006:32) report that 'During the Medieval period, the practice of worship became too objective centering in symbols (verbal or otherwise) which became ends in themselves. This worship ceased to meet the deep needs of the people…' But Nigerian Pentecostalism in general is revising the concept of worship in new and dynamic ways. For example, Melva Wilson Corsten (2007:45) claims that, 'The corporate worship of God is more experiential than rationalistic, focusing upon the communal sharing of reality rather than simply transmitting information…' And for Durkheim that worship is a participatory kind of group activity. The question therefore is what sets the Pentecostal worship and by extension the Pentecostal experience apart from any other kind is that the three Ps of Prayer, Praise-worship and performance constitute the core elements of Nigerian Pentecostalism in ways that are peculiarly expressive, ecstatic and exuberant and from which alone the Durkheimiam 'collective effervescence' is generated. As Birgit Meyer (2010:122) writes:

> With many researchers, I share the view that Pentecostal services and other events however their appeal to the strong emphasis on inducing dramatic experiences of an encounter with the Holy Spirit and a spiritual war against the satanic (manifesting as old gods, witchcraft, and other spirits).

I shall now proceed to discuss each aspect of the Pentecostal worship in some detail, beginning with prayer.

3.4:1 Prayer as communication

The discussion that follows will not address the philosophical questions as to whether God answers prayers, as has been argued by authors like Scott Davison

(2012), Vincent Brummer (2008) and others who claim in what Davidson describes as 'the pointlessness of prayer'. Terrence Tilley's (1995) criticism of the philosopher's focus on the 'rationality of religious belief, still applies. My concern therefore is not with the question of the truth or falsehood or the efficacy of prayer but about what believers believe about prayers and the role that prayer plays in their lives. This point is crucial to any sociological assessment or analysis of prayer, since prayer may be dismissed on the grounds that it lacks evidential proof as to claims of efficacy. Efficacy here refers to the way that prayer works for many within a religious context not whether it can be proven to work on objective or scientific grounds.

According to Giordan and Woodhead, (2015) 'Prayer, or something like it, seems to be at the core of every religion. Even more, it is the core of any relationship with the transcendent, however we wish to define it, within and outside the organized religious traditions.' Many members of the church in which the study was carried out rely on 1 Timothy 1-2, *I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men*. The passage refers to different kinds of prayer: supplication, intercession and thanksgiving. For the Benedictine Monks, *Laborare est orare* (to experience) and so prayer can take many different forms and I shall examine each of those forms. Although writers such as Murray and Meyers (1997) argue that petitionary prayer does have a place within religious belief as it solidifies the relationship between the believer and God.

But I begin with prayer as communication. Many Christians believe that to pray is to communicate with God, as one of the interviewees mentioned, yet if communication is a form of interaction between people who can see or hear each other, how is prayer as communication be possible between man and a God that man cannot see or hear? Christians might reply that God listens, hears and answers prayers, but how is this possible? Walter Benjamin, in *On Language as such and on Language of Man* (1997:62) asserts that: 'Every expression of human mental life can be understood as a kind of language, … all communication of the contents of the mind is language, communication in words being only a particular case of human language. …the existence of language, however is co-extensive not only in areas of human mental expression…but with absolutely everything.' Benjamin calls into question the idea that communication in words

must be geared towards somebody in particular, referring to this idea as a 'bourgeois conception of language' and goes on to say that 'the other conception of language knows no means, no object, and no addressee of communication. It means: 'in the name, the mental being of a man communicates itself to God.' (p.65) In other words, there is a kind of language that is not purposive towards any human end. It is a language of man, a language of things. Things, for Benjamin, possess communicative value and it is perhaps in this sense that Nigerians would say that things have a spirit. They speak to man, but not in words, and Benjamin stresses that language is not only communication in words. So the language of prayer is the language of communication but also the language of communing, of being with or together with or in concert with something.

For Kierkegaard the language of faith situates the individual within a (positive) mental and emotional state of being. It is the 'leap' into the dark that the believer makes, expecting his or her prayer to be answered. Belief breeds optimism and hope and conditions the believer into seeing the positive in everyday experience and from which he or she draws strength and confidence. The believer does not expect that every prayer would be answered in the way that he or she desires; however, what appears to be unanswered prayer is viewed within a positive frame of mind. Abby Day (2005) treats this notion of unanswered prayer in a research she conducted on a women's prayer group about which she writes: 'I noticed that, as they reviewed the prayers from previous meetings, many prayers were not answered as originally requested. Yet, there always seemed to be some way in which the women would interpret events to allow them to be satisfied with what had happened' (p.344). According to Day, through 'chats', the women appear to come to terms with what seemed like unanswered prayer and this idea of 'chats' and is not dissimilar to one idea of prayer that Uche Chizaram (2013:8) describes as '…talking aloud in the hope that some new insight will come or a better decision can be made, prayer has the function of being part of a decision-making process.'

But for many Nigerian Pentecostalists this is no mere act of voicing a problem in the sense that a 'problem shared is a problem halved' although it includes such a notion; but prayer as a way of voicing a problem is dispersing or sharing or distributing that voice within a sacred context, believing that a higher power is

involved in the process of its resolution. For them, prayer is belief in positive outcomes within the larger belief that God answers prayers; and negative results do not disprove their sense that God answers prayers and just like the 'chats' in Abby Day's research, in which results (whatever they may be) are subsumed within the positivity of the belief system. In *Wilfully Disempowered* (2008:263) Day cites Peter Berger's (1967:53) views on theodicy, an idea not '…intended …to bring happiness to the suffering individual but rather to confer meaning onto circumstances which might otherwise appear chaotic.' This echoes Weber's views on theodicy, which he sees as an intellectual process of trying to understand the world by trying to find meaning in what appears to be a chaotic and meaningless world.

Rebecca Lynch (2015:158) following Mauss (2003) reinforces the idea that prayer is a 'social' act rather than an individual act, but particularly she looks at prayer as a form of therapy. In Trinidad where she conducted her research, Lynch observes that 'Prayer …helped people to make sense of and deal with the problems of everyday living' (p.168). This is the optimism of faith, indeed faith as trust, as a positive, assuring and reassuring as well as confidence-building belief system that underpins belief in prayer. This is why many Nigerian Pentecostalists rely on Psalm 24:4 'Yea, I walk through the valley of the shadow of death; I will fear no evil: thy rod and thy staff comfort me'. Therefore for the typical Nigerian Pentecostalist Christian there is no such thing as an unanswered prayer; rather, what there is, is but a temporary delay in response, as God knows what is best for the believer. To an outsider, however, such an argument might seem unconvincing, but only upon the basis of or the approach of rationality might the idea of prayer be deemed to be meaningless. Yet, the belief in prayer does not entail blind faith; it relates to hardwork backed up by prayer. Prayer in this sense recognizes the limitation of the powers of man and the humility in accepting those limitations. D. Z Phillips (1965) sees the analysis of the concept of prayer as resting on the ordinary use of language as erroneous. In his book *The Concept of prayer* (1965) Phillips sees prayer as '…attitude towards (1) all explanations, (2) the sum of all one's moral endeavors, [sic] and

(3) contingency.'[20] The point about prayer and time is verification. How do we verify time or prayer?

The idea of Miracles through prayer is pertinent here. There is a misconception by authors like Paul Gifford (2003; 2004) regarding the attitudes of Nigerian Pentecostalists to miracles, since he believes that it is predicated on the belief in instantaneous resolution to existential problems. David Hume (1748[2000] defines a miracle as 'a transgression of a law of nature by a particular volition of the Deity' (p.173). For many Nigerian Pentecostalists, a miracle is not necessarily a violation of laws of nature but could be consistent with the laws of nature. The key here is a pragmatic attitude towards miracles, which include even occurrences that are consistent with the natural process. For example, Nigerian Pentecostalists make a distinction between the material cause and a spiritual cause of an event and even though they acknowledge the material cause they also appreciate that there is a spiritual dimension that underpins the event's ultimate cause. Evans-Pritchard (1976:69-71), in his study of the Zande people makes this very point about African belief in witchcraft. He cites the example of a granary that collapsed as a result of the stems been eaten away by termites and just before it collapsed a group of people had gone in to take shelter from the burning sun and were killed, as the granary collapsed. To Western minds, this is an unfortunate accident and no causal factors needed to be sought but the Zande attributed the cause to witchcraft. Csordas (1997) connects the idea of misfortune in what he describes as the 'the irrationality of primitive belief'. But as Pritchard makes clear the Zande need not be reminded that the collapse of the granary was an accident, caused by the granary's weakened columns that gave way all of a sudden. But for them the question goes beyond the immediate observable causal factors responsible for the occurrence and goes towards an attempt to understand why both occurred at the same time? To the Western scientific mind it is futile to search for a metaphysical cause beyond the physical clash of events. Yet the problem of theodicy remains just as problematic for the Western mind as it is for the Zande. Their quest is for

[20] Just like the works of Schleiermarcher, James and Otto were a response to the attack on religion by enlightenment thinkers, the works of D.Z. Phillips and others were a response to the positivism and verification theories of A. J. Ayer, Rudolp Carnap, Morris Schlick and others. According to the positivists, only that which can be verified can be said to have meaning.

the event's metaphysical underpinnings even if the immediate material cause is known. In simple terms it is an attempt to explain unfortunate occurrences, which is no different to Western attempts to do the same. The difference is perhaps in method and the distinction between the Western scientific method and the African belief systems is not as greatly different as may be supposed, (Horton, 1993; Lurhmann, 2012; Csordas, 1997).

Equally, for Nigerian Pentecostalists, a miracle is not a mere coincidence or good fortune; it is a positive occurrence within the context of religious belief. The belief in miracles may thus be described as the power of positive thinking but power that comes as a gift from God, just as is found in Day (2005). Therefore, the birth of a child, the safe arrival after a journey, passing an exam even after studying hard and so on are positive results within the context of religious belief, just like extraordinary occurrences that defy logical explanation – untreatable medical conditions that have confounded science for example – are also deemed to be miracles. Perhaps there is a simple explanation that have not yet been found but for the believer such an occurrence is a miracle regardless of whether there exists a perfectly reasonable explanation or not.

But this idea is not so far fetched as might appear. In the West we find cases of unconscious use of metaphors of miracles, good fortune, luck and so forth, as George Lakoff and Mark Johnson explain in their book, *Metaphors We Live By* (1980). They argue that metaphors are often expressions of meaningful ways in which we live our lives and what appears to be miracles are part of daily experiences. Examples include expressions like: *saved by the bell*, *back from the brink* or *back from the jaws of death, what a miraculous escape* and so on, which humans unconsciously employ in everyday experiences that reflect the extraordinariness of these situations. In which case there is perhaps little difference between Western or Euro-American assessments of these events and the Zande's so-called irrational approach to unexplained or inexplicable occurrences.

The obvious question is why the need for miracles if miracles are no more than ordinary day-to-day occurrences? The answer, as already mentioned is that miracles function within a religious belief system, as a matter of grace and the acknowledgement of man's limitations. Miracles range from the seemingly impossible, extraordinary events (escaping being hit by a speeding car), to the

mildly possible (went to sleep and woke up in the morning) and the seemingly mundane (ran into an old friend who gave me the number to a recruiting agency that led to me getting a job) all of which are underpinned by religious belief. In my ethnographic study I found that positive beliefs or seeing the positives in life's experiences is immensely enabling for the believer and motivates him or her towards even more positive actions. Prayer and the idea of miracles produce positive psychological states that are inherently therapeutic as well as protective of the believer, which in turn generates the feeling the kind to which William James refers when he says 'all is well with the individual'.

It is worth noting that there is a sense in which some Nigerian Pentecostalists are gradually moving away from the language of miracles towards the language of blessing. These are early days yet and only time will tell how far or in what ways this development will proceed, but there is some evidence that this is the case in some churches. For example, in the CAC church the emphasis is on *blessing*. Indeed a popular song that is sung in the church is *There will be Showers of Blessing*! During my attendance an entire month was devoted to the theme of blessing called 'Divine abundance'. Many services embrace the common refrain of blessing or where members are urged to say to the person seated next to them the words: *you are blessed*! In Nigeria, Pentecostal crusades and revivals that refer to *Miracles, Signs and Wonders* are often promotional advertisements and popular images of miraculous healing – sight being restored, the lame walking, the deaf hearing, the mute speaking and other miraculous are slowly being consigned to narrow margins within the movement. The sensationalism or theatrical throwing off of crutches, the wheelchair and walking sticks are giving way to a more substantial form of spirituality that is rooted in every day modes of living. Although miracles might be seen as answers to petitionary payers, but miracles do not function as the logical end to prayers but rather function within a wider religious context that include grace, gifts and blessing.

What is also noteworthy is that miracles and blessing are twined within Nigerian Pentecostalism. I discovered that blessings are to Nigerian Pentecostalists underserved gifts (grace) and empowerment by the Holy Spirit while miracles function as an aspect of blessings in the context in which difficulties are made easy, problems are resolved, needs are provided for and

evil, misfortune and wretchedness are warded off. Therefore miracles are encapsulated with the general belief in blessing, which accepts man's unworthiness and limitations and the fact that things occur as part of the 'natural process' does not entail that they must occur by necessity or that the believer is entitled to them. The fact that it is natural that women conceive and bear children does not entail the right or entitlement to conception or to bear children. Some cannot and those that can are no better than those that cannot: but for the grace of God.

Here I must mention the idea of 'gift' in Nigerian culture, which forms part of the background to the Nigerian Pentecostalist belief in grace or blessing. In Nigeria, showing gratitude is a prized and valuable custom where the emphasis is on showing gratitude where the act is demonstrative, effusive, involving a kind of performance, a dance or drama or praise. Much of what Mauss (1954[1990]) has to say about 'Gift' can be found in Nigerian culture. The gift is not necessarily given freely although it seems as though it is free and because it seems to be free it connotes the idea of grace by the giver. But the recipient must have deserved it in some sense either by attitude, situation, actions or being in some kind of relation to the giver. This is where the idea of 'gift' acts as a social cohesive glue or bond connection among people and also acts as a medium of exchange of love or affection and spirituality that endures within the community. One negative aspect of the corruption in Nigeria has origins in the gift culture, mixed with Western capitalist material culture. It was when gifts began to be given for favours, particularly when money began to be used as gift, which started to have a corrupting influence within the culture. Gift also has a spiritual dimension as it extends to the notion of grace as a form of underserving blessing. This is where the notion of the grace of God (gift as miracles or miracles as gift) enters the picture for many Nigerians. Whatever positive outcome one might receive or encounter in life must be seen as a gift, that is grace like 'manna from heaven' since one does not deserve it and should not expect it. Therefore a miracle is considered a gift from God, even if it falls within the normal or ordinary day-to-day occurrence.

3.4:2 Prayer as experience

For Walter Benjamin, again in *On Language As Such and Language of Man* (1997) there are different kinds of languages. If language is a means of communication then there is the thing, like words, to be communicated. But there comes a time when what is being communicated surpasses the instrument of communication as in when words run short of experience, like a translator running out of indigenous words to effect translation. This is the limitation of words that is said to compare with the infinity of God's wisdom. For Benjamin (1996:69) 'language never gives *mere* signs' and the language of prayer is more than 'mere signs'. It is experience as a whole.

Most of those interviewed in the study thought that prayer is a way of speaking to God from the heart and criticize the mainstream churches' attitude to prayer, particularly prayer as a written text. This criticism echoes a short story by Leo Tolstoy: *The Three Hermits*, about three Monks living in a remote Island – accessible only by boat – where all they do is pray. A visiting Bishop hearing about these men asks to be taken to the Island to see them but the fishermen said it would be a futile journey, as the men were old and perhaps senile. After insisting that he wanted to see these men the bishop finally arrives to find them as they had been described. 'Three are ye, three are we, have mercy upon us' was all they said in prayer. Believing the men to be ignorant of true prayer the bishop proceeds to teach them the Lord's Prayer. Being old men the hermits found the words difficult to memorize but after repeating the lines several times they seemed to have mastered them. The Bishop then departs but just as his boat was about to sail the hermits chased after it and catching up said to the bishop, *We have forgotten your teaching, servant of God. As long as we kept repeating it we remembered, but when we stopped saying it for a time, a word dropped out, and now it has all gone to pieces. We can remember nothing of it. Teach us again.* The futility of his enterprise now dawned on the bishop, who in admission replied: *Your own prayer will reach the Lord, men of God. It is not for me to teach you. Pray for us sinners*.

This story has some relevance to this discussion on several levels. The first is prayer as experience of the divine, of group worship and petition. It is also

relevant in the sense of what Nigerian Pentecostalists refer to the rigidity of orthodox churches' attitude to prayer, where prayer appears to be scripted and taught rather than spontaneous. Here the Bishop attempts to teach the hermits how to pray and it is their rejection of prayer as taught that is equally worthy of note. Although their own prayer might appear repetitive, it is devotional and perhaps varying depending on their experiences of the day. Mauss (2003:21) also criticises recitative prayer or prayer by rote and has this to say:

> Infinitely supple, it has taken the most varied forms, by turns adoring and coercive, humble and threatening, dry and full of imagery, immutable and variable, mechanical and mental. It has filled the most varied roles: here it is a brusque demand, there an order, elsewhere a contract, an act of faith, a confession, a supplication, an act of praise, a hosanna.

I shall now turn attention to the different kinds of prayers and treat each in turn.

(B) *Prayer as supplication or petition*

One of the main criticisms of prayer is prayer as petition but most Pentecostalism scholars often omit, neglect or gloss over the important role that prayer plays in Pentecostal worship and even when addressed, they see petitionary prayer as directed towards material goods, (Gifford, 2004). Other criticism include the fact that if God is omniscient then he already knows the needs of the worshipper and no longer is there the need to ask God for something he already knows.

One of those interviewed for this project said that petitionary prayer is just one of many kinds of prayer and in this sense she echoes William James's (1912 (2008:336) idea that '… petitionary prayer is one department of prayer; and if we take the word in its wider sense as meaning every kind of inward communion or conversation with the power recognized as divine, we can easily see that the scientific criticism leaves it untouched.' James then goes on to quote the French Theologian Auguste Sebatier (1897) by saying that 'religion is an intercourse, a conscious and voluntary relation, entered into by a soul in distress with the mysterious power upon which it feels itself to depend and

upon which its fate is contingent… Prayer is religion in act; that is, prayer is real religion' (James:1902:416). But petitionary prayer is but one kind of prayer and what is petitioned is often an expression of distress or a cry for help, an admission of powerlessness and consequently a submission, as Sabatier says, to a power above and beyond the individual.

Prayer is one act of religious worship that may consist in a monologue or a dialogue with God. The eyes often shut out the physical world as heart begins to speak in the belief that someone is listening. The prayer could be silent, personal and meditative or it could be in a group with voices raised together. One person I interviewed, Debbie says 'when I sing and pray, I shut the world out of my mind and think about nothing else but my communication with God.' She appears to create a mood within which the mind is stilled from the problems and care that surrounds her. 'I feel calm afterwards' she said. Prayer as devotion is solemnity in commitment to the sacred as though declaring an oath of allegiance to God. It involves setting aside time and space to engage in communing with a higher power.

3.4:3 Prayer as thanks-giving

Discussions on prayer within Pentecostalism are dominated by the emphasis on petitionary request that we encountered in the last section and indeed in the last chapter by authors like Paul Gifford (2004), David Maxwell (2006) and others and this is partly because of the sociological bias towards the logic of deprivation theory. Religious adherents are said to pray because they have some material need, as Gifford (2004) and others argue but there is another kind of prayer that is not geared towards the need to have some problems resolved. There is a form of prayer that is offered as praise to God or prayer of adoration. Prayer of praise or thanksgiving is perhaps as important, if not more important than petitionary prayer. For Nigerian Pentecostalists, prayer as thanksgiving functions within a holistic context of general well-being and not because of a particular favour that has been received.

3.4:4 Glossolalia: making sense of nonsense

Although none of those interviewed for this project mentioned glossolalia as a key appeal of Pentecostalism, but as we saw in the first chapter, glossolalia remains a central tenet of the Pentecostal doctrine, as a key distinguishing feature between the Pentecostal movement and other kinds of Christian neo-fundamentalist faith. We also saw it as a special work of grace, a gift of the Holy Sprit. At the CAC church I witnessed smatterings of such utterances by the pastor-in-charge but only as brief interjections during a sermon and never on a scale of collective performance. Glossolalia appears to be slowly waning as an essential part of worship, being replaced by other forms of 'festive' participatory performance. For example, in the church that this research was conducted, there was little evidence of glossolalic utterance during church services. So why is glossolalia relevant to our discussion if its significance as part of the Pentecostal worship is waning? The point is that glossolalia remains an important part of the Pentecostal story and one that we cannot omit as it is significant to a discussion on Pentecostal experience. Also, the ability to speak in tongues and be baptized are prerequisites of a born again Christian.

A distinction is sometimes made between glossolalia and Xenoglossy (Mapes Anderson, 1979), where glossolalia is the ability to speak in tongues and xenoglossy is a language that is foreign to the speaker, which the speaker has never previously spoken and which the speaker cannot understand but which others can understand. But if, on the other hand, glossolalia is in fact Xenoglossy, then evidence is required that (a) the words are intelligible and (b) others beside the speaker can understand the language. If, however no evidence of intelligibility can be produced to authenticate the words that are spoken, then both Xenoglossy and Glossolalia are equally delusional.

Glossolalia is a form of language that involves ecstatic utterance, sounding like unintelligible 'gibberish'. Karen Stollznow (2014) thinks that glossolalia is not a language at all, writing: 'Glossolalia is language-like but it is not language. It bears only superficial similarity to language' (NP). But this is a claim against

which I must take issue. As we saw in Benjamin, language is anything that is capable of communication, even objects and things; but Stollznow perhaps has in mind the notion that glossolalia is unlike any familiar language that is spoken anywhere in the world like English, say or Yoruba. There is no country of glossolalia speakers where a simple sentence like *I am going to the market* could be uttered.

But the critical question is not whether glossolalic content, that is, the words spoken, are intelligible or not but what exactly is the purpose of glossolalia? Why do the faithful need to speak in tongues at all? The Bible states that glossolalia is a gift of the Holy Spirit; but what is the purpose of this gift? Is it the mere speech-act of a polymath? That could hardly be it. Perhaps it is a corrective to the curse of the Tower of Babel. That could hardly be it either. Glossolalia does not function as an everyday language within social intercourse, but within a sacred setting and so the Tower of Babel reference does not apply. The problem is partly down to the attempt at a rationalization of religious belief and practices, to find something meaningful in them by virtue of what might be thought to be commonsensical or rational. Clearly glossolalia does not appear to fall within the scope of rationalism.

Yet, academic assessment of glossolalia has ranged from complete dismissal to more charitable interpretations of its meaning. For example, George Cutten (1929) believes that glossolalia was common among people of low intellect, that is, those with limited eloquence and expressive ability. This argument cannot be sustained since those with above average intelligence also practice glossolalia. One of the problems with this assessment is its disproportionate focus on the speech-act and the psychological states of those engaged in the activity instead of the overall context in which the act is produced. Stollznow (2014) picks up on this point and urges that focus be placed on the 'behaviour' side of the phenomenon. If glossolalia is viewed merely as a defective speech-act then it is easy to see why it might be considered meaningless. But glossolalia is no more absurd than faith is absurd. What could be more absurd than a man (Abraham) agreeing to the sacrifice of his own son to a God that he does not see, and how much less the seeming absurdity of speaking in what appears to be 'meaningless' words? If religious belief is its own evidence and what is believed motivates practice, it is the context in which the language is spoken, the context

of religious setting, where alone it possesses significance and the basis upon which it must be assessed. Two main criticisms of glossolalia have been levelled on linguistic and psychological grounds and I shall look at both in turn.

(a) *Linguistic content of glossolalia.*

William Samarin (1972:293) has examined the linguistic content of glossolalia and declares that:

> … glossolalia by definition makes no such sense, because it consists of strings of syllables, made up of sounds taken from all those that the speaker knows, put together more *or* less haphazardly but emerging nevertheless *as* word-like and sentence-like units because of realistic, language-like rhythm and melody…there can be neither syntactics or semantics to this speech.

As for Donald G. Bloesch (2000:174), 'On both the psychological and spiritual levels, maturation can be traced to primitive unintelligibility to social communicability'. But John P. Kildahl (1972) suggests that 'from a linguistic point of view, religiously inspired glossolalic utterances have the same general characteristics as those that are not religiously inspired.' Virginia Hine believes that linguistically glossolalia contains speech patterns of the speaker in terms of tone, depth, pitch and syllables all made up of consonants and vowels. This shows that there is nothing extra-ordinary about glossolalia even though it might sound like a string of meaningless words but one that is organized in pitch, tone, rhyme and rhythm with coherent syllabic stresses.

Lewis Carroll's *Jabberwocky,* a nonsense poem is one that is no less redolent of meaning for Alice. Glossolalia cannot simply be dismissed on the basis of a lack of intelligibility since the idea of intelligibility rests on a different set of criteria, and we should perhaps look to the experience that the phenomenon induces rather than the content of the words. Traditional African spiritualists utter incantations that may sound like gibberish but such utterances, accompanied by

trancelike states and expressive performances are common features of traditional African religious ceremonies.

