

CHAPTER FOUR

SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT OF NIGERIAN CHARISMATIC PENTECOSTAL CHURCHES

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This chapter identifies two approaches charismatic Pentecostal churches in Nigeria adopt in their response to social challenges. The first approach is centripetal. The chapter argues that churches that take this position are either passive in relation to social and civic engagement or work in collusion with elements in the Nigerian society that undermine efforts toward political, social and human improvement especially corrupt leadership, but in their engagement with society they offer spiritual (in lieu of physical) solutions to myriad of social and political problems their members face in Nigeria. In other words, in spite of the enormous wealth these churches gather from the members, social engagement in the form of political, social and human improvement, such as, political awareness and improvement in living conditions of less endowed members and non-members is almost nil. This *genre* of charismatic Pentecostal church is dominated by charismatic Pentecostal mega churches. Another kind has been seen; its relation to society tends to be centrifugal in the sense that it tries to confront political and social problems and offer material help to the needy in society. This latter group is relatively small and, at the moment, most of them are located in Lagos. The chapter concludes that, in spite of the image portrayed by the first *genre* of charismatic Pentecostal churches in Nigeria globally, it would be wrong to paint all them with the same brush. The study covers Nigeria and draws some comparison with Nigerian charismatic Pentecostal churches in Ghana and Liberia.

Key words: Power, Authority, Charismatic Pentecostal, African Indigenous churches, African Initiated Churches, New Christianity, centripetal and centrifugal

Introduction

The *Daily Mail* of 21 October 2012 carried a story of one of the Nigeria's richest pastors, David Olaniyi Oyedepo.¹¹² The chapter alleged that he was exploiting British worshippers, "Followers are ferried in double-decker shuttle buses to the church, handed slips inviting them to make debit card payments, and are even told obeying the ministry's teaching will make them immune from illness." The church's target is "vulnerable people such as the lonely, the sick, the homeless and the suicidal." This story captures the nature of a type of Nigeria's charismatic Pentecostal churches in their engagement with the Nigerian society. Charismatic Pentecostalism or Neo-Pentecostalism is a conflation of classical Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity that began in Nigeria in university campuses in the 1970s. It began as a monolithic group under the umbrella of the Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria (PFN) but today it is diverse. Three groups can be identified. The first is the mainline and constitutes the PFN. The second are charismatic which have remained within mission churches and the third are those who do not belong to the PFN and would not want to be called Pentecostals or neo Pentecostals for political reasons, even though in teaching and practice they are neo-Pentecostals, for lack of an adequate term, we call them proto-Pentecostals, for example, Christ Embassy and the Synagogue of All Nations.

The social engagement of charismatic Pentecostal church such as Oyedepo's is what can be called centripetal – all resources financial and human are channelled into the church. But these churches do not utilise their immense financial resource for social and human development. Power and administrative structure are highly centralised, there is no sense of internal democracy. They represent a particular approach. There is another approach which tends to be outward looking, centrifugal in

¹¹² George Arbuthnott, "Laughing on his private jet – the £93m pastor accused of exploiting British worshippers", <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2220833-private-jet--93m-pastor.html>

relation to society. Resources both human and financial are utilised for social improvement in two different ways: politically, such as engaging in social and political advocacy hoping to change the basis for social and political inequality and, socially, by actively participating in social, particularly economic improvement of the marginalised in society, such as providing for the destitute, street gangs, prostitutes, homeless and the indigents in society. These latter dispositions are trends that are emerging in charismatic Pentecostal Christianity in Nigeria. Another new trend that has equally divided charismatic Pentecostal Christianity in Nigeria is the engagement with Islam. In our study of Pentecostals in Kaduna and Jos - hot spots of Muslim Christian confrontation - most Pentecostal leaders called for confrontation with political Islam either violently or through dialogue. Those calling for violent response to militant Islam argued that Christ commanded Christians to allow their enemies slap them twice, after that they should retaliate.¹¹³ Yet there are other Pentecostals who not only preach peace but are active in promoting peaceful coexistence between Muslims and Christians. Prominent among these are Yakubu Pam, a minister in the Assemblies of God Church, Jos, and founder of Young Ambassadors for Peace and Interfaith Foundation¹¹⁴ and James Morel Wuye, also a pastor in the Assemblies of God Church, Kaduna; he and his Muslim colleague, Muhammad Nurayn Shafa established the Interfaith Mediation Centre in Kaduna. In a joint publication they state how they were transformed from violent activism to peace building:

We both, in the past, had been involved in war of words through various publications, 'The Youth Christian Association of Nigeria news bulletin', 'The Whole Truth', and the 'National Council of Muslim Youth Organisation's News Bulletin' among others. In these papers we expressed radical, provocative ideas from the stand points of our religions, on which we would refuse to negotiate for any reason. These uncompromising attitudes, in the past, had resulted in a tense atmosphere which did not allow room for dialogue or for any form of interaction between us. Everyone

¹¹³ Danny McCain, Musa Gaiya, Katrina Korb, "Salt and Light or Salt and Pepper: Views on Ethno-Religious Violence and Peace among Pentecostals in Nigeria", forthcoming.

¹¹⁴ McCain et al, "Salt and Light", 20-22

was trying to outwit the other...To our very greatest surprise, as this discussion progressed, we were both startled by some discoveries. Hidden behind the turbaned Imam was a gentleman, not the violent man that the Pastor has assumed he was. Similarly, the suited Pastor was a bird of the same feather as the Imam. We found that we had a lot of things in common.¹¹⁵

The second group is non-confrontational; it calls for prayers. Islam is influenced by Satan; it is, as Kalu puts it “the illegitimate religion of the bondwoman”, as such, the only way to peace is in exorcising the demons in Islam.

Another area in church engagement with society (centrifugal) that has been studied is democratisation (church and politics) in Africa. There has been some discussion on the role of Christian churches (both mainline and popular) in political developments of Africa. Their roles (especially those played by older ones) in the democratisation of Africa has been noted by Paul Gifford.¹¹⁶ It has been noted that their contributions have been so significant in the modernisation of Africa that Adrian Hastings comments, “Black Africa today is totally inconceivable apart from the presence of Christianity.”¹¹⁷ Reflecting on the contribution of the church to the democratisation of South Africa, the theologian John de Gruchy emphatically states that apartheid would have lingered longer were it not for the active participation of the church in the process of dismantling it. He concludes, “[T]here can be little doubt that the church played a key role in the ending of apartheid.”¹¹⁸ A

¹¹⁵ Muhammad Nurayn Ashafa and James Morel Wuye, *The Pastor and the Imam Responding to Conflict* (Kaduna: Muslim/ Christian Youth Dialogue Forum, 1999), 2.

