

**HOPE AND THE HOLY SPIRIT:
THE GLOBAL PENTECOSTAL MOVEMENT IN BRAZIL AND NIGERIA,
1910-2010**

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A dissertation submitted to the faculty of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Department of History.

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ABSTRACT

LAURA PREMACK: Hope and the Holy Spirit:
The Global Pentecostal Movement in Brazil and Nigeria, 1910-2010
(Under the co-direction of John Charles Chasteen and Lisa Lindsay)

This dissertation argues that Pentecostal Christianity is a fundamentally global religion. By examining Pentecostalism in Brazil and Nigeria – two of the most Pentecostal countries in the world – it de-centers the United States and shows how Pentecostalism’s development in the U.S. and elsewhere has been contemporaneous. By demonstrating the multiplicity of narratives which comprise Pentecostal history, this dissertation intervenes not only into the field of religious history but also into global studies, arguing that global movements are best understood by investigating the specific, historically-produced networks that constitute them. What is most fruitful in looking at expressions of a global movement is not considering which aspects came from within and which from without, but rather investigating the modes, degrees, and directions of interaction. The first two chapters revise the conventional narratives of Pentecostalism’s beginnings in Brazil and Nigeria, using missionary records, colonial correspondence, and other historical evidence to show how it originally emerged as a complicated mix of imported and homegrown elements. The third chapter examines the middle years of Pentecostalism’s development in both countries, looking at Brazilian conversion narratives and Nigerian maternity centers in order to examine what people hoped Pentecostalism would do for them personally. Chapters Four and Five explore the national

political context of Pentecostalism's development in Nigeria and Brazil over the course of the twentieth century. The final chapter investigates the contemporary intersection of Pentecostal, national, and global identities. Ultimately, by looking at Brazilian Pentecostalism, Nigerian Pentecostalism, and Pentecostalism as a global movement within Brazil and Nigeria, this dissertation offers a model of how one can do global history in a way that both includes and looks beyond the nation-state.

To the best parents ever

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PREFACE

In August of 2004, I emailed Miles Fletcher, the convener of the Global History field at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, to ask him about applying to the doctoral program. I wrote that I wanted to study idealism throughout history. I told him my questions were: What is idealism? Where does it come from? How has it manifest? When he asked, I explained that my interest in the subject came from my religious education in Judaism and my various experiences trying to be an agent for social change by teaching at-risk youth, experiences which had included volunteering at Connecticut's secure lock-up for youth; working as a Teach for America corps member in Phoenix; guiding adjudicated youth through the Utah wilderness in an alternative to incarceration program; and, what was then my current work, teaching sixth grade at a tuition-free Catholic school in the Tenderloin neighborhood of San Francisco.

All of this was difficult work. The successes were few and fleeting. The failures were often heartbreaking. I truly believed in the value of what I was doing, but I was keenly, painfully aware of its futility. I wondered why more people engaged in this kind of work did not just give up. I wondered why more of our students and their parents did not just give up. What kept us going? Where did this hope in the possibility of making a better world and better lives for ourselves come from? How was it taught? Learned? Sustained? These are the questions I brought with me to Chapel Hill, where I arrived chafing at the bit and eagerly

telling everyone who asked, “I am here to study hope in global history.” Just how would I do that? I did not know.

When I arrived, I began a long series of conversations with John Chasteen and others about how to craft a global historical research project centered on hope. At first, I considered writing an intellectual history, but it did not take long for me to realize that I preferred to find a way to study hope as a lived experience. I needed a topic which would serve as a lens with which to examine my questions. Heather Williams helped by encouraging me to cast as wide a net as possible as I fished around for a topic. At one point, my list of possible ideas included millenarianism, revolution, prayer, despair, and even baseball. But I kept coming back to religion.

By the time I landed in Chapel Hill, my life had taken turns that included volunteering at a Quaker school in Costa Rica, teaching at two Catholic schools in San Francisco, designing courses on Islam and Hinduism, practicing meditation at a Buddhist monastery in California, living with a community of Christian Brothers, singing in a gospel choir, and assisting in a Jewish Sunday school classroom. Religion was an accidental thread in my life, one that led me to narrow my questions and begin to focus them on how hope has been connected to religion, faith and social transformation. It was at this point, in the fall of 2005, that I read *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity* by Philip Jenkins. This was the book that introduced me to Pentecostalism. I had found my subject.

It was a subject which was brand new to me. Somehow, despite my wanderings, I had never heard of Pentecostalism. I was familiar with the term “holy rollers” but did not really know what it meant. I had seen speaking in tongues once, in 1997, the one time I attended the

Hartford, Connecticut church where my gospel choir director was pastor; I remember watching a skinny boy in glasses and a dark suit, about 14-years-old, running in wild circles around the congregation. Without any vocabulary to describe what I had witnessed, I was left confused and uncomfortable. I chose to try to forget that Sunday, but it turned out to be something I never quite managed to do.

The past eight years of studying Pentecostalism have brought me back to that memory again and again as I have read, dug in archives, attended churches, and made Pentecostal friends. I will always be grateful to the many people – strangers and friends – who welcomed me into their congregations and homes; who prayed for my success and safety; who shared their Bibles with me; who answered my questions and challenged me with their own; and who cared enough about me to be concerned for the welfare of my soul. When I embarked on this project, because of my personal experiences, I believed that religion is valuable and I knew that religious institutions do good things. At times, as I have learned more and seen more, this attitude has been difficult to maintain, but I have not lost it entirely. Like any religion, Pentecostalism is neither all good nor all bad, and Pentecostal people and institutions do good things and bad things. But, at the end of the day, Pentecostalism gives people hope and keeps them going. For many millions of people, that is a very, very good thing.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|---|-----|
| INTRODUCTION..... | 1 |
| Chapter | |
| I. “THE HOLY ROLLERS ARE INVADING OUR TERRITORY”: SOUTHERN BAPTIST MISSIONARIES AND THE EARLY YEARS OF PENTECOSTALISM IN BRAZIL | 32 |
| Radicals and the Anti-Missionary Spirit | 40 |
| Ministering to the Better Classes | 49 |
| Women and the Missionary Enterprise | 56 |
| The 1930s | 60 |
| Conclusion | 66 |
| II. “MANY CASES OF HEALING WERE PERFORMED THERE”: THE EARLY YEARS OF PENTECOSTALISM IN NIGERIA | 70 |
| “We As Africans Need a Man From You”: The Prophet Babalola, the Faith Tabernacle, and the Apostolic Church | 79 |
| Pa Elton, Franklin Hall, and <i>Great Power Through Prayer and Fasting</i> | 96 |
| III. BECOMING PENTECOSTAL IN BRAZIL AND NIGERIA | 104 |
| Brazil: Conversion Testimonies and the <i>Assembléia de Deus</i> | 106 |
| Nigeria: Women, Healing, and Maternity Centers in the Christ Apostolic Church | 124 |
| Conclusion | 138 |

| | |
|---|-----|
| IV. FROM ALADURA TO CHARISMATIC: NATIONAL POLITICS AND PENTECOSTAL GROWTH IN NIGERIA | 140 |
| Preparation for Self-Governance | 141 |
| First Republic | 145 |
| Oil Boom | 155 |
| Structural Adjustment | 159 |
| E. A. Adeboye and the Redeemed Christian Church of God | 161 |
| Redemocratization | 172 |
| V. FROM PENTECOSTAL TO NEO-PENTECOSTAL: NATIONAL POLITICS AND PENTECOSTAL GROWTH IN BRAZIL.... | 176 |
| From Colony to Republic | 177 |
| The First Republic and the First Wave..... | 179 |
| <i>Getuliato</i> and the Second Wave | 182 |
| Redemocratization and the Third Wave | 185 |
| Dictatorship | 191 |
| Redemocratization and the Fourth Wave | 194 |
| Edir Macedo and the <i>Igreja Universal do Reino de Deus</i> | 199 |
| New Republic | 210 |
| VI. PENTECOSTALISM, NATIONALISM, AND GLOBALIZATION..... | 214 |
| For the Nation: Prayer, Politics, and National Identity | 215 |
| Changing the Nation: A Comparison | 219 |
| Brazil in Nigeria and Nigeria in Brazil: Redeemed and <i>Universal</i> Abroad | 238 |

| | |
|--------------------|-----|
| Conclusion | 259 |
| EPILOGUE | 261 |
| BIBLIOGRAPHY | 267 |

INTRODUCTION

The Gifts of the Holy Spirit

Special Holy Ghost Service, Redemption Camp, Nigeria, March 2010

I am sitting in the front row. Ahead of me looms a video screen the size of a three-story house. Beyond that, football fields of empty space lead up to an enormous stage which is flanked by risers with hundreds of dark-suited men on the left – the pastors – and hundreds of white-suited men and women on the right – the choir. Just to my left, in velvet-upholstered, carved wooden chairs, are two men dressed in folds of white, carpets at their feet. These are the *obas*, the traditional rulers or kings, in literally the very best seats in the house. Behind me: rows and rows and rows and rows of people. It is impossible to see all the way to the back of the arena. It is impossible to see all the way to the left or to the right. We are in a mind-blowingly huge, open-sided, rectangular space, as if dozens of airplane hangars have been set side by side and end to end. I have never been surrounded by so many people in my life.

Hundreds of these people will flood the empty space in front of me during the altar call. They will put their hands on their heads while a small army of pastors encircles them from behind, handing out pencils and forms to fill out with their names, addresses, and prayer requests. The hours will pass as we listen to preaching, as we pray, as we dance, and as we

sing songs with lyrics like “I’m serving the God of miracles I know, yes, I know.” I will doze off at least twice and, while awake, will be shown, glazed and sweating, on the Jumbotron more times than I care to remember. A pastor will pray for Jesus, “the King of Nigeria,” to “come and rule and reign over Nigeria.” People will give testimonies of miracle babies. People will stand for special prayers for those seeking healing from sickness, those seeking fruit of the womb, those struggling with darkness, those seeking husbands and wives, those who are businessmen and businesswomen, and those who are students. I will stand with this last group. Pastor Adeboye will pray over us, “God, turn all these children to geniuses.” Almost everyone in the arena – a couple million of us – will stand when Pastor Adeboye calls on all who seek anointing power to perform signs and wonders for the Almighty to rise to their feet. We have been here all night, and the sun is about to rise.

The billboard on the Lagos-Ibadan Expressway, just outside the gates to Redemption Camp and the arena, promises healing, anointing, testimonies, deliverance, and joy. By dawn, we will have seen all of these things at this Special Holy Ghost Service, a deluxe version of the all-night revivals held here the first Friday of every month since 1998. All kinds of Christians travel from throughout Nigeria to attend; all denominations; all classes. Even people who want nothing to do with other Pentecostal pastors are drawn to Adeboye. I am sitting in the VIP section with my hostess, an Anglican. She is a VIP because she is a chief and is the wife of a famous historian, and I am a VIP because I am with her and because I am white. Tomorrow night I will flee this section and the video camera that keeps seeking me out. I will sit on a wooden bench, at the outskirts of the arena, under the stars.

This March service lasts two nights instead of just one, and draws about two million people rather than the usual one million because it is dedicated to celebrating Pastor Adeboye's birthday. Enoch Adejare Adeboye is the General Overseer of this church, the Redeemed Christian Church of God, and he is head of all its media, business, educational, and missionary operations. Founded in Lagos in 1952 by a former prophet of an Aladura church¹, Redeemed's popularity began to skyrocket when Adeboye took over as leader in 1980. Adeboye, a former university professor with a Ph.D. in math, somehow manages to be a Big Man² who cultivates his Big Man status (arriving at open air prayer meetings in a caravan of SUVs which drive right up to the altar, for example) while also maintaining a credible humbleness. He is at once above ordinary people and below God.³ His church currently has millions of members in Nigeria and abroad. It is present in at least one hundred

¹ Redeemed was founded in the Ikeja neighborhood of Lagos by Josiah Akindayomi, a former prophet of the Cherubim & Seraphim Church, which grew out of the Nigerian Aladura movement of the 1930s. Aladura means "prophet-healing," and the movement will be discussed in some detail in Chapters Two and Three.

² "Big Man" is a term commonly used in Africa and by Africanists to refer to the men (and they are nearly always men) at the top of political-economic-social hierarchies. These are men with great power in their contexts, whether as small as a village or as large as a nation-state. Part of being a Big Man is demonstrating status through displays of wealth. For the history of the term, see John Iliffe, *Africans: The History of a Continent* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995). For a good discussion of Big Men in African politics, see Jean-François Bayart, *The State in Africa: The Politics of the Belly* (London: Longman Press, 1993).

³ Adeboye's followers, which included many who are not members of his church, refer again and again to his humility when asked what makes Adeboye special. As one Redeemed pastor put it, "He is different from the other men of God I have met in my life" because "he has one attribute that very few men of God have, and that is his humility." Lagos State government minister and RCCG pastor Biodun Oluwaluyi in Tai Adeloje, "Pastor E. A. Adeboye in the Eyes of Others," *Redemption Light*, March 1998, 8.

countries on six continents.⁴ It is one of the largest and fastest-growing Pentecostal churches in Africa and the world.⁵

The Redeemed Christian Church of God and Adeboye have counterparts in Brazil: the *Igreja Universal do Reino de Deus* (Universal Church of the Kingdom of God) and its head, Edir Macedo. *Universal* is similar in many ways to Redeemed, especially in its hierarchical organization, its media presence, its focus on miracles, and its aggressive prosperity doctrine.⁶ Founded in 1977 in Rio de Janeiro by Macedo, a former civil servant, *Universal*, like Redeemed, has millions of members, an expansive international missionary network, and is one of the largest and most powerful Pentecostal churches on its continent and in the world.

Igreja Universal do Reino de Deus, Salvador da Bahia, Brazil, July 2007

The first time I went to a Brazilian Pentecostal church was on a Tuesday evening in Salvador da Bahia. I went with Railda, my host mother, a short woman in her 60s with a hennaed bob and dark lipstick. We took a bus to Iguatemi, the large shopping mall half an hour outside the city. We crossed over the highway on a pedestrian bridge crowded with people, most of them

⁴ The figures I am providing here are intentionally vague. Given the movement's incredible dynamism and the fact that many Pentecostals are located in countries where it is challenging to conduct accurate censuses, Pentecostals are difficult to label and count. Even deciding who should be considered a member can be a challenge, and churches' own grandiose claims about their size and scope can not be trusted (this will be addressed in Chapter Six). Accurate religious data for Nigeria is especially difficult to come by because religion is a highly sensitive issue in the country, which is evenly divided between Christians and Muslims. The threat of religious violence is always looming and the Nigerian Census has not collected religious data since 1963.

⁵ For more on Redeemed's history and growth, see Asonzeh Ukah, *A New Paradigm of Pentecostal Power: A Study of the Redeemed Christian Church of God in Nigeria*, (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2008).

⁶ Prosperity doctrine is the teaching that the more money you "sow" by giving to the church, the more money you will eventually "reap."

heading, like us, to the church on the other side. My memories of that bridge at sundown have blended with many of my other memories of Brazilian city evenings: tables set out with melting chocolate bars; glass cases full of popcorn and peanuts or hotdogs and fixings; boys with wooden boxes of chewing gum hanging from their necks, reminding me of 1920s cigarette girls; a sense of busy calm, everyone going somewhere, no one in any real hurry. It was twilight, the air humid and hazy, and in my memory the light is grainy, as in a low-light photo shot with high speed film. Most of the people walking with us were women wearing stretchy fabrics and bright colors. Even the bras announcing themselves from under open-backed tops were yellow, hot pink, green. I remember thinking, “These people do not look like they are going to church.”

The cathedral itself was a large, white, stuccoed building with pillars and porticos, looking like it might just as well be a Disney hotel as a house of worship. Huge red letters stood on the roof, each self-supporting like the letters in the Hollywood sign, spelling out *Jesús Cristo É O Senhor*: Jesus Christ is the Lord. You could see the letters from the highway and later, as I rode by on the bus, I could see them even more clearly, lit gold and glowing at night. It was not until I got close to the entrance that I could see the name of the church in smaller letters, set below a glass panel with a white dove inside a red heart: *Igreja Universal do Reino de Deus* (Universal Church of the Kingdom of God).

We entered, walking through an air-conditioned, shiny-tiled lobby into a room that was huge without being grand. The room featured tiers of flip-down seats on two levels – as in a stadium or concert hall – a concrete floor, and plain walls. It was entirely unlike the elaborate Catholic cathedrals I had been touring in the city center, with their detailed

carvings, ascending arches, and extravagances of gold leaf. For me, there was no sense of ceremony entering this space, no pause by the door for genuflection or prayer, no catching of breath or steadying exhale, no feeling of having abandoned the banality and materiality of the secular for the sudden expansiveness of the spiritual. The secular was still very much with us.

Railda led me to one of the rows near the front. I think she wanted to be close to the altar. I also think she was also proud to have me – this light-skinned foreigner – there with her and wanted people to see us together. As we settled into our seats, a woman approached us. She was dressed in a white button-down shirt and a navy blue skirt, like the uniform of a dowdy flight attendant. Her outfit was unusually conservative for Brazil. She had a bottle of oil with her. Railda reached out her hand for some and dabbed it on both of our foreheads. When I asked Railda what the oil was for, she said it was to protect us from our enemies. When I told her I did not think I had any enemies, she said I did; she told me that my enemies were the many people who were jealous of me because I was tall and had long, straight hair.

After this anointing, we had to wait quite a while for things to start. There was a man dressed all in white up on the stage. He was speaking animatedly into a video camera mounted on a small platform in the middle of the aisle directly across from his podium, and we could not hear a word he said. They must have been filming something for *Universal's* television network. I looked around, bored, curious, ill-at-ease, and not quite sure how else to feel. The mass of people from the pedestrian bridge had sorted themselves out into the six thousand seats. About half of the seats were taken. Many people were sitting by themselves; indeed, most people seemed to have come alone. With all the open space, and all the vacant seats, the great room seemed more empty than full.

Once the man in white had left the podium and the video camera was cleared out of the way, the event finally started with singing. I have heard so much of this kind of music since then – praise worship, it is called – that it all blends together, but I think there was a keyboard and a drum kit as well, amplified through a muddy sound system. It was lugubrious, predictable music with the lyrics inevitably sung about a half-beat behind the accompaniment. Some people waved their arms and swayed, but there was no real dancing. What you might imagine in this city known for being the heart of Afro-Brazilian culture? African rhythms and drumming and hip-shaking abandonment? None of that; none at all. You will find far more exuberance in an African-American gospel church than in *Universal*, even here in Salvador da Bahia.

The singing went on for a very long time, as I came to learn it always does at the beginning of these services. Then, what happened over the next hour or so blurs in my memory. There were opportunities to go to the front and purchase *Universal*'s newspaper, its magazine, and a book by its founder, Edir Macedo. There were more calls to go to the front to put money in a big glass box. When it comes to giving money at *Universal*, there is no discrete passing of the basket. Money is given up front, where everyone can see you giving it. The small army of flight-attendant looking women and men passed around only three things that day: the anointing oil; tiny clay crosses packaged with instructions to slip them under the mattresses of loved ones, pray Psalm 121 daily, and bring the crosses back next Tuesday; and a form to set up a regular donation directly from your paycheck to the church's bank account. The form, which I still have, quotes Proverbs 3:9-10: "Honor the Lord with your belongings, and with the first fruits of all of your labor; then your barns will be filled

with abundance, and your vats will overflow with wine.”⁷ Interspersed between these calls, there may have been some more singing and some preaching which my still-developing Portuguese did not permit me to fully understand, and then, suddenly, my memory becomes very clear.

This was when the exorcisms started. The pastor started calling forth evil spirits, telling them to make themselves known, and commanding them to leave. Over and over again, he said it: “*Sai, sai, sai em nome de Jesús.*” Louder and louder and louder: “Leave, leave, leave in Jesus’ name!” We were supposed to close our eyes and join him in directing the spirits, the demons, Satan himself to appear and to leave, but I kept my eyes open wide and looked around silently. I had never witnessed anything like this. All of these people, eyes closed, arms raised, hands continually flung forth and released with each chanted “*sai,*” as if throwing a soccer ball in from out of bounds or flicking water off of their fingertips. Quietly at first, then steadily, repeatedly, more and more loudly: leave, **leave**, **LEAVE!**

The flight attendant army, which I later learned was made up of church “workers” (the entry-level position into the church’s carefully-structured hierarchy), began moving into the crowd as people began to swoon, flail, and convulse. About a dozen of the most affected people were brought – shrieking and hissing and thrashing – up onto the stage-altar, each accompanied by at least one worker. I recall one woman who became so violent that it took four workers to restrain her. The demons within were appearing as commanded, and the pastor began to turn his attention directly to them. I was not the only one watching

⁷ My translation of the Portuguese differs slightly from the English found in the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV) of the Bible; I tried to give the words the same valence they have in Portuguese. Here is the original from Universal’s form: “*Honra ao Senhor com os teus bens, e com as primícias de toda a tua renda; assim se encherão de fartura os teus celeiros, e trasbordarão de mosto os teus lagares.*”

now as he walked among the possessed with his microphone, speaking in a low voice to some, screaming at others, staying relentlessly on his single message: “I command you to leave in the name of Jesus!”

Over the course of the next thirty minutes or so, things slid to a gradual denouement as all of the people before us quieted, drooped, and became still. Only one woman remained possessed, and the pastor began to interview the spirit that possessed her, asking it why it was there and why it refused to leave. This spirit responded in angry hisses and deep groans. Later, Railda explained to me what had been said; it was a complicated story about an engagement, a cheating fiancé, the woman who had “stolen” him, a curse, and many inexplicable illnesses. The interview ended with the possessed woman returning to her senses, bewildered and spent, and showing no signs of remembering what had just occurred.⁸

I think I may have been even more bewildered than that woman. Even though I had entered the church prepared to accept whatever happened and committed to witnessing without judging, what I saw confused me on a very basic level. I was a nonbeliever in the middle of thousands of believers. I was as disconcerted by what I had just seen as I was by the response of the people around me. They all seemed to have watched what had happened unquestioningly, as if to see people possessed by demons were perfectly normal and entirely unremarkable. Of course there are evil spirits. Of course they inhabit people’s bodies. Of course even the most stubborn among them will be driven out by the power of Jesus’ name. What I saw that July evening, like so many of the things I saw and heard during my time

⁸ For an example of Edir Macedo performing this kind of interview, a trope of Universal’s deliverance practices, see the video posted on YouTube as “Bispo Macedo expulsando Demônios:” <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T36-7jcGIxs>.

spent among Brazilian and Nigerian Pentecostals, did not – *could* not – square with my foundational understandings of how the world works.

Pentecostalism cannot square with many people’s beliefs about what is true and untrue, possible and impossible, reasonable and ridiculous. Friends and acquaintances sometimes ask me, “How can you study those crazy people who believe in speaking in tongues, spirit possession, exorcism, all those wild and absurd things?” I tell them about those evenings in Salvador da Bahia and in Redemption Camp, when I looked around at the thousands of people who all appeared to believe in something so utterly incomprehensible to me, and thought, “Well, how can I be so sure that I am right and they are wrong? Especially when they believe in it so strongly, so firmly, so unquestioningly?” The existence of spirits is not in doubt for them. Evil spirits exist, the Devil exists, and the Holy Spirit – most powerful of all – exists. It is through the power of Jesus, through his blood and his gifts and his holy ghost, that all victories are won. Demons are expelled, invalids walk, cancer is cured, barren women have babies, lonely people find spouses, students succeed, businesses prosper, and all kinds of miracles happen. Pentecostalism’s compelling ability to call on the power of Jesus is fundamental to its success. The gifts of the Holy Spirit are at the very heart of the global Pentecostal movement.

Investigating the Global Pentecostal Movement in Nigeria and Brazil

Pentecostalism is a form of modern Christianity based on the belief in and experience of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Its name comes from the celebration of the Pentecost described in the Bible. After his resurrection, according to the Book of Acts, Jesus told his apostles to remain

in Jerusalem, promising them that there they would soon be “baptized with the Holy Spirit.”⁹

On the day of Pentecost – the spring harvest festival held fifty days after Passover – this promise was fulfilled. All of Jesus’ followers were celebrating together in one place when:

Suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability.¹⁰

This was as the prophet Joel had predicted: “In the last days it will be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams.”¹¹ The day of Pentecost is the day that the Holy Spirit began to heal and save. The global Pentecostal movement is thus phenomenologically united by the shared set of charismatic practices – healing, prophesying, seeing visions, speaking in tongues – which are centered on the Bible and based on what began on that day of Pentecost.

Pentecostalism is one of the fastest growing religions in the world. Studies which calculate religious growth by conversion (rather than by birth) identify Pentecostal Christianity as *the* fastest growing religion.¹² While its population is difficult to count,

⁹ Acts 1:4-5 (NRSV).

¹⁰ Acts 2:1-4 (NRSV).

¹¹ Acts 2:17 (NRSV).

¹² Philip Jenkins, *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 2-6.

current estimates place the world's total number of Pentecostals at close to 600 million.¹³

One quarter of all Christians worldwide belong to one of the major Pentecostal strands, and only Catholicism has more followers.¹⁴ The vast majority of these Pentecostals are

concentrated in the global South: Latin America, Africa, and Asia. In many of these places, Pentecostals have come to play significant roles in national political and cultural debates.

While still a minority in most places, they have formed political coalitions and parties; voted Pentecostal candidates into local, state, and national offices; built substantial media presences in print, radio, television, and online; and have even become stock characters in television and movie productions. Pentecostals are a force to be reckoned with throughout the global South.

¹³ See the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life's 2011 report, "Global Christianity: A Report on the Size and Distribution of the World's Christian Population," available online at <http://www.pewforum.org/Christian/Global-Christianity-movements-and-denominations.aspx>. This figure relies on an expansive definition of Pentecostalism which includes members of both "classical" Pentecostal and neo-Pentecostal/charismatic groups.

¹⁴ The Pew Research Forum on Religion and Public Life, *Spirit and Power: A 10-Country Survey of Pentecostals* (Washington D.C.: Pew Research Center, 2006), 1.

The widespread assumption is that Pentecostalism started in the United States and was taken to the rest of the world by American missionaries.¹⁵ This conventional narrative starts at the Bethel Bible College in Topeka, Kansas where, in 1901, a woman received Spirit baptism and spoke in tongues, purportedly for the first time since apostolic days. The leader of the bible school, Charles Fox Parham, a white man, began traveling and teaching. In Houston, Texas, he permitted some black students to sit outside the open windows of his classroom. It was here, in 1905, that the preacher William J. Seymour spoke in tongues for the first time. Seymour then took this experience and made it the basis of a multi-racial mission he founded in California in 1906. The opening of Seymour's mission on Azusa Street in Los Angeles is generally held to be the starting point of the modern Pentecostal movement. There are typically two historical questions posed. Where did Azusa Street (as the seminal Pentecostal mission is referred to) come from and where did it go? Responses to the first question trace Pentecostalism's roots back to the Wesleyan-Holiness movement (and its Puritan and Pietist predecessors), the Eastern Orthodox Church, and African-American slave

¹⁵ To cite just a couple prominent examples, see Harvey Cox, *Fire From Heaven: The Rise of Pentecostal Spirituality and the Reshaping of Religion in the Twenty-First Century* (Cambridge, MA: Da Capo Press, 1995); David Martin, *Pentecostalism: The World Their Parish* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2002); and Donald Miller and Tetsunao Yamamori, *Global Pentecostalism: The New Face of Christian Social Engagement* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2007). Others have also challenged this view, such as Ogbu Kalu, who has categorically stated that Nigerian Pentecostalism "is not an offshoot of Azusa Street revival." However, Kalu goes too far in the other direction with his claim (shared by others) that Nigerian Pentecostalism is best understood "from its fit in African primal worldview," with problems and idioms "sourced from the interior of African spirituality." While there is certainly a great deal of truth to Kalu's interpretation, my intervention is to show that this is not a case of either/or, but that the best approach to understanding the global Pentecostal movement in its many expressions is one which begins from a premise of yes/and. Ogbu Kalu, *Power, Poverty and Prayer: The Challenges of Poverty and Pluralism in African Christianity, 1960-1996* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2000) as cited in Matthews Ojo, "American Pentecostalism and the Growth of Pentecostal-Charismatic Movements in Nigeria" in R. Drew Smith, ed. *Freedom's Distant Shores: American Protestants and Post-Colonial Alliances With Africa* (Waco, Texas: Baylor University Press, 2006), 155-56.

religion.¹⁶ Responses to the second question trace how its branches grew, through missionary endeavors, out to the rest of the world.

This project challenges the narrative of global Pentecostalism as the tree that grew from Azusa Street by exploring other questions and interpretive possibilities. What local conditions have made Pentecostalism become significant? Where did it emerge? Why did it stick? Others have pointed to such explanations as urbanization, poverty, community, gender, and politics, and there is truth to be found in all of these explanations. What has been overlooked is the appeal of direct communication with the Holy Spirit.

This communication with the Holy Spirit can be understood as the practice of continuous revelation, a concept which historian John Thornton introduced in 1992 in his pioneering *Africa and Africans in the Making of the Atlantic World, 1400-1800*.¹⁷ Thornton originally used the concept to explain the emergence of African Christianity in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Africans' and Europeans' mutual acceptance of the underlying principle that "there was another world that could not be seen and that revelations were the essential source by which people could know of this other world" is what permitted the

¹⁶ The most thorough discussion of Pentecostalism's multiple roots is found in Walter Hollenweger, *Pentecostalism: Origins and Development Worldwide* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1997). See in particular the chart on page 2. For an excellent discussion of its Wesleyan/Holiness (Methodist) roots, see Donald W. Dayton, *Theological Roots of Pentecostalism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Francis and Taylor, 1987). For more on Pentecostalism's African roots, see William C. Turner Jr., *The United Holy Church of America: A Study in Black Holiness-Pentecostalism* (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2006); Ithiel C. Clemmons, *Bishop C. H. Mason and the Roots of the Church of God in Christ* (Latham, MD: Pneuma Life Publishing, 1996); Iain MacRobert, "The Black Roots of Pentecostalism," in *African-American Religion: Interpretive Essays in History and Culture*, Timothy Fulop and Albert Raboteau, eds. (New York: Routledge, 1997); and Leonard Lovett's seminal study, "Black Holiness-Pentecostalism: Implications for Ethics and Social Transformation," Ph.D. diss., Emory University, Candler School of Theology, 1978.

¹⁷ John Thornton, *Africa and Africans in the Making of the Atlantic World (Second Edition)* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998). Thornton recently elaborated on the concept in *Cultural History of the Atlantic World, 1250-1820* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

accommodation of some African cosmology into a European religious system.¹⁸ This “other world” – the spirit world, which was “normally imperceptible except to a few gifted individuals and inhabited by a variety of beings and entities,” including the souls of the dead – communicated with certain, select people through possession, dreams, signs, visions, voices, etc. Revelation is thus, as Thornton defines it, “a piece of information about the other world, its nature, or its intention that is perceptible to people in this world through one or another channel.”¹⁹ Continuous revelation is the ongoing delivery and receipt of these pieces of information.

Pentecostalism relies on the same underlying principle: there is another world, and its inhabitants (be they demons, angels, of the Trinity itself, as either the Father, Jesus, or the Holy Spirit) communicate with inhabitants of the material world. The only difference is that, instead of being available to only a select group of priests, diviners, and prophets, Pentecostal revelation is open to anyone. The possibility of receiving a revelation from God, and the power and possibilities that come along with that experience, is one of the chief appeals of Pentecostalism for many of its adherents around the globe. Two of the few scholars to have emphasized the spiritual explanation for Pentecostalism’s success are Africanist historian David Maxwell and Latin Americanist sociologist David Martin, both of whom acknowledge that “what particularly animates the movement is ‘the free and democratic availability of

¹⁸ Thornton, *Africa and Africans*, 236.

¹⁹ Thornton, *Africa and Africans*, 238.

gifts of the Spirit.”²⁰ This dissertation offers a geographically and temporally wide-ranging addition to the project of looking, as Maxwell does in his study of the Zimbabwe Assemblies of God of Africa, at the “pneumatic *practices*” which are “central to Pentecostals’ self-definition.” The intent is to avoid the “great danger” of a reductive, instrumentalist approach which focuses exclusively on “Pentecostalism’s relation to economics and politics.”²¹ The free and democratic availability of the charismata – that is, this open access to continuous revelation – is the defining feature of the global Pentecostal movement.

This dissertation thus makes two simultaneous interventions, one into Pentecostal studies and the other into globalization literature. One purpose of this dissertation is to show that Pentecostalism, instead of being a movement that was seeded from California and “globalized” through missionary church-planting efforts, is rather a *fundamentally global religion*. Pentecostalism is an inherently rhizomic movement with multiple origins, expressions, and purposes. A rhizome is a type of plant with a creeping rootstalk which, rather than sending shoots up and roots down, wends its way underground in many directions and pushes up through the earth in many places at once. A rhizomic movement is thus one without a clear chronology or precise origin which, as described by Giles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, is formed and re-formed by “ceaselessly established connections” and “spreads like the surface of a body of water, spreading towards available spaces” with no precise beginning

²⁰ David Maxwell, *African Gifts of the Spirit: Pentecostalism and the Rise of a Zimbabwean Transnational Religious Movement* (Oxford: James Currey, 2006), 15, quoting David Martin, *Forbidden Revolutions: Pentecostalism in Latin America and Catholicism in Eastern Europe* (London: SPCK, 1996), 10-11. Martin’s best-known work on Latin American Pentecostalism is *Tongues of Fire: The Explosion of Pentecostalism in Latin America* (Oxford: Blackwell), 1996.

²¹ Maxwell, 15.

and no precise end.²² This dissertation applies this way of thinking to global Pentecostalism in order to de-center the United States, complicate the conventional narratives of Pentecostal growth, focus on Pentecostalism's expression in the two most Pentecostal countries in the global South, and examine how people have organized around their Pentecostal beliefs. By doing so, this dissertation shows that Pentecostalism is neither recently nor incidentally, but rather *essentially*, global.²³

The other purpose of this dissertation is to show how the story of this global movement can be told as the story of how specific people in specific contexts, nations, and cultures have incorporated, institutionalized, and expressed beliefs about spiritual power and the charismata.²⁴ This project takes on two of these sites: Brazil and Nigeria. The giants of

²² Deleuze and Guattari popularized the philosophic use of this botanical term in *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (London: Athlone Press, 1988). Paul Gilroy introduced the concept to the Africana Studies discourse in his seminal work, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993).

²³ I am not charting an entirely new course by doing this, but rather adding to an emerging body of scholarship. For example, my goals align with those of David Maxwell, who has written that “while globalization theory grows ever more nuanced, there is still a widespread belief that globalization involves cultural homogenization and the obliteration of the locality.” David Maxwell, *African Gifts of the Spirit: Pentecostalism and the Rise of a Zimbabwean Transnational Religious Movement* (Oxford: James Currey, 2006), 14. Birgit Meyer has also complicated the relationship between the global and the local, showing how “these seeming oppositions . . . are actually entangled.” Birgit Meyer, “Christianity in Africa: From African Independent to Pentecostal-Charismatic Churches,” *Annual Review of Anthropology* 33 (2004): 459. A third example is found in the work of Joel Robbins, who has written of a “paradoxical globalization” which “works both ways at once,” allowing for both “Westernizing homogenization” and “indigenizing differentiation.” Joel Robbins, “The Globalization of Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity,” *Annual Review of Anthropology* 33 (2004): 118.

²⁴ The charismata are the gifts of the Holy Spirit as mentioned above: glossolalia, prophecy, etc.

South America and Africa, they have two of the world's largest populations of Pentecostals.²⁵ They are the most populous countries on their respective continents and both are also key players in the world economy. Nigeria, one of the world's largest oil producers, is still reeling from structural adjustment programs of the 1980s and is not the force it once was, but Brazil is currently one of the world's most powerful emerging economies. Brazil and Nigeria are also historically and culturally connected by the transatlantic slave trade.

This link was the original logic for designing a study which would examine Brazil and Nigeria together. Brazil was the largest destination for slaves in the Americas throughout the course of the slave trade. Almost five million enslaved Africans arrived in Brazil over four centuries, with about one million of those coming from what is now Nigeria, and a significant number returning to Nigeria to visit or live after gaining their freedom. As a result, Brazil and Nigeria have the two largest populations of African descent in the world and Africans have had a significant influence on the development of Brazilian culture and society. (This influence has run in the other direction as well, with Afro-Brazilians influencing Nigerian culture and society, particularly in the construction of the Yoruba ethnic identity.) It is possible that a shared, spirit-centered cosmology may be a large part of why Pentecostalism has proven so popular in both places. Perhaps it is because of their shared African religious background (a background which influences Brazilians of all skin tones,

²⁵ Again, it is difficult to give figures with any precision, given difficulties with both counting and labeling. According to the Pew Research Center, which has aggregated material from several sources, Brazil has the world's second-largest Christian population at 175 million and Nigeria, in sixth place with 80 million, has the most of any country in Africa. Given the way denominational and phenomenological lines blur in both of these countries, it is safe to say that most of these Christians fall somewhere on the Pentecostal spectrum. See the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life's 2011 report, "Global Christianity: A Report on the Size and Distribution of the World's Christian Population," with population data available online at <http://features.pewforum.org/global-christianity/population-number.php?sort=totalChristianPopulation>.

from deep black to pale white to every shade in between), that Brazilians and Nigerians have been remarkably receptive to the opportunity to receive the charismata which Pentecostalism offers.

The main reason for examining Pentecostalism in Brazil and Nigeria side by side is that they are the countries with the largest expressions of Pentecostalism outside the United States and are home to the biggest Pentecostal churches in the world. This reason ultimately provided the logic for the investigation as it evolved during the research and writing processes.²⁶ The chapters that follow focus on four of these institutions in particular, each country's largest Pentecostal and largest neo-Pentecostal churches.²⁷ Looking at these sets of institutions – their leaders, members, and rhetoric – is one way to look at Pentecostalism's development over time. Using the historical methodology of archival research to investigate these churches over the full course of Pentecostalism's existence helps balance and nuance what we have learned from the anthropologists, sociologists and political scientists who have

²⁶ As noted in footnote 13, I use “Pentecostal” very expansively, including older and new forms of Pentecostalism in the same rubric. I also use “neo-Pentecostal” and “charismatic” interchangeably. I recognize that this would not make sense in a Latin Americanist context, in which “charismatic” refers to the recent phenomenon of Spirit-centered Catholicism. It does, however, make sense in a global context, in that what is called “charismatic” in Africa is the same as what is called “neo-Pentecostal” in Latin America.

²⁷ The four churches studied are the *Assembléia de Deus* (Assembly of God, a Brazilian church not to be confused with the Missouri-based Assemblies of God, as will be discussed in Chapter One); the *Igreja Universal do Reino de Deus* (Universal Church of the Kingdom of God); the Christ Apostolic Church; and the Redeemed Christian Church of God.

investigated more recent manifestations of the movement.²⁸ And putting these two countries in a single frame illuminates not only Brazilian Pentecostalism and Nigerian Pentecostalism, but it also illuminates Pentecostalism as a *global* movement *within* Brazil and Nigeria.

At this point, it will be useful to provide brief histories of the religious context into which Pentecostalism emerged in each country. We begin with Brazil, which was from its start an officially Catholic colony, formally granted to the Portuguese crown by the Pope in the 1494 Treaty of Tordesillas. Even after becoming an independent monarchy in 1822 and then an intermittently democratic republic in 1889, the Brazilian state maintained an informal relationship with the Church well into the twentieth century. The Portuguese had brought to Brazil a largely folk Catholicism with a magical worldview that further developed outside the papal hierarchy in the plantation-centered Brazilian context.²⁹ While many Brazilians were

²⁸ There is a large and growing body of scholarship on global Pentecostalism. While historians are arriving a bit late to the table, other scholars have been investigating Latin American and African Pentecostalism since the 1960s, offering compelling reasons why people have turned to the religion, mostly related to structural social change: urban to rural migration, industrialization, increasing economic disparity, etc. Arguments have been made for the way Pentecostalism can provide opportunities for improving economic stability, democratic participation, health, community, and self-worth. A few prominent examples of this work include David Stoll, *Is Latin America Turning Protestant?: The Politics of Evangelical Growth* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990); David Lehmann, *Struggle for the Spirit: Religious Transformation and Popular Culture in Brazil* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1996); John Burdick, *Blessed Anastácia: Women, Race, and Popular Christianity in Brazil* (New York: Routledge, 1998); André Cortén and Ruth Marshall-Fratani, eds., *Between Bible and Pentecost: Transnational Pentecostalism in Africa and Latin America* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001); Paul Freston, *Evangelicals and Politics in Asia, Africa and Latin America* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004); Paul Gifford, *African Christianity: Its Public Role* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998); David Maxwell, *African Gifts of the Spirit: Pentecostalism and the Rise of a Zimbabwean Transnational Religious Movement* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2006); Ruth Marshall, *Political Spiritualities: The Pentecostal Revolution in Nigeria* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009); and Ogbu Kalu, *African Pentecostalism: An Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008). For an outstanding literature review which discusses many more examples, see Joel Robbins, "The Globalization of Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 33 (2004): 114-43.

²⁹ One of the best descriptions of this early Brazilian Catholicism is found in Laura de Mello e Souza, *The Devil and the Land of the Holy Cross: Witchcraft, Slavery and Popular Religion in Colonial Brazil* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2003).

devoutly Catholic, many more were just nominally so, entering churches only for their baptisms, marriages, and funerals. Brazil's longstanding shortage of priests further compounded this nominalism, which continued to be the experience of most Brazilians of their official religion all the way through the present day.

Over the centuries of cultural exchange between the Portuguese and Africans, a particularly syncretic form of Catholicism developed, especially in the Northeast, where the majority of the population was (and is) of African descent. The most-commonly cited example of this is the way enslaved Africans and Afro-Brazilians linked Catholic saints with African ancestral spirits and deities, namely West African orixás.³⁰ Doing so allowed them to maintain New World versions of their own religious practices in the guise of (or alongside) their new Catholic ones. This especially Brazilian Catholicism, characterized by expressive, spirit-centered worship, has proved formative in shaping not only Brazilian religion but also Brazilianess generally.

As anthropologist Patricia Birman and sociologist David Lehmann have expressed it, Brazilian Catholicism has always had “an open and non-exclusive approach to the adherence asked of its followers,” which allows for a looking-the-other-way at practices which contradict the Church's official expectations. Individuals can build their own religious toolboxes from a variety of sources; Catholicism's cultural and political predominance in Brazil has always allowed room for other ways of believing. As one Brazilian Jesuit has poetically described it, all Brazilians “live in a mythic universe.” It “comes from our African and Indian roots” and is “much more fluid and all-encompassing than Catholicism,”

³⁰ Orixá is the Portuguese spelling and is commonly used by Brazilianists even when writing in English. Orisha is the anglicized spelling and is most often seen in Africanist literature, along with orisa. This dissertation will use both orixá and orisha, depending on context.

providing “a parallel atmosphere we float in” where “everything is always in flux” and “transformations are always possible.” This cosmology offered strong soil in which Pentecostal beliefs could take root.³¹

Brazil offered culturally fertile ground, but it was not as easy when it came to the politics of church-planting. When Protestant missionaries first ventured into Brazil in the mid-nineteenth century, they arrived to a mixed reception, depending on who held sway in the municipalities where they tried to deliver Bibles and preach. Some faced violent resistance by priests and their allies – Bibles were burned and preachers were jailed – while others received warm welcomes from liberal elites eager to emulate the American democratic model and embrace its Protestant emissaries. It was not until Brazil became a republic in 1889 that missionaries had the protection of the law, and even then, a gap between book law and street law remained for several decades more. Mainline Protestantism grew very slowly (especially compared to Pentecostalism, as we will see in Chapter One), with total mainline church membership – which included *all* Brazilian Baptists, Presbyterians, Methodists, Congregationalists, Episcopalians, and Adventists – having reached only 33,530 by 1900 and 121,879 by 1930.³² Catholicism remained dominant.

Even as the numbers of Protestants and Pentecostals have grown significantly in more recent decades, coming to include over fifteen percent of all Brazilians by the beginning of

³¹ Father Valdelí Carvalho da Costa in conversation with journalist/essayist Alma Guillermoprieto, as quoted in Guillermoprieto, “Rio, 1991,” *The Heart That Bleeds: Latin America Now* (New York: Vintage Books, 1994), 173.

³² Francisco Cartaxo Rolim, *Pentecostais no Brasil: Uma Interpretação Sócio-Religiosa* (Petrópolis: Editora Vozes, 1985), 104.

the twenty-first century,³³ they all still tend to be grouped together as *crentes* (believers) or *evangélicos* (evangelicals), with little awareness of denominational differences even amongst many of the *evangélicos* themselves. Distinctions between Protestants and Pentecostals are rarely drawn. Today, an exchange like this one is not uncommon: “My sister goes to a Pentecostal church.” Which one? “The Methodist.” It is not unusual to encounter nominal Catholics who attend Pentecostal prayer meetings, Spiritist seances, or Candomblé ceremonies.

Candomblé is one of the two most significant Afro-Brazilian religions, the other one being Umbanda. Both are sometimes jointly (and dismissively) referred to as Macumba. Candomblé is the religion which was practiced by many enslaved Africans and Afro-Brazilians, based on West African spiritual practices and centered on communication with a pantheon of deities through song, sacrifice, drumming, and dancing. After decades of persecution, Candomblé is now embraced as emblematic of the Black Movement which developed in Brazil in the 1960s and resurged in the 1980s and 90s. Umbanda is something like a nationalist, more middle-class version of Candomblé which incorporates not only Afro-Brazilian deities but also indigenous Brazilian *caboclos* (Indian spirits) and *preto velhos* (wise, old slaves).

Both religions are practiced by Brazilians of all colors and social classes, and enjoy a greater cultural visibility than their relatively small number of practitioners would suggest; according to the 2010 census, there were just 407,332 *umbandistas* and 167,363 *candomblecistas* in all of Brazil (though, to be fair, the actual numbers are likely a bit higher,

³³ See Paul Freston, ed., *Evangelical Christianity and Democracy in Latin America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 163.

as many people choose to identify themselves to census takers as Catholic or Spiritist).³⁴ Since the 1930s and 40s, when restrictions on them were lifted, these religions, often called “possession cults,” practiced by Brazilians of all racial, ethnic and national backgrounds, have become defining markers of Brazilian national identity. The Catholic Church’s position toward these and other religious groups has continued to soften since the 1960s, when Vatican II required a more conciliatory stance toward the growing presence of Protestant and Pentecostal groups. This stance was difficult for many members of the Church hierarchy but embraced by others, particularly the few but influential socially progressive priests who embraced liberation theology in the 1970s and more recently have spearheaded the growing Catholic Charismatic Revival movement.