Psychological state of glossolalia

Most psychologists approach glossolalia from the individual's mental state and perhaps fail to see the socio-religious and cultural context in which the phenomenon arises. Lincoln Vivier (1960), William Wood (1965) Mapes Anderson (1979) all view glossolalia as a form of psychopathology, a sign of mental illness like schizophrenia, psychosis or hysteria. Freud thought it was a form of psychosis. Kelsey (1964) also sees it as a sign of being possessed while for PJ Holliman (2002:197) the 'religious experience can provide compensatory structure, sustain self cohesion, enhance development of self structure; and provide opportunities for transformation.' Mark Cartledge (1998) also takes issue with the idea that glossolalia is a form of pathological condition. Harvey Cox, however believes that it is not as a sign of madness but 'ecstatic utterance', while Virginia Hine (1969) sees 'glossolalia as a non-pathological linguistic behavior, [sic] which functions in the context of the Pentecostal movement as one component in the generation of commitment. …it operates in social change…providing powerful motivation for attitudinal and behavioral changes in the direction of group ideals' (p.225). Felicitas D. Goodman (2008) also dismisses the idea of glossolalia as a form of hysteria or epileptic fits. Something meaningful to the members appears to be going on, which may not or cannot be said of those experiencing hysteria or epileptic fits.

It is not merely the ecstatic utterance but also the engagement of the body in convulsions, falling and rolling on the ground in what is known as spirit-possession - a term with negative connotations - but which is no more than a state of temporary release or sacred therapy that uplifts the body and the spirit. For Virginia Hine, 'One of the most remarkable things about tongue speakers is the degree to which they can communicate both the quality and effect of their subjective religious experience' (1969:213). This is to say that speaking in tongues is part of religious experience and it is the experiential aspect of glossolalia that has become more widely recognized. Or, as Russell P. Splitter (1999) puts it, 'Glossolalia, it is fair to say, is the spiritual experience of the twentieth century', (p.6). Therefore Glossolalia should be seen as a form of

prayer or musical language like scatting, which is a an improvised rendition common in Jazz music, a means of communication like scatting, as argued by Stephen J Casmier and H Matthews (1999) who see glossolalia as 'non-mimetic' – that is, a spontaneously creative form of expression. Harvey Cox (1996:91) also sees a connection between glossolalia and trance, observing that:

> In many of these places it is "speaking in tongues" that opens the way for this backdoor syncretism. After all, from a psychological perspective, tongue speaking itself is an example of ecstatic utterance, possibly also a form of mystical trance.

Ultimately glossolalia must be seen not merely as the utterance of unintelligible gibberish but as what appears to be improvisational expressive form of sacred performance, which is an important part of the Pentecostal experience. I must now leave this discussion and turn to the music, song and dance as a key aspect of the Pentecostal worship: praise-worship.

3.5 Praise-worship – music, song and dance

Praise-worship is an important part of Nigerian Pentecostal worship. It is a form of thanks-giving, of praising God that consist of music, songs and dance in high tempo and feverish ecstasy that builds and builds in one seamless flow until it reaches a crescendo of 'collective effervescence'. The ethnographic findings bears testament to the claim that the praise-worship session is one of the significant moments of the Pentecostal service and for many, it is the high point of the church service.

Western aesthetic tradition conceives art not as a means to an end but an end in itself (*ars gratia ars*) and within this tradition art is viewed as distilled emotion and the aesthetic response is equally one of disinterestedness, where subjective interests are set aside and the object is contemplated from a distance. This is the Kantian view and what Edward Bullough (1912) describes as *psychical distance.* African aesthetics on the other hand is geared towards performance and engagement; where, according to Robbins (2004:179), in the Pentecostal liturgy, 'Services appear spontaneous, experiential and exuberant'. Praise-

worship sessions in modern day Nigerian Pentecostalism is reminiscent of the ritual of drumming, singing, clapping and dancing of the pre-colonial and pre-Christian Nigeria, which the missionaries considered fetishistic and anti-Christian. If music is the emotions expressed in rhyme and rhythm and melody, as we find in Lefebvre (1992), then songs are emotions in words through music as much as in poetry. The melodies of Nigerian songs began as praise worship, as the Yoruba poetry known as *Ewi* shows. The *Ew*i is a song poem that is recited in the praise of someone. A small but growing body of scholarship on the relationship between music and Pentecostalism is now emerging, particularly between black African or African American music and religion. Much of American popular music has its origin in black music, which in turn has its origin in gospel or Pentecostal or religious music, (Palmer, 1976). Kenneth and Strongman's (2002) study of the role of Music in Pentecostalism shows 'the links between music, emotion and religious experience.' This echoes the work of Becker, J. (2004) while for Melvin Butler (2008) those predisposed to deep emotional response to music are also more likely to possess the same predisposition to religious experience. Butler thinks that music is one way of constructing the African American identity in the sense that African American music possesses a peculiar style that is culturally embedded, for example Jazz. While Monique Ingalls, *et al* (2013) write about the way that music produces a religious feeling, suggesting that:

> Religious experience is comprised of moments that are both extraordinary and mundane…Congregational music as a locus of Christian experience can provide insight into human religious impulse conceived more broadly: in particular in the way that the individual and collective performances shape believe and create identity at the site of this powerful musical experiences.

Estelle Ruth Jorgensen (2011:137) sees religious music as performing a form of therapy and healing functions. For her, 'Music intensifies ordinary lived life; it is …subjectively felt 'inner life'…To consider music as healing is to take a comprehensive view of the ways in which music impacts mind, emotions and senses and potentially restore one to health and wholeness.' Jorgenson also

refers to Maslow's notion that 'music can answer human need for spiritual fulfilment and transcendence' (p.137).

The works of Glenn Hinson (2000), Teresa Reed (2003), Timothy Rommen (2007), Melvin Butler (2008), Timothy J. Nelson (1996) and others have all explored this connection between Pentecostalism and West Indian and African American music. Butler for example, sees the centrality of music within the Haitian and Jamaican Pentecostal experience but also sees music as performing a function beyond the Pentecostal experience. For Butler (2005) 'Song is a vehicle for experiencing divine manifestations of the Holy Spirit and accessing a supernatural realm believed to provide empowerment, protection, healing, and joy in the face of social misery' (p.xviii). While for Reed, many styles of modern secular music like Jazz can be traced back to Pentecostalism. All human experiences and situations are turned into song and dance. But praise-worship is thanking God in ecstatic expressions of gratitude and joy for what is considered the blessings of life and joy of living.

Equally, many authors have drawn interesting connections between Pentecostalism and rave culture. For example, in the introduction to *Rave Culture and Religion* (2004:1) Graham St John begins by quoting Henry Apollo (2010:NP) when he writes:

> From African priests to Korean shamans, there was and still is the belief that dance and music can open communication with intangible powers and produce tangible benefits for the communities involved: self-knowledge; fuller understanding of the natural world; good health; and a sense of belonging to a supportive group in an often dark and hostile but ultimately understandable universe.

Apollo thinks that rave culture must be seen as '… another rebirth of very ancient, natural, non-Western traditions of ecstatic dance…' and that 'this rebirth occurred within an African-American subculture…' For Gilbert Rouget (1980[1985]), 'Of all the arts, music undoubtedly has the greatest capacity to move us, and the emotion that it arouses in us can reach overwhelming proportions' (p.316). Some of the ravers shut their eyes – as though in prayer or

in a trance while in full performance mode and in lively ecstatic gyrations they appear not unlike people undergoing a religious experience.

Rave culture therefore provides insight into the Pentecostal experience in much the same way that the Pentecostal experience can tell us something about the rave culture. Scholars working on *Rave culture*: Ben Malbon, Scott Hutson, Tim Olaveson, Henry Apollo, Graham St John, Gilbert Rouget and others believe that rave is a kind of religious experience just as the Pentecostal performance is religious experience. The difference between the two forms of performances is the sacredness of the one compared to the other. But Rave must also be seen as a kind of collective neo-religious activity of the Durkheimian kind even though it falls under the category of the profane. The volume edited by Graham St John contains several articles that deal with the rave culture and its connection to religious worship. Tim Olaveson (2004) asserts that most ravers believe that they are engaged in a form of religious activity. Olaveson uses the term *connectedness*, to refer to Durkheim's collective and Victor Turner's *communitas* all of which refer to the collective community spirit that generates the effervescence. This scholarship sees rave not as a youth subculture to be dismissed but as embodying a new form of religious movement. S Hutson (1999:54) stresses that rave as '…empty-joy-of-disappearance… is incomplete because it ignores the poignant and meaningful spiritual experience that ravers say they get from raves.' Although rave is not formally a sacred performance but it arises out of a religious activity and the 'collective effervescence' works on the basis of resonation, amplification and repetition while appearing like a current that surges through the group, causing the ecstatic convulsion. Francois Gauthier (2004), borrowing from Bastide and Battaile sees religion not as a practice that disappears but morphs into something like rave, like Deleuze and Guattari's rhizome.

Pentecostalism therefore enables us to see more clearly the metamorphosis from religion to other forms of collective activity of an ecstatic kind such as rave. Rave is a resurrection of the primitive 'festive' culture and there can be no effervescence without the participation of the 'communitas' or the collective. In one of the most profoundly relevant passages in the *Elementary Forms* that describes almost accurately the Nigerian Pentecostal experience Durkheim observes that:

> Once the individuals are gathered together, a sort of electricity is generated from their closeness and quickly launches them to an extraordinary height of exaltation. Every emotion expressed is retained without resistance in all those minds so open to external impressions, each one echoing the other. The initial impulse thus becomes amplified as it reverberates, like an avalanche gathering force as it goes. And as passions so strong and uncontrolled are bound to seek outward expression, there violent gestures, shouts, even howls, deafening noises of all sorts from all sides that intensify even more the state that they express... (1912:162-163)

Robin Sylvan (2002) draws a link between altered states of consciousness that is induced by music. In Africa, the idea of a personal, private or subjective experience of the divine is objectively and collectively an encounter with the spiritual world. But could it also be transcendent?

Therefore prayer, glossolalia, trancing and praise worship together constitute the Pentecostal experience for most Nigerian Pentecostalists. As Rudolf Otto (1959:27) puts it the religious feelings 'may burst in sudden eruption up from the depths of the soul with spasms and convulsions, or lead to the strongest excitements, to intoxicated frenzy, to transport, and to ecstasy.'

Gauthier also asserts, '…when community becomes eroded, this leads to feelings of solitude and helplessness.'(p.67). But he could also have added that the erosion of community leads to isolation and the loss of individuality, since the individual replenishes him/herself within the community and it is the community that provides the basis for sustenance for the individual and prevents him/her from losing that individuality. I observed this community spirit during my research at the church. As Durkheim (1960) notes, 'society can exist only if it penetrates the consciousness of individuals and fashions it in its "image and resemblance". As one individual interviewed for this project mentioned: 'I love the fact that I belong to the church community here because of the spirit of being one with each other.'

3.6 Performance

The last of our three Ps of the Pentecostal experience is performance. Although strictly speaking performance does not constitute a separate category of the Pentecostal experience yet it is also not its mere culmination. Performance is the ritualized worship in all its various manifestations that involves speech, activity and the entire body, which altogether make up the Pentecostal performance. As B. Giesen (2006:342) writes that:

> Rituals do not exist like texts or institutions as structures of signification … they exist as embodied performances, as events produced and experienced bodily by actors in a shared situation and in a local site. They center bodily procedures – singing, dancing, moving, marching, signs, painful violations of the body, or even killing a living being in a sacrificial rite…. In the ritual coordination of bodily movements the participants experience themselves as mirrored by others – individual differences are disregarded in and even banned from the ritual performance.

The above statement sums up much of the ideas regarding the subject matter of this chapter and that of the next two chapters on the body and the scriptures. But here all three elements prayer, praise-worship and performance is what I argue constitute the Pentecostal experience and it is the experience that is most central to Nigerian Pentecostalism. My use of the term *performance* here might suggest a drama or theatrical display but this is precisely what I am suggesting, that is, a theatrical performance or drama but not one that is primarily artistic but one from within which the artistic impulse springs. Indeed, in Nigerian cultures artistic theatre have their origins in the rites and rituals of religious worship. But it is the participatory group activity that revolves around the sacred that I take to be the religious performance. Perhaps the biggest influence on Victor Turner's idea of *communitas* derives from African idea of the community. In works such as *From Ritual to Theatre (*1982), (1968), Turner argues for religious rituals as performances and his ideas of artistic or theatrical performance is derived from African rituals. As he explains, 'I learned from the Ndembu that rituals and symbols are not merely epiphenomena or disguises of

deeper social and psychological processes, but have ontological value (1975:31-32). Graham St John (2008:4) puts it thus, 'Religion was found in human action, in the expression of experience, and what would become a study of performance and experience…'

But the idea that human beings are always performing in the social arena or what might be described as the real life is not new. Erving Goffman's idea of dramaturgy in *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (1959) sees social interaction as inducing a kind of performance, which is to say, human beings in a social setting are engaged in a kind of performance as in a theatre or drama, a way of responding to social stimulus, which in turn shapes how they act and subsequently who they are. Similarly Judith Butler (1990) also sees gender as a kind of performance that is most exemplified by the idea of 'drag queen', which is another dimension of the 'performance' metaphor. But in general, action or movement is a kind of performance, either as a metaphor or a function of reality. There is an argument to be made that religious performance furnishes the very first ideas of performance, which later carried into the world of theatre or dramatic stage and even the social space. But this is an argument for a future project.

In conclusion, my argument in this chapter has been that the proper study of Pentecostalism, particularly Nigerian Pentecostalism must be located in worship: the rites and rituals of performance in all its various forms of expressivity: prayer, praise-worship, music, dance and glossolalia all of which are different ways of experiencing God. Through the support of the ethnography I have attempted to show that the Pentecostal experience is the most important appeal of Nigerian Pentecostalism and that such experience is grounded in the collective ritual of worship. In doing so, I have presented as well as criticized classical religious experience theories of thinkers like William James and shown the ways in which the Pentecostal experience perhaps improves on the classical religious as generating the religious impulse. Equally, the Pentecostal experience is better able to withstand the kind of criticism levelled at the religious experience theories. As Kenneth Archer (2009:28) notes: 'Pentecostalism was not just a re-interpretation of old style religion. Pentecostal service worship with tongues, trances, dances and healing were transforming commitment to a new movement rather than simply attempting to preserve the

old ways'. Equally for Durkheim (1995:419), 'As rich in emotive power as an idea may be, it cannot add anything to our natural vitality; it can only release emotive forces that are already within us, neither creating nor increasing them'. Durkheim thinks that power does not reside in the hands of the individual but with society and it is from society that the individual derives power. For Harvey Cox (1995:259), '… the great strength of the Pentecostal impulse [lies in] its power to combine, its aptitude for the language, the music, the cultural artefacts, the religious tropes... of the setting in which it lives.' Such performances are demonstrative and expressive, as they are participatory. It is the point at which the *sthenic* and *asthenic* states meet and where as is found in Durkheim the vital emotions pour out like 'liquid' matter. But what is also significant to the Pentecostal experience is the body. As Henry Apollo (2010:NP) notes, '… the dancing body is the vehicle by which the world of the flesh and the world of the spirit meet.' And it is to the body that I turn in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 4

THE BODY AND AFRICAN PENTECOSTALISM.

> I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. (Roman 12:1)
>
> Questions about religion cannot, in my view be divorced from the questions of the body. Bryan Turner *Religion and Social Theory (*1983:1)

4.1 Introduction

In the last chapter, I argued that central to the appeal of the Nigerian Pentecostalism is the Pentecostal experience; but there remains the need to examine the vehicle through which the Pentecostal experience is expressed as well as achieved: the body. Without the body there would be no expression, and the various rites and rituals of worship: prayer, praise-worship: singing, dancing, clapping, glossolalia and others forms of performances would not take place. As Birgit Meyer (2010:122) has noted about African Pentecostalism:

> '...it is impossible to overlook the constant appeal made to believers to participate with the whole body. Being called to stand up or sit, to lift one hand or two, to put forward the right or left foot, to pray (in tongues), to dance, to sing, to shake hands with the neighbors and to hold their hands, and at times to read, to listen, and to be

> quiet indicates the high degree of bodily movement, which generates – at times overwhelming – religious experience.

The aim of this chapter is to examine the role of the body in the Nigerian Pentecostal performance and to argue that Nigerian and African Pentecostalism must be seen as a way of reinstating the body as a central part of the religious worship.

The second section examines Western conception of the body, particularly the philosophical and sociological discourse around the mind/body distinction and the nature/nurture debate and how the concept of shame and sin, has shaped various attitudes to the body, particularly within Western society. Under a philosophical and sociological representation of the body, Christianity adopted notions of sin as associated with the body while the third section looks at the body within a historical conception as the bearer of sin and shame that required cleansing as well as controlling. Consequently, in respect of the body, the European missionaries introduced sin and shame into African culture, which was subsequently used as an instrument of suppressing or controlling the various African forms of expressivity, the kind that we find in Norbert Elias's *Civilizing Process* (2000).

The fifth section returns to the concept of dance as a significant part of bodily expressionism within the Pentecostal worship, bringing aspects of the ethnographic study to bear. The sixth section deals with the Nigerian conception of the body as co-extensive with other bodies and from which the 'collective effervescence' is generated.

4.2 The body in sociological discourse

Sociologists did not use to talk about the body until in the last few decades and it is not entirely clear why. Perhaps it is because the body has always been with us, an outer casing for the seemingly more important mind. The body has always been perceived as appearance and not reality and in this sense it carried the problems associated with appearance: illusoriness, uncertainty, falsehood, fussiness, incoherence, corruptibility and so on. But the distinction between

appearance and reality as represented by the body and the mind, dates back not only to Descartes but also Plato. Yet the concept of *reality*, which is notoriously difficult concept to pin down and define or describe and which means different things to different thinkers, is however thought to possess independent existence of a concrete kind - the thing-in-itself in Kant's noumenon or the Platonic form. It is therefore the province of truth, certainty, purity, absoluteness, (FH Bradley, 1893), transcendentalism and coherence.

Back in the Eighteenth Century, Descartes had split the self into two: the body and the mind (Cartesian dualism) and declared that the mind is better known than the body. The senses cannot guarantee epistemological certainty in the way that the mind could and from this reasoning, Descartes gave the world perhaps the most celebrated philosophical declaration of all: the *cogito*. But the idea of the cogito did not start with Descartes. We find it in St Augustine's *City Of God* (426[2004:460]), where he declares that 'If I am mistaken, I exist'. Also in Plautus' 'Amphitryon' where the character Sosia, when confronted with his double in the person of Mercury and no longer sure who he is, seeks assurance by saying: *sed quom cogito, equidem certo sum* - 'but when I think, I certainly exist', (quoted in Donald Verene (1997:18).

Therefore the argument that the mind is superior or sovereign over the body has a long history in the Western intellectual tradition, while the body on the other hand was thought to be defective or weak and susceptible to temptation, particularly sexual temptation and other immoralities, all of which carries shame. Shame is therefore the key point in this discussion, with its associative feelings of guilt, for which the Christian confessional became a necessary part of purgatory. The body's various forms of expression, those considered to be shameful, were therefore to be suppressed or tamed through the ordeal of self-denial or discipline like fasting, abstinence, sacrifice and other forms of mortifications as ways of self-purification. Judith Butler (1993) has argued that the body has been the site of political power play for centuries as it was used to subjugate certain group, such as homosexuals. Weber (1966:236) also notes that, 'Rational ascetic alertness, self-control, and methodical planning of life are seriously threatened by the peculiar irrationality of the sexual act, which is ultimately and uniquely unsusceptible to rational organization'. Crucial therefore to the discussion of the body, particularly in religious discourse is the

concept of shame as the instrument of controlling or 'civilizing' it, that is, the body, (Elias, 2000).

There is much discussion of shame, embarrassment and guilt with regards to the body in the works of C. H. Cooley (1902[2006]), Norbert Elias (2000), Erving Goffman (1956, 1959) Sylvan Tomkins (1995) Gershen Kaufman (1989), T. Scheff (2000, 2003) E. Probyn, (2005) and others. These authors, in varying degrees and in different areas of emphasis argue that shame or embarrassment is a social emotion that is imposed on the individual, just as it acts as a means of social bonding. With shame also comes fear, as Elias (2000:415) notes that '…fear of social degradation or, more generally, of other people's gestures of superiority', just as Scheff (2003:1) notes that 'shame can be seen as a signal of a *threat to the bond*.

Although more has been written about the mind than about the body, the body is now more prominent both in Western society and academic disciplines. The body is more visible, more discussed and dissected than ever before and the shame and repression of it, particularly as happened in the Victorian era, (Kern, 1975) is now giving way to a much relaxed and liberal attitudes to the body. Witness the attention that many now pay to the body or the many ways the body is worshiped – sunbathing, plastic surgery, bodybuilding and so forth – and how consumerism has helped to promote the 'modification' of the body towards the goal of achieving the body beautiful, (Featherstone, 2007). With regards to religion, the body is also gradually being seen as important to religious belief and practices, as Bryan Turner (1983) tells us in the above quotation. The body has not gone away, both in secular and religious life, despite the many attempts to supress it.

But there remains a sense in which the idea of shame as it relates to the body hangs over Western societies. For example, Martha Nussbaum, in an aptly titled book, *Hiding from Humanity: Disgust Shame and the Law* (2004) sees the disgust and shame associated with the body as a way of 'hiding' from our humanity and this idea has variously influenced many legislations passed in Western democracies such as against pornography, as a relic of centuries of thinking about the 'wrongness' of what the body does. Similarly, the missionaries exported such notions of 'disgust' to Africa where it became entrenched within the cultures. Yet, the African conception of the body has always been at odds

with its Western conception. Western ambivalence about the body is largely absent from the African tradition and this difference in conceptions lies at the heart of the tension between Western and African Christianity. The binary dichotomies of mind/matter, body/spirit are largely absent in African conception of the self. The African does not see the body as separate from the mind or as an object of shame and guilt that requires suppressing or taming. In fact the body has always been important in African religious rituals and celebrations, but to early the missionaries, the African was quintessentially the 'Heathen in his blindness', (Balagangadhara, 1994) and his body was the very embodiment of primitive savagery and 'ungodly' traditions. Although many of the negative perceptions of African cultures as they relate to the body and performance are slowly becoming fashionable in the West, significantly finding academic support, particularly in sociological discourse in such works by Bryan Turner, Chris Schilling, Mike Featherstone, Mike Hepworth, Lisa Blackman, AnnMarie Mol, Judith Butler, Sara Ahmed, Laurent Berlant and a host of others.

So what exactly is the body, whose body is it, what shapes it, defines it or determines it: is it nature or culture? Bryan Turner (1984:8) sees the difficulty of pinning down the concept of the body when he writes, '… at once the most solid, the most elusive, illusory, concrete, metaphorical, ever present and ever distant thing – a site, an instrument, an environment, a singularity and a multiplicity.' This definition, although helpful, remains inadequate. But perhaps no definition would suffice, as Spinoza (2002:280) recognizes when he notes that, 'Nobody as yet has determined the limits of the body's capabilities: that is, nobody as yet has learned from experience what the body can and cannot do… For nobody as yet knows the structure of the body as to accurately explain its function …the body solely from the laws of its own nature can do things at which its mind is amazed.'

There is however a view; let us call it a commonsensical view that conceives the body as naturally determined. Here nature is thought to fix certain human categories, such as racial appearance – black/white/yellow; sex or gender – men and women - and determines shape, size, height, hair texture and other features. From this natural determinism, some believe, also flows certain characteristics – intelligence or mental capacity, emotional dispositions and behavioural traits: criminal behaviour, for example, as we find in Cesare

Lombroso's *Crime, its Causes and Remedies* (1911). But when socio-anthropologists like Margaret Mead, Mary Douglas, Franz Boas and others began to study other cultures they found something startlingly different to previous presuppositions about the nature/culture debate and the tide began to turn against natural determinism. Mead in particular, (1928, 1930, 1935) has shown how sexual practices and behaviour previously thought to be naturally determined and universally applicable were in fact products of culture. Although Mead's work on Samoan society has not gone unchallenged, famously criticised by the Australian anthropologist Derek Freeman, who in his book, *Margaret Mead and Samoa: The Making and Unmaking of an Anthropological Myth* (1983) 'exposed' what he considered to be grave errors in Mead's ethnographic study of Samoan society. Freeman's book stirred a controversy that has divided anthropological opinion ever since. However, some of the main thrusts of Mead's work remain undisputed, particularly in respect of the culture versus nature debate, as Franz Boas, (1986) once Mead's tutor writes that '…the data of ethnology prove that not only our knowledge but also our emotions are the result of the form of our social life and the history of the people to whom we belong' (p.5). More recently, Anne Bolin & Patricia Whelehan (1999) argue that the phenomenon of 'morning sickness' is not a universal phenomenon, but rather a predominantly Western preoccupation. So when Mary Douglas famously declared, 'dirt is matter out of place' (1966:35), by which she meant each culture determines its own idea of what is indecent, she was part of a tradition that goes back to Durkheim and Mauss in its influence. For Durkheim and Mauss (1962) the classification of things is not innate but externally formulated within the context of culture and tradition. As they famously put it, 'the classification of things reproduces the classification of men' (p.11). We also find this classificatory system in Pierre Bourdieu (1984), where for Bourdieu, taste is acquired rather than innate and it is acquired through culture or tradition, background, education and so on, where behaviour or conduct is shaped by the 'unconscious' force of habit that through repetition or regulatory action soon becomes a norm long after the original cause of the action is forgotten. Or as he puts it, 'the scheme of the habitus, the primary forms of classification, owe their specific efficacy to the fact that they function below the

level of consciousness and language, beyond the reach of introspective scrutiny or control of the will,'(p.466). Further, he writes that:

> The manner in which culture has been acquired lives on in the manner of using it: the importance attached to manners can be understood once it is seen that it is these imponderables of practice which distinguish the different—and ranked—modes of culture acquisition, early or late, domestic or scholastic, and the classes of individuals which they characterize …Culture also has its titles of nobility—awarded by the educational system—and its pedigrees, measured by seniority in admission to the nobility. (p.XXV)

So the classificatory systems being externally or culturally acquired and are often imposed by others. Durkheim and Mauss's classification idea places strong emphasis on the body as bearer of signs, particularly in a religious sense. Membership of the religious group, as we find in Durkheim's membership of the clan, carries totemic designations and ceremonial import, which generates the idea of the sacred from which the body is released or opened up in the 'collective effervescence' of emotional expressivity. This process of spontaneous expressivity and performance is important in Nigerian Pentecostalism and enables us to understand how it differs from the Weberian, protestant rational model. Also, the Nigerian Pentecostalism's animistic heritage and the way it releases the body in expressive exuberance might help to explain the lack of shame in such ecstatic displays. So when Gehlen (1988) asserts that human beings are 'unfinished animals' he means by this the idea of human beings as a work in progress, constantly creative and evolving and in this sense are unfinished. Now we know that nature can be tampered with, altered, bent, shaped and modified (Featherstone, 1992).