¹¹⁶ Paul Gifford, “Introduction: Democracy and the Churches,” *The Christian Churches and the Democratisation of Africa* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1995), 1-10.

¹¹⁷ Adrian Hastings, “Christianity in Africa,” Ursula King ed., *Turning Points in Religious Studies* (Edinburgh: T. And T. Clark, 1990), 208.

¹¹⁸ John W. De Gruchy, *Christianity and Democracy* (Cambridge University Press, 1995), 211. See full discussion in de Gruchy, “Theological Reflections on the Task of the Church in the Democratisation of Africa,” *The Christian Churches and the Democratisation of Africa* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1995), 47, 57-60.

similar conclusion was arrived at by Richard Joseph in his study of democratisation processes in Cameroon, Zaire, Benin, Togo, Kenya, Madagascar, and Zambia¹¹⁹ and also the conclusion of John Mihevc.¹²⁰ What these studies failed to point out is that in reality, in Sub-Saharan Africa at least, democracy does not translate into good governance or more importantly socio-economic justice. So, religious institutions, like the church, can make even more significant impact on society if they pay attention to issues of social and economic justice. This should be done not only by merely criticising government but by making positive contributions toward achieving social and economic transformation. Our concern is on the efforts of popular Christian groups, particularly the charismatic Pentecostals in Nigeria. Jeff Haynes has, in a general statement, credited popular Christian groups for “catering for popular needs.”¹²¹ This statement is certainly anchored on the generally accepted notion that charismatic Pentecostal Christianity (a form of popular religion) is the most influential religious institution in the World. This is the position of Donald Miller and Tetsunao Yamamori in their study of Pentecostal and Charismatic groups in the global south. Their thesis is that “most innovative social programs in the world are being initiated by fast-growing Pentecostal churches”¹²² -churches they call “progressive Pentecostals.” So, to find out this, they visited many cities in the global south where they found amazing cases of social engagements by Pentecostal and Charismatic groups. But Miller and Yamamori failed to capture a prevailing world view in the global south (particularly in Africa) in which society can be engaged by offering spiritual solution to almost all physical problems through instruments such as, faith healing, divine prosperity, divine guidance, divine appointment, spiritual

¹¹⁹ Richard Joseph, “The Christian Churches and Democracy in Contemporary Africa,” *Christianity and Democracy in Global Context* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1993), 231.

¹²⁰ John Mihevc, *The Market tells them so: the World Bank and Economic Fundamentalism in Africa* (London: Zed Books, 1995), 225-242.

¹²¹ Paul Gifford, *African Christianity: Its Public Role* (London: Hurst & Company, 1998), 25.

¹²² Donald E. Miller and Tetsunao Yamamori, *Global Pentecostalism: The New Face of Christian Social Engagement* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), 6.

deliverance, prophecy, and anointing. They elected to exclude groups that centred their activities on these alone. However, to give a holistic approach to the study, Pentecostalism in the global south scholars now speak about spiritual economics and spiritual politics or “political spiritualities.”¹²³

It may be worth noting in the passing developments that Pentecostal Christianity in Nigeria since the 1980s has increasingly become the church of the elite. Pastors of Pentecostal churches have become more sophisticated. Some are highly trained professionals, such as engineers, medical doctors and experts in information technology; others are technocrats and high profiled academics. Many charismatic Pentecostal groups are run as business outfits, managed and guided by sophisticated entrepreneurs, who see themselves as business tycoons. Some Pentecostal groups have moved away from saturated urban settings into rural areas; these are mainly the mega churches, which include Deeper Life Bible Church (DLBC), Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG), Living Faith Church Worldwide (LFCW) and Mountain of Fire and Miracles Ministry (MFMM). Pentecostal teachings and social impact in rural villages in Nigeria are yet to receive scholarly attention.

Centripetal Engagement: Living Faith Church Worldwide

In social engagement, LFCW is typical of the first approach. The church, like many of its type in Nigeria, believes in delivering health and wealth to its adherents spiritually (packaged in variety of products) while at the same time reaping huge physical material benefits in return from members. Even when such spiritual benefits do not graduate into physical reality, members are told to believe that “all is well.” “It is well” is a popular slogan in LFCW. This idea and practice partly explain the docility of many Nigerians, hence the saying, “Nigerians are happiest people on earth.” It makes an important influence in society because this kind of Christianity commands adherence of many Nigerians.

The story of Oyedepo, the founder and leader of Living Faith Church Worldwide, is a synthesis of the indigenous and modern

¹²³ See Stephen Ellis and Gerrie Ter Haar, *Worlds of Power: Religious Thought and Political Practice in Africa* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004); Ruth Marshall, *Political Spiritualities: Pentecostal Revolution in Nigeria* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009).

Christianity. Oyedepo was born in 1954 to a Muslim father and a mother who was a staunch member of a faction of the Cherubim and Seraphim Church, Eternal Sacred Order of Cherubim and Seraphim Movement (an indigenous Christian group that emerged out the Anglican church in Yorubaland in the 1920s, and popularly known as *Aldura*- praying church) in his home town, Omu-Oran in Kwara State, Nigeria. So, Oyedepo's early spirituality was *Aladura*, which places a lot of emphasis on prayer. Oyedepo also had absorbed American Faith preachers' teachings. One of Oyedepo's greatest moments was when he was told that he had slept on the same bed Kenneth Copeland slept on about sixty years back. The next night, he prayed:

God, you know how much I love Copeland's ministry, how much I appreciate your hand upon his life, how much he has affected our world for you, how much he has proved the devil wrong in demonstrating that you bless those you have called. Lord, as I go to sleep on this bed tonight, let those works in Copeland begin to work in me.¹²⁴

And listening to Kenneth E. Hagin Sr. preaching in Tulsa, Texas, in 1986, Oyedepo had an encounter with God:

My heart exploded, and I began to sob openly. The Spirit entered into me and changed the entire course of my ministry! Before then, I used to preach jumping all over the place and sweating. But that day, the Spirit entered into me, and the serenity of Kenneth Hagin's style of ministration was imparted to me instantly!¹²⁵

Therefore, it is important to note, Nigerian charismatic Pentecostal Christianity is both indigenous and imported – a point Gifford has consistently made.¹²⁶

¹²⁴ David Oyedepo, *The Release of Power* (Ota: Dominion Publishing House, 1996), 142.