As Brazil was created by Portuguese imperialism in the sixteenth century, so Nigeria was created by British imperialism in the nineteenth century. The region came under British influence in the late 1880s and officially became a united British colony in 1914. The British divided it into three regions – the Northern Province, the Southern Province, and Lagos Colony – and administered it under a system of indirect rule. Administrative steps towards self-governance began in the 1950s and Nigeria became fully independent in 1960. The North was (and is) predominantly Muslim, and its leaders rarely permitted Christian missionaries to enter. Therefore, it remains mainly outside the historical narratives presented

³⁴ IBGE, Banco de Dados Agregados: Censo Demográfico e Contagem da População, www.sidra.ibge.gov.br.

by this dissertation. The focus here is mainly on the South, which was (and is) predominantly Christian.³⁵

For most of the eighteenth century and into the nineteenth century, economics and politics in the South revolved around the transatlantic slave trade, subsistence farming, regional trade, and artisanal production. During colonialism, the economic focus shifted to the export of palm oil and cocoa, as well as the maintenance of the physical and administrative aspects of the colonial infrastructure. After independence, economics and politics continued to center on the maintenance of this gatekeeper state³⁶ while also becoming complicated by the discovery of oil in the Niger Delta in the late 1950s. Meanwhile, subsistence farming continued to decline and petty trading continued to increase as people moved away from their villages and urban populations grew at exponential rates.³⁷

Throughout these years, Nigerian society retained a clientelist structure focused around families, villages, and ethnic groups, which in the South are predominantly Yoruba and Igbo. This clientelism played out in interesting ways in the religious sphere. While Big

³⁵ The South is not entirely Christian; it also includes Muslims, who historically have lived there relatively peacefully, side-by-side with Christians, often in the same families. Islam arrived in Southern Nigeria around the same time that Christianity did, in the mid-nineteenth century, though this varied from region to region. In Ibadan and Ijebu Ode, for example, Islam arrived about a generation earlier than Christianity. See J.D.Y. Peel, *Ijeshas and Nigerians: The Incorporation of a Yoruba Kingdom, 1890s-1970s* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 170-71.

³⁶ “Gatekeeper state” is a term coined by Frederick Cooper to describe the political economy of colonial administrations in Africa and of the subsequent independent African countries. The “gate” is “the interface between a territory and the rest of the world” where resources are collected and distributed: customs revenue, foreign aid, business permits, entry and exit visas, and permission to move currency in and out. The gatekeepers establish and maintain power through their control of the gate and the imports and exports which pass through it. In colonial times it was British (or other European) administrators who held these positions; with independence, the positions passed to Africans (although, of course, foreigners maintained indirect influence) and patron-client relationships developed around them. See Frederick Cooper, *Africa Since 1940: The Past of the Present* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

³⁷ This rapid urbanization had begun in the 1930s.

Men – the village leaders (often kings) who occupied the peak of pyramidal social socio-political structures – were notoriously reluctant to become Christians for many years,³⁸ by the twentieth century this began to change. In the period under consideration here, when a Big Man welcomed a Christian missionary into his village and converted to Christianity, most of the people who relied on his political and financial largesse would convert as well. And while the successful missionary invariably identified the leader’s reason for converting as his having been saved and taken Jesus into his heart, it just as well could be that his conversion was materially motivated. The Big Man’s actions quite likely fit into a long history of extraversion³⁹ as he seized an opportunity to bring a school, health clinic, or road into his community, simultaneously improving life for his people and increasing his own status and power.

These Christian missionaries first arrived in Nigeria in the 1840s under the auspices of the Church of England’s Church Missionary Society (CMS), working mainly in Abeokuta, then Lagos, Ibadan, and nearby smaller towns. Other Protestant missionaries from England,

³⁸ See J. D. Y. Peel, *Religious Encounter and the Making of the Yoruba* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2003). Also see James Coleman, *Nigeria: Background to Nationalism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1958).

³⁹ “Extraversion” is a political-economic model developed by Jean-François Bayart which argues that the internal structure of African societies stems – and has stemmed for centuries – from their relationship with the larger world economy. By pursuing trade relations with Europeans across the Atlantic and Sahara, African elites attempted, generally successfully (if temporarily), to gain and maintain power, drawing on outside resources to attract and maintain clients (people) for their patronage networks. The model was an intervention against blithe application of the Latin American theory of underdevelopment to Africa, intended to show how African societies had not been the passive objects of a process of dependency but rather had been agents who pursued their own strategies for centuries, even through colonization. See Jean-François Bayart, *The State in Africa: The Politics of the Belly* (London: Longman Press, 1993). On Yoruba extraversion, see J. D. Y. Peel, *Ijeshas and Nigerians: The Incorporation of a Yoruba Kingdom, 1890s-1970s* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

Canada, and the United States established presences throughout the South⁴⁰ soon after; the churches they represented included Methodist, Baptist, and Catholic, among others. Most of them, either initially or eventually, worked in cooperation with the British colonial government. As we will see in Chapter Two, not all missionaries to Nigeria came from mainline churches. By the early twentieth century, fringe groups had established a presence as well, often through the literature they sent as well as occasionally in person.⁴¹ Missionaries tended to congregate in certain cities and towns, taking trips through the bush as able (much like colonial administrators did), and Christianity rarely displaced traditional beliefs entirely.⁴²

The Christian churches existed alongside traditional religious practices which included the worship of ancestors, spirits and deities and visits to herbalists, diviners, and native priests. In the part of the country with the most intensive missionary activity – the Southwest, which today is also the site of the greatest number of Pentecostal churches and missions – the predominant traditional religion was that of the Yoruba. Both the Yoruba ethnic group and the notion of “traditional” religion are in some ways social constructions, produced mainly in the second half of the 19th century in response to colonial conditions and

⁴⁰ I am using “South” here to include both Western (predominantly Yoruba) and Eastern (predominantly Igbo) regions.

⁴¹ Many of these missionaries were unsuccessful, succumbing to tropical diseases and dying soon after arriving in West Africa.

⁴² There is an enormous body of literature on religious plurality in Africa. For a start, see Jacob Olupona and Sulayman Nyang, eds. *Religious Plurality in Africa: Essays in Honour of John. S. Mbiti* (Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 1993) and Jacob Olupona ed. *African Spirituality: Forms, Meanings and Expressions* (New York: Crossroad Publishing, 2000).

as a product of the transatlantic slave trade.⁴³ Yet “traditional Yoruba religion” is a useful concept, having come to describe beliefs in the efficacy of sacrifices and prayers to orishas and in the active role of otherworldly spirits in the day-to-day lives of individuals. In practice, many Nigerian Christians (and Muslims) maintain these beliefs and continue to observe these practices alongside their Christian (and Muslim) ones, sometimes openly, often secretly. It is an instrumentalist approach to religion similar to that found in Brazil: a whatever-works open-mindedness to a variety of spiritual possibilities to health, happiness, and prosperity, regardless of any contradictions in the approaches. Pursuing one avenue does not foreclose the simultaneous pursuit of another, though the traditional path may be kept secret in order to keep up appearances. For example, today, it is not uncommon to hear said of someone in the southwestern city of Ibadan, “He attends church in Bodija, but his back troubles him so badly that he secretly goes to see a native doctor in Dugbe.”

This dissertation brings together material gathered over the course of two years of research in Brazil, Nigeria, England, Wales, and the United States in order to juxtapose and compare Brazil and Nigeria as a means of exploring the global Pentecostal movement. This material includes documents produced by Pentecostals as well as by groups that have been influenced by Pentecostal growth, such as Catholics, Baptists, and governments, to see what can be learned about Pentecostalism by studying reactions to it. The intent has been to look at the words and actions of founders and leaders alongside the beliefs and practices and testimonies

⁴³ See J.D.Y. Peel, “The Making of the Yoruba,” *Religious Encounter and the Making of the Yoruba* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2003), 278-309 and J. Lorand Matory, “The English Professors of Brazil: On the Diasporic Roots of the Yoruba Nation,” *Black Atlantic Religion: Tradition, Transnationalism, and Matriarchy in the Afro-Brazilian Candomblé* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 38-72.

of church members. The types of documents collected include church magazines, instructional material, missionary correspondence, ecclesiastical journals, literary magazines, novels, poems, tabloids, newspapers, court records, speeches, sermons, government documents, prophecies, testimonies, and evangelical pamphlets and advertisements.

These sources and their contexts are uneven, and this unevenness is both the chief problem and the real delight of undertaking comparative work. Doing global history requires a flexible schematic which is as challenging as it is exciting. Rather than pretend to compare apples to apples, this dissertation engages the inherent asymmetry. As the individual chapters reveal, it asks the same questions of each place where the same questions work, and it asks different questions where different questions are appropriate. Still, the overarching questions remain the same: How did Pentecostalism get to Brazil and Nigeria? What was its appeal, and how has that appeal evolved over time? How does Pentecostal identity interface with national and global identities? By examining the interplay between personal hopes, national circumstances, and transnational beliefs, and by looking *at* the nation-state and *beyond* the nation-state at the same time, this global historical approach allows the global and the local to illuminate and inform each other.

The dissertation tackles this project over the course of six chapters. Chapter One revises the conventional narratives of Pentecostalism's beginnings in Brazil, using Southern Baptist sources to explore reasons for the extraordinary early growth of the movement. Chapter Two does the same for Nigeria, taking an expansive view of Nigerian Pentecostal history which investigates cultural and institutional links between mainline Protestant churches, Aladura churches, Nigerian prophets, foreign evangelists, and the colonial

government. These two chapters show how the global Pentecostal movement has been constructed from a slippery, messy, complicated mix of imported and homegrown elements. Chapter Three then looks at the middle years of Pentecostalism's development in both countries, examining Brazilian conversion narratives and Nigerian maternity centers in order to examine what people hoped Pentecostalism would do for them personally. Chapters Four and Five pull the lens back to explore the national political context of Pentecostalism's development in Nigeria and Brazil over the course of the twentieth century. Finally, Chapter Six investigates the contemporary intersection of Pentecostal, national, and global identities, considering what people hope Pentecostalism will do for their nations. Viewed as a whole, the six chapters together demonstrate some of the ways in which Pentecostalism has been different things to different people in different places. Rather than an American missionary export that has been carried to the rest of the world on a tidal wave of neocolonial globalization, Pentecostalism is a complex knot of multiple origins, practices, and purposes.

This is essential to understand because the more clearly we see what Pentecostalism is, and the more insight we gain into why it is growing so quickly, the more sense we can make of one of the most important forces shaping today's global landscape. Global Pentecostalism is a movement with serious economic, political, and social motivations and ramifications. It is also a movement with a strong spiritual basis. Believing in the prophecies, dreams, visions, and healings that the Holy Spirit provides is what being Pentecostal is about. Indeed, not just believing in but *actively hoping for* these things is at the core of Pentecostal life, and continuous revelation is the process through which Pentecostalism works. The content of what is being revealed, as we shall see, has to do with such concerns as health,

prosperity, healing, love, success, and prestige. In other words, the content of the revelations is what people hope for, and the purpose of the revelations is to instruct how these hopes can be realized. Thus the rhizomic development of the global Pentecostal movement and the continuous revelation which forms its spiritual and phenomenological core are essentially linked: Pentecostalism's historical development and cultural appeal are both based on having direct access to the gifts of the Holy Spirit. These gifts promise and provide transformation, agency and hope. And hope in the Holy Spirit is as powerful a tonic as there is, energizing people, giving strength, and changing lives.

CHAPTER ONE

“The Holy Rollers Are Invading Our Territory”: Southern Baptist Missionaries and the Early Years of Pentecostalism in Brazil¹

The Holy Rollers are invading our territory recently – Billy said the other day that he had about come to the conclusion that it was not Catholicism we had to win folks from down here but from the Pentecostals, Spiritualists, Seventh Day Adventists, and such ilk. Their preferred method of approach in Ricardo is to affirm that the Baptists are fine folks but lack just one thing, they need to be sealed by the Holy Spirit so they can cure and be cured, speak in tongues, etc. An ignorant believer can easily be led astray.²

—Edith Allen, Southern Baptist Missionary, Rio de Janeiro, 1932

One hot day in November of 1910, two men dressed in heavy wool suits stepped off a freighter in Belém, Pará, chief port of the lower Amazon River and rubber capital of Brazil, to fulfill a divine prophecy. The equatorial weather was hot and humid, hovering somewhere around eighty degrees, not altogether unlike the Chicago summers the men had become accustomed to, though quite unlike the chilly weather of their native Sweden. Perhaps the two men took off their jackets, loosened their ties, and rolled up their shirtsleeves as they made their way through the bustling city. Or, perhaps, for propriety's sake, they kept jackets on, ties tight, and sleeves down as they walked slowly through the steamy streets, stopping to rest in the shade of the mango trees which lined their way. There is a good chance they were

¹ A nearly-identical version of this chapter was published as an article with the same title in the *Journal of Religious History* 35, no.1 (2011), 1-23.

² Edith Allen to T.B. Ray, 27 May 1932, Allen Papers, International Mission Board Missionary Correspondence (IMBMC), Southern Baptist Convention (SBC), Richmond, Virginia.

rained on, and there is a good chance that this rain did nothing to cool them off. It is likely that rivulets of sweat dribbled down their backs as they made their way to the city's single Baptist church, somehow finding directions despite their nearly non-existent Portuguese.³

These men were Gunnar Vingren and Daniel Berg. Both were Swedish Baptists in their mid-twenties who had immigrated to the United States as teenagers. Vingren was thin and fair with a dark mustache which curled up dramatically into sharp points at each end. A Baptist pastor, he had quit school at age eleven to work as a gardener in Sweden and then as a laborer in the United States before enrolling at the Swedish Baptist seminary in Chicago. Berg, by contrast, was dark-haired and strong, with a broad physique well-suited to his work as an iron worker. Not only were both men Baptists, but also they were a part of the Pentecostal movement which was sweeping eastward across the country at the time, an as-yet uninstitutionalized movement which sought to integrate the practice of Spirit baptism into evangelical worship.⁴ Having begun with the founding of the Azusa Street Mission in Los Angeles in 1906 (with Charles Fox Parham's 1905 Bible school in Houston, Texas and 1901

³ Climatic information from Conselho Nacional de Geografia, Divisão de Geografia, *Atlas do Brasil* (Rio de Janeiro: Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística, 1959), 10. Please note that in this paper I will often refer to "Southern Baptists" as simply "Baptists" for the sake of brevity.

⁴ It should be understood that, in the early twentieth century, Pentecostalism was not seen as an *alternative* to traditional worship but rather as an *addition* to it; it was only when mainline churches rejected the doctrine of Spirit baptism that Pentecostalism began to evolve from a movement to a collection of institutions. Spirit baptism, the essential Pentecostal belief and practice, is believed to occur when God, in the form of the Holy Spirit, descends from heaven and is incorporated by men and women who manifest the Spirit's presence in their bodies with ecstatic expressions which include shaking, rolling, running, dancing, seizing, and, especially, speaking in tongues. It traces its origins all the way back to the day of Pentecost, the moment fifty days after Jesus' resurrection when, according to the Book of Acts, Jesus' spirit descended into the bodies of his apostles. See Harvey Cox, *Fire From Heaven: The Rise of Pentecostal Spirituality and the Reshaping of Religion in the Twenty-First Century* (Cambridge, MA: Da Capo Press, 1995).

Bible school in Topeka, Kansas as Azusa's direct antecedents),⁵ the movement quickly spread eastward, which was where Vingren learned of and first experienced Spirit baptism in 1910. Berg, for his part, had become Pentecostal during a visit to Sweden in 1908.⁶

A few months before their arrival in Brazil, at a prayer meeting held in South Bend, Indiana, God had spoken through their friend Adolfo Uldin⁷ and told the two men to “depart to preach the Gospel and the blessings of the Pentecostal awakening” in Pará, supposedly a place no one present for the prophecy had ever heard of. In fact, according to the official story, determining the location of the mysterious Pará required a trip to see the atlas at the

⁵ Parham's Topeka Bible school is generally accepted as the site of the first instance of glossolalia, or speaking in tongues, in the United States. Parham, who was white, taught his tongues doctrine in Houston, where William J. Seymour, founder of the Azusa Street Mission, who was black, listened to him outside the Bible school's open windows. See Grant Wacker, *Heaven Below: Early Pentecostals and American Culture* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001).

⁶ It was during a visit with his childhood friend, Lewi Pethrus, the eventual leader of the Swedish Pentecostal movement, that Berg was influenced to adopt Pentecostal beliefs. Paul Freston, “Protestantes e política no Brasil: da constituinte ao impeachment,” (PhD diss., Univesidade Estadual de Campinas, 1993), 70. This location of Berg's conversion is important as scholars typically assume that Pentecostalism is a US import. Even scholars who are aware that Vingren and Berg were Swedish immigrants tend to assume, as Cecília Loreto Mariz does, for example, in *Coping with Poverty: Pentecostals and Christian Base Communities in Brazil* (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 1994), 25, that Vingren and Berg were both “Baptists who discovered the Pentecostal renewal in the United States.”

⁷ Adolfo Uldin is the name given by Wilson Harle Endruveit in his dissertation, “Pentecostalism in Brazil: A Historical and Theological Study of its Characteristics,” (PhD diss., Northwestern University, 1975), 11, citing Ivar Vingren, *Gunnar Vingren, O Diario do Pioneiro* (Rio de Janeiro, Brazil: Casa Publicadora das Assembléias do Deus, 1960), 20-1. H. Joseph Carr, Jr., however, gives the name “Olaf Uldin” in his thesis, “A Missiological Comparison of the Pentecostals, Baptists, and Churches of Christ in Brazil,” (MA thesis, Harding Graduate School of Religion, 1979), 10.

local public library.⁸ Several months of scrounging up enough money to book passage to Brazil followed.

Upon their arrival in Pará, so the official story goes, Vingren and Berg befriended Baptist missionary Erik A. Nelson, who generously let them stay in the dark basement of the Belém Baptist Church. Vingren dedicated himself to learning Portuguese while Berg supported them both with wages from his job at a local foundry. About six months after their arrival, with Nelson conveniently several hundred miles away,⁹ Vingren began leading prayer and healing services at the Baptist church where he preached the doctrine of baptism by the Holy Spirit. Some of the Brazilian Baptists embraced his Pentecostal message. Others adamantly rejected it.¹⁰ Forced out by a minority of the church's members, the two men and their seventeen followers founded the Apostolic Faith Mission. Seven years later, in 1918, the Mission changed its name and became the first church of the *Assembléia de Deus no Brasil* (Assembly of God in Brazil, referred hereafter as simply the *Assembléia*), which is now,

⁸ Emilio Conde, *História das Assembléias de Deus no Brasil* (Rio de Janeiro, Brazil: Casa Publicadora das Assembléias de Deus (CPAD), 1960), 14. Conde's history, published by the publishing house of the Assemblies of God (Brazil), serves as the official history of the church. While Conde does not discuss his sources anywhere in the book, it is safe to assume that he relied very heavily on the journals of Gunnar Vingren and Daniel Berg: Daniel Berg, *Enviado por Deus, Memórias de Daniel Berg* (São Paulo, Brazil: Grafica Sao Jose, 1959); and Ivar Vingren, *Gunnar Vingren, o Diário do Pioneiro* (Rio de Janeiro, Brazil: CPAD, 1973). Based on my research, I believe it was more likely that Ulldin had heard about Pará from the Baptist missionary Erik A. Nelson, a native Swede who had been the Southern Baptist missionary to the Amazon Valley territory (which included the state of Pará) since 1893. (Freston came to this same conclusion, and he ought to be credited for having arrived there first.)

⁹ According to Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) records, Nelson had only recently returned to Brazil from an extended furlough in the United States and, after a brief stay in Pará, left to see to his other territories. R.J. Willingham, "Sixty-Sixth Annual Report of the Foreign Mission Board Southern Baptist Convention," Minutes from IMB Meeting, 17 May 1911, IMB Archives and Records Services, Accession No. 2686 (hereafter cited as IMB Archives, 2686, etc.) Also Nelson to R.J. Willingham, 20 January 1911, 5 July 1912, 15 July 1912, 21 August 1912, and 27 May 1913, Nelson Papers, IMBMC.

¹⁰ According to Freston, this had happened at Vingren's Chicago church as well, and was the event that led him to leave Chicago for South Bend. Freston, "Protestantes e política," 70.

despite the splits and schisms it has experienced over the years, the largest Pentecostal organization in one of the most populous Pentecostal nations in the world.¹¹

This account of events has rarely been questioned: two Swedish men arrive in Pará by way of the United States and, as if by magic, found the fastest growing religious movement in Brazil.¹² For the most part, it is all we know of early Pentecostal history. Scholars generally rely heavily and uncritically on the church's own accounts of their beginnings, if they pay any attention to them at all.¹³ Most focus on the 1960s and beyond, far more concerned with explaining Pentecostalism's appeal and implications than with investigating its history. This is because the salient concern of most of the scholars who have studied Brazilian (and Latin American) Pentecostalism in any depth is identifying and explaining the present-day situation, not determining its historical development. The forty-odd years

¹¹ According to the 2000 Brazilian census, there are over 17.5 million Pentecostals in Brazil and almost 8.5 million of them belong to the Assembléia. See Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística, "Censo Demográfico 2000, Tabela 1.3.1," http://www.ibge.gov.br/home/estatistica/populacao/censo2000/populacao/religiao_Censo2000.pdf (accessed 16 August 2010).

¹² It should be noted that Vingren and Berg were not the first two Pentecostals to arrive in Brazil. They had been preceded by Luigi Francescon, an Italian who had also come to Brazil by way of the United States. However, because Francescon focused his efforts on the Italian emigrant community rather than on Brazilians, because the church he founded in a Presbyterian community in São Paulo — the Congregação Cristã (CC) — is smaller and less influential than the Assembléia and because the CC has even fewer published sources than the Assembléia, Vingren and Berg presented better subjects than Francescon for this study. For a brief account of Francescon's work in Brazil, see Paul Freston, "Pentecostalism in Brazil: A Brief History," *Religion* 25, no. 2 (1995): 124–5. Also see Francescon's memoir, *Histórico de Obra de Deus, Revelada pelo Espírito Santo, no Século Atual*, 4th ed. (São Paulo: Congregação Cristã no Brasil, 1977).

¹³ These *Assembléia* sources consist mainly of a handful of missionary memoirs and church-sanctioned histories (see footnote 7 for citations). They are notoriously difficult to work with due both to their triumphalist bias and their scarcity. As sociologist Paul Freston has explained, Pentecostalism has little use for history, which it regards as largely irrelevant. Because Pentecostalism is understood by Pentecostals as having been created by the Holy Spirit, they see only two important historical moments — *the original Pentecost* (as related in the New Testament) and *its recovery* by those who founded the Pentecostal movement a century ago. (See Paul Freston, "Contours of Latin American Pentecostalism," in *Christianity Reborn: The Global Expansion of Evangelicalism in the Twentieth Century*, edited by Donald M. Lewis (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2004), 223–4; originally stated in his dissertation, Freston, "Protestantes e política," 64.

between establishment of Pentecostal churches in the 1910s and their emergence as powerful political entities in the 1950s and 1960s are elided, in most studies, to focus on the second half of the twentieth century.

There are some exceptions to this general rule, of course. Most notable are the historically oriented work of sociologist Paul Freston and the scholarship of those, like R. Andrew Chesnut and Andre Corten, who rely on his work.¹⁴ Other influential scholars, however, have made troubling assertions about the origins of Brazilian Pentecostalism. One example is David Stoll, to whom we owe a great debt for his role in helping bring the significance of the rise of Latin American Pentecostalism to scholarly attention, but who has erroneously claimed that “the giant of the [Brazilian] pentecostal denominations was the Assemblies of God, based in Springfield, Missouri.”¹⁵ This common assumption that the Brazilian *Assembléia* began as a mission church of the US Assemblies of God is a problem; the truth is that the Missouri-based church had nothing to do with the establishment of the *Assembléia*. While Assemblies of God missionaries were active in Latin America, Brazil was not one of their mission fields.¹⁶ In order to fully comprehend the Pentecostal phenomenon, we need to investigate the unique history of its early years. We cannot continue to assume that Pentecostalism grew in the same manner as the mainline Protestant churches did.

¹⁴ R. Andrew Chesnut in *Born Again in Brazil: The Pentecostal Boom and the Pathogens of Poverty* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1997) and André Corten in *Pentecostalism in Brazil: Emotion of the Poor and Theological Romanticism* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1999). Both rely largely on the AD sources and Freston’s important work (see footnotes 5, 7, 11 and 12 for citations).

¹⁵ David Stoll, *Is Latin America Turning Protestant? The Politics of Evangelical Growth* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1990), 107.

¹⁶ See the Assemblies of God newspaper, known at the time as *The Christian Evangel*, as well as Freston’s work. For example, in “Pentecostalism in Brazil,” he states that American missionaries from the Assemblies of God did not arrive in Brazil until 1934.

Consider these widely accepted numbers: in 1900 there were no Pentecostals in Brazil; in 1930 there were 44,311; and by 1970 there were 1,418,933. To put this into perspective, consider that in 1900 there were 4,582 Baptists, 19,108 Presbyterians, and 5,596 Methodists; in 1930 there were 41,090 Baptists, 46,032 Presbyterians, and 15,480 Methodists; and by 1970 there were 295,295 Baptists, 244,030 Presbyterians, and 58,591 Methodists.¹⁷ Why did the number of Pentecostals grow so quickly? How did Vingren and Berg – few in number, poorly funded, and without institutional support – manage to gain so many converts so quickly when it had taken Baptists and other Protestant groups so much money and so many years to gain comparably so few? Why were they more successful in converting Brazilians than the Baptists and other evangelical groups who had not only more resources but also far more experience with mission work? Were they more appealing? More strategic? Just luckier?

Because of the scarcity of Pentecostal sources for this time period, it is necessary to look to other contemporary sources for answers to questions about causes of early Pentecostal growth. One underutilized methodological approach is to make use of the extensive records of the Protestant churches that were involved in mission work in Brazil in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries – a group which includes Southern Baptists, Presbyterians, Methodists, and Lutherans. All kept extensive records which include the personal and professional correspondence of missionaries and mission board members,

¹⁷ Francisco Cartaxo Rolim, *Pentecostais no Brasil: Uma Interpretação Sócio-Religiosa* (Petrópolis, Brazil: Vozes, 1985), 104. Rolim based his figures on three sources: Erasmo Braga and K. Grubb, *The Republic of Brazil* (London: W.D.P., 1932); W. Read, *New Patterns of Church Growth in Brazil* (Grand Rapids, MI: E.P.C. Press, 1955 [sic 1965]); and “Estatística do Culto Protestante do Brasil” (no publication information given).

minutes of various committees and conventions, newsletters and short magazines published for various audiences, photographs, missionary health records, and other materials.

Of these sources, Southern Baptist records provide the most useful material for clarifying how Pentecostalism gained enough traction in Brazil to be poised to take off when it did, and why Pentecostalism – and not other forms of Protestantism – exploded in the 1950s and 1960s. Because Baptist theology, with its emphasis on direct experience, is most similar to Pentecostal theology, and because most of the early Brazilian Pentecostal churches were formed by *crentes* (Protestant believers) who left their Baptist congregations, the Baptist missionaries were most threatened by the Pentecostal presence in Brazil and therefore made note of Pentecostal activities in their journals, reports, and correspondence.¹⁸ Using Baptist sources to investigate Pentecostal history is not easy, however. Along with the fact that such sources contain their own biases, there is the challenge of staying on track. Heading north to go south, so to speak, it can be difficult to keep the ultimate destination in mind. But it is worth going out of our way in order to contrast the experiences and methods of Vingren and Berg with those of the Baptist missionaries who were so much more established in Brazil and yet found so much less success there.

In order to achieve a complete understanding of Pentecostal development, it is necessary to consider the strategies, activities, and attitudes that they did not embrace and which would have limited their achievements if they had done so. While still a young movement, by 1935 Pentecostalism already had twenty-five years of history in Brazil and

¹⁸ As David Martin has argued, “Baptists had a more demotic and participatory style and they were ready and/or able to reach some of the poor and the coloured. The growing success of Baptists relative to Presbyterians presaged the future success of Pentecostals. The Pentecostals were in most respects like the Baptists, only more so.” See David Martin, *Tongues of Fire: The Explosion of Protestantism in Latin America* (Oxford, UK: Basil Blackwell, 1990), 63.

that history explains much about its growth. Taking a comparative approach which relies on primary sources found in the missionary archives of the Southern Baptist Convention, this paper carefully examines what Vingren, Berg, and their followers did to create their extraordinary success. Unlike Catholic priests and mainline Protestant missionaries, Vingren and Berg shared their power easily and eagerly; they *needed* Brazilians to take the Pentecostal message and to spread it themselves: preaching, converting, founding churches, and leading.

In this chapter, I argue for the necessity of distinguishing Pentecostals from mainline Protestants and for the value of reconsidering the prevailing periodization of Brazilian Pentecostal history. I propose that Vingren and Berg succeeded in establishing a dynamic Pentecostal movement in Brazil because they emphasized the charismata and gave Brazilians an agency which other forms of Christianity denied them. My research tells the story of how Baptist missionaries sought to spread their faith while also maintaining their control over it, something which Vingren and Berg – operating independently, without institutional support – were neither inclined nor able to do. While the Baptist missionaries became heavily invested in educating the Brazilian upper class, the early Pentecostals were free to focus on doing just one thing and doing it well: convincing people to accept the Pentecostal doctrine of baptism by the Holy Spirit.

Radicals and the Anti-Missionary Spirit

To begin with, it is essential to understand that, in these early years of Protestantism in Brazil, conversion was essentially a numbers game. The more churches you could found, the

more people you could convert; the more converts you had, the stronger your movement became. The efforts that mainline Protestant missionary organizations made to grow were stymied by the critical role the missionaries themselves played in the process. The main difference between the Pentecostals and the Baptists was that, once Vingren and Berg managed to convert the first seventeen believers in Pará, Pentecostals no longer needed missionaries in order to establish and grow new congregations of believers.

As the church which Vingren and Berg had founded in Pará continued to spread throughout Brazil, Pentecostals continued to employ the same *modus operandi* that the Swedes had in Pará (an undertaking easily accomplished with the Baptists stretched so thin and so many of their churches lacking permanent pastors); they brought the doctrine of Spirit baptism into existing churches. For example, M.G. White reported from Bahia in 1917 of the trouble caused by “various sects at work in the field . . . ‘Holy Rollers’, ‘Darbyists’, ‘Independent Baptists’, and so on; *all working among the believers, instead of seeking the unsaved.*”¹⁹ If it weren’t for the strategic need to send positive, self-congratulatory reports to the Board so that much-needed funds would be provided to them rather than sent to one of the other mission fields, candid reports such as this one would probably have occurred with far greater frequency.

The Pentecostals were the wolves who pounced when the shepherds were not looking, and the Baptists simply did not have enough shepherds to protect their flock. Pentecostals poached from the Baptists throughout their first decades in Brazil. Some lambs were forced out when they accepted the Pentecostal doctrine of Spirit baptism; some opted to

¹⁹ W.C. Taylor, “Annual Report” of the North Brazil Mission, presented at Foreign Mission Board (FMB) meeting 16 May 1917, IMB, 2693 (italics mine).
20.

leave because they were offered more autonomy by the Pentecostal shepherds; some might have joined up with the Baptists had they been given an opportunity but had simply met the Pentecostals first. In 1918, Z.C. Taylor reported from Recife that the single Baptist church there “is the only church in a vast region where the people are clamoring for the gospel, and where the Spiritualists and Holy Rollers are invading the country and offering the people stones for bread.” He went on, “It makes one heart-sick to see the opportunity we are losing for want of workers in that great field.”²⁰ But with only one missionary for every one million Brazilians,²¹ there simply were not enough Baptist shepherds.

Why were the “sheep” so willing to be stolen? A main reason for Brazilians’ enthusiastic response to Pentecostalism was that it empowered them. Power in the Catholic Church was held by (mostly foreign) priests; power in the mainline Protestant churches was held by foreign missionaries and Brazilian elites; power in the Pentecostal churches, however, could be held by anyone – and after 1930, *had* to be held by Brazilians.²² This was in part a matter of theology and in part a matter of necessity. In the case of the *Assembléia*, Vingren and Berg knew they would not be able to advance their cause without Brazilian leadership and support. With limited funds and reinforcements available from abroad, they needed the Brazilians and could achieve very little without them. So while the Baptist

²⁰ W.C. Taylor, “Report of the North Mexico Mission,” presented at FMB meeting on 15 May 1918, IMB, 2694.

²¹ See Solomon Ginsburg’s memoir, *A Missionary Adventure: An Autobiography of Solomon L. Ginsburg* (Nashville, TN: Southern Baptist Convention, 1921), 207.

²² In response to escalating tensions between missionaries and Brazilians, a general meeting was held in 1930 where the decision was made that all churches would be taken over by Brazilian pastors. The decision was made on scriptural grounds; as Vingren put it himself, “We all believe that each congregation should be free and independent as were all the congregations mentioned in the Scriptures, and we therefore reject all kinds of organization and establishment of denominations except the foundation of local churches.” Vingren, 157–8 as quoted in Endruweit, “Pentecostalism in Brazil,” 34.

missionaries doubted Brazilian leadership ability and continued to do so well into the 1940s, if not longer, typically doing a remarkably poor job of hiding their doubts, the Pentecostals could little afford to do so. The Brazilians were thus their equal partners from the very beginning.²³

Just as it happened in Pará, *crentes* who accepted Pentecostal doctrine were expelled from their churches and founded their own. Brazilians were thus in charge of things at once, the foreigners too few in number and too dependent on Brazilian partnership for the kind of foreign/native tensions which became so problematic among the Baptists to ever be a significant concern for the Pentecostals. Unlike the Baptist missionaries, who depended on the Board to pay their salaries, assign their territories, and approve and fund their projects, the Pentecostal missionaries had no choice but to work independently because they were spreading a new religious message which was still becoming institutionalized. This enabled them – and also *compelled* them – to be far more effective than their mainline Protestant predecessors and contemporaries.

One of the things which most facilitated Pentecostal efforts was that, unlike the Baptists, they did not have substantial requirements for Brazilians who wished to become pastors of their own churches. The Baptists – despite founding missionary Solomon Ginsburg’s 1900 warning to the Board: “Brethren, if Brazil is ever to be converted, it will only be through Brazilians [so] let us therefore prepare our men, so that in the near future they may be able to take our places” – made sure that such a future was a long time coming,

²³ See Conde, *História das Assembléias*, 29–59, for descriptions of Brazilian pastors.

largely because of the way the American Baptists went about preparing their successors.²⁴ Biblical literacy was considered essential for Baptist pastors (as it was and is for other mainline Protestant pastors), and when the Baptists first arrived in Brazil in the 1880s biblical literacy for anyone other than priests was unheard of (and even for priests was unreliable).²⁵ Therefore, any Brazilian who wanted to become a leader in a mainline Protestant church – either as a pastor (an option available only to men) or as a missionary (a possibility for both women and men) – had much to learn.²⁶ The Baptists thus decided early on that they ought to follow the Presbyterians’ example and focus on opening schools for the upper classes.

Founding schools in Brazil became, as missionary Z.C. Taylor put it in a 1900 letter, “the necessary outcome of missions.”²⁷ Before a Brazilian could lead a Baptist church, he needed formal study of the Bible. The Baptists looked to the Presbyterians, who had been in Brazil since 1855, for models. According to Ginsburg, who toured their school(s) in Pernambuco, the Presbyterians had found great success by investing in theological training:

They have a good church in this city, and several others in different parts of this State. I attribute their excellent success to the wisdom of their first missionaries, who, as soon as they had the opportunity, prepared some young

²⁴ Solomon Ginsburg, “Annual Report of the Pernambuco Baptist Mission for 1900,” presented at FMB meeting on 11 May 1990, IMB Archives, 2666.

²⁵ At this time, there were no versions of the Bible in the vernacular and the Latin versions were available only to priests.

²⁶ Baptist training requirements were less than those of other churches, but were still significant for people starting from nothing. Pentecostals, however, required far less. Because Pentecostals believed that power and knowledge come directly from God via baptism by the Holy Spirit, they did not invest in theological training beyond basic biblical literacy. The ability to read and interpret the Bible, while useful, was not absolutely necessary.

²⁷ Z.C. Taylor to unknown correspondent (first four pages of letter are missing from archive), ca. Summer 1900, IMBMC: Taylor.

men for the ministry, and these are spreading their cause with a zeal worthy of esteem and appreciation.²⁸

A focus on education continued to be the primary Baptist strategy over the years, mandated by the Board and supported (if not always enthusiastically embraced) by missionaries in the field.

Over thirty years after Taylor and Ginsburg first urged them to do so, the Board continued to believe, as Executive Secretary Charles E. Maddry wrote to missionary Edith Allen in 1934, “that the hope for our work in all lands is through the young people . . . [and] we ought to concentrate on institutions, agencies and individuals that train our young people for future leadership.”²⁹ Allen, for her part, despite feeling confined by her teaching duties in Rio and wishing she could “go to some town where there is no work and build up a work from the ground” and experience that “soul satisfaction [found] in the constant fresh contacts in talking to others about the gospel who have not heard it that nothing in a school routine can substitute,” also believed in the importance of the Mission’s educational efforts. “I feel more and more as the years pass,” she wrote to Maddry, “that some of us have got to give our time and strength to these institutions that must prepare the leaders for the work out on the fields, and in that conviction am glad I can serve here in Rio college.”³⁰ A month later she repeated those sentiments (perhaps trying to convince herself she believed them), writing that experience “convinces me more and more that the most lasting results come from training the children into young people capable of serving the church, and preparing a few of the choice

²⁸ Ginsburg, “Annual Report of the Pernambuco Baptist Mission for 1900.”

²⁹ O.E. Maddry to Edith Allen, 14 December 1934, IMBMC: Allen.

³⁰ Edith Allen to O.E. Maddry, 23 September 1934, IMBMC: Allen.

ones for leadership” and “right there comes in the vital need of our college and its contribution to the denominational development.”³¹

Forty years after Ginsburg first urged them to prepare Brazilians to assume full leadership, the general consensus among the Baptist missionaries, according to Allen, was that Brazilians were still not yet ready to take over, for “moral character and stability aren’t developed in one generation.”³² Other letters offer evidence which bolsters her assertion that this opinion was widely held. Describing Daniel de Sarmo, who was made secretary of the Brazilian Baptist Convention in 1931, Allen wrote that “his principal peril will be in speaking too frankly to the Brasilians about their faults. *He sees them as we do*, and has been exceedingly plainspoken, which isn’t always the best thing.”³³ And, a few years later, when some of her comments on Brazilian (in)competence were excerpted from a letter she had written to Maddy – for example, “that there is considerable character building to be done yet, before we will have a Brazilian constituency in condition to take over full responsibility of the work” – and published in the *Baptist Courier* without her permission, she chided her correspondent that “the Brazilians know that *most of us feel that way*, and it does not help any to see it in cold black and white.”³⁴

It certainly did not help to see it spelled out so clearly, as it only served to fuel the resentment the Brazilians already harbored towards the foreigners. After all, the Baptist missionaries were certainly aware of the *crentes*’ eagerness to spread the evangelical

³¹ Edith Allen to O.E. Maddy, 19 November 1934.

³² Edith Allen to Ruth Ford, 20 February 1940, IMBMC: Allen.

³³ Edith Allen to T.B. Ray, 20 November 1931 (*italics mine*).

³⁴ Edith Allen, “Notes From Rio de Janeiro,” *The Baptist Courier*, 5 December 1935; and Edith Allen to O.E. Maddy, 31 December 1935, IMBMC: Allen (*italics mine*).

message. In his memoir, Ginsburg described the enthusiasm of the converted Brazilians. “If there is one characteristic that distinguishes the Brazilian convert more than any other it is his desire to tell the good news to others,” wrote Ginsburg. “He just bubbles over with joy and he cannot keep quiet. He must go out and tell others.”³⁵ Typically the Baptists were happy to see Brazilians bringing their friends, relatives, and neighbors to Protestantism, but most were reluctant to give the kind of real leadership roles which the Pentecostals so liberally offered.

It became such a problem for the Baptists that they even had a special term for Brazilians who wanted the missionaries to grant them more power: they were called “radicals” by the missionaries and the Board. It was a much-discussed problem which often came to a head at conventions. For example, Allen reported that her 1931 district convention sessions “were even more disquieting than those of last year” as “the radicals were plainly in the ascendancy, and the anti-missionary spirit was manifest more than once.”³⁶ A few months later she reported that “some of the missionaries are worried at radical croppings out in different places.”³⁷

The efforts that the missionaries and the Board made to address the problem did little to help. For example, in a 1931 letter, T.B. Ray encouraged missionaries to give contributions towards Brazilian pastors’ salaries to their churches rather than directly to the men themselves, for “if the Mission pays directly to a pastor any portion of his salary, that reduces by so much his responsibility to his church.” Ray continued, “A pastor ought to be made to

³⁵ Ginsburg, *A Missionary Adventure*, 215.

³⁶ Edith Allen to T.B. Ray, 20 November 1931.

³⁷ Edith Allen to T.B. Ray, 24 February 1932, IMBMC: Allen.

feel that first of all that he is pastor of that church and not a servant of the Mission,”³⁸ but friction between missionaries and Brazilian leadership continued. For example, while the Allens were in the United States on furlough for fifteen months in 1936–1937, a Brazilian family moved into the house they had intended to occupy upon their return, while others spread rumors that the Allens would not return at all – according to Mrs. Allen, the pastor who made “the biggest campaign against Mr. Allen” said “he wasn’t returning, and no good as a teacher” – and angled to take their jobs.³⁹ “Not a speck of appreciation, but that is the order of the day down here now . . . by the bunch that is running things.”⁴⁰

The power struggle was ongoing, and often it was ugly. It undoubtedly was inefficient as well, slowing down the work and thereby creating opportunities for Pentecostals. The Baptist party line, as expressed by Ginsburg, was that evangelism and the “opening up” of new territories must be practiced by missionaries, not Brazilians. “Although in some places a competent native could do it, as a rule it has to be done by the missionary, who in a certain way can demand, if necessary, the protection of the authorities.”⁴¹ While such protection might have been needed in the early days of Baptist missionary work, back when missionaries often had to rely on their political and social connections to secure permission to preach and occasionally get them out of jail, it was no longer was the case – at least not universally – by the time Vingren and Berg were beginning their work.

³⁸ T.B. Ray to William Allen, 31 October 1932, IMBMC: Allen.

³⁹ Edith Allen to O.E. Maddry, 16 March 1938.

⁴⁰ Edith Allen to Ruth Ford, 21 September 1936, IMBMC: Allen.

⁴¹ Ginsburg, *A Missionary Adventure*, 217.

Foreign Mission Board Assistant to the Executive Secretary Ruth Lucille Ford, with whom Edith Allen kept up a regular correspondence, got it exactly right when she wrote in a 1940 letter to Allen, “I am very much afraid . . . that these dissensions and divisions and lack of harmony do much to retard the work, and that is a thing to be deeply regretted.”⁴² While the Pentecostals found fantastic success sending Brazilians out to evangelize, the Baptist effort stagnated, and what slowed the Baptists’ work speeded the Pentecostals’ as some disillusioned Brazilian Baptists, frustrated by the missionaries’ endless “character building,” tired of being treated like children and responded enthusiastically to Pentecostalism’s promise of greater power.

Ministering to the Better Classes

Unlike the Baptist missionaries, Gunner Vingren and Daniel Berg were working-class immigrants from Sweden who, despite their light skin, were accustomed to being considered “ethnic” rather than “white” (a term which when applied unmodified at the turn of the twentieth century in the United States – where both men had resided for several years – referred normally to white Anglo-Saxon Protestants). Furthermore, as Freston argues, they were men who, given the place of Baptists on the outskirts of Swedish society, were accustomed to marginalization. Anti-intellectuals who were uninterested in social climbing and unconcerned with institution-building, Vingren and Berg were comfortable building communities as socially excluded as they were accustomed to being as Baptists in Sweden, immigrants in the United States, and Pentecostals in Baptist churches.⁴³ In many ways, they

⁴² Ruth Ford to Edith Allen, 9 March 1940. IMBMC: Allen.

⁴³ Freston, “Protestantes e política,” 69; Freston, “Pentecostalism in Brazil,” 122.

could not have been more different from the Southern Baptist missionaries, most of whom were educated white men and women who had grown up in the Reconstruction South, with all the race, class, and social baggage that entailed.

These differences in personal background mattered. Class and color affected whom missionaries felt most comfortable working with and how they viewed the Brazilians with whom they came into contact. And while the Baptists were not unwilling to baptize poor and black Brazilians, they saw them as “other” in a way that the Pentecostals did not. Consider the following which missionary Frances A. Bagby wrote in a letter upon returning from furlough to Brazil:

We reached our destination safely — and our whole trip was pleasant, with very calm weather, and some congenial passengers, although the majority were not the class of people we would choose for companions, unless for the purpose of helping them. We had professional boxers and professional dancers in our number. Mr. Bagby held the service on Sunday over in the first class social hall, and quite a goodly number of passengers from first and tourist class attended. We also had the opportunity of evangelizing a very cultured Portuguese gentleman, who has spent his life in Brazil. . . . He seemed to be such a sincere person, and a perfect gentleman of culture and learning, and persons of his type could be so useful in reaching others of the higher class.⁴⁴

A distinction is made between those who are social equals – the passengers from first and tourist class – and those who are not – the professional dancers, boxers, and their ilk – with clear preference shown for the former. What would Bagby have thought of Berg had she met *him* aboard the ship, an iron worker traveling third class?

This Baptist preference for evangelizing the upper classes was more than the personal inclination of missionaries like Frances Bagby. It was, in fact, official Baptist policy, at least in certain areas of Brazil. For example, when Edith and Billy Allen returned to Rio de Janeiro

⁴⁴ Frances A. Bagby to Ruth Ford, 6 October 1937, IMBMC: Bagby.

after their 1937 furlough, they found themselves installed in the fine home of the Almirante Henrique Guilhem Barreto – the Secretary of the Brazilian navy – a house chosen for its proximity to the Baptist college and the church which had recently been organized to serve the college community. Edith Allen wrote that “the nice house, we feel is part of the Lord’s plan for that particular contact we will make” during this new term which “is to be more largely with the educated, cultured class instead of with the poorer class as it was this last term.”⁴⁵ Despite her often-expressed personal preference for working with “the humble folk” and the difficulty with which she had to “reconcile [herself] to a future that is confined to just school contacts or those related to it religiously” and excludes “working in some section where the gospel is not known,” the Board’s priority was the upper class college community and hence that is where she and her husband were sent.⁴⁶

The Baptist fascination with the upper classes (and corresponding antipathy for the lower classes) was longstanding and was, I argue, one of the main reasons they became so deeply involved in education. Founding schools gave missionaries a way to influence, as they so often phrased it, “the best people” and “the better or ruling class.”⁴⁷ Pioneer missionary Z.C. Taylor, for example, visited the Presbyterian school in São Paulo, which had already been there thirty years and where they educated, according to him, “the children of governors, the presidents of the Republic, city mayors, the law-making society and

⁴⁵ Edith Allen to Ruth Ford, 29 July 1935, IMBMC: Allen.

⁴⁶ Edith Allen to Ruth Ford, 29 July 1935, IMBMC: Allen.

⁴⁷ These two phrases come up again and again in Baptist minutes and correspondence. One example is found in a letter written by Z.C. Taylor which states, “. . . our schools will attract the better or ruling class . . .” (Taylor to unknown correspondent, ca. Summer 1900); another example is found in a Laura Barton Taylor letter which she refers to “the very best families of the city,” (Laura Taylor to R.J. Willingham, 26 June 1900, IMBMC: Taylor).

sentiment-making people of the state and country.” Taylor wanted the same for the Baptists, and there was no reason they could not achieve it, as the Presbyterian schools could not serve all the powerful families of the city. “As [the] ex-governor told me,” wrote Taylor, “there were not reliable boarding schools in the city, and having tried to get his son into Presbyterian schools in vain, [he] sent him to Europe.”⁴⁸ Laura Barton Taylor described men from “the very best families of the city” of São Paulo who “come and plead with me to take their children and train them up in the way that they should go,” while Ginsburg reported similar conditions in Pernambuco, where he was asked “by some of the influential citizens of this city, who are tired of the Jesuitical teaching, to open a place where they could put their children in our charge” and who “have even offered to help raise the means for starting a school if a good teacher is sent.”⁴⁹ Meanwhile, in São Paulo, William Bagby reported in 1908 that the Girls’ School had “greatly prospered” and had received pupils “from many of the best Brazilian families in the city.”⁵⁰

The Baptists’ focus on the upper classes extended to rural areas as well. The late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was a boom time throughout Brazil: sugar in Bahia, dairy products in Minas Gerais, rubber in Manaus, shipping in Rio and Pará, manufacturing in Recife and, overshadowing all else, coffee in São Paulo. Elites were building their fortunes throughout the country, and Baptists were intent on following them. Even rural areas had their aristocracies with liberal elites who were eager to help the Protestants. For example, in

⁴⁸ Z.C. Taylor to unknown, ca. Summer 1900.