The body therefore is a tabula rasa on which society writes cultural signs and symbols and from which identity is derived but all too soon these signs and symbols become reified as to appear natural, (Goffman, 1959; Turner, 1984; Shilling, 1993; Featherstone, 1992). It is a process that distorts, disguises,

emphasizes and selects aspects of the body from which it draws certain conclusions about the self or about a group to fit particular narratives. Nature makes the flesh but society constructs the body and the body that society constructs dominates the flesh that nature creates. For example, Iris Young in *Throwing Like a Girl* (1980) argues that what appears to be a natural process – the way that a girl might throw an object, often viewed as weak, restricted – is in fact not a naturally determined process at all but part of a culturally imposed classificatory and descriptive process where society places the perceived weakness or restriction or 'limitations' on girls. It is the naturalization of a social process whose conventions lie not in nature but in culture. In short: 'throwing like a girl' is an epithet that arises out of social construction. Another example is how in the West the ideal female figure appear to be the slimmer woman, but an ideal that seems to be universal. But the Efik people of Calabar in Nigeria have a tradition known as *fattening Houses* where a bride-to-be is kept in purdah for several days during which she is fattened through feeding to make her attractive to her groom. [21] As strange as this may appear to Western eyes, to the Efik man, it is the most desirable thing in a woman. Both these examples illustrate that much of what is social convention is often thought to be part of the natural process.

But the sociological discourse of the body has largely centred on Western conception of the body (white body) in Western society. Chikako Ozawa-De Silva (2002) points this out when he notes that, 'For all its merits and innovations, British sociology of the body is still characterized by ethnocentrism and by the not fully recognized or addressed limitations of its Cartesian-rationalist philosophical ancestry' (p.22). But when the West has turned its focus on the African body, it has, historically viewed it negatively. I shall discuss this point shortly. But as I mentioned earlier, much of the Western negative perception of the body can be traced to Christianity, but it goes as far back as Greek philosophy. For example, Plato has this to say about the body in the Phaedo (2009:102)

[21] This practice is dying out if not all but died out and now the men of this region prefer slimmer women. This trend can only be explained in terms of Western influence.

> 'For the body is a source of endless trouble to us by reason of the mere requirement of food; and is liable also to diseases which overtake us ... it fills us full of loves and lusts and fears and fancies of all kinds, and endless foolery ... money has to be acquired for the sake and in the service of the body", and thus "so long as we keep to the body"] we are slaves in its service.

This view has certainly influenced the Greco-Roman world, as Peter Brown (1998) writes:

> This tradition had trained the minds of educated people to ignore the body, as total other to the self. They were encouraged to treat the body as a distant thing. Its temporary joining to the soul was due to the complex weave of a wider cosmos, whose deeper, divine purposes encouraged a certain serenity in confronting this troublesome partner. A distant thing, the body might be indulged at times. But at other times, it was to be sternly bridled by the soul. For the body was a piece of matter that the soul was to administer, through a judicious mixture of firmness and benevolence… Now, centuries of Christian thought had placed the body – this recalcitrant 'other'' – on the wrong side of the frontier. Aspects of the body's otherness (its mortality, its physical weakness, its tendency to sexual disorder) were now lodged firmly within the frontiers of the self. (p.lix-lx).

Professor Diarmaid MacCulloch in a recent television (BBC2, 2015)[22] series further supports this view as he explains the manner in which the body was thought to be the bearer of sinfulness and how that idea has influenced Western Civilization to this day, in a mixture of Greek philosophy and Christianity. Following Plato, St Paul viewed the body and its propensities to indulgencies as

[22] MacCulloch, D. "Sex And The Church" BBC 2 First aired Friday 1 May 2015
www.bbc.co.uk › Factual › History

evils that must be resisted. Thus he writes, 'Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to *fulfil* the lusts *thereof*', Romans 13:13. In *Discipline and Punish* (1991) Foucault has a chapter titled *Docile Bodies* in which he traces the way the body was turned into docility through discipline and 'political anatomy'. There he notes that, 'The classical age discovered the body as a target and object of power. It is easy enough to find signs of attention paid to the body - to the body that is manipulated, shaped, trained, which obeys, responds and becomes skillful [sic] and increases its forces' (p.137).

The body has become the site of convergence for competing ideological positions. It is where Marxian materialism meets Weberian libertarian capitalism and Foucauldian materialism meets religious and state authoritarianism. It is perhaps this significance that prompted Foucault (1980:58) to '… wonder whether, before one poses the question of ideology it wouldn't be more materialist to study first the question of the body and the effects of power on it.'

This shows that rationalism has not had it all its own way. Even within the German philosophical traditional through which much of Western rationalist thought had descended, certain antirational theories about the nature of being have emerged over time. In Schopenhauer's *World as Will and Representation* (1818[1958]) we see the *will* as that blind involuntary vital impulse ('the will to live') that is life affirming, self enhancing, constantly striving, constantly pushing and constantly seeking to assert itself in the world as the essence of being, the thing-in-itself. The noumenon that Kant had thought was ultimately unknowable was the very thing that Schopenhauer thought he had discovered and found to be even more powerful than reason: the will. Nietzsche picks up this anti-rationality and carries it further in *The Will to Power* (1901[1999]) capturing that thought perhaps better in the *Gay Science* (1882[1974]) where he writes that, 'by far the greatest part of our spirit's activity remains unconscious and unfelt' (p.261) and in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (1883) he conceives of the soul not as separate but as indeed an aspect of the body. It is just as Antonio Damasio in *Descartes's Error: Emotion, Reason and The Human Brain*

(1994[2006]), notes that 'It does not seem sensible to leave emotions and feelings out of an overall concept of the mind', (p.158). In other words, feelings and emotions are significant aspects of the mind and not separate from them, which is a very African conception of the self. And so Schopenhauer's *Will* and Nietzsche's vitalism in the will to power is similar to Spinoza's conatus, which is the will (the power) that leads reason by the hand, so to speak. In Heidegger we find the concept of *Befindlichkeit* 'mood' or feeling or emotions or affect as that which provides the 'primordial' essence of being-in-the world, and which for Freud is the *id* and for Bergson the *elan vital.* Under Heidegger's influence Maurice Merleau-Ponty proposes a similar idea in his *Phenomenology of Perception* (1945), which Barral (1965) articulates so well when he writes that:

> Movements of the body are developed almost without conscious effort, in most cases. There seems to be a sort of intelligence of the body: a new dance is learned without analyzing the sequence of movements.' This idea of the intelligence of the body refers to the body 'knowing' what to do without being told and how to do it and when to do it; where if thought were to enter the picture, the body is compromised and no longer feels assured about what it knows better than thought. (p:137)

Weberian rationalization was essentially a process of civilization in which natural impulses and emotionalism are brought under the control of and the service of reason. As Weber points out in *Protestant Ethic* (2003:169,) 'That powerful tendency toward uniformity of life, which today so immensely aids the capitalistic interest in the standardization of production, had its ideal foundations in the repudiation of all idolatry of the flesh.' This is in essence the 'repudiation of the flesh', which the asceticism of the monastery or the 'religious duties' once undertaken by the priest was transferred to the home', Or as Bryan Turner (1984:140) adds, 'Everyday life came under the scrutiny of individual consciousness and as the individual became liberated from the authority of the priest so he also became more subordinated.'

Like Weber, Norbert Elias in the *Civilizing Process* (2000) turned Weberian rationalization into the process of civilizing human conduct within social intercourse, particularly on matters of etiquette and manners. Elias traces the history of the 'civilizing process' from the Court system in medieval Europe as a form of control over certain modes of conduct, which were deemed acceptable or unacceptable. All the bodily functions that occurs below the waist: farting, excreting, urinating, sexual intercourse of certain types and the exposure of the body or exposure of certain parts of the body was discouraged and must be hidden or concealed from public view. Meals must be eaten in a particular manner with cutlery at the table and the pastime of taking *High Tea*, being an example. The result was polite manners, etiquette and decorum. The civilizing process was further aided by technological advance where devices were invented that refined bodily functions such as toilet gadgetries for disposing bodily waste, (Shilling, 1993). As Bryan Turner also writes, 'Nature is characterized by its violence; the polis, by order…The Church is that institution that has the symbolic power to order society and individual lives, operating through forms of ritual and discipline to control souls' (pp.2-3). This church authority over lives has been maintained through spiritual and political hegemony, particularly over moral conduct, instructing them on what to do or not do. This exercise of control is what Bryan Turner calls 'Sovereignty' which was the world that the early Europeans brought to Africa and the basis upon which they set about civilizing Africa. Therefore, as we shall soon discover, this civilizing process began with the control of the African body and then the mind.

However, recent scholarship on the body is slowly moving away from the concept of the body as an individual or singular entity that is self-contained and the unit of sociological enquiry. There is the recognition that instead of speaking of *the* body or *a* body, we must now speak of bodies and instead of speaking about the materiality of the body we must speak of the immateriality of the body within affective discourse. More recently, the works of Lisa Blackman (2008, 2012), AnnMarie Mol (2002) and others are significant in this area. What is significant also is affect theory and the way it presents a counterpoint to the rationality thesis, the considered superior aspect to emotionalism.

As for shame, according Silvan Tomkins (1995) there is nothing natural about shame; saying 'I regard shame as an auxiliary affect and as a theoretical

construct rather than an entity that is unambiguously defined by the word shame' (397). Tomkins goes on to say that now shame has more to do with '…feelings of inferiority than feelings of guilt' and this conception applies more readily to the way that the West has constructed shame around the African body. Elias distinguishes between shame and guilt as opposed to Thomas Scheff who sees them as cognates of each other. Scheff (2003) also sees shame not only as a social emotion but 'the premier social emotion.' Shame therefore serves as the intensification of 'social bond' where 'shame can be seen as a signal to the threat to the bond', or the breaking of social taboo where taboos act as mechanisms for holding society together. The British notion of keeping a 'stiff upper lip', or restraining the emotions is considered symbolically rational and masculine, civilized and cultured, while to give in to the emotions is considered feminine, sentimental, irrational, uncivilized and uncultured, (Ahmed, 2004). But it is the idea of the body as a site of sin that has exerted the most influence on religious tradition and it is to this discussion that we shall now turn our next focus.

4.3 The body and sin

Original sin was essentially a sin of the flesh. Adam and Eve ate the apple and man fell as a result. Thus the body became the access point through which the human soul was corrupted. Or as Mary Douglas (1966) describes it, the body is seen as the site of pollution and defilement. However, in the West where strong dichotomous or binary classifications are part of intellectual discourse, such as good and evil, God and devil, love and hate and so on. These dichotomies, as I earlier mentioned, do not exist in Nigerian or African culture, particularly in polarised senses that we find in the West. But again this form of thinking is now becoming fashionable in the West as we find for example in the work of Casper Jensen (2013). Yet, says Paul, the sins of the flesh are many, and Galatians 5:19-21 mentions some of them.

> Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings,

> murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

It is clear from the above quotation that almost all of man's sins are sins of the flesh, which supports Plato's and others' conception of the body as carrier of multitudes of impurities. 'The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak', says Romans 26:41 and warns that we should, 'Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation.' But if the body is corruptible, how can it be made pure? The answer, as mentioned earlier, lies in the mortification of the body through abstinence and denial of the flesh and through sanctification or purification and baptism, in order to make our 'bodies a living sacrifice holy and acceptable to God.' Romans 12:1. Since the body is the weak link between the world and the soul, the wall that is so easily breached; or rather, since it is through the body that the soul is thought to be corrupted, therefore to resist temptation such as abstaining from food (fasting), from alcohol, (teetotal) from sex (celibacy), from ecstatic, indulgent permissiveness (asceticism, as in the nun in her nunnery and the monk in his Abbey or monastery) – is the way to remain pure and holy, and be acceptable to God.

However, the significant point about sins of the flesh is that it is contradistinguished with the spirit. Verse 18 of the above Bible passage talks about the spirit: 'But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law.' The law here is the Law of Moses, the observance of which previously had been the requirement for the remission of sins, but which the death of Christ on the cross as atonement for the sins of man did away and grace through the Holy Spirit abounded. So Romans 8:14 says, 'For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.' And 1 Timothy 1-9 tells us that '… the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers'. But '… with grace sins of the flesh are easier to resist as Romans 6:14 tells us. 'For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.' And finally, from the same book of Galatians 5:16-17 Paul tells us that: This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not

fulfil the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh…'

But Paul recognized the difficulty of resisting temptations, writing in Romans 7:19 'For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do.' In verse 24, he laments still that, 'O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?' Sex was also particularly problematic, a veritable form of wanton indulgence of the body and, 'Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me', says Psalm 51:5. Sex replaced the creative efforts of God and became the ever-present reminder of our sinful nature. Sex therefore is sin, but a necessary sin by virtue of the fact that through sex is procreation to be achieved. But it must not be indulged, even for pleasure. Or as Turner puts it, 'Sexuality is pre-eminently wasted time, unless it is geared towards reproduction, but this must be achieved without pleasure' (1984:140). So in cases where certain bodily functions are unavoidable or indeed necessary and must be accommodated, these must be done under control. According to Elias, 'No less characteristic of a civilizing process than `rationalization' is the peculiar molding of the drive economy that we call `shame' and `repugnance' or `embarrassment' " (1982: 292). In other words, shame is paradoxically a good thing, since on the one hand it demonstrates consciousness or knowledge of what is wrong yet it simultaneously induces disgust on the back of that consciousness. To lack shame is to lack awareness that something is shameful and it is the lack of shame that is construed as undesirable. But ignorance or innocence knows no shame since it is unconscious of taboo and to lack shame in this sense is an indication of untainted purity, a *sancta simplicitas*. Adam and Eve lacked shame of their nakedness until they tasted from the tree of knowledge; likewise children have no concept of the shame of nakedness until they attain adulthood whereupon innocence is lost after the awareness of their bodies.

In this sense there are two ways that shame might occur: the individual feels shame within him or herself about some personal conduct or the individual is made to feel shame by society, (Cooley, 2006; Goffman, 1959; Scheff, 2000). In both cases shame is concomitant with guilt either as the transgression of religious instructions (sin) or the breaking of cultural taboos, which gives rise to feelings of guilt or embarrassment. Shame is a personal feeling resulting from a

public gaze that is fixed upon socially determined moral conduct and upon its disapprobation must be concealed and which the individual upon such knowledge would wish to conceal. This is because disclosure engenders feelings of humiliation, ridicule, derision and so on. Shame is meant to isolate, to exclude or ostracize the individual from the group on account of offending or violating public norms and conventions, (Scheff, 2000). We find similar sentiment in Ruth Benedict (1946) in her analysis of Japanese culture, which sees shame as violating social norms. Seeing shame as a 'social emotion' also in Durkheim or as a collective consciousness, we see shame as a consequence of breaking that collective bond. For Sara Ahmed (2004) emotions are not internal individual experiences that are bounded or sealed within an entity but are collective and shared feelings that express those collective feelings and because they are contagious they spread among a group. What we call body language is a language of culture or cultural signs that human beings share within a community. For Ahmed (2004:104):

> Shame in exposing that which has been covered demands us to re-cover, such a re-covering would be a recovery from shame. Shame consumes the subject and burns on the surface of bodies that are presented to others, a burning that exposes the exposure, and which may be visible in the form of a blush, depending on the skin of the subject, which might or might not show shame through this 'colouring'.

Therefore the body of Christ, dead, sacrificial and resurrected is the very basis of Christianity. The Catholic practice of Eucharist is predicated on the supposed physicality of Christ's body and one of the disputes between Catholicism and Protestantism relates to different interpretations of the Eucharist: the Catholic believing it to be transubstantiation (the body and blood of Christ transforming in substance into the bread and wine) taken at the Eucharist and Protestant consubstantiation (the body and the blood being present 'alongside' the bread and the wine). Nevertheless these disputes demonstrate the importance of the

body in religious belief. I shall discuss the way that idea of shame came to Africa and how it influenced African behaviour and attitudes towards religion.

4.4 Western perception of the African body – a brief history

Historically, Western conception of the African has always been linked to the body, principally to skin colour - blackness. As W. Jordan (1974:6) explains: 'White and black connoted purity and filthiness, virginity and sin, virtue and baseness, beauty and ugliness, beneficence and evil, God and the devil.' The African body represented Bakhtin's idea of the grotesque and similar characterization can be found in Pieterse's book *White on Black* (1995) where the negative stereotype of black people had extended to a psychology that associates or creates negative representation or qualities that are not even black. The black African was the prototype of man in the state of nature, but a state closer not to Rousseau's but to Hobbes' conception of the idea, where the life of man is 'nasty, brutish and short.'

From the start black as a skin colour appears to be the wrong human colour since nothing good or pure or fair or kind or gentle or beautiful is ever black: the night, for example, or evil as dark. In his natural habitat the African was not unlike Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, ignorant and unworldly. But Africa was no Garden of Eden but a harsh, sunburnt, inhospitable environment where its people were no different to the wild untamed animals that roamed its wide-open spaces. There the African walked about naked in complete ignorance of the shame of the exposed body until Western 'civilization' brought knowledge in the way of shame to the culture. 'Who told thee that thou wast naked?' God had asked Adam in Genesis 3:11. Like Adam and Eve, the African had tasted of the fruit of Western civilization and like the loss of virginity, innocence was lost and shame took its place. In Africa, for example, the average market woman feels no shame of public breastfeeding (unconcealed), while she serves her customers and they in turn see no shame in her doing so. But in the West, a different attitude obtains where public breastfeeding is thought to offend public decency, as though it is a shameful act akin to sex in public. But now the modern African woman feels the embarrassment of public breastfeeding and shares this feeling

of shame with her Western counterpart, a far remove from the lack of shame in her fellow African market-trader sisters. This example demonstrates how Western influence introduced shame into African culture, as part of the modernity and progressive influence. Although attitudes to public breastfeeding in the West are changing; there are now more ambiguous sets of responses to such public activities as we find in Cas Wouters (2004, 2007) with the acceptance of public kissing, holding of hands, inter-racial relationships and a more general relaxed attitude to matters that were once deemed to be taboo. There is also the breaking down of barriers between social classes and different races in what Wouters describes as 'informalization', which has opened up a more democratic attitude to social matters that were once disapproved. However, some residual notion of shame remains with regards to some of these social practices, as Martha Nussbaum (2004) has reminded us. But just as attitudes are relaxing in the West about certain social matters, surprisingly they are hardening in Africa. For example, the liberalization of homosexuality in the West finds the opposite in Africa. I shall not be drawn on the reasons for this state of affairs, as it would take us to far away from our subject.

In any case the process of civilizing the African began with the body through the introduction of shame. Early missionaries, for example would not allow unbaptized Africans into the church, since they lacked the symbolic purification of the body necessary for holy acceptance, (Barrett, 1968). Peter Brown has also shown in *Body and Society* (1988[2008]) how the church hierarchy in ancient Rome believed that '…the body was unruly', and had to be disciplined, which was precisely what the missionaries believed about the African body and which they set about disciplining. The first act was to cover up the African nakedness, to make him see the shame of it and to make it acquiesce in the act of covering up the shame associated with it. Next, they attempted to tame the emotions or what they considered to be gratuitous excitement or exuberance or ecstatic expressiveness, which was a key part of the civilization process, to curb base instincts and to reign in the exposure of human nakedness and emotions. But by nakedness I do not simply mean the mere exposure of the body in public; but also the emotions in their raw, unrestrained state: ecstatic, feverish and exuberant expressions in what might be termed 'naked' aggression. However, it was not just the appearance of the African body, the colour or the emotions that

were thought to be shameful; it was also its shape, size and features. The racial theories of the Eighteenth and Nineteenth centuries helped to establish the superiority of the white race through the different racial categorizations that we find in Linnaeus and Larmack down to Darwin's *Origins of the Species And the Descent of Man* (1859) and Arthur Gobineau's *An Essay on The Inequality of the Human Races* (1915). Even the Bible was used to support these views, where as W. Jordan (1974) explains, the predicament of the African slave was blamed on Noah's curse on Canaan, the son Ham that his descendants will be slaves. Africans were thought to be the descendants of Ham and hence, they were to be enslaved.

The shape, size and features of the white body symbolized purity, softness and delicateness just as the straight hair, pointy nose, thin lips, slim hips and moderate buttocks symbolized refinement. Nature had refined the imperfections of the white body through the evolutionary process while the black body remained in intermediate state within the evolutionary process, which would explain the curly hair, the thick lips, the flat nose, the flat voice, the ape-like cranium, the excessively large buttocks of the women (indicating exotic sexual fecundity) and the abnormally large male penis (indicating sexual aggression). The myth of the size of the black man's penis was thus used to perpetuate the fear of black sexual aggression that threatened the masculinity of the white male and was used to justify many a lynching of African American men on account of rape of or the mere association with white women, (Shilling, 1993), as we also see in Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mocking Bird*. Greg Thomas (2007) sees the Western perception of black sexuality and the black body within a power and exploitation discourse that relates to politics, colonialism and various forms of oppression. For example, when Edward Burnet Tylor (1871:1,28) says about the African:

> 'Savage moral standard are real enough but they are looser and weaker than ours. ...But that any known savage tribe will not be improved by judicious civilization, is a proposition which any known moralist would dare to make; while the general tenor of the evidence goes far to justify the view that on the whole

> that the civilized man is not only wiser and more capable
> than the savage, but also better and happier…'

This is the kind of sentiment that Thomas is criticising: the Tylorian 'judicious civilization' that is engaged through the enforced restriction of the African emotional, sexual and religious impulses. Indeed, Western civilization in part has been an attempt to make shame the significant negative social emotion upon which the justification for restricting or curbing human conduct has been predicated, (Scheff, 2000). The pollution of the body, 'dirt' as Mary Douglas (1966) calls it, in the manner of Elias revolves around the body and the orifices from which things issue, as already mentioned: snort, saliva, blood, spit, vomit, semen or sperm and even sweat.

However, Elias's *Civilizing Process* has not gone unchallenged. One of Elias's most prominent critics is the anthropologist Jack Goody (2012), who argues against the Eurocentricism of Elias' claim. For Goody civilization – whatever we mean by it - was not peculiarly or genealogically or culturally specific to Europe but was peculiarly a developmental process in other cultures, such as Asia. Also, it began long before Elias thought it did even in Europe. Equally, the idea of European civilization that Elias presents is a narrow kind that is filtered through the rosy lens of history; but a history that omits the violence and barbarism that Europe perpetrated against other nations, particularly the colonies. François Dépelteau et al (2013:46) point out the deletion of Western barbarism from the narrative of Western civilization, that '…capacity to administrate, dominate through open violence, and sometime to exterminate other people around the world.' To Elias's claim that Europe invented table manners, Goody (2003:66) responds by saying that 'No society is without its table manners; its formalized ways of eating, and none without its attempt to distance bodily function from the generality of social intercourse.'

However, Katie Liston and Stephen Mennell (2009) have attempted to defend Elias' theory of the civilizing process against critics like Jack Goody, claiming that Goody had misunderstood aspects of Elias' theory and that some of the animus inherent in Goody's criticism boils down to personal antagonism arising from their time together at the University of Legon in Ghana. But when Elias writes about Western civilization that:

> It sums up everything in which Western society of the last two or three centuries believes itself superior to earlier societies or 'more primitive' contemporary ones. By this term Western society seeks to describe what constitutes its special character and what it's proud of: the level of its technology, the nature of its manners, the development of its scientific knowledge or view of the world, and much more. (1978:5)

He is not presenting a fundamentally Eurocentric idea even if intended as an explanation of its origins. Dépelteau et al (2013) argue that Elias extends the civilizing process to societies beyond Europe, that is, to universalize it. And so Western rationality has always attempted to bring the body and the emotions under the control of the mind or 'beneath the surface', as Ahmed describes. But instead of seeing the body and the emotions as constituting 'base' aspects of human nature we now see the body and the emotions as the foundation of the self in the Heideggerian and the Merleau-Pontyian senses through which all experience is possible. It is this paradigm shift in thinking about the body that would enable us to better understand the significance of Nigerian Pentecostalism. Or as Sara Ahmed (2004) writes, the 'emotions are a way of apprehending the world' in what we might describe as emotional epistemology.[23]

As such this is the way that early Western perception of the African began to shape the African's own attitudes to his or her body and the legacy of these cultural influences remain to this today. In most African societies, fairer skin is considered superior to the darker skin, a belief that has induced many an attempt to lighten the skin by applying bleaching creams. The full lip is no longer a feature of derision, but now much desired – witness the rise of plastic surgery and the injection of Botox or collagen to enhance the lip. And the size or shape of the black woman's posterior, once viewed as grotesque as in the case of Sarah or Saatjie Baartman, the South African (hottentot) woman brought to

[23] I have found very useful the article by Lorraine Sim and Ann Vickery *New Feelings: Modernism, Intimacy, and Emotion* (2014)

Europe in the eighteenth century as a specimen of a Bhatkinian ugliness and was paraded on stage has now given way to a more acceptable and celebration of such shapes as in the cases of reality star Kim Kardashian, and the singers Nicki Minaj and Jennifer Lopez.