¹²⁵ Oyedepo, *The Release of Power*, 135.

¹²⁶ Paul Gifford, *African Christianity: Its Public Role* (London: Hurst & Company, 1998), 41; he pursues this theme in "The Complex Provenance of Some Elements of African Pentecostal Theology," Andre Corten and Ruth Marshall-Frantani eds., *Between Babel and Pentecost: Transnational Pentecostalism in Africa and Latin America* (London: Hurst & Company, 2001) and *Ghana's New Christianity: Pentecostalism in a Globalizing African Economy* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004).

Oyedepo married Florence (Nee Abiola Akano) in 1982 after she adopted her nickname 'Faith' in 1976.¹²⁷ The two had made a 'Dedication Vow' in which they pledged the following:

Having definitely relinquished all claims I deliberately turn my back on everything (sic). Thus I renounce all that I am and have. It's no longer mine but God's. Henceforth, He has the absolute right to do what he like [sic] with it, and if at any time he should call upon me to literally [sic] forsake what I have renounced, I must not even murmur or complain. Discipleship demands renunciation.¹²⁸

David Oyedepo studied architecture at the Kwarrar State Polytechnic and graduated with a Higher Diploma, then had two honorary doctorate degrees from universities in the United States of America, while Faith, his wife, was a graduate of economics from Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife.

The couple established the first LFCW congregation in a rented facility at Ramat Close in Angwan Rimi in Kaduna in 1984.¹²⁹ But in January 1985, LFCW dedicated its own church building (Dominion Cathedral) on a 13-acre land in Barnawa, Kaduna, called "Garden of Faith." Before satellite churches were planted in other parts of Kaduna, Sunday attendance had risen to 25,000.¹³⁰ According to Selome Kuponu, most of the initial members of the Kaduna church may have been made up of a breakaway group from a Pentecostal church in Kaduna.¹³¹ From Kaduna the church spread to Lagos (the first congregation was in Iyana Ipaja, Ikeja-Lagos) and then to other parts of Nigeria. The Lagos branch, like the Kaduna church, was also made up of members of existing

¹²⁷ Faith or 'Sister Faith' was probably a nickname depicting her strong faith but gradually it became her first name. There has not been an official change of name.

¹²⁸ LFWC, *A Success Story* (1988), 41-43. Also cited in Selome Igbekele Kuponu, "The Living Faith Church (Winners' Chapel), Nigeria: Pentecostalism, Prosperity Gospel and Social Change," (PhD Thesis, University of Bayreuth, Germany, 2007), 22.

¹²⁹ The church dates its beginning from Oyedepo's call in a hotel room in Ilesha, 2 May 1981, where he also received a vision of his ministry.

¹³⁰ Interview with Emmanuel Agi, Resident Pastor LFCW, Barnawa, Kaduna 5th May 2012.

¹³¹ Kuponu, "The Living Church," 30-32.

Pentecostal churches whose leaders had invited Oyedepo to give seminars on faith. Oyedepo himself relocated to Lagos in 1988 due to the religious crisis in Kaduna State, which began in 1987, but even more important, Lagos would have been a more fertile ground for this new Christianity.¹³²

But LFCW, like some other mega churches in Nigeria under this category, such as Redeemed Christian Church of God, Mountain of Fire and Miracles, is not just a church, it is also an industry. Oyedepo's businesses are enormous. For instance, at Canaan Land, particularly during the annual national gathering called *Shiloh* (where at least one million people attend), his company supplies all the table water. All the bread eaten at such meetings are supplied by his bakery; the Dominion Publishing House prints all his books (a must read for members every month) and many other investments in banks and industries. Forbes magazine rated him as the richest pastor in Nigeria. He is worth \$150 million!¹³³ His 2008 jet costs \$25 million.

What does Oyedepo give to his members in return: 'faith' package in spiritual products and sold to members in the form of Holy Communion (ordinary juice and bread, which is said to have been transformed into actual flesh and blood of Jesus). The elements, specially the blood, can be preserved to be used against evil forces. It is also a 'supreme injection' as Oyedepo puts it, "If you partake of the communion table with this understanding, you will never need to take any drug for the remaining days of your life."¹³⁴ Also, the 'word' which is Oyedepo's preaching and teaching, spoken, taped and written is packaged as channels of power. He says the 'word' makes a believer a god in the kingdom of Satan. Entrance of the 'word' in a believer's life is called 'impartation' or it could mean the 'laying on of the hands.' Special impartation services are held where power (unction) is

¹³² Matthews A. Ojo, *The End-Time Army: Charismatic Movements in Modern Nigeria* (Trento, NJ: Africa World Press, Inc., 2006), 165.

¹³³ Maureen Chigo, "The Man who Works with God," *Newswatch* (14 Nov. 2011), 13.

¹³⁴ David Oyedepo, *Walking in Dominion* (Ota: Dominion Publishing House, 2004), 80.

transferred to members. Oyedepo has written 61 books as at 2011¹³⁵ (all published by the church's Dominion Publishing House, Ota) and every member is expected to read these books, at least a book a month to guarantee an effective and powerful Christian life. These books are Oyedepo's sermons and, as such, often repetitive. The 'word' is also carried in audio tapes, audio compact discs (CDs), visual compact discs (DVDs) and VHS. Members rush to buy them after service. The spoken word could also come through radio, television and the internet. Others are the consecrated anointing oil which transmits power to heal and fight evil forces. Oyedepo defines the anointing oil as "the Spirit of God mysteriously put in a bottle, and mysteriously designed to communicate the power of God bodily";¹³⁶ white handkerchief, often called the 'mantle'; the idea of the 'mantle' comes from the story of Elijah and his disciple Elisha (2 Kings 2 especially verses 13-14) and the story of the Apostle Paul's power (Acts 19:11-12). According to Oyedepo,

The mantle ministry is a ministry of transmission of unction. As I speak forth the anointing for special miracles and casting out of devils goes into the handkerchief...where it appears, the works of the devil will be destroyed. It is a mantle for exploits. It is the end-time prophetic mystery in the hand of the carrier, for amazing results, signs and wonders. It is a carrier of divine energy and heavenly virtue. It always produces signs!¹³⁷

The mantle might include physical contact with the 'anointed man' or 'woman of God' through handshake, touching of clothes or anything associated with him/her. Members can carry this power in their pockets or bags; they can even put it on their bookshelves. There is no gender discrimination in the use of power, as testimonies of women using spiritual power are replete in Oyedepo's writings. The democratic access to this spiritual power is a fulfilment of another mandate given to Oyedepo on 2nd May 1981: "[Now] the hour has come to liberate the world from all oppressions of the devil, [through the word of faith] and I am sending you to undertake the task."¹³⁸

¹³⁵ Ishaya Ibrahim, "Sixty-one Books and Still Counting," *Newswatch* (14 Nov. 2011), 34.