⁴⁹ Laura Barton Taylor to R.J. Willingham, 26 June 1900; Ginsburg, “Annual Report of the Pernambuco Baptist Mission for 1900.”

⁵⁰ Helen Bagby Harrison, *The Bagbys of Brazil* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1954), 134.

1911 in Castanhal, Pará, Julia Menescal, the wife of a merchant navy captain who spent most of his time away from home, held down the Baptist fort. Converted in 1900, she dedicated herself to keeping up “the work” – as the missionaries called their efforts – in the absence of a pastor, and serving as “the pastor, Sunday school superintendent, general visitor, and what not.” Another woman, Dr. Amelia Cavalcante, a medical doctor, also supported the work “in her own sphere and way.”⁵¹ These were upper class women, a demographic which the Baptists were very interested in reaching, as demonstrated by the Bahia mission’s efforts to develop a cooking school in order to attract, in the words of a fundraising brochure distributed in Missouri, “the high class of Bahia women – those cultured, wealthy, lovely women of leisure who have come from the aristocracy of Europe.”⁵²

It must be noted that the Baptist concern with the “better class” had begun as a matter of political exigency as much as one of snobbery. The precarious situation of Protestants in nineteenth-century Brazil meant they needed powerful allies in order to protect them from Catholic attacks and to keep them out of jail. Mainline Protestant missionaries had established schools in Brazil not only because they needed to train Brazilians to serve as pastors, but also because they needed a way to ally themselves with Brazilian elites. These elites, for their part, were eager to embrace the missionaries because of the liberal, republican ideologies they represented, viewing the missionaries both as harbingers of progress and as

⁵¹ Solomon Ginsburg, “Report of North Brazil Mission,” presented at FMB meeting on 17 May 1911, IMB Archives, 2686.

⁵² *Building Project, Bahia, Brazil* (Kansas City, MO: Woman’s Missionary Union, April 1935), IMB microfilm 880/231AR, 5–6.

challenges to the hegemony of the Catholic Church.⁵³ As a 1971 report commissioned by the mission board of the Methodist Church explains, nineteenth-century Latin American intellectual elites, who “admired and endeavored to introduce into the subcontinent the political, economic, and cultural forms for Anglo-Saxon countries . . . abetted – in some cases, even invited – and protected the entry and work of the Protestant missions.”⁵⁴ It was not difficult for the early missionaries to befriend wealthy and educated Brazilians; most wanted progress, which to many of them meant making Brazil politically, economically, and ideologically more like the United States and Europe. This required weakening the power of the Catholic Church by turning to Protestantism instead.⁵⁵

While Protestant missionaries had a negligible affect at first, converting and baptizing very few, they were influential in other ways, particularly the way in which they helped powerful Brazilians publicly enact their struggle against the Catholic Church and then advised them on transitioning from empire to republic. It was not uncommon for politicians to turn to missionaries for political advice, especially during the late nineteenth and early

⁵³ For more on the political relationship between liberal elites and foreign missionaries, see the scholarship of Jean-Pierre Bastian, David Gueiros Vieira, Antonio Gouvêa Mendonça, and Adam Anderle.

⁵⁴ “River Plate Study Group Report” (report for the World Division of the Board of Missions of the United Methodist Church, Buenos Aires, Argentina, 2 July, 1971), published in “The Missionary and Social Justice: Latin America” in *The Future of the Missionary Enterprise* series, *IDOC-North America* 51 (March 1973): 40.

⁵⁵ As historians David Gueiros Vieira and Antonio Mendonça have argued, the insertion of Protestantism into nineteenth-century Brazil was not a case of missionaries forcing their liberal beliefs on unwilling Brazilians, but rather one of powerful, liberal Brazilians encouraging missionary activity because they viewed wealthy Anglo-Saxon countries as models of modernization and progress. See, for example, Mendonça, *O Protestantismo, a maçonaria e a questão religiosa no Brasil* (Brasília, Brazil: Ed. Universidade de Brasília, 1980), 73; and Gueiros Vieira, “O liberalismo, o maçonaria e o protestantismo no Brasil no século dezenove,” in *Iglesia, Religión y Sociedad en La Historia Latinoamericana, 1492–1945: Congreso VIII de Asociación de Historiadores Latinoamericanistas de Europa, tomo tercero*, edited by Adam Anderle, (Szeged, Hungary: Jate K., 1989), 132.

twentieth centuries, when Brazil was in its early days as a republic.⁵⁶ As the young Republic developed, Brazilian elites continued to seek missionaries' advice. In particular, Baptist missionaries were asked for input on the development of a national public education system. According to Z.C. Taylor, Baptist missionary to Rio, in 1900 the Baptist school was "constantly visited by prominent men who recognize[d] it as a model."⁵⁷

By the time the Pentecostals arrived, however, Brazil was no longer a monarchy, nor was it still a fledgling democracy. There were problems to be sure, especially in the rapidly growing cities where poverty and disease flourished while political unrest was the order of the day, but on the whole, earlier missionaries had already made Brazil much more hospitable to Protestantism by forging relationships with elite Brazilians. Pentecostals, then, did not face the same pressure to build relationships with powerful Brazilians who could protect them. Nor did they want to. Vingren and Berg, neither "white" nor upper-class themselves, were not interested in ingratiating themselves with powerful men. They cared little about "the best people" or "the ruling class." They opened no schools and sought no students, and their mission was far less concerned with politics and ideology than it was with spirituality. In the early years of the movement, Pentecostals simply wanted to spread the news of baptism by the Holy Spirit to as many people as possible. One reason why they succeeded so well, I believe, is that Vingren and Berg were men.

⁵⁶ For example, some high-ranking Brazilians sought the North Americans' thoughts on constitutional reform, as happened with William Bagby. As his daughter recalls, "Aristides Lobo, who became Secretary of the Interior, called on Father shortly before the establishment of the republic and talked at length about the Constitution of the United States and about reforms which later were put into effect." After the republic was established the contact between liberal politicians and missionaries continued, as the missionaries, again according to Bagby Harrison, "contributed democratic ideas of state and church government and influenced, however inconspicuously, the destinies of the budding nation." Harrison, *The Bagbys of Brazil*, 82-3.

⁵⁷ Z.C. Taylor letter to unknown correspondent, ca. Summer 1900.

Women and the Missionary Enterprise

Along with class preferences, beliefs about what constituted proper work for women significantly affected the types of projects that missionaries undertook. Political, theological, and socio-racial considerations were three factors which led Baptists to focus on founding schools; the fourth is that women missionaries were determined to play a significant and direct role in mission efforts. Their work was taken seriously and encouraged, with “woman’s work” given separate attention in the reports made each year to the Board. Given that women could neither travel unaccompanied, nor hold public prayer meetings, nor found churches, nor serve as pastors, women who wanted to participate in missionary activities could do one of two things: they could help educational efforts by founding and teaching at schools or they could evangelize by making home visits. The former option offered more institutional power and was therefore more attractive to many. Its pursuit precluded the latter option. Running schools took enormous amounts of time, energy, and resources.

If these Baptist women had gone to Brazil simply to accompany their husbands, things might have turned out differently. But this was not the case. Most of the Baptist women were there because they felt called to be missionaries. Indeed, in some cases, such as that of William and Anne Bagby, it was the wife who had convinced the husband to go.⁵⁸ In several other cases, such as those of Edith and Billy Allen and Emma and Solomon Ginsburg, the women arrived in Brazil as single missionaries and met their husbands once they were already appointed by the mission board. In fact, accommodating missionary marriages became such a challenge that at one point the Board considered a making a policy of

⁵⁸ Harrison, *The Bagbys of Brazil*, 10–30.

appointing no single women because too many complications ensued when they fell in love.⁵⁹ Ford joked to Edith Allen:

I think I'll open up a matrimonial bureau and marry them all off before they go to the field. It would save us a lot of confusion and future worry. What do you think of the idea?⁶⁰

The female missionaries were, many (if not most) of them, independent and strong-minded women who were determined to serve.

Such indomitable women were the founders and principals of the Southern Baptists' first six schools in Brazil.⁶¹ Once her children were grown, Laura Barton Taylor, for example, taught English classes day and night in order to save enough money to open a school. In a 1900 letter she wrote:

Mr. Taylor tried to persuade me from such a course for more than two years and finally consented, only because he said I would not be happy without it. After making all calculations as to cost, ill health, etc. I told him I would be willing to make every sacrifice and work in every imaginable way (to save money to build the school) for at least five years.⁶²

Once established, the school depended on Laura Taylor for its success; in 1901 her husband wrote in a letter, “. . . we have been occupied with Mrs. Taylor's health, for if she does not get a good rest the whole school will fall.”⁶³

⁵⁹ Ruth Ford to Edith Allen, 25 February 1938, IMBMC: Allen.

⁶⁰ Ruth Ford to Edith Allen, 25 February 1938, IMBMC: Allen.

⁶¹ Maggie Rice, 1888, Rio de Janeiro; Emma Ginsburg, 1895, Campos; Bertha R. Stenger and Mary B. Wilcox, 1898, Belo Horizonte; Laura Taylor, 1898, Bahia, Emma Ginsburg, 1901, Pernambuco, and Anne Bagby, 1902, São Paulo. Recorded in Harrison, *The Bagbys of Brazil*, 121.

⁶² Laura Barton Taylor to R.J. Willingham, 26 June 1900.

⁶³ Z.C. Taylor to unknown correspondent (first three pages missing from archive), ca. 1901, IMBMC: Taylor.

Anne Bagby was similarly determined. Upon moving to São Paulo, after twenty years spent raising six children (and burying two more) and keeping house, she became hungry to return to missionary work. As her daughter recalls, “Men had been wonderfully blessed in their pulpit approach to the masses, she [Anne Bagby] commented; a school would furnish her a comparable, if not superior, influence.”⁶⁴ Anne Bagby cited the fact that President Salles’ own children attended mission schools as evidence that schools could spread the gospel to the upper, powerful classes, for “Roman Catholic children could patronize a gospel [Protestant] school when attendance at an evangelical [Protestant] church would mean excommunication.”⁶⁵ Once her *Colegio Progresso Brasileiro* was founded in 1902, Bagby was so dedicated to the school that, with the Board’s approval, she chose to forego her 1908 furlough in order to put the money which would have purchased her family’s passage home towards purchasing the school building instead.⁶⁶ As soon as women were no longer tied to the home by child-rearing duties, they (re)joined the mission work proper by founding, running, and teaching in schools. In accordance with gender norms, men were nominally in charge, but it was the women who ran the show.⁶⁷

The officialization of the schools in 1930, a result of the Vargas revolution, which required the Protestant schools to adapt their curriculum to new government requirements, only complicated matters, creating a situation in which the “spirituality” of the schools

⁶⁴ Harrison, *The Bagbys of Brazil*, 120.

⁶⁵ Harrison, *The Bagbys of Brazil*, 121.

⁶⁶ Harrison, *The Bagbys of Brazil*, 124. Before the purchase, she and her husband had been paying out of their own pocket! Harrison, *The Bagbys of Brazil*, 121.

⁶⁷ For example, Harrison recalls, “While Mother was absorbed in her educational mission Father, though nominally head of the school and certainly indispensable to the life of the institution, devoted his time to preaching.” Harrison, *The Bagbys of Brazil*, 133.

suffered even more than it already had as a result of the need to hire Catholic teachers and satisfy Catholic parents.⁶⁸ Their schools tied the Baptists down to particular places, determining where missionaries lived and with whom they interacted, reinforcing a top-down evangelical strategy which came to absorb more than just the women, affecting all mission work across gender lines and limiting Baptists' opportunities to evangelize. The educational project eventually came to involve men who entered the classroom as professors – taking them away from traveling and public preaching – once colleges were founded to serve the graduates produced by the Baptist secondary schools, for higher education was not women's work. A great deal of the Baptists' energy, time, and funds were dedicated to the educational project, with little spared for other activities, a fact which some missionaries found difficult to accept. For example, Edith Allen wrote in 1933:

What hurts me most, though, is that with the great amount of regular teaching, etc. we do not have time for the contacts with the students and with the church members that is so necessary and valuable both for them and for us. I love the visiting in the homes more than anything other phase [sic] of the work and we are always well-received — how we *do* need to be multiplied many times over.⁶⁹

Allen and her contemporaries became trapped by their schools.

In 1935, Allen took it upon herself to speak for the group of them, stating “I believe that now most of us, if we could choose, so far as our own personal inclinations are concerned, would prefer to be in different ‘evangelistic’ work rather than the institutional work we are in.” They remained where they were, in their educational and publishing institutions, because they accepted the Board philosophy that “the Cause” would be best

⁶⁸ Edith Allen to O.E. Maddry, 10 October 1938; and to Ruth Ford 12 October 1938, IMBMC: Allen.

⁶⁹ Edith Allen to T.B. Ray, 17 October 1933 (*italics mine*).

served by preparing others.⁷⁰ Meanwhile the Pentecostals did what Allen and others wished they could be doing – visiting homes, holding prayer meetings, having one-on-one conversations – evangelizing full time.

The 1930s

In the 1930s, the Baptists' work became hampered even further by the Great Depression. By 1933, according to Edith Allen, "Our missionary force [was] nearly at its row's end with no reinforcements and no hopes of any anytime soon."⁷¹ At the same time, the Pentecostal movement was growing exponentially.⁷² While it would be too simple to claim an inverse correlation between Baptist reduction and Pentecostal growth, the two are not unrelated. Was it purely a coincidence that 1930, the year in which Baptists began curtailing their work in Rio in response to the global financial crisis, was the same year that the Assemblies of God moved its national headquarters to that city from Pará? Perhaps. Still, the fact that mainline Protestant power decreased at the very same time that Pentecostal power was increasing bears investigating.

Baptist missionaries were dependent on the United States for money. Almost all of their funds either came from or were approved by the Foreign Mission Board in Richmond, Virginia. In keeping with policy, even when potential donors wanted to give directly to missionaries, they were often put off until the Board could be consulted. Of course – given

⁷⁰ Edith Allen, "Notes from Rio de Janeiro," *The Baptist Courier*, 5 December 1935, 7, IMBMC: Allen.

⁷¹ Edith Allen to O.E. Maddry, 5 December 1933, IMBMC: Allen.

⁷² I refer again to Rolim's figures: 0 Pentecostals in 1900, 44,311 Pentecostals in 1930, and 705,031 Pentecostals in 1960. Rolim, *Pentecostais no Brasil*, 104.

the state of communications – this slowed things down tremendously. For example, a man who was interested in donating money to help build a new church in Rio was told “to wait a little longer” by his pastor who did not “want our Baptist people to help a man personally unless he is all right with the Board” because he “believe[d] that we ought to consult our Mission Board about our missionaries so as to guard against embarrassing the Board in any way.”⁷³ In no way were the Baptist missionaries financially independent.

Thus, because their financial well-being was completely tied up with the state of the US economy, the Great Depression dramatically affected the Baptist mission work. The year 1931 was, according to corresponding secretary T.B. Ray, “the hardest year in our Foreign Mission Board work I have ever known.”

The awful burden of debt is about to kill us, and then we have added to this debt during the present year nearly \$200,000.00. We thought we had cut down enough to take care of the situation, but we missed it. We didn’t calculate that our people would drop in their gifts as much as they have done during this year. I think we must have surely gotten just about down to the bottom.⁷⁴

But it got worse. In 1932 the Southern Baptist Convention ordered the Foreign Mission Board to cut the 1933 budget to 12 per cent below 1932 expenditures. This meant that the 1933 budget was less than half of the 1930 budget, a decrease so dramatic that Ray confessed concern that, even if they were “able to appropriate enough to keep the work alive,” it would not be “anything like the support that is deserved and called for by the needs.”⁷⁵

Appropriations for “native work” were halved, thirty missionaries were kept at home “on

⁷³ Unknown author (illegible) to R.J. Willingham, written on letterhead from “Office of Administration, William Jewell College, Liberty, MO,” 18 June 1910, IMB microfilm 873/227AR. The letter concerned the Brazilian pastor Soren, who was visiting the United States for medical, educational, and fundraising purposes.

⁷⁴ T.B. Ray to Edith Allen, 9 December 1931, IMBMC: Allen.

⁷⁵ T.B. Ray to Edith Allen, 1 October 1932, IMBMC: Allen.

indefinite furlough without salary,” and no money at all was allotted for those who were supposed to return in 1934.⁷⁶ By February of 1933 the Board reported that more missionaries would be called home should income continue to decline as it did in January. Ray summed up the situation when he wrote, “We face a fearful situation with reference to our whole foreign mission program.”⁷⁷

The situation became so dire that in 1933 the Board asked missionaries to sell Board property. As recorded in the minutes of a special meeting of the South Brazil Mission, the Board requested “in any case where it may be done without damage to the work that mission properties be sold and the proceeds reverted to the Board.” The money would be “applied on the debt in the banks here in Richmond.” A request was made at the same time that “a detailed list of native workers and expenses” be sent to the Board, which suggests that the Board was considering cutting the salaries of Brazilians who worked with missionaries just at the time when they were most needed.⁷⁸ Although there was talk of making efforts to replace furloughed missionaries with Brazilians, given the Baptists’ educational requirements and limited funds, it was difficult.⁷⁹

The Pentecostals’ financial situation was very different. They were not dependent on funds sent from abroad and could receive donations directly and immediately, without

⁷⁶ T.B. Ray to Edith Allen, 1 October 1932, IMBMC: Allen.

⁷⁷ O.E. Maddry to William Allen, 17 February 1933, IMBMC: Allen.

⁷⁸ Minutes from “Called Meeting of Executive Committee South Brazil Mission” 6 January 1933, IMB microfilm MM30.

⁷⁹ O.E. Maddry to William Allen, 17 February 1933: “I wish very much indeed that some native preacher could be sent into the region covered by Brother Sherwood [furloughed missionary] and the Executive Committee of the South Brazil Mission will take whatever steps are necessary with the money in hand, to take care of this situation.”

waiting for letters to be exchanged, meetings held, and donations approved. Furthermore, almost all of their money came from their church members in Brazil rather than from the United States and, because they were not running a worldwide mission project as the Baptists were, nearly all of it stayed in Brazil.⁸⁰ Nor were Pentecostal numbers negatively affected by the Depression the way the Baptists' were; all Pentecostal pastors already were Brazilians, so there was no need to replace missionary pastors who were unable to return to their posts. In sum, the fact that neither their financial nor their human resources were in any way dependent on the United States meant that the Great Depression affected Pentecostals far less than it did the Baptists.

This is not to say that the depression did not affect Brazil. It did. But it did not affect Pentecostals in the same way it affected Baptists. One reason for this is that most Brazilians were used to want and gave in spite of it. There is evidence which demonstrates that, while donations from the US middle and upper classes fell precipitously in the 1930s, donations from poor Brazilians remained the same (and even improved). In 1932 Allen had exclaimed, "I can't get over how these folks manage to give out of nothing."⁸¹ Later that same year, her husband, reporting on the Federal District convention, wrote that "contributions held up pretty well . . . [and were] almost up to the last year's level in spite of worse conditions economically due to the unstable situations."⁸² Baptist fundraising in the United States plummeted with the disappearance of discretionary spending, but Brazilians continued to

⁸⁰ The *Assembléia* did send a few missionaries to Portugal; the first to go left Brazil in 1913. Conde, *História das Assembléias*, 36.

⁸¹ Edith Allen to T.B. Ray, 5 September 1932.

⁸² William Allen to T.B. Ray, 12 November 1932, IMBMC: Allen.

give. This suggests that Pentecostal income, which relied nearly exclusively on Brazilians, most likely remained stable in the 1930s.

Another reason that Pentecostals suffered less than the Baptist missionaries in the 1930s was that the political instability of the time, beginning with the Revolution of 1930 and continuing through the early Vargas years, made it more difficult for foreigners to come and stay in Brazil. Visa problems kept missionaries in the United States for most of 1932. Referring to the turmoil, William Allen reported that “open-air work in general” was “hampered” due to the “unsettled conditions of the country.”⁸³ The large prayer-tent meetings which the Baptists had been employing so successfully at least since the beginning of 1931⁸⁴ were now limited to suburban areas.

If anything, the Depression helped Pentecostals, as they benefited from the same situation which caused the Baptists so much heartache. Not only were they less affected financially, but there is also the fact – clichéd though it may be – that in tough times one of the things people turn to is religion. Allen observed this phenomenon in 1932:

When I see how our folks down here manage to sacrifice and give, and that [they do so] facing absolute want, and when I see folks coming confessing the Lord right along (we have six awaiting baptism right now) and increasing interest on all sides, in part due to the fact that folks are up against it and are turning to the Lord, some of them, as a desperate last resort, there are blessings to be found in the difficulties.⁸⁵

And if one religion is not fulfilling their needs, especially in a religiously pluralist society like Brazil, they turn to another. Those who were already inclined to embrace Protestantism –

⁸³ William Allen to T.B. Ray, 8 October 1932.

⁸⁴ See Edith Allen to T.B. Ray, 5 January 1931, IMBMC: Allen.

⁸⁵ Edith Allen to T.B. Ray, 5 September 1932.

especially among the lower class – could turn to Pentecostalism. The Baptists were still rejecting them, but the Pentecostals never did.⁸⁶

The political and economic crises of the 1930s did put pressure on the Baptist missionaries to make Brazilians more equal partners. Billy Allen, finding “blessings” in the silver lining of “these troubled times,” wrote of “the absolute necessity . . . of the native churches coming to selfsupport.” He went on, “While money was comparatively easy to get, the training for the native constituency was not quite so insistent of that point, but since hard days came many a congregation that thought it impossible to support itself had to or die, and the result is a stronger group than before.”⁸⁷ It was, however, a case of too little too late. The Baptist mission was still structured for a long apprenticeship, but how can you “stay and learn” from someone who has left?

Even the optimistic Edith Allen acknowledged “the tragedy of open doors that have closed and of millions who have not heard the gospel because there was no one to tell them.”⁸⁸ Because the Baptist missionaries had dragged their feet, keeping most of the leadership power to themselves, the decline in missionary numbers and funds was an enormous blow to their work. Not so for the Pentecostals, who had experienced this pressure from the very beginning and formalized an institutional structure in 1930 which ensured that each church would act as an independent unit.⁸⁹ While Baptist tensions simmered into the

⁸⁶ At least, I have yet to find any evidence indicating that Pentecostals — or, to be quite precise, the *Assembléia* from its inception until 1935, which is the time the paper addresses — ever rejected anyone.

⁸⁷ Edith Allen to a Miss Coleman, 7 August 1934, IMBMC: Allen.

⁸⁸ Edith Allen to a Miss Coleman, 7 August 1934, IMBMC: Allen.

⁸⁹ See footnote number 22.

1940s, slowing the work, whatever tensions that did exist between Pentecostals on a regional or national scale were of little consequence.

Conclusion

In sum, the lack of a group dedicated to funding Pentecostal mission work was more a help than a hindrance. The fact that early Pentecostal missionaries operated independently – without the support of a mission board – turned out to be an advantage, as it left a legacy of missionary independence and foreign/native partnership. While Baptist efforts to expand were slowed by their determination to acculturate and educate Brazilians before handing over the reins, Pentecostals were able to work quickly. They sought the gifts of the Holy Spirit and organized around them. No existing institutional structure demanded a system of united decision making; each church was able to operate as an independent entity. No mission board demanded that time be spent on writing reports, organizing meetings, and traveling to regional and national conventions. The Baptists – with their class and race biases, their educational requirements for pastors, their dependence on the Southern Baptist Convention’s Foreign Mission Board, the political circumstances of their arrival, and their many female missionaries – spread themselves thinly among projects and places, but the early Pentecostals focused on doing just one thing and doing it well: convincing *crentes* and others to accept the Pentecostal doctrine of baptism by the Holy Spirit.⁹⁰

What seemed at first to have been a disadvantage — the lack of strong institutional support for Pentecostal missionary work in Brazil — turned out to be an advantage. This

⁹⁰ It has been suggested to me that an analogy can be seen between this situation and the one that occurred in the Brazilian Catholic Church in the late nineteenth century, after Brazil became a republic and the Church was freed from many of its institutional entanglements.

became especially clear when the economic and political crises of the 1930s hit and the indigenous Brazilian Pentecostal movement which Vingren and Berg had jumpstarted was positioned to take advantage of the very conditions which dramatically slowed Baptist efforts. More scholarly attention needs to be paid to this critical decade as the time when Pentecostalism became a truly national religion in Brazil. Freston's widely adopted formulation of Brazilian Pentecostal history which divides the creation of Pentecostal churches into three waves — the 1910s, the 1950s and early 1960s, and the late 1970s through the 1980s⁹¹ — has been misread by scholars who then assume that nothing interesting happened in between waves, when in fact 1930 was a watershed year in both the religious and political history of Brazil. This was the year of the *Assembléia's* liberation from foreign control as well as the year in which the São Paulo/Minas Gerais hold on the government was broken by Vargas, and it marked the beginning of remarkable growth and development, not only industrial but also spiritual.⁹²

In 1930, the *Assembléia* made the crucial decision to give full independent status to each individual church – a decision which gave Pentecostalism a completely unique institutional structure and enabled it to become the first version of Christianity in Brazil's history to fully empower Brazilians, and not just a chosen few but Brazilians of all socio-economic classes. Recognizing this uniqueness helps distinguish Pentecostalism from

⁹¹ See Freston, "Pentecostalism in Brazil," 120. While a few scholars have noted the significance of the 1930s, notably David Martin and Ronald Frase, most do not do enough to distinguish Pentecostalism from other forms of Protestantism. Instead, they rely exclusively on Freston's analysis, which was never intended to be a periodization. Freston, personal communication, 5 August 2010.

⁹² An anonymous reviewer of the article version of this chapter raised the question of the relationship between Getulismo and Pentecostalism, and wondered whether the two movements competed for the allegiance of the poor. I think this is a promising line of inquiry.

Protestantism – categories too often treated as a single one: “evangelicalism.” While there are certainly reasons to look at them together, particularly when investigating the relationship between religious and political change, it is necessary to separate them in order to be able to figure out just what this thing called Pentecostalism *is*. In order to unpack Pentecostalism – to get at not only who Pentecostals are and what they do, but also at *how* Pentecostalism came to be in the first place – we need to carefully articulate its history in Brazil as something distinct from Protestantism as a whole.

By history I mean the context and conditions – the *specific historical circumstances* – of Pentecostalism’s establishment in Brazil. We need to ask, as I have begun to do here and will continue to do in Chapter Three: Who were the actors? What were their motivations? We need to continue the project which I have begun here of distinguishing the work of independent missionaries like Vingren and Berg, whose loose institutional affiliations were with Sweden, not the United States, from American missionary evangelicalism as a whole. Only by inserting a more complete history into the discussion of Brazilian Pentecostalism – one which pays attention not only to the *creation* of Pentecostal churches but also to their *development* and *growth* in the 1930s, 40s, and 50s – can we understand what has happened to Brazil’s religious landscape over the past century. It is time to recognize the simple and critical importance of the fact that Pentecostalism is not a North American import⁹³ but rather a national and nationalist religion whose founding was facilitated by the Protestantism which preceded it and which grew not only because of something particular about the faith it

⁹³ It is true that Pentecostalism in Brazil is not without US ties. However, these US ties were far less important than those with Sweden (as Freston has shown, the *Assembléia*’s primary relationships, both financial and spiritual, were with Sweden, not with the United States) and none were central to Pentecostalism’s development.

offered but also because of the fact that it offered a faith at all – an accessible, democratic faith which, color-blind and class-blind, was unconcerned with status, with education, with institution-building, and which was not only willing but compelled to offer agency to any who sought it.

CHAPTER TWO

“Many Cases of Healing Were Performed There”: The Early Years of Pentecostalism in Nigeria

It all began one October day in 1928 when a 22-year-old steamroller driver named Joseph Ayo Babalola had a vision. His engine had broken and he had been camping in the bush for two weeks trying to repair it when a voice spoke to him. It said, “Joseph! Joseph! Joseph! Leave this work, otherwise you will die this year!” Babalola ignored the voice on the first day and on the second, but on the third day he responded and asked, “What do you want me to do?” The voice told him to go home and fast for six days. Babalola did as he was told, and when he arrived at home an angel entered his room, filling it with an extraordinary light, and told him that Jesus Christ wanted to send him with important messages to certain places. At the end of the six-day fast, the voice spoke again and told Babalola to go to the town of Ipetu, warn the people that they must repent, and tell them that if they did not they would be punished by the plague. Babalola did as instructed. The people of Ipetu listened and asked him to pray to God to have mercy on them. Then God spoke to Babalola directly. As Babalola remembered it, “The Lord told me through His spoken voice to attend to the sick people in this town who would call on me for help, and many cases of healing were performed there.” Thus began the prophet Babalola’s healing ministry.¹

¹ *History and Works*, 2-4 and E. H. L. Olusheye, *A Short History of the Christ Apostolic Church (Revival Edition)*, (Ibadan: Christ Apostolic Church, 1994), 18.

This voice continued to direct Babalola, and Babalola continued to listen. The most important instruction it gave him was that he should heal without medicine of any kind. In every town he was asked to visit, Babalola recalled, “the voice would instruct me to tell the inhabitants not to use medicine anymore but to trust the Lord for their healing: the voice would simply tell me to tell the sick person to go home and the Lord has healed already.”² In another vision, the angel returned to emphasize this directive, bringing with him a calabash containing a dry fish to represent the herbs and leaves used for medicine, and the angel said of the contents, “God is going to render them useless and powerless.”³ Instead of herbs and leaves, Babalola was instructed to heal people with prayer and blessed water, and this became the center point of his ministry.

News of Babalola’s work spread to Lagos, where the Faith Tabernacle Congregation of Nigeria was based. This was an independent, African-led church which was affiliated with the Faith Tabernacle Congregation of Philadelphia. The Faith Tabernacle had been established in 1897 by Jacob Thomas Wilhide, who had been a leader in what was then the largest divine healing church in the United States, John Alexander Dowie’s Christian Catholic Church.⁴ The Philadelphia church, a congregation of mostly working-class white people, practiced evangelism by correspondence, sending tracts and letters abroad, and had been cultivating relationships with Anglophone West Africans since the early 1900s.⁵ The

² *History and Works*, 5.

³ *History and Works*, 5.

⁴ Adam Mohr, “Capitalism, Chaos, and Christian Healing: Faith Tabernacle Congregation in Southern Colonial Ghana, 1918-26,” *Journal of African History* 51 (2011), 66.

⁵ The church established its missionary department in 1908, and may have been mailing literature abroad even earlier. See Mohr, “Capitalism, Chaos, and Christian Healing,” 67.

primary focus of their ministry was the principal doctrine of their church: divine healing. This was the belief that God could heal everything, and that all other forms of healing, whether scientific or spiritual, must be abandoned.

The Faith Tabernacle of Philadelphia had been sending tracts and letters to Nigeria and Ghana since at least 1917, and their publication which circulated most widely there were issues of their occasional periodical, *Sword of the Spirit*.⁶ In general, Faith Tabernacle literature tackled such topics as “How to Receive Perfect Healing,” “How to Exercise Faith,” “The Work of the Holy Spirit,” and the need to have a repentant, obedient, steadfast heart in order to receive the blessing of divine healing.⁷ Interest in their literature in Nigeria increased dramatically in 1918, during the influenza epidemic, when churches were shuttered by government decree and small groups of literate Nigerians began to meet in private homes to read and pray. Copies of *Sword of the Spirit* were passed around among friends and acquaintances, many of them railroad clerks who, due to their mobility, helped generate interest in the Faith Tabernacle among young men throughout the colony.⁸ Many of these men maintained an active correspondence with the Philadelphia representatives, who received as many as 200 letters from West Africa every day.⁹ Even after splitting with the

⁶ See Adam Mohr, “Out of Zion Into Philadelphia and West Africa: Faith Tabernacle Congregation, 1897-1925,” *Pneuma* 32, no. 1 (2010), 73.

⁷ “How to Receive Perfect Healing #25,” (Philadelphia: Faith Tabernacle Congregation, 1906); “How to Exercise Faith #23,” (Philadelphia: Faith Tabernacle Congregation, 1909); “The Work of the Holy Spirit #36,” (Philadelphia: Faith Tabernacle Congregation, 1907); and J. Wesley Ankins, “Seven Principles of Prevailing Prayer,” (Philadelphia: Faith Tabernacle Congregation, n.d.).

⁸ See Adam Mohr, “Faith Tabernacle Congregation and Strategies of Extraversion in Colonial Nigeria, 1906-1929,” Unpublished (2012), 13-14. Also see J. D. Y. Peel, *Aladura: A Religious Movement Among the Yoruba* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1968).

⁹ This is figure Adam Mohr gives for 1927. Mohr, “Out of Zion,” 75.

Philadelphia mother church in 1926, the Nigerian congregation remained robust.¹⁰ By the time Babalola received his first vision and began his itinerant preaching, there were approximately 1,000 Nigerian Faith Tabernacle members, a remarkable figure given that there were only 1,800 members of the Philadelphia church.¹¹ The congregations were mostly concentrated in the Western Region (that is, the southwest area of the colony, an area also known as Yorubaland, where Yoruba ethnicity and culture predominated), with a substantial portion also located in the East and a few in the Muslim-dominated North.

In November 1929, the Faith Tabernacle leadership invited Babalola to visit them in Lagos. He accepted the invitation, preached, healed, and was baptized as a member of the congregation.¹² Recalling the visit, one Faith Tabernacle leader described Babalola's work as evidence that the days of prophets and miracles had not ceased, writing that, "since the days of the Apostle[s], we have never witnessed such wonderful manifestations of God's power in any country: surely the Lord has not changed His dealings with His elects, it all depends on to what extent we believe these operations of the Holy Spirit."¹³ Before bidding farewell to the Lagos congregation in order to begin holding a series of open-air meetings around Yorubaland, Babalola said that the Holy Spirit told him that many prophets would be raised up among members of the church. Babalola's traveling ministry eventually went on to attract

¹⁰ The reason most commonly given for this split was unethical behavior by the leader of the Philadelphia church, though there might have been a different cause. Splits and schisms for various reasons – doctrinal, political, often personal – were tremendously common during these first decades of Pentecostal development in North America and abroad, and they have continued throughout the years of Pentecostalism's growth, as we will see later in this chapter as well as in Chapter Four.

¹¹ Mohr, "Out of Zion," 75.

¹² Olusheye, *Short History*, 22 and *History and Works*, 9.

¹³ *History and Works*, 10.

thousands of people from all walks of life, among them, in the words of one government officer, “clerks, bushmen, Muslims, Christians.”¹⁴ He became the leading prophet of a movement known as the Aladura movement.

In Yoruba, “Aladura” means “prophet-healing.” It was a movement characterized by prayer and miraculous healing. Many of the churches which were established by the Aladuras still exist today. There are currently four significant, extant Aladura churches in Nigeria, with the bulk of their thousands of congregations concentrated in Yorubaland. Two are what are often called white-garment churches, because they require worshippers to attend church dressed all in white. These are the Cherubim and Seraphim Church and the Church of Our Lord Aladura. The other two churches, which began as a single church and eventually split into two in 1940, are the Apostolic Church and the Christ Apostolic Church.¹⁵ They are the churches with which Babalola was affiliated, having developed (as we shall see) out of the Faith Tabernacle’s decision to invite Apostolic Church missionaries to Nigeria. These were not white-garment churches. Like the Faith Tabernacle, they centered around the doctrine of faith in divine healing. Of all the Aladura churches established in the 1930s, the Christ

¹⁴ Assistant District Officer, Ilesha to District Officer, Ife, 13 Aug 1930, “Appendix II: Copies of Archival Material from the National Archives, University of Ibadan” in Samson Adetunji Fatokun, “Pentecostalism in Southwestern Nigeria With Particular Emphasis on the Apostolic Church, 1931-2003,” PhD Thesis, Department of Religious Studies, University of Ibadan, 304.

¹⁵ The precise circumstances and date of this split are contested, but it was essentially the result of a power struggle between the British missionaries and the African leadership. 1940 is year given by Christ Apostolic Church elder Olu Olusunmbola in his denominational history, *The Growth of Christ Apostolic Church in Nigeria* (Ibadan: Ayoxpress Publishing, 2001), 26. Ayodeji Abodunde, a self-taught historian who has done a remarkable amount of research on Nigerian Pentecostal history over the past decade or so, much of it through conducting interviews, gives the reason for the split as a difference of opinion over whether Babalola should continue healing with water or not. See Ayodeji Abodunde, *A Herald of the Last Days: The Story of Sydney Granville Elton* (Ibadan: Complete House Publishers, 2007), 26-7.

Apostolic Church is now the largest, with well over a million members.¹⁶ Together, given their focus on prayer, prophecy and healing through the Holy Spirit – two of the *charismata* bestowed on the apostles on the biblical day of Pentecost – the Apostolic Church and the Christ Apostolic Church can be considered the first Pentecostal churches in Nigeria, comparable to Brazil's *Assembléia de Deus*.

The purpose of this chapter is to develop this background to the flowering of contemporary Pentecostalism in Nigeria by examining the history of this largest Aladura church, the Christ Apostolic Church. While Chapter One challenged assumptions about Brazilian Pentecostalism's foreign origins, this chapter takes the opposite approach, challenging assumptions about Nigerian Pentecostalism's indigenous beginnings. This chapter asserts the important role of foreign evangelists and missionaries in the development of a church which has come to proudly think of itself as entirely indigenous in origin. Specifically, this chapter adds to the historical narrative of Nigerian Pentecostalism by considering the role of British missionaries in the years the Apostolic Church was first established and by then revealing the influence of a marginal American evangelist on the church's doctrine during the second decade of its existence.

The Aladura movement is widely held to be an indigenous movement, one which began with the series of events described in the opening to this chapter. In the genesis described above – a counterpart to the *Assembléia de Deus* creation myth discussed in Chapter One, where Vingren and Berg were prompted by a vision and an atlas to scrape together money for passage and set off for the mysterious land of Brazil – this Nigerian

¹⁶ Mohr, "Out of Zion," 78.

movement's origin is located in the bush, next to a broken-down steamroller, under a hastily-built canopy of palm fronds. In both cases, what is more interesting historically is what happened next. How were the Aladuras able to spread? Where did Babalola hold his prayer meetings? How did the colonial government react? What exactly did Bablaola say and teach? In answering these questions, it becomes clear that the Aladura movement may have had indigenous origins, but its development made significant use of foreign support.

And yet, there is more to say here than simply: the Aladura movement also had foreign origins. Indeed, the indigenous/foreign lens does not always provide a useful way of looking at things. Generally speaking, a problem with how we look at the history of African Pentecostalism – and African Christianity in general – is that we get bogged down in indigenous/foreign debates. The history of Christianity in Africa has typically been written as the history of missionary activity and native response. More recent scholarship then often sets out to revise this narrative by highlighting the indigenous origins of some African Christian churches, paying particular attention to the many prophets across the continent, like Babalola, who developed followings in the early 20th century. Much is often made of their illiteracy, and the fact that their ministries were divinely inspired, with the prophets' instructions coming not from missionaries but directly from God.

In the case of the history of Nigerian Pentecostalism, the indigenous/foreign paradigm predetermines certain narratives. On the one hand, we have the Pentecostalism-came-out-of-the-entirely-native-Aladura-movement-of-the-1930s-and-40s narrative described above, an account embraced by most denominational historians of the Christ Apostolic Church. On the other hand, there is the American-and-British-missionaries-brought-Pentecostalism-to-

Nigeria-in-the- 1970s-and-80s narrative, popularized by Matthews Ojo and Ruth Marshall and presumed by most casual historians of Nigerian and global Pentecostalism.¹⁷ This chapter, however, rather than passing judgment on whether twentieth-century Nigerian Pentecostalism is more foreign or more indigenous, seeks to dispense with the indigenous/foreign question as much as possible. It does so by focusing on the *interactions* between Nigerian, American, and British actors and agents in the development of Pentecostalism in Nigeria, a development which began with the establishment of the Aladura churches, chief among them the Christ Apostolic Church. These actors include prophets, missionaries, evangelists, believers, and colonial government officials.

By focusing on these interactions, this chapter seeks to provide an example of a way to study a global movement that gets beyond the assumptions a globalization framework so often imposes. As Africanist Frederick Cooper has noted, globalization is not necessarily a useful category of analysis, especially not for historians. As he has suggested, when it comes to analyzing “processes that are large-scale, but not universal,” it is useful to pay attention to the “crucial linkages that cut across state borders and lives of cultural difference” *without* resorting to the now-hackneyed global/local paradigm which, one might argue, is essentially a new wineskin for these foreign/indigenous and missionary/native wines. Indeed, as Cooper writes, “that global should be contrasted with local even if the point is to analyze their mutual constitution only underscores the inadequacy of current analytical tools to analyze anything in between.” Rather than handicap one’s analytical prospects by insisting on global and local as primary categories of analysis, it is better, he says, to investigate these large-scale

¹⁷ Student Christian groups which developed on university campus in the 1960s and 70s were important motors of Pentecostal growth in Nigeria, but they are not where the movement originated. This wave of growth will be discussed in Chapter Four.

processes with as much historical specificity as possible. In fact, for Cooper, globalization is never a useful category of analysis because, being mutually constituted, the global and the local are not analytically separable.¹⁸ The salient question when it comes to Babalola, the Aladura movement, foreigners, and the development of Nigerian Pentecostalism is not which aspects came from within and which from without, but rather in what ways and to what degree were foreign influences significant?

Beginning with the questions above, this chapter looks at the interactions between the various agents and actors involved in the development of the Aladura movement, considering the specific contexts and particular reasons for their engagement with each other. It focuses on two areas, logistical and doctrinal. The logistical argument, which has a strong political component, is that Babalola and the men who supported and organized much of his itinerant preaching – namely, the leadership of the Faith Tabernacle Congregation of Nigeria – reached out to foreigners to help facilitate their work. This was necessary because mainline missionaries and native pastors, at first supportive of Babalola’s revival efforts, soon became unwilling to work with him. It was also necessary because the Aladuras emerged at a time of tax protests, and the colonial government was made uneasy by any large native gathering. Thus, in the 1930s, during the very first years of the Aladura movement, invited foreign missionaries served as essential political fixers for the emerging movement. Nigerian Pentecostalism, from the very beginning, combined indigenous initiative with foreign support.

¹⁸ Frederick Cooper, “What is the Concept of Globalization Good For? An African Historian’s Perspective,” *African Affairs* 100 (2001): 191.

The doctrinal argument is that some of Babalola's teaching was directly influenced by foreign evangelists; that is, some of what he taught and published in Yoruba was a direct translation of material written by an American healing evangelist and provided to Babalola by a renegade British missionary in the 1940s. We see, then, that once the Aladura movement was firmly established and institutionalized, foreigners became a source of theological ideas and spiritual practices, something which has never before been recognized. This is significant because it shows that the key figures in the development of the Christ Apostolic Church in the 1940s were influenced by the same ideas and evangelists who influenced campus Christian groups which emerged in the 1960s and helped popularize Pentecostalism among the young, urban, and upwardly mobile. It also demonstrates the mutual constitution of American and Nigerian Pentecostalism by exploring how an American healing evangelist influenced the growth of the global movement on both continents at the same time. In other words, instead of emerging *first* in the US and *then* being taken to Africa, Pentecostalism's development in both places was co-eval.

“We As Africans Need a Man From You”: The Prophet Babalola, the Faith Tabernacle, and the Apostolic Church

In May of 1931, Pastor David Odubanjo, secretary of the Faith Tabernacle Congregation, Lagos, Nigeria, sent a letter to the missionary board of the Apostolic Church, a British church which had grown out of the 1904 Welsh Revival.¹⁹ This hopeful, idealistic letter (reminiscent

¹⁹ The Welsh Revival was a movement led by Evan Roberts, a young man who, like Babalola and other prophets, claimed to receive visions directly from the Holy Spirit. The revival swept across Wales into Scotland and England during 1904 and 1905. It is estimated that as many as 100,000 people converted in Wales during that year and as many as one million in all of Britain. See J. Gwynfor Jones, “Reflections on the Religious Revival in Wales, 1904-05,” *Journal of the United Reformed Church History Society* 7, no. 7 (2005): 427-45.

of a fictional one once written by young Jane and Michael Banks) requested that the Apostolic Church send a missionary to Nigeria. It read, in part:

We as Africans need a man from you, full of the Holy Ghost, a gentleman, cheerful, sympathetic, unassuming, level-headed, law-abiding, non-fanatic, and lowly in nature . . . a spiritually devoted and elderly-mannered man with thorough education . . . a revivalist, good speaker and preacher, and one that makes himself accessible to all people, making no difference in his treatment on account of colour.”²⁰

The invitation was accepted. A few months later, the Apostolic Church sent three missionaries to Nigeria. Looking back forty years later, the Apostolic Church’s newspaper recalls:

They arrived in Lagos on 23rd September, 1931, and walked straight into a revival! The evangelical move of the Holy Spirit in Lagos and elsewhere, was striking, and these British Pastors followed it up by adding their preaching on the Baptism of the Holy Spirit exactly as in Bible days. The result was like a prairie fire. Multitudes of Africans received, Acts 2:4, and like the Book of Acts, there were many notable miracles of direct, divine healing among the multitudes.²¹

Clearly the Holy Spirit was already on the move in Lagos when the missionaries arrived, which begs the questions: Why was their presence necessary? What purpose did Odubanjo and the other Nigerians who headed the Faith Tabernacle hope these foreigners would serve? What happened when they arrived?

Missionaries were not necessary when Babalola first began his revival in 1929. At first, the Aladura movement was entangled with the denominational churches, who helped it grow. Babalola, through his healing services, created a demand for Christianity which, too

²⁰ “In Review: Nigerian Field, 1922-1972,” *Apostolic Herald*, August 1972, 150-51 in “D/D Ap: Apostolic Church Collection,” item 401, West Glamorgan Archive Service, Swansea, Wales.

²¹ “Recall and Rejoice,” *Apostolic Herald*, June 1971, 114, D/D Ap 391.

large for the tiny Faith Tabernacle Congregation to handle, was met by various local churches. Unlike in Brazil, where the *Assembléia de Deus*'s early growth was achieved by poaching members from mainline churches, the Aladuras' early growth actually contributed members to mainline churches. Indeed, the mainline churches facilitated – even enabled – the early, exponential growth of the movement.

While it is true that, as happened in the Baptist congregation in Pará, some people were forced out of mainline churches when they decided to follow Babalola,²² many more were welcomed into mainline churches after deciding to become Christian at Babalola's healing services. For example, after the Ilesha revival of 1930, "the congregation of saints at Faith Tabernacle Ilesa rose from sixty to two thousand; the African Church baptized six hundred and fifty new converts; the Anglican (CMS) Church admitted three hundred and twenty six into the new converts class."²³ All the thousands of people who attended Babalola's revivals, threw their household idols into the piles to be burned, and turned to Jesus needed churches to attend when the prophet moved on, and the Faith Tabernacle did not have nearly enough teachers, facilities, or funds to help them all. Mainline churches thus overflowed with eager new converts. The situation became complicated, however, as pastors and missionaries debated the readiness of these folks for baptism and full church membership.