Perhaps these positive developments have prompted authors like W.J Wilson (1978) to declare that the racism in America had declined significantly from the beginning of Twentieth Century and economic factors and class were more important social determining factors. But Loic Wacquant (2004) disagrees, arguing that racism as predicated on skin colour remains an important defining and determining factor in the black experience in the US. For Wacquant, the decadent inner city American ghettos, over-populated by African Americans must be seen as a kind of prison while the actual prison must be seen as a kind of ghetto. Pieterse (1995) expresses similar sentiment in examining the historical portrayal of black images by dominant white culture that reinforces negative stereotypes of black people and we also find this in Henry Louis Gates (1988).

4.5.The body and dance in Pentecostal worship.

I have already discussed the importance of the dance to the Pentecostal experience. Now I return to the idea in the context of the present discussion on the body. It is difficult for a visitor to the Christ Apostolic Church Stockwell to not notice the significance of music and dance to the church service, where there is much dancing and singing. The dance appears spontaneous, highly rhythmic, seamlessly willowy and effortlessly fluid, with lots of swaying and swirling and gyrating. The dancing style varies from individual to individual yet collectively they appear to harmonize as one. About this, Henri Lefebvre (1992:15) writes that 'everywhere where there is space and time and the expenditure of energy there is rhythm,' For Lefebvre, melody, harmony and rhythm in music together connect in time and space because of the succession of their placement. Rhythm is beat, like the beat of the heart, the sequencing, the measurement, like the rhythm of the step or the beat of the raindrop. For Lefebvre all of these centres on the body, noting that 'at no moment does the analysis of rhythm and the rhythmanalytical project lost sight of the body'

(p.23). There is an interesting description of the rhythm of mere walking as a bodily movement in Rebecca Solnit (2000), which I quote here at some length. She writes:

> Where does it start? Muscles tense. One leg a pillar, holding the body upright between the earth and sky. The other a pendulum, swinging from behind. Heel touches down. The whole weight of the body rolls forward onto the ball of the foot. The big toe pushes off, and the delicately balanced weight of the body shifts again. The legs reverse position. It starts with a step and then another step and then another that add up like taps on a drum to a rhythm, the rhythm of walking. The most obvious and the most obscure thing in the world, this walking that wanders so readily into religion, philosophy, landscape, urban policy, anatomy, allegory, and heartbreak.(p.3)

Just as there is rhythm to walking there is a rhythm to breathing, to speaking, to tapping where the rhythms are in essence beats and then a dance just as the cadence of speech, its rise and fall turns into poetry and then a song suffused by 'moods' in the Heideggerian sense. The emotions are rhythmic and connect the beat to song and body moves in harmonious response. But there is however a distinction that is made between African and European culture and tradition to which the terms Dionysian and Apollonian has been applied. Although Nietzsche puts these two concepts to use in his description of the birth of tragedy, but Ruth Benedict (1934) gives it an anthropological turn, where she appears to believe that Africans possess natural Dionysian traits of emotionalism, wild excitement, demonstrative gesticulations and irrationality all of which contrasts with the Caucasian Apollonian reserve, organized, rational, logical, structured and methodical, as in Weber, Elias and others. The claim by Benedict is a kind of naturalism, the idea that this is the African nature, the way Africans are naturally constructed. But we have come a long way from the idea of naturally determined nature towards social constructionism and conventions and beyond. Most conventions that appear natural are indeed learnt, even apparently spontaneous forms of dance. The African can do Ballet just as the white man can do Jazz, scatting or disco or Gospel music.

There is a useful discussion of the body and dance in Bryan Turner's *Body and Society* (1984) in a chapter titled *Body and Motion*. For Turner, 'Dance is a natural language by which human beings convey meanings through organized performances, typically accompanied by music and with costumes.' Dance is universal, or as Turner puts it, quoting Heidegger that, 'dance is fundamental to our being in the world; there are no cultures without it and it is shared with other species as a rhythmic performance conveying basic emotions about sex and violence, (p.214). But why only 'sex and violence' since dance also conveys religious essence 'that pertains to all cultures in various forms and called different names'?

Turner further notes that '…the dancing body in short has a national script. (p.223)' '…Essentially involves all senses', that is, the whole body. This implies that although dance is a universal concept each culture has its own kind of dance, peculiar to it. In Europe there are Ballet, the Waltz, the Cotillion and the Flamenco; in Argentina there is the Tango and in Brazil there is the Samba and so on. Different dances reflect different cultural practices. For example, in the film *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner*[24], a dialogue takes place between Matt Drayton played by Spencer Tracy and Dr. John Wade Prentice played by Sidney Poitier where both men discuss the matter of race, music and dance. On the question of dance and rhythm Matt Drayton says '…the coIored kids are better than the white kids.' Dr Prentice responds by saying, 'But there's an explanation for that. It's our dancing, and it's our music. We brought it here. I mean; you can do the Watusi. But we are the Watusi[25]. In other words, the dancer and the culture appear inseparable. The culture that created the Watusi dance is the culture that created the Watusi man.

But in many African cultures, dance is a sacred form of performance and the various dances reflects particularly in African Pentecostalisms. Although Turner does not mention African dance or the African body in his book, only a passing reference to a form of healing, he nevertheless distinguishes between choreographed and spontaneous dances. Choreography regulates the dance movement and according to him, Norbert Elias thought that '…dance was important in training the body to make it a civilized part of courtly behaviour.

[24] Guess Who is Coming to Dinner (1967) Directed by Stanley Krammer

[25] The Watusi was a famous African (Kenyan) dance in the 1940s

Deportment was an essential feature of the civilized bodies of courtiers, and ballet was essentially a product of court life' (1984:215). This idea of civilizing dance was also a way controlling the body in motion and ballet was a perfect example of the civilized, controlled and disciplined body in motion, a body that obeys the commands of the mind, moving as though under the control of a marionette, just as shame is used to control behaviour. Turner also notes that 'Ballet and later modern dance has encapsulated the elite visions of national character of performance' (p.223). But this manner of civilizing the dance appears to be opposed to the body's free and natural rhythmic response to external stimulation, the kind that we find in Merleau-Ponty. Western aesthetic tradition of disinterestedness or psychical distance stands opposed to African spontaneity and participatory performance, freely expressed rather than rationally constrained. It is the particularity of the African modes of expression in dance and music that we also find in the various African Pentecostalisms.

These then are the cultural inheritors of ancient African religious traditions: the drumming and singing and dancing and clapping. The Yoruba for example, have for a long time used the talking drum as a sacred instrument in ritual performance as well as a means of communication. The drum talks, the music sings, the body moves, all to the rhythm of the beat, and all three completing a trilogy of the African 'somaesthetic' performance that are expressed through the body. However, the dance or movement is not individualised but functions as a collective participatory activity, as we see in Deleuze and Guattari (1980) when they speak of multiciplicty of bodies and connectivity. Within each culture, the dance always fits the music. For Jeremy Gilbert (2004), the essence of music is not the meaning that it conveys but the 'physical effects' that it produces. Music is not a matter of thought - although the lyrics of a song might convey meaning - but it is more a matter of the way the music provokes or invites the body to movement, (Eric Shouse, 2005). But not only in dance and collective movement is this evident but also in prayer. I have already mentioned the importance of prayer within the Nigerian Pentecostal church services and prayer must be seen as constituted of both the body and the expression of the emotions. To kneel or stand and pray, to close one's eyes and wave the hands in the air, to shake the head or nod incessantly, to clap and shout are all part of engaging the body as the 'nodal' point of the religious energy. Therefore, to sing and dance and clap

and pray is the collective engagement of bodies in worship, which I described as constituting the Pentecostal experience.

Richard Shusterman's *Pragmatist Aesthetics: Living Beauty, Rethinking Art* (2000) argues for the aesthetics of the lived body and performance and although Shusterman acknowledges the influence of John Dewey's aesthetics on his work, his can also be seen in the mode of William James and his critique of the kind of rationalism that runs through the conception of dance as disciplined movement. Shusterman conceives an idea that he calls somaesthetics, which is an attempt to '…cultivate the pleasures and discipline of the body' (p.xiii). Shusterman wants to situate the body as central to the aesthetic experience, since for so long the body has been ignored within that discourse.

But reading Shusterman, one can see his idea of somaesthetic experience in similar vein to the African cultural expression about which Pentecostalism furnishes a prime example. Shusterman's somaesthetics is in a way the Nigerian Pentecostal experience that I discussed in the last chapter in terms of its emphasis on performance. In *Performing Live: Aesthetic Alternatives for the Ends of Art* (2000), Shusterman returns to the same theme, that is, the aesthetics of the body. But in Nigerian Pentecostalism, the body is not prepared in any particular way for the ritual of service. In my ethnographic study, I found no evidence of a back stage/front stage practices in which the body is 'purified' and made ready to be entered in the presence of God. No lighting of candles and only occasional burning of incense. No rosaries to be read or the crucifix to be held as religious symbolic objects. Most pastors wear a suit, although a few might wear vestments such as a dog collar; but there is no ritual washing of the body or the feet or any form of pre-service purification. However, there is the Nigerian and indeed African emphasis on appearance via modes of dressing for occasion, which extends to attendance at church services. According to Birgit Meyer,

> '…it is commonly acknowledged that appearance is a prime concern for those participating in Pentecostal churches. A person's appearance – the type of clothes, the car, the house - is seen as an indication of an interior spiritual state. As in consonance with the prosperity gospel, wealth is regarded as a sign of blessing from the Lord. (p.126)

Although Meyer is right that appearance is important to African Pentecostalists but there are other explanations for reasons why. First, for many Africans, at least for Nigerians, appearance has social significance and meaning. It is a symbol of identity and social belonging. For example, there is a custom in the Yoruba social scene known as *aso ebi* or *aso egbe* or *And Co* (i.e. and company) where groups of men or women, as members of a family or friends or social club dress in same colours of attire at public functions. This custom expresses togetherness, bonding and social or community belonging. Secondly, appearance in terms of dressing up is also a way of showing respect, reverence or regard in a social setting, where turning up in inappropriate clothes is considered an act of disrespect. Although this not peculiar to Nigerians since it is a practice that is found in other cultures. But dressing up for church services is also a way of showing due regard to God and members of the congregation. Long before Elias' *Civilizing Process*, this idea of 'putting one's best foot forward' has always been part Nigerian tradition by the refinement and adornment of the body. Thirdly, appearance is important to Nigerians as a way of expressing emotions either of joy and gratitude where the exuberant dancing and singing and the bright and colourful modes of dressing express similar sentiments. Lastly, appearance, especially elaborate colourful adornment is a matter of the aesthetics, similar to Shusterman's somaesthetics of performance. But in the discussion so far, I have tried to move away from the body as an individual entity. I now examine the collective nature of African bodies in the last section.

4.6 The body and belonging in Nigerian culture

> The branch cannot bear fruit of itself except it abide in the vine (John 15:4)

There is a saying in Yoruba: *Apalara, igunpa ni yekan:* the arm is a part of the body connected at the shoulder. This refers to the benefit of joint or concerted effort; however, the literal meaning of this saying is equally significant for an understanding of the Yoruba view of the body. The word *apa* refers to the arm

while *ara* means the body; therefore *apalara* says, the arm is *the* body and not a mere part of it. We speak of parts of the body, such as the arm, the nose, the leg and so on, all connected to the body. Although the Yoruba recognizes this description yet speaks of the arm not as a mere part but as *the* body. The difference is subtle but important since talk of a part might suggest separation or independence whereas talk *the* body in reference to the part sees what is regarded as a part as more of a representative of the entire. In this way the body is conceived as a whole and also symbolizes the connectedness of a unified entity. In other words, the African idea of the body is not as an individual or a separate entity but as an extension of the family, the community or the wider society. The individual is perceived as belonging to or is part of or as an extension of something bigger than him or herself, where belonging means that the loss of a part affects the group or community and diminishes it in significant ways, rendering it bereft and incomplete, a sentiment that we find in John Donne's poem.[26] This then is the body as a group, closely knit, the body as a multiple, the body as collective that transcends the body as an individual. In pre-missionary pre-colonial Nigeria there was a practice of ethnic facial markings, known as tribal marks (although they were not tribal marks at all, but religious markings of the group). This practice has all but died out now but at its height it was a practice of cultural significance that went beyond aesthetic decorations and was used as a form of group identity and social bonding. Although the practice was confined to what seemed like certain ethnic groups, each of these groups possessed their own peculiar marks, as a form of identification particularly in times of war. The marks are also ritualized sacred expressions within the culture but significantly they point to a way of literally writing on the body as a collective rather than an individualized entity. Lisa Blackman (2008), AnnMarie Mol (2002) and others discuss this idea of the body not as a single

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[26] No man is an island,

Entire of itself,

Every man is a piece of the continent,

A part of the main.

John Donne *Devotions Upon Emergent Occasions, and Severall Steps In My Sicknes*, (1624) Meditation XVII.

individualised unit or as 'self-contained' but as 'co-extensive'. In her work, Blackman questions the idea of the individual body – *the* body as an ideal type 'self-contained and bounded by the skin', which is the traditional way of thinking about the body and explores the notion of the body as a collective. Referring to the work of AnnMarie Mol (2002), where Mol attempts to address traditional belief in *the* body or *a* body as a 'singular' entity, 'contained' or sealed off within the 'skin'. Lisa Blackman's work is just one of many that now acknowledges the affective dimension of the concept of the body. What is noteworthy is that this shift in the discourse is, as we have seen throughout our discussion here, a turn towards the African conception of the body not as a singular entity but as a multiple and not merely corporeal but also affective. As Blackman writes, '…the focus on affect also moves away from a distinctive focus on the human body to bodies as assemblages of human and non-human processes. …This new trend of body theory, with its focus on affective energies and creative motion, characterizes bodies in two ways: by movement and process,' (2012:5). Reflecting the ideas of AnneMarie Mol she writes that the body is not '…a singular bounded entity or substance but rather… 'body multiple'. …our bodies always extend and connect to other bodies, human and non-human, to practices, techniques and objects which produce different kinds of bodies…'(p.1). In *A Thousand Plateaus* (1987[2003]) Deleuze and Guattari present the idea of the rhizome, a concept that rejects the stage-by-stage developmental process that is predicated on linearity, verticality and universality and the singularity of source. This linearity of progress implies that development or civilization like Western civilization travels on a single track like a train and upon the same track every culture must embark if it wishes to be considered civilized. The six principles of the rhizome, particularly the multiplicity and connectivity aspects sees the rhizomatic process as creating not a singular but a multiplicity of development and not an independent or separate entity but a connective web or network of interconnections that ultimately describes African culture and which is evident in the Durkheimian kind of social ties that bind the collective, the community or group together. As Mr Ore, one of those interviewed for this project told me; 'I also come to this church because I want to be part of the community here.'

Therefore, each person connects to another in a variety of ways – spiritually and through kinship, friendship, fellowship, brotherhood and in other ways and these connections or relationships form part of the principles of the rhizome, which are the cartographical as well as a delcalcomanial mosaic. They are connections that are made possible through the 'affective turn' as when Teresa Brennan (2004) sees affect as something 'transmitted' or passed on from person to person, an idea similar to Silvan Tomkins' (2008) 'contagiousness' of affect. But the affect is social as we find in Sara Ahmed (2004), Lauren Berlant, (2008, 2011), Brian Massumi, (2002). Equally, this idea of the body multiple and its immateriality fits well with Lisa Blackman and Annemarie Mol's idea that bodies are interactive and co-extensive and are never self-contained, isolated or individualized.

We also find the criticism of the single genealogical project in Scott Lash (1991). For the Yoruba, the individual is made up of the *ara* (body), *okan* (mind) and *emi* (spirit) (Segun Gbadegeshin, 1991). These three aspects of the self constitute the totality of what we refer to as the individual but here no single part is necessarily more important than the other. For Nick Crossley (2008:96) '… the individual belongs to a group or variety of groups, and the individual habitus tends to manifest many group specific characteristics. Indeed the individual and the individual habitus are but variants of the collective root'. Therefore the emotions as affects connect most readily to the body through which we feel our way in the world. Or as Massumi (1995) says the body 'doesn't just absorb pulses or discrete stimulations; it unfolds context, it infolds volitions and cognitions that are nothing if not situated. Intensity is asocial, but not presocial - it includes social elements, but mixes them with elements belonging to other levels of functioning, and combines them according to different logic', (p.90-91). In other words, affect is both social and individual but more importantly, consciousness has no control over affect, as Jesse Prinze (2008) argues with regards to fear and so even an attempt to suppress fear through reason is often unsuccessful.

In conclusion, the centrality of the body to Pentecostal worship has engaged us in this chapter. Once the site of sin and shame the body has undergone socio-cultural and religious transformation over the past two centuries. The idea of civilizing the African began with the body, suppressing its various forms of

expressiveness and ridding it of acts that the Europeans deemed shameful and indecent. But recent anti-rational conception of the body that we find within Western intellectual tradition is moving in the direction of African ideas regarding the body, as multiple and co-extensive.

As Silvan Tompkins argues, there is nothing natural about shame; shame is something that society writes on the body. Nigerian Pentecostal performance and expressionism has never worked along these lines even in the native traditional form from which it arose. The Pentecostal revival in Nigeria must therefore be seen as an attempt to reinstate the body to the centre of Pentecostal worship and through which the religious experience is achieved. African Pentecostalism is now demonstrating the significance of the body in religious experience, particularly in religious worship. For example, one reason that most African cultures insist on burial rather than the cremation of the dead (Vincent Brown, 2010) is that the body must remain intact even in death since it continues into the spirit world as one single unified whole. In ancient Yoruba culture, certain individuals are selected, mostly servants, known as the *Abobaku* – those who die with the King, - are interred (alive) with a dead king and his worldly possessions upon the belief that both servants and possessions would be of use in the afterlife. As Mbiti (1969) writes, 'There is neither paradise to be hoped for nor hell to be feared in the hereafter" (pp. 4–5). But it would appear that the practice of the Abobaku has not completely died out; because most recently the *Ooni* of Ife, the King of Yoruba people passed away (28 July 2015) and the designated *Abobaku*, the man destined to be interred (alive) with the dead King suddenly took flight. This perhaps shows that some attitudes regarding the body are changing even in Africa with certain customs. But if the body and its various emotional expressions constitute the vehicle through which the Pentecostals experience is derived, how do we reconcile this bodily and emotional expressivity with the written word, that is, the scriptures? This question will concern us in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 5

PENTECOSTALISM AND SCRIPTURES

5.1 Introduction

'In the beginning was the word and the word was with God and God was the word', says John 1:1. But what form did the *word* take: was it written; was it spoken; was it spirit or was it embodied? I shall not go into theological exegesis, but suffice to say that some Christians believe that the *word* was Jesus Christ, in which case the *word* that was in the beginning was spirit made flesh. If this is the case then the *word* is not quite the same as scriptures or a written text but something above and beyond the text. The *word* is something that is alive, a living thing that is at once communicable (in the original meaning of the Greek, the word means *logos*) as we also find in Benjamin's *On Language of Things*. But Nigerian traditional religions have no sacred texts or scriptures, such as the Bible or Quran or the Torah and this lack of sacred text or indeed the general lack of a literary culture, prior to the arrival of the missionaries has contributed to the negative perception of African cultures. Edward Gibbon (1898) for example, believed that '…the use of letters is the principal circumstances that distinguishes a civilized people from the herd of savages, incapable of knowledge or reflection', (quoted in R. Thomas (1992:1). African cultures were therefore predominantly oral compared to the literary culture of the West, hence their being perceived as savages.

For many Nigerian Pentecostalists, the Bible, as a written text is also paradoxically an oral document: a living word that speaks to man in the here and now. But perhaps more importantly many African (oral) cultures see the

word or a language, first and foremost as a spirit or spirited utterance, (hence they speak of prophetic utterance or of there being power in the word) a thing that is also communicable. We employ words in expressing feelings, emotions, thoughts and ideas but we use breath to push out the words (as spoken) and the breath, at least in Yoruba culture, is *emi* (spirit). So where words fail us, (or for the deaf or mute), we use gestures or signs, (animation), and other active or spirited means to convey feelings, emotions and so forth. Going back to the Bible and John 1:1, if the *word* was or is spirit, then the *word* is life or activity or dynamism, but when it is written down, then it is 'frozen' or lies temporarily dead until it is resurrected. Therefore the distinction between oral and literary cultures could be said to be analogous to the state of water in its liquid (flowing) state on the one hand and in its frozen form, on the other. As Walter Hollenweger (1973) has observed, 'Pentecostalism is revolutionary because it offers alternatives to 'literary' theology and defrosts the 'thinking' within literary forms of worship and committee-debate. It gives the same chance to all, including the 'oral' people.' Harvey Cox (1997:93) echoes this sentiment when he notes that:

> …Pentecostals are experiential and not as text-oriented…Pentecostalism represents a massive "re-oralization" of a religion - namely Christianity - that was originally oral but soon became fixated on texts. Its style is narrational, not disquisitional. Sermons are not lectures sprinkled with a few anecdotes, but stories, often dramatically reenacted, with an occasional doc-trinal observation interjected.

This Coxian idea of 're-oralization' is precisely Hollenweger's defrosting of static or rigid text turned into liquid effervescence. Cox further notes that although the pastors and preachers during sermons carry '… a large bible in hand. But they rarely actually open it. The Bible is a symbol of authority, not a text to be explained' For Kenneth Archer (2013:NP) 'Pentecostals recognize that scripture is the authoritative voice in the community and able to transform lives as it is inspired anew by the Holy Spirit. Yet the hearing of the scriptures is filtered through the Pentecostal narrative tradition.' Therefore Pentecostalism, at least

its Nigerian version, rests in the liberation of the spirit from the rigidity of literary theology and the 'defrosting' of frozen thinking' echoes Durkheim's 'liquid effervescence' that flows through the collective members in song and dance and rituals that constitute Pentecostal worship. The 'Liquid effervescence' for Durkheim, the oral 'tradition' for Hollenweger, the 're-oralization' for Cox and the 'narrative culture' for Archer all point to the spontaneous spiritedness of performance as against rule-based or rigid literary text.

However, I should stress that orality must not be viewed merely as comprising the spoken word. It must also be seen in what Leonard Lovett describes as '…a discourse that takes in the oral culture i.e., testimony, dance, song, spontaneity…' quoted in Landeana Thomas (1997:155). To this may be added the emotional expressionism that constitute the Pentecostal experience. Continuing with the oral/liquid and literary/frozen metaphor, this also provides an entry point into Weber's church/sect distinction. The written text (not just the scriptures but other forms of documentation – common book of prayer, hymn books and so on) is the cornerstone of the established churches and reflects the rituals of order, hierarchy and choreography that distils and solemnizes the liturgy, slowing it down towards a freezing point. This then is yet an aspect of the Weberian rationalization of religious belief that is evident also in practice, the institutionalizing and bureaucratizing development of the pneuma or the charisma that turns rigid and also into an anti-democratic dogmatizing orthodoxy. The Weberian religious development of the sect and its gradual stabilizing routinization although starts off with a charismatic leader soon progresses into the institution of the church.

The charismatic leader, such as a Pentecostal pastor, blessed with great oratory, performs on the pulpit or the stage, which is an example of his or her charm, which might help to explain the popularity of the Tele-Evangelists who hold their audiences enthralled by the power of their oratory. Such a model of the sect could be said to reflect the orality of Nigerian Pentecostalism as against the literary culture of the established Western churches) which contrasts with Durkheim's 'unfreezing' of the religious canon, cutting them loose through the 'collective effervescence' and the dynamic rituals of worship. The problem however is that although Pentecostalism might be said to fit Weberian model of the sect with a gradual progression towards an established church order, there

is a sense in which this may not be the case and that Pentecostalism's emergence is uniquely different from the sect-church typology of Weber or even that of Ernest Troeltsch or R. Niebuhr and spins off a different model. But what model that would be is not yet clear.

But the oral versus literary distinction reflects the spontaneous versus methodological divide. As Cox (1996:93) also notes that 'Spreading the Word: Organizational Techniques, Theological Emphases," recognize the importance of the orality of the cult. But they believe it is important mainly because it makes worship available to semiliterate people.' But how do we reconcile orality with a text-based theology within the Pentecostalism discourse? What role does the sacred text play in a Pentecostalism that is largely experiential and performance-based? Does Pentecostalism in general have a theology and if so what is that theology? What would a Nigerian or African Pentecostal theology look like? These questions will engage us in this chapter.