¹³⁶ Oyedepo, *Walking in Dominion*, 70.

¹³⁷ Oyedepo, *Walking in Dominion*, 79.

¹³⁸ Oyedepo, *The Release of Power*, 171.

The use of material/object as a means for social improvement is also seen in Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG), another mega church in Nigeria and led by Pastor Enoch A. Adeboye, popularly known as the General Overseer (GS). Asonzeh Ukah reports that even the logotype of the church solves spiritual and physical problems.

The RCCG logo is ubiquitous. It is a marker of identity; it restructures the imagination of members. It carries strong religious significance: members attribute miraculous powers to it for keeping thieves and robbers away, or protecting cars from automobile accidents. It repulses evil spirits such as witches and wizards from places and persons who carry it on them; it also attracts blessings, miracles, good luck, and prosperity. It is believed to establish 'contact' with the sacred. In these ways, the logo and the materials on which it is printed, designed or carved, serve both spiritual and social purposes...Not unexpectedly, the production and marketing of the logo in different sizes serve as strong commercial enterprise, providing employment and livelihood to many people.¹³⁹

Similar potency is in the use of photos of Adeboye and his wife, the anointing oil and white handkerchiefs. On the utility of the oil, Adeboye told his audience in one of the church's Holy Ghost services,

When you touched the oil, you will touch your head, you will touch your mouth and then you will rub the remainder on the palm of your hand. The one on your head is going to take care of every yoke in your body. The one in your mouth is going to ensure that the prayers you pray tonight will all be answered. And the one on your hand is going to ensure the beginning of your prosperity.¹⁴⁰

RCCG's Redemption Camp is believed by members of the church to be the kingdom of heaven on earth. It is where Jesus, the miracle worker is found, it is "a site where God is waiting to welcome the weary worshipper, where miracles happen every day, dreams become reality"¹⁴¹ - it is the "Christian Mecca."

¹³⁹ Asonzeh Ukah, *A New Paradigm of Pentecostal Power: A Study of the Redeemed Christian Church of God in Nigeria* (Trento, NJ: Africa World Press, 2008), 223.

¹⁴⁰ Ukah, *A New Paradigm of Pentecostal Power*, 230.

¹⁴¹ Ukah, *A New Paradigm of Pentecostal Power*, 257.

These constitute physical and spiritual empowerment which was the mandate given to Oyedepo while on a visit to the United States of America on 26th August 1987. The mandate was, “Arise get back home and make my people rich.”¹⁴² Henceforth, Oyedepo began to teach and preach prosperity and he published a number of books on prosperity complementing the late Archbishop Benson Idahosa, the acclaimed apostle of prosperity gospel in Nigeria. Scholars have debated whether prosperity, as it is presented by Pentecostal preachers, is African or it is of foreign import.¹⁴³ Africans desire the ‘good things of life’¹⁴⁴ (wives, children, food, good health, long life and in a monetised economy, money) is rooted in the worldview. But prosperity of this kind demands hard work, it would not come magically. When an African makes sacrifices to the ancestors or deities, he is praying for their blessings on the labour of his hands, which in traditional African society includes activities, such as, farming, hunting and warfare. In traditional African society, not everyone is destined to be successful in life, especially people born with bad destiny or as the Yoruba would put it ‘bad head.’ The idea of “lining up myself with His commandments, and it (wealth) keeps flowing!” is foreign to Africans. This simplistic understanding of economics has led Oyedepo to develop what I prefer to call ‘spiritual economics.’ He declared, “The economy of your nation has no bearing on your covenant walk,” - an escapist mentality, “My hope is not in the budget of my country, my hope is not in the national economy, nor in the

¹⁴² David O. Oyedepo, *Understanding Financial Prosperity* (Ottawa: Dominion Publishing House, 1997), 14, 230.

¹⁴³ Scholars who argued for the foreignness of prosperity gospel in Africa include Paul Gifford, “Prosperity: New and Foreign Elements in African Christianity,” *Religion* 20 (1990), 382-400, Ruth Marshall, “Power in the Name of Jesus: Social Transformation and Pentecostalism in Western Nigeria ‘Revisited’” in *Legitimacy and the State in Africa* (London: Macmillan Ltd, 1993), 229. Scholars who think prosperity, as it is taught by Pentecostals in Africa, is African include Ogbu U. Kalu, *African Pentecostalism: An Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 255-263; Mathews A. Ojo, *The End-Time Army*, 206-211.

¹⁴⁴ Randee Ijatuyi-Murphey, *Africa’s Social and Religious Quest: A Comprehensive Survey and Analysis of the African Situation* (Jos: Hokma House, 2011), 456-468.

global economy; my hope is built on nothing else but Jesus Christ and His precious blood.” It is little wonder that the church, in spite of its enormous financial resources, does not have a consistent programme for social transformation. Oyedepo’s enrichment project, where the faithful are taught to think, act and speak as millionaires, is a psychological therapy for poverty. Since the church teaches that poverty is the work of the devil, human and structural causes of poverty are overlooked. As such the church’s contribution to the campaign against corruption, which Nigeria is notoriously known for, is by providing spiritual solution to the dilemma. Thus in 2010 at the popular Tafawa Balewa Square, Oyedepo prayed “for forgiveness if the body of Christ had erred by collecting ‘blood money’ gotten chiefly from corrupt government officials.”¹⁴⁵ And when a prominent politician invited him to pray for him in his house, but before he collected ‘seed money’ from the politicians he was assured by him that the money was not ill-gotten.¹⁴⁶

The LFWC did not only prophesy the victory at the polls of a former Governor of Plateau State, Mr. Joshua Dariye, to become a Senator in 2011, but also celebrated this in its popular magazine, *Aroma*, calling him a Daniel.¹⁴⁷ This edition also carried the 50th birthday celebration of the second most powerful individual in LFCW, Bishop David Olaniyi Abioye.¹⁴⁸ Dariye during his reign as Governor of Plateau State escaped arrest by the British police for money laundering. A strong critic of this spiritual economics is Tunde Bakare, a Pentecostal leader himself. Tunde Bakare is critical of Oyedepo’s theology of ‘easy believism’ or ‘pie in the sky,’ also described in another place as Christian shamanism;¹⁴⁹ a criticism Oyedepo never took kindly.¹⁵⁰ This is a healthy development, there is hope that this kind of Pentecostal self-criticism will continue. This might reduce criticism from outside and

¹⁴⁵ Modupe Ogunbayo-Tona, “It’s No to Dubious Money,” *Newswatch* (14th Nov., 2011), 30, 31.