Looking specifically at the Nigerian Baptist Convention's response to Babalola's 1930 Ilesha revival provides a concrete example of the pattern of negotiation and competition

²² J. D. Y. Peel discusses this in *Aladura: A Religious Movement Among the Yoruba* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1968), 91-105.

²³ John Odunayo Ojo, *The Life and Ministry of Apostle Joseph Ayo Babalola* (Lagos: The Prayer Band Publications, 1988) 73.

that characterized the relationship between the Aladura movement and the denominational churches generally, a pattern which set the stage for the Faith Tabernacle's decision to seek affiliation with the Apostolic Church in 1931. Baptist records show that, at first, Baptist leaders praised Babalola. For example, the minutes of the Ekiti Divisional Conference, a meeting of Nigerian Baptist leaders, in December of 1930 record several statements made in support of Babalola's work. One pastor thanked God for "the conversion of many adults in the town through the movement of the Aladura, Joseph Babalola the prophet whom God raised up by this time." Another added that "we too have many things to thank God for, namely; the conversion of many adults, over 50, through the prophet movement," while his wife spoke "on the good effect of the Prophet movement in the Ikogosi town." From these statements we can conclude that one effect of Babalola's revival was to increase the number of people seeking baptism into Baptist churches.²⁴

Not all of the representatives present at this meeting agreed with these assessments. Some cautioned against a wholehearted embrace of the Aladuras. For example, the minutes also report that D.O. Togun and T.O. Dawodu, pastors with close ties to white Baptist missionaries, "rose up after each other and warned the audience seriously to be very careful with regard to the Aladura movement."²⁵ Yet, even they were conflicted about how to respond to this windfall of potential new converts that Babalola's revival attracted. Despite his warning, less than a year later Dawodu himself invited Babalola to preach at his own church, the prominent Idikan Baptist Church of Ibadan, the largest city in Yorubaland and in

²⁴ "Brief Report from Churches," Minutes of Ekiti Divisional Conference of the Araromi-Ebenezer Baptist Mission, Erusu, 12-14 December 1930 in "NBC Minutes of EC and and CBC, 1929-1947" Collection, Accesssion #19042, Nigerian Baptist Theological Seminary Library and Archives.

²⁵ Ibid.

all of sub-Saharan Africa. According to *The Yoruba News*, 3,000 people attended the first day and 4,000 the second. The inside of the church was filled to the brim, the extra pews that had been placed outside were overflowing, and hundreds sat on the ground. According the reporter, “Rev. T.O. Dawodu who declared the gathering opened with songs and prayer told people present that: the day’s meeting was the Gathering of Exhortation and Prayer for whoever wants to ask for anything from God that night, and that, water and buckets were not allowed in the church from anyone except faith alone.”²⁶

Dawodu’s actions are a striking example of the contradictory Baptist response. He was skeptical of the movement, yet he invited Babalola to preach at his church, albeit with the restriction that there would be no water and no buckets allowed. As for Babalola, even though healing with water was the center point of his ministry, and people often came with buckets full of water for him to bless, he agreed to the restriction. Instead of praying over water, he preached. As *The Yoruba News* reported it, his sermon “unveiled various mysteries as regards the meaning of Trinity in such a way that it was clear to anyone present; hardly can there be anyone who will claim not to understand what was explained.” It must have been a constant negotiation for Dawodu and men like him: how to get Aladura-sized crowds without betraying mainline sensibilities? The Aladura movement was attractive to Baptists because it increased the number of people seeking conversion. If Dawodu is any example, it appears some dealt with the challenge by doing their best to hedge their bets. Meanwhile, Babalola hedged his bets as well, taking advantage of an opportunity to build both his audience and his reputation.

²⁶ “Woli Joseph Babalola,” *The Yoruba News*, 17 November 1931, Nigerian National Archives, trans. Ayodele Olofintuade.

This was not an ideal situation for either side. Babalola was limited in how he was able to practice his healing ministry, while pastors were put in a position of having to decide whether to bypass the usual preparatory steps and baptize people who had converted at Babalola's healing services. For the Baptists, this dilemma created a controversy which came to a head in April 1932, about a month after Babalola's visit to the Idikan Baptist Church. Minutes of a meeting of the Executive Committee of the Nigerian Baptist Convention, a group which included both Nigerians and missionaries, record a "warm discussion" over the baptism of 1,800 people by Reverend D.O. Togun of Efon Alaye. A report on the incident written by a committee sent to investigate recommended "1st that he should be reprimanded [sic], second that the baptism should not be recognized third that he should apologise for doing so."²⁷ While these minutes make no direct reference to Babalola, Efon Alaye was the location of some of his largest revival meetings and the minutes of the annual meeting, held a few days later, describe prophets who gather large crowds by healing with water and promising free salvation. According to one report, the Baptist church there had only about 43 members with an average attendance of about 177 every Sunday.²⁸ It is hardly surprising that its pastor would be eager to baptize the 1,800 who presented themselves, as it would dramatically increase the size of his congregation.

If the Baptists did not take in the new converts, someone else would. After all, the Methodists were doing it. As a 1931 Methodist report puts it:

²⁷ Minutes of Executive Committee Meeting, Nigerian Baptist Convention, Ebenezer Baptist Church, Lagos, 1 April 1932, "NBC Minutes of EC and and CBC, 1929-1947," Roberson Collection, Nigerian Baptist Theological Seminary.

²⁸ Minutes of Annual Meeting, Nigerian Baptist Convention, Lagos, 4-6 April 1932, "NBC Minutes of EC and and CBC, 1929-1947."

The work of organizing and directing the people touched by the Aladura was left to the churches. This work was done. The catechumen classes are kept very busy, teaching the Aladura converts to read and understand Scriptures.²⁹

Indeed, it appears the majority of mainline churches preferred this system to allowing one of the African-led Faith Tabernacle churches to open nearby. In August of 1932, a group of Christians gathered at Ilesha and recommended to the king (owa) that he reject the application of “the Faith Tabernacle apostolic church or other titles under which their work is carried on, to extend the said work in Ilesha or District, on the grounds, that the doctrines of this church are detrimental to the well-being of the community at large.”³⁰ The mission churches, long used to cooperating with each other, were reluctant to allow the Aladura upstart onto their turf.

In many ways, when it came to the draw of the Aladura movement, these mainline leaders were caught between a rock and a hard place. They had two choices: lose out on the opportunity to increase their numbers by thousands, or baptize people without the necessary preparation to join their congregations. And they did not all agree on the best course of action. Archdeacon Henry Dallimore of the CMS church in Ekiti complained of “the willingness of the imported ‘Baptist’ pastor to baptise those whom the discipline of properly constituted Churches refuse.”³¹ His own position was strongly against “baptizing masses of illiterate, and un-informed people;” he believed that at least a year of instruction is necessary

²⁹ *54th Annual Report of Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society* as quoted in Peel, *Aladura*, 101.

³⁰ This petition was signed on behalf of the Ilesha Christian Community by J.O. Olorunyomi and Jacob Agbeiro of the David Oni Baptist Church. Source: Olorunyomi Journal (excerpts of journal kept by Rev. James Osadare Olorunyomi, translated from Yoruba by unknown, typed by Mr. and Mrs. Cecil Roberson), 22 Aug 1932, “Roberson Collection,” Nigerian Baptist Theological Seminary Library and Archives.

³¹ Henry Dallimore to District Officer, Ekiti, 10 July 1931 in “EKITI DIV 1/1,” Nigerian National Archives.

before baptism, “both as a test of keenness and to secure some knowledge of the Christian Faith,” and that this instruction should include literacy, so that “all people who are not really old must learn to read that they may read the Bible for themselves.”³² This may have been the extreme end of what mainline churches might expect of their new members, but most did expect at least some educational preparation, if only regular attendance at Sunday School.

As the denominational churches lost their enthusiasm for the new converts and stopped baptizing them, Babalola and the Faith Tabernacle leaders (who, as explained at the beginning of this chapter, had joined forces in 1929) had to find a way to establish more congregations themselves. Without the missionary support that the mainline churches received, the Faith Tabernacle found it difficult to compete. They lacked funds to build churches and men to lead them. This is why they had been willing to cooperate with the Baptists and others, agreeing to their restrictions in order to use their facilities and send them their converts, and this is why they found themselves in such a bind when the mission churches withdrew their support. The Faith Tabernacle was on its own.

Even though they continued to maintain the name Faith Tabernacle, circulate Philadelphia literature at Babalola’s revivals,³³ and keep the faith-healing doctrine as their central focus,³⁴ there was no longer any institutional relationship between the Nigerian and

³² Henry Dallimore to District Officer, Ekiti, 3 April 1931.

³³ Assistant District Officer, Ilesha to District Officer, Ife, 13 Aug 1930, “Appendix II,” 304 reports that Babalola uses pamphlets from Faith Tabernacle which “appeal to faith and nothing more” and that he preaches out of the Bible; Commissioner of Police, Calabar Province to District Officer, Ibadan, 18 July 1933, “Appendix II,” 301 mentions that Babalola has “publications of American origin.”

³⁴ Henry Dallimore to District Officer, Ekiti, 8 July 1931 outlines several concerns with Aladuras: “I also find that it is being commonly reported that the C.M.S. allows medicine. If this means “magic” I think that the Aladuras are spreading a libel of a very incriminating nature. If it means medical treatment, it simply shows, what is so much to be feared, that these people are simply spreading the teaching of the Faith Tabernacle.”

Philadelphia congregations after the 1926 split. And, even when there had been, no Faith Tabernacle missionaries had ever visited Nigeria, as the church policy was to conduct all evangelistic activity by correspondence. Without any outside support at all, the Faith Tabernacle of Nigeria remained too small an institution to accommodate all the new Christians. So, while the denominational churches had facilitated the early growth of the movement by baptizing the thousands of Babalola's followers who burned their household idols and clamored for the healing power of Jesus, Babalola and his associates soon found they needed to establish their own churches in order to continue to grow, and they needed help doing so.

This was necessary not only to provide a home for the new converts but also to ensure protection from concerned government officials, who typically took the perspective that, in the words of one Assistant District Officer, "movements which are innocent enough in their origins sometimes become troublesome later on."³⁵ Laws were on the books to keep the growth of African-led churches in check. As anthropologist Adam Mohr has learned through his privileged access to Faith Tabernacle of Philadelphia correspondence with their Nigerian affiliates, Nigerian pastors sometimes wrote letters begging for their pastoral credentials in order to avoid persecution by local district officers. The need for legitimacy in the eyes of the colonial government was essential.³⁶

What Babalola and the Faith Tabernacle leaders needed was an affiliation with another established church; they needed to invite missionaries into the country in order to provide leadership, contribute funds, train pastors, and bestow legitimacy in the eyes of the

³⁵ Assistant District Officer, Ilesha to District Officer, Ife, 13 August 1930, "Appendix II," 306.

³⁶ See Mohr, "Faith Tabernacle Congregation," 14.

government officials, who were increasingly suspicious of their activities. Without this support, they could not compete; indeed, without some sort of affiliation the government would likely try to shut them down. In fact, some government officials tried doing just that in 1932, finding Babalola guilty of “preaching against witches” and imprisoning him for six months in Benin City. This was seen by his many followers as evidence of the colonial government’s desire to destroy his ministry.³⁷ Colonial officers’ suspicions were encouraged by denominational church leaders. For example, when fulfilling the Oyo Province Resident’s request for an investigation of the Faith Tabernacle in Ilesha, the Assistant District Officer found that “the Wesleyan Mission feels its continued existence here to be seriously threatened and there is no doubt that considerable defections have already taken place both from them and from the C.M.S.” The officer concluded that the Faith Tabernacle’s efforts to found a new religious society “would appear to have as one of its aims the extinction of the Mission Societies.”³⁸

In order to avoid persecution by the British colonial government, which tended to view most African organizations as sites of potential revolutionary activity (especially in the 1930s when Yorubaland was in the midst of a series of tax revolts), the Nigerian Faith Tabernacle leaders knew they needed a new affiliation as soon as possible. As a “native” organization, and therefore as a perceived threat to the established, government-sanctioned Christian churches, the Nigerian church would have to have foreign support in order to afford it a degree of protection from concerned colonial officials. The Faith Tabernacle leaders

³⁷ Abi Olowe, *Great Revivals, Great Revivalist: Joseph Ayo Babalola* (Houston: Omega Publishers, 2007), 188.

³⁸ Assistant District Officer, Ilesha to Senior Resident, Oyo Province, 25 March 1931, “Appendix II,” 308.

needed places for the converts to go, European allies to advocate on their behalf with the government, and a reliable source of funding. These exigencies are what led to them sending off that letter to the Apostolic Church requesting “a man from you, full of the Holy Ghost, a gentleman, cheerful, sympathetic, unassuming, level-headed, law-abiding, non-fanatic, and lowly in nature”³⁹ in March of 1931.

Six months later, Daniel Powell Williams, Williams Jones Williams, and Andrew Turnbull arrived. D.P. Williams was the founder and president of the Apostolic Church; W. J. Williams was his brother; and Turnbull was the church’s vice president.⁴⁰ The missionaries’ purpose, as they explained it in an interview with the Assistant Police Commissioner in Ibadan a month after their arrival, was to support the Faith Tabernacle congregations and to coordinate faith healing movements. According to him, “they assorted [sic] that it was their desire to assist and uplift the followers of the Faith Tabernacle, for they understood that misunderstandings among the followers has caused trouble in Ilesha and the closing of some of their Churches.” They said that they had met with Babalola and explained that the meeting was made “with a view to absorbing him and his followers into the Apostolic Church provided Babalola accepted their teaching.”⁴¹

The Apostolic Church missionaries were not ideal, but they were likely the best the Nigerians could do. They were not ideal because, as this confidential memorandum (one of many such memoranda) suggests, these three missionaries sent by the Apostolic Church at

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Adeware Alokun, *The Christ Apostolic Church: C.A.C. 1928-1988* (Ibukunola Printers Nigeria Ltd., 1991), 153.

⁴¹ Assistant Commissioner of Police, Oyo-Ondo Province, Ibadan to The Resident, Oyo Province, 29 October 1931, “Appendix II,” 315-16.

the request of the Nigerian Faith Tabernacle were met with suspicion by the colonial government officials. Their permission to visit the country had not been endorsed by the British authorities but rather by the Vice Consul of the United States in Lagos.⁴² In a confidential response to a telegram requesting information on them, which was sent shortly after their arrival by the Resident of Oyo Province, the Assistant Commissioner of Police for the province shared what he knew of the three men and assured the Resident, “I have . . . arranged for them to be watched.” He made subtle note of their social class, lower than that of most colonial officers, describing them as “ex-miners” and “a Glasgow man” who “are in possession of second-class return passages.”⁴³ After the Resident met with them himself a couple of weeks later, he described them in similarly disparaging terms, reporting that “the Williamses are typical Welsh revivalists, they have pronounced Welsh accents” and “Turnbull is a silent Scot.” He was dismissive of the claim to Englishness of one of the Williams brothers, writing that “W.J. [states] that he is qualified by residence to represent England because he lives at Bradford.”⁴⁴

When the Police Commissioner met with them himself a week later, he took a hard line: “I informed them that so far as the Residents of Oyo and Ondo Provinces and myself as Commissioner of Police were concerned no breaches of the law would be passed over and that any tendency towards unorthodox and anti capital preaching would be strongly

⁴² Assistant Commissioner of Police, Oyo-Ondo Province, Ibadan to the Resident, Oyo Province, 6 October 1931, “Appendix II,” 313. This meant that the Vice Consul, who had a personal relationship with the Philadelphia Faith Tabernacle, promised to finance their return to the UK should they be unable to do so themselves.

⁴³ Assistant Commissioner of Police, Oyo-Ondo Province, Ibadan to The Resident, Oyo Province, 6 October 1931, “Appendix II,” 313.

⁴⁴ The Resident, Oyo Province to Commissioner of Police, Ibadan, 23 October 1931, “Appendix II,” 314. Class was a significant issue here.

deprecated and checked at once.”⁴⁵ A few months earlier, the Assistant District Officer of Ilesha had suggested a particular section of the Criminal Code which could be used to prosecute Babalola, Faith Tabernacle leaders, and other Aladura prophets whose presence in communities threatened the vitality of the mainline missions.⁴⁶ When the Apostolic Church missionaries arrived to offer their support, they were not warmly welcomed by the government. The Police Commissioner seemed to sum up the attitude of all the officials involved by concluding, “The three of them appear to be well meaning fanatics who might do more useful work at home.”⁴⁷

The Nigerian leaders of the Faith Tabernacle, who were soon ordained as Apostolic Church ministers, would have disagreed with this assessment. These first three missionaries and the others who followed them over the next two decades had very useful work to do in Nigeria: they contributed to the development of the movement started when Babalola and the Faith Tabernacle had joined forces by providing legitimacy, appointing native pastors, performing baptisms, opening schools, continuing the focus on healing, and distributing literature. The Nigerians wanted them there. Indeed, they depended on them. George Perfect, who arrived in Lagos shortly after the initial delegation departed in order to supervise the Apostolic Church’s work in Nigeria in the 1930s, found that the Nigerians seemed “imbued with the idea of the superiority of the European in matters Christian” and tended “to think that the European must, of necessity, be better able to lead and shepherd the flock than the

⁴⁵ Assistant Commissioner of Police, Oyo-Ondo Province, Ibadan to The Resident, Oyo Province, 29 October 1931, “Appendix II,” 316-17.

⁴⁶ Assistant District Officer, Ilesha to Senior Resident, Oyo Province, 25 March 1931, “Appendix II,” 309.

⁴⁷ Assistant Commissioner of Police, Oyo-Ondo Province, Ibadan to The Resident, Oyo Province, 29 October 1931, “Appendix II,” 316-17.

African.”⁴⁸ This may have been true, but it also could be that the Nigerians were simply more savvy; they knew that the realities of life under the British meant that white missionaries were useful allies. They wanted their own foreign benefactors, perhaps, as one Apostolic Church missionary later suggested, “to use as a cloak to protect them.”⁴⁹ And, indeed, in the 1930s the Apostolic Church missionaries did occasionally serve as advocates, intervening with colonial government on behalf of church members. For example, one reported doing so in Ekeya “on behalf of certain of our church members who had been wrongly punished by the native law.” He met with the District Officer there, who “promised to do what he could,” and shortly thereafter the matter was resolved.⁵⁰

Even more important than their advocacy was their willingness to baptize converts. It was one of first purposes of the Apostolic Church missionaries in the years before many Nigerians had been trained and appointed as pastors themselves. This was very important because it helped disentangle the Aladuras from the denominational churches, allowing the movement Babalola had sparked to continue to grow under its own auspices. Indeed, evidence from Apostolic Church missionary reports, published in the church’s monthly magazines, show that one of the Apostolic Church missionaries’ main preoccupations throughout the 1930s was to raise enough money to travel from village to village, preaching and performing baptisms. For example, in 1934 Pastor Noah Evans reported conducting several baptism ceremonies during a sixteen-day tour of villages outside Calabar, in eastern

⁴⁸ George Perfect, “Nigeria’s Obstacles, ---- And Gratitude,” *Apostolic Herald*, March 1933, 7 (from private collection of Adam Mohr).

⁴⁹ From a letter Elton wrote to a District Officer, quoted in Abodunde, *A Herald of the Last Days*,” 26, no citation given.

⁵⁰ “Interior Calabar’s desperate need. Finding of Pastor Vaughan’s expedition to Cross River District,” *Apostolic Herald*, May 1936, 11, D/D Ap 174.

Nigeria. 29 people were baptized in one village, 115 in another, and 72 in a third. In addition to those baptized, “so many decided for Christ in response to the ministry that it was impossible to count them.”⁵¹

The missionaries also worked with the Nigerian leaders in order to train men to preach and perform baptisms themselves. In Ilesha, for example, the Apostolic Church missionary helped raise funds for the construction of a building for the Ilesha Bible School, a school which one of the Nigerian Apostolic Church leaders, Pastor Babatope, had established to train men to teach and lead the many assemblies that had formed in the Ilesha area. Once the school was built, the missionary became one of the instructors. The reason he gave for his dedication to the project is the same reason denominational churches had given for their caution in baptizing Babalola’s followers: “It soon became apparent that something must be done to instruct those who had been converted.”⁵² The number of church members had grown too quickly for one man to be able to teach them all himself. Indeed, the missionary describes how “on Sundays, so vast were the masses who gathered to hear the Word that it was often necessary for three speakers to address different sections of the crowd at the same time.”⁵³

The Apostolic Church missionaries founded schools for children as well as for pastors. As was the case with missionaries throughout the world, one of the reasons the Apostolic Church missionaries were welcomed into communities was because they brought schools with them. It was a win-win; Nigerians increased their educational opportunities

⁵¹ “Fresh Foot-Prints. A Monthly Review of Missionary Activities,” *Apostolic Herald*, January 1935, 7, D/D Ap 172.

⁵² S. G. Elton, “Studies in Black and White,” *Apostolic Herald*, July 1938, 51, D/D Ap 177.

⁵³ *Ibid.*

(often from nothing) and missionaries increased their numbers of church members. They thought of founding schools as setting bait. For example, one missionary wrote of Agbor, a town about forty miles outside of Benin City, that “here in this particular part of Nigeria, the bait that the Lord is employing to catch the children is the schools, and through the children He reaches the parents.”⁵⁴ Another reported how one group of villagers, very proud of their new Apostolic school, “tried for a long time to persuade me to allow them to add further standards [grades] to it,” something he declined to do as he could not provide the necessary teaching staff.⁵⁵

In addition to attracting people by establishing schools, the Apostolic Church missionaries also helped bring people into the movement by continuing the emphasis on healing, which remained the heart of the movement. An example of how this focus continued to bring converts into the church was given by an Ilesha-based missionary in an article he wrote for *The Apostolic Herald*, the Apostolic Church’s monthly missionary magazine. A young Nigerian man, studying abroad, became sick and had to return home. His family practiced traditional religion, but they had heard about the Apostolic Church’s teaching “that god hears and answers the prayer of faith for the sick” and asked the local pastor to visit. This man, a Nigerian, came immediately and prayed for the young man. Even though this had no apparent effect, for “the sick man himself does not look as though he has received a Divine touch,” the pastor’s visit had a strong impact on the relatives. According to the report, “all

⁵⁴ J. Kirkwood, “News from Nigeria,” *Apostolic Herald*, October 1952, 165 D/D Ap 203.

⁵⁵ S. G. Elton, “Happy Days in Ilesha,” *Herald of Grace*, November 1945, 205, D/D Ap 425.

have given up their idols, confessed their sins and accepted Jesus as their Saviour.”⁵⁶ Healing brought people to the church.

Indeed, as this chapter has shown so far, healing is what brought people to the church from the very beginning of the Aladura movement, when Babalola first began traveling from town to town blessing water and burning idols. Indeed, it brought so many that Babalola and the Faith Tabernacle Congregation of Nigeria needed help managing them all. At first the mainline churches cooperated, happy to reap this remarkable harvest of new converts and reluctant to cede any of their turf, but they soon changed course, unwilling to baptize people who were not properly prepared for church membership, no matter how enthusiastic those people were. At this point, the Faith Tabernacle leaders decided to seek another source of support, which they found in the Apostolic Church who sent missionaries eager to enter this open door to the Nigerian mission field. While they were met with suspicion by colonial government officers and mainline missionaries, who were wary of the newcomers’ fringe beliefs and lower-class origins, the Apostolic Church missionaries were welcomed by the Faith Tabernacle congregations, with whom they quickly developed a mutually beneficial relationship; the Nigerians gained funds, teachers, and a degree of protection from government interference, while the British church gained the status that comes with operating an international evangelical project. By 1940, the Apostolic Church had over 265 mission stations in Nigeria. They had a presence not only in Yorubaland, but in the Eastern and Northern Regions as well, including in Calabar and in Zaria.⁵⁷

⁵⁶ Kirkwood, “News from Nigeria,” 166.

⁵⁷ “Across the Seas,” *Apostolic Herald (Australasian Issue)*, August 1936, 58, D/D Ap 176 and “News in Tabloid Form,” *Apostolic Herald*, July 1938, ii, D/D Ap 177.

Pa Elton, Franklin Hall, and *Great Power Through Prayer and Fasting*

Perhaps the most influential of all the Apostolic Church missionaries was Sidney Granville Elton. An orphan from a socialist family, he had converted to Christianity in his late twenties after attending church with his landlord's niece, the woman who became his wife in 1930. Soon after marrying, the two of them became Pentecostal at the Apostolic Church in their Shrewsbury neighborhood, and in 1934 Elton received prophetic word that he would become a missionary in Ilesha.⁵⁸ He arrived there in 1937, his wife and daughter followed shortly after, and he served as an Apostolic Church missionary for eighteen years until 1954 when the mission board dismissed him from his position. The reason for Elton's dismissal was the controversy he had created by inviting the Canadian leaders of the Latter Rain Movement to Nigeria, a polarizing movement which embraced the contested practice of imparting spiritual gifts through the laying-on of hands.⁵⁹

Instead of returning to England after losing his missionary post, Elton stayed in Nigeria with his family, living out the rest of his life in Ilesha. Becoming a sort of renegade evangelist, he worked with the Christ Apostolic Church throughout the 1950s and 60s. Later, he became involved with charismatic prayer groups that emerged on university campuses in the late 1960s (groups which will be discussed in Chapter Four), linking university students with prominent, American healing evangelists like Gordon Lindsay and T.L. Osborn. For more than thirty years, from his dismissal from the Apostolic Church up until his death in 1987, Pa Elton, as he came to be known, was instrumental in disseminating foreign

⁵⁸ Abodunde, *A Herald of the Last Days*, 16-20.

⁵⁹ For a thorough accounting of events, see Ayodeji Abodunde, *A Herald of the Last Days*. Abodunde is currently at work on a longer biography of Elton, who was a crucial lynchpin in the development of transatlantic Pentecostal networks and well-deserving of further study.

evangelical literature and making transatlantic connections, becoming a vital nexus in a network of evangelists, pastors, and believers. Yet little is known about the role he played as a distributor of tracts in the 1940s and 50s, as most of the scholarly focus has been on Elton's networking in the late 1960s, 70s and 80s. The evidence which will be discussed here suggests that some of this literature came to have a significant influence on the Aladura movement.

Specifically, in the 1940s and 50s, Elton distributed books and pamphlets written by Franklin Hall. Hall was a California-based healing evangelist whose first significant campaign was a 1946 revival focused on healing through fasting and prayer. Hall published prolifically in the 1940s through the 1970s, and a primary focus of his ministry was to print and ship his newsletters, books, and pamphlets around the world. They circulated in the United States and West Africa, influencing both American healing evangelists and Nigerian Christians. Scholars of Nigerian Pentecostalism are aware that Hall developed relationships, facilitated by Elton, with campus ministry leaders in the 1970s, and that he travelled to Nigeria in 1975 to visit universities in Ibadan, Lagos, and Ilorin. He has been described as having had "the most sustained ministry" on the 1970s college campuses which served as crucibles for the development of the charismatic movement. His newsletter was circulated among campus charismatics who "were fascinated with the testimonies of miraculous healings and divine protection that featured regularly in the magazine." But, as a close look

at his archive reveals, his influence in Nigeria actually began in the 1940s, two decades earlier than has previously been realized.⁶⁰

It turns out that Hall had established a presence via his literature well before the rise of the student groups in the 1970s. The first, and most widely-circulated, of his booklets was *Atomic Power with God with Fasting and Prayer*, published in 1946. Evidence of his early influence includes a letter, sent to Hall from the Eastern Region of Nigeria on May 19, 1947, which mentions *Atomic Power*. That the letter was published in Hall's newsletter as "another letter from Oron, South Nigeria, West Africa," suggests it was not the first he received from there. It reads in part:

Dear Brother Hall:

I have long known the value of a few days of prayer, but lately I have felt a longing for something deeper, but I never knew what it was. Your book proved to be the answer. How happy I am that I can get so much closer to the Lord in fastings. I previously did not know how to fast more than four days. I believe the contents of "Atomic Prayer With God" to be a Heavenly revelation.

Your brother in Christ,
J. U. U. (West Africa)⁶¹

Even more surprising than this evidence of Hall's earlier influence in Nigeria is the fact that it appears that Babalola, the leading Aladura prophet himself, was directly influenced by Hall's literature.

⁶⁰ Matthews A. Ojo, *The End-Time Army: Charismatic Movements in Modern Nigeria* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2006), 42, 49, 74. The earliest Ojo allows is the 1960s: "There was a testimony in the 1960s from a pastor in Uyo, who claimed that fasting had healed him. See Franklin Hall, *Faith Treatments* (Phoenix, 1967), pp. 30-31." This is endnote 72 in Ojo, *End-Time Army*, 56.

⁶¹ Franklin Hall, *The Fasting Prayer* (Phoenix: Franklin Hall, 1947), 78.

What Babalola taught about fasting, a practice which was not part of his original focus on water and healing but which came to be a main focus of his sometime in the 1940s, shows that Hall had direct impact on Babalola, his followers, and the churches that developed out of his revival. Babalola published a slim, Yoruba-language pamphlet, *Great Power Through Prayer and Fasting*, sometime after 1945, when he first began to publish pamphlets, and before July 1959, when he died. The tract includes a list of “90 Reasons Why We Should Fast,”⁶² apparently patterned on one that Hall published, “80 Reasons Why We Should Fast.”⁶³

Here are five of Babalola’s and Hall’s reasons:

Babalola, Reason 41. Fasting is the biggest way to healing.

Hall, Reason 41. Fasting is the greatest curative agency known.

Babalola 42. Fasting is the fastest way to healing known to man.

Hall 42. Fasting is the quickest curative agency known.

Babalola 43. When you are feeding a body that is sick, you are also feeding the sickness. Fasting starves sickness.

Hall 43. When you feed a diseased body you feed the disease; fasting starves the disease.

Babalola 44. Fasting helps to clear all the waste products debris and other poisonous things that came as a result of overeating from the body.

Hall 44. Fasting rids the body of practically all the unwanted poisonous filth of autointoxication.

Babalola 45. Fasting makes the fountain of blood pure and holy.

Hall 45. Fasting purifies the blood stream.⁶⁴

⁶² Joseph Ayo Babalola, trans. Moses Olulele Idowu, *Great Power Through Prayer and Fasting* (Lagos: Moses Idowu Outreach Ministries, 1999 (orig. pub. circa 1950)).

⁶³ Franklin Hall, “80 Reasons Why We Should Fast,” Hall Deliverance Foundation, nd.

⁶⁴ Babalola, *Great Power Through Prayer and Fasting*, 15; Franklin Hall, “80 Reasons Why We Should Fast.” (A note on numbering: Babalola’s pamphlet breaks the list into two groups; Babalola’s number one on the second group is the same as Hall’s number 41.)

The parallels are clear. In fact, allowing for the alterations which would have occurred with translation from English to Yoruba and back to English, these statements are similar enough to be considered nearly identical.

But if Babalola's pamphlet reproduced Hall's, how did this happen? It was probably through the efforts of Pa Elton. Joseph Babalola and Pa Elton knew each other. Entries in Babalola's journal reveal that the two men kept up a correspondence and met in person. For example, Babalola noted in his journal that he received "a letter from S.G. Elton Oke Ooye Ilesha" in February of 1953 and that "Pastor Elton came from Ilesha" in June of 1954.⁶⁵ Given Elton's fluency in Yoruba and English, along with his commitment to circulating evangelical literature, it is likely that Elton provided Babalola with Hall's pamphlet and helped him translate it into Yoruba. Hall's direct influence on Babalola's thinking, writing, and preaching has never before come to light.

That it has now is significant to our understanding of Nigerian Pentecostal history, as well as global Pentecostal history, because it shows that Hall had influence in Nigeria in the 1940s, at the very same time that he was influencing American evangelists *and* at the same time that the Nigerian Aladura churches were developing. In other words, American and Nigerian Pentecostalism were co-eval, developing side by side, connected via literature to the same networks. Joseph Babalola and his teachings – the "local" in the conventionally understood local/global dynamic of emergent Nigerian Pentecostalism – were not as entirely "indigenous" as has been presumed. Babalola certainly had ideas of his own from the very

⁶⁵ Olowe, *Great Revivals, Great Revivalist*, 227-8. (Olowe reproduced and translated excerpts from Babalola's daily journal in his text.)

beginning: the importance of fasting, the possibility of healing without medicine, and the power of prayer. Yet, when given the opportunity, he borrowed language and concepts from foreign evangelist Franklin Hall in order to amplify, extend, and articulate his message.

Hall, meanwhile, has been given short shrift and essentially written out of Pentecostal history. A striking example of this is his utter absence from the 1,284-page *International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*.⁶⁶ Yet a close look at Hall's publications reveals that Hall had a profound influence on many of the leading healing evangelists of the second half of the twentieth century, including Walter Branham, T.L. Osborn, Katherine Kulhman, Gordon Lindsay, and others. In fact, many of them got their start at Hall's 1946 revival, either by attending or by reading material distributed there. For example, T.L. Osborn, who has been very influential in West and South Africa (through evangelistic tours and literature distribution), attended one of Hall's first fasting and prayer crusades in 1947.⁶⁷ He credited Hall with inspiring his ministry and requested more of his books to distribute. In a testimony, he told Hall:

It was by reading your books that we [my wife and I] were enabled to go into many days and weeks fasting and praying. . . . My life was so changed that God began using me in the healing ministry. . . . Brother Hall, we wanted you to know, we do appreciate your vision, and the tremendous way you have STIRRED THE WORLD with FASTING AND PRAYER. We shall do all we can to push that part of the Gospel. We are going to handle your books in our meetings and shall order them in large quantities. You may send me one thousand of your, "Because of Your Unbelief," revival booklets.⁶⁸

⁶⁶ Stanley M. Burgess, ed., *The New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements, Revised and Expanded Edition* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2003).

⁶⁷ For evidence of this, see the photograph of the crusade Hall held in Portland Oregon on 12 February 1947, reproduced on the back cover of Franklin Hall, *Because of Your Unbelief* (Hall Deliverance Foundation, 1975, orig. pub. 1947).

⁶⁸ Franklin Hall, *Atomic Power with God with Fasting and Prayer* (Phoenix: Frankling Hall, 1973 (orig. pub. 1946)), 2-3. (The book opens with printed testimonies from T. L. Osborn and others.)

Gordon Lindsay, a key figure in coordinating healing evangelists in the 1940s and 50s, also thanked Hall for his influence and praised his book, writing to Hall to praise *Atomic Power with God* as “the book of the hour for believers” and gushing that “we know of no writer whom God has so signally used to bring out Scriptural truth on fasting, as Evangelist Franklin Hall.” Of “The Voice of Healing Magazine,” the organizing mouthpiece of the healing evangelists in the 1940s which Lindsay edited, he wrote that “many of the associates . . . feel that fasting and prayer should have an important place in a successful salvation-healing ministry.”⁶⁹

This detour into American Pentecostal history is necessary because all of the healing evangelists associated with Lindsay and Hall have had a profound influence on contemporary West African charismatic Christianity. They have made dozens of visits to the continent where they have held widely-attended revivals. Their books are available in most Christian bookstores and their articles are published in charismatic magazines. Hall is relatively unknown in the annals of Pentecostal history, but these healing evangelists who were influenced by Hall’s teachings certainly are not. Through the networks they developed, evangelists like Hall, Lindsay, Osborn, and their colleagues, who were on the religious fringe in their home countries, were embraced in Nigeria where their beliefs, which were considered outlandish by many at home, were accepted as credible by many Nigerians who were already practicing spirit-centered, healing Christianity. These developing relationships were mutually beneficial, enabling each marginalized side to gain status from their new

⁶⁹ Hall, *Atomic Power*, 3.

“international” affiliations, allowing their participants to move away from the fringe and toward the mainstream.

Why does this matter when it comes to understanding the subject of this chapter: the early years of Pentecostalism in Nigeria? It matters because it historicizes the contemporary Pentecostal movement in Nigeria by revealing the kind of relationships that developed between Nigerian and foreign Pentecostals in the 1930s and 40s. The Nigerian Faith Tabernacle turned to the British Apostolic Church for institutional, political and logistical support. The Nigerian prophet Babalola turned to the publications of American Franklin Hall for new ways to conceive and express his teachings. Both the structure and the doctrine of Nigerian Pentecostalism were influenced in its earliest years by foreigners, but in both cases by foreigners who were invited and welcomed, not because they were bringing something new, but because they were able to provide support for a thriving movement which already had plenty of momentum on its own.

CHAPTER THREE

Becoming Pentecostal in Brazil and Nigeria

While the first two chapters discussed the origins of Pentecostal institutions, this chapter turns to the people who joined the new churches. Specifically, it examines the growth of Pentecostalism in Brazil and Nigeria the 1930s, 40s and 50s by asking, why did people join the *Assembléia de Deus* and the Christ Apostolic Church during these decades? Answering this question involves answering two related questions: what attracted people to Pentecostal churches, and how did these churches focus their efforts to attract and retain members?

Guided by the available sources, this chapter focuses more on church members for Brazil and more on church leadership for Nigeria. The sources for Brazil are a large collection of detailed testimonies submitted by individual *Assembléia* members and published in the *Assembléia's* newspaper, *O Mensageiro da Paz (The Messenger of Peace)*. These testimonies offer a window into Brazilians' motives for joining the church. The sources for Nigeria are more diffuse. The Christ Apostolic Church had no substantial counterpart to the *Mensageiro da Paz*, but the historical record offers a variety of memoirs, denominational histories, newspapers, speeches, colonial correspondence, and personal conversations.

Taken together, these sources reveal that in both countries, as throughout the Pentecostal world, people were attracted to Pentecostalism's promise of health and healing.¹ In Nigeria, this was the primary attraction and central concern. The people who joined the Aladura movement and the Christ Apostolic Church were primarily women; they did so in large part because the churches offered sources of support during pregnancy and delivery, support which was especially attractive for the way it addressed both material and spiritual needs. In Brazil, however, while divine healing was a significant draw, there were a surprising number of other motivations as well, such as the appeal of Pentecostal doctrine and the promise of enduring happiness. The differences between the reasons people became Pentecostal in these two countries remind us that Pentecostalism's form and appeal has always varied with the different historical circumstances of each place where it emerged and grew. By examining the contextually specific motivations Brazilians and Nigerians had for becoming Pentecostal, this chapter illuminates the underwritten history of Pentecostalism in each country while supporting a larger argument of this dissertation: that Pentecostalism is, and always has been, different things to different people in different places.

At the same time, this chapter explores the similarities in Pentecostalism's appeal in both places – its promise of health, hope, and happiness – which remind us that what unifies Pentecostalism's various expressions is its focus on the miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit. All of the charismata are present, possible, and fundamental to the complete, unmediated, democratic practice of Pentecostal Christianity. The most important feature of the comparison this chapter undertakes is the way it illustrates just how central and vital

¹ This is always a preoccupation of religion, and it has been one of the primary reasons for the appeal of Pentecostalism in every time and place it has appeared.

continuous revelation has been to Pentecostalism's appeal and growth. The miracles, prophecies, visions, and healing which will be described here are instances of the ongoing presence of the charismata in the lives of Pentecostals. The revelations are ceaseless and expansive, as these miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit constantly appear in different places at different times, sprouting from the same meandering rootstalk. Taken together as a unit, this chapter and the two that preceded it demonstrate the rhizomic, revelatory nature of the global Pentecostal movement.

Brazil: Conversion Testimonies and the *Assembléia de Deus*

Chapter One showed that the earliest converts to the *Assembléia* came from the Baptist Church, describing how the first Pentecostal missionaries targeted Baptist congregations by telling members that they were missing a key part of doctrine: baptism by the Holy Spirit and all its attendant miracles. The chapter concluded that the *Assembléia* began to thrive in the 1930s because it put into place an institutional structure that encouraged growth and because its main competitors – mainline churches dependent on foreign missionaries – declined as a result of the global economic crisis. It argued that the scholarship needs to separate the *Assembléia* from other churches, rather than continuing to lump them together without distinguishing Pentecostal from Protestant. This chapter continues that project.

It does so by turning to testimonies published in the *Mensageiro da Paz*, which was printed every fortnight at the *Assembléia*'s printing press in Rio de Janeiro, beginning in 1930, and had a national circulation in the tens of thousands throughout the 1930s, 40s, and

50s.² These testimonies were written by people of all ages, from as young as ten to as old as eighty. Some were written by women; most were written by men (and a few by boys). Some writers were new converts to the *Assembléia*, while others had been members for decades. The testimonies came from all around Brazil after being approved and submitted by pastors and workers. People often included news, doctrine, and exhortations but, as the editor warned in a 1950 edition, “testimony should only be testimony.”³ Almost every issue included several testimonies, all published together in a dedicated section.

People submitted these testimonies for three main reasons. The first, and most common, is the most predictable: people wanted to spread the good news and bring more people into the fold. One wrote of wanting “to bring the message to those who are still in darkness,”⁴ another of his desire “to announce to all . . . so that all of humanity may understand” that Jesus is the only path to heaven,⁵ a third of his pleasure in “speaking of the love of God so that others may also know this grace.”⁶ Some were so enthusiastic they wrote of hardly being able to contain themselves. For example, one *crente* who had been cured of a fever that nearly killed him wrote, “I can’t be silent,” and “I can’t keep quiet.”⁷

² It is still published, and is now a daily paper which is distributed nationally and published online.

³ *Mensageiro da Paz*, 2a Quinzena de Agosoto de 1950, 3. (During the years examined in this chapter, the newspaper was published every *quinzena*, or fortnight.)

⁴ Marcilio Costa, “Meu testemunho,” *Mensageiro da Paz*, 1a Quinzena de Setembro de 1940, 3.

⁵ Jose de Castro Silva, “Meu testemunho,” *Mensageiro da Paz*, 1a Quinzena de Novembro de 1949, 3.

⁶ João Lourenço da Silva, “Um novo cantico,” *Mensageiro da Paz*, 1a Quinzena de Novembro de 1939, 3.

⁷ Alfredo Galvão do Lima, “Jesus é o melhor médico,” *Mensageiro da Paz*, 1a Quinzena de Dezembro de 1939, 3.

The second reason that some people submitted testimonies is that doing so served as part of their “coming out” process. For many, joining the *Assembléia* meant rejecting the religion (and accompanying traditions) of their families. One did not dabble in Pentecostalism in these years; converting was an all-or-nothing proposition. This could be difficult. One *crente* recalls, “my family and friends from before [my conversion] scorned me.” He says he ignored their disdain because “I found in Jesus a better Father and, in my brothers in the faith, I found better and more sincere friends.”⁸ In other words, by becoming Pentecostal he severed ties with his family and friends and created a new social world for himself; narrating this experience as a formal testimony may have been part of declaring this new identity.

Finally, the third reason for writing testimonies is one particular to the Catholic cultural background of these new Pentecostals. There is a tradition in Catholicism – especially in the kind of folk Catholicism found in Brazil – of deal-making with saints. The transaction is this: a person asks the saint to do something for him and promises to do something for the saint in return.⁹ For example, it could be: if you heal my back, I will make a pilgrimage to your shrine. There is evidence of this kind of bargaining in the *Mensagem*

⁸ Based on anecdotal evidence like this, it seems to me that the rupture caused by conversion to Pentecostalism in the 1930s and 40s was much more extreme in Brazil than in Nigeria. Anecdotal evidence from Nigeria – like Adelola Adeloye’s experience with his Aladura mother and traditional grandmother, which I describe in the second part of this chapter – shows Nigerian Aladura members existing side by side with family members who practiced mainline Protestantism, Yoruba religion, and Islam, in a well-known pattern of Yoruba religious additivity (see J.D.Y. Peel, *Religious Encounter and the Making of the Yoruba*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000)). The Aladuras apparently co-existed with non-Aladura relatives and neighbors much more comfortably than Brazilian *Assembléia* members did with other Christians, with Spiritists, and especially with Catholics. I do not yet have enough material to make this argument, but I believe it is a hypothesis worth considering.

⁹ This is very similar to the transactional relationship with ancestors, spirits, and orishas in Yoruba religion, though there may be greater financial outlay required to engage the ancestors, etc than to pray to saints.

da Paz testimonies. For example, one woman who had been sick declares, “I promised to give my testimony as soon as I got better; that’s why I am keeping my obligation, telling about God’s great goodness toward me.”¹⁰ Another woman, whose son had fallen over fifty feet from a tree and broke his hand, tells how she decided to bring her son to a prayer service. The hospital set his hand but could not do anything for his pain, so she explains that she asked the pastor to pray for her son while “concomitantly, I made a vow to the Lord to give this testimony if Jesus healed him.”¹¹

Healing, Happiness, and the Holy Spirit

The Brazilian testimonies offer three major motives people had for joining the *Assembléia*. They are: because they found miraculous cures through Pentecostal prayer; because they discovered a deep, enduring happiness in the Pentecostal church; and because studying the Bible convinced them of the truth of Pentecostal doctrine. Hints of all three of these reasons appear in the following testimony, which was submitted by a man who had been baptized in the Baptist Church in 1906 and had never heard of the *Assembléia* until 1938, when he moved and ended up living next to one. This man said he was afraid of the Pentecostals, based on what people had told him about them, and he helped persecute them when he had

¹⁰ Helena Pessoa de Araujo, “Curado, pelo Senhor,” *Mensagem da Paz*, 1a Quinzena de Outubro de 1939, 3.

¹¹ Emilia Portes da Silva, “O Nosso Deus Faz Maravilhas,” *Mensagem da Paz*, 1a Quinzena de Abril de 1959, 4. Interestingly, the first two reasons for making testimonials – convincing others to join the fold and declaring a new identity – all rely on evidence from testimonies given by men, while the third reason – fulfilling a deal made directly with God in a similar way to how Catholics fulfill a deal made with a saint – all rely on evidence from women. Anecdotal, to be sure, but perhaps the seed for a future investigation into the different reasons the *Assembléia* appealed to men and women as well as the different ways men and women made use of the techniques and practices of their new religion in the middle decades of the twentieth century.

time. Little did he know, he recalls, that his Pentecostal neighbors were praying for him and that one day he would end up a member. As he describes it in his testimony:

One day, however, I decided to enter, with great respect yet suspicious because I'd heard that they rolled on the floor, among other things. I attended the meeting and I liked it, but in the moment of prayer, I kept my eyes open to see what was happening. Everything changed, I didn't see the disorder I'd heard about, but instead I saw happy faces, fervent prayers, praises overflowing from every lip, in a sweeping spiritual enthusiasm. For me, that room seemed like heaven; the vision I had of heaven full of stars made me feel like I was in the celestial regions.¹²

He continued to attend prayer meetings, studied the Bible, and joined the *Assembléia*. Jesus cured him of a terrible stomach ache. Even though he was still waiting to receive Spirit baptism when he submitted his testimony, he reported that “today I can say, like the psalmist, ‘The Lord has done great things for me, and because of this I am happy.’”¹³

The majority of testimonies mention or focus on healing. Stomach aches, rabid dog bites, appendicitis, heart attacks, fevers, tumors, pains, unexplained illnesses, and death are all among the afflictions healed by prayer and Jesus. *Crentes* wrote of their miraculous cures for all three of the reasons described above: to convince others to join, to “come out” as Pentecostals, and to fulfill bargains made with God. Some were already believers when they were cured; the healing was just icing on the cake. Others were convinced to join when the doctors were unable to do anything else. They turned to the *Assembléia* out of desperation and found that the prayers of the pastors and “saints” (as the *crentes* sometimes called themselves) worked.

¹² Sebastião Balmant, “Trinta e tres anos denominacional,” *Mensageiro da Paz*, 1a Quinzena de Novembro de 1940, 3.