The first section deals with the distinction between orality and literacy and argues that this distinction is a false dichotomy but nevertheless makes the claim that Nigerian Pentecostalism must be seen within the context of an oral culture and that any Pentecostal doctrine or theology must be constructed around the Pentecostal experience. The second section asks whether in fact there is a Pentecostal theology and what that theology might look like. The claim, by some authors like Robert Beckford (2000) that there is such a thing as black theology and that that theology fundamentally concerns or must concern itself with black experience of racial, social and political injustice is questioned. This theology borrows largely from the Liberation theology of Latin America famously espoused by the likes of Gustavo Gutierrez (1973[1988]), Juan Segundo (1976) and others. The third section addresses the question of African theology and asks whether there can be such a thing as African theology and what this would look like. The fourth section examines the way that Nigerian oral tradition might help shape the Pentecostal theology. The last section argues that the book of Psalms together with the Acts of Apostles has had perhaps the most influence on the Nigerian Pentecostal ritual of worship. I will now examine the literary and oral culture debate in some detail, as it provides the basis for a better assessment of the Nigerian Pentecostal approach to literary text.

5.2 Orality versus Literary culture

> Who also hath made us able ministers of the New Testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life. 2 Corinthians 3:6

The advantages of the written text over the spoken word are many and could be summed up by the phrase *Vox Audita Perit, Litera Scripta Manet* - the spoken word perishes or disappears leaving little trace, record or evidence behind (except if recorded electronically or stored in memory), while the written word endures and its enduringness provides permanence that serves as a source of historical documentary evidence or a bureaucratic codification and regulation. But oral cultures lack such documentary evidence or codification of rules, laws, political, historical, constitutional or legal systems and this lack has been interpreted as a sign of primitiveness. This has prompted the likes of Edward Gibbon and Hugh Trevor Roper to denigrate African culture, but as Michael Clanchy (1979:9) notes 'Primarily and most obviously, it is language itself which forms mentalities, not literacy. Writing is one of the means by which encoded language is communicated; it can never be more than that.'

However the distinction between orality and the written word has been shown to be a false dichotomy. For example, Jack Goody (1977:15) notes that 'the written word does not replace speech, any more than speech replaces gesture. But it adds an important dimension to much social action.' Rosalind Thomas (1992:27) stresses a similar point when she explains that, 'writing is not the mirror image and destroyer of orality, but reacts or interacts with oral communication in a variety of ways.' Each has advantages and disadvantages but both are complimentary of each other. However, the advantages of orality in African cultures once denounced or diminished by some Western thinkers, has allowed the shame of illiteracy much like the shame of the body and the exuberant performance to take hold.

In 1946, for example, the Nigerian novelist Amos Tutuola sent the manuscript of his novel *The Palm-wine Drinkard* (1953) to Faber and Faber in London for

possible publication. Faber summarily rejected it on account of its subject matter – African magic realism that it considered unsuitable to a Western readership and the writing style – fractured or Pidgin English. But T.S. Eliot, at the time poetry editor at Faber, championed the cause of the book and persuaded the Faber hierarchy to give the book a chance. Faber did but they wanted the book re-written in appropriate literary style befitting a Faber publication; but Eliot insisted that the book be published in the style that it had been written (broken English). The book was published and remains to this day a classic of African literature. One can only wonder what fate would have befallen it had Eliot not intervened. No Nigerian publisher would have published the book for the same reasons that Faber had rejected it. Indeed upon publication many (educated) Nigerians were embarrassed by it, seeing it as a reminder of the very negative European perception of the African, as primitive, illiterate and backward; a perception from which they had wished to distance themselves. It was a reminder of the shame that had attached to the African body. Therefore to impress and to please and not to be shamed, the African must adopt the Western mode of thought and its style of dissemination.

The Palmwine Drinkard was obviously composed in oral style mixed with the little knowledge of English that Tutuola had learnt, creating thereby the hybrid known as Pidgin English. Eliot appeared to be familiar with this oral form of composition and its significance in literature and possibly he had been aware of the work of Milman Parry (1930) early in the twentieth century on ancient Greek literature, which had been influential in the scholarship on oral culture. Parry thought that the Homeric compositions were oral compositions but crucially he thought that they were not mere spontaneous improvisations as previously thought, but were constructions based on set formulas. This formulaic idea is similar to the way that Nigerian praise-singers compose their songs of praises. In the absence of a text it appears as though they had composed it extempore or improvised when in fact they are working to a set formula. Parry is thought to have shown that what is lost in the inaccuracy of retelling stories was actually not a loss since the structure of the oral poems is preserved and passed down from generation to generation. This structural form of story-telling in its preserved form is precisely what we find to be the case in African culture. For Parry (1930:77)

> The poet who composes with only the spoken word a poem of any length must be able to fit his words into the mould of his verse after a fixed pattern. Unlike the poet who writes out his lines,—or even dictates them,—he cannot think without hurry about his next word, nor change what he has made, nor, before going on, read over what he has just written.

But does it matter if these poems were oral compositions or written texts? How do we determine or differentiate between an oral and a text-based composition when all we have is the written text? In any case what relevance do these points have for this thesis? To the first point I must state that it matters if we know how these poems were composed and the fact that they were oral compositions provides an insight into the thought-world of oral cultures. Equally, this insight has implications for this thesis in the sense that it shines a light into the way that pre-literate and pre-biblical Nigerian cultural traditions constructed cultural signs and how those cultures approached the scriptures from their pre-literate thought-world. The task of determining the oral composition from a text was the task that Parry undertook with acclaimed success.

But Parry died young, publishing very little yet his work has influenced a host of thinkers down the age the first of whom was Albert Lord, who was Parry's one-time academic assistant. Lord in *The Singers of Tales* (1960) continued with Parry's line of inquiry focusing on the Serbo-Croatian poets in the early 1930s and the way the poets learnt to master and reproduce long lines of the poetry that were not text-based. It had previously been thought that the poets learnt these poems by rote but Lord found, as Parry had done that the learning of these poems were not rote-learnt but were based on a set 'formula', which Sarah Price (2004:5) describes thus:

> A bard would learn the general storyline by listening to several performances. That bard, in turn, would perform the song, but his performance would be far from identical to what he had previously heard. In fact, each performance would be unique. The reason for this lies in the songs' transmission. Rather than memorizing a long

> poem word for word, a bard would learn oft-repeated themes, like arrival or departure.

It is the performance and the repetitive recitation of these poems, albeit by variations, claims Price that helped with its mastery by the poets. Whilst studying at the Sorbonne in Paris Parry had come under the influence of Marcel Jousse who had been working on the concept of orality and according to E. Richard Sienaert, (1990:94) the question that Marcel Jousse set himself to answer was this; 'how does oral man, oral society, in the absence of writing, remember, conserve, and transmit its values and beliefs? Or: how does oral memory work?' Jousse answered this question by stressing that, 'The original language then is corporeal, it is the expression of the entire body, of the entire being, of the whole of man.' (p.96) This is why Jousse has been called the anthropologist of gesture because for Jousse, (2015:xiv) 'Man thus is all gesture and gesture is the whole of man.' It is perhaps from Jousse that Parry had learned much of the ideas that he applied to his own work such as 'pitch' and sound and cadence and from which a formulaic structure or metre is formed, made up of the 'groups of words'. This is the way the poems are learnt and the way that they are delivered in oral culture. And it is this method of composition and delivery that marks orality apart from the literary text.

Thus, it can be argued that the African historical lack of literary culture has enabled as well as enhanced a performance tradition; just as literary culture could be said to have contributed to the stifling or the stilling of such forms of expressiveness within Western culture through the 'civilizing process' and technological advance. The African performance culture in its particularity engages the entire body in ritual worship and in a spontaneous, improvisational and highly expressive manner partly because it does not conform to or is restricted by a written script. And because it is also collective, it produces the 'collective effervescence' that I have been discussing. For example, according to Jousse, orality encourages or engenders a heightened sense of corporeal expressionism, the kind that we find in Nigerian Pentecostalism. Jousse also stresses the importance of pitch in oral composition that Parry also regarded as important.

Walter Ong (1982) tracks a similar intellectual path as those of Parry, Lord and Jousse when he writes that 'Oral cultures…produce powerful and beautiful verbal performances of high artistic and human worth, which are no longer even possible once writing has taken possession of the psyche' (p.14). Although writing has taken possession of modern Nigerian society but this has not diminished the orality of its collective psychology out of which the various expressionisms being discussed here is based. The idea of orality in pre-literate culture is what Walter Ong describes as primary orality and the introduction of literacy in Nigeria in the nineteenth century did not do away with orality but left residues of the oral culture, which Ong describes as secondary orality. Ong believes that the distinction between written word and orality from which a superiority and inferiority dichotomy has been derived is mistaken.

For Ong (1995) the text is a technological invention or as he puts it, 'Deconstructionists and others … show that texts and anything considered by analogy as a text, can be found never to have total internal consistency. But this is hardly surprising if one notes that texts are not purely "natural" products, such as exhaled breath or sweat or spittle, but are technologically constructed systems' (p.9). But the spoken word appears as perhaps 'natural products' and has resonance and dissonance as well as pitch and rhythm and cadence and the like. I have shown the importance of sounds in Nigerian Pentecostalism as expressed through the medium of prayer, glossolalia, preaching and music. In that discussion I also cited the importance of noise in rave music, whose roots can be traced to the African tradition of performance. The art of preaching forms part of the religious performance in which the body, the words and sound come together to good effect in the charismatic preacher. Jazz, which appears to be improvised and crudely composed, but is not as crudely or spontaneously improvised as the sounds might suggest, is formed of complex rhythms and synchronization albeit with variation. What is also worth mentioning here is that it is not the music as a written text that necessarily makes the music but the melody, the rhythm, the beat and so on, all of which precede the writing.

E.A. Havelock in his *A Preface To Plato* (1963) argues that Plato occupies a mid-point between the Oral and literary cultures. We know of Socrates mainly through Plato's dialogues since Socrates appear not to have written a word. Yet, there is a curious thing where Socrates, through Plato the writer, speaks of his

antipathy to the written word. In *The Republic* Plato objects to mimesis on the grounds that it is imitational of reality and imitation (a copy) is a step removed from the real. Equally, in the *Phaedrus* (275a) Plato disdains the written word on account of it being unhelpful to memory, noting this of writing that '… this invention will produce forgetfulness in the minds of those who learn to use it, because they will not practice their memory. Their trust in writing, produced by external characters which are no part of themselves, will discourage the use of their own memory within them.' Plato also objects to the written text on account that it is static and unresponsive to interrogation, noting that 'Writing… has this strange quality, and is very like painting; for the creatures of painting stand like living beings, but if one asks them a question, they preserve a solemn silence. And so it is with written words; you might think they spoke as if they had intelligence, but if you question them, wishing to know about their sayings, they always say only one and the same thing.' (275e) This is because written words '…cannot defend themselves by argument and cannot teach the truth effectually' (275d).

A series of works by distinguished thinkers on oral culture includes those of Harold Innis (1950, 1951), Marshall MacLuhan (1951, 1962, 1964) and Jack Goody (1968, 1977, 1986). Goody, in particular in works such as *The Logic of Writing and the Organization of Society* (1986) and *Literacy in Traditional Societies* (1968) traces the impact of writing on societies and sees these impacts in their political, economic, legal, religious and social dimensions. Goody tries to show the impact of writing not only on social intercourse but also on intellectual output. There was therefore a social as well as political dimension to literary culture that the West introduced to other cultures.

For Goody, job interviews for example, are conducted on a face-to-face basis, where the interviewer needs to see and hear the interviewee for reasons that the performance of the interviewee (the expressions, voice, sounds, gestures and overall performance) are thought to be crucial to the appointment and not just the words on the application form. Equally, within the legal system, the presence of the accused is required in court to be seen and to be heard (*viva voce*) in terms of testimony and those of witnesses. Anecdotal reports have suggested that the film careers of several Hollywood stars of the silent era were irreparably damaged by the introduction of sound or the talkies upon the fact

that some of these actors had unsuitable accents, lisps or speech defects that made it difficult for them to make the transition from silence to sound.[27]

In *The Interface between the Written and the Oral* (1987), Goody describes the way that religious texts help to set parameters for the control of social conduct. Borrowing from Max Weber, Goody (1977:15) explains how paperwork was used as an instrument during the colonial bureaucratic control and to divide the local population. An example is South Africa where the Identity Card was used as a means of entrenching the apartheid system just as in Rwanda where the Belgians used ID cards to determine the Hutus from the Tutsi, prompting Jim Fussell (2004:65) to note that '… the introduction of group classification on ID cards by the Belgian Colonial government in 1933, an action most significant because it introduced a rigid racial concept of group identity where it had not previously existed.' We find similar argument in Mamdani (2002).

But Nigerian cultures remain largely oral in what Ong describes as secondary orality since it retains residues of (primary) oral traditions now mixed with the written text. This hybridity is important for our understanding of Nigerian Pentecostal approach to the text since orality feeds into Nigerian Pentecostal culture, as it preserves much of the significant aspects of the oral tradition. It is also important to note that technological advance or literate culture has not completely got rid of the oral culture, as Goody has argued. For example, most Western educated Nigerians speak English interspersed with local language since many think primarily in their native language and merely use English words to express idea and feelings that have been conceived in the local language; hence they weave in and out of languages in what is known linguistically as *cold-switching*.

Equally, the use of mnemonics as a part of the oral culture aids memory and provides piquancy that is as effective as the literary text. For example the Yoruba language is a highly tonal language and its tonality makes use of rhythm and beat or syllabic stresses and cadence as part of the communication system, as well as conveying meaning. The Yoruba oral poetry rests on tonality, which expresses the emotions. One word could have as many as five different

[27] The Film, *Singing in the Rain* starring Gene Kelly, Donald O'Connor and Debbie Reynolds deals with the problems associated with the transition from the Silent Era to the 'Talkies'. Incidentally, the dramatic film that was being proposed within the film was turned into a musical.

meanings depending on the tone or accent. So a word like *owo*, could mean: money, trade, reverence and the hand. Several African proverbs derive from this culture of orality and capture truths about human experiences. As Ong has argued, proverbs and wise sayings are marks of an oral culture since those cultures think in concrete or practical terms and not in abstract terms.

There is no doubt that the written text has strongly influenced the sociology of knowledge as much as Western philosophy, religion and literature. It has favoured Western tradition over oral cultures in what Harold Innis (1986) describes as the 'monopoly of knowledge'. Only in the last few decades has the idea of African philosophy, which revolves around orality been taken seriously. For Innis (1986) oral cultures have a certain vitality that is threatened by the text, noting that 'written works, including this one, have dangerous implications to the vitality of an oral tradition and to the health of a civilization, particularly if they thwart the interest of a people in culture…' (p.IV). Marshall McLuhan's *Guttenberg Galaxy* (1964) follows the works of Havelock and Innis by arguing that the print press has had a similar impact on society in the way that the Guttenberg Bible had done. As information became widely available and learning dispersed among more people, a good thing in itself, the downside was something of a de-valuation of human interaction.

In the West, thoughts are converted into texts but oral cultures convert texts into the spoken word. This is what Hollenweger means when he says that Pentecostalism 'defrosts' the frozen 'literary theology', cutting it loose from its rigid moorings and turning it into a lively flowing stream of words. The result is a certain immediacy in oral cultures (face-to-face speaking, where members are more likely to know each other by sight, by name and a familiarity and fellow-feeling that engenders certain salient threads that bind the community together and fosters community spirit and cohesion, (Goody, 1987). On the other hand, literary communities tend towards de-personalization of human relationships, removing or lessening the touch, the feel and the immediate connection that binds people together. In Benedict Anderson (1983) an 'imagined community' is an example of the latter, where, '… the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion' (p.49). But what does all this mean for Pentecostal theology? How do we reconcile these two

seemingly opposing cultures of orality and the literacy culture of the bible? This discussion is taken up in the next section.

5.3 Pentecostalism: Doctrine or Theology?

The first question to pose is this: does Pentecostaism have a theology or is it just about doctrine? But what is theology and what is doctrine? Before we attempt an examination of the concept of theology let us deal with the question of doctrine to which theology is sometimes substituted. Donald Dayton defines theology as:

> … the intellectual claims, implicit or explicit, of a religious movement attempting to articulate its identity over against other movements—and that it is possible to reflect on and to attempt to bring into coherence the ideas of even popular movements that have not characteristically expressed themselves in the terms of classical theology—or of the academy. This is the task of Pentecostal theology; but by no means an easy task, with its many pitfalls.[28]

Theology therefore may be said to be the study of systems of religious beliefs or traditions and aspects of human experience as they relate to religious beliefs and practices by a method of systematic thought in a formalized setting, such as a university. This means that theology is not confined or limited to sacred texts but draws from outside the text in all areas of practical life and academic study, including history, archaeology, philosophy, anthropology, science etc., even though the sacred text remains central to the study. On the basis of this brief analysis could Pentecostalism not be more suited to doctrine than to theology? The problem is that the application of the term *theology* to Pentecostalism appears to be a contradiction, since most Pentecostalists do not believe that God

[28] I have not been able to find a date for the publication of this article from which this quotation has been sourced on the Internet. The article by D. Dayton "The Problematic of Pentecostal Theology" in Torch Trinity Journal 3 www.ttgst.ac.kr/upload/ttgst_resources13/20124-207.pdf *accessed on 27:05:2015*

can be studied or known through a systematic or intellectual examination. As Kenneth Keathley and James T. Draper (2001:108) write:

> The ability of the Word of God to address every area of human existence is called the *sufficiency of the Scriptures*…An inerrant Bible is an authoritative Bible. Just as the doctrine of the inerrancy of Scripture logically leads to belief in its authority, even so the doctrine of the authority of the Bible necessitates the confidence that the Scriptures are sufficient. Christians did not arrive at the doctrine of the sufficiency of the Bible simply by way of logical reasoning; we believe that the Bible is the road map for living because it is what the Bible claims about itself. (p.108)

God is revealed through his words and that revelation is more felt than cognitively accessed. Isaac Newton was reported to have believed that the bible was written in codes and spent much time attempting to decode its meaning. But Pentecostalists favour a literal interpretation of the Bible, based on the idea of *sola scriptura*. It regards the bible as the absolute authority over all else. As many Nigerian Pentecostalists rely on 2 Timothy 3:16-17. 'All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work.'

For all the merits of the text one downside is its crystallization of religious instructions as if cast in stone, much like Moses' tablet. Sacred texts are thereby prone to interpretations that are often subjective but often presented as objective. This is the paradox of religious hermeneutics, which although based on interpretation yet regards interpretation as singular and exclusively true and valid when it is just one of many. It is one reason why religious fundamentalisms flourish upon the belief in the rigidity of the text. Since the text is viewed as an unchanging document, it engenders the hardening of positions on matters religious as well as the imposition of a hard line on matters that lies outside the religious sphere such as politics. As such the written text so often produces the rigidity or the hardening of belief.

For many Nigerian Pentecostalists the bible is the absolute word of God spoken or breathed by God himself and written by men inspired by God. As a result, many Nigerian Pentecostalists do not concern themselves with questions about the origins of the Bible or how it was knitted together, whether it contains contradictions of one kind or another, or whether the gospels are first-hand account of the events of the life of Christ or historical re-enactments. Equally, the simplicity of the language of the bible, its clear limpid prose is thought to remove the possibility of ambiguity, misunderstanding, vagueness or error. In other words, one does not require a PhD in religious studies to understand the Bible. It is a text that can be interpreted and understood through the guidance of the Holy Spirit and only those with the spirit's anointing are able to penetrate God's message. But there is a contradiction here. If only those anointed by the Holy Spirit are better able to understand as well as interpret the Bible and these are men of God, why then is emphasis on the literal reading of the Bible, which anyone capable of reading anything at all, can understand? Pentecostalists would reply that any one that has the gift of the spirit can understand the Bible but the men of God (pastors) are better able to understand the full message. The full gospel is the complete message of the New Testament, starting with the Holy Spirit, the grace of healing, glossolalia and evangelism.

Perhaps for these reasons Veli-Matti Karkkainen (2002) argues that Pentecostalism lacks a coherent body of systematic belief, which is to say that Pentecostalism lacks a theology. Similarly Dayton also believes that Pentecostalism is yet to possess a theology, noting that 'Pentecostals sometimes suffer from a massive "theological inferiority complex" that causes them to lose confidence in their own sources and the importance of their own movement as a carrier of significant theological resources.' But Dayton's views are decades old now and does not characterize present or contemporary Pentecostalism. But in any case does Pentecostalism need a theology? Is Pentecostalism not a radical movement whose very radicalism consists in anti-intellectual systematicity? As Dayton in "The Problematic of Pentecostal Theology" (ND:4) observes: 'Pentecostalism was not noticed for its production of theology. It was noticed, when it was noticed, for its most distinctive practice—that of "speaking in tongues"—a practice that was often interpreted sociologically or psychologically.'

It is not difficult to see why an African American theology might be deemed necessary or an African anti-colonial or a feminist theology or a Latin American liberation theology made famous by the likes of Oscar Romero or Gustavo Gutierrez (1973) or Segundo (1976) or any number of theologies. The danger is that these theologies stray too close to secular politico/sociological ideologies with religious undertones, blurring the lines between religion and secular ideologies. The result is that instead of theology we have sociology or politics dressed up as theology. Another difficulty is that the term 'theology' has its roots in Western intellectual tradition (with its connections to established churches and institutions of higher learning) and it may not be applicable to a movement that appears so dynamic or 'reticulate' as Pentecostalism.[29] But Pentecostalism has proved itself to be more than a sect, yet not quite a church in the traditional sense. Perhaps to this end some of its adherents believe in a distinctly Pentecostal theology. Amos Yong (2005) is one such believer in a Pentecostal theology. He bases his belief on what he calls the 'pneumatological imagination'. For Yong, 'Pentecostalism …provides an emerging theological tradition through which to explore the possibilities and challenges confronting the development of Christian theology for our late modern world' (p.18). However in his follow-up book (2006) Yong updates his idea of Pentecostal theology not as a yet-to-be idea but an idea that has come and this idea now rests firmly on spirituality. But this spirituality is not merely localized but also globalized within a pluralist or diverse reading of the Bible, which ultimately informs Pentecostal practice.

Without a coherent theology the movement is thought to be no more than a sect that derives its doctrine from a few passages of the Bible, (Dayton, 1987). But authors like Yong (2000), Tony Richie (2011), Frank Macchia (2006) argue for the centrality of the spirit in Pentecostalism. Steven Jack Land (1993) sees prayer and spirituality as key aspects of Pentecostal theology and defines

[29] In his article, "The Problematic of Pentecostal Theology" Donald Dayton narrates the story of Albert Outler in the nineteenth century who had proposed the name of Charles Wesley as a theologian to the committee and the committee had laughed with derision on the basis that the term theologian and the leader of a radical, albeit Christian movement had been mentioned in the same breath.

spirituality as '…the integration of belief and practices in the affections which are themselves evoked and expressed in those beliefs and practices. The...beliefs and practices [consists in] songs, testimonies and early eye witness account to tell the story.'(p.1) For Land the central elements of Pentecostal belief and practices, which include spirituality, prayer, songs, testimony etc., constitute the Pentecostal theology. But the idea of the spirit must be contrasted with the idea of the written word. Kirsch (2008) thinks that the spirit is alive while the letter by its very nature is statically inanimate. The question is whether the idea of a theology that revolves around the spirit can amount to a methodological or systematic study of Pentecostalism or whether these are academic studies, the kind that sociologists or anthropologists might undertake even if the scholars are Pentecostalists? For example, does this present research constitute a Pentecostal theology? It must be noted that most of the scholars that subscribe to the idea of Pentecostal theology are themselves Pentecostalism scholars who teach in various schools of divinity – Yong, Macchia, Dayton and many others; but the crucial question is how much does their work influence Pentecostal beliefs and practices, or, are they merely articulating Pentecostal beliefs and practices as they see it, presenting an insider's view of the movement in ways that is not materially different from the views of an outsider? Perhaps Pentecostal theology becomes a side issue if it appears to have little impact on the Pentecostal experience. This remains problematic for the notion of Pentecostal theology in the sense that if the Pentecostal phenomenon is rooted in experience, in what way can a theology articulate the dynamism and spontaneity of the Pentecostal experience, particularly given that the Pentecostal project is in many ways anti-systematic or anti-methodology? Even if the talk is of a pneumatology the unpredictable direction in which the spirit might move or direct people is one that is hard to capture by a systematic approach. In which case could the Tele-evangelist or preacher be described as Pentecostalism's theologians, since theirs is the voice of authority that determines the direction of travel in most cases? This is not to suggest that the idea of Pentecostal theology cannot be valid even if it is confined to pneumatology. The Church where this thesis's ethnography was conducted runs a Bible course for its evangelists and the graduates are expected to take positions of responsibility within the church. In which case if there is to be such

a thing as Pentecostal theology, it must revolve around the Pentecostal experience. As Harvey Cox (1995) has noted, we do not have to go too far to find what Pentecostal theology is all about: it is rooted in the songs and the words through which Pentecostalists express themselves, what we call the Pentecostal experience.