¹⁴⁶ Maureen Chigbo, Modupe Ogunbayo-Tona and Anthony Akaeze, “Miracles Are Real”, 31.

¹⁴⁷ “The Fragrance of Practical Christianity,” *Aroma* 37 (2011), 10.

¹⁴⁸ “The Fragrance of Practical Christianity,” 23ff.

¹⁴⁹ See Paul Gifford, *African Christianity*, 40.

¹⁵⁰ Maureen Chigbo, Modupe Ogunbayo-Tona and Anthony Akaeze, “Miracles Are Real,” 23.

help to develop healthier churches that would contribute meaningfully to the transformation of society.

Thus, pragmatic programmes for social transformation are absent in these churches. According to Kuponu, LFCW provide some social services, such as medical services through its Gilead Medical Centre to church workers in Canaan Land. But the church prohibits assistance to any one suffering from poor health due to what the church calls “unauthorised activities,” like HIV/AIDS.¹⁵¹ In fact, in an interview with Pastor Stephen Ilori he categorically said LFCW does not do HIV/AIDS awareness and rehabilitation because these negate its belief in total health of the faithful. The church runs bus services for members at a reduced price to induce members/non-members to worship at the Tabernacle in Canaan Land. LFCW runs educational institutions, nursery/primary schools, secondary schools and two universities, Covenant University in Ota and Landmark University, Kwara State.

RCCG has similar educational institutions. Most of these institutions, especially the universities, are very expensive for the average Nigerian, including church members who make financial contributions for the running of such schools. The belief in LFCW is that any person who utilises the means of enrichment through faith would prosper and thus afford to send his/her child to any of its schools.

Centrifugal Engagement in Lagos: A Paradigm Shift

If one were to ask ordinary people on the streets of Lagos which of the leaders of a charismatic Pentecostal churches has affected their lives practically, they are likely to say Prophet T.B. Joshua – a highly vilified Pentecostal leader in Nigeria¹⁵² - and not Oyedepo. I recently watched a television show ‘Who wants to be a Millionaire’ on Sunday 27th May. It was a children’s edition; one of the children who won 1 million naira was asked what he would like to become when he grew up, the boy shouted ‘a pastor;’ the presenter asked him his favourite pastor, he answered T. B. Joshua. Similar impressions can be gathered on the streets of Lagos. Joshua is said to have done a lot of humanitarian activities in Lagos as well as outside Nigeria that include catering for the

¹⁵¹ Kuponu, “The Living Faith Church,” 66.

¹⁵² This criticism scared scholars from closely studying the Synagogue; it also has made the church ultra-sensitive and suspicious of visitors.

needs of widows, dwarfs, the elderly, the physically challenged, orphans, the destitute and cares for those inflicted with several kinds of diseases, which included HIV/AIDS. Joshua also offers scholarships to orphans and children of under privileged parents to attend schools from primary to university. He has rehabilitation centres for armed robbers, prostitutes and ex-militants from the Niger Delta. He had established similar humanitarian facilities in Ghana called ‘Passion for the Needy.’ After the 2010 earthquake in Haiti, Joshua sent a team of medical personnel and humanitarian workers to help; a health clinic was established there, ‘Clinique Emmanuel.’ Joshua’s humanitarian activities throughout the world are put at more than \$20 million. These activities had come to the attention of the Federal Government of Nigeria and it decided to award him a national honour in 2008.¹⁵³ This explains why the Liberian government wanted to invite T.B. Joshua to Liberia to contribute in its national rehabilitation. Nigerian Pentecostal church leaders discouraged the government from doing so, alleging that T.B. Joshua was an agent of Satan. Benjamin Dorme Lartey, the Secretary of the Liberian Council of Churches who led a government fact-finding delegation to the Synagogue in Lagos, said the following after staying and observing activities of T. B. Joshua for about two weeks, “if T.B. Joshua is Satanic, then Satan has the capacity to do certain good things.” Lartey concluded that the criticism against T. B. Joshua by Nigerian Pentecostals was unfounded, it was mere jealousy.¹⁵⁴

The Synagogue is a type of the second category, but is not the only one engaged in such social improvement. There is a coalition of Pentecostal churches leaders, mostly located in Lagos, which calls itself Church for Change. Initial members included Tony Rapu, pastor-in-charge of God Bless Nigeria Church; Adewale Adefarasin of the Guiding Light Assembly, Sam Adeyemi leader of Day Star Christian Centre, Oregun, Lagos, and Ladi Thompson – these are successful leaders of major charismatic Pentecostal churches in Lagos.¹⁵⁵ At one of

¹⁵³ James Uwem, “T. B. Joshua Absent at National Awards,” *Vanguard* (23rd December, 2008), 45.

¹⁵⁴ Interview with Dr. Lartey in his office, Monrovia, 21 October, 2011.

¹⁵⁵ Interview with Wale Adefarasin by Danny McCain, 7th December, 2011, Lagos.

their meetings, they began to ask pertinent questions on the socio-economic problems common to most ordinary Nigerians:

If we have a cathedral that is worth let's say two billion on a street that is just about one kilometre and the street is in a very deplorable condition why can't the church take responsibility and fix the road? Why can't the church feed the poor? Why can't the church give free medical treatment to the poor people? Why can't the church send children of poor people to school? Why can't the church be involved in that? Why just build cathedral, cathedral, cathedral, have airplanes?¹⁵⁶

The group realised that communities have a lot of spiritual and social problems; the church should become concerned about them and help. They felt the community the church is located in,

has problems, social problems, all kinds of problems.... Jesus Christ came to set the captives free. People are not only spiritually in darkness, they are in darkness in other areas of their lives. They do not have water. They do not have electricity. These are issues that the church should get involved in. And I think in a non-partisan perspective. There are problems that we need to get involved in.¹⁵⁷

Two charismatic Pentecostal leaders led their churches to become involved. They were Tony Rapu and Sam Adeyemi. Tony Rapu rehabilitated youth gang members (popularly called 'area boys' in Lagos), street kids, destitutes, prostitutes and drug addicts. Rapu says these were transformed and a church established for them:

Out of all this work has risen a church . . . when we started the church was initially in Lekki and had the demographics of professional people. From the work we did in the field, we found the need to raise a different church that could meet the peculiar needs of the people we were reaching out to in our social work. So in a manner of speaking, we have a church now that has the poor, ex-

¹⁵⁶ Bishop Abraham interviewed by Danny McCain, 24th September, 2011, Lagos.