¹³ Ibid. This is a reference to Psalm 126:3: “The Lord has done great things for us, and we rejoiced” (NRSV).

It is in this healing that the reason *crentes* often referred to themselves as saints becomes clear. In their church, they replaced the Catholic saints with themselves. For example, one woman with severe appendicitis wrote that she “turned to the Lord through the prayers of the saints, and the Lord revealed a brother who would heal me.” Through the ministrations of this fellow *crente*, the woman was healed. The “saints” prayed to God, who, the women reported, “has been our doctor when we have appealed to his mercy.”¹⁴ In the *Assembléia*, unlike in the Catholic Church, there was no need for intermediaries to petition God on anyone’s behalf.¹⁵ The community could come together and do it for each other, through prayer.

The descriptions of the second main reason given for joining— that people found profound happiness in the church – are quite striking. Scholars of Latin American Pentecostalism tend to look more at what Pentecostalism *does* for people – heals, connects, empowers – than what it *means* to people. But for many, the appeal of Pentecostalism is the joy it provides; joining the *Assembléia* means living with a belief, community, and practice that offers lasting spiritual peace. One man described his Spirit baptism as pleasure which flooded his heart, declaring, “I can’t possibly explain how enormous was my delight, which has continued until today.”¹⁶ Another described his as “an inexplicable happiness” which

¹⁴ Donatila Regis Calazans, “Em gratidao ao Senhor,” *Mensageiro da Paz*, 1a Quinzena de Novembro de 1940, 3.

¹⁵ This is a striking difference between Yoruba and Pentecostal practices as well; rather than turning to ancestors, spirits, and orishas to mediate, one turns directly to God (though admittedly the fact of the Trinity – with the Holy Spirit and Jesus potentially mediating with the Father – does complicate this comparison).

¹⁶ Francisco Cavalcante de Oliveira, “Jesus Salva e Batiza,” *Mensageiro da Paz*, 1a Quinzena de Junho de 1949, 8.

“flooded my being, to the point of moving me to shed tears of jubilation.”¹⁷ Another wrote, “I am happy, and this happiness overflows from my heart.”¹⁸ The joy came not only from Spirit baptism, but from simply accepting Jesus as one’s savior. As one man described it, “Before I knew the Gospel, I didn’t have peace, I didn’t have pleasure; however, since I accepted Jesus as my Savior, my soul enjoys the sweet peace that is in Christ.”¹⁹ We are often so quick to jump to the material and political reasons people had for becoming Pentecostal that we overlook, ignore, or dismiss these spiritual ones. Some people find the peace and happiness that have eluded them their entire lives when they let Jesus into their hearts. It is not necessary to understand this personally to accept it as a respectable reason for becoming Pentecostal. Spirit baptism is not rational – it cannot be scientifically observed and empirically proved – but it is entirely real to the people who believe in it. Becoming Pentecostal makes some people happy not just because it gives them community or agency or skills or hope for the future. These testimonies show that becoming Pentecostal also gives some people a deep, spiritual happiness in their hearts. It can be as simple as that.

The third reason – that people were attracted to Pentecostal doctrine – is the most surprising one. It is surprising because scholars are accustomed to thinking of Pentecostalism as a religion for the poor, uneducated, and easily-manipulated – a religion focused more on the message than on the source of the message. Yet a remarkable number of testimonies recount being brought to the *Assembléia* through reading and discussing the Bible. For

¹⁷ Oscar Jeronimo dos Santos, “Das trevas para a luz,” *Mensageiro da Paz*, 1a Quinzema de Agosto de 1939, 3.

¹⁸ Francisco Martins Ferreira, “Grandes coisas fez o Senhor por mim,” *Mensageiro da Paz*, 1a Quinzema de Setembro de 1939, 3.

¹⁹ Helio Strobel, “Das trevas para a luz,” *Mensageiro da Paz*, 2a Quinzema de Novembro de 1939, 3.

example, one *crente* describes how, one day, an evangelical pastor selling Bibles²⁰ arrived at his house and spoke to him of the love of Jesus. In his testimony, he recalls, “I felt the desire to know these things better, and I started to examine the Bible, reading it carefully, and the light began to dawn in my heart, so that I was touched by the reading.”²¹ Another writes that, while still a Catholic and living with his family, he came to own a Bible which his father told him to burn (as priests had been doing with the dangerous Protestant books for years). The father said that “he didn’t want that book in the house; he said it was a Protestant book.” But instead of burning it, the son kept it and took it with him when he moved away to work in a mine. There, he began to read the Gospel and as he did so, he reported, “my eyes opened, I understood the truth, and I started to see how great were the things written in this book which I had owned for four years without realizing what wealth it contained.”²²

For both of these men, according to their testimonies, it was the Pentecostal *doctrine* which they read in the Bible which convinced them to join the *Assembléia*. Even if this was the story they chose to tell, rather than what actually happened – perhaps it was a fellow miner that introduced this *crente* to Pentecostal beliefs, rather than his private reading of the Bible – it is a story which shows that the Bible was esteemed so highly as the source of these beliefs that it was given pride of place in conversion narratives. Another testimony explains this idealized experience very clearly in the instructions it gives to the imagined reader:

²⁰ This was part of the missionary tradition of colportage, practiced in Brazil since the mid-nineteenth century. Typically, nondenominational “colporteurs” traveled the country selling Bibles for a nominal fee.

²¹ Jose Nascimento, “Salvo pelo poder de Jesus,” *Mensagem da Paz*, 1a Quinzena de Julho de 1940, 3.

²² Gonçalo Walcampi Silva, “Fora do Egito,” *Mensagem da Paz*, 2a Quinzena de Setembro de 1939, 3.

“Read your Bible, with perseverance and prayer . . . and you will have the unique revelation of the truth of God and of the promise sent on the day of Pentecost.”²³

The importance conferred to the Bible shows that many of the people who joined the *Assembléia* were literate. Of course, to back up a step, the simple fact that the published testimonies exist already encourages certain assumptions about literacy. These testimonies were written to be read (or read aloud) by other *crentes* in a newspaper with a circulation in the tens of thousands, a newspaper which included testimonies, reports, and articles submitted from around the country as well as translated from foreign publications. Given the existence of this newspaper, and the popularity of the space allocated for testimonies, there must have been a sizable community of reading and writing *Assembléia* members, at least enough to read aloud to others throughout the country. A problem with this assumption, however, is that we can't be sure that all these men and women wrote their testimonies themselves, at it would not have been difficult to find someone to write on their behalf; there was a thriving informal economy of letter-writers throughout the country in the middle decades of the twentieth century. But, when we look not just at the *existence* of the testimonies but at their *content*, we see that many of them discuss how reading the Bible was what brought them to the *Assembléia*. This strengthens an argument for a more literate community than has previously been supposed.

Some testimonies are detailed in their discussion of doctrine, providing yet more evidence that the *Assembléia* attracted some people who were interested in complex theological thinking. They use the proper theological language to describe the experience of

²³ Jose Campos, “Desperta tu que dormes!” *Mensageiro da Paz*, 2a Quinzena de Setembro de 1939, 3.

Spirit baptism, such as “the Lord sealed me with the Holy Spirit”²⁴ or “my husband and two daughters received the seal of the Promise.”²⁵ Other testimonies were specific about exactly what it was the Bible said that drew them to the *Assembléia*. The most common reference – by far – was to a verse from Hebrews: “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.”²⁶ Some call attention to it directly, like this testimony that declares, “Beloved *crentes* in general, the promise is unto you whom God has called (Acts 2:39) and we repeat it, here, once again, that Jesus Christ is the same, eternally (Heb 13:8) always ready to bless.”²⁷ Another writer makes it the title of her testimony – “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever” – and then gestures toward it in her conclusion by expressing this hope: “We pray that God will open the spiritual eyes of those who doubt so that they can surrender themselves to the Living Christ who operates in our days just as he did in apostolic times.”²⁸ Some address the sentiment without citing the verse, like one woman who wrote that she left the Presbyterian Church for the *Assembléia* when she came to understand that “God is still the same and can give the same blessings as in the apostolic times.”²⁹

Cited and referred to again and again, this belief that Jesus, through his Holy Spirit, continues to give his followers the same blessings he showered on his apostles on the biblical

²⁴ Brasilino M. Dias, “Aos 19 anos, fui salva,” *Mensagem da Paz*, 2a Quinzena de Setembro de 1939, 3.

²⁵ Genuina Pereira da Silva, “Era católica, mas desconhecida a verdade,” *Mensagem da Paz*, 1a Quinzena de Novembro de 1939, 3.

²⁶ Hebrews 13:8 (NRSV).

²⁷ Jose Campos, “Desperta tu que dormes!” *Mensagem da Paz*, 2a Quinzena de Setembro de 1939, 3.

²⁸ Zelia Brito Macalão, “Jesus Cristo é o mesmo ontem, hoje e eternamente,” *Mensagem da Paz*, 2a Quinzena de Novembro de 1939, 2.

²⁹ Iracema Maia Silva, “Um caminho mais glorioso,” *Mensagem da Paz*, 2a Quinzena de Dezembro de 1939, 3.

day of Pentecost is omnipresent in the contemporary Brazilian Pentecostal landscape as well. The message of “the same yesterday and today and forever” appears on awnings over storefront ministries and on bumper stickers all over the country. It means that, contrary to what has been asserted repeatedly over the centuries, miracles have not ceased.³⁰ Instead, prophecies, healings, visions, and tongues are all still available to true believers. Indeed, the one constant in various forms of Pentecostalism across time and space may be this belief that Jesus, acting through the Holy Spirit, is the same now as he was described in the Book of Acts.

Other Reasons for Joining the Assembléia

While happiness, healing, and doctrine were the three main reasons people gave for joining the *Assembléia* in the 1930s, 40s, and 50s, there were other reasons as well. These additional reasons, some of which go beyond what one might expect, help illustrate the complexity of Pentecostalism and the Pentecostal community in Brazil, reminding us to refrain from oversimplifying the movement. Some of the reasons are quite predictable. People liked the enthusiasm and inclusiveness of Pentecostal worship. For example, one *crente* left his Protestant church because he found it boring. There, “everything was done by method, even the prayers were written down, and there was no spiritual profit; only people who had graduated from theological schools could speak, even though there were others with inspiring

³⁰ On the controversy over the cessation of miracles, see Jon Ruthven, *On the Cessation of the Charismata: The Protestant Polemic on Post-Biblical Miracles* (New York: Continuum Press, 1993).

and beneficial messages.” He preferred the “spiritual fervor and enthusiasm” he found at the *Assembléia*.³¹

Another well-known reason, touched upon by this *crente* in his comment about seminaries, is that people liked that they could participate and even take on leadership roles in the *Assembléia* without a formal education. This became a contested subject as the century wore on, but in the 1930s and 40s, the prevailing Pentecostal wisdom held that an uneducated man truly called by God was a better pastor than an educated man without the call. A long article published in a 1939 edition of the *Mensageiro* makes this point, denigrating missionary churches for choosing men to serve as pastors because they had university degrees and professional titles, rather than because they were spiritually prepared for the job. The better “indicator of spiritual aptitude” is “to have suffered in the name of Jesus;” it is a “more valid document than the diploma of a doctor, engineer, etc.”³² The article references 2 Timothy 1:9, which describes “a holy calling” given “not according to our works [achievements] but according to his [God’s] own purpose and grace.”³³ The *Assembléia*, as did other Pentecostal churches around the world at this time, prided itself in selecting pastors who had been chosen by God for the work, regardless of their educational background. Faith mattered more than fortune, a divine calling more than a college degree.

Meanwhile, some people report having been directed to Pentecostalism by voices, dreams, visions, and prophecies. This shows that people valued all of the spiritual gifts, not

³¹ Jose Fauso de Silva, “Em gratidão ao Senhor,” *Mensageiro da Paz*, 1a Quinzena de Outubro de 1940, 3. The testimony does not specify which Protestant church.

³² A. Maurini, “Obreiros aprovados,” *Mensageiro da Paz*, 2a Quinzena de Dezembro de 1939, 2.

³³ 2 Timothy 1:9 (NRSV).

just Spirit baptism. For example, one *crente*, who had left the Catholic Church to attend the *Assembléia* next door to his house, but who still had doubts and had not yet been saved, describes how one day in church, “inside of me, something said, ‘Get up and confess My name, in front of my saints, who are the people of God, and you will be free.’”³⁴ Another heard a voice in a dream; he had returned from a spiritist session, asked God to show him the true path to salvation, and fallen asleep when a voice said to him, “The way of salvation is the Gospel of Jesus Christ.”³⁵ Some dreams were more elaborate. One *crente* described seeing her Catholic church, which had just been built, collapse. Everything was destroyed, even the icons of the saints, which made her doubt their power. Then a voice told her that “salvation is only through Jesus.” It was this dream, she said, that led her to leave the Catholic Church and join the *Assembléia*.³⁶ Others wrote about visions rather than dreams, such as one man’s vision of a staircase coming down from heaven with three people in resplendent gowns unlike any he had seen before. In this vision, many *crentes* were climbing this staircase, but as a non-believer he was not able to follow them.³⁷ Still others described prophecies, such as one man who wrote that God warned him that two of his sons would die – “by prophecy, He had told me that they were His, they were flowers in His garden” – and he says that knowing this allowed him to bear the suffering like Job.³⁸ All of these spiritual

³⁴ Wilson Maximo Coelho, “Vivia perdido, sem Cristo,” *Mensagem da Paz*, 1a Quinzena de Agosto de 1939, 3.

³⁵ Antonio Borges, “O Evangelho,” *Mensagem da Paz*, 1a Quinzena de Outubro de 1939, 3.

³⁶ Maria Andrade de Carvalho, “Um sonho maravilhoso,” *Mensagem da Paz*, 1a Quinzena de Novembro de 1939, 3.

³⁷ Ulisses Pereria Paulo, “Como aceitei a salvação,” *Mensagem da Paz*, 1a Quinzena de Janeiro de 1940, 3.

³⁸ Jose Fagundes, “O Senhor é o meu socorro,” *Mensagem da Paz*, 1a Quinzena de Novembro de 1939, 3.

gifts, which were originally given to the apostles on the day of Pentecost, were esteemed and compelling enough to be considered vital material for conversion narratives.

The vision of the *crentes* climbing the staircase together addresses the fact that one attraction of the *Assembléia* was the sense of community it provided.³⁹ Even the act of conversion could be a group experience. Testimonies often describe entire families converting together, such as one in which a *crente* wrote: “On the day I decided, truly, to follow this path, twenty people from my family also accepted the Gospel.”⁴⁰ Sometimes, entire church congregations converted together. In one example, a man describes in his testimony how he had been a member of the Adventist Church but, after reading the Bible and learning that he was “missing the seal of the Promise,” joined the *Assembléia* in order to receive Spirit baptism. One day, he had a vision about the church he had left in which all the members of the church gathered on the patio as the Holy Spirit descended in the form of a dove and the people began speaking in tongues. Three days later, he writes, the elders and all of the Adventist church members decided to join the *Assembléia* and to make their church building the local *Assembléia* headquarters. By the time he wrote the testimony, which was published in 1940, the church had nearly 300 members.⁴¹

³⁹ This was the argument made in the first study of Brazilian Protestantism and Pentecostalism, by anthropologist Emilio Willems. Published in 1967, his book argued that structural changes in society had created a new class of urban poor who, experiencing acute *anomie* in their new circumstances, joined the new churches in order to create communities similar to those they had left behind in their villages. See Emilio Willems, *Followers of the New Faith: Culture Change and the Rise of Protestantism in Brazil and Chile* (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1967).

⁴⁰ Raimundo Martins de Oliveira, “Despertado,” *Mensagem da Paz*, 1a Quinzena de Janeiro de 1940, 3.

⁴¹ Darci Limes dos Santos, “Minha conversão,” *Mensagem da Paz*, 1a Quinzena de Julho de 1940, 3.

Finally, there are three more, somewhat surprising, reasons mentioned. One is that some people wrote that joining the *Assembléia* liberated them from their sins and vices. This seems quite influenced by the Catholic context, with its emphasis on sin and redemption; there is very little mention of sin in Nigerian Pentecostal material from this time, and most of the American and British material seems far more focused on healing and all the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Yet this reason shows up in the Brazilian testimonies. For example, one *crente* wrote that “three days after I accepted Jesus, I became free of all vices”⁴² and another that “Jesus liberated me from vices, including smoking, a vice I’d had since I was seven-years-old.”⁴³

A second surprising reason has to do with finances and prosperity. One man wrote that his financial situation improved when he started to give regularly to the church. When he first joined the *Assembléia* he tithed, but eventually he stopped for several months. During this time, his financial situation worsened; he had so many debts that he didn’t know what to do, until he finally realized that he had been remiss before God and decided to start giving again, come what may. The result of this awakening, he wrote, “was that God blessed me; I paid my debts and I am very happy with the Lord.”⁴⁴ This is a remarkable testimony because, with its the-more-you-give-the-more-you-get message, it outlines the basic philosophy of prosperity doctrine, and it does this several decades before prosperity gospel – now so closely associated with Brazilian neo-Pentecostalism – supposedly existed. More evidence of

⁴² Jose de Castro Silva, “Meu testemunho,” *Mensagem da Paz*, 1a Quinzena de Novembro de 1949, 3.

⁴³ Maria Idalina Almeida, “Meu testemunho,” *Mensagem da Paz*, 1a Quinzena de Julho de 1940, 3.

⁴⁴ Sebastião Rodriguez, “Experiencias uteis,” *Mensagem da Paz*, 1a Quinzena de Setembro de 1940, 3.

this followed a few months later when a short article was published in the newspaper with a similar message. Titled “Agreeable Surprises,” the article is a list of things that might surprise a person who becomes a regular tither. Among them are that he will have enough money to give to God, that he will easily pay all of his bills with the remaining nine-tenths of his salary, and that he will receive blessings from God which will increase his income.⁴⁵ It appears that the presence of prosperity doctrine in Brazil may predate American influence and neo-Pentecostal growth.

A final reason for conversion – exorcism – hints towards the direction Pentecostalism began to take in the later decades of the twentieth century. By the end of the 1940s, we start to see testimonies that refer to demon possession. One describes a textbook scenario:

“Although I was only 11-years-old, I was a victim of the power of demons, I lived tormented, I was thrown to the ground by a satanic power, but when Jesus saved me, I was completely liberated, as it is written in the Gospel of Mark 16:15-18.”⁴⁶ Another testimony describes a possessed mother-in-law who gave her son-in-law much trouble because Satan oppressed her and forced her to do crazy things.⁴⁷ A long article in a 1949 edition of the newspaper directly addressed this apparently growing problem of possession by demons and evil spirits. The article challenged the contemporary idea that “mental weaknesses” have psychological causes and suggested that their real cause is a “demonic character” from which the afflicted

⁴⁵ “Surpresas Agradáveis,” *Mensageiro da Paz*, 1a Quinzena de Novembro de 1940, 4.

⁴⁶ Mark 16:17 is the salient verse here: “And these signs will accompany those who believe: by using my name they will cast out demons; they will speak in new tongues” (NRSV). Lourdes Ferreira da Silva, “Salva pela graça,” *Mensageiro da Paz*, 1a Quinzena de Março de 1949, 3.

⁴⁷ Jose Antonio de Atayde, “Como Jesus salva,” *Mensageiro da Paz*, 1a Quinzena de Junho de 1949, 8.

can only be cured by divine intervention.⁴⁸ Like the prosperity teachings discussed in the previous paragraph, this focus on demons and exorcisms is not entirely unique to the more recently established neo-Pentecostal churches. These may be the practices most associated with churches like the *Igreja Universal do Reino de Deus* (the church described in this dissertation's introduction), but they have more diffuse origins than are typically attributed to them. Contrary to the assumptions of most of the scholarship, demon possession and exorcism were concerns of classical Pentecostal churches like the *Assembléia* as well.

To return to the two questions posed at the beginning of this chapter – what did these churches provide that people wanted and how did these churches focus their efforts to attract and retain members? – we see that these testimonies best answer the first question. The three reasons for joining the *Assembléia* that really stand out from the testimonies have to do with happiness, doctrine, and healing, but all of the reasons offered here for why Brazilians joined the *Assembléia* in the 1930s, 40s, and 50s are important. And while the testimonies certainly have their problems as sources – subjectivity and lack of context chief among them – they are our best source of insight into the lives and minds of individual *crentes*.

Perhaps the testimonies' most useful contribution is the way they help us address a problem central to scholarship on Pentecostalism: the question of change versus continuity. The testimonies provide a window onto generally overlooked continuities between Catholicism, classical Pentecostalism, and neo-Pentecostalism in Brazil. The *Assembléia*, Brazil's largest classical Pentecostal church, is not as different from *Universal*, Brazil's largest neo-Pentecostal church as the scholarship encourages us to believe. As discussed

⁴⁸ A.P. Vasconcelos, "Poder sobre espíritos," *Mensageiro da Paz*, 1a Quinzena de Setembro de 1949, 2.

above, the key features of *Universal* – prosperity doctrine and exorcism – were present in the *Assembléia* by the 1950s. And a fundamental belief of Brazilian Catholicism – that the saints will intervene with God on one’s behalf to secure miracles – was (and is) also a fundamental belief of the *Assembléia*. The only difference is the definition of “saints.”

Scholars often talk about how surprising it is that Pentecostalism has taken hold in a predominantly Catholic country because it is so different, so foreign. In general, Protestantism has been seen as an “invasion” which “threatens” the cultural, moral, and political fabric of Latin America.⁴⁹ We tend to assume that people who joined the *Assembléia* were turning away from their Catholic practices, when in fact most were not actually rejecting all of their Catholic beliefs.⁵⁰ If anything, they were intensifying them. By rejecting the Vatican’s rulings on the cessation of miracles and relying on the Bible and its promises of continual revelation, they came to believe that, contrary to what the church told them, Jesus is the same yesterday, today, and forever. In Brazil, the saints (and orixás) were rejected not because they did not exist or were not useful, but because they were deemed less powerful than direct appeals to Jesus. This is remarkably similar to the reasons Nigerian Pentecostals rejected orishas and ancestral spirits. Pentecostals do not need intermediaries. They speak directly to God and God directly to them. In the African context, this is what John Thornton

⁴⁹ See, for example, David Stoll, *Is Latin America Turning Protestant? The Politics of Evangelical Growth* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 9-10.

⁵⁰ Indeed, one of the very first scholarly analyses of Latin American Pentecostalism made this very argument. In his 1968 study of Chilean Pentecostalism, published shortly after Willems’s, Swiss sociologist Christian Lalive d’Epinay argued that the continuity between rural folk Catholicism and urban Pentecostalism was so strong that Pentecostalism should be understood not as a new, Protestant religion but rather as a movement giving new force to traditional Catholic values and ideas. See Christian Lalive d’Epinay, *El Refugio de las Masas: Estudio Sociológico del Protestantismo Chileno* (Santiago de Chile: Editorial del Pacífico, S.A., 1968). Also published in English and Portuguese in 1968. Also see Frederick Turner, “Protestantism and Politics in Chile and Brazil,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 12, no. 2 (April 1970): 213-229.

has described as “continuous revelation,” with God still working through omens and visions and direct speech to his followers.⁵¹ In Brazil, this ability to converse with God meant that it was Church *hierarchy* and *practices* that were rejected, not Catholic *belief* in devotion and miracles. The continuity between Brazilian Catholicism and Brazilian Pentecostalism – as between traditional Yoruba beliefs and Nigerian Pentecostalism – is the belief in the possibility of miracles. Miracles are the key.

Nigeria: Women, Healing, and Maternity Centers in the Christ Apostolic Church

This section returns to the questions posed at the beginning of this chapter – what attracted people to Pentecostal churches, and how did these churches focus their efforts to attract and retain members? – but the Nigerian historical record takes us in a different direction than the Brazilian testimonies did. First of all, as discussed in Chapter Two, the Nigerian sources make it clear that miraculous healing was the primary draw of Nigerian Pentecostalism from its very beginnings. Second, the sources open a fascinating window into the relationships between healing, gender, and agency in the Christ Apostolic Church.

Women have received extraordinarily little notice in any histories of the Christ Apostolic Church, which are mostly written by men, about men, and for men.⁵² This section on Nigeria thus addresses two problems at once: the exclusion of women from Christ

⁵¹See John Thornton, *Africa and Africans in the Making of the Atlantic World, 1400-1800 (Second Edition)* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

⁵² There are many accounts of Babalola’s life and works; many institutional histories of Apostolic Church and Christ Apostolic Church focused on leadership, affiliations, schisms, doctrine, tenets; and many books on male leaders of Nigerian Christianity generally. See, for example, Bisi Ojedian, *Nigeria’s Men of God: How They Were Called* (Lagos: Bookplus Nigeria, 2007) and J. A. Omoyajowo, *Makers of the Church in Nigeria, 1842-1947* (Lagos: CSS Bookshops, 1995). There are few women in Nigerian Religious Studies, and the attention paid to women paid by foreign scholars is generally concerned with recent decades.

Apostolic Church history and the exclusion of the 1940s through the 1960s from Nigerian Pentecostal history. A look at healing brings women into the center of a historical narrative which, by focusing on leaders, has typically left women at the margins. An investigation centered around the establishment of Christ Apostolic Church-sponsored maternity centers and midwife training programs reveals an important aspect of the church's growth: between the 1940s and 60s, the Christ Apostolic Church appealed to and retained women by offering maternal health care based on divine healing. This strategy served not only to attract and retain female members, but also to liberate male leaders from interfering government oversight. This means that women became central to answering the question of how the Christ Apostolic Church grew in the 1940s through 1960s.

As discussed in the previous chapter, Jopseph Babalola attracted thousands of people to his Aladura revivals in the 1930s because he healed them. The Christ Apostolic Church grew out of this movement and strictly maintained its insistence on divine healing even when other Aladura churches relaxed their positions on it.⁵³ Babalola and the Christ Apostolic Church provided a particular healing technology, one based on water, prayer, fasting, and faith in Jesus. The reason the Christ Apostolic Church was able to continue to grow after the height of the revival in the 1930s, even when confronted with the public health campaigns of the 1940s and 50s, and then after Babalola's death in 1959, was that it used its healing technology as a strategy for church growth and agency. Divine healing – centered around maternal and child health – provided the means with which the Christ Apostolic Church competed in Western Nigeria's crowded religio-medical marketplace.

⁵³ J. D. Y. Peel, *Aladura: A Religious Movement Among the Yoruba* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1968), 128.

Women, Healing and the Aladura Movement

From its beginning in 1929, the Aladura movement attracted mainly women. Of the many accounts of this, one comes from the Assistant District Officer for Ilesha, the site of Babalola's earliest revivals. In a confidential report to his superior, this officer wrote, "Recently I have been spending much time in road work on the Ijebu-Ijesha road and I have been very struck by the extraordinary numbers of people, mostly women, who are pouring into Ilesha and returning home with bottles of holy water." Many of these women, he reports, were "very aged cripples." When he asked around in Ijebu, he learned that "the men regard the whole thing as a nuisance as it has unsettled their women and they keep running into Ilesha," a distance of about ten miles. Women were coming from other areas as well; the officer reported that "it is the same on the other roads, and the market is chock-a-block with lorries which have brought passengers in from a distance."⁵⁴ The Resident of Oyo Province made a similar report to the Secretary of the Southern Provinces shortly after, stating that "thousands of persons from these Western Provinces and Lagos continue to pour into Ilesha to see him [Babalola]," though the men the Resident spoke to were less disparaging; the Resident reported that "the Owa and Chiefs, and in fact everyone to whom I have spoken on this subject, are greatly impressed by the cures he is able to effect." According to his account, some were so impressed that "they say God has come to Ilesha."⁵⁵

⁵⁴ Assistant District Officer, Ilesha to District Officer, Ife, 13 August 1930, "Appendix II: Copies of Archival Material from the Nigerian National Archives, University of Ibadan" in Samson Adetunji Fatokun, "Pentecostalism in Southwestern Nigeria With Particular Emphasis on the Apostolic Church, 1931-2003," PhD Thesis, Department of Religious Studies, University of Ibadan, 304.

⁵⁵ Resident, Oyo Province to Secretary, Southern Provinces, Enugu, 25 August 1930, "Appendix II," 307.

Babalola's cures were the main draw for these crowds of people. As the Assistant D.O. stated in his report, "he preaches out of the Bible and claims to have the power of faith healing, and it is this which causes his great popularity." When the Assistant D.O. disguised himself in order to attend one of Babalola's sessions, which typically began after sundown and lasted until midnight, he "found a crowd of many hundreds of people, including a large contingent of the halt [sic] and lame and blind." The highlight of the prayer meeting was when everyone present stood in a half circle and held their bottles of water above their heads while Babalola, from his position on a raised dais, held out his hands and blessed the water. Afterward hymns were sung, and "the sick afterward received spiritual attention inside the Church."⁵⁶ Healing was the center point of each meeting.

At this time, Babalola was still associated with the Faith Tabernacle (the Apostolic Church missionaries had not yet arrived from the UK), and he circulated their pamphlets at his meetings.⁵⁷ The most popular of these pamphlets, "Seven Principles of Prayer," taught that the keys to having one's prayers answered are repentance, forgiveness, surrender, belief, obedience, steadfastness, and love. It said that no matter what kind of "victory" one desired – spiritual, physical, or financial – effective prayer was the means to achieve it.⁵⁸ And while the Faith Tabernacle pamphlets emphasized personal prayer, the prayer meetings demonstrated a more typically Yoruba approach, with Babalola serving as the conduit, the power of

⁵⁶ Assistant District Officer, Ilesha to District Officer, Ife, 13 August 1930, "Appendix II," 304, 306.

⁵⁷ Assistant District Officer, Ilesha to District Officer, Ife, 13 August 1930, "Appendix II," 304-05.

⁵⁸ Elder J. Wesley Ankins, "Seven Principles of Prevailing Prayer" (Philadelphia: Faith Tabernacle Congregations, undated), from personal collection of Adam Mohr.

transformation resting in his hands.⁵⁹ The people came, he blessed the water, they drank it, and – ostensibly – they were cured. Indeed, according to sociologist J.D.Y. Peel, author of the most substantial work on the Aladura movement, “the main occasion for the emergence of the Aladura churches” was “to cure people of sickness.”⁶⁰

What were they cured of? Everything. One denominational history of Babalola includes this remarkable list:

Some of the miracles witnessed at Ilesa include among others—safe delivery for women with prolonged pregnancies, instant healing for stomach aches, headaches, sicknesses and diseases, leprosy, goiter, gonorrhoea, barrenness [sic], issue of blood, ulcer, rheumatism, groin fungal infection, early morning weakness, malignancy, hernia, conjunctivitis [sic], backaches, pile, multifarious infant diseases (most of which cannot be named) sleeplessness, joblessness, poverty, hypoplasia of the breast, impotence, lose [sic] of appetite, epilepsy, weariness, blindness, seizure of menstruation in women and a host of other numberless diseases which cannot be named here and for which there were no names: the raising of the dead, deliverance from familiar spirit, etc.⁶¹

The catch was that women and men who sought apostolic faith healing were forbidden from seeking healing elsewhere.

As church historians Olubunmi and Abiodun Adedoye explain in their *Treatise of the Early Apostolic Churches in Nigeria*, in the Christ Apostolic Church, as in the Faith Tabernacle, the use of medicine was seen as showing a lack of faith in God. “The emphasis on divine healing,” therefore, “is a practical application of the belief that God is to be trusted

⁵⁹ On this, see Karin Barber, “How Man Makes God in West Africa: Yoruba Attitudes Toward the ‘Orisa,’” *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute* 51, no. 3 (1981): 724-745.

⁶⁰ Peel, *Aladura*, 127-28.

⁶¹ John Odunayo Ojo, *The Life and Ministry of Apostle Joseph Ayodele Babalola* (Lagos: Prayer Band Publications, 1988), 69-70.

in all things rather than man.”⁶² This was the primary message of Babalola and the other Aladura prophets. It was also the main purpose of the original Apostolic Church missionaries, who upon arrival had informed the Ibadan police that “they had been sent to Nigeria to co-ordinate the various faith healing movements.”⁶³ When the elders of Christ Church, the CMS church in Ekiti, wrote to the District Officer of their concerns with the Aladuras, one of their main points of complaint was that “they [the Aladuras] refuse people from going to any doctor for treatment, and made them rely on water only, by that people die of slight sickness which the Doctors can cure in a moment.”⁶⁴ Archdeacon Dallimore echoed this concern in his own letter, stating that five Aladura followers died in a single day because “they were not allowed to take any medicine whatever, but only to drink water.” He noted that not only was Western medicine prohibited, but even “their own simple medicine” which probably “would have saved their lives” was forbidden as well.⁶⁵ What did this mean specifically for women? It meant that women who chose to join the Christ Apostolic Church relinquished the options of visiting shrines, consulting herbalists, seeing medical doctors, and taking medicine of any kind in order to get pregnant and carry pregnancies to term.

There is evidence that Babalola and other Aladura prophets had addressed concerns about pregnancy and childbirth directly from the very beginning. For example, J.O. Ositelu, one of Babalola’s contemporaries who went on to found the Church of our Lord (Aladura),

⁶² Olubunmi Adeloye and Abiodun Adeloye, *A Treatise of the Early Apostolic Churches in Nigeria*, (Ilorin: Corporate Office Max, 2001), 52.

⁶³ Assistant Commissioner of Police, Oyo-Ondo Province, Ibadan to The Resident, Oyo Province, 29 October 1931, “Appendix II,” 315.

⁶⁴ The Christ Church Elders, Efon Alaye to District Officer, Ekiti Division, 7 April 1931, in “EKITI DIV 1/1,” Nigerian National Archives.

⁶⁵ Henry Dallimore to District Officer, Ekiti, 10 July 1931.

made prophecies in the early 1930s concerning pregnancy. One prophecy addressed the Yoruba belief that it is possible for witches and wizards to lock pregnancies inside wombs: “People who have been carrying long term pregnancies shall be freed from the bondage they have been put in by the wicked people of the world.”⁶⁶ Babalola also recalled treating pregnant women. Early in his ministry, even before he became associated with the Christ Apostolic Church, he healed a woman who had been pregnant for more than four years by giving her water to drink. Though he does not say so directly, he must have healed her, as the next day she returned with all of her relatives, “shouting for joy,” until a group of two thousand had assembled and listened to Babalola “preach holiness and divine healing,” as the voice of his visions directed him to do.⁶⁷ Shortly after, he healed another pregnant woman, who was about to give birth and “in great agony,” simply by placing his hands on her head.⁶⁸ Part of Babalola’s success in gaining followers and growing the church was due to his ability to heal pregnant women and help deliver babies. Ministering to pregnant women was part of the Aladura mission from the beginning, which makes sense given that most Nigerian health and healing initiatives at this time were aimed at helping women have babies; it was a major concern.

A decade later, after Babalola’s revivals had been institutionalized into the Christ Apostolic Church, healing still stood at the center of Church activities. Of all the Aladura churches, the Christ Apostolic Church in particular “lay great emphasis on their belief in the

⁶⁶ J. O. Ositelu, “Awon Asotele,” “Nigerian Pamphlets, 1867-1964” Collection, reel 14, item 329, African Collection, Yale University Library. trans. Ayodele Olofintuade.

⁶⁷ *The History and Works of the Prophet Joseph Babalola*, (Ibadan: The Ilare Press), 6, “Nigerian Pamphlets, 1867-1964” Collection, reel 10, item 249, African Collection, Yale University Library.

⁶⁸ *History and Works*, 9.

power of prayer to cure all sickness,” so much so that their official doctrine forbade all cures other than prayer and *omi iye* (water of life).⁶⁹ This was the original instruction given to the prophet Joseph Babalola in his first vision when he was, to quote Peel, “told to take a bell, and was given the message that prayer and *omi iye*, the ‘water of life,’ would cure all sickness; all ‘medicines’ should be destroyed.”⁷⁰ Other Aladura churches had adopted a more liberal attitude toward this instruction by the 1960s, when Peel was doing his fieldwork, but the Christ Apostolic Church continued to hold complete reliance on divine healing as “its most treasured belief.”⁷¹

As the movement matured, the Christ Apostolic Church continued to attract more women than men. In his delightful memoir of his 1940s childhood, neurosurgeon Adelola Adeloye offers a few reasons why women were drawn to the Aladura movement, reasons which he discussed with me in 2009. He says that in his home village of Ikole, the former seat of the Ekiti North Division, women were attracted to the churches because they were tired of going to staid churches where they were forbidden to dance and because they liked the tall, elegant, approachable, unmarried pastor of Ikole’s Christ Apostolic Church, Brother Sowedo.⁷² Sowedo had met the prophet Babalola in Oshogbo during World War II, decided to become a Christ Apostolic Church minister, and found immediate success when he returned home to start a church. As Adeloye recalls, “he gave his audience the impression that through him and by attendance in his makeshift place of worship, . . . he could, and

⁶⁹ Peel, *Aladura*, 128.

⁷⁰ As Peel notes, “medicines” referred to “native medicines” of herbs, etc. Peel, *Aladura*, 70.

⁷¹ Peel, *Aladura*, 128.

⁷² Adelola Adeloye, *My Salad Days: The Primary School Years* (Ibadan: BookBuilders, 2009), 109 and personal conversation, 31 December 2009.

would solve all problems.” In particular, he gave women this impression. In Adeloje’s memory, “like a magnet,” Brother Sowedo “attracted women in their hundreds to his new creed.”⁷³

Blessed water was still central to their practices. Adeloje’s own mother was one of the women who attended Sowedo’s church, and Adeloje has memories of how he, as a ten-year-old boy in 1946, used to go with her to “sing lustily and dance vigorously.” They would bring home water blessed by Sowedo. His mother used to make him fast on Saturdays, a new practice which she said was to cleanse his soul.⁷⁴ His grandmother did attend the church and did not fast, but she did not mind the practice as long as her grandson broke his fast with the food she had prepared. He always did so, washing it down with Brother Sowedo’s water.⁷⁵

Establishing the Christ Apostolic Church Maternity Center

Since 1939, the Christ Apostolic Church had provided women with an alternative to shrines, hospitals, and traditional healers by offering pregnant women care throughout the course of their pregnancies by *iya aladura*, “prayer women” who helped pregnant women by overseeing their hygiene, meals, exercise, and prayers.⁷⁶ However, as the government took a greater interest in public health and medical services in southwestern Nigeria after World War

⁷³ Adeloje, *My Salad Days*, 110.

⁷⁴ Some other reasons for fasting are discussed in Chapter Two.

⁷⁵ Adeloje, *My Salad Days*, 100 and personal conversation, 31 December 31 2009.

⁷⁶ Adeware Alokan, *The Christ Apostolic Church: C.A.C. 1928-1988* (Ibukunola Printers Nigeria Ltd., 1991), 220.

II,⁷⁷ these prayer women turned out not to be enough. There were two main problems. One was that women were leaving the Christ Apostolic Church to seek other medical options. There was a longstanding discussion in the Christ Apostolic Church about the problem of the “temptations” faced by “our pregnant women” to follow advice to see medical doctors for bi-weekly checkups at hospitals and clinics throughout the course of their pregnancies.⁷⁸ The temptations were strictly forbidden by the church’s divine healing doctrine, which prohibited any treatment other than prayer. The other problem was that government officials began to interfere with Christ Apostolic Church’s religio-medical practices, in the interest of protecting public health. The Christ Apostolic Church dealt with these increasing post-war pressures by establishing its first maternity center at Ede in Oyo State in 1959.⁷⁹

Adeaware Alokun, a retired educator who has held several positions in the Christ Apostolic Church national leadership, writes briefly about the center in his excellent denominational history. After the center was founded, it became a hub of revival and evangelism where barren women became pregnant; cursed women gave birth safely; half-human/half-animal babies were born without surgery; long overdue women were finally delivered; and women who continually miscarried were healed.⁸⁰ Specific examples of the work of the center were given in a 1964 edition of a Christ Apostolic Church magazine, *The*

⁷⁷ University College Hospital in Ibadan was founded in 1952, as were dozens of clinics funded through the Social Welfare Department. While funding was never substantial, there was a significant propaganda effort in many parts of Africa with the purpose of improving maternal health in the years after World War II. See, for example, Nancy Rose Hunt, *A Colonial Lexicon of Birth Ritual, Medicalization, and Mobility in the Congo* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1999) on the expansion of government maternity services in the 1950s.

⁷⁸ *The Onward Christian*, No. 2 August 1964, “Nigerian Pamphlets 1867-1964” Collection, reel 7, item 193, African Collection, Yale University Libraries.

⁷⁹ Alokun, *The Christ Apostolic Church*, 220.

⁸⁰ Alokun, *The Christ Apostolic Church*, 222-23.

Onward Christian. One success reported was the case of Mrs. Maria Babalola from Ilesha who, swollen “from head to toe,” admitted that she would rather die than give birth. After praying for many hours, however, she gave birth to a set of twins and lived. Another was Mrs. Limota Lasupo of Oke-Foko, Ibadan who was brought to the maternity center after having visited most of the hospitals in Ibadan where she had been x-rayed and told “they could only see something like a stone and not a babe in her womb.” But, “through relentless prayers for her,” as the article reports it, “God again ascertained His supremacy over the doctors of the world and she gave birth to a Fairy, which died immediately,” though the mother lived. A third, Mrs. Abigail Adejumo of Olugbode, Ibadan, gave birth to a dead child who, after three days of prayers, returned to life. Another woman, Mrs. Florence Adeleye of Alaho, Ibadan gave birth to a baby with six arms. The child died, but the mother lived. “If the woman were with [a] native doctor,” the article warns, “she would have been asked to bring what might have caused her poverty for the doctor would insist that sacrifices must be made” (of animals the woman would have had to purchase). But she did not have to pay a kobo for the care she received, as “all healings are freely given in CAC.”⁸¹

As word of these healings spread, people began going to the maternity center for help with others kinds of problems too. It became the site of a monthly revival called *Olorun Gbogbonse*, meaning “the Lord is all problem-solving.”⁸² In other words, the Christ Apostolic Church’s reported success at healing fertility-related problems led other women and men to seek out Christ Apostolic Church’s prayer-based solutions as well. The maternity center became instrumental in spreading the Christ Apostolic Church’s divine healing

⁸¹ All cases from “What a Friend We (C.A.C.) Have in Jesus?” in *The Onward Christian*, No. 2, 10.

⁸² Alokun, *The Christ Apostolic Church*, 223. No date is given for when these revivals began.

mission and growing the Church. In Alokan's own assessment, "the importance of the establishment of maternity centre[s] in C.A.C. throughout Nigeria cannot be overemphasized." While he only devotes a few pages of his book to them, he argues that it is this system of centers and midwives which "has successfully sustained one of the pillars on which the C.A.C. is built – Divine Healing."⁸³ It was the maternity center's success that led the church leaders to decide to start sponsoring women to attend midwife-training courses, aiming to expand its healing ministry.⁸⁴ The response to this project was slow at first since it required each Christ Apostolic Church district to budget money for it, but as the first midwives completed their training and opened centers, and as villagers began to see how valuable having a trained midwife in the community could be, a "healthy rivalry among districts, towns and villages" soon developed and the numbers of trained Christ Apostolic Church midwives continued to rise.⁸⁵

There is an interesting irony in the Christ Apostolic Church's decision to found a maternity center in order to keep women in the church. During the height of the Aladura revivals, Henry Dallimore, the CMS Archdeacon who served in Ekiti District from 1929 until 1947, had done the same thing; he established a hospital in Ado-Ekiti to stem the flow of women leaving the CMS for the Aladuras. It was a personal project; he and his wife raised the money themselves. We know this because the Oba of Ado-Ekiti explained it in the speech he gave at Dallimore's burial ceremony. Speaking directly to the deceased, he recalled,

⁸³ Alokan, *The Christ Apostolic Church*, 224.

⁸⁴ The church's extreme position on medicine did permit learning midwifery skills, as "common-sense treatments" were allowed. See Peel, *Aladura*, 133.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

“After the marth [march] of the Aladura healing parade in 1929, when Joseph Babalola claimed that God could cure sickness through him, this claim, coupled with the sight of the sick flocking to Joseph Babalola for cure, led you, Dallimore and your wife to attempt medical work in Ekiti in sheer sympathy for the people, realising that people needed bodily healing as well as spiritual healing you latter [sic] solicited for money in England and you founded ‘Our Saviour’s Hospital’ in Ado-Ekiti.”⁸⁶ The hospital opened in 1937 and is now known as the Ile-Abiye Maternity Hospital. The military governor who spoke at the ceremony selected the establishment of this hospital as Dallimore’s single most important achievement. He cited the center, “which is today thriving and has received national acclaim for its work among our pregnant women and sick people,” as the model for “the maternity centres which are now built in every town and village.”⁸⁷ Dallimore established this center as a response to Babalola’s revivals; later, the Christ Apostolic Church, which grew out of those same revivals, established its own health clinic focused on serving the needs of pregnant women for the very same reason: to stem the flow of women from the church.

Opening the maternity center and training midwives was not just a response to women’s health needs. It was also a means of responding to government officials’ concerns. As the Christ Apostolic Church expanded, as it lost the protection which had been afforded by its affiliations with foreign missionaries, and as interest in public health increased, the care offered by the prayer women was not enough to satisfy local authorities. Thus the

⁸⁶ “Funeral Oration by Oba Aladesanmi II At the Burial Ceremony of Archdeacon Henry Dallimore at Ado-Ekiti on Saturday, 18th July, 1970,” personal papers of Adelola Adeloye, Ibadan.

⁸⁷ “Funeral Oration at the Graveside of the Late Venerable Archdeacon Henry Dallimore as delivered by His Excellency Brigadier R. A. Adebayo, idc, psc, the Military Governor of the Western State at Ado-Ekiti on Saturday, 18th July, 1970,” personal papers of Adelola Adeloye, Ibadan.

decision to invest in maternal and child health was in large part a response to tension between the Christ Apostolic Church and the colonial government. It was, in Alokán's words, a response to "unyielding persecutions from the detractors of the church,"⁸⁸ most likely an assortment of mainline Protestant and Apostolic Church⁸⁹ leaders and missionaries and their native and colonial governmental allies.

Thus the founding of the first maternity center in 1959 was a solution to two problems at once: the problem of women leaving for other medical options, as discussed above, and the ongoing institutional problems of government persecution. In other words, the Christ Apostolic Church leaders decided to found a maternity center and fund midwife training in large part in order to get the government off their backs. As their network of midwives expanded, according to Alokán, "the harrowing experiences of government officials threatening the Church" was "reduced to the barest minimum."⁹⁰ Indeed, these women's health initiatives may have been *the* central ingredient in freeing the Christ Apostolic Church from governmental interference. The initiatives allowed the Christ Apostolic Church to continue to compete, on its own terms, in an increasingly crowded religio-medical marketplace – one centered on maternal health – with "apostolic faith healers" a viable alternative to traditional healers and government and missionary hospitals and clinics. Women's health issues were at the very center of Christ Apostolic Church's

⁸⁸ Alokán, *The Christ Apostolic Church*, 220.

⁸⁹ As explained in Chapter Two, the Christ Apostolic Church was founded as result of a split with the missionary-based Apostolic Church in 1940.

⁹⁰ Alokán, *The Christ Apostolic Church*, 224. Though, to be fair, those threatening experiences may have become less harrowing on their own with Nigerian independence in 1960.

growth from its beginnings, when they flocked to Bablola's revivals in the 1930s, into the 1940s, 50s, and beyond.