Scholars like Yong, Richie, Land, Macchia and others have attempted to bridge the gap between the practical expressiveness of Pentecostalism and Pentecostal theology that may appear distant from the praxis and to remove any potential antinomy between a mainly performance based belief system and a potential theological (textual) grounding by asserting that the practice is informed by the theory. However, it must be conceded that the experience or performance precedes any theory, and like most theories can only 'look back' at practice. The idea then is to formulate a theology based around core Pentecostal beliefs and practices, such as its pneumatological and eschatological concepts. But how can there be a theology of Pentecostalism when Pentecostalists believe in the inerrancy of the Bible and reject biblical revisionism? The literal interpretation of the bible appears to leave no room for discussion with regards to meaning. Perhaps we should do away with the notion of Pentecostal theology and replace it with the notion of Pentecostal doctrine, which is sufficiently elastic as to cover what could be described as core Pentecostal beliefs and practices. The question is what do Pentecostalists believe in terms of their attitudes? Bearing in mind that I use the word *belief* in a slightly more attitudinal or practical sense, it might be said that they:

1. Believe in being born again – salvation, redemption and in holy baptism.
2. Believe in the gift of the Holy Spirit and glossolalia.
3. Believe in miracles and healing.
4. Believe in eschatology
5. Believe in prosperity, however that is defined
6. Believe in the inerrancy of the bible
7. Believe in Pentecostal experience

Different Pentecostal movements might emphasize different aspects of the above strands of belief/practice but the important point is that together they constitute core aspects of Pentecostal belief. The doctrine upon which Pentecostalism has emerged is to be found in the books of Acts of the Apostles. What else is there to be said when the Bible has said it all? What can commentary add to a divine project? What use is studying the bible as though one is studying a literary text and applying the logic of reasoning and standards of literary criticism? The rejection of intellectual approach to the bible is precisely what happened upon the translation of the Bible into various African vernaculars. It meant that ordinary people could read and understand the bible for themselves and no longer require any church authority to interpret its content. Still, to dismiss the idea of Pentecostal theology appears to leave us with something missing. I will now examine another kind of theology, black theology, and see how this might help our analysis.

5.4 Black Theology as liberation struggle

In 1960s Latin America there emerged a movement known as Liberation Theology, which campaigned for the poor, the destitute, the disenfranchised and the marginalized in society. The works of Gustavo Gutierrez (1973), Juan Segundo (1976) and a number of Latin American theologians and the murder of Archbishop Oscar Romero and other prominent church members brought Liberation theology into great prominence. The idea was that the Church could not be disengaged from the socio-economic and political conditions of its members and it was the duty of religious authorities to speak out on social matters. But this idea of the church's concern for social causes was not new. The roots of Methodism through the Wesley brothers can be traced to the socio-economic conditions that prevailed in nineteenth century England. Early in the twentieth century, writers like Richard Niebuhr (1929) examined the social consequences of religious organizations in America and in Britain in the 1980s, there is the famous letter by leading clergymen during the Thatcher years called

Faith in Our Cities.[30] However, it is one thing for the church to voice concern on social matters and another to elevate those concerns into a systematic study that makes up a theology. At the same time that Liberation Theology was emerging in Latin America another kind of Liberation theology was developing in the United States with focus on the oppression and racial discrimination of African Americans. This might be described as an African American theology whose proponents include James Hal Cone (1969, 1970). There have been other social movements around which theologies have been constructed, such as Feminist theology (that looks at and challenges patriarchal dominance in the church and the portrayal of and the denigration of women within it), queer theology, (that looks at Gay experience), black British theology in Britain that looks at black struggle for equality in society and African theology (which looks at the colonial experience).

A common theme running through these theologies is the group experience of oppression, subjugation, deprivation, discrimination and other forms of socio-economic disadvantages and the need for liberation, hence *Liberation Theology*. But if the Bible is to have any relevance at all it must have practical application in the context of the everyday lives and culture of the people. It must speak their language and address their needs and be relevant to their lives as it is lived in the present. But if the bible is to be read merely as a historical document then it becomes no more than a book of stories and myths about a bygone age. Black theology therefore must be constructed around the socio-economic and political experiences of black people. But what exactly is the black experience and what is the theological method of approaching this experience? The black experience is often conceived in terms of oppression, racism and prejudice. So how does a theology address these matters? Roswith Gerloff (1992) pleads for recognition of black experiences and for a black theology to be undertaken by black theologians about those (black) religious experiences. Robert Beckford (1998, 2000, 2004, 2006, 2014) is firmly a black liberation theologian that focuses on the political and social empowerment of black people. Beckford believes that black theology is not only needed but is necessary for that empowerment to

[30] "Faith in Our Cities" was a report commissioned by the then Archbishop of Canterbury in 1985 on Urban Priority Areas. The report focused on Deprivation and social exclusion and was critical of the Thatcher government.

take place, to inspire and encourage black people to rise above their socio-economic conditions and to achieve social justice. For Beckford the primary concern of black theology is not with systems of worship or the religious belief but with the black struggle. Anthony G. Reddie (2008:2) believes that 'Black theology's 'dominant reason' for being is to espouse the theme of liberation.' Reddie's theological methodology includes 'participatory education and workshops'.

But something does not quite seem right here. Just like the poverty/prosperity argument that I discussed in Chapter 2, the argument here is that black theology must first and foremost be concerned with black existential problems such as slavery, colonialism, racism, discrimination, oppression, social injustice and so forth and only through such concerns can black Pentecostal Christians be empowered. While not denying the reality of these experiences the danger is that such a theology becomes essentially reactionary while ignoring other legitimate positive black experiences. The second point is that although there is nothing wrong with theology that is reactionary but to do theology mainly as liberation project risks imbibing the same methodological approach of the white-centred neo-liberal theo-secular ideology from which it seeks to liberate itself. Like dogs mating but looking away from each other it ties black theology to white perception of black people, whilst looking in the opposite direction as though it is doing something systematically or fundamentally different. If white theology ignores black experiences, is liberation theology the answer?

Another problem, which I touched on earlier, is that black theology as a liberationist project strays too close to sociology or political ideology, which is then confused with theology. But doesn't 'white' theology run the same risks? Yes, but 'white' theology, if such a thing exists is not about the 'white' experience but sees itself as addressing the question of humanity from a theological perspective. Black theology on the other hand sees black Christian experience through the prism of oppressive socio-economic and political conditions, ignoring vast areas of black cultural experiences: questions of religious salvation, the ethics of daily life, Christian worship and other metaphysical as well as cultural expressions. But then again the Bible can be used to support any particular position, as did the Dutch Reformed Church of South Africa that justified apartheid on certain biblical passages. A third problem with black

liberation theology is that it assumes a homogenous 'black experience' or black identity that all black people share; when in fact the black experience is many and varied and so constitutes not a singular set of experiences, good or bad.

Joe Aldred (2005) shares some of these concerns about black theology the sort that is advocated by Beckford and others. Thus he writes, 'my problem with Beckford's analysis is that its *raison d'etre* is exclusively tied to the oppression/liberation dialectic, as though the only expression that black people have is in response to white behaviour' (p.20). A theology of blackness or race risks becoming a reductionist theology that is stripped of all other saliences or even essences and subsists merely as a reaction to racial prejudice; just as a theology of prosperity turns on the quest for material security omitting what Allan Anderson describes as the 'theology of the cross' (2014.172). Oppression is not the only experience that black people face and certainly not one that 'defines' them, says Aldred. James Cone (1977) makes a similar point when he asserts that, 'Black theologians and church people must now move beyond reaction to white racism in America and begin to extend our vision of a new socially constructed humanity for the whole inhabited world….Since humanity is one and cannot be isolated into racial and national groups' (p.310).

It is perhaps note-worthy that the idea of black theology derives from the US where the black negative experience remains topical and fresh. This is one aspect that Aldred is uncomfortable with, that is, the 'black' in black theology, seeing it as an American import. Could there be a black British theology and if so what will that look like or what experiences would form its analytical category? Are the black British experiences any different from African experience or African American, or West Indian experiences? Alistair Kee, in his provocative book, *The Rise and Demise of Black Theology* (2008) questions this generic idea of black struggle upon which this theology is based when he notes that, 'A too ready use of the phrase 'Black Liberation' arises from an uncritical transposition of a concept from the US to the UK' (p.172). Kee himself, a Black Liberationist theologian but one that remains critical of the sloganizing that surrounds liberation theology, which he believes does no more than repeat the 'mantra' of liberation theology. In *Marx and the Failure of liberation theology* (1992) Kee writes, 'Liberation theology has failed the academic community, but importantly, it has failed the very people to whom it is committed' (quoted in

Kee (2008:x). However, Kee is an admirer of Beckford who he sees as perhaps the only serious academic currently doing Black theology in Britain. What Kee admires about Beckford is Beckford's radical departure from the mainstream theological assumptions and the fact that Beckford does not merely regurgitate the same old lines about black oppression but situates the liberation narrative within a socio-political context that is grounded in the scriptures. But Kee also believes that to borrow from the African American theological system that is built around the history of slavery down to segregation and the *Black Power* movement of the 1970s follows a different historical trajectory and to apply it to the black British experience, which has not followed the same mode of travel, is problematic. For example, in Britain there were no Jim Crow laws or apartheid-like lawful racial segregation as there were in the US. Where then is the concerted racial oppression in Britain against which a liberation theology is needed? For Kee, (2008:172) 'Those of British-Caribbean descent are now at two removed from Africa and their experiences cannot be described under such categories as neo-slavery or neo-colonialism.' Although Beckford speaks of the empowerment of black people through the construction of a black theology but that theology and it's putative empowerment discourse need not be achieved via the rhetoric of oppression/liberation import.

Stephen Breck Reid (1997) presents such a corrective to the dominant interpretation of the bible but in light of black reading, particularly of the book of Psalms. Reid sees a correlation between the lament passages in the psalm and blues music that is expressive of African American experience. This idea of textual representation of a people's experience provides the basis for a theology of that experience and empowerment comes from seeing a representation of a people's experience and deriving strength from applying aspects of it in their own lives in practical ways. I shall later show how the book of psalms has contributed to Nigerian Pentecostalism through the application of the oral approach to scriptures. However, Amos Yong (20005:187) tries to bridge this gap by advocating:

> '…the contribution of the black churches to the ecumenical tradition of Pentecostalism is to restore to a central position the concerns for uplifting the black race,

> empowering sociopolitical and economic transformation of the church, acting as a prophetic conscience of the nation in general …'

Yong's concern here is with the contribution of black theology to American ecumenism that meets with white Pentecostal theology of spirituality in a happy union. But Yong is not a black liberation theologian but a Pentecostal theologian whose attempt is to build ecumenical bridges. If the idea of black theology is problematic, how does the idea of African theology fare? This is the subject of the next discussion.

5.5 The question of African theology

Just like black British theology, African theology continues to be confronted with a dilemma from which it has not been able to extricate itself. What should African theology look like; what should its concerns be and what methodology should it employ, are some of the questions that many African theologians address but without an obvious resolution. There are those like John Mbiti (1969) who believe that African theology should situate itself within biblical teachings but still see a *rapprochement* between Christianity and African religious beliefs and traditions. However, there are the liberation theologians that see African theology as an anti-colonial project, a way of asserting African identity through opposition to white oppression. Muzorewa (1990:174) thinks that: "African theology is a reflective interpretation of what the biblical God is doing to enhance African survival through the agency of people who are informed by Scripture and traditional concepts of the God who is revealed to us through the faith and the life of Jesus Christ." Ambrose Moyo (1994) another African Liberation theologian writes that, 'Only from within the African cultures can we discover the savior [sic] of our oppressed, exploited, and poverty-stricken African land. We can only discover that savior when we have learnt to feel, hear, see, and feel things the way Africa feels and understands its environment' (p.267). Admittedly some of these views may be dated and may not address specifically the Pentecostal emergence in Africa but Van Eck (2005) has suggested that black African theology must address issues such as poverty,

oppression and so on. But perhaps more importantly, black theology should address specifically the black cultural beliefs and practices that revolve around such matters as the belief in spirits. As Mushete (1994:20) puts it, 'African theology [that validity] operates on the basis of the cultural and religious experience of the African peoples, a theology that responds to the questions posed by African society.' Also Bediako (1996:5) believes that:

> '…if the Christian way of life is to stay in Africa, then African Christianity must be brought to bear on the fundamental questions of Africa's existence in such a way as to achieve a unified world-view which finally resolves the dilemma of an African uncertain of its identity, poised between the impact of the West and the pull of its indigenous tradition'

Mercy Oduyoye (1986) embeds African theology within African tradition, particularly from women's perspective. But the concept of theology is not only of Western origin but is also an idea that is more relevant to Western literary and intellectual tradition. How is African theology to proceed without seeming to imitate Western theological systems of exegesis coming from an oral perspective? Perhaps fearing that if African Christianity were to admit that it has no theological system then it is vulnerable to the charge of biblical illiteracy. In other words, if African Christianity subscribes to a Western theological framework it becomes vulnerable to the charge of lacking a distinctive theology, yet if it presents a distinctive African theology, it might be accused of doing orality dressed up as theology. The negative connotation of the word orality conjures up, 'illiteracy', and an orally framed theology can find no place to flourish, even though African philosophy now recognises the importance of African oral cultures. But as I have attempted to show: the shame of orality is misplaced.

An example of this misplaced idea of African philosophy that imitates Western ideas is that of Placide Tempels' *Bantu Philosophy* (1959), which he conceived as an attempt to correct the perception that Africa has no philosophy. But Tempel's book instead turned into an exercise in the propagation of the same myth by his application of the Western methodologies, an approach that one African

philosopher, Hountondji (983), describes disparagingly as ethno-philosophy. Therefore, to cut from the Western intellectual tree a branch to be sown on the African cultural soil forces a Procrustean fit between two contrasting traditions. As I have argued, if African theology is essentially reactionary or driven by anti-Western sentiments then it becomes no more than a reactionary project. But just as we find in Aldred (2005), there is a sense in which African theology must fundamentally address itself to the rich vein of African traditions and cultures and not be merely reactive or be defined by its antagonism to Western culture. The question is what has African theology to offer? The answer is that it must return to the roots of the culture that preceded Western contact to see what that culture was like and how much of it remains in contemporary African experience. This is what Pentecostalism in Africa is now doing but through a new cross-cultural hybridity that is featured as part of what I described as a new form of religious life and this feature revolves around the importance of the oral approach to the scriptures, as well as to the Pentecostal experience.

However, African Christians are assiduous reader of the bible. They refer to it, quote from it and live by it. But such readings do not constitute a theology since theology has to do with a coherent and systematic approach to religious matters and exegesis that refers to what educated people in universities do when they study the Bible and the concept of God and the divine and such matters. Yet, what educated people in universities do, which we call theology, must also be relevant to the lives and living conditions of the man on the street, (Kee, 2008). Indeed, it is what the man on the street thinks and believes and practices that constitute the Pentecostal experience and it is those experiences that the Pentecostal theologian must address himself or herself. David Adamo (2001) believes that there is an authentic African biblical studies and one that involves the incorporation of African culture; however the problem with Adamo's thesis is that he treats *theology* in an African context as a given or as though an integral part of African culture. Adamo omits or fails to sufficiently appreciate the oral nature of African culture and the way this might impact on the African approach to the reading and interpretation of the Bible. This search for identity, the 'dilemma' of striking a balance between African tradition and Western influence continues to plague the African interpretation of the Bible. A recurring theme is the idea of the 'relevance' of the bible to the African experience. Asamoah-Gyadu

(2013) thinks that with regards to African Pentecostalism that the experience precedes the text and paraphrasing Harvey Cox where Cox says that with Pentecostalism, the prayer, songs and expressive performances tell us more about that experience than any theology could ever do. As such Pentecostal theology must situate itself within those experiences. Just as Ernest Van Eck (2005:693) notes:

> If African theology wants to be Christian, it should be Biblical and contextual. The first and foremost resource for African theology, as in any other theology that purports to be Christian, should be the word of God. The results of African theology should make a difference in all walks of life. Understood as such, the Word indeed means life, is life, and promises life in its fullness.

But how can we reconcile the oral tradition of Nigerian cultures with the sacred text of the Bible? This question is next in the discussion.

5.6 Nigerian Pentecostalism and scriptures

When the missionaries first arrived in pre-colonial Nigeria the Christian message they brought did not immediately resonate with the natives. In some cases they met with hostility and initial converts were the easy group of people: slaves, women and social outcasts, (Ajayi, 1969). But the introduction of literacy (also as part of education system) marked one of the turning points in the history of missionary contact in Africa. For the natives, it soon became clear that what could be spoken could also be written and read. Gradually, the local chiefs, noblemen and notable persons in the communities began to be converted and Christianity began to spread among the many. But initially it was not the new religion that appealed to them but the practical skills and enterprise that were concomitant with the missionary message. According to Ajayi (1969:133):

> 'what they expected from the Europeans was not a substitute but a supplement, a system of apprenticeship by which the children acquired additional arts and skills,

> the art of trading and writing, gauging palm-oil or manufacturing gunpowder or sugar or building boats'

In the same passage Ajayi goes on to quote Crowther where he says of the people that:

> They did not want religious teaching, for that the children have enough at home; they teach them that themselves; that they want them to be taught … the other merchantile business as soon as possible.'

The missionary endeavour to teach the Bible to the natives was based on the expectation that the African would imbibe the Christian message, whereas for the African, the advantage of the Bible was a text that would enable him to read at all. Many had probably never seen a book or read one and the Bible represented a novel and fascinating object of desire in much the same way that a bibliophile might regard a first edition of Shakespeare's works even if he never reads a word of it. Here's one account of how one native considered the bible.

> My father could not read or write, yet he owned a bible. Nobody ever read this bible. It was not acquired to be read like ordinary books. My father's bible was carefully wrapped in a white cloth and kept under lock and key in a wooden cabinet in which my father kept things he particularly treasured. Ernest Nzeogu, quoted in Kirsch (2008:86)

Although this is a relatively recent account but it illustrates the historical local perception of the bible during the missionary period. Philip Jenkins (2006:28) also writes that, 'Reading the scriptures is an awe-inspiring experience, but even for those who cannot read, the bible acquires immense potency.' Jenkins goes on to report the case of a Trinidadian Baptist individual who possessed over fifty copies of the bible but who still could not read. According to Peel (2000), before the advent of the missionaries the only form of writing in Yoruba tradition were by the medicine men who would take down divine messages of the *Ifa* oracle by scrawling it in the sand. But the ability to convey thoughts, feelings or

information through words on any surface: paper or text therefore elevated writing to an almost divine activity. Peel (2000) cites the example of a local man whose freshly educated son had written him a letter, which someone read to the old man, which caused the old man some amazement that his son's thoughts and feelings could be conveyed on paper, as though by magic. The reader of the letter now occupied a position akin to a diviner who could divine the thoughts of his son. This was the kind of impact that writing and reading had on the local population and only the privileged could acquire such a skill.

But in the early days the missionaries were the sole authority on the Bible and the native population accepted *tout court* what the missionaries told them. But perhaps the most significant development in the history of Nigerian Christianity occurred in the nineteenth century when Samuel Ajayi Crowther (1809-1891) translated the Bible into Yoruba. The Igbo translation followed not long afterwards and gradually translation into other Nigerian languages also followed. But the translation into indigenous language marked a revolution in the local people's attitude and approach to the Bible, perhaps in the way that John Tyndale's translation did for English readers in the seventeenth century. This is how Barrett (1968:127) describes the impact:

> Up to this point the missions had had the same absolute control over the scriptures as they had exercised over the church. They alone had access to the Hebrew and Greek sources; their interpretation was final. But with the publication of African translations, a momentous change took place: it now became possible to differentiate between missions and scriptures. Through these scriptures, Africans perceived that God was addressing them in the vernacular in which was enshrined the soul of their people; The vernacular scriptures therefore provided an independent standard of reference that African Christians were quick to seize upon.

The natives began to read the bible for themselves in their own language and subsequently the authority of the missionaries began to wane and the balance of religious power began to shift. The natives' ability to read the Bible began to

demystify it as a source of secret power and knowledge that had once appeared the sole preserve of the white man. But translation was no mere mirroring of one language by another but the reconstruction of a thought-world, of concepts and new ways of thinking, seeing and believing. As Naoki Sakai (2009:NP) explains that,

> Translation possesses an *amplificatory* character because it is applied supplely, from a single word or combination of a few words, to the proposition, the paragraph, the single work, and then the complete works of an author….translation operates by exceeding the narrow meaning of language.

Crowther himself was a freed slave and undertook the uncommon task of bringing the Bible to the Yoruba people and his translation still stands as the standard text in Yoruba to this day. But Crowther had to invent certain concepts that had no Yoruba equivalent. For example there was no concept of the *devil* in the Yoruba language; Crowther invented him and thus *Eshu* became the devil of the Bible whereas in traditional Yoruba religious tradition, according to Bolaji Idowu (1962) *Eshu* was a trickster, a messenger of *Olorun,* (Yoruba God) a go-between god and man. *Eshu* was not Lucifer that fell from heaven, but because Crowther could find no equivalent concept of Lucifer in Yoruba tradition he opted for the nearest idea to the devil in Yoruba cosmology. Thus by translating or making *Eshu* to be the devil, Crowther conflated two completely different name/concept with different genealogies and meanings, which begs the question as to whether God or the devil can be translated into another language or culture? As Birgit Meyer has noted,

> '… the meanings of translated key terms were brought about in the process of translation between the missionaries and the Ewe. For missionaries, the chosen Ewe terms denoted the content they put in them. For Ewe Christians the term's old meanings did not totally disappear but continued to form parts of the terms. One and the same terms would thus have different

> meanings for missionaries and for Ewe Christians.' Meyer (1999:81)

Therefore, if Africans, in respect of the new Christian doctrines, retained old meanings and those meanings differ from the thought-world of the missionaries in respect of the same terms, the difference in meaning could not have been merely linguistic but deeply cultural as well as metaphysical. In effect, what transpires is one religion but two different conceptions of it, namely: the Western and African conceptions of the same religion. But the effect of translation includes the following.

1. The natives began to read the Bible for themselves and to interpret the contents in the light of their own culture and belief systems.
2. The authority of the missionaries began to diminish as biblical knowledge and power began to filter down into the hands of the people.
3. Significant developments began to occur as a result of indigenous understanding of the Bible. For example, with regards to polygamy, the missionaries made Africans to believe that the Bible prohibited it. But as Barrett (1968) explains, when the Africans began to read the Bible for themselves they could not find any parts of the Bible that disapproved of polygamy.

Thus, translation transformed the Bible from a foreign inaccessible or inscrutable text into an indigenous living language that appeared to have been written for or indeed spoken to the local population. As (1998) Kalu explains:

> A significant aspect of the nineteenth century was that as missionaries sowed the seed of the gospel, Africans appropriated it from a primal, charismatic world-view and read the translated scriptures in that light. Indigenous agencies recovered the spiritual resources of

> the gospel and challenged missionary Christianity to be fully biblical. (Cited in Ukpong (2006:7)

But translation also made certain concepts equivalent. For example, Jesus Christ appeared to be no different from the local medicine men, the healers, such as the *Babalawo* or the *Maraba.* Or as Schoffeleers (1999:73) argues, Christ in Africa was like the figure of Nganga, (the local medicine man). However, historically, four stages constitute the way that Bible has been read and assimilated by Nigerians from the time of the missionaries to the present.
The first stage was when the bible was read as a storybook, myths and folklore. The second sees the bible as a source of moral instructions. The third stage is the bible as a source of spirituality, miracles, salvation and redemption. The fourth stage stands between the second and third stages, which is the stage in which the Old Testament, as we find in the book of psalms became the textual representation of the Nigerian oral traditions and rituals that we now find expressed in the rituals of Pentecostal worship.

5.6.1. The Bible as a book of stories

The early appeal of the bible for Africans began, not as a sacred or holy text, but as a book of stories. Steeped in the oral tradition of storytelling, myths and legends, the biblical stories were perceived in similar vein to African mythologies, magic realism and legends. Walter Hollenweger (quoted in Karla Powe (1994:201), writes, 'Pentecostals by their very nature are inherently storytellers. They primarily transmit their theology through oral means.' Kenneth Archer (2013:NP) adds that Pentecosalists:

> … have been conditioned to engage Scripture as story. The Bible is understood as a grand story—a metanarrative. Thus a narrative theological approach with a bent towards reader response would enable the Pentecostal community not only to critically interpret Scripture but also to let Scripture critically interpret them.

For Albert Lord (1960:20) 'In societies where writing is unknown, or limited to a professional scribe, the art of narration flourishes, provided that the culture is in other respects of a sort to foster the singing of tales'. But these stories were taught in the mission schools, as sermons during church services and to the children in the Sunday schools, (Ajayi, 1969:133). For instance, the story of Jesus was the story of a good man sacrificed for the 'sins' of others and the miracles that Christ was reported to have performed were perhaps no different from the magic of the local herbalists, medicine men or divine healers. In Malinowski's *Magic, Science and Religion and Other Essays* (1954) he states:

> Myth as it exists in a savage community, that is, in its living primitive form, is not merely a story told but a reality lived. It is not of the nature of fiction, such as we read today in a novel, but it is a living reality, believed to have once happened in primeval times, and continuing ever since to influence the world and human destinies. (Quoted in *Malinowski and the Work of Myth* ed. Ivan Strenski (1992:81)

Although Malinowski is right regarding aspects of mythology in Africa but he does not sufficiently demonstrate knowledge of the equally important age-old African tradition of storytelling. African mythology is essentially a form of storytelling as one might read Homer's *Iliad* or *Odyssey* or Ovid's *Metamorphosis* or Aesop's *Fables,* in the same way that we now read Tutuola's *The Palmwine Drinkard* or Ben Okri's *Famished Road.* In his essay, *The Storyteller*, Walter Benjamin (1936[2006]) looks at how modern technology has eroded the art of storytelling. Stories of Adam and Eve and the serpent, the story of Noah and his ark, of Cane and his murder of Abel, of Abraham's attempted sacrifice of his son Isaac, Lot's wife turning into pillar of salt, of Sampson and Delilah, and many more, were and are still fascinating stories. Under the light of the moon or a burning fire that tradition continues in African villages and in the rural parts to this day. The African oral tradition of story telling through myths, folklore, cautionary tales, proverbs, legends, magic realism, riddles or explanation for

natural phenomena – how the cock lost its teeth, for example - and many more, seamlessly assimilated the Christian biblical stories into the African tradition. David Adamo (1999) has this to say about that process of assimilation.