¹⁵⁷ Interview with Wale Adefarasin by Danny McCain, 2nd May, 2011, Ikoye, Lagos.

criminals, ex-commercial sex workers, ex-drug barons who have been reformed.¹⁵⁸

Rapu calls this kind of social ministry ‘Post-Pentecostal.’ Sam Adeyemi is also engaged in community rehabilitation. He was staring the design of the magnificent cathedral he was about to build when God directed his attention to the debilitated school nearby. ‘Now look at the school across the road. Now, do something about the school. That will give you something to talk about it. Let them feel how you care for the community. I want to give your church a beautiful facility.’¹⁵⁹

Adeyemi acted on this vision. His church built and furnished an examination hall, built toilet facilities, laboratories, offices for the principal and staff and printed notebooks for the students numbering between 3, 000 and 4, 000 (each student had 10 notebooks). He has renovated 5 public schools.¹⁶⁰ These churches are a new phase of charismatic Pentecostalism in Nigeria, which is expected to grow and become more influential.

This new face of social engagement is changing the attitude of Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria (or PFN, an umbrella body that brings all charismatic Pentecostal churches together) towards the plight of ordinary Nigerians. Perhaps jolted by attacks from some mainline Christian groups that Pentecostal churches had shown a nonchalant attitude to the plight of teeming Christians in Nigeria suffering as a result of religious riots, natural disasters, inter-communal conflict, environmental degradation and epidemics, the PFN set up a Welfare Committee headed by Pastor Taiwo Odukoya of Fountain Life Church to address this matter. In his letter of acceptance to chair the Committee, Odukoya outlined the agenda for Pentecostal social engagement:

Having understood the role of the Welfare Committee, [there are lots] of welfare issues affecting the body right now and which I would like to suggest that the committee, in conjunction with the Fellowship, should make a priority. The issues are (1) Persecution

¹⁵⁸ Tony Rapu Interviewed by Danny McCain, 9th June, 2011, Lekki and Ikeja.

¹⁵⁹ Sam Adeyemi interviewed by Danny McCain, 13th December 2012,

¹⁶⁰ Leke Alder, “The Cross and the Crossroad,” (posted in *Faith*, December 13th 2012).

of Christians, (2) National Disasters, (3) Poverty Alleviation, (4) Health Scourge.¹⁶¹

In response to these suggestions, PFN donated 6 motorcycles (for commercial use) and 12-months' salary to 15 pastors in north-western Nigeria. In the southwest, it donated 5 motorcycles and 10 grinding machines to widows. While in northcentral, PFN gave 15 motorcycles; while south-south was equally given 15 motorcycles. Some pastors in the Federal Capital Territory (Abuja) were given money, the same was done to pastors in southeast; while in Lagos PFN gave a cash donation to an orphanage. The north east of Nigeria, which has been devastated by religious and communal violence as well as terrorists' attacks, had only a visit to condole Christian victims.¹⁶² However, attention to other areas suggested by Adukoya's Committee, such as health and poverty alleviation to ordinary Christians, were not paid attention to in PFN activities.

The new engagement has stretched into political activism in the two categories as in social engagement. This is a novelty because Pentecostals like their Evangelical counterparts were noted for their apolitical stance. Pentecostals in Nigeria began to be active in politics in the 1990s. This was when its organisation, the PFN, was under the leadership of Archbishop Benson Idahosa, the father of modern Pentecostalism in Nigeria. The political activism of Pentecostals was so significant that it partly helped to bring about the emergence of the first elected Christian (born-again) president in 1999. Many Pentecostal leaders were present at the inauguration of Olusegun Obasanjo that year. But while many Nigerian Christians were still celebrating this victory, Pastor Tunde Bakare, the founder and head of the Latter Rain Assembly in Lagos, shocked Nigerians when he expressed pessimism (in prophetic language) of any radical change in Obasanjo's moral credentials to enable him transform the country. He prophesied, "Obasanjo is not your messiah. He's King Agag and the prophetic axe is coming upon his head

¹⁶¹ David Adebayo Oluwashina, "Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria: An Analysis of the Significance of an Association in the Society," (PhD Dissertation, The Nigerian Baptist Theological Seminary, Ogbomosho, 2007), 179.

¹⁶² David Adebayo Oluwashina, "Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria," 180, 181.

before May 29 [when Obasanjo would be sworn in as President of Nigeria]”.¹⁶³ Before the election, however, pastor Adeboye (of Redeemed Christian Church of God) had said Obasanjo was a messiah “divinely selected to rule and redeem the country from the abyss of economic, social and political woes and chaos.”¹⁶⁴ By 2006, most Nigerian knew whose prophecy was right. Nevertheless, today the PFN is the strongest voice in the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN). It is therefore, no surprise that the leader of the PFN was at a time also the national leader of CAN. This has culminated into the election of a Pentecostal as the Vice President of Nigeria. In 1991 Pastor Ladele, Secretary of Lagos Chapter of PFN said this, indicating a shift in Pentecostal attitude to politics and political mobilisation:

Many Christians believe it is wrong to want to be in politics. But we are teaching them in our sermons, in our lectures that if we don't take an active part by helping to choose the right person, you will see that it is the enemy that is coming to rule us again....The Americans, before you can become their President, they will agree that this is their man, and they use the church pulpit to tell their members. So we have to do that to get the next President; we will do it. Because the suffering is enough.¹⁶⁵

But most charismatic Pentecostal groups in Nigeria would pursue spiritual means in political engagement rather than discuss issues or confront bad leadership. Prominent among such Pentecostals is Pastor Adeboye. His prayer is sought by many politicians. Even Muslim politicians seek his prayer for victory at the polls. This role has brought him close to political leadership beginning with Mr. Obasanjo as has been pointed out above. This has made Adeboye the most politically influential Pentecostal pastor in Nigeria. We also observe this close association between Pentecostal and political leaders in Plateau State, one of the hot spots in Muslim/Christian relations in Nigeria. The most influential charismatic Pentecostal leader is Prophet Isa Sadiq El-

¹⁶³ Musa A. B. Gaiya, *The Pentecostal Revolution in Nigeria* (Occasional Paper, Centre of African Studies, University of Copenhagen, 2002), 25.