Conclusion

By looking at people becoming Pentecostal in the 1930s, 40s, and 50s, we can develop a broader and more nuanced understanding of the contemporary Brazilian and Nigerian religious landscapes. This chapter has explored the reasons people had for becoming Pentecostal as well as the strategies early Pentecostal churches pursued for attracting and retaining members. It has also demonstrated the useful asymmetry inherent in comparative investigations. Different contexts, different historiographies, and different sources invariably lead to different questions, arguments, and conclusions. In this chapter, the Brazilian material led to a focus on individuals while the Nigerian material led to a focus on institutions. What is the weakness of one section is the strength of the other. Together, both help show how rich and complex Pentecostal history is, with church growth and personal conversion intersecting with all sorts of other concerns, demonstrating not only ruptures but also surprising continuities.

By moving back and forth between institutions, believers, and beliefs, this chapter and the two that preceded it have also raised an implicit tension which is present in any study of religion: the tension between the material and the spiritual. This tension is especially strong in the study of Pentecostalism because of the movement's pronounced emphasis on spiritual gifts alongside the considerable appeal of its material promises. It is a tension which can be tremendously compelling. How do we hold institutional actors and spiritual beliefs in

the same frame? How do we balance a focus on beliefs with a focus on their contexts? What can be learned from the many possible juxtapositions? The next three chapters will address these questions as they turn toward the larger political contexts of Brazilian and Nigerian Pentecostalism by investigating Pentecostals' relationships with government, citizenship, and national identity.

CHAPTER FOUR

From Aladura to Charismatic: National Politics and Pentecostal Growth in Nigeria

There have been three waves of Pentecostal growth in Nigeria, with each wave bringing in a new demographic group. The first wave is the one described in Chapter Two: those who joined the Aladura churches in the 1930s and 1940s. For the most part, these people were Yorubas in Western Nigeria, though some were Igbos in the East as well, and there were even a few prayer groups and churches established in the North along the railroad lines. Some of this first wave was comprised of the educated, Christian young men who worked as civil servants and railroad clerks; most, however, were uneducated people in small towns and increasingly, cities, as the 1930s and 40s were a period of rapid urbanization in Nigeria. The majority of the leaders of these new churches were educated men, while the majority of followers were uneducated women, as discussed in Chapter Three.

What happened between the 1950s, where the previous chapter left off, and the turn of the 21st century, where the final chapter will begin? How did the fringe Aladura churches of the 1930s, 40s and 50s evolve into the powerful charismatic churches which now dominate the Nigerian Christian landscape? What happened in Nigeria in the 1960s, 70s, 80s, and 90s, (politically, economically, socially) and what was the relationship of these developments to the concurrent explosion of Pentecostalism in the country? In order to answer these questions, we now turn our attention to the second and third waves of

Pentecostal growth, examining them in the larger context of the emergence and development of the Nigerian nation-state.

We will see that the story of the Nigerian nation is, in large part, the story of what political scientist James Coleman has called “the knotty problem of how to create nations out of heterogeneous cultural materials”¹ It is a story of political openings alternating with political closings; of the development of regional and ethnic divisions; of the longevity of patronage ties and vertical networks; and of the impact of colonial administrative structures on the independent nation. Fragmentation, ambiguity, patrimonialism, and oil are important themes in the story this chapter tells as it discusses the political-economic history of the nation of Nigeria from 1950 through 2010, examining how this history has intersected with the three waves of Nigerian Pentecostal growth. The chapter concludes with a close look at the leading church of the third wave: Nigeria’s most significant charismatic church, the Redeemed Christian Church of God.

Preparation for Self-Governance

The run-up to Nigeria’s self-governance began in the 1950s as a joint project of British administrators and Nigerian nationalists. The British administration had operated under the assumption that they would have control over Nigeria, as over all of their empire, for far longer than they did. However, Nigerian nationalism and financial imperatives, both effects of the Second World War, led to Britain’s decision to grant many of its African and Asian colonies independence. The decision was not taken hastily, and independence was not

¹ James S. Coleman, *Nigeria: Background to Nationalism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1963), 409.

granted overnight. Instead, Nigeria became fully independent in 1960 after a gradual transition to self-governance.

The Macpherson Constitution of 1951, drafted jointly by British and Nigerian representatives, formally structured the nationalist movement (which had been growing in Nigeria, as in much of Africa, after the end of the Second World War) into political parties which operated within a new electoral system. This constitution, a replacement for the Richards Constitution of 1946 which had been written by then Governor-General of the colony Sir Anthony Richards and found unacceptable by nationalists, was soon found wanting as well. Its problems – namely that it gave the central government too much power over regional legislation – were addressed in a meeting of British administrators and Nigerian nationalists held in London in 1953. It was at this conference that the most significant decisions about Nigeria's future self-governance were made: that it would be a federal state, with specific powers allowed the federal government and residual powers allowed the three regions; that each region would have a premier; and that each region could have full internal self-government beginning in 1956.²

These new decisions formed the basis of the Constitution of 1954, establishing the framework for an independent state which would maintain the regional structure established during the British administration – North, West and East – with each developing its own multiple political parties based on existing patronage networks. By 1956, most nationalists were directing their attention toward their own regions, rather than agitating for independence, and there was a general feeling of pro-British sentiment among Nigerians. A

² Coleman, *Nigeria*, 369, 371.

constitutional review conference, originally scheduled for 1956, took place in London in the spring of 1957 with relatively little drama. The conference deliberations, which focused mostly on arranging the details of giving self-government to the Eastern and Western regions in 1957 and to the Northern region in 1959, as well as determining the division of functions between federal and regional governments, were marked by a general sense of unity and good will. Discussions of the date on which the Nigerian Federation would become independent were postponed, as were controversial conversations on minority ethnic groups, new states, and revenue allocation.³ All of these problems would be left for the Nigerians to deal with on their own after independence. As political scientist Richard Joseph has written, once colonial powers decided to withdraw, “they devoted more attention to the retention of desired economic, diplomatic, and security arrangements than to the operation of new governmental institutions.”⁴ Indeed, correspondence of colonial officers in the late 1950s shows that many were also more concerned with their personal situations – employment, salary, pensions, etc. – than those of the states they were leaving behind.⁵

In August 1957, both the Eastern and Western regions became fully self-governing. This was a significant milestone. Eastern Region Premiere Nnamdi Azikiwe called it a “major achievement” marking “the end of the beginning of the struggle for freedom from political tutelage,” while Western Region Premiere Obafemi Awolowo declared that “we are now free, within our clearly prescribed jurisdiction, to do just what we like, without let or

³ Coleman, *Nigeria*, 373, 375-6.

⁴ Richard Joseph, “Democratization in Africa after 1989: Comparative and Theoretical Perspectives,” *Comparative Politics* 29, no.3 (1997): 370.

⁵ See, for example, the personal correspondence of J O’Regan, an officer at the Ministry of Health in Ibadan in the late 1950s. “O’Regan, Box 2,” MSS Brit. Emp. S385, Bodleian Library of Commonwealth and African Studies at Rhodes House, University of Oxford.

hindrance from any quarter.”⁶ It is important to note, however, that the development of this liberty created accompanying problems. Maintaining the British administrative structure of three separate regions meant that the emerging Nigerian state would be marked by regionally-based factionalism. It was a system which was, to quote historian Michael Gould, “hopelessly undemocratic and factionalized.”⁷

From the beginning, there was no real incentive for cross-regional cooperation or for the development of truly national political parties. Instead, the leading parties were each dominated by the majority ethnic group of each region: the Hausa-Fulani in the North, the Igbo in the East, and the Yoruba in the West. It was system in which, as historian Olufemi Vaughan has written, “communal-based elites define[d] collective political action as struggles for scarce resources of wealth, status and power.”⁸ While the 1954 Constitution tried to mitigate the influence of regionalism on the national government by establishing a central Council of Ministers, this council was relatively weak – so weak, in fact, that historian James Coleman asserted that “this failure at the center unquestionably facilitated the drift to regionalism” that followed independence (and that has continued up through the present day). All political parties had regional bases; despite some real efforts to establish them, there were no truly national parties.⁹

⁶ As quoted in Coleman, *Nigeria*, 376-7.

⁷ Michael Gould, *The Struggle for Modern Nigeria: The Biafran War 1967-1970* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2012), 1.

⁸ Olufemi Vaughan, *Nigerian Chiefs: Traditional Power in Modern Politics, 1890s-1990s* (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2000), 12. Also see Richard Sklar, *Nigerian Political Parties: Power in an Emergent African Nation* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1963).

⁹ Coleman, *Nigeria*, 377.

The 1957 conference discussed this problem of regionalism and decided to create the office of federal prime minister, giving him the power to nominate his own cabinet, with the hope that the holder of this office could help establish a truly national government. In 1957, a few weeks after the Eastern and Western regions became self-governing, this national government was established with Abubakar Tafewa Balewa, a widely-respected politician from the Northern state of Bauchi, as its head. That Balewa was a Northerner is very significant; his selection is an example of the ways in which the British favored the North when developing their blueprint for Nigerian self-governance. An even more pronounced example of Northern advantage was the fact that seats in the House of Representatives were split evenly between the North and the South. This meant that the Southern seats were split between the Eastern and Western Regions, whose politicians were unlikely to come together as a single voting bloc, allowing the more unified North to dominate the House. Why did the British want this allocation? Most likely because the Northern leaders were historically more likely to cooperate with the British rather than to agitate impatiently for independence as in the South. Southern resentment of perceived Northern advantages granted in the run-up to independence have simmered into the present day. Indeed, longstanding resentments and competitions rooted in regionalism and factionalism are some of the primary (internal) reasons for the instability of the postcolonial Nigerian state, though the profound impact they would have was not immediately evident to all.

First Republic

At first, there was optimism. The independent Nigerian nation was established on April 2nd, 1960 with great pomp and promise. Despite significant turbulence, stemming from both

intra- and inter-regional factionalism, Prime Minister Balewa managed to maintain his position for a full four-year term and was re-elected in 1964. Two years later, however, he was murdered in a military coup. This coup, led by an Igbo from the East, targeted and killed many of the leading Western and Northern politicians. The coup was an instance of what Frederick Cooper has called “Africa’s outbursts of military populism: a military elite, trained to get things done, perceiving a government of elected politicians as self-interested, corrupt, and incompetent, announcing its determination to restore competence and regularity to government.”¹⁰ This First Republic lasted barely six years.

The proximate cause of the coup were the events of the national elections of 1964 and their aftermath in the Western region in 1965. The lead-up to the national elections held in 1964 were characterized by intimidation of opponents, disruption of campaigns, general lawlessness and, in some cases, assassinations, a situation which political scientist Eghosa Osaghae has fairly described as a “descent into anarchy.” By the time the elections were held, most candidates in the North and East were returned unopposed. In the West, however, the opposition candidates and their supporters stayed in the election; afterwards, unsurprisingly, the results were contested. Problems in the West precipitated problems at the national level: a power struggle between president and prime minister that was resolved only with the intervention of the Supreme Court. The truce negotiated required a new round of Western regional elections in 1965. These turned out to be “the final Waterloo for the young Republic.” The campaigns were violent, the election was rigged and manipulated on a large scale, and the victory was claimed by two competing political parties, as both tried to swear

¹⁰ Frederick Cooper, *Africa Since 1940: The Past of the Present*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 172.

in its own candidate as Premier. Protests and demonstrations followed; there was burning, destruction of property, and death in a “complete breakdown of law and order” in the West. The military struck while the West burned.¹¹

The second wave of Pentecostal growth, which happened during the 1960s and 70s, was a response to this failure of the First Republic. These were the years when Christian students established charismatic prayer groups on university campuses.¹² The prayer groups were centered on the campuses of University of Ibadan, the University of Ife, the Yaba College of Technology, Lagos, and the University of Lagos. As they were located in the Western region, they involved mainly Yoruba students, many from poor backgrounds with promising futures, beneficiaries of the radical expansion of education opportunities in the Western region in the 1960s and 70s. As universities had mostly male students at the time, most of the members of this interdenominational “campus Christianity” movement were young men.

In their activities the students brought together, to quote J.D.Y. Peel, “two strands of Evangelical tradition which had been planted in West Africa many decades before: student prayer and Bible-study groups such as the Inter-Varsity Christian Union; and Pentecostalism, which had gone through several mutations since its introduction at the height of the Aladura revival around 1930.”¹³ In addition to the Inter-Varsity Christian Union, the groups included the Student Christian Movement, the Christian Union, the Scripture Union, and the

¹¹ Eghosa E. Osaghae, *Crippled Giant: Nigeria Since Independence* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998), 44, 46-7.

¹² Mathews Ojo, himself a former participant in these groups, has written about them at length. See Mathews Ojo, *The End-Time Army: Charismatic Movements in Modern Nigeria* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, Inc., 2006).

¹³ J.D.Y. Peel, “Forward” to Ojo, *The End-Time Army*, viii.

Evangelical Christian Union, as well as the organizations that developed out of them, such as the Tuesday Group and the World Action Team for Christ. Inspired at first by foreign evangelical literature, much of which was provided by Sidney Granville Elton (the renegade British pastor described in Chapter Two), and then by visits by some of the evangelists themselves, including Billy Graham, T.L. Osborn, and Franklin Hall, the groups focused on miracles, healing, fasting, prayer, and – especially – baptism by the Holy Spirit.

It would be difficult to overestimate the importance of these groups in spurring the growth of Pentecostalism in Nigeria. The student groups held weekly prayer meetings, published and circulated newsletters and pamphlets, actively recruited other students, and invited evangelists to campus. As Ojo has clearly stated, “it was the entry of Pentecostalism into the institutions of higher learning in the 1970s that precipitated the Charismatic renewal in the country” as “from then on, educated youths with widened horizon[s] of experience and an elite status became actively involved in promoting this new trend in Nigerian Christianity.” These young men were committed to revitalizing Christianity and responding, as Christians, to the young nation’s socio-economic and political tumult.¹⁴ It was through these groups that, to quote Peel, “Pentecostalism, which had existed rather on the edge of Nigerian Christian life – among Aladura (especially Apostolic) groups and in sporadic revivals, often by American evangelists – moved closer to the center” and “gained a springboard for it to move socially ‘up’ as well as spatially ‘out’ within the wider society.”¹⁵ Ultimately, these student organizations served as crucibles for the charismatic churches which started developing in the late 1970s and have continued growing through the present

¹⁴ Ojo, *The End-Time Army*, xix, 2.

¹⁵ Peel, “Forward” to Ojo, *The End-Time Army*, ix.

day. Nearly all of the most significant charismatic organizations in the country – such as Deeper Life, Living Faith Church (Winners’ Chapel), and the Redeemed Christian Church of God – evolved from the groups established and led by these students after graduation. Indeed, nearly all of the key figures in contemporary Nigerian Pentecostalism are former members of these groups.

Why did these prayer groups emerge in the first place? They did so, in large part, because of the students’ disillusionment with the mainline churches. These students were already Christians, members of the churches which ran the mission schools in which they had been educated, but they were dissatisfied. One reason for their frustration was the mainline churches’ longstanding failure to involve young people to the extent they wished to be involved in church and convention leadership. The other was that prominent Christian politicians were implicated in the violence and atrocities carried out during the Western Region elections of 1964 and 65 which led to the collapse of the First Republic. This combination of factors led students to look outside the mainline churches for new forms of Christianity which would allow them to take the leadership roles denied to them by the mainline organizations and which were untainted by post-independence political corruption. As this argument has not been made before, it bears going into in some depth here.

While Christian students from all the mainline churches were disillusioned with their elders,¹⁶ here we will focus on the case study provided by records from the Nigerian Baptist Convention. In this particular case, Baptist youth were dissatisfied with the Convention as early as 1952, when the Convention president gave a speech which noted that, “to many men

¹⁶ Personal communication with Matthews Ojo, Ife, Nigeria, 18 January 2010.

and women today, especially the younger ones, the church is not a witness to the truth of its Gospel, but it is in its divisions, its dullness, its unreality an obstacle, a stumbling, an effence [sic]."¹⁷ By the mid-1960s, references to disenchanted youth in Baptist speeches, editorials, and articles had multiplied. For example, after the 1966 Convention, the editor of *The Nigerian Baptist* congratulated “our youths for being so bold to [sic] and frank in challenging the validity of what they thought was wrong.”¹⁸ A letter to the editor published a couple of months later addressed “the malady of frustration” and the “apathy and lack of interest amongst so many of our members.” The writer claimed that the Convention was being run by a nepotistic clique which only appointed its members to positions of power, operating on a principle of “rub my back and I'll rub your back.” Claiming that “one gets a job this days not on merrit [sic] but on the basis of his clannish relationships,” the writer demonstrates that there was little room for unconnected people of any age in the leadership of the Convention.¹⁹

The editor addressed the topic of frustrated youth again two months later, discussing how, “in the past few years, the Baptist youths have complained that they were not given adequate recognition by the Convention,” because none were appointed to any decision-making body and none were consulted in the selection of youth representatives to national and international youth conferences. These complaints were discussed at the 1966 national convention where convention leaders said “that until our youths show definite evidence of

¹⁷ J. T. Ayorinde, "President's Message," *The Nigerian Baptist*, May/June 1952, 24, Southern Baptist Convention Historical Library and Archives.

¹⁸ "Editorial Page: Convention Echoes," *The Nigerian Baptist*, June 1966, 2.

¹⁹ J. M. Enomate, "Letters to the Editor: Frustration? -- Yes," *The Nigerian Baptist*, August 1966, 18.

sincerity, conviction, realism and genuine desire to up-life Christ, proclaim and inculcate his true philosophy of life among our people, they will hesitate to let them serve in delicate positions of trust and responsibility."²⁰

In response, a few enterprising youths began para-church organizations of their own, such as the Ibadan Baptist Association Youth Movement. According to its student founder, this new movement was “organized to rise to the challenge of the Nigerian Baptist Convention that all youths should come together as one and to foster lasting Christian fellowship among all youths.”²¹ Here we see that the type of student movements Ojo writes about – the incubators of Pentecostalism in Nigeria – grew as a result of frustration with mainline church leadership. Furthermore, they also grew with the encouragement of some members of church hierarchies who felt the youth were not yet ready to take on leadership positions within the church itself, following the same pattern established by missionaries' paternalism towards early African converts and the growth of African Initiated Churches (AICs) in response, and reminiscent of the Baptist missionaries discussed in Chapter One.

These enterprising youth were responding not only to a lack of leadership opportunities but also to a deep-seated disappointment with the immorality of members of the church's hierarchy. This disillusionment was not just limited to the Baptists. As Coleman has written, “More than two-thirds of the southern members [of the House of Representatives] started their careers either as employees of Christian missions societies, usually as teachers in mission schools, or as members of the junior civil service in the government of Nigeria.”²²

²⁰ "Editorial Page: Nigerian Baptist Youths, Awake," *The Nigerian Baptist*, August 1966, 18.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Coleman, *Nigeria*, 379.

Even those who were not employed by mission societies or the colonial administration had been educated at mission schools, as these schools were the only place to learn to read and write in the colonial era. Nearly all Southern politicians in the 1960s were Christians of one kind or another.

Returning to the specific example of the Baptists, the record shows that there were widespread accusations of Baptist politicians' culpability in the bungled 1965 elections, accusations accepted as credible by the leaders of the Nigerian Baptist Convention. Leading Nigerian Baptists accepted this blame. For example, in 1966, at the first national convention after the fall of the First Republic, the president of the Nigerian Baptist Convention recognized widespread accusations of Baptist culpability for the bungled elections and the carnage which followed and called for revival: "a spiritual coup d'etat."²³ In this he echoed a demand for revival and reconversion made by the editor of *The Nigerian Baptist* a few months earlier.²⁴

The president and the editor were both responding to accusations which were direct, pointed, and publicized. Here is a letter to the editor of *The Nigerian Baptist* that was published in April 1966 under the title "Election Riggers of the Baptist:"

Dear Editor,

One Saturday when I was travelling [sic] home, some people I was travelling with were talking about the affairs of Western Nigeria. They mentioned [the] Baptist denomination. They spoke of those among the Baptists swimming in politics. They even mentioned names of some ministers and some of our other leaders who were mixing politics with God's work. They termed them 'Election Riggers of the Baptist'. They further alleged that all the people in Nigeria have known that Baptist ministers and some other high ranking

²³ E. A. Dahunsi, "The Presidential Address," *The Nigerian Baptist*, June 1966, 6-7.

²⁴ "Editorial Page: The First Convention After the Coup," *The Nigerian Baptist*, April 1966, 2.

Baptist officials in the West were the ones spoiling [the] Western Region of Nigeria.

This letter was followed by an editor's note which reported that another "member of the Baptist denomination" had a similar experience and "wrote almost precisely the same thing."²⁵ It is apparent that at least some members of the general public had come to associate Baptists with political corruption and bloodshed.

The editor validated these accusations not only by publishing them but also by encouraging Baptists to take them seriously. In his monthly editorial, which was the first one ever to be published in Yoruba as well as English, he offered advice on the eve of the Convention's first post-coup annual convention. He encouraged all Baptists to be concerned about accusations such as the ones published in the letters to the editors. "The persistent question that will have to be answered," he asserts, "is whether we as individual members and therefore as a Convention have played a creditable role in the general conduct of the affairs of our First Republic which has just been swept away by our national army." In order to answer the question honestly, he claimed, it would be necessary to "renew our faith which will help us to earnestly search our hearts and confess our sins without being ashamed of people or of ourselves," necessary because "many of us, especially certain of our leaders, have allegedly played disreputable roles and have thus by their actions brought about the downfall of our last civil government."²⁶

These accusations were also addressed by the president of the Convention, who not only validated the need to consider them but also confirmed the truth behind them. The

²⁵ E. O. Agbeleoba, "Letter to the Editor," *The Nigerian Baptist*, April 1966, 11.

²⁶ "The First Convention After the Coup," 11.

accusations had basis in fact. In his “Memorandum on the National Situation” published in February 1966, he wrote:

We Baptists once derived joy as champions of freedom and justice, of truth and honest[y]. However, our heads were bowed in shame as people observed that the distressing atrocities [in the October Western elections when hundreds were killed] were committed in the area where our denomination had the strongest influence, where many Baptists were in key positions in Government and quasi-government bodies. Many of us . . . become ardent supporters of evil policies and practices in total disregard of Jesus Christ and his demands. We flattered corrupt politicians for personal private profit. We sang their praises in the assembly of God’s people. We connived at sin . . . [and] all of us were implicated in the moral confusion of the times [.] May God forgive us!²⁷

The president returned to this theme two months later, during his address at the annual convention in April 1966, declaring that in the aftermath of the elections, “as the reign of terror became more general,” he “received all sorts of caustic messages charging Baptists with the greatest responsibilities in the carnage.” His response? “The charges were well-founded.”²⁸

After accepting Baptist culpability for the bungled elections and the carnage which followed, the president ended his speech with a plea for revival, stating, “If there is anything above all else I desire to see happen at this Convention, it is a spiritual revival, a SPIRITUAL COUP D’ETAT.” This echoed a demand made by the editor of *The Nigerian Baptist* a few months earlier, when he published an editorial which boldly stated, “You either need a revival or a reconversion or else quit calling yourselves Christians.”²⁹ Thus Baptists

²⁷ E. A. Dahunsi, “Memorandum on The National Situation,” *The Nigerian Baptist*, February/March 1966, 6.

²⁸ Dahunsi, “Presidential Address,” 6-7.

²⁹ “Editorial Page: Revival or Reconversion,” *The Nigerian Baptist*, January 1966, 3.

themselves contributed to the development of Pentecostalism in the 1960s by acknowledging Baptist culpability and calling for a revival of spirituality in response to the elections of 1964 and 1965 and the failure of the democratic nation-state.

The problem was not that the Baptists' message went unheeded; the problem was that new Christians were not interested in joining the dishonored church while young people, who were already chafing under the tight control of the Baptist leadership, began to look outside of it. These young people, at once frustrated with their lack of power within their own churches and disgusted with the role their co-religionist elders played in the violence of the early post-colonial period, actively sought out alternative ways to be Christian. They chose to work with each other and with foreign evangelists rather than within their own churches and their historical missionary relationships. The revival the Baptists called for at their 1966 convention did happen. It just did not happen in the way Baptist leadership intended. The spiritual coup d'état came from outside the church, not within it, as young people began to look for new ways to organize and practice Christianity, creating the second wave of Pentecostal growth.

Oil Boom

Returning to the political narrative after the fall of the First Republic in 1966, the new military government was led by Major General Johnson Aguiyi-Ironsi as Head of State. He was another Igbo the coup's leaders had intended to assassinate but who had managed to evade murder and rise to power. This power turned out to be brief. Just six months later, Ironsi's government was overthrown in a counter-coup led by Northerners angry at what they

saw as an Igbo power grab. This second military government was led by Ironsi's own Army Chief of Staff, Lieutenant-Colonel Yakubu Gowon, a Christian from Plateau State, located on Nigeria's Middle Belt. The North had wrested control back from the South, and Gowon held power for nine years, from 1966 until 1975.

It was under Gowon's watch that the Biafran War was fought. This was Nigeria's civil war, sparked by the secession of three Eastern States and their formation of the independent republic of Biafra. Gowon's first response was a police action, one he expected to be resolved within a couple weeks. Instead, the war lasted two and a half years, from July 1967 to January 1970. Ostensibly a war over ethnicity – secession in response to discrimination and violence against Igbos living in the North – the conflict was also about natural resources. Eastern Nigeria had oil. International forces, with their eyes on the rich reserves in the contested land, became involved: Britain backed Nigeria, France back Biafra, and Russia sent arms to Nigeria when the British government bowed to humanitarian pressure to stop doing so. Nearly one million Biafrans died during the conflict, mostly children killed by starvation as a result of a Nigerian blockade, images of which were shown on international television, the first moving-picture films of starving African children seen by many Westerners.³⁰

With the end of the war, the oil reserves became the driving force in a thriving Nigerian economy. This post-war economy was not diverse– nearly all revenues came from oil – but it grew spectacularly. Total revenue from oil increased most dramatically between 1973 and 1974, when the world market price nearly quadrupled; pulling the lens back a bit,

³⁰ Frederick Forsyth, "Foreword" in Gould, *Struggle for Modern Nigeria*, xii.

we see that Nigeria's total federal revenue increased more than seven times over in the first half of the 1970s, from N785 million in 1970-1 to over N6.1 billion in 1976-7.³¹ Oil powered the Nigerian economy through the 1970s, enriching political "Big Men" and their patronage networks. As historian Olufemi Vaughan has explained, state structures functioned "largely as mechanisms for allocating patronage and ensuring political domination."³² The influx of petrodollars permitted the maintenance of the politico-economic structure that had been established through the syncretism of the gatekeeping colonial state apparatus with the longstanding Nigerian culture of patrimonialism. In other words, the job of the state in the 1970s was to profit from the export of oil, the job of politicians was to pass these profits along to their supporters, and the job of their supporters was to reelect them. The strength and efficacy of these pyramidal vertical ties was such that they largely impeded the development of class- and interest-based horizontal ties.

The oil boom affected not only the new nation's political economy but also its social programs and its culture. Schools, hospitals, and roads were built. Huge sums of money were spent on an international festival celebrating African and diasporic culture, the Second World African Festival of Arts and Culture (FESTAC), held in 1977. As anthropologist Andrew Apter describes it, "it was a dizzy time, as administrative structures, civil servants, and employment opportunities proliferated, as cash and commodities accelerated in complementary flows, and fortunes appeared overnight without any apparent relations to

³¹ Osaghae, *Crippled Giant*, 96.

³² Vaughan, *Nigerian Chiefs*, 13.

capital investment or hard work.”³³ Government officials used oil revenues for patronage, nationalist cultural projects, infrastructure development, and investment in education. While they did make some lackluster efforts to develop import substitution industrialization projects, they largely neglected the agricultural and industrial sectors, focusing instead on developing what Apter has called “a de facto market of government contracts, licenses, and offices.”³⁴ There was more than enough money to import all that was needed. Indeed, Head of State Gowon is reported to have said, “the only problem Nigeria has is how to spend the money she has.”³⁵ If postcolonial Nigeria has had a golden age, the 1970s were it.

In the middle of this decade of Nigerian abundance, there was another coup. Frustration with Gowon’s regime, which had been steadily growing with reports of rampant corruption, reached a breaking point in 1974 when he reneged on his promise to allow a return to civilian rule in 1976. A group of army officers organized a coup which they carried out successfully in July 1975. Northerner Murtala Mohammed was appointed Head of State and Southerner Olusegun Obasanjo his Chief of Staff. Mohammed’s leadership was well-received, as he charged officials with corruption and slashed the bloated bureaucracy and army. Less than a year later, however, Mohammed was killed in a failed coup attempt. Obasanjo took charge and saw through Mohammed’s plan for a return to civilian rule by 1979. A constitution was drafted and political parties (re-)formed. Northerner Alhaji Shehu

³³ Andrew Apter, *The Pan-African Nation: Oil and the Spectacle of Culture in Nigeria* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2005), 8.

³⁴ Apter, *The Pan-African Nation*, 8, referencing Sara Berry, *Fathers Work for Their Sons: Accumulation, Mobility, and Class Formation in an Extended Yoruba Community* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), 13-14.

³⁵ This is a quote widely attributed to Gowon but without reference. He may not have said exactly these words, or even anything close, but the fact that many believe he did demonstrates how many Nigerians view the 1970s, at least in retrospect.

Shagari was elected President of Nigeria's Second Republic and served four years, from 1979 to 1983. Although he was re-elected in a very questionable election in 1983, he was quickly removed from power in a bloodless coup and replaced by Major-General Muhammed Buhari from the Northern state of Katsina.

Structural Adjustment

Buhari's takeover was welcome at first, as he took on the corruption of the civilian government, publicly humiliating civil servants as part of a public campaign called the "War Against Indiscipline" and taking measures against inflation. Yet he soon wore out his welcome with his heavy-handed tactics, such as censoring the press, preventing labor movements, and jailing musician and political critic Fela Kuti on a trumped up charge. And despite his efforts, corruption and economic decline continued, so that the next coup, in 1985, was generally well-received as well.

General Ibrahim Babangida of Niger State became the new Head of State, and he held the position from 1985 to 1993. During this time, the Nigerian economic landscape changed dramatically. Oil prices suddenly fell in the 1980s. Petrodollar revenues were drastically reduced, and government officials devoted most of what was left to maintaining their patronage networks, leaving social services and infrastructure – hospitals, schools, roads, electric plants, etc. – to fall into disrepair. Nigeria's economic decline began in earnest with the implementation of austerity measures and the "Structural Adjustment Program" (SAP) at the behest of the International Monetary Fund, introduced incrementally beginning in 1985. In exchange for aid, Babangida oversaw deregulation, privatization, and the devaluation of

the naira. The Nigerian economy did grow some at first, but real wages fell and public service spending decreased drastically. On the whole, this was a case of “adjustment without a face,” meaning its success was measured in economic rather than human terms, and its effect being essentially, to quote Osaghae, a waging of “a war on ordinary people.”³⁶

In addition, regional and ethnic tension increased, as competition for now-scarce revenues increased. A gatekeeper state only functions when the state is bringing in enough money – through taxes, customs, permits, visas, contracts, etc. – for all Big Men to maintain their patron-client relationships; that is, to be able to keep filtering funds down through their levels of supporters. As Cooper has written, “keeping the gate was more ambition than actuality, and struggles for the gate – and efforts of some groups to get around it – bedeviled African states from the start.” The sudden decline in revenues disrupted the fragile stability of the gatekeeping state by increasing competition for resources, competition which, due to the regional-ethnic divisions in the Nigerian state, played out in regional-ethnic terms.

The third wave of Pentecostal growth took place in the 1980s and 90s, after the implementation of structural adjustment programs and austerity measures led to the rapid decline in educational opportunities, employment possibilities, and general quality of life throughout Nigeria. It was a response to SAP-induced desperation. Those who joined Pentecostal churches during these decades can be described as “the SAP-ed generation,” a phrase pastor Michael Ojewale used in a title to a pamphlet, “Hope for the SAP-ed Generation,” about which anthropologist Ruth Marshall has written. It was a time characterized by an acute sense of hopelessness, a feeling that, to quote Ojewale, “everything

³⁶ Osaghae, *Crippled Giant*, 200.

– absolutely everything – is on the decline and and the verge of collapse.” It seemed as if all possibilities were suddenly foreclosed: “no jobs, no money, no food, no clothing, no personal dignity.”³⁷ This new hopelessness was felt especially profoundly after the optimism of the 1960s and prosperity of the 1970s.

Many Nigerians, searching for what Ojo has called “messianic intervention” which would afford some measure of “personal and collective salvation,”³⁸ turned to the charismatic movement. As Marshall has written, “the security, hope and empowerment that new life in Christ brings” became even more appealing in this context.³⁹ Nigerians were looking for both material and spiritual ways to cope with their drastically altered circumstances. The state could no longer provide. Maybe the new churches, which aggressively marketed themselves as solutions to SAP-induced problems, could. Maybe Jesus could. With “the failure of the centralized state,” Pentecostalism offered “an alternative center of power to solving human needs.”⁴⁰ The church which most exemplifies this SAP-inspired third wave is the Redeemed Christian Church of God.

E. A. Adeboye and the Redeemed Christian Church of God

Enoch Adejare Adeboye is the head of Nigeria’s largest charismatic (or neo-Pentecostal) church, the Redeemed Christian Church of God. Adeboye’s official title is General Overseer, and most church members refer to him as Daddy GO. He is also President of Redeemed’s

³⁷ Ruth Marshall, “Power in the Name of Jesus,” *Review of African Political Economy* 52 (1991): 25.

³⁸ Ojo, *The End-Time Army*, 3.

³⁹ Marshall “Power in the Name of Jesus,” 26.

⁴⁰ Ojo, *The End-Time Army*, 14.

university, Editor-in-Chief of its magazine, and head of its international missionary activities. Adeboye is a national celebrity with his own jet; fleets of dark-windowed, shiny cars; bodyguards; and multiple homes. He hobnobs with politicians and business leaders and is featured regularly on the front pages of Nigerian newspapers, tabloids, and magazines. His church is no ordinary church. It is a movement, an institution, a political power, and a cultural force. As Peel, an eminent historian of religion in Nigeria, has written, Redeemed “is perhaps the most remarkable of all Nigerian neo-Pentecostal churches, not just because of its amazing growth. . . but because of its singular history.”⁴¹ This singular history Peel refers to is the fact that, unlike almost all of the other charismatic churches with which it is grouped,⁴² Redeemed began as an Aladura church.

When Adeboye first began attending the church in 1973, Redeemed was a mostly illiterate, little-known congregation located in a poor Lagos neighborhood. At the time, Adeboye was a professor of Mathematics at the University of Lagos. While he had grown up as an Anglican, he was not a churchgoer, but ennui, health problems, marriage difficulties and, especially, the ill health of his youngest daughter had led him to a series of prayer houses and native doctors, seeking some sort of healing medicine with little success. Grasping at straws, he and his wife accepted her uncle’s invitation to attend Redeemed with him. To Adeboye’s great surprise, after attending the church for two months, he became saved. Recalling that overwhelming night, he has said, “I suddenly realized it is possible to

⁴¹ J.D.Y. Peel, “Forward” to Asonzeh Ukah, *A New Paradigm of Pentecostal Power: A Study of the Redeemed Christian Church of God in Nigeria* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, Inc., 2008), xix.

⁴² The only exception is the charismatic Mountain of Fire and Miracles Ministry, which was established by a member of the Christ Apostolic Church in order to provide an attractive alternative to Redeemed.

have all the PhDs in the world and still be on the losing side.” Despite having a head full of mathematical formulas, “I did not know the one for eternal life.”⁴³

Adeboye was warmly welcomed into the church by Redeemed’s leader, Joseph Olufemi Akindayomi, who had founded the church in 1952. Papa Akindayomi, as he was widely known, was a former prophet of the Cherubim and Seraphim Church, one of the white garment Aladura churches described in Chapter Two. He had become an Aladura during the Great Revival of 1930. After spending two decades with the C&S, first in Ondo and then in the Lagos neighborhood of Ebute-Metta, becoming well-known for his ministry to barren women and his prophecies, Akindayomi left to establish his own church. His reasons for leaving are contested, but they most likely had to do with doctrinal disputes over polygamy (with Akindayomi critical of C&S prophets who kept more than wife) and necromancy (consultation with spirits of the dead, which Akindayomi opposed).⁴⁴ Influenced by some of the classical Pentecostal beliefs of the Apostolic Faith Mission and Assemblies of God, as well as by new friends who were members of these churches, Akindayomi decided to abandon the white gowns and the term prophet. Instead, he turned his focus to preaching.⁴⁵

Long before Adeboye walked through the doors, Akindayomi had prophesied that his successor would be a newcomer to the church, an educated man, similar enough in height and weight to Akindayomi that they would wear the same suit size. The day Adeboye arrived,

⁴³ E.O. Adeboye, *The Water and the Fire* (Lagos: CRM, 1998) 34, as quoted in Ukah, *A New Paradigm of Pentecostal Power*, 73.

⁴⁴ See Ukah, *A New Paradigm of Pentecostal Power*, 15-30.

⁴⁵ Peel, “Forward” to Ukah, *A New Paradigm of Pentecostal Power*, xx and Ukah, 33-4.

without having met him, Akindayomi announced, “My successor is now here with us.”⁴⁶ In this congregation of mainly poor and illiterate Nigerians, Adeboye soon rose to a leadership position. He became Akindayomi’s English interpreter, then a pastor, and then, after Akindayomi received a vision during a trip to a Pentecostal revival in Topeka, Kansas, in 1979, Akindayomi’s official successor. When Akindayomi died in 1980, his instructions, though controversial, were followed, and Adeboye took over as head of Redeemed.

After Adeboye took over, the church grew dramatically, in large part because of the changes Adeboye implemented, namely: holding services in English rather than Yoruba; relaxing restrictions on dress and personal adornment; and shifting the focus from living in holiness to expressing God’s grace through material success and deliverance from evil. This turned out to be the magic formula for growing a church in the 1990s, one that other churches have tried to copy in subsequent years, the perfect balance which reconciled members’ “aspirations to modernity” with their traditional views about how religion works.⁴⁷ While in the 1970s, attendance at its annual convention was still less than one thousand,⁴⁸ today Redeemed draws one to two million followers to its revival services every month, and four million followers to its annual Christmas revival services, all held at Redemption Camp, the physical and spiritual heart of Redeemed located in what was once an empty field along one of Nigeria’s busiest roads, the Lagos-Ibadan Expressway. The biggest crowd Redeemed has attracted to date was in 1998 at a special revival service held at Lekki Beach in Lagos;

⁴⁶ Olanike Olaleru, *J. O. Akindayomi: The Seed in the Ground*: (Lagos: Father of Lights, 2007), 220-21.

⁴⁷ As Peel as has written, “The secret of its success was that it managed to combine so well its members’ aspirations to modernity with their more traditional views of the presuppositions of effective religious action.” Peel, “Forward” to Ukah, *A New Paradigm of Pentecostal Power*, ix.

⁴⁸ Peel, “Forward” to Ukah, *A New Paradigm of Pentecostal Power*, xx.

estimates put the number of attendees from anywhere between four and seven million. It is undoubtedly the largest event Redeemed has ever held.

Today, the well-organized institution has national headquarters in Ebute-Metta and international headquarters at Redemption Camp. It also has continental headquarters in Texas and London. As of June 2005, there were more than 8,500 Redeemed churches in Nigeria. All these churches, called home fellowships, are organized hierarchically into parishes, areas, zones, provinces, and regions, with regions at the top of the pyramids. There are five regions: three in the West (Lagos, Oyo, and Kwara) and one each for the East and the North.⁴⁹ There are also unknown number of Redeemed churches in the rest of Africa and abroad, most likely numbering in the thousands.

Churches are led by pastors, most of whom undergo a lengthy training process, beginning with five years at the lowest rung of the church hierarchy: worker. This is a change from the days of Akindayomi, when all that was needed to become a pastor was, as historian of Redeemed Asonzeh Ukah puts it, “spiritual fervor and a demonstration of dedication to the vision of Josiah [Akindayomi].” Adeboye has professionalized the church, bringing educated, affluent people like himself into the leadership and requiring them to show their worth by increasing tithing, growing attendance, and attracting powerful people before being permitted to move up the leadership ladder. Exceptions are made, however, for high-ranking business and political leaders – “societal bigwigs” as one pastor called them – who are often fast-tracked to the pastorate.⁵⁰

⁴⁹ Ukah, *A New Paradigm of Pentecostal Power*, 90-1.

⁵⁰ Ukah, *A New Paradigm of Pentecostal Power*, 108-9.

The heart of Adeboye's message is that Jesus has the power to change your life. Jesus – through Adeboye's ministry – can heal your illness, make you fertile, assist in your struggles with evil forces, make you smart, find you a spouse, increase your wealth, get you a promotion, and give you the power to perform signs and wonders on God's behalf, such as healing the sick, raising the dead, making the blind see, making the deaf hear, making the lame walk, and making demons scatter and the Devil run away. Adeboye promises that these changes will be permanent. His God, he says, is the God of miracles. If you believe in Jesus and you pray, he promises that "your future compared to your present is like comparing the noonday sun to candlelight."⁵¹

The source of his authority is his direct line to God. "I'm not a prophet; I'm a pastor," Adeboye has said. "But I do hear from God once in a while." He makes prophecies regularly, in person and in print. When preaching, he will often pause, be silent for a moment, and then say, "My Daddy says to me that there is someone here tonight who. . ." and give the prophecy. For example, he might say: "There is someone here tonight who will understand what I say: the poison has been neutralized; a river that has dried up will run again."⁵² Of the many possible ways to interpret this, one is that someone who seeks fertility will be able to bear children; indeed, when he said this at a all-night prayer service in 2010, the vast arena erupted in cheers.

Other examples of frequent types of prophecy include, "I can prophecy to someone here today that the gates of heaven are opening and your enemies will be destroyed" and, "Whatever sickness is in your body right now, by the end of this service it won't be there

⁵¹ E. A. Adeboye in sermon given at Special Holy Ghost Service, Redemption Camp, 5 March 2010.

⁵² Ibid.

anymore.” Sometimes the prophecy is even vaguer: “The Lord has asked me to tell you, ‘I will take care of it all.’” Throughout a sermon, Adeboye typically continually interrupts himself to give new messages from God as they arrive. Later, when daybreak approaches, he will call on all recipients of prophecies to come to the front of the arena. “Don’t come to me later saying that was me,” he warned in March of 2010. “This is the moment that He wants to do this special act of deliverance.” People ran to the front as Adeboye began to sing one of Redeemed’s favorite hymns: “I’m serving the God of miracles, I know, yes I know.”⁵³

The cynical observer would note that every time people are called to the front, they are corralled after the blessing by Redeemed workers who gather their personal information with the purpose of following up with them after the service, recruiting them to become members (and therefore tithers) of their local Redeemed congregations. This observer would say that the whole show is an elaborate ruse, a spiritual pyramid scheme designed to exploit ignorance, superstition and desperation in order to send money up the ladder and make Adeboye rich. In this scenario, Adeboye is just another Big Man and Redeemed’s structure is just old patronage wine in a new evangelical wineskin.

Adeboye’s extraordinary focus on money provides evidence to support this perspective. Most of the dozens of books he has published address wealth and prosperity in some way. For example, 2004’s *When You Need a Miracle* describes a spectrum of wealth, from poor to comfortable to rich to wealthy to flourishing. In this conceptualization, rich is average. “God’s plan for your life,” Adeboye promises the reader, “is to make you fat and flourishing.” God will not be satisfied with simply making you rich; “God wants you to be

⁵³ Ibid.

extremely rich to the point where you are able to lend to nations.”⁵⁴ Similar books include *Divine Encounter: Where Poverty Is Abolished by the Abundance of Jehovah El-Shaddai* and *65 Keys to Prosperity and Wealth*, both published in 2003.

65 Keys declares that “God is the bonafide owner of all the wealth in the universe,” and it lays out clearly what is known as prosperity doctrine (or prosperity gospel): the more you give, the more you’ll get. This is not one of Adeboye’s typical themes these days – he is more likely to promise money than to ask people to give it – but in this book he states clearly, “if you can decide to give extraordinarily, by the time God finishes with you, your neighbors and relatives will be amazed at the rate of your jump into wealth and prosperity.” Yet, even here, the focus is as much on praying than on reaping money to be sown later. “If you pray,” he assures the reader, “God can pick you from the lowest rung of the ladder and put you at the highest.” Indeed, “real prosperity requires supernatural intervention.”⁵⁵ An entire chapter is devoted to “Faith For Wealth.”⁵⁶

In contrast to the concerns expressed in Chapter Three – where we saw most Christ Apostolic Church leaders and members focused on health and fertility – here we see that contemporary Nigerian Pentecostals are very much concerned with wealth. Given the constriction of the Nigerian economy under structural adjustment, which meant the collapse of state institutions and services as well as the foreclosure of secular means to make money, it is unsurprising that Nigerians have turned to churches. And yet the message they are

⁵⁴ Adeboye, *When You Need a Miracle* (Redemption Camp: CRM, 2004), 8.

⁵⁵ Adeboye, *65 Keys to Prosperity and Wealth* (Redemption Camp: CRM, 2003), 14, 18, 31, 41.

⁵⁶ Adeboye, “Chapter Six: Faith For Wealth,” *65 Keys*, 59-64.

receiving from places like Redeemed is that those who remain in poverty have only themselves to blame.

Adeboye's position on wealth may have changed over time. *When You Need a Miracle* was published in 2005. Its promises are similar to those in 2006's *You Can Possess Your Possessions*, a book which promises that "God has promised you great possessions in life."⁵⁷ The overarching message is that poverty is a curse and God wants you to prosper. It is striking in its difference from the message of 1997's *Pray Without Ceasing* in which Adeboye declares that "many of us ask for prosperity to acquire material things" and warns "if this is why you are praying, forget it." God will not answer selfish prayers.⁵⁸ Yet by 2010, Adeboye was regularly promising believers things like, "When the Spirit descends, the fire will sear any hole in your financial pocket."⁵⁹ No more caveats. His message by then was clear: if you believe, and if you pray, God will make you rich. This may have been simply because by 2010, with the dictator Sani Abacha out of office and the economy improving, it was easier to get rich than it had been in 1997.

The focus Adeboye gives prosperity is not altogether new to Nigerians. While American churches are typically seen as the site of prosperity doctrine's origin, the practice of spending money on spiritual measures to increase one's health and position aligns perfectly with traditional Yoruba religion. Yoruba cosmology already included the belief that money can be created through magic. There is even a Yoruba word for it: *edu*, meaning

⁵⁷ Adeboye, *You Can Possess Your Possessions* (Redemption Camp: CRM, 2006), 4.

⁵⁸ Adeboye, *Pray Without Ceasing* (Redemption Camp: CRM, 1997), 20.

⁵⁹ Adeboye, Special Holy Ghost Service Anointing Service, Redemption Camp, 6 March 2010.

“money brought by magical powers.”⁶⁰ The belief that wealth can be achieved through divine means pre-dates the influence of American prosperity gospel. Spiritual spending for material earning is an example of a Pentecostal practice which can just as easily be traced back to Yoruba “traditional” religion as to American Pentecostal preachers.

Pentecostalism is partly a new shape for old ideas and partly an old shape for new ones. What Pentecostals say is not new; it is simply framed differently. For example, when it comes to wealth, while one could argue that Pentecostalism’s prosperity doctrine is different from traditional Yoruba beliefs because it adds the requirement that one must give money in order to get money, this is not actually dissimilar from traditional medicine-making. Ingredients with which to make “juju” have to be purchased, and they are often expensive and difficult to find. Not only is making medicine is pricey, but so is offering sacrifices to spirits and deities, which is “the heart of the devotional relationship in the Yoruba religion.”⁶¹ In both cases, you also have to sow in order to reap.