> Faced with some peculiar problems as African Christians, we searched the Bible consistently with our own eyes in order to discover whether there could be anything in the bible that could solve our problems. In the process of reading the Bible with our own eyes, we discovered in the scripture great affinities with our own worldview and culture. (p.67)

The more the African read the bible the more he moved away from the Western interpretation of its content, creating a new hybrid world but nevertheless its own world. As Horton (1993) explains:

> The most striking aspect of these developments is the body of belief and doctrine quite distinct from that missionary and 'African churches'. Like their pagan predecessors, aladura members believe in the coexistence of God and a host of lesser spirits. They make use, too, of the concept of *agbara*, the power of God and the spirit as manifested in the spacetime world, either directly or through the medium of religious leaders. (p.88)

5.6.2 The Bible as a source of moral instructions.

The second phase of assimilation of the Bible into Nigerian culture was as a book of moral instructions. This is the stage in which the Bible became more than a storybook but also a source of moral instructions and religious precepts on how to live the Christian life. The stories then became cautionary tales or moral legislation or principles and the Ten Commandments, were particularly important in this respect. Six of the commandments presented no problems for the African moral world view: *thou shall not steal, kill, bear false witness, commit adultery, covet thy neighbour's wife,* and *Honour thy father and thy mother …'* The last of these is one that Africans could have written themselves, since it forms a

significant aspect of their tradition. Deeply ingrained in the African social custom is respect, deference or reverence for one's parents, the elderly, the stranger or guest, the King, the powerful, the sublime and the inscrutable, including spirits. The idea of God as a father figure and the symbol of authority appealed to Africans since it fits perfectly within the pre-existing paternalistic hierarchy of group classification, (Ajayi et al, 1985). In Nigerian culture the man (father) is the head of the family and one in whom absolute authority reside and he gets his authority from God.

This idea of reverence manifests itself in various forms, but principally in speech-act – (the use of certain respectful words or tone when addressing an elder), - gestures: bowing, prostrating, hands behind the back, kneeling, averting gaze and so on. In Nigerian culture it was and still considered a cardinal transgression of a sacred belief if a child were to dishonour or disrespect his or her parent. As Ajayi et al (1985) also note that:

> The male was the head of the family since he is the nearest Authority was conceived as paternal and personalized. It is related to age as the elders were considered the nearest to the ancestors and the wisest and most objective members of society. … the authority of the head of family was that he was a representative of the ancestors. (p.12)

Equally:

> The most basic unit of the Nigerian society is of course the family, and it is through the family that we all first experience authority. The concept of authority transmitted through family life is fundamental to any political culture as it tends to be embedded within the deepest levels of our psyche. Our changing concepts of authority tends to be a reflection of changes within the family structure. (*Ajayi* et al 1985:11)

The idea of respect or reverence for elders does not end with the death of the elders, hence the historically misconceived idea of ancestor worship, which in

truth is the continuation of customary reverence for the elderly, even in death. But when it came to the 4th Commandment: *Remember to keep the Sabbath holy*, even this commandment was not novel to Africans since they too had sacred days that were set aside for religious purposes. For instance in Nigeria there are religious festivals performed on particular days when markets would close and normal daily activities would be suspended, such as the mounting of the masquerades and others. The remaining three commandments: (1) *thou shall have no other Gods before me;* (2) *thou shall not bow down to idols and* (3) *thou shall not use the name of your God in vain*, were thought to be particularly problematic for the Africans since none of these were part of the traditional African religious beliefs. It was therefore on these three commandments that it is thought that Africans converted from their traditional gods into the Christian God. But this analysis is not as simple and straightforward as might be supposed. There is a sense in which African Christians retained aspects of their gods both in language and belief, as Birgit Meyer has argued in *Translating the Devil Religion and Modernity Among the Ewe in Ghana* (1999). Therefore at this stage of the reading of the Bible there was little in the Bible that was not to be found in African cosmological belief and practices.

5.6.3 The Bible as a source of Spiritual Power.

To an oral culture, the Bible was special for the various reasons, particularly the stories and moral instructions that it contained. However, a gradual development began to take place with the Nigerian reading of the New Testament, which began to reveal further similarities between Nigerian beliefs and Christianity. Ideas of salvation and redemption now connected with the idea of original sin as both a problem and its solution, and the ideas of spirituality, miracles, deliverance, prosperity, emancipation, grace and blessing then followed. The key to the Africanization of the Bible is to be found in the New Testament and the passage is Acts Chapter 2, and the events of the day of Pentecost, which we encountered in the first chapter.

God had decided to interfere directly in the affairs of men so that atonement for sin can be gained through his son Jesus Christ. This is the context in which the

Yoruba would say, *Emi Olorun sokale* - the spirit of God descended to earth. Therefore when Nigerian Pentecostalists talk about being born again they mean the emi/spirit is reborn, renewed or granted new (spiritual) powers. But in order to arrive at this point of renewal, of salvation and redemption and of Pentecost, sacrifice was required and that sacrifice was Christ on the cross (see the table in Chapter 1). Previously in many Nigerian traditions, sacrifice - animal or human - was the means by which atonement, appeasement or supplication were made to the gods. Should the rains fail and there was drought, the rainmaker was engaged and sacrifices made to appease the gods. Therefore the death of Christ on the cross as sacrificial lamb for the sins of man perfectly accorded with Nigerian beliefs and practices. And when it came to the reading of Acts of the Apostles where the Holy Spirit descended and unleashed spiritual powers of blessing and grace, – and it is by grace not works that the people are saved - and with grace came the strength to counteract the forces of darkness. This is where the African belief in spirits and the Holy Spirit in the Bible finally come together. The African is thus presented with an enduring source for a brand of Christianity that is not only African but also one that serves as the basis for an African spiritual identity.

Therefore the New Testament opened up a new avenue for the understanding of the Christian message as it did for the African ownership of the Bible. The letters of St Paul began to be read as though they were addressed not to Romans, Ephesians or Corinthians but to Nigerians, Ghanaians and Zimbabweans. The Bible became in a sense an African text (but oral in interpretation), addressed or spoken to Africans about the conditions of their lives. The Law of Moses or the Ten Commandments was no longer necessary for salvation just as moral conduct or obedience to the law, was no longer a prerequisite for being the child of God. As we find in Agamben's *The Time That Remains* (2005) the messianic age is the age of the doing away with moral legislation and ushering in of a form of democratic Christianity. For Agamben, Paul was the continuation of aspects of Jewish history. But Paul was not one of Christ's apostles. He was once an outsider and a militant persecutor but one who after receiving the grace turned it into a new form of religious expression. As Paul himself writes in Romans 6:15 'What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid'. Agamben (2005) echoes this sentiment when he writes that: 'One

day, humanity will play with law just as children play with disused objects, not in order to restore them to their canonical use, but to free them from it for good. What is found after the law, is not a more proper and original use value that precedes the law, but a new use that is only born after it', (p.64)

5.7. The book of Psalms and Nigerian Pentecostalism.

Although the Acts of Apostles has rightly been acknowledged as the basis of Pentecostalism, it is perhaps to the Old Testament and the book of Psalms that we must look for scriptural (yet oral) underpinnings of Nigerian Pentecostalism. The Book of Psalms has traditionally been read by Nigerian Christians for generations partly because it possesses cultural resonance to the extent that many passages are committed to memory and recited during church services. For instance, psalm 23 is a staple that almost every Nigerian Christian child is taught at home and Sunday school and which he or she is expected to recite either in English or in the indigenous language. Many have praised the psalter as containing some of the most sublime and edifying passages in the whole of the bible, particularly in its 'tonality' and enunciation. John Calvin (1949:xxxvi), (quoted in J. Witvliet (2007:44) says of the psalms that 'there is no other book in which we are more perfectly taught the right manner of praising God, or in which we are more powerfully stirred up to the performance of this religious exercise.' Herman Gunkel's *Introduction to Psalms: The Genres of the Religious Lyric of Israel* (1933[1998:1]) stresses the tonality of the poetry of the psalm that, 'The individual tones resound powerfully and magnificently, but each reverberates by itself….' B. W. Anderson (1974:5) writes that '…when one considers the enriching and invigorating influence which the psalms have exerted on preaching, worship and devotional life, it is no exaggeration …to say that the renewal and reunion of the church, for which we are hoping, cannot come about without the powerful assistance of the psalm.' David Pleins (1993) examines the book of psalms in light of cultural experiences. Also David Adamo's application of the book of psalms to Nigerian Christianity dwells on the margins rather than on its centrality to the religious worship that takes its source from the oral tradition.

Apart from the Acts of the Apostles, the book of psalms is quintessentially the biblical passages that have most influenced Nigerian Christianity and Nigerian Pentecostalism in particular. The book is both a monologue as well as a conversation with God, of words and deeds and not of things that are written. It is the book of worship, the most oral and most tonal of all the books of the Bible where the poet sums up the human condition in all its various experiences. It is the book of prayer and of songs, of praises, dances, lamentations, petitions, the unworthiness of man and the grace of God. For example, Psalm 32:11 'Be glad in the Lord and rejoice, you righteous; and shout for joy, all you upright in heart!' Equally, St Augustine (1847[2013:317]) says of this line the following.

> For singers, either in the harvest, or in the vineyard, or in any other busy work, after they have begun in the words of their hymns to exult and rejoice, being as it were filled with so great joy, that they cannot express it in words, then turn from actual words, and proceed to sounds of jubilation. The jubilee is a sound signifying that the heart laboureth with that which it cannot utter...that the heart may rejoice without words, and the boundless extent of joy may have no limits of syllables.

This exposition may be read as a precursor or an adjunct to glossolalia but its significance also rests on its exuberance of expressionism – 'jubilation' of that expression, which is typically characteristic of Nigerian Pentecostalism. Where the New Testament provides the spiritual dimension, the book of Psalms provides the basis for the Pentecostal performance through worship. Let us look briefly at some of those aspects of worship that are contained in the Psalms.

1. Prayer

The book of psalm is mostly about prayer. Psalm 61: 1 *Hear my cry, O God; attend unto my prayer*. Psalm 86: 143:1 *Hear my prayer, O LORD; give ear to my supplications! In thy faithfulness answer me, and in thy righteousness*. But there are many ways of praying just as there are different kinds of prayers. We saw in chapter 3 that one of the main elements in Nigerian Pentecostal church services is of prayer in all its forms: prayer as communication, prayer as petition or

supplication, prayer as meditation, prayer as speaking out loud or in silence, prayer as expressing personal or collective pain, anguish, suffering, anxiety and discomfort. Prayer is a cry from the heart.

2. Praise worship, music and dance

We have seen how almost every Nigerian Pentecostal church begins its services with praise worship or has a segment of praise-worship. Psalm 98:1 *O sing unto the lord a new song; for he hath done marvellous things…make joyful noise unto the lord, all the earth*; *make a loud noise, and rejoice, and sing praise*. Psalm 104:33 and 96: *I will sing unto the Lord all my life; I will sing praise to the Lord psalm* 142.7; 13.6, *I will sing unto the Lord, because he has dealt bountifully with me.* Clapping during church services that the missionaries had discouraged was found to have been encouraged by Psalm 47:1 *O clap your hands, all ye people; shout unto God with the voice of triumph.* Psalm 145:21, *My mouth will speak the praise of the LORD, and all flesh will bless His holy name forever and ever. Praise ye the LORD. Praise God in his sanctuary: praise him in the firmament of his power. Praise him with the sound of the trumpet: praise him with the psaltery and harp. [4] Praise him with the timbrel and dance: praise him with stringed instruments and organs.*

As for dance Psalm 149:3. *Let them praise his name in the dance: let them sing praises unto him with the timbrel and harp*. Psalm 150:1-6

3. Evil forces against which man is in constant battle.

We have already encountered notion of evil spirits, demons and witchcraft in African belief systems. This idea of spiritual enemies is also acknowledged in the book of psalms, best exemplified by Psalm 23 that begins, *The Lord is my shepherd I shall not want*…. *Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil. …* Adamo (1999:71) picks up the theme of evil forces when he writes that 'the existence of evil is painfully real in the African indigenous tradition. Witches, sorcerers, wizards, evil spirits and all ill-wishers are considered enemies.'

4. The idea of blessing and miracles as derived from the unworthiness of man.

This is most exemplified in psalm 51:1 *Have mercy upon me according to thy loving kindness and according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out*

my transgression.' The Pentecostal church at which the ethnography for this project was conducted and indeed most Nigerian Pentecostal churches end churches services by reciting this line from this psalm - *Goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life and I will dwell in the House of the Lord forever*. It is an acknowledgement of man's need for mercy, forgiveness and blessing. If the starting point for Nigerian Christians is the unworthiness of man or the idea that man is undeserving, then whatever positive development in his life becomes a blessing. It is equally in this context that blessings might be considered as miracles. And it is within the idea of unworthiness that Miracles must be located. As Psalm 77:14 *thou art God that doest wonders; thou has declared thy strength among the people*.

5. The body

As with prayer and praise-worship we also find that the body features in the book of Psalms. Psalm 139: 14. *I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfuly made; marvellous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well.* This is often quoted in Pentecostal church services as a celebration of the body, where many would often say that 'I am wonderfully made'.

6 Problem of theodicy.

I touched on the problem of theodicy earlier and here again the Christian reliance on the Psalms, particularly Psalm 137:1 *By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea we wept, when we remembered Zion* is well known. This poem has become the standard text for the oppressed and persecuted people around the world. Originally expressive of the plight of the Israelites it has often been cited by many oppressed and persecuted group to express their plight and the search for liberation. The Voortrekkers of South Africa have invoked it, as have African slaves and the idea of 'Negro Spirituals' is said to have grown out of the book of psalms.

In conclusion, I have tried to show how the orality of Nigerian culture has informed as well as influenced Nigerian Pentecostalism. It is the oral approach that has turned the scriptures from a rigid, static, or formal text into a lively

spiritual instrument that has galvanized the collective Pentecostal performance and as well as the Pentecostal experience. Both the oral and the literary cultures represent the two different faces of Christianity: the free-spiritedness and dynamism of Nigerian Pentecostalism and the more sombre and studied Western orthodox Christianity. This distinction also echoes the difference between the Weberian development of the church-sect typology as represented by the text as against the 'liquid effervescence' of Durkheim. Therefore the African or Nigerian Pentecostal theology must grapple first with the orality of the culture that finds expression in the systems of worship that we discussed in chapters 3 and 4 and any liberation theology must first be predicated on those experiences rather than on notions of oppressions and suffering but need not exclude these.

This chapter therefore concludes the three main grounds upon which we have sought to argue that have helped to shape the growth of Nigerian Pentecostalism. But there is one final thought that needs discussing by way of bringing the project to a close and that is the global proliferation of Pentecostalism. This will form our part of our conclusion to the project.

CONCLUSION

The conclusion to this thesis is divided into two parts. The first part contains the summary and recapitulation of the main themes and findings of the thesis. The second part examines briefly Pentecostalism within a global context and asks what its likely impact might be for the future of Christianity worldwide.

Part 1. Summary and recapitulation of main thesis and findings.

It is just over two hundred years since the European missionaries first set foot on pre-colonial Nigerian soil, followed not long after by the colonial adventure. These two events have shaped the history of the people that we now know as Nigerians. But the missionary and colonial adventures did not entirely succeed in making Africans in the image of the West. For example the brand of Christianity now practiced in Nigeria or Africa is not the kind that the missionaries introduced into the native cultures. Despite the many attempts to suppress indigenous religious customs and traditions that the missionaries deemed to be heathen or unchristian, (Ajayi, 1969; Ayandele, 1967; Balagangadhara, 1993; Barrett, 1968), the Africans rather assimilated Christianity into their culture. As such, the conditions of converting and baptizing the natives into Christianity depended on the renunciation of certain so-called primitive rites and ritual practices. But the natives resisted these pressures, a resistance that led to the schism that established the African Independent Churches (AIC).

Some of these Independent African Churches, at least in Nigeria, were in many ways forerunners of Nigerian Pentecostalism. Churches like the *Aladura* movement brought indigenous practices of prayer, singing, dancing, clapping, drumming and other forms of participatory rituals back into church services, a deviation from the Western style of Christian liturgy. This style of worship and its form of spirituality are some of the main features of present day Nigerian Pentecostalism. But importantly, it is the Durkheimian collective participatory nature of these services – performances that generate 'effervescence' from which the Pentecostal experience is derived that has been the central aspect of

Nigerian Pentecostalism. I therefore distinguished the Pentecostal experience from the classical religious experience theories of William James, Rudolf Otto, Soren Kierkegaard and others. I did so on the bases of three central themes. The first is the emphasis on the individuality of the experience, the second being the transcendentalism of the claims, while the third revolves around the apriority of the experience. Most classical religious experience theories invoke concepts that appear to lie outside experience itself, (visions, revelations, divine inspiration, etc.) whereas experience is always an *aposteriori* concept, even within any given metaphysical formulation. For this reason and others, the religious experience theories of James and others have been criticised by many authorities such as Wayne Proudfoot (1985) and others but I argue that the Pentecostal experience is sufficiently robust to withstand these criticisms. I have also supported my arguments with an ethnographic study based on the fact that the Pentecostal experience is observable and verifiable within the experiential schema.

But the Nigerian Pentecostal experience would be empty without the body as the vehicle through which the Pentecostal rituals are expressed. The attempt by early Europeans to suppress certain African practices began with the African body, negatively perceived on account of appearance and its performance, which they believed, also reflected the content of the African mind. By attaching the idea of shame and sin to the African body and its various expressivity they found justification for 'civilizing' the African (Elias, 1980) - which was essentially a way of suppressing and repressing the body. But Nigerian and indeed African Pentecostalisms is now reinstating the body back into the centre of religious worship through the rituals that I have discussed.

However, the dynamism and spontaneity of the Pentecostal performance has its origins partly in the Nigerian oral culture and it is this orality that has informed the Pentecostal approach to the scriptures. Through the injection of that same vitalism that we saw in the body, the oral approach began to 'defrost' the 'frozen' or rigid Western literary culture. The biblical stories and the moral instructions they contained as well as the spirituality fitted well within the native cultures and practices. Therefore Nigerian Pentecostal theology, if one exists at all, must concern itself primarily with the Pentecostal experience in all its various manifestations. In which case an African or black theology must look

beyond various oppressive experiences and towards a more positive black cultural ontology.

These three main themes have been the central focus of this thesis. But before engaging in the discussion, I looked at the influential explanation proposed for the growth of Pentecostalism in Nigeria such as argued by authors like Paul Gifford (2004), Phillips Jenkins (2006,2008), David Maxwell (2006) and many others, which is the socio-economic deprivation theory. Although this explanation has some merit, not all Pentecostalism scholars subscribe to this view and I have added a voice to a growing criticism of the theory.

But why have many of these authors focused on the social deprivation? One possible explanation has to do with the sociology of knowledge, which has framed the religious discourse particularly on Africa. I question the way that such knowledge has been produced - by whom, for whom, from where and to what end. Authors like Mannheim (2006[2008]), and post-colonial writers like Bhambra (2007), Gilroy (1993) Mignolo (2009) and others have asked similar questions. For example, Mignolo (2011) has observed the popular belief that '…the first world has knowledge, the third world has culture; Native Americans have wisdom, Anglo Americans have science. The need for political and epistemic de-linking here comes to the fore…' (p.118). It is a similar kind of narrative that locates the origins of modern day Pentecostalism in the United States and sees its trajectory as spreading from this 'centre' to the rest of the world taking with it the American capitalist culture. This is the modernity and secularization argument of African Pentecostalism and it is here that the British Colonial presence in Nigeria was brought into the picture.

Much like the missionary repudiation of African cultural and religious traditions, the colonial project, in the guise of 'civilizing' the African merely intensified the cultural suppression through processes such as state creation, bureaucratic controls and classificatory systems. The departure of the colonial power merely invited African leaders to pursue ideas of modernity within a Western framework by moving away from old traditions in favour new paradigms of modernity. But modernity through its various expressions became too fragile to withstand the weight of indigenous culture. We can see this problem through the concept of the rhizome as proposed by Deleuze and

Guattari (1978) of the linearity of progress. Equally, as (Eisenstadt, 1966:1) writes:

> Historically, modernization is the process of change towards those types of social, economic, and political systems that have developed in Europe and North America from the seventeenth century to the nineteenth and have spread to other European countries and in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries to South America, Asian, and African continents.

This may have been true of 1960s or 1970s Nigeria but is no longer the case since this idea of modernization is being contested by the resurgence of indigenous cultures in various parts of the world and by something that is perhaps beyond culture. It is difficult to say what this 'something' is, but whatever it might be, some connection with religion cannot be ruled out. The paradox is that in the global age of transcultural influences and technological deterritorialisation, Africa is at the same time turning inward into itself in order to make sense of its place in this age of modernity. This is the return to indigenous culture that James Clifford talks about in *Returns* (2013). Yet, Africa's continuing emergence from the postcolonial mist into what appears to be the clear light of day has been misconceived by many authors like Paul Gifford and Phillip Jenkins and many others as following along the path of Western modernity and global capitalism.

However, if the politics of post-independent Africa was driven by a set of naively conceived political ideologies from the top, the religious revival is being driven from the grassroots, like the rhizome. Therefore, the religious resurgence is an attempt to recover or revive or redeem an African past that appears to have been lost in the colonial fog: the search for cultural, spiritual, economic and political identity, a new way of self-assertion; which in essence is a way of returning to the old way or a way of using the old to create the new. This is why I describe the Pentecostal resurgence in Nigeria as a new form of religious life within the context of modernity. There is no doubt that these new religious currents are transforming Nigerian society in many ways both for good and ill. As Ruth Marshall (2010) observes that there is a new kind of politics emerging

in Nigeria, one that is being engendered by Pentecostalism on the Christian side. This is not a theocracy but a politics in which religion features prominently. Similarly Birgit Meyer (1995) sees an African Christianity where the 'Imaginations of evil are not mere reflections of ill-understood social, political and economic conditions. Rather, they are fields within which people produce meanings enabling them to critically and thereby shape their life conditions' (p.237). But Gifford (2004:172) in criticising Meyer asks, '… in what way have the charismatics transformed the public sphere in Nigeria? Is the country less corrupt, more transparent, more governed by law?' This are legitimate questions to ask but Pentecostalism cannot be assessed on the basis that some existential or material problems exist but on wider spiritual bases, as I have attempted to show. One cannot argue that because there are problems in the world religion has no impact on the lives of the many that believe.

But there are indeed problems. For example the Nigerian constitution, which had maintained a clear separation between state and religion, Ben Nwabueze (1981), which commits the state to liberal democratic values of freedom, equality, rights and democracy is being threatened by the growing religiosity within the country. For example, of the 36 states that make up the Nigerian federation, 9 have declared Sharia law as the basis of government. If the precepts of Sharia law now take precedence over secular law, how is this inevitable tension to be resolved? On the other hand the anti-secularist camp, mainly Muslims, argue that for so long they have been forced to live under a series of anti-Islamic secular law, imposed by Western style neo-Christian secularism with its liberal values, which is opposed to their religion and way of life, (Falola, 1998). This tension between Islam and Christianity remains the predicament that confronts contemporary Nigerian politics and society, which has been the source of religious conflict in the country. As Ruth Marshall (2010) has observed 'secularism has run its course' and we are now in an age of religious politics.

More research needs to be undertaken in this area in order to assess the implications of these developments. The growth of religion in Nigeria is bound to shape the Nigerian future either for good or ill, peace or conflict and will remain the foremost geo-political issue the country faces. This thesis might therefore be viewed as a contribution to the growing debate about the rise and

implications of religion in places like Nigeria. But before I bring this research to a close there is yet one last subject that is worthy of discussion and that is the global spread of Pentecostalism.

Part 2. The global spread of Pentecostalism.

Although this thesis has not set out to explain the global dimension of the Pentecostal phenomenon, it is however worth ending the discussion on the global rise of the movement. This discussion will be brief as it is intended to open up the debate for further possible research that time and space has not permitted here. Four main themes will be engaged in the following discussion, namely: (1) the multi-dimensionality of the origins of Pentecostalism; (2) The argument from indigenous factors; (3) Pentecostalism as a Third World phenomenon and (4) Pentecostalism as part of the globalization process.

2.1 The Multi-dimensionality of the origins of Pentecostalism.

If Nigerian Pentecostalism has emerged from within Nigerian cultural traditions, the kind that may have influenced the American, West Indian and South American Pentecostalism (through slavery and voluntary migration), how might the proliferation of the movement be explained in societies where there are no immediate traceable black African connections such as Romania, South Korea or India? It is either that modern day Pentecostalism originated in one place - the US, with the black African influence - in which case the origins of worldwide Pentecostalism lie in African culture via the American route from where it has spread to the rest of the world. There is no doubt that some of the explanations that I have advanced for the growth of Pentecostalism in Nigeria and Africa in general might be applicable elsewhere but it is important to stress that the global Pentecostal phenomenon is not sourced from a single origin but from multiple genealogies that chime with Deleuze and Guattari's (1978) principles of the rhizome. Perhaps the problem is with the term *Pentecostalism*,

which suggests a monolithic movement or a single church with headquarters in the United States and which is formed of unified systems of belief and worship, when in reality there are different kinds of Pentecostalisms with varying degrees of emphasis on styles of worship, belief and doctrine, depending on factors as diverse as the charisma of the leader or pastors to local belief and practices. There is no doubt that American Pentecostalism has had some influence on other cultures but it is difficult to sustain the claim that its origins lie in one single place.