¹⁶⁴ Ukah, *A New Paradigm of Pentecostal Power*, 200.

¹⁶⁵ Quoted in Marshall, “Power in the Name of Jesus”, 240.

Buba,¹⁶⁶ founder and head of Ebomi Prayer Centre in Jos. He is the spiritual mentor, adviser and “visioner” to the former Governor of Plateau State, David Jonah Jang. He introduced himself as a former Islamic militant (or “militant jihadist” as he puts it), who was converted into Christianity by Jesus Christ himself when he personally appeared to him and called him to be a prophet. He ordained the Governor as a pastor and later in 2002 prophesied that Jang would become Governor to transform Plateau State (in his capacity as both king and priest of Plateau State) – this is the point at which they met and became very close. El-Buba introduced Jang to a circle of Pentecostal preachers and they had held crusades together.

Jang’s perception of Islam, which also guides his relation to Muslims in the state,¹⁶⁷ comes from the teaching he has received from El-Buba. El-Buba’s ideas about Islam are contained in *Satanism Exposed*,¹⁶⁸ published in three volumes. This explains El-Buba’s theology of space: he reasons that Plateau State is the most endowed area in Nigeria but Muslim presence has polluted it. Muslims are the cause of the ills and backwardness of the state. What is needed is for the indigenes (the Berom) to seize their land and recommit it to God so as to realise its potentials. The support for this theology is in Psalm 24:1-2 interpreted by Pentecostals thus: “when the land is returned to its owner, peace will reign and prosperity return.”¹⁶⁹ To reclaim the lost land, both spiritual (prayer and crusade to rid the state of demonic influence, especially Islamic) and physical (armed conflict) fight might be needed. El-Buba trains his members militarily using his experience as a trained militant Islamic jihadist. The visible mark of El-Buba’s success in this relationship with politicians is the remarkable edifice standing in middle of the city of Jos, described as the tallest prayer tower in the world (10 story building)!

¹⁶⁶ Interviewed by Musa A. B. Gaiya and Richard Burgess in Prophet El-Buba’s office, No 14 Panyam Street, Jos, 17th May 2012.

¹⁶⁷ See Philip Ostien, “Jonah Jang and the Jasawa: Ethno-Religious Conflict in Jos, Nigeria”, www.sharia.in.africa.net

¹⁶⁸ He says Muslims had tried to kill him (nine times) for misrepresenting Islam.

¹⁶⁹ Ogbu Kalu, *African Pentecostalism*, 215.

El-Buba's attitude to political Islam is not unique. It is also a Pentecostal position. Pentecostal encounter with political Islam in Nigeria has forced its umbrella organisation (PFN) to become politically active in defence of members under persecution in northern Nigeria. Today, PFN does not only organise prayer sessions for the emergence of Christian political leaders, but spits fire-for-fire in response to Muslim violence. Pentecostal engagement with Islam began when Pastor Ayo Oritsejafor was elected PFN President in 2005. In 2006 he said, in reaction to destruction of lives and churches (most of the Pentecostals, are described as 'mushrooms') by Islamic fundamentalists,

... we say this because we do not want another problem to come from the north. If it does, we may not take it. We love peace, we want to work toward peace but our prayer is that nobody will push us to the other side because nobody has the monopoly of violence.¹⁷⁰

Oritsejafor's stance on violent Islam possibly earned him the presidency of Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN); the first Pentecostal leader to head that organisation. This has changed CAN's attitude to dialogue with Muslims in Nigeria. In a swift reaction to Boko Haram¹⁷¹ insurgency, Oritsejafor called on Christians to retaliate.

We have hitherto exercised restraint in our public statements on these matters. However, we cannot continue to do so indefinitely, and are determined that in the year 2012, if these unprovoked attacks continue, and Christians remain unprotected by the security agencies, then we will have no choice but to defend our lives and property and take our own steps to ensure our safety and security.¹⁷²

This militant stance has encouraged Pentecostal pastors to ask their congregations to stock weapons (called 'King James,' euphemism for

¹⁷⁰ Oluwashina, "Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria," 137.

¹⁷¹ Boko Haram is the Hausa name given to an Islamic terrorist group which has links with al-Qaeda groups in North Africa and who are committed to making northern Nigeria ungovernable. Their Arabic name is *Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati wal-Jihad* ("People Committed to the Propagation of the Prophet's Teachings and Jihad"). Boko Haram has many splinter groups, perhaps some of them not yet known to the Nigerian security.

¹⁷² Danny McCain *et al*, "Salt and Light or Salt and Pepper," 1.

Old Testament approach to violence) in their houses for self defence.¹⁷³ This aggressive posture has recently agitated the minds of Catholic Church leaders to consider the possibility of leaving CAN altogether. The Catholic Secretariat of Nigeria gave their reason for pulling out; it accused Oritsejafor of making “CAN too cozy (sic) with the government and too confrontational with Muslims (in response to continuing attacks on Christians).” Also, that CAN has “not given a priority attention to promote peace and unity in the nation,” but has become “an army put in place to defend Christians against Muslims.”¹⁷⁴ Bishop Katung says Roman Catholics do not understand Muslims that is why they trust Muslims and would sit and dialogue with Muslims. He says the only dialogue Muslims understand is confrontation.¹⁷⁵

It may be pertinent to mention, perhaps in passing, that a Shari’ah (Islamic Law implemented in 12 states in northern Nigeria from 1999) complaint Pentecostalism is emerging in the far north. This is seen in changes in dressing, church building, use of loud speakers in church, time of fellowship, church school curriculum (which includes the learning of Islam) and organisation of revivals (crusades).¹⁷⁶

The above examples are a position some charismatic Pentecostal take in political activism, the others take on bold positions in confronting issues and the state. Ruth Marshall -Frantani provides such a stance:

Pentecostal discourse on the current economic and political situation in Nigeria entails bold attack on the Nigerian state. In its engagement with the local forms of knowledge and practice it develops an ongoing critical debate about government, one which not only indicts the immorality and inequality at the heart of domination, but does this by using a language and imagery that resonates in the imagination of the dominated. It is, in part at least, through this ‘intellectual response to social process...[this]contest of

¹⁷³ Interview with Bishop Jonas Katung, founder and leader of Maranatha Covenant Church International, Hulshe, Jos, 21st January 2012.