Additionally, in both Yoruba cosmology and in Nigerian Pentecostalism, invisible agents affect events in the visible world. People have long turned to spirits for help with their most prosaic and fundamental concerns: health, food, shelter, family, children. Pentecostals certainly break with some practices – praying to family ancestors, for example, is replaced by praying to Jesus – but they maintain continuities with many beliefs. Wealth is as much about money as it is about family, kin, and clients. The Yoruba value of *alafia*, the belief that a

⁶⁰ See “Criminal Record Book Feb. 25th 1935,” also titled “Ife Divisional Customary Court 25.2.35 - 20.22.38,” page 379, Yorubaland Court Records Archive, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria.

⁶¹ Peel, *Religious Encounter and the Making of the Yoruba* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2003), 99.

good life is characterized by health, success, family and prosperity, persists.⁶² As Adeboye writes in one pamphlet, expressing the African tenet of wealth in people (or “rights-in-persons”),⁶³ “The bible makes it clear that the wealth of a prince is the number of people following him.”⁶⁴

Along with continuing to prioritize wealth and health, the new churches also embrace old beliefs in witches, magic and prayer. As Birgit Meyer, Ruth Marshall, Charles Piot, David Gordon, and others have noted, Redeemed and churches like it take the threat of sorcery seriously.⁶⁵ For example, during one sermon, Adeboye shared his revelation that, when he became born-again, the “blood that flows through Jesus” also began to flow through him. Because of this, he knew that “any witch that tries to suck my blood is in trouble.” It was a revelation that brought him “into divine health.” Another time, during a Holy Ghost Night, Adeboye heard one witch say to another witch, “It is time for us now to intervene.” God told him what was going on, he recalls, and so he “announced to the two witches that I knew their plans” and commanded them to come forward and surrender to Jesus, which they did.⁶⁶ The

⁶² Peel, *Religious Encounter*, 91.

⁶³ See Suzanne Miers and Igor Kopytoff, eds. *Slavery in Africa: Historical and Anthropological Perspectives* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1977), especially Kopytoff and Miers, “Introduction: African ‘Slavery’ as an Institution of Marginality,” 3-84.

⁶⁴ Adeboye, *You Can Possess Your Possessions*, 6.

⁶⁵ See, for example, Birgit Meyer, “The Power of Money: Politics, Occult Forces, and Pentecostalism in Ghana,” *African Studies Review* 41, no. 3 (1998): 15-37; Ruth Marshall, *Political Spiritualities: The Pentecostal Revolution in Nigeria* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009); Charles Piot, *Nostalgia for the Future: West Africa After the Cold War* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010); David Gordon, *Invisible Agents: Spirits in a Central African History* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2012).

⁶⁶ Gbenga Fatogun, *Life Inspiring Stories of Pastor Enoch Adejare Adeboye* (Lagos. SOS Publications, 2008), 35, 51.

mainline, missionary churches may have rejected the existence of witches and the possibility of witchcraft, but charismatic churches like Redeemed decidedly do not.

What they do, instead, is simply offer a stronger magic: the power of Jesus. A short man can wish he were taller and suddenly find that his pants are not long enough. An anointed handkerchief can save a young woman who has gone violently mad. A herbalist's evil medicine can be disabled by the words, "I rebuke you in the name of Jesus."⁶⁷ Even the concept of prayer warriors – those who battle demons and the Devil through prayer and fasting – widely understood to be unique to the charismatic churches which developed in the past forty years, is older than that. Babalola used the term as early as 1952 in his diary, writing, "We arrived Owo at 8 pm and we had prayers all night with prayer warriors."⁶⁸ The new Pentecostal institutions are certainly examples of change, but the beliefs they embrace demonstrate continuity with traditional culture. In the third wave of Pentecostal growth, we see the Pentecostalization of longstanding beliefs and practices, adapted to respond to the postcolonial context.

Redemocratization

Beginning in 1989, President Babangida oversaw a planned transition to civilian rule. He had to (or, at least, he had to appear to do so), for democratization was one of the conditions for receiving some foreign aid; creating democracies was seen as critically important by Western lenders in these post-Cold War times. An election was held in 1993, but Babangida annulled the results, creating an interim national government instead. This is an example of a pattern

⁶⁷ Fatogun, *Life Inspiring Stories*, 12, 14, 21.

⁶⁸ Abi Olowe, *Great Revivals, Great Revivalist: Joseph Ayo Babalola* (Houston: Omega Publishers, 2008), 219.

described by political scientist Laurence Whitehead, in which “policies aimed at ‘promoting democracy’ . . . are likely to constitute an open invitation for manipulation by local political actors.”⁶⁹ In response to the nation-wide strikes and protests which resulted from Babangida’s disregard of the electoral process, he relinquished power to a surrogate who was quickly replaced in a coup by General Sani Abacha. Abacha would go on to lead the most repressive administration Nigerian has seen – detaining people without trial, shutting down newspapers, and dramatically increasing militarization – lasting from 1993 until his death in 1998. Presidential elections were held again in 1999, and this time the elected candidate – former military Head of State Olusegun Obasanjo, a Christian from Osun state – became president of Nigeria’s Third Republic, serving two terms. He was succeeded in 2007 by democratically-elected Umaru Yar’Adua who served until his death in 2010.

Structural adjustment finally ended in the early 1990s, partly because some of its goals had been met and partly because the Babangida administration had slowly abandoned its policies. Democracy in post-SAP Nigeria can be understood as the negotiation of three triangular forces: the regime, the opposition, and external agencies. As political scientist Richard Joseph has argued, party affiliations in Africa have little to do with ideological distinctions and rest mainly on on region, ethnicity, and kinship. Party objectives are focused on achieving material and political advantages.⁷⁰ So, the beginning of the 21st century finally did see the redemocratization of Nigeria, but it was a redemocratization located within the

⁶⁹ Laurence Whitehead, “International Aspects of Democratization,” in Guillermo O’Donnell, Philippe C. Schmitter, and Laurence Whitehead, *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule: Comparative Perspectives* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), 45, quoted in Joseph, “Democratization in Africa,” 372. Whitehead is a Latin Americanist, but his observations apply equally to postcolonial Africa.

⁷⁰ Joseph, “Democratization in Africa,” 374, 376.

constraints of continued regionalism and patrimonialism, and it certainly did not mean the end of voting irregularities.

The first decade of the new century also saw the consolidation of the SAP-ed generation of Pentecostals into a substantial, politically-significant, media savvy bloc. Indeed, media has been fundamental to this process, with newspapers, magazines, films, audio- and video-recordings, and the internet connecting local actors to global networks; mediating Pentecostal images and narratives across transnational spaces; and allowing for their continual circulation.⁷¹ This media has at times been imbued with magical powers. For example, Adeboye tells a story of a blind man who regained his sight after listening to a cassette tape recording of the Lekki '98 prayer service.⁷²

Nigerian Christians are now coming together across denominational lines to form a united front against radical Islam, whose strength was bolstered in 2000 when several northern states adopted Sharia law despite Christian opposition. Redemption Camp and other charismatic centers have become sites of interdenominational unity, attracting not only born-again Christians but also Anglicans, Catholics, Baptists, and others, as well as the curious and hopeful unaffiliated. It is becoming increasingly difficult to separate Pentecostal and mainline churches in Nigeria; for example, the Baptists have special services for speaking in tongues while the Anglicans and Catholics hold charismatic revivals. As Pentecostalism continues to develop in Nigeria, it does so very much in the context of polarization along religious lines. These lines may be becoming even more significant than the regional and

⁷¹ See Ruth Marshall-Fratani, "Mediating the Local and the Global in Nigerian Pentecostalism," *Journal of Religion in Africa* 28, no. 3 (1998): 278-315, especially page 280.

⁷² Fatogun, *Life Inspiring Stories*, 26.

ethnic distinctions which have predominated for so long; or, perhaps, they are becoming the outstanding way to organize and articulate regional and ethnic divisions. Time will tell.

CHAPTER FIVE

From Pentecostal to Neo-Pentecostal: National Politics and Pentecostal Growth in Brazil

The previous chapter examined the relationship between national development and Pentecostal growth in Nigeria. It asked, how did the nation's evolving politico-economic situation influence the successive waves of conversion to Pentecostalism? In other words, how can national context account for Pentecostalism's increasing appeal over the course of the twentieth century? And, furthermore, what, if any, continuities are there between Nigerian culture and Nigerian Pentecostalism? This chapter asks parallel questions of Brazil.

This chapter begins several decades before the previous one, as Brazil was a colony for centuries longer than Nigeria before becoming an independent monarchy and then a republic. A longer chronological view is necessary in order to more fully treat Brazil's development as a nation. We start with the story of Brazil's journey from colony to constitutional monarchy to republic, with the purpose of setting the foundation for an examination of the political, economic and cultural developments of the twentieth century, the period in which Pentecostalism took root, expanded, and grew. The chapter concludes with a detailed discussion of the most significant neo-Pentecostal church in Brazil, the *Igreja Universal do Reino de Deus*, showing that, while it has been influenced by foreign ideas (as

has Christianity everywhere), it is essentially a Brazilian church, based on Brazilian culture and responding to Brazilian needs.

From Colony to Republic

Brazil was claimed by Portugal in the year 1500. By the mid 1600s, it had become the economic heart of the Portuguese empire, source of sugar, gold, and other minerals and agricultural products. In 1808, Brazil became the Portuguese empire's political heart as well. This was the year when the entire Portuguese court – including more than ten thousand courtiers, military advisors, priests, and attorneys – arrived in Salvador da Bahia after fleeing Napoleon by sailing across the Atlantic under the protection of the British Navy.¹ Then, in 1821, when the king finally returned to Lisbon with his court, he left his son, Dom Pedro I, behind in Rio de Janeiro to serve as regent. The next year, after a nearly bloodless revolution in which Dom Pedro defied orders to return to Lisbon, declaring, “It is time!” and “We are separate from Portugal!” Brazil became the only durable independent, constitutional monarchy in Latin America.²

This new nation was not established overnight. It took three years for the new polity to establish the necessary institutional structures and to coerce recalcitrant provinces (Maranhão and Pará in the far north and what is now Uruguay in the far south) to abandon their loyalty to Lisbon. “Ultimately,” writes historian Roderick Barman, “it was international

¹ Thomas Skidmore, *Brazil: Five Centuries of Change, 2nd edition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 41.

² A. J. R. Russell-Wood, “Preconditions and Precipitants of the Independence Movement in Portuguese America” in *From Colony to Nation: Essays on the Independence of Brazil*, Russell-Wood ed. (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1975), 4.

recognition of Brazil's national independence, obtained through a treaty of reconciliation and recognition with Portugal in August 1825, rather than the achievement of internal consensus that determined the acquisition of legitimacy and the consolidation of political order."³ From 1822 to 1825, liberals and traditionalists debated whether power should be distributed by election or by inheritance; these debates, while contentious, were also consensus building in their own right given that they rested on the *premise* of the fact of Brazilian nationhood.⁴ The final outcome was that Dom Pedro would rule as a "moderating power"⁵ without being considered the embodiment of Brazil, that his title would be Emperor, and that he would share power with provincial legislatures elected by landowners.

These debates between liberals and conservatives continued throughout the 19th century. Anti-monarchical liberal pressure was so strong that, after less than a decade as emperor, Dom Pedro I bowed to popular demand and abdicated the throne, leaving his five and a half year old son Pedro II as prince.⁶ During the subsequent decade, when regents ruled in the young prince's stead, liberals sought to decentralize power so that the emperor would be subordinate to the national assembly, while conservatives, concerned with the divisive effects a decentralization program could have in a country as large and regionally diverse as Brazil, pushed to maintain the "stabilizing power of the monarchy."⁷ A series of regional

³ Roderick J. Barman, *Brazil: The Forging of a Nation, 1798-1852* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1988) 97.

⁴ Barman, *Brazil*, 97.

⁵ Skidmore, *Brazil*, 54.

⁶ To be fair, the liberals were more against the monarch himself than they were against the monarchy as an institution; they saw Pedro I as incompetent, unethical, and too Portuguese to be truly Brazilian. See John Charles Chasteen, *Americanos: Latin America's Struggle for Independence* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 173-4.

⁷ Chasteen, *Americanos*, 175.

liberal revolts failed, strengthening the conservative position, and the regency ended early so that Pedro II could assume the throne in 1840 and recentralize power.

A period of elite consensus-building and export-oriented growth ensued.

Protestantism made its first inroads into Brazil at this time, in the form of Bible salesman and a few mainline missionaries, many of whom received local support from liberals who associated Protestantism with Republicanism and were eager to learn from and emulate the Americans. In the 1860s, slavery emerged as a contentious issue. Brazil, the world's largest slave economy, faced both internal and external pressure to eliminate the institution. The question was ultimately resolved in 1888, when slavery was finally fully abolished and all enslaved people set free. The next year, the military, with the support of republican elites, led a coup against Dom Pedro II. The emperor accepted the fall of empire as an inevitability and peacefully left Brazil with his family for exile in Portugal. Thus Brazil, still without experiencing any bloody revolution, became a republic in 1889.

The First Republic and the First Wave

The first decades of this first Republic (or Old Republic, as it is sometimes known), were turbulent ones. Republicans gained power, but they did not represent most Brazilians, many of whom remained monarchists for several years after Pedro II's deposition. For example, a community of millenarian monarchists in the interior of Bahia fought a three-year battle with federal army forces in which thousands were killed and wounded before the government finally triumphed.⁸ Still, the republican elites remained firmly in control of the federal

⁸ This was the siege of Canudos, made famous by journalist Euclides da Cunha in his 1902 book *Os Sertões*. For a brief summary of the events, see Skidmore, *Brazil*, 84-5.

government and dramatically altered the institutional and economic structures of Brazil with their Constitution of 1891.

This constitution radically decentralized power, making Brazil a federation and allowing each state to elect its own government, maintain its own militia, levy its own tariffs on interstate trade, and even contract its own foreign loans.⁹ What federal power remained was shared uneasily among the coffee and cattle ruling elites along the São Paulo / Minas Gerais axis, who passed it among themselves in shifting and at times treacherous alliances. *Coronelismo* – Brazil’s version of “Big Man” clientelism – dominated and determined politics during this period, as local landowners (*caudilhos*) amassed votes by any means necessary.

The constitution also affected the religious landscape, as it guaranteed freedom of religion and allowed the establishment of Protestant churches for the first time in Brazil’s history. This national guarantee was not always (or even often) enforced at the local level, where Catholic priests and local landowners still dominated the governance of their municipalities and often ran missionaries and colporteurs out of town. Yet the new principle of religious freedom, even though unevenly enforced, allowed Protestants to gain a foothold in corners of Brazil, particularly in urban areas where the educated elites who supported them – and kept them out of jail – were most likely to be found. By 1900, 33,530 Brazilians belonged to these new Protestant churches.¹⁰

⁹ Skidmore, *Brazil*, 80.

¹⁰ Francisco Cartaxo Rolim, *Pentecostais no Brasil: Uma Interpretação Sócio-Religiosa* (Petrópolis: Editora Vozes, 1985), 104.

The developments enabled by the Constitution of 1891 set the stage for Brazil's first wave of Pentecostal growth in 1910.¹¹ This was the decade when Italian-American Luigi Francescon founded the *Congregação Cristã* in São Paulo in 1910 and when Swedes Gunnar Vingren and Daniel Berg established the Brazilian *Assembléia de Deus* in Belém do Pará in 1911. The *Congregação*, focusing its efforts exclusively on the Italian community, remained insular and small; it could be fairly described as a Christian sect according to Ernst Troeltsch's classic definition, with the belief that it "possess[es] the absolute truth of the gospel" but without the desire to be a popular church, believing "this truth to be far beyond the spiritual grasp of the masses and the State."¹² Meanwhile, the *Assembléia* encouraged widespread evangelization and opened its doors to all who were interested, as discussed at length in Chapters One and Three. Still, at first, the impact of both groups on the Brazilian religious landscape was equally limited, hardly noticeable in fact. Catholicism dominated, with the historical Protestant churches making very slight inroads and these new Pentecostal churches remaining undistinguished from their mainline co-religionists. Many people who may have been interested in the *Assembléia* were prevented from indulging their curiosity by their need to remain in the good graces of their Catholic landowning patrons, most of whom

¹¹ There have been four waves of growth so far. While most scholars rely on sociologist Paul Freston's analysis and maintain that there were three waves – in the 1910s, the 1950s and early 1960s, and the late 70s through the 1980s – I consider the developments in the 1930s described in Chapter One to be a wave of their own. Based on personal conversations with Freston, I believe he would agree. (Freston, personal communication, 5 August 2010.)

¹² This point was made by Freston in his foundational "Pentecostalism in Brazil: A Brief History," *Religion* 25, no. 2 (1995): 119, where he quoted Ernst Troeltsch, *The Social Teaching of the Christian Churches*, 2 vols. (London: Allen & Unwin, 1931), 998.

maintained close ties with local magistrates and priests in order to sustain coronelismo's political alliances.¹³

The foundation for the second wave of growth was laid during the next decade. By the 1920s, dissatisfaction with this patronage system had spread among intellectuals, artists, and especially military officers. Junior officers – *tenentes* – in particular were concerned with Brazil's slow pace of modernization, as the nation's economic growth rates still lagged behind those of Argentina and the United States. They blamed liberalism, wanted an activist military, and began to express their frustration in a series of revolts which had the effect of demonstrating the weakness of the civilian political elite and the strength of the officers' discontentment with the national politicians in power. The *tenentes* wanted to speed up the modernization of Brazil and thought this would be best achieved with a strong central government and an end to "professional politicians becoming rich at public expense." Their frustration with the political system was shared by many others who had witnessed its slow breakdown, as historian Thomas Skidmore has described it, "into widespread fraud and voter manipulation" under the *coronelismo* system. Whatever legitimacy elections had once bestowed was lost as "state elections turned ever more frequently into political farces."¹⁴

***Getulato* and the Second Wave**

A measure of stability was finally achieved as a result of the Revolution of 1930, when the opposition presidential candidate, Getúlio Vargas, after losing both the election to fraud and

¹³ An idea suggested by Freston in his assertion that, "In the North, Catholic opposition and the social dependence of much of the population were unfavourable." Freston, "Pentecostalism in Brazil," 122.

¹⁴ Skidmore, *Brazil*, 102-5, 108.

his running mate to assassination, led an attack on the incumbent federal government. His coup – a cooperative effort of *tenentes* and opposition politicians from around the country (who shared a common resentment of São Paulo’s continued dominance in national politics) – was achieved without bloodshed, and Vargas became president, consolidated power, and established an authoritarian regime which would last for the next fifteen years. This coup, the beginning of the period now known as the *getulato*, marked “a clear turning point in Brazilian history.”¹⁵ Social and economic conditions evolved dramatically under Vargas. Vargas managed Brazil’s response to the global financial crisis of the 1930s, a situation which affected most Brazilians far more directly than any political intrigues did, and it was under him that the nation became more central, more industrial, and more urban.

The centralization – the strengthening and consolidation of the Brazilian federal government – was accomplished with a one-two-three punch. First, almost immediately after taking office, Vargas dissolved Congress and began to rule by decree. Soon after, he oversaw the establishment of a federal authority to ensure fair elections (rather than letting states and municipalities continue to manage their own electoral processes). Third, Vargas oversaw the writing and ratification of the Constitution of 1934, which promised a new focus on a fair judicial system, economic development, and social development, and resulted in his democratic election to the office of President.¹⁶ As it turned out, however, despite his 1934 constitution, Vargas was no democrat.

¹⁵ John Charles Chasteen, *Born in Blood and Fire: A Concise History of Latin America*, 2nd edition (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2006), 232.

¹⁶ Skidmore, *Brazil*, 112.

In order to circumvent the constitutional term limits which would have required him to sit out the 1938 election, Vargas led another coup in 1937 and ruled Brazil as a dictator (albeit a popular one who was respected, even beloved, by much of the working classes) for seven more years. His “nationalist institutional makeover for Brazil” was the establishment of the repressive yet populist *Estado Novo* (New State) which prohibited such democratic institutions as political parties, legislative bodies, and a free press and encouraged the development of nationalist commissions, businesses, labor unions, social programs, and cultural projects.¹⁷ Indeed, one of the greatest aspects of the Vargas legacy was the consolidation of Brazilian national identity, centered especially around samba, soccer, and carnival. The 1930s saw the nationalization of the *Assembléia de Deus* as well.

This marked the beginning of the second wave of Pentecostal growth, as described in Chapter One, in which the *Assembléia* became fully Brazilian and began to spread widely as migrants from the North and Northeast who moved for labor opportunities in the burgeoning industrial and informal economies of the Southeast brought their church with them into their new neighborhoods. In 1930 Lewi Pethrus, the head of the Swedish Pentecostal church which had been providing missionary support to the *Assembléia* since 1916, visited Brazil in order to supervise the handover of power from the Swedes to the Brazilians. The pressure to do so came not only from the Brazilians, as would be expected, but from the Swedes themselves, particularly those back home in Stockholm who, to quote Paul Freston, “defended the complete autonomy of the local congregation and accused their missionaries of building a nationwide organization.” While missionaries themselves were still relatively

¹⁷ Chasteen, *Born in Blood and Fire*, 233, 236.

useful – providing funding and training for the Brazilians (though their capacity to provide the former was severely curtailed by the global economic crisis) – it was not their job to supervise a nationwide organization. And, indeed, that is what the *Assembléia* had become by 1930, having established congregations in nearly every state in Brazil.¹⁸

Redemocratization and the Third Wave

The *getuliatto* lasted until 1945 when, responding partly to new liberal sentiments which emerged during World War II and mostly to the army's threat to besiege the presidential palace should he try to stay in power, Vargas resigned and Brazil once again returned to democracy. Former war minister General Eúrico Gaspar Dutra, who had been an essential figure in the *Estado Novo*, was elected President with Vargas's endorsement. He served from 1946 to 1951. The 1950s, which saw the redemocratization of Brazil after the end of the *getuliatto*, was also a period of significant internal migration and deepening differences between urban and rural life.

The process of urbanization which had begun in the late 1800s, prompted by the end of slavery and the need for new workers (especially on the coffee plantations in São Paulo state), and encouraged under Vargas in the 1930s and 40s, picked up pace in the 1950s. This time, it was prompted by a devastating series of droughts in the northeast interior, which led more and more people to decide to leave their villages and move to cities to work in factories and the largely informal businesses which were developing around them. The migration was also spurred by the fact that immigration from European countries decreased substantially

¹⁸ Freston, "Pentecostalism in Brazil," 122-3.

after the World Wars, leading industrial employers (largely located in urban areas) to turn to the native-born Brazilian labor force.

While Brazil's population was growing as a whole – thanks to successful public health campaigns against disease epidemics which led to declining mortality rates – regional concentrations were shifting. The largest migrations were out of Minas Gerais and the Northeast and into the states of Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo, and Paraná, which neighbor each other along Brazil's central coast.¹⁹ As cities grew, the informal shantytown communities called *favelas* developed on the edges of urban areas (and, in Rio de Janeiro, famously on mountainsides within the city itself). These new centers of newly-located rural masses provided homes for those on the margins of the urban economies. They also provided ideal incubators for the new Pentecostal churches.

Along with the expansion of the *Assembléia*, as many of its members and leaders joined the migration from the north and northeast to the big cities of the southeast, this third wave of Pentecostal growth saw the development of new churches. These churches included the *Igreja do Evangelho Quadrangular* (Church of the Four-Square Gospel), the only significant Brazilian Pentecostal church to have been founded by American missionaries. It was established in 1953 in São Paulo state, brought by Harold Williams, a former actor in American Westerns, and it gained popularity by holding outdoor revivals under circus tents. One of its revival preachers, Manoel de Mello, a northeastern migrant to São Paulo whose mother was a member of the *Assembléia*, broke away from the *Evangelho Quadrangular* to found his own church in 1955. Echoing the nationalist sentiment of the times, he called his

¹⁹ Skidmore, *Brazil*, 137.

church *Brasil para Cristo* (Brazil for Christ). Renting cinemas and stadiums in which to hold revivals and spread its message, the church grew quickly, but its growth soon petered out in the 1960s due to Mello's failure to establish an institutional culture and administrative structure that could sustain a growing empire. The third significant church of this third wave was the *Igreja Pentecostal Deus é Amor* (God is Love Pentecostal Church), established by young southerner David Miranda in 1962. *Deus é Amor* was quite different than the other two, relying on radio rather than large revivals to carry its message; maintaining a very strict doctrine which tightly circumscribed the lives of its members; and keeping its distance from other churches as well as from society at large.²⁰

The reasons for the success of these churches at this time had to do with the conditions in which the migrants found themselves living. Away from their families, their communities, and their familiar rhythms of daily life, many found themselves suffering from an acute sense of anomie, as anthropologist Emilio Willems explained in his foundational 1967 work on Brazilian Pentecostalism, *Followers of the New Faith*.²¹ Structural changes in society – namely migration, urbanization, and industrialization – created a new class of urban poor who sought to recreate the sense of community they had left behind in their villages by becoming members of the new churches. In fact, one of the reasons that the new churches attracted these people may have been the similarities between Pentecostalism and the folk Catholicism of their villages, an argument advanced by another early scholar of Latin

²⁰ See Freston "Pentecostalism in Brazil," 126-8, summarized in the preceding paragraph.

²¹ Emilio Willems, *Followers of the New Faith: Culture Change and the Rise of Protestantism in Brazil and Chile* (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1967).

American Pentecostalism, Swiss sociologist Christian Lalive d'Epinay in his 1968 *El Refugio de las Masas*.²²

It was not only existential concerns that drew the poor to the churches, but material ones as well. Following the strict codes of the classical Pentecostal lifestyle – no alcohol, no gambling, no smoking, etc. – helped people maintain jobs, save money, and sustain domestic partnerships. “Before I joined the church, I was smoking two packs a day,” recalled one pastor in the *Deus é Amor* church, and “that’s money.” He continued, “You save even more when you stop drinking, and it gets easier to hold down a job.”²³ Of the several scholars who have investigated these motivations, sociologist David Martin may have summarized them best when he described Brazilian Pentecostalism as combining the best of all religious possibilities by offering “the fruits of honesty and thrift and a surrogate family, as well as the chance of participation, and sense of worth, meaning and empowerment.”²⁴ On the whole, the 1950s created economic, social, and cultural motivations for people to try the Pentecostal lifestyle.

As for 1950s politics, while Dutra served his five-year term, Vargas prepared to make another run for office. He used patronage to cultivate relationships with union leaders (similarly to how Juan Perón did in Argentina) in order to develop his populist bonafides, while he also courted powerful political groups, including the military leadership and the

²² Christian Lalive d'Epinay, *El Refugio de las Masas: Estudio Sociológico del Protestantismo Chileno* (Santiago de Chile: Editorial del Pacífico, S.A., 1968). Also published in English and Portuguese in 1968.

²³ Pastor Laime as quoted by Alma Guillermoprieto, “Rio, 1991,” *The Heart That Bleeds: Latin America Now* (New York: Vintage Books, 1995), 168.

²⁴ David Martin, *Tongues of Fire: The Explosion of Protestantism in Latin America* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990), 65. Also see Willems, *Followers of the New Faith* and André Corten, *Os pobres e o Espírito Santo: O pentecostalismo no Brasil* (Petrópolis: Vozes, 1996).

governor of São Paulo. Five years of carefully laid groundwork paid off when Vargas won 48 percent of the vote and returned to the presidential palace in 1946 promising to pursue an aggressive industrialization agenda. While he managed to do this with some success (for example, the nationally-owned oil company Petrobrás was established under his watch), trade problems caused in large part by declining world coffee prices led the IMF and the US government to press Brazil to adopt stabilization measures. Vargas, bowing under this pressure, instructed his finance minister to implement the suggested program, even though doing so would curtail economic growth and frustrate his popular base by limiting their credit and cutting their wages. This marked the beginning of the end for him. In 1954, under pressure from both the military and the public, and feeling, he said, as if he were “standing in a sea of mud,”²⁵ Vargas committed suicide in his bedroom in the presidential palace.

The man who succeeded him in 1955 (after a short caretaker regime) was Juscelino Kubitschek, who managed to establish a measure of political stability which stood in stark contrast with the chaotic final years of the Vargas administration. His economic development program, a “Program of Goals” designed to develop infrastructure and intensify industrialization,²⁶ launched a period of optimism, one described in official propaganda as “fifty years in five.”²⁷ It was a largely successful development program; between 1955 and 1961 industrial production increased by 80 percent, with the greatest growth in the fields of steel, mechanics, electricity, communication, and transport materials. During the decade of

²⁵ Skidmore, *Brazil*, 130, 132-3, 135.

²⁶ Skidmore, *Brazil*, 142.

²⁷ Boris Fausto, *História Concisa do Brasil* (São Paulo: Editora da Universidade de São Paulo, 2001), 232.

the 1950s taken as a whole, Brazilian gross domestic product per capita was approximately three times greater than that of the rest of Latin America.²⁸ One of the most evident demonstrations of the wealth accrued through this economic growth was the construction of Brazil's futuristic new capital, Brasília, which was inaugurated in 1960. An aggressively modernist city, designed by architect Oscar Niemayer and city-planner Lúcio Costa, Brasília was Kubitschek's most visible contribution to economic growth, modernization, and the consolidation of national power and identity in Brazil.

Kubitschek was succeeded by Jânio Quadros, a charismatic *paulista* who was immediately faced with the economic crisis caused by an empty treasury and rising inflation, and he turned out not to be up to the task. When his stabilization program stalled in Congress, he suddenly tendered his resignation, a ploy to receive emergency powers from Congress which failed. His brief presidency thus ended in late 1961 as he was replaced by the vice president, João Goulart, a Vargas disciple who had run on a Quadros's opponent's ticket. A populist and a communist-sympathizer, Goulart was immediately denounced by powerful military leaders, making his succession a subject of national debate with echoes of the Vargas years: populist versus military.²⁹ Inflation continued to rise, the economic crisis deepened, foreign investment dried up and, ultimately, the military won the debate. In 1964, with the secret approval of the U.S., Goulart was deposed in a military coup.

²⁸ Fausto, *História Concisa do Brasil*, 236.

²⁹ Skidmore, *Brazil*, 148.

Dictatorship

The two decades of military dictatorship which followed did not see a dramatic change in the religious landscape, but they are nevertheless important to our story because they established the conditions for the fourth wave of growth. Dictatorship's contractions set up redemocratization's openings. As we shall see, when citizens finally regained the opportunity to participate in governance again, Pentecostals were in the vanguard of new political actors. But first: the dictatorship.

The first concern of the new government, an alliance between military officers and technocrats, was the economy. General Castelo Branco, the army general who had led the coup, became president. He worked with a team of anti-government economists and engineers who had, to quote Skidmore, "clear and conventional ideas about how to contain inflation and restore Brazil to economic growth."³⁰ When Goulart left office in April 1964, the annual increase in the rate of inflation stood at over 100 percent. Increase over the three years that Goulart had been in office was even higher: it had climbed from 34.7 percent in 1961 to 89.9 percent in 1964.³¹ The technocrats' approach to tackling the economic crisis – orthodox stabilization measures, such as limiting budget increases, which had previously failed due to political concerns – was one of the two main issues around which emerging opposition to the new regime began to organize itself. Those on the left, as well as many in the center, feared that the new anti-inflation program would lead to massive unemployment and would also create opportunities for foreign (particularly American) firms to take over

³⁰ Skidmore, *Brazil*, 151.

³¹ Werner Baer, *The Brazilian Economy*, 6th ed. (Westport: Praeger, 2008), 410, cited in Skidmore, *Brazil*, 151.

Brazilian businesses. By 1965 and 66, it was clear that the policy was causing decreases in real wages and public spending.

The other coalescing issue was repression. From the beginning, the new regime set about weakening the opposition by removing leftist politicians from office and disempowering left wing political parties. To justify their actions, the government employed the anti-Communist rhetoric common at the time. As resistance to their new economic policies gathered steam with the formation of guerrilla groups who mainly robbed banks and kidnapped diplomats, so did the military government's response. In 1968, the president issued a decree closing Congress, implementing military justice for crimes against national security (that is, establishing a police state), and censoring television, radio, and print media. It was at this point that Brazil became "a genuine dictatorship."³² Opposing faculty, students, and clergy were targeted in particular; their telephones were tapped and personal mail opened; many were denounced by informers and many lost their positions. Some were tortured and killed. In addition, fault lines within the military also began to crack open, as divisions between those who took a hard line and those who preferred a moderate approach began to widen, a situation which would continue throughout the dictatorship, eventually leading to the period known as the *abertura* (opening).

The *abertura* began in 1974, the year that the growth of the Brazilian economy, which had been created by the military government's strict stabilization program, came to a screeching halt. From 1968 to 1974, the Brazilian economy had grown by ten percent annually. Inflation decreased, foreign debt was renegotiated, exports increased, and

³² Skidmore, *Brazil*, 155, 157.

agriculture was diversified on a large scale so that coffee was no longer Brazil's primary agricultural product. Quality of life increased across the economic spectrum, though the educated classes benefited most and the rural poor least. This six-year boom ended in 1974 as a result of the 1973 OPEC oil embargo which created an oil shock with global economic consequences. This was also the year in which General Ernesto Geisel became president and began curtailing some of the more repressive dictatorship activities, such as censorship and surveillance. Geisel, a moderate, was president until 1979, and it was under his watch that "authoritarianism was slowly eroded by the interaction of the soft-line military and the increasingly vocal civilian opposition," a process that the hard-liners resisted at every turn. Still, by the time he left office, Geisel had managed to lay out what he called a "slow, gradual, and certain" path for transition back to civilian rule.³³

Geisel's hand-picked successor, João Batista Figueiredo, continued the process. Under him, Congress passed an amnesty law, enabling the return of exiled academics, intellectuals, artists, writers and others who had left Brazil to escape the repressive regime. He had the support of young army officers as well as civilians, millions of whom joined a campaign to restore direct election of the president in 1985 (during the years of the regime, president had been indirectly "elected" by Congress). Civilians wore t-shirts that proclaimed, "I want to vote for president!" and attended regional rallies which attracted remarkable crowds as large as 500,000 in Rio and one million in São Paulo.³⁴ Civil society was clearly revitalized by the *abertura*, beginning to establish the conditions for the fourth wave of Pentecostal growth which was to occur during redemocratization. While the bill to restore

³³ Skidmore, *Brazil*, 173-5, 177.

³⁴ Skidmore, *Brazil*, 178.

direct presidential elections did not manage to pass, though the vote (in government-controlled Congress) was close, the opposition candidate triumphed and Tancredo Neves became Brazil's first civilian president elected in fifteen years.

Redemocratization and the Fourth Wave

The economic limitations and political opportunities confronted during redemocratization were the two main contributing factors to the fourth wave of Pentecostal growth. This wave started in the late 1970s and lasted through the 1980s.³⁵ It saw increased numbers of churches and members as well as increased visibility and influence of Pentecostals as a group. Tancredo Neves died before he could take office, so the growth began under his vice president, José Sarney, who became the first civilian president in fourteen years on the day of Neves's death, April 21st, 1985. Sarney did not inspire any of the hope or optimism that Neves had done. He was a politician of the old school, concerned with patronage and privileges, focussed on getting into office and staying there. Indeed, his first move as president was to find a way to add an extra year to his term. This accomplished, he turned to the two main tasks of his presidency: addressing rampant inflation and rebuilding the democratic system.

Regarding the first task, the economic crises of the 1970s and 80s made jobs scarcer, wages lower, and basic goods more expensive. Given this economic situation, the reasons that attracted new rural migrants to the churches in the 1950s during the third wave continued to be reasons that drew those suffering from the economic crises of the 1970s and 80s: being

³⁵ This is the same growth period that Freston has identified, only that he considered it the third wave, as explained in footnote number 11.

Pentecostal helped improve one's quality of life. As journalist and essayist Alma Guillermoprieto has written, "to a large extent the evangelical sects' genius is to have helped their followers *change* reality." By giving instructions on child-rearing, homemaking, married life, formality, punctuality, and self-control³⁶ – virtues not addressed, at least not in the same systematic way, in other religious communities – the new churches helped converts achieve a measure of domestic and professional stability, albeit within the constraints of institutionalized inequality. As sociologist Cecília Loreto Mariz has put it, Pentecostalism in the 1970s and 80s provided the means for people to cope with poverty.³⁷ And while it is true that Christian base communities (established by the Catholic clergy and lay leaders who embraced liberation theology) shared these goals of improving poor people's material conditions, the truth of the matter is that evangelical churches attracted far more poor people than the base communities ever did.³⁸

While Sarney busied himself with the economy, developing a stabilization plan known as the *Plano Cruzado*, his Congress, elected in 1986 as a Constituent Assembly, concerned itself with the task of redemocratization and set about drafting a new constitution, the country's third. Besieged by lobbyists, especially those from leftist Catholic, union, and human rights groups, Congress ended up writing a largely nationalist and populist

³⁶ Guillermoprieto, Rio, 1991," 172. Emphasis hers.

³⁷ Cecília Loreto Mariz, *Coping with Poverty: Pentecostals and Christian Base Communities in Brazil* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994). Also see John Burdick, *Looking for God in Brazil: The Progressive Catholic Church in Urban Brazil's Religious Arena* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), John Burdick, *Blessed Anastácia: Women, Race, and Popular Christianity in Brazil* (New York: Routledge, 1998), David Lehmann, *Struggle for the Spirit: Religious Transformation and Popular Culture in Brazil and Latin America* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 1996), and R. Andrew Chesnut, *Born Again in Brazil: The Pentecostal Boom and the Pathogens of Poverty* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1997).

³⁸ See, for example, Mariz, *Coping with Poverty* and Lehmann, *Struggle for the Spirit*.

constitution which granted many citizen rights, guaranteed the state oil monopoly (Petrobrás), and restored tenure for federal civil servants, though it certainly did not meet all requests; for example, the new constitution stopped short of prescribing any substantial land reform. On the whole, however, the Constitution of 1988 was praised.³⁹ The *Plano Cruzado* was less successful; Brazil's annual rate of inflation increased from 235.1 percent in 1985, the year Sarney took office, to 1782.9 percent in 1989, the end of his term.⁴⁰ Sarney did not seek reelection.

The drafting of this new constitution afforded new opportunities and motivations for Pentecostal development. This fourth wave of growth of Pentecostalism was thus not only an increase in numbers of Pentecostal churches and members, but also an expansion of Pentecostal visibility, influence, and power in larger Brazilian society. The fourth wave was when Pentecostals entered the political arena. The political opportunities afforded by redemocratization created conditions for the development of a Pentecostal presence in local, state, and national politics. Some churches began supporting official candidates for office, selecting people to run for office (mostly evangelists, singers, television presenters, sons of pastors, and businessmen) and instructing their members to vote for them.

The results were impressive. For example, in 1985, the General Convention of the *Assembléia de Deus* set the goal of electing one member from each state to the Constituent Assembly. Each State Convention selected an official candidate, and fourteen out of these eighteen candidates were successfully elected. Other churches which embraced similar agendas include the *Evangelho Quadrangular* and the *Igreja Universal do Reino de Deus*

³⁹ See Skidmore, *Brazil*, 181-2.

⁴⁰ Baer, *The Brazilian Economy*, 410, cited in Skidmore, *Brazil*, 185.

(Universal Church of the Kingdom of God, the church which was described in the introduction to this dissertation and will be examined in some detail in the next section of this chapter).⁴¹ *Universal's* ability to elect its candidates proved to be remarkable. It still has the greatest "electoral discipline" of any church. In the election of 1989, one of its candidates to represent Rio in the federal legislature was elected despite the fact that he lived in São Paulo and made almost no appearances in Rio during the campaign. His election speaks to the impressive "efficiency of the pastors as vote-gatherers." *Universal* elected three federal deputies that year. In 1994, it doubled its presence, successfully electing six.⁴²

The reasons these churches had for entering politics were varied. One was to benefit the church leaders themselves. Going into politics, whether directly or by throwing their weight behind a candidate, could increase the status of a pastor by providing means for him to exercise his power in a very visible way, one apparent to those outside his own congregation. As Freston has astutely observed, this could help address the "status contradiction" many faced as "leaders in the church" who are "marginalized by society"⁴³ (for their non-mainstream religion and, often, their lower-class roots). Other reasons benefitted Pentecostals more generally. Brazilian evangelical politicians were (and are) guided more by pragmatic concerns than by ideological ones.⁴⁴ By electing enough

⁴¹ See Paul Freston, "Evangelicals and Politics: A Comparison Between Africa and Latin America," *Journal of Contemporary Religion* 13, no. 1 (1998): 40-1.

⁴² Freston, "Pentecostalism in Brazil," 129.

⁴³ Freston, "Evangelicals and Politics," 41.

⁴⁴ While it is true that many evangelical politicians (a term which, in the Brazilian context, includes both mainline Protestants and Pentecostals) tend toward right wing positions, there is also an active left wing, long present in mainline churches and growing in Pentecostal churches. The striking example of this type of Pentecostal politician is Benedita da Silva, a *favelada* (favela-resident) from Rio de Janeiro who was Brazil's first black woman senator.

Pentecostals to office to caucus together and vote as a bloc, Pentecostals helped protect their own interests.

For example, they voted against the noise control bills which were thinly-veiled attempts to limit the evangelical reach of Pentecostal churches (which often relied on loudly-amplified music and sermons to attract members). They also voted in favor of legislation which helped them grow, such as those loosening media ownership restrictions and allowing them to acquire radio and television stations. More generally, entering politics allowed Pentecostals another arena in which to contest Catholics (who still dominated politics at all levels) and stake their own claim for “space in civil religion” and “equal status in public life.”⁴⁵

Their entrance into this political arena has been problematic. Corruption charges have dogged evangelical politicians from the start. For example, in 1988 the majority faction of the evangelical caucus in the Constituent Assembly was accused of corruption and vote selling. The national newspaper the *Jornal do Brasil* reported that “many *evangélicos* are making a profitable trade out of preparing the new constitution, by negotiating their votes in exchange for advantages for their churches, and often for themselves.” These advantages, according to the newspaper, included “a television channel, at least half a dozen radio stations, important posts in government, benefits of many types and, above all, a lot of money.”⁴⁶

⁴⁵ Freston, “Evangelicals and Politics,” 41.

⁴⁶ *Jornal do Brasil*, 7 August 1988, B4, as cited in Freston, “The protestant eruption into modern Brazilian politics,” *Journal of Contemporary Religion* 11, no. 2 (1996): 151.

The newspaper's claim about the television stations was certainly true. Edir Macedo, the head of the *Igreja Universal*, decided in 1989 that he wanted to buy TV Record, Brazil's fourth largest television network. In order to gain the political support he needed to get the deal approved by the government, he led a campaign to get the right-wing, populist candidate, Fernando Collor de Melo elected to the presidency in 1989.⁴⁷ It turned out to be a very close election, and the evangelical vote is what probably put Collor over the edge. After the purchase, Macedo and the *Igreja Universal* became the pastor and church most associated with corruption in the Brazilian public eye, in spite of the fact that the majority of the Constituent Assembly members accused in 1988 had belonged to the *Assembléia de Deus*. Far more attention is paid to the *Igreja Universal* than to the *Assembléia*, in part because, as owner of one of Brazil's largest television networks, the *Igreja Universal* is a competitor and therefore a target of national media, especially the Globo network.⁴⁸ *Universal* has become the most visible Pentecostal church in Brazil.

Edir Macedo and the *Igreja Universal do Reino de Deus*

The *Igreja Universal* is the church which was described in the introduction to this dissertation. It is the largest, most powerful Brazilian neo-Pentecostal church, and as such the counterpart to Nigeria's Redeemed Christian Church of God. Its leader, Edir Macedo, is therefore the counterpart to Redeemed's Enoch Adeboye. Macedo, who uses the title of

⁴⁷ According to Freston (and many others, for there is general scholarly and public consensus on this point), "the need for political support to get the purchase of TV Record approved by the government" was the motivation for *Universal's* engagement in the national presidential election. Freston, "The protestant eruption," 154.

⁴⁸ For a thorough discussion of this see Patrícia Birman and David Lehmann, "Religion and the Media in a Battle for Ideological Hegemony: The Universal Church of the Kingdom of God and TV Globo in Brazil," *Bulletin of Latin American Research* 18, no. 2 (1999): 145-64.

Bishop, founded the *Universal* in 1977. A former *umbandista* (practitioner of the spirit-possession religion Umbanda) from a working-class, Catholic family in a small town in Rio de Janeiro state, he spent a short time as a member of the Pentecostal *Nova Vida* (New Life) church before leaving to establish his own church in a converted funeral parlor on the outskirts of the city of Rio de Janeiro. After moving to the United States in 1986 to run his church from there, Macedo returned to Brazil in 1989 and has split his time between the two countries since then. Like Adeboye, Macedo has become very rich, with multiple homes and cars, though he maintains a more modest public profile and is widely reported to keep most of his money squirreled away in offshore accounts.

Universal claims to have as many as eight million members, ten thousand pastors, and five thousand churches in Brazil, though official estimates are much lower.⁴⁹ The majority of its congregations are urban churches concentrated in Rio, with secondary concentrations in São Paulo and Bahia. The church also has a very active evangelical arm and maintains an unknown number of missions abroad, concentrating its efforts in Argentina, Chile, South Africa, Japan, Portugal, the U.S., Canada, and especially in Lusophone Africa. Its national headquarters and main cathedral are in Rio de Janeiro, in a large, gleaming complex in a working-class neighborhood in the city's north zone. The organizational structure is a pyramidal hierarchy, like Redeemed and like the Catholic Church. Members first become volunteer workers and then paid pastors who may slowly work their ways up the ranks of the pastorate. Many – if not most – of *Universal's* thousands of pastors and

⁴⁹ The most recent census places its population at just under two million. See IBGE, Banco de Dados Agregados: Censo Demográfico e Contagem da População, www.sidra.ibge.gov.br.

missionaries come from poor and working-class neighborhoods. Indeed, the church prides itself on being a place where the marginalized can find a home and prosper.

The *Igreja Universal* has almost single-handedly changed the tone of inter-denominational discourse in Brazil. Long characterized by openness and a pronounced lack of dogmatism, the Brazilian religious sphere was unaccustomed to and unprepared for the aggressive and divisive tone of *Universal*. Instead of simply adding one more option to the Brazilian religious toolbox, the church instead has consistently attacked Catholicism, Spiritism, and Afro-Brazilian religions. By rejecting the open fluidity long permitted by the Catholic hierarchy as well as, to quote anthropologists Patrícia Birman and Márcia Pereira Leite, the “relatively conflict-free religious syncretism” it had engendered, *Universal* also rejected “a valued characteristic of national identity.”⁵⁰ Instead, with its pronounced religious intolerance, it changed the rules of the game.⁵¹ In doing so, *Universal* has engaged deeply with existing aspects of Brazilian (and especially Afro-Brazilian) culture. Given that Pentecostalism in Latin America has often mistakenly been seen as being culturally and politically rooted in North America – the work of right-wing political activist missionaries working in cahoots with the U.S. government⁵² – this is important. As Chapter One showed that Brazilian Pentecostalism’s institutional history is primarily located in Brazil itself, not in the United States, so here this chapter pauses to show that Brazilian Pentecostalism’s cultural history is primarily located in Brazil as well.

⁵⁰ Patrícia Birman and Márcia Pereira Leite, “Whatever Happened to What Used to Be the Largest Catholic Country in the World?”, *Daedalus* 129, no. 2 (2000): 273.

⁵¹ Birman and Lehmann, “Religion and the media,” 148.

⁵² Perhaps the standout example of this view is David Stoll’s *Is Latin America Turning Protestant? The Politics of Evangelical Growth* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990).