There are certain facts about Pentecostalism that are perhaps indisputable. The fact that it is a Christian movement organised around a set of practices and belief system that derive largely from the events described in the Acts of the Apostles and other passages of the New Testament. This includes belief in the Holy Spirit, the gift of speaking in tongues, praying, healing and so forth, which most Pentecostalists share. These are basic facts that remain central to the movement almost everywhere that Pentecostalism is practiced. Yet there are variations on these basic themes and also the movement operates differently in different cultures, interpreting the gospel in different ways to suit indigenous local beliefs and practices. For example, David Lehmann (2003:121) sees Pentecostalism as 'notoriously uniform across the globe and displays a 'radical similarity of practice' despite the radical 'dissimilarity' of context in which they appear.' But it is not exactly clear what Lehmann means by uniformity here. If Lehmann is referring to the spiritual doctrine, the belief in Salvation, the Holy Spirit, miracles, healing and so forth, (those basic facts that are central to Pentecostalism) then he is right that there is some degree of 'uniformity across the globe'. But Pentecostalists do not all speak with one voice. For instance, there are many Pentecostal churches in Nigeria, operating under different names with different practices that range from the prosperity strand to the anti-prosperity group with shades of belief and practices in between. The danger with the uniformity thesis, especially when not properly explicated, is that it ignores salient local factors and subjective interpretations that differentiate one shade of the movement from another and which particularizes the movement towards local and individual needs. No doubt that Pentecostalists around the world feel a certain affinity towards their fellow Pentecostalists and this fellow-feeling engenders a sense of brotherhood or ecumenism. And to its adherents

Pentecostalism might feel like a new form of religious nationalism that cuts across geographical divide or borders as we find in Appadurai (1999), John Tomlinson (1991), or as part of imagined community, (Anderson, 1983). But it is to cultural contexts that we must look to find the factors responsible for the growth of the movement within individual countries.

2.2 Culture and the indigenization of Pentecostalism.

The focus on poverty and social deprivation has meant the neglect of cultural factors. For example (Joel Robbins, 2004) argues that we need to '…recognize that P/C possess cultural features that allow it, in most cases, to work in both ways at once.' This is a view shared by Allan Anderson (2000:NP) when he writes that:

> A sympathetic approach to local culture and the retention of certain cultural practices are undoubtedly major reasons for their attraction, especially for those millions overwhelmed by urbanisation with its transition from a personal rural society to an impersonal urban one.

What the growth of both Islam and Pentecostalism in Nigeria have shown is that the factors responsible for their emergence cannot entirely be uni-causal, even if a dominant thesis prevails, a variety of factors must come into play and the task is to assess the relative contribution that each makes to an overall explanation of the religious phenomenon, however approximately. Since globalization has led to the deterritorialization of cultures, (Appadurai, 1996) new paradigms must be developed that recognize the importance as well as the complexities and multidimensionality of cultural flows in the discourse on globalization and modernity. Authors like Hollenweger (1972), Cox (1994), Anderson (2004), Martin (2001) Robbins (2004) and others argue that although there is a global dimension to the movement but some degree of native factors or 'localism' must be seen as responsible for its proliferation. Writing about the rise of Pentecostalism in Asia, Michael Bergunder (2004) observes that:

> Most of Pentecostalism's rapid expansion in the twentieth century was not mainly the result of the labours of missionaries from North America and western Europe to Africa, Asia and Latin America. It was rather the result of the spontaneous indigenization of the Pentecostal message by thousands of preachers who traversed these continents with a new message of the power of the Spirit, healing the sick, and casting out demons. This may be one of the most important reconstructions necessary in Pentecostal historiography. (p.158)

With regards to the movement's growth in South Korea – which has one of the largest Pentecostal movements in the world, - Cox explains that we need to see that growth within the context and influence of Shamanism. Accordingly he writes (1996:4) '… it is precisely this indigenous religiosity, not just in Latin America but everywhere in the world, that often provides the richest soil for Pentecostal expansion.' For Hollenweger (1997:101) in South Korea, 'Pentecostalism was a popular movement which worked through the shamanist forms of religion (characterized by the healing of the sick, visions, ecstasies…' Yoo (1988) also sees South Korean Pentecostalism as situated within South Korean culture, its history and socio-political dimension in what he describes as the 'Minjung dimension', which is rooted in shamanism and the Han culture. Indeed, articulating Yoo, Walter Hollenweger (1997:105) believes that the *Han* culture expresses itself through orality as '…it articulates…(a kind act of collective feeling of defeat, resignation and nothingness; but also of the tenacity and will for life which comes from the weak), and makes it concrete in healings, visions, and spirit experiences' based mainly on an emotional response to the human condition. However, Japan (once a colonizer of Korea) has Shintoism or what we might call Shinto animism and also in China there is Taoism yet there is no evidence of an indigenously emerging Pentecostalism in both Japan and China as is the case in South Korea. Although Heidi Ostbo Haugen in *Take Over Asia for God: Public Face of African Church in China* (2014) claims that there is a growing presence of Nigerian-based Pentecostalism in the Guangzhuo province

of China. But this growing Pentecostal presence is imported from elsewhere. It is therefore clear that the factors responsible for the global growth of Pentecostalism are far more complex than can be properly discussed here for reasons of space and time and so would only be touched on briefly.

Allan Anderson (2014) talks about healing and spirituality as central attractions of Pentecostalism, but spirituality means different things in different cultures. He observes that:

> A sympathetic approach to local culture and the retention of certain cultural practices are undoubtedly major reasons for their attraction, especially for those millions overwhelmed by urbanisation with its transition from a personal rural society to an impersonal urban one. (p.168)

It is therefore to each individual culture that attention must be focused in order to determine the peculiarities that might explain the way that Pentecostalism has evolved in each culture. Lamin Sanneh (1989:94-95) believes that the appeal of Christianity consist in its translatability into different cultures and settings and 'it was the extraordinary multiplicity of mother-tongue idioms that became the subject of Christian mission rather than the cosmopolitan values of an ascendant West.' This is what Sanneh describes as the 'indigenization of the gospel' that was responsible for the proliferation of the gospel in Africa. Kalu (2007:3) also thinks that 'One of the complexities of Pentecostalism is that there are geographical, economic or even symbolic centers [sic] for the movement. Heterogeneity and mutual dependence are core characteristics.' Although Harvey Cox (1995:5) thinks that 'Pentecostalism was born in the United States, but the forms of it that are spreading most rapidly today are the ones that have least connection with North America.'

Wilfred Hodges (1953:14) notes that with the spread of Pentecostalism 'There is no place on earth where, if the gospel seed be properly planted, it will not produce an indigenous church. The Holy Spirit can work in one country as well as in another.' This is rather a wild claim and it is not clear what Hodges means by 'properly planted' but whatever he means, it cannot be strictly correct that even if 'properly planted', Pentecostalism would thrive anywhere. For example,

it is reasonable to assume that Pentecostalism is unlikely to thrive in Saudi Arabia. But according to Anderson (1999):

> The Pentecostal emphasis on 'freedom in the Spirit' has rendered the movement inherently flexible in different cultural and social contexts. In varying degrees and in wide varieties of settings we find different forms and precisely because of their inherent flexibility, these Pentecostals attain an authentically indigenous character, which enables them to offer answers to some of the fundamental questions asked by many within their own cultural contexts. (p.221)

So why has Pentecostalism not enjoyed as much indigenous flourishing in the countries of Europe? It is not only Pentecostalism that (indigenously) has failed to gain foothold in many of the European nations, it is also the fact that religion in general has largely declined in many of these nations as witnessed in reduced church attendance. European culture, perhaps since the Enlightenment and through the modernity drive has weakened the religious base in Europe. It is the importation of new brands of Christianity and Pentecostalism in particular that is feeding the growth of Christianity in Europe. Yet, within European culture, the Weberian rationalization, which is to say, secularism, social progress, technological and scientific advance and the stress on individuality, the various freedoms and rights have not only eroded much of religious belief but also the collective community spirit that once held societies together and upon which the religious expression, in the Durkheimian sense, have subsisted. Industrialization dislocated communities and broke up extended family network, which then produced the working class and the nuclear family thus chipping away at the community spirit and the religious beliefs and practices upon which Pentecostalism thrives, turning those grounds arid and infertile, only to be found as a cultural import, (E.P. Thompson, 1963, E. R. Wickham, 1958, K. R. Inglis, 1963). Although, according to Georgina Byrne (2010) the decline of religion in the West does not entail decline in spirituality; the problem however, is that spirituality without community spirit is dead, since it is the community that generates the spiritual energy through collective performance

upon which religion thrives. But what appears to have been lost in Western Europe – the fertile soil upon which religion thrives – appears to remain largely intact in most Third World cultures and it is to this idea of the Third World that we must now turn focus.

2.3 Pentecostalism as a Third World Phenomenon.

According to Allan Anderson (2000:NP) 'Pentecostalism is *not* a predominantly Western movement, but both fundamentally and dominantly a *Third World* phenomenon.' But what does Anderson mean by this claim? The problem with the term *Third World* is that it is a categorical anachronism, a relic of the past to which it was once suited but no longer in contemporary times. In this day and age the term is virtually meaningless as it subsumes a vast number of countries with varying levels of socio-economic and political development (from Argentina to Zimbabwe, Brazil to Botswana) under the same category. What these countries have in common is perhaps only that they are non-Western nations.

But one way of looking at the *Third World* dimension of Pentecostalism is to see it more appropriately as a post-colonial phenomenon. This post-colonial idea does not derive from any post-colonial theory only as a perception or observation that many of the countries where Pentecostalism has proliferated also happen to have been former colonies. This is true of almost all of sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America: Brazil, Chile and parts of Asia: India, Korea and much of the West Indies and of course the United States. This compares with very little growth of the movement in countries that have historically been colonizing powers – Europe, for example. Indeed, as I have mentioned, the presence of Pentecostalism in Europe owes more to recent migration from Africa and the West Indies than to any indigenous flowering of the movement. But sharing a history of colonization does not in itself explain the global rise of Pentecostalism; other factors must come into play and one of these is a racial/cultural dimension that attaches to the post-colonial strand.

Firstly, many of the countries where Pentecostalism currently flourishes are predominantly black or Asian, while countries in which Pentecostalism is a rare

phenomenon, (apart from Islamic nations) Europe for example, are predominantly white. But why is Pentecostalism thriving in black and Asian culture and not in white culture? The answer again is complex and cannot be fully explained here but again cultural factors must play a large role in any explanation and the other factor is globalization to which I shall turn attention.

2.4 Pentecostalism and Globalization.

Marshall MacLuhan's (1967:63) enduring remark that 'We now live in a global village', rings true for worldwide Pentecostalism, which has seen cross-cultural influences in recent times. Although the concept of globalization is highly contested, meaning different things to different people, but the sense that it is a recent phenomenon is itself a contested claim. Wallerstein (1974) was one of the first to query the idea that globalization was a recent phenomenon; but even more recently this contestation can be found in Jack Goody (2010), Roland Robertson (1992) and even more recently J. N. Pieterse (2015). Following Goody, Pieterse (2015:144) asserts that 'Globalization is braided and its influence is interlaced…' meaning that it subsists not as one culture against another but that it '… goes in circles and eventually the lines of influence arrives to where they came from…What matters…is not binary history but parallel history…Flows are not two-way but multidimensional and multipolar...' which echoes Deleuze and Guattari's rhizomatic process that encapsulates the cross-cultural influences that have been taking place for hundreds of years. In which case, Christianity itself and its spread around the world is a global phenomenon, even as far back as the early years of missionary expansion in Africa. There is also the sense that globalization is a counter-discourse to the dominant Euro-centric narrative; yet globalization could also be viewed as a Eurocentric project that sucks in the global South into its bag under the pretence of freedom of capital and cultural flows but in reality victimizes the South through unfair trade deals and so forth, (Comaroff and Comaroff, 1985). In other words, globalization is a new name for old systems in which the West continues to dominate the rest; or to put it in other words, globalization is a form of disguised imperialism. We see this idea for example, in Joseph Stigler's

Globalization and Its Discontents (2003) where he argues that globalization has profited the richer nations at the expense of the poorer nations or rather: globalization has increased rather than decrease world poverty, since the same old bodies like the World Bank, IMF and world trade organizations, mainly constituted by the West, continue to dictate the direction of global economic travel. Joel Robbins (2004:119) thinks we should make a distinction between the 'indigenizing differentiation and globalizing homogenization but with a possible third and instead construe the globalization of Pentecostalism as a prime example of a widespread kind of cultural hybridization…. Yet is in their very struggle against local culture that they prove how locally rooted they are.' In other words, whilst been global they remain situated within various local settings. But there is now a de-centering of dominant cultures and the breaking down of barriers and the crisscrossing of cultural flows, (Featherstone, 1995). There is now more cultural diversity in the sense that there has been a paradigm shift in the way that cultural influences have been conceived, as Arjun Appadurai (1990:296) writes:

> The new global cultural economy has to be understood as a complex; overlapping disjunctive order, which cannot any longer be understood in terms of existing centre-periphery models…The complexity of the current global economy has to do with fundamental disjuncture between economy, culture and politics, which we have barely begun to theorise.

Harvey Cox (1995:102) famously noted that Pentecostalism '… is a religion that is made to travel', which is a strikingly apposite description that captures the streams and currents of the movement as it continues to flow into some of the world's most remote areas. Similar arguments can be found in James Clifford *Travelling Cultures* (1997) and so when it is asked why Pentecostalism has succeeded in penetrating different areas of the globe, ready answers may be found within and outside Pentecostalism itself, namely: (a) the Pentecostal doctrine and modes of worship; (b) local cultural factors and (c) the context of

globalization. In a BBC profile of Pentecostalism,[31] the article picks up on this notion of adaptability by asserting that:

> Pentecostalism adapts easily to local traditions and incorporates local music and other cultural elements in worship, enabling people to retain elements of their own spirituality when they move to a Pentecostal church. This adaptability has made it easy for non-Pentecostal churches to include Pentecostal elements.

According to Featherstone in *Genealogies of the Global* (2006:389)

> If globalization points to the process of the integration of the world (often characterized in terms of space–time compression) and the increased consciousness of this process, then it should also give rise to emergent dimensions of social life, new social phenomena, which can challenge existing modes of conceptualization in the social sciences and humanities.

This view may be true of global Pentecostalism, as it gives 'rise to new social phenomena.' Featherstone continues by suggesting that:

> A shift in the global balance of power away from the West to Asia would potentially involve different accounts of global integration which could challenge Western narratives and provide the economic and symbolic capital to stimulate systematic research to develop alternative version…

However, there is not one globalization theory but many with different perspectives, emphasis and dimensions – political, economic, cultural and social. The argument by Gifford (2004), Brouwer et al (1998) and others that the prosperity strand of Pentecostalism in places like Nigeria, is either motivated by

[31]BBC "Pentecostalism"
w.*w.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/christianity/.../pentecostal_1.shtml* 2:7:2009

capitalism or the gospel is merely an extension of American free enterprise culture assumes that cultures flow in only one direction – north to south – echoing Jeremy Tunstall's (1977) argument that:

> Cultural Imperialism thesis claims that the authentic, traditional and local culture in many parts of the world is being battered out of existence by indiscriminate dumping of large quantities of slick commercial and media product**,** mainly from the United States.' (Quoted in Tomlinson, 1991:8)

Although Turnstall's argument may now be viewed as dated but its assumptions of the linearity of the cultural flow still pervades the arguments we find in the theories of Paul Gifford and others. This is the sense in which, through the framework of globalization, modernity and neo-liberal capitalism, Pentecostalism is viewed as emerging from the West (the US) as a form of economic and cultural imperialist phenomenon that gobbles up other cultures when in fact these categories remain the province of the West and not necessarily of the rest, (Chakrabaty, 2001; Achille Mbembe, 1992). On the other hand Turnstall's view appears to have been overtaken by more 'multidimensional' theories of globalization, the kind that we find in (Appadurai, 1990, 1996; Tomlinson, 1999; Sinclair, 1992) and others.

The shifting sands of global geopolitics is moving the 'centre' in different directions, as new global players are now entering the fray - Brazil, Russia, India China, South Africa, Brazil, (BRICKS) – and breaking the dominance of Western culture as is the case with the emergence of the MINT countries (Mexico, Indonesia, Nigeria and Turkey). For example, Rana Dasgupta (2006) claims 'the Third World metropolis is becoming the symbol of the new', as cities like Lagos, Bombay and Shanghai are now turning into mega cities and challenging traditional first world cities like London, Paris and New York but in different and unique ways. For example, Dasgupta cites the fact that most luxury goods are now made in countries like Bangladesh, China, India and others, all of which suggests the growing importance of nations once considered to operate on the fringes of global cultural, political and economic centre. Similar arguments can

be found in the works of authors like Saskia Sassen (1991), Ash Amin, (2006), Amin and Thrift (2002), Simone (2004) and others that have examined new cities once thought to lie at the fringes of the centre of the world. Witness another example of the Nigerian film industry known as *Nollywood,* which is the biggest film industry in Africa and according to UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) Survey (2009) *Nollywood* is second only to India in terms of film production. Through film, the old myths and folklore are now being retold in little stories that have captured the imagination of many within and outside Nigeria. *Nollywood* films have now replaced Hollywood as the staple diet of the Nigerian film going public. This development reflects the way that Pentecostalism has broken the monopoly of the established or orthodox churches and engendered what I have described as the African religious reformation.

Equally, a growing body of studies is now showing the impact of African religions on the West. Works by Richard Burgess (2008, 2010, 2011) Jacob Olupona (1991), Israel Olofinjana (2013) Afe Adogame (2014), Frieder Ludwig et al (2011) and many others have explored the different ways in which African Christianity is evangelizing Europe. What is not in dispute is that Nigerian or African Pentecostalism is spreading its brand of the Pentecostal message in the diaspora in what is now known as reverse mission, (Adedibu, 2014; Burgess, 2008, 2010, 2011; Adogame, 2014; Olofinjana; 2013; Olupona, 1991). *Reverse mission* is a form of religious evangelism that is now emerging from what used to be the colonized South and spreading to the colonizing West, which is a reversal of the European missionary evangelism in Africa and other places in the late and early eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Through recent voluntary migration to the West, Africans are planting and growing the seeds of religious movement, the like that has never been witnessed before.

A recent University of Roehampton research by Andrew Rogers (2013) reports that the London borough of Southwark in South East of London, particularly on the Old Kent Road, is to be found the largest African churches anywhere in the world outside Africa and many of them are Pentecostalists. But Southwark is not the only borough experiencing the growth of these churches; other London Boroughs such as Greenwich, Lewisham, Hackney and many more are catching up. As church attendance decline in Europe, African churches in Europe, the

BMCs (Black Majority Churches are growing and expanding at a rapid rate. There is therefore no doubt that migration from the African and Asian continents is feeding the Pentecostal expansion in developed nations, particularly Europe, just as the transportation of African slaves to the Americas influenced the rise of Pentecostalism in the United States and surrounding areas. This development supports Stuart Hall's (1992) claim that the rest of the world, which was once thought to be different and distant and exotic and primitive is now part of the West. But then again, for Hall, the West was never a homogenous entity neither is the rest with which it has historically been contrasted equally homogenous. Nevertheless both descriptions have sought to condense complex heterogeneities into simple procrustean categories.

But what is the likely consequence of this growing cultural heterogeneity, particularly in the West? The current refugee crisis in Europe is a case in point that serves to illustrate the deterritorialization that I referred to earlier. The borders of once 'fortress Europe' are currently being breached by a stream of refugees from Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan and other parts of the world that Europe is struggling to stem. The bureaucratic regulations that govern foreign travel such as visas processes are being bypassed by the sheer weight of numbers, the physical presence of the refugees at Europe's shores, which the European powers appear powerless to stem or even to contain what has been described as a 'crisis': so much for the rationality of order and regulation. This border crossing of migrants has entailed also the importation of culture and religion, which is likely to create what can best be described as an ultra or supra-nationalist religious alliance. Take the recent deaths of many Muslim pilgrims to Mecca (2015) crushed to death in stampede; the sheer numbers, which has been blamed for the deaths, from different nations attending the pilgrimage continue to rise but significantly their nationalities appear to take second place to their religious faith. This new form of religious nationalism or religious identity is characteristically borderless and essentially situated within a religious melting pot, a centre that transcends nation-states. We see this happening with Pentecostalism where there is a growing international Pentecostal community in which for example Nigerian Pentecostalists identify more readily with Jamaican Pentecostalists than with their fellow Nigerian Muslims. Perhaps modernity and the traditional nation-state model are gradually being recast by

these new religious and cultural movements, turning them into what Pieterse (2015) describes as a 'melange' of the new globalization.

However, with regards to Pentecostalism in Africa many of the African Pentecostalist churches were founded, led and held together by charismatic men who continue to oversee and wield enormous power and influence over these churches. This state of affairs raises a number of questions regarding Weberian charismatic leadership and authority, namely: (a) what would happen to these movements once these leaders pass away; (b) are there structures in place to ensure easy successions and seamless continuation of the movement; and (c) is there life in these churches after the death of their leaders or would they wither and die or would the death of the leaders mark the beginning of an organized hierarchical establishment, which would also rob the movement of its charismatic status? If the movement makes the transition from sect-like body into an established church with hints of Weberian legal-rational authority structures in place would they not lose the dynamic spontaneity and the 'collective energy' that has made them distinctive and unique and which has been part of their great appeal? In which case religious resurgence becomes cyclical, following Weber's process of religious development from sect and finally a church. These are the dilemmas that confront many of the African Pentecostal churches, which are questions that might be further explored elsewhere.

But for now the religious resurgence in Nigeria must be viewed as the end of history but not history that ends in the triumph of Western liberal democratic values as espoused by Fukuyama (1992) or the triumph of global capitalism as we see in Gifford (2004) but the end of the Western style modernity and secularism and the beginning of the resurgence of indigenous traditional systems of belief and practices that were once suppressed by Western powers. This new phase in the history of Africa is bound to open up fresh problems, struggles, strife and crises yet the resolution must involve traditional culture in one way or another. There is no doubt that globalization has fanned the Pentecostal flame but the factors that lit the Pentecostal fire were primarily indigenous cultures.

Yet within the global context the role of technology must also be mentioned. Marshall McLuhan's world as a 'global village' has been made possible partly by

the electronic media. For example in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the European missionaries travelled vast distances to reach remote corners of the world in their evangelistic quest but now cultures and geographical distances have 'shrunk' or 'compressed' as Featherstone puts it, even though the geographical distances remain unchanged. What has changed is that technology has bridged the vast distances that used to exist between cultures and Pentecostal evangelism need not travel in the same mode of the early missionaries. The role of the media in attenuating a new kind of 'imagined community' of Pentecostalist believers is therefore significant. With regards to the acclaimed influence of American Pentecostalism on its African counterpart, this is more evident in terms of style or the pastoral performance: the strutting back and forth on the stage, the theatricality, the mode of dress, the speech-act, the high intensity or ferocity of delivery, profuse sweating, which in turn generates energy among the congregation.

In Appadurai (1991) there is mention of the combination of the 'media and migration' as two of the main drivers of the global cultural flows. We touched on migration earlier but technological innovation and its proliferation, not to speak of its accessibility have contributed in significant ways to the globalization phenomenon. Take the example of Nigeria where in 2001 the government deregulated the telecommunications industry, (Taiwo, 2015) leading to the proliferation not only of technological or electronic devices, which has transformed the social world in which Nigerians in general and Pentecostalists in particular, live (Hackett, 1998). These technological transformations of society can be seen in the area of religion in general and Pentecostalism in particular. With technology Pentecostalism has 'travelled well' as Harvey Cox has noted, enabling the transportability of the sacred – the Internet for example - to reach people in distant and remote areas, facilitating religious engagement with those without the means to participate in collective group worship such as the sick and unwell. Many Nigerian Pentecostal pastors use the electronic media to spread their messages: sermons, prayers and other spiritual information; social network facilities: *Facebook*, *Whatsapp* and others are also being used to convey religious messages, (Asonzeh, 2004). Text messaging, according to Taiwo (2015:195) '… are woven around Christian topics… aimed at admonishing members and helping them to build up their faith. Sometimes,

such texts are in the form of prayer and good wishes for the addressee…' For example, in the church that the ethnography for this thesis was conducted there are only a handful of Bibles (in book-form) compared to mobile phones, tablets and other electronic devises through which many now access the Bible.

Should the growth of Pentecostalism continue at its current rate the movement is unlikely to remain a 'predominantly Third World phenomenon' for very long, as Anderson (2000), Jenkins (2011) and others maintain. As South to North migration increases, with people bringing their religious beliefs with them the face of world Christianity is bound to change, but the question is knowing which way the change is likely to travel. Would there be an integrated or federated global Pentecostalism and if so what would the structure look like or would the movement continue to be a loose collection of different kinds of Pentecostalisms? How much inroad can African Pentecostalism make on Western (European) culture? Can African Pentecostalism threaten it or is African Pentecostalism destined to remain on the fringes of Western society? The flame of Pentecostalism may dim in the near to long term or it might mutate into a new sect or religious movement but with regards to the question of the thesis the analysis and argument advanced in the preceding pages offer but a small contribution to what is an on-going debate. What is not in doubt is that in Nigeria as indeed in most of Africa, there is now a new form of religious life and that life is predominantly to be witnessed in Pentecostalism.

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