¹⁷⁴ Sunday Oguntola, “How a Catholic-Pentecostal split could Help Nigeria’s Militant Islamists,” *The News* (7th March 2013).

¹⁷⁵ Interview with Bishop Katung, 21st January 2012.

¹⁷⁶ This phenomenon is being studied by John Apeabu, “Charismatic Pentecostalism in Shari’a States on North-western Nigeria”, ongoing PhD dissertation, University of Jos.

moral knowledge' that the community constitutes itself politically. Pentecostalism is a force not merely as a result of successful competition within the religious field – providing the spiritual and material benefits others did not. Its radical success in conversion has as much to do with the fact that it reconceptualises the moral order, claiming a redemptive vision of citizenship in which the moral government of the self is linked to the power to influence the conduct of others. To align oneself with the wrong sort of supernatural and material powers, and to regulate one's conduct according to the wrong set of precepts opens up the space in which the 'failure of the nations' is manifest.¹⁷⁷

Richard Burgess reports that Pastor Tunde Bakare of the Latter Rain Assembly in Lagos has carried Pentecostal civic engagement further through his Save Nigeria Group (SNG). Save Nigeria Group has organised political agitations on the streets of Lagos and Abuja protesting government policies that are perceived as anti-people, such as removal of fuel subsidies. His concern over pervasive corruption in Nigeria led him to predict in 2006 the emergence of a super cop in Nigeria that would end corruption. This super cop, Bakare said, would act like a bee “stinging the corrupt to death and releasing honey to those who will do the work because enlightenment has come.”¹⁷⁸ Bakare and Chris Okotie have actively participated in partisan politics. The latter ran for the presidency of Nigeria many times under several political parties he created. In a letter to the leaders of Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria (PFN) indicating his interest to run for president in 2007, Okotie wrote, “I will like to use the occasion to formally inform the National Executive of my intention to contest for the office of the president...We believe that this development will provide the church with the necessary and credible

¹⁷⁷ Ruth Marshall-Frantani, “Mediating the Global and the Local in Nigerian Pentecostalism”, *Between Babel and Pentecost: Transnational Pentecostalism in Africa and Latin America* (London: Hurst & Company, 2001), 100.

¹⁷⁸ Olukunle Olafioye, “Thus Saith the Lord,” *The Week* 24:25 (Jan, 15th 2007), 15.

platform to finally ensure righteousness and equity in the government of our dear nation.”¹⁷⁹

Others bemoan the social and political malaise but resort to intercessions for God’s intervention. The reason, as Kalu puts it:

Is that affairs of the earth can be changed through prayers. Political dissent and action can be pursued on one’s knees, not only by carrying placards; in fact, the ‘worn knee’ approach is considered more effective and salutary because it seeks the will of God on earth and gives the battle to the Lord. Because society’s ills are basically demonic, dealing with them requires spiritual weapons of fasting, prayer retreats...prayer walking, travelling throughout the community, speaking and calling into being the good of the community.¹⁸⁰

Mega churches, such as LFCW, RCCG, DLBC, and MMFC, well known in Africa, especially in the West African sub-region due to their size and large membership are silent over this endemic social and political ills, such as corruption, inept political leadership and social injustice (seen in the wide economic gap between the rich and the poor). They show little evidence of political influence or use of political clout due to their size to speak about these issues apart from offering private prayers for politicians. May be Adefarasin is right when he said as long as politicians have these top Pentecostal leaders in their pockets, they cannot challenge corrupt politicians.¹⁸¹ Pastor Ilori said LFCW does not do political awareness and mobilisation, because the church’s place is to hear and serve God.¹⁸²

So, the attitude of some of these mega churches to politics is out of sync with the new developments in political engagement within the Pentecostal body. The fact is that some of these mega churches lack internal democracy. One of the leaders of these mega churches, Adeboye, said even God is not a democrat and recommended an authoritarian style of leadership in the church. He asserts:

¹⁷⁹ In David Adebayo Oluwashina, “Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria,” 169.

¹⁸⁰ Ogbu Kalu, *African Pentecostalism*, 218.

¹⁸¹ Interview with Adefarasin by Danny McCain, 2nd May 2011, Ikoyi, Lagos.

¹⁸² Interview with Pastor Ilori, Barnawa (Kaduna) 20th April 2012.

When I became the General Overseer of the Redeemed Christian Church of God, we had almost the same problem as we are having with PFN now. Everybody doing what he thinks is right in his own sight. Ask somebody to go on transfer, they will tell you: 'Let me go and pray about it.' Or they may even resign, or take the church away. Then all of a sudden the Holy Spirit moved. He did something that I am praying He will do among the Pentecostals. All of a sudden, we held a meeting, we reached an agreement that from now on, once the General Overseer has spoken, the pastors will see to it that it comes to pass... everybody must take orders from the commander-in-chief. No arguments, no debates. I told you last time you came, I said God is not a democrat... I want PFN to become an invading army. I don't want it to become a social club. I want to see PFN by the grace of God that when the devil hears "p" he will begin to shake. That cannot happen if we go about it democratically. Because when God has spoken and we say this is the way we shall go, someone will say, let us vote. I can tell you, whenever you go to vote, the majority will vote for the devil.¹⁸³

Conclusion

It would appear to an observer that charismatic Pentecostalism in Nigeria is a monolithic group, especially with the emergence of the PFN, but close study indicates diversity in the group's teachings, structure and impact on society. The mega churches, with immense wealth and sophisticated structures seem to look like the Deed Sea - they collect money from members and give them nothing in return except the teaching on faith. These Pentecostal churches form one category. Another group, although small in size and new but growing in influence, are actively involved in social improvement, particularly in Lagos, the most densely populated and socially stratified city in Nigeria. The third group equally small but influential is actively involved in partisan politics in Nigeria. This means there is a shift in charismatic Pentecostal emphasis in Nigeria and it is hoped that this shift to more engagement with society will be the dominant characteristic of Nigerian

¹⁸³ Quoted in Ruth Marshall-Frantani, "'God is not a Democrat': Pentecostalism and Democratisation in Nigeria," *The Christian Churches and the Democratisation of Africa* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1995), 256, 257.

Pentecostalism in the years to come. Today, Charismatic Pentecostalism in Nigeria seems to be the Christian counterpart of Islamic fundamentalism. This may prove to be problematic in a meaningful dialogue between Christians and Muslims.

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