To begin with, in *Universal* cosmology, all other religions are the work of the devil. Indeed, a chief element of *Universal*'s appeal has been its promise to improve people's lives by liberating them from the work of the devil which characterizes all other religions, especially popular Catholicism and the so-called possession cults (variously called Candomblé, Umbanda, Macumba, Quimbanda, and Spiritism, as discussed in this dissertation's introduction). As Guillermprieto has written, "They rail against the Catholic Church, which they claim is an invention of the Devil, who hides behind every saint in the form of an *orixá*."⁵³ They have led campaigns against the national holiday for the patron saint of Brazil, Nossa Senhora da Aparecida, as well as against public celebrations of Afro-Brazilian culture, such as the exhibition of a sculpture of an *exú*⁵⁴ on the meridian of a public highway in Rio de Janeiro.⁵⁵ And yet, as Birman and sociologist David Lehmann have noted, "the [*Universal*] Church itself borrows from the cults' language and symbolic apparatus."⁵⁶

Indeed, in spite of *Universal*'s many attacks on Candomblé and Umbanda, Macedo has never rejected *orixás* and spirits, just as Adeboye has never rejected witches and sorcery. For both men, as for the pastors and members of both of their churches, the supernatural exists and it is powerful. Rather than shrug off such beliefs as irrational, they embrace them as possible, significant, and very real threats. Macedo recognizes that there are people who

⁵³ Guillermprieto, 166.

⁵⁴ An *exú* is an Afro-Brazilian spirit usually associated with the Devil (a meaning less nuanced in Brazil than it is in West Africa, where Exú is the intermediary, trickster god of the crossroads whom missionaries interpreted and described in demonic terms).

⁵⁵ Patrícia Birman explores the controversy over the *Exu dos Ventos*, a work of the artist Mário Cravo, in "Percursos afro e conexões sociais: negritude, pentecostalismo e espiritualidades" in *As religiões no Brasil: Continuidades e rupturas*, Faustino Teixeira and Renata Menezes, eds. (Petrópolis: Editora Vozes, 2006), 196-8.

⁵⁶ Birman and Lehmann, "Religion and the media," 148.

are afraid of “being attacked by demons” and “who think that the spirits will do them harm,”⁵⁷ and he believes that these fears are reasonable. Rather than dismiss them out of hand, he simply assures the fearful that the powerful spirits they dread can never be as powerful as Jesus. For those who have accepted the Holy Spirit into their hearts, he promises, “that which is in you is much more powerful than any attack.”⁵⁸ Jesus is stronger than any *exú*, *pombagira*, *caboclo*, or *orixá* can ever be. Spreading this message is so important to Macedo that he dedicated one of his longest and most widely-read books to the subject of demons.

The stated purpose of *Orixas, Caboclos, and Guides: Gods or Demons?* is “to help people who live in suffering because they have been deceived by evil spirits.”⁵⁹ The book was first published in 2000. By 2008, it was a best-seller with seventeen editions in circulation. Its popularity was likely due in part to the controversy its publication had incited; in 2006 a federal judge in Bahia suspended its sale and recalled copies already in circulation, accusing the book of perpetuating a discriminatory and dangerous attack on Afro-Brazilian religions and thus creating conditions of religious intolerance.⁶⁰ Dedicated to “all the *pais-de-santo* and *mães-de-santo* in our country,” the book was intended to collect in one place all of Macedo’s teachings on these supernatural entities “that live deceiving people and making

⁵⁷ Edir Macedo, *Orixás, caboclos e guias: deuses ou demônios?* (Rio de Janeiro: Unipro Editora, 2008), 182.

⁵⁸ Macedo, *Orixás, caboclos e guias*, 182.

⁵⁹ Macedo, *Orixás, caboclos e guias*, 16.

⁶⁰ See “Julgamento de livro proibido de Edir Macedo será transmitido pela internet,” JusBrasil (website), posted 22 September 2006, accessed 14 December 2012, <http://expresso-noticia.jusbrasil.com.br/noticias/136372/julgamento-de-livro-proibido-de-edir-macedo-sera-transmitido-pela-internet>.

them into horses, donkeys, or instruments (*aparelhos*),” that is, descending on people and “mounting” them in order to use their bodies to do harm.⁶¹ These were teachings he had been giving throughout the 1980s and 90s all collected in one place.

Assuring readers that many former priests of Umbanda, Quimbanda, and Candomblé are now workers and pastors in the *Igreja Universal*, Macedo invites them to reject the spirits and embrace Jesus instead. This has been an active project in *Universal* churches, where the pastors “call the demons, under the names of the various umbanda entities, to manifest themselves in the people present, so they can then be exorcised.”⁶² For example, they hold mass exorcisms, similar to the one described in the Introduction to this dissertation, at which the pastors not only call out the demons as they did at the cathedral in Bahia – “Leave, leave, leave in Jesus’s name!” – but where the pastors also address the demons by the names of the *orixás* – “Come out, Xango! Come out, Ogum!” – making it easy for new converts, who “do not have to admit that the *orixás* do not exist – only that they are the Devil, and that God is stronger.”⁶³

The book’s chapters address such themes as how demons seize people; names used by demons; signs of possession; demons and diseases; power against *exús* and demons; and what all former practitioners of Macumba (the general, derogatory term for all African-inspired spiritist religions) should know. The overarching message here is that different types of spirits exist, they are all evil and weak, and they should be abandoned in favor of the Holy Spirit, who is good and strong. Macedo articulates exactly how these evil spirits do their

⁶¹ Macedo, *Orixás, caboclos e guias*, 10, 16.

⁶² Freston, “Pentecostalism in Brazil,” 130.

⁶³ Guillermprieto, “Rio, 1991,” 166.

work in another book, *The Voice of Faith: The Secret to a Successful Life*, explaining that their method is to implant weakness inside human beings in order to be able to take possession of their bodies, which they need in order to kill, rob, and destroy. “A spirit has no way to act on his own,” Macedo explains. “Only the Spirit of God has the power to do anything without a human body.”⁶⁴ Some spirits, meanwhile, simply wish to cause problems within the host’s body.

How do people know if they are possessed by a demonic spirit? In *Are we all children of God?* (in which the answer given is no, we are not all children of God), Macedo discusses some of the problems caused by demonic possession at length. These symptoms include: constant headaches, insomnia, fear, anxiety, undiagnosable pain, envy, and depression. For example, with anxiety, the more spirits inside a person – and there can be more than one at a time – the more intense his anxiety will be. With undiagnosable pain, which is one of the most common symptoms of demonic possession, doctors and x-rays reveal nothing because the origin of the pain is “strictly spiritual,” as it is caused entirely by “localized possession.” As for insomnia, when it is not the standard sleeplessness caused by worries about daily life, it is caused by “unclean spirits” that “act on the victim’s nervous system in a way that prevents her from sleeping normally.” Fear, meanwhile, “the purest manifestation of the absence of living faith,” is caused by the “direct action of the spirit of fear,” which convinces its victim that terrible things might happen, things which the victim believes only because he does not have the faith in God which would be necessary to keep him from doing so. To take

⁶⁴ Edir Macedo, *A voz da fé: O segredo para uma vida bem-sucedida* (Rio de Janeiro: Unipro Editora, 2009), 70.

one final example of the signs and causes of demonic possession, persistent headaches which cannot be stopped with medicine are the result of evil spirits fighting over a victim's head.⁶⁵

Along with deliverance from demonic possession, the other primary focus of the *Igreja Universal* is money. Prosperity gospel is emphasized far more in the *Universal* than it is in *Redeemed*. Deliverance and prosperity are the two beliefs most closely associated with the *Igreja Universal*. Yet, as we saw in Chapter Three, these have been aspects of Pentecostal belief and practice since the 1940s at least. This was the decade when the *Assembleia's Mensageiro da Paz* published testimonies from the man whose debts increased when he stopped tithing and disappeared when he started again; from the woman who was liberated from a satanic power by Jesus; and from the man whose mother-in-law was forced by the Devil to do crazy things. It is also when the *Mensageiro* published the articles about the "Agreeable Surprises" which happen to regular titers and about the growing problem of possession by demons and evil spirits.⁶⁶ This was about thirty years before Macedo founded his church and about forty years before it really took off. While it may come as a surprise to those who have examined the *Igreja Universal* outside the larger context of Brazilian Pentecostal history, it is clear that the focus on prosperity and demons is not unique to the neo-Pentecostal churches.

Looking specifically at *Universal's* teachings about prosperity, we see that several rationales for giving as much money as possible to the church are offered, many of them explained together in *The Voice of Faith*. One is the argument that because God sacrificed his son Jesus for us, we must sacrifice what we can for him. It is a "supernatural exchange of

⁶⁵ Edir Macedo, *Somos todos filhos de Deus?* (Rio de Janeiro: Unipro Editora, 2007), 47, 49, 50, 53.

⁶⁶ See Chapter Three, 115-17.

faith.” Another is the argument of cause and effect. Citing Newton’s third law of motion – that for every action there is an equal and opposite reaction – Macedo (and his minions) have explained that the Holy Spirit teaches us that very same law in Galatians 6:7, where the foundation of prosperity gospel is found: that is, “you reap whatever you sow.”⁶⁷ *Universal* pastors, in order to make sure their members do not stop making offerings, even if years pass with no result, especially emphasize the next part of the verse, which urges, “let us not grow weary in doing what is right, for we will reap at harvest time, if we do not give up.”⁶⁸ Continuing to tithe in the face of doubt demonstrates faith that God will fulfill promises and grant blessings. Anyone who has ever been successful has had to make sacrifices – at least according to the *Universal* – and “the altar” (that is, *Universal*’s altar) “is the only sacred place to sacrifice.”⁶⁹

While *Universal*’s doctrine recognizes that there are several kinds of sacrifices, financial sacrifice is privileged. It is the “materialization of supernatural faith.” Giving money demonstrates that one has the courage to deposit the fruit of one’s hard work on the altar, and that one truly believes that the more you give, the more you get. Indeed, according to Macedo, the way to measure another person’s faith is to see how much that person donates to the church, for “faith is measured by the quality of the offering one gives.” Those who have the courage to give deserve to receive more in return. Praying and fasting cannot make you rich; only tithing can make you rich. This is because no one can reap what he does not

⁶⁷ Macedo, *A voz da fé*, 98-9.

⁶⁸ Galatians 6:9 (NRSV).

⁶⁹ Macedo, *A voz da fé*, 107, 101.

sow, and because “it would be, at the very least, injustice on the part of God to make prosper those who don’t have the courage to plant.”⁷⁰

Universal certainly increased the Pentecostal emphasis on money, but it did not invent it, nor did it adopt prosperity doctrine piecemeal from North American Pentecostals. What the *Igreja Universal* has managed to do, however, is to taint the practice with corruption. As Birman and Lehmann have written, expressing the views most educated people hold of Macedo and his church, “Macedo challenges and scandalizes the intellectual and cultural establishment with his ability to persuade millions of worshippers, despite their low incomes, to donate apparently substantial amounts of money in response to insistent requests by the Church’s preachers.” *Universal*’s “techniques have been variously described by the Catholic Church, the liberal intelligentsia and the quality press as unfair competition, indecorous behavior, or just plain charlatanism.”⁷¹ Globo has conducted investigations into money-laundering allegations. There are unsubstantiated reports that the U.S. Department of Justice has done the same. Brazilian politicians and judges have shared similar concerns (though, of course, given how active *Universal* is in the political arena, it is difficult to know just what may be motivating their concerns), and charges have been brought against Macedo and other leading figures in the church several times over the years.

A prominent example is Macedo’s arrest on charges of charlatanism and fraud in 1992. Due to lack of evidence, he was released after twelve days. He has since used the experience to his advantage, painting himself as a Christ-like sufferer of unfair persecutions. For example, the photograph selected for the cover of his authorized biography was one

⁷⁰ Macedo, *A voz da fé*, 99, 111, 121.

⁷¹ Birman and Lehmann, *Religion and the Media*,” 148.

taken of him through the bars in his jail cell; it shows him sitting in a chair against the wall with his legs crossed, wearing neatly pressed gray trousers, white shirt and shoes. His head is down, he is resting his chin in his hand, and he appears entirely focused on reading the Bible he holds open in his lap.

When it comes to concerns about their churches' wealth and their manipulative possibilities, a marked difference between Macedo and Adeboye is that even if some of Redeemed's practices are questioned, Adeboye is widely respected and largely seen as being above the fray. This is decidedly not the case with Universal, where any charge of corruption, money-laundering, exploitation, etc (and there are many) are seen as resting squarely on the leader and face of the church, Edir Macedo. The church insists all the charges are trumped up by political and business enemies – especially the nearly-hegemonic Globo news and entertainment network – but given the church's relentless appeal for donations from its mostly impoverished members, there are certainly reasons to suspect the church of exploitative intent.

Ultimately, we need to find a way to recognize the possibilities of corruption and exploitation while also recognizing – even admiring – the examples of creativity and ingenuity in both churches. Freston has rightly suggested leaving aside the “ethical and legal consequences of its [*Universal's*] actions” long enough to consider “its innovative religious and social aspect.”⁷² To dismiss *Universal's* (or Redeemed's) beliefs and practices as besides the point, as window-dressing for an insidious process of manipulating poor people into handing over their hard-earned money (even though this very well be the ultimate purpose of

⁷² Freston, “Pentecostalism in Brazil,” 132.

the church), is to miss a valuable opportunity. Instead, we can investigate their new syncretisms and innovations in order to see how these churches have evolved – in conversation with larger political, economic, and social developments – into alternative spaces to enact Pentecostalized versions of cultural practices which have long been associated with folk Catholicism and Afro-Brazilian religions.

New Republic

Returning to the political narrative, the Fernando Collor de Melo administration may have been best described by Thomas Skidmore, who called it “The Collor Debacle.”⁷³ A virtually unknown politician from a powerful northeastern family, Collor won the 1989 election through a combination of good looks, advertising, connections, and promises of neoliberal reform. Once elected, he quickly lost popular support by unilaterally decreeing such measures as the freezing of all Brazilian savings accounts and firing thousands of federal workers in an attempt to slow a rate of inflation approaching 100 percent per month. In the meantime, he increased his own personal wealth through payoffs and bribes, running an administration which was unusually corrupt and greedy even by Brazilian standards. Drug, sex, and corruption scandals ensued; federal investigations followed; and ultimately Collor was impeached and dismissed from office by Congress three years after his election.

Collor was succeeded by yet another unprepared vice president, Itamar Franco. Faced with the continuing economic crisis of runaway inflation – Collor’s drastic measures, unevenly executed, had done little to help – Franco made the savvy decision of appointing

⁷³ Skidmore, *Brazil*, 207.

renowned economist Fernando Enrique Cardoso to his cabinet, first as minister of foreign relations and then as finance minister. Fernando Enrique, as he is commonly known, brought in a crack team of economists which managed to do what Vargas, Kubitscheck, Quadros, Goulart, and Sarney had all failed to do: implement a stabilization plan for long enough that it could actually work. With its sophisticated *Plano Real*, the team began to transform Brazil from “the economic pariah of Latin America” to a stable economy with a monthly average inflation of less than one percent by the end of 1995.⁷⁴ Cardoso decided to run for office himself in the next presidential election and won handily. During his term he focused on continuing stabilization and on pushing through Congress (steamrolling, one might say) a bill increasing presidential term limits from one to two. He was re-elected in 1998 and continued his neoliberal reforms, bring increasing stability and robustness to the Brazilian economy, but doing little to improve the living conditions of average Brazilians.⁷⁵

In 2002, after three disappointing runs for president, labor leader Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva – or just Lula, as he is widely known – finally won the election. He became the first man from the popular classes to ever hold the office. Born in the rural northeast and raised on the outskirts of São Paulo, Lula was the seventh child from a poor family. He received little formal education, not learning to read until he was ten years old, and he left school at age twelve to work on the streets as a shoeshine boy and vendor. At age fourteen he started his first factory job, eventually finding good employment as a press operator at an automobile factory, and he became involved in union activities in his early 20s. He soon became a union

⁷⁴ Skidmore, *Brazil*, 212, 214.

⁷⁵ One significant exception to this is that in 2001 Cardoso issued a decree implementing affirmative action policies in all federal ministries, a major advance in addressing longstanding racial inequality in Brazil.

president and labor activist, leading strikes in the late 1970s and ultimately forming part of the group which founded the *Partido dos Trabalhadores* (Workers' Party, or PT) in 1980. During the two terms he served as President, from 2002 to 2010, Brazil became one of the strongest emerging economies in the world thanks to a combination of factors which included Brazil's abundant natural resources, the lasting effects of Cardoso's economic reforms, and Lula's pragmatic, flexible approach to governing. In 2010, his handpicked successor, Dilma Rousseff, became the first female president of Brazil.

If the 1990s is when the fourth wave of Pentecostal growth crested, the Lula years are when it crashed on the shore. Approximately 20 percent of Brazilians now consider themselves evangelical. Spiritism has also developed a more significant presence, increasing in visibility, for example with the recent big-budget films inspired by famous medium Chico Xavier's life and writings, as well as in number, the Spiritist population having increased by 65 percent between 2000 and 2010. Those who identify as "without religion" have also increased. The number of Catholics, meanwhile, has continued to decrease, though they are still the largest religious group in the country by far.⁷⁶ The *Igreja Universal*, meanwhile, has seen a slight decline in its membership as some people have migrated to other evangelical churches.⁷⁷ Thus the Pentecostal churches – established without much notice in the 1910s; coming into their own in the 1930s; expanding rapidly with the structural and cultural changes of the 1950s; innovating with the opportunities provided by the end of the military

⁷⁶ "Com mais 16 milhões de fiés em 10 anos, evangélicos são 22,2% dos brasileiros," IG São Paulo (website), posted 29 June 2012, accessed 15 December 2012, ultimosegundo.ig.com.br/2012-06-29/com-mais-16-millhoes-de-fieis-em-10-anos-evangelicos-sao-222-dos-brasileiros.html.

⁷⁷ Hannrikson de Andrade, "Censo 2010 aponta migração de fiés da Universal do Reino de Deus para outras igrejas evangélicas," UOL Notícias (website), posted 29 June 2012, accessed 15 December 2012, noticias.uol.com.br/cotidiano/ultimas-noticias/2012/06/29/censo-2010-aponta-migracao-de-fies-da-universal-do-reino-de-deus-para-outras-igrejas.html.

regime in the 1980s; and becoming more firmly part of the Brazilian cultural, political, and economic landscape during the New Republic – are evolving part and parcel with the Brazilian nation-state. Though influenced by foreigners and ideas from abroad, they are fundamentally Brazilian institutions, ever changing and surprising.

CHAPTER SIX

Pentecostalism, Nationalism, and Globalization

In the previous two chapters, we have seen how Pentecostal identity has interfaced with national politics. In this final chapter, we turn our attention to how Pentecostal identity intersects with national *identity*. At the turn of the 21st century, how has being Pentecostal related to being Nigerian and being Brazilian? What have the terms meant to Pentecostal church leaders and their followers? Has Pentecostal identity served as a global identity which transcends national borders? This chapter sets out to answer these questions by examining the rhetoric and influence of the leaders of two of the contemporary world's most powerful Pentecostal churches: Edir Macedo of the *Igreja Universal do Reino de Deus* and Enoch Adeboye of the Redeemed Christian Church of God. As discussed in the previous chapters, these men both began their rise to power in the late 1970s (Macedo when he founded *Universal* and Adeboye when he was hand-picked to replace the founder of Redeemed) and are now the most influential Pentecostal leaders on their respective continents, making them two of the most powerful religious leaders in the world. Here we look at their influence in both their national and global contexts, considering how they promote their churches and themselves; how they define and address larger national projects; what images they project and what narratives they promote within and across national

boundaries; how these messages are received by their followers; and what kind of awareness they display of each other.

The reason to ask these questions is they help us understand some of the many layers of recent Pentecostal history – history which, it must be emphasized, should not be projected backward as if all Pentecostal history can be understood as a linear series of events in a single, globalizing narrative with, to borrow phrases from Frederick Cooper, problematic “totalizing pretensions” and “presentist periodization[s].”¹ People’s reasons for becoming Pentecostal over the past hundred years have always been varied and changing, and what it means to be Pentecostal has constantly shifted, and continues to do so. If nothing else, this dissertation has hopefully made clear by now that “Pentecostal” has multiple meanings in every location in which the term is found, and that the most reliable constant among these variations is the unifying belief (expressed in myriad ways) in the direct, unmediated action of the Holy Spirit in the lives of individuals.

For the Nation: Prayer, Politics, and National Identity

One of the arguments most often made about Nigeria’s Redeemed Christian Church of God, Brazil’s *Igreja Universal do Reino de Deus*, and churches like them is that a substantial part of their appeal is that they offer their followers access to a global, modern identity. The claim is that Pentecostalism, like other global movements, provides an alternative identity to national identity, an alternative community to the national community, and an alternative

¹ Frederick Cooper, “What is the Concept of Globalization Good For? An African Historian’s Perspective,” *African Affairs* 100 (2001): 193.

imaginary to the national imaginary.² Much of the literature posits the rise of a kind of global religious identity which, for many people, has superseded local national identity. For example, in one of her many brilliant discussions of the transnational nature of contemporary Nigerian Pentecostalism, Ruth Marshall considers the definition of transnationalism provided by French sociologists B. Badie and M. C. Smouts, whereby the demise of the nation-state has led to the construction of new relations in a global space, and she argues that this transnationalism “takes on its new significance in a context 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.”³ Setting out to explore the ways in which transnationally circulating media facilitate the re-emergence of the sacred realm as a primary location of identity, Marshall builds from anthropologist Rijk Van Dijk’s assertion that “the new charismatic type of Pentecostalism creates a moral and physical geography whose domain is one of transnational cultural inter-penetration and

² The scholarship on this is vast. To cite just a few examples, see Birgit Meyer and Peter Geschiere, eds., *Globalization and Identity: Dialectics of Flow and Closure* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999); Jürgen Habermas, trans. Max Pensky, *The Postnational Constellation: Political Essays* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2001); and Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996). An excellent recent example specific to Pentecostalism is Joel Cabrita’s exploration of the history of the Church of the Nazaretha in South Africa. In a recent paper, Cabrita described how citizenship in the Nazaretha church was seen as outranking citizenship in the apartheid political state, based on the idea that, to paraphrase: our names are listed in heaven so Pretoria doesn’t matter. Cabrita’s book on this subject, *Text and Authority in a South Africa Church*, is forthcoming from Cambridge University Press. Joel Cabrita, “Heavenly Bureaucracy in the South African Nazaretha Church” (paper, African Studies Association 2011 Annual Meeting, Washington D.C., 19 November 2011).

³ Ruth Marshall-Fratani, “Mediating the Local and the Global in Nigerian Pentecostalism,” *Journal of Religion in Africa* 28, no. 3 (1998): 278. The Badie and Smouts work under consideration is B. Badie and M. C. Smouts, *Le retournement du monde: Sociologie de la scène internationale* (Paris: Presses de la Fondation Nationale des Sciences Politiques & Dalloz, 1992).

flows.”⁴ Marshall ultimately concludes that urban Nigerian Pentecostalism has created “delocalized subjects” who embrace “a ‘postnational’ form of religious identity.”⁵ All of this is true.

It is also true that Pentecostal identity has been used to reinforce national identity: to provide new means and rhetoric with which to define and assert a particular kind of nationalism and – to be more specific – a particular kind of Nigerian-ness and Brazilian-ness. Marshall’s work, and the work she cites, is part of the larger body of scholarship which emerged in the 1980s and 90s to challenge the widespread tendency of scholars – especially historians – to reify the nation-state (a tendency that has foundations in the very origins of the discipline).⁶ The death knell for the nation-state was rung, convincingly, again and again as the reification of the nation-state was challenged and the possibility of alternative sovereignties examined. Yet, as intellectual historian Lloyd Kramer asserted in his more recent book on nationalism, “these transnationalist tendencies have not changed the fact that nationalism and nationalist thought retain enormous influence almost everywhere in the modern world.”⁷ The premise of this chapter is that an overemphasis on the global has led to a mistaken de-emphasis on the national. The nation-state – and nationalism – is not dead yet.

⁴ Marshall-Fratani, “Mediating the Local and the Global,” 281, quoting Rijk Van Dijk, “From Camp to Encompassment: Discourses of Transsubjectivity in the Ghanaian Pentecostal Diaspora,” *Journal of Religion in Africa* 27, no. 2 (1997): 142.

⁵ Marshall-Fratani, “Mediating the Local and the Global,” 311.

⁶ On nationalism and the practice of history, see for example: Georg G. Iggers, *Historiography in the Twentieth Century: From Scientific Objectivity to the Postmodern Challenge* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1997).

⁷ Lloyd Kramer, *Nationalism in Europe and America: Politics, Culture, and Identities since 1775* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011), 5.

This chapter thus explores some ways that global movements also inform national movements, demonstrating how religious and national identities can cut across each other.⁸ Looking at the interplay between nationalist thought and transnationalist religion, Chapter Five investigates how Pentecostal, national, and global identities intersect in the two most Pentecostal countries in Africa and Latin America by examining how Pentecostals in Redeemed and *Universal* have asserted Christian national identities in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. The reason for this shift of focus away from the *Assembléia de Deus* and the Christ Apostolic Church is that, by the period under consideration here, these earlier churches had been eclipsed by newer, charismatic/neo-Pentecostal churches. While the Brazilian *Assembléia* and the Nigerian Christ Apostolic Church were their countries' dominant Pentecostal churches in early and middle 20th century, it is *Universal* and Redeemed who have dominated the late 20th and early 21st century, both in terms of numbers of new members attracted and in terms of media and scholarly attention granted, as they provide the loudest and most-listened-to voices in their national conversations on Pentecostalism and the nation.

⁸ Precedents for this kind of work include Birgit Meyer, "The Power of Money: Politics, Occult Forces, and Pentecostalism in Ghana," *African Studies Review* 41 (1998): 15-37. In this article on politics, the occult, and Pentecostalism in Ghana, she argues for attention to be paid to religion and national politics. "In contrast to the predominantly transnational orientation of Nigerian Pentecostals analyzed by Marshall-Fratani (1998)," she writes, "Ghanaian pentecostalists consciously and purposely speak to national concerns," using Pentecostalism to reveal and purify the demonic aspect of modern politics. Meyer, "The Power of Money," 31. David Gordon has taken on a similar project for Zambia, the subject of his forthcoming book, *Invisible Agents: Spirits in a Central African History* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2012). Examples from Latin America include articles by Patrícia Birman, David Lehmann, Paul Freston, Cecília Mariz, and Márcia Pereira Leite. See, for example, Patrícia Birman and Márcia Pereira Leite on "the religious destiny of Brazil" in "Whatever Happened to What Used to Be the Largest Catholic Country in the World?" *Daedalus* 129, no. 2 (2000): 271-290.

By playing Nigeria and Brazil off each other and moving the investigation into the present, this chapter is the most comparative and most anthropologically-minded part of the dissertation. The first part of this chapter argues that by identifying an anti-national “other” and asserting a particular kind of Christian Nigerian-ness or Brazilian-ness, Pentecostalism can provide a new way of defining national identity and contesting who belongs in and who ought to lead the nation-state. By juxtaposing the political engagement of Nigerian and Brazilian Pentecostals, this chapter complicates much of the literature which tends to investigate the question of Pentecostalism and national politics as monolithic across national boundaries. The purpose here continues to be to show that global Pentecostalism is not necessarily about making people and nations subordinate to an American, neo-colonial, missionary project which runs roughshod over local beliefs and values, but is rather a movement which provides a means for people to engage in their own nation-building projects. The second part of this chapter then argues that, even in their work outside their own countries, these churches continue to embrace their Nigerian-ness and Brazilian-ness. For *Universal*, Redeemed, and churches like them, national identity is never abandoned. In fact, it is at the very heart of their global missionary efforts.

Changing the Nation: A Comparison

A November 2009 cover of *The Economist* showed Christ the Redeemer, Brazil’s iconic statue of Jesus which looms over the city of Rio de Janeiro, taking off like a rocket ship into a cloudless blue sky, flames shooting out of its feet. Around the same time, readers of the BBC’s website could read about “Nigeria: Troubled Giant” and choose to participate in an

online debate over whether or not Nigeria ought to be considered a failed state.⁹ Brazil and Nigeria are currently countries with vastly different internal and external narratives. The way Nigeria and Brazil are viewed – by Nigerians and Brazilians, by the larger world – could hardly be more different. Nigerians fear being ignored; Brazilians revel in the international spotlight. Nigerians want Nigeria to become a significant, respected world power; Brazil is already becoming one. Nigeria is on the way down; Brazil is on the way up, blasting off into space.

These are the prevailing narratives, in any case, and they give us an interesting starting point. The *stories* are that Nigeria is fundamentally sick and Brazil is fundamentally healthy. Even though it is easy to prove this as a false dichotomy, the perceived state of the nation is an important factor to keep in mind when it comes to understanding global Pentecostalism because it helps us become aware of just how adaptable a religion it is, how mutable and flexible and multi-dimensional: how its practices – so similar-looking – can serve so many different purposes. When it comes to the Pentecostal perspective on the relationship between God and nation, and the ways in which Pentecostals have engaged in politics in recent years, the biggest difference between Brazil and Nigeria – between a rising power and a declining one, according to these narratives – is that in Nigeria the people depend on God to create the nation He wants, while in Brazil God depends on the people to make the nation He wants.

This means that the necessary action for Pentecostals to take has been different. Different national predicaments have lead to different goals, and different goals have lead to

⁹ “Debate: Is Nigeria a failed state?” BBC News, last modified 7 July 2009, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/8112800.stm>. The webpage’s sidebar reads, “Nigeria – Troubled Giant.”

different courses of action. In both places, people are vessels, but the direction is different. In Nigeria, they are vessels for prayer, from earth to heaven; in Brazil, they are vessels for direct political action, from heaven to earth. In Nigeria, Pentecostals are encouraged to pray to God, while in Brazil, Pentecostals are encouraged to involve themselves in politics by learning about the political system, voting, and running for office.

Nigeria: Praying for the Nation

The example most often cited by Nigerian evangelicals as proof that God will intervene if Nigerians pray hard enough is the death of General Sani Abacha. Abacha was the military dictator who seized power in 1993 and maintained his brutal regime until his sudden death in 1998. Members of the Redeemed community often recall how, at the June 1998 Holy Ghost Night, its leader, Enoch Adeboye, had everybody turn to his or her neighbors and wish them a happy new year. This instruction was met with shock. Happy new year in June? According to one recollection:

Pastor Adeboye said, “As I was praying last night towards the Holy Ghost service of today, the Lord said I should ask you to shake hands and greet one another ‘happy new year.’ I know that God is going to give someone a new beginning.”¹⁰

A few days later, when Abacha’s death was reported, people realized that Adeboye had prophesied the event: he had predicted that Abacha would die, and that is why it was the beginning of a new year.

The first democratic elections for president to be held since 1993 followed a few months later, and Pentecostals took credit for this turn of events as well; they believed

¹⁰ Olaitan Olubiyi, “Nigeria: A Prophecy Fulfilled,” *Redemption Light*, June 1999, 7.

that God had acted on their prayers. Unsurprisingly, Olusegun Obasanjo, the man who was elected president and a Christian, espoused this belief as well. At his inauguration he said, “I believe that this is what God Almighty has ordained for me and for my beloved country, Nigeria and its people.”¹¹ Later, a “Goodwill Message” delivered on his behalf at a 2001 Holy Ghost Night declared:

I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that the prayer of the church in this nation has been our mainstay. You prayed in . . . 1998 and the Lord visited our land. Democracy was restored and our land experienced a new lease of life.¹²

This belief that Nigeria was saved from Abacha and returned to democracy through intercessory prayers is widespread among Nigerian evangelicals, or at least considered as a possibility, like ghost stories, neither fully believed nor entirely discounted. As reported in various articles in Redeemed’s magazine, “the death of Abacha was a divine intervention” which only God could have brought to pass.¹³ As God delivers people from sickness and poverty, so he delivers nations from diseased political systems. God’s – a Christian God’s – hand was clearly at work in the liberation of Nigeria from the Abacha regime.

Prayer for the Nigerian nation is not just a practice. It has become a movement, an institution established in 1996 by former president General Yakubu Gowon (1967-75) in cooperation with expatriate Nigerians living in the United States. A group of these expats met at a national prayer breakfast in Washington DC, discussed Nigeria’s many problems

¹¹ Olaitan Olubiyi, “God Ordained My Election – Obasanjo,” *Redemption Light*, June 1999, 8.

¹² Olusegun Obasanjo, “Heaven Will Open For Nigeria,” *Redemption Light*, January 2001, 28.

¹³ Olaitan Olubiyi (quoting an unnamed Nigerian), “Nigeria at 40: It’s a Turning-point Celebration,” *Redemption Light*, October 2000, 31.

and what they could do to help, and decided, as Gowon recalls, that “the only solution was prayer, to ask God to have mercy on Nigeria.”¹⁴ Together, they founded an organization called Nigeria Prays. And it was not enough for just a few concerned expatriates to pray. “We felt all Nigerians should start to pray without ceasing.”¹⁵

The movement has grown since then. In 2002, Nigeria Prays published the *Prayer for the Nation National Prayer Handbook*. This handbook is dedicated to “all the praying saints of Nigeria – the spiritual gate keepers of the nation, who have graduated from survival bread-and-fish prayers to national revival prayers.”¹⁶ Its purpose is to help Nigeria regain its former wealth and status which it has lost. The preface optimistically and reassuringly declares, “THERE IS HOPE” for this nation that was once “rich” and “respected” but is now “rebuffed and suspected,” and there is also hope for Nigerians who are currently “captives because we have mortgaged our resources and destiny to other nations and the devil.” The way out of this captivity is prayer. If enough people repent of their sins, God will “mitigate his judgement on the nation” and “mercy, healing, progress and prosperity will be the result.”¹⁷ It is not only individuals who can be saved, as we saw in Chapter Three; nations can be saved as well.

Here is the rationale for the Prayer for the Nation movement, worth quoting at length:

Our nation is in dire need of people who will stand before God for her healing and progress. We have tried every other thing we know how and employed different policies for political stability and economic development but have

¹⁴ Yunusa Akee, “Gowon Visits Camp,” *Redemption Light*, May 1998, 21.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Moses Aransiola, ed., *Prayer for the Nation National Prayer Handbook* (Ibadan: Feyisetan Press, 2002), 5.

¹⁷ Aransiola, *National Prayer Handbook*, 6.

failed. It seems as if threats, of chaos, bewilderment and darkness are closing in on us more than ever before. We have come to realise that every effort to save our country without effective prayer will fail. . . . Without a heaven-sent visitation, there will be no spiritual re-awakening, social, economic, technological breakthrough and political stability in the land. There is no alternative and no short-cut. Effective prayer is the answer.¹⁸

We see here that in twenty-first-century Nigeria, prayer is activism. Protests and marches are derided as inappropriate; the handbook declares that “other people may take to the streets to express their grievances over bad leadership and ungodly decisions, but Christians must take to prayer.”¹⁹ Prayer is safer; no one gets arrested or killed for praying. Indeed, at this point, it is the only kind of activism that many Nigerians – aware of the history of political action leading to injury and death – can be convinced to do. Prayer is also something that all Christians, regardless of denomination, ethnicity, or class, can do together.²⁰

Prayer for the nation makes a great deal of sense in a country where conventional activism typically achieves no positive results. It is a way for people to turn from the despair of powerlessness to the satisfaction of action. Taking action means using the power of prayer.²¹ People have the agency to ask God for help, but only God can actually change things. Pastor Adeboye stated this clearly in one of his sermons:

¹⁸ Aransiola, *National Prayer Handbook*, 17.

¹⁹ Aransiola, *National Prayer Handbook*, 24.

²⁰ This belief is expressed by the Prayer for the Nation movement as, “God is now calling for concerted and united prayers that cut across ethnic, social and denominational lines.” Aransiola, *National Prayer Handbook*, 31.

²¹ I saw anecdotal evidence of this philosophy in action when I was in Ibadan in 2010 during President Yar’adua’s three month absence from the country, when no one knew where he was, or if he was even alive. I asked people, “Why aren’t people protesting?” and “Why is everyone just accepting this?” Finally, I was told by my neighbors, historian Jacob Ade Ajayi and his family, that I was looking in the wrong place. People *were* taking action, but by praying in the churches, not by marching in the streets.

We are the ones with the power to heal this nation. Oh no, no, no, I'm not saying that we are God. I'm saying that we know how to reach that God to get healings for our nations.²²

These healings are expected to be big, as miraculous as the physical healings experienced by individuals. As G. F. Oyer, President of God-Will-Do-It Ministries in Ibadan, described it at the National Intercessors prayer conference in Ibadan in 2000, "At the end of this prayer, we are expecting a new Nigeria."²³ For those who doubt prayer's efficacy, a common response is, "If you think Nigeria is still bad now in spite of our prayers, imagine what it would look like without our prayers."²⁴ Liberia, Sierra Leone, Yugoslavia, Rwanda, and Somalia, are cited as examples of what Nigeria would be if it weren't for the prayers of Christians.²⁵ Adeboye has expressed it like this: "But for the Almighty God, Rwanda would have been child's play compared with what would have happened in Nigeria."²⁶ Given that ethnic tensions sometimes do turn violent in Nigeria, the comparison with Rwanda is a plausible one.

Some take this one step further, declaring that because Christians have the power to heal the nation, Nigeria's problems are the Christians' fault. One pastor who takes this position is Moses Iloh of Soul Winning Ministries Inc. He holds Christians "totally responsible" for Nigeria's problems. According to him, and others who share this belief, the

²² E. A. Adeboye, "The Red Sea, Bondage and Freedom," *Redemption Light*, October 2009, 8.

²³ G. F. Oyer, "Expect a New Nigeria," *Redemption Light*, October 2000, 36.

²⁴ Interview with Ayo Oritsejafor, former president of the Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria, "If every Christian lives the life of Christ, Nigeria will feel the impact," *Redemption Light*, April 2005, 35.

²⁵ See, for example, Josephine Dirionyemma, "Nigeria: It's Your Turn," *Redemption Light*, October 1998, 34 and Aransiola, *National Prayer Handbook*, 20.

²⁶ Josephine Dirionyemma, "Nigeria: It's Your Turn," *Redemption Light*, October 1998, 34.

church “has all it takes to change this nation” because it has “power in the name of Jesus.” Evangelicals have all the spiritual weapons they need, yet “they do not do enough to harness these powers to help the nation.”²⁷ There is nothing at all in this rhetoric about colonial legacy, problems with the political system, multinational corporations, the global economy, the culture of corruption, and other possible reasons for Nigeria’s current predicament. Structural problems are treated as demonic afflictions which God can heal. For example, at a Lagos revival which allegedly attracted seven million people in 1998, the pastor who led an intercessory prayer for the youth spoke of how “the youths have been afflicted with drugs, cultism, abominable acts, cases of uncertainties and joblessness.” Another pastor who preached at the same event explained that “if the devil gets the family, he can get the church and after that the nation,” causing barrenness, broken homes, joblessness, sickness, and other problems.²⁸ These problems are not structural. They are the fault of Christians who do not pray, and the solution is for all Nigerians to pray for the healing of Nigeria. Perhaps when nothing has worked for fifty years, you give up on the old ways of fixing things (protests, politics, blaming outsiders) and look for new solutions. Or perhaps the turn to blaming yourself occurs after decades of blaming the wider world accomplishes little to nothing.

Those who encourage the prayer solution offer as evidence instances of intercessory prayer from more successful nations. For example, *The Prophetic Destiny of Nigeria: God’s Plan for the Nation*, a 2008 publication of Nigeria Prays, cites precedents of praying for the nation set by the United States. A very creative reading of American colonial history, it offers

²⁷ Interview with Moses Iloh, “Nigeria at 42: Why Change Has Not Come,” *Redemption Light*, October 2002, 21.

²⁸ Bukonla Akinwande, “As One Man,” *Redemption Light*, January 1999, 32

several examples of occasions when American political leaders directed colonists/citizens to engage in prayer for the nation. These examples include “Days of Fasting, Humiliation and Prayer” proclaimed by the Virginia House of Burgesses in 1774, President Adams in 1798, President Madison in 1815, and President Lincoln in 1861 and 1864, as well as a “Day of Thanksgiving and Prayer” proclaimed by President Washington 1795.²⁹ The idea here is, if we pray like the United States, we will become like the U.S: strong, rich, and respected. And it is not just religious and political leaders who are pushing this view. For example, a recent commenter on a Nigerian news blog wrote of his bafflement that people are complaining on the internet when instead each one should “get on ur knees and pray for Nigeria.”³⁰ The idea that prayer can save Nigeria has real traction.³¹

If there are problems with Nigeria, then, the fault is with Nigerians for not asking for help in the right way, from the right source: the Christian God, the most powerful of all patrons. The logic here, in crude terms, is: it’s our own fault our nation is so messed up. We haven’t prayed hard enough, and as a result the devil has had his way with our country.³² This

²⁹ Moses Aransiola, ed., *The Prophetic Destiny of Nigeria: God’s Plan for the Nation* (Ibadan: Esthom Graphic Prints, 2008), 37-46.

³⁰ Anonymous, comment on “Occupy Nigeria Protesters Regroup, Say Protests Will Continue,” Sahara Reporters, posted on 16 January 2012, <http://saharareporters.com/news-page/occupy-nigeria-protesters-regroup-say-protests-will-continue>.

³¹ One likely reason for this traction is that there is a longstanding tradition of intercessory prayer in Nigeria, especially in Yorubaland. Asking someone to intercede on your behalf – whether a person of greater status or an ancestor spirit – is fundamentally Yoruba. For an excellent discussion of this, see Karin Barber, “How Man Makes God in West Africa: Yoruba Attitudes Toward the ‘Orisa,’” *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute* 51, no. 3 (1981): 724-745.

³² There is much more to say on the devil, demons, and deliverance, and I plan to pursue this in future research and writing. There is a very substantial body of literature on the occult in Africa; see especially Peter Gescheire, *The Modernity of Witchcraft: Politics and the Occult in Postcolonial Africa* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1997). On Nigeria specifically, a fascinating example is Stephen Ellis, “The Okija Shrine: Death and Life in Nigerian Politics,” *Journal of African History* 49, no. 3 (2008): 445-466.

is interesting not only because of the way it dismisses other causes of Nigeria's poverty, corruption, and disorder, but also because it is based on the premise that Nigeria is meant to be – destined to be! – a nation. And not just any nation, but, according to some, God's chosen country.³³ The chairman of the National Prayer Conference 2000 declared that "Nigeria is a country favored by God" and "strategic in God's end-time move."³⁴ Redemption Light published an article in 2000 called "The Ark of Covenant Moves to Nigeria" which opens with the epigraph, "Thus saith the Lord 'Nigeria' is my son, even my first born!"³⁵ This is Exodus 4:22 with Nigeria replacing Israel. Just decades after its creation and its civil war, the existence of the Nigerian nation is not a question.

Redeemed claims to be at the heart of the Nigerian nation and at the epicenter of this intercessory prayer activism. It is, according to its rhetoric, "the spiritual capital of Nigeria."³⁶ Not Western Nigeria; not Christian Nigeria; all of Nigeria. Redeemed claims it is the reason that Nigeria continues to exist as a nation, and Redemption Camp, site of the monthly Holy Ghost Nights, is the "engine room" of Nigeria's precarious unity and survival.³⁷ This rhetoric does more than build up Redeemed and Redemption Camp. It also marks Nigeria as a fundamentally Christian nation, existing thanks to the Christians who

³³ This is a longstanding trope in nationalist thought. See Kramer, *Nationalism*, 85-6 on the history of nationalists describing their national populations as the chosen people of history.

³⁴ Bukonla Akinwande and Shole Atere, "Nigeria: A Nation in God's Programme," *Redemption Light*, October 2000, 31.

³⁵ Olufemi Lawal, "The Ark of the Covenant Moves to Nigeria," *Redemption Light*, February 2000, 23.

³⁶ Tosin Onayiga, "Days of Dress Rehearsal," *Redemption Light*, January 1999, 26.

³⁷ Interview with E. A. Odeyemi about Redeemed's evangelical arm, Christ the Redeemer's Ministry (CRM), "CRM: A Living Dream," *Redemption Light*, April 2007, 4.

have gathered together by the millions to pray for its survival. As the *National Prayer Handbook* states:

Some people . . . commonly say: ‘we still have many problems despite all our prayers; are the prayers really working?’ The answer is simple: if not for our prayers, Nigeria would have ceased from being a nation. Our collective destiny would have suffered total destruction. God knew we would have problems, and that is the reason why He has generously poured upon us the spirit of grace and supplication. Oh! Nigerians can pray.³⁸

Through this prayer, Nigerians will achieve their national, Christian destiny.³⁹

Brazil: Planning for Power

There is no prayer for the nation movement in Brazil. These days, Brazilian Pentecostals are more likely to see their role as participating directly in politics than as petitioning God to change the political situation. One of the main reasons is because intercessory prayer is a longstanding Catholic practice and Brazilian Pentecostals aim to differentiate themselves from the majority Catholic “idolators,” as they call them. Indeed, at the core of Brazilian Pentecostal identity is a rejection of Catholicism. This was crystalized in a 1995 incident which became a national controversy: when a *Universal* bishop kicked an

³⁸ Aransiola, *Prophetic Destiny*, 60.

³⁹ It should be noted that prayer for the nation is not a particularly Nigerian practice, though of course there are particularities specific to the Nigerian situation, not the least the fact of its population being nearly 50/50 Christian and Muslim. As David Gordon has noted, “prayer as a political resource has become common in many African countries, in part due to Pentecostalism and charismatic influences.” See his contribution to the July 2012 H-Africa discussion of “National Prayer and Penitence” as well as the final chapter of his recent book, David Gordon, *Invisible Agents: Spirits in a Central African History* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2012).

icon of the patron saint of Brazil on national television, an incident so well known it even has its own Wikipedia entry.⁴⁰

Another reason why there is no prayer for the nation movement in Brazil is that, unlike in Nigeria, ordinary Brazilians have actually managed to have an impact on government. There are significant differences between the ways politics have developed in each country over the course of the twentieth century. In Brazil, beginning with the *abertura* (the ten years of “opening” which began in the mid 1970s, during the second half of what would turn out to be a 20-year military dictatorship), ordinary people have influenced government, most notably in the remarkable election of labor leader Lula da Silva to two terms as president (2003-2010). In Nigeria, over the course of the fifty-two years since independence from Britain – a period which has seen six successful coups, nine dictators, and countless contested elections and political assassinations – this has not been the case. Rather than experiencing increasing political influence, most people have experienced increasing political irrelevance. Brazil, even with its institutionalized corruption, is now far closer to a democracy than oligarchical Nigeria. Thus, unlike in Nigeria, voting matters in Brazil.

In Brazil, Pentecostal involvement in politics is part of a larger trend of an increasing religious pluralism and the development (since the late 1980s) of an assertive notion of citizenship.⁴¹ Pentecostals are more likely to see their role as influencing the

⁴⁰ “Chute na santa,” Wikipedia, last modified 16 March 2012, http://pt.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chute_na_santa. A better source of information on and analysis of the famous “chute” (kick) is Patrícia Birman and David Lehman, “Religion and the Media in a Battle for Ideological Hegemony: The Universal Church of the Kingdom of God and TV Globo in Brazil,” *Bulletin of Latin American Research* 18 (1999): 145-164.

⁴¹ My thanks to Anthony Pereira for making this point in response to my presentation at the “Brazil in Africa: Africa in Brazil” workshop held at Cambridge University on 31 May 2011.

country from the inside rather than from the outside, as participating directly in politics rather than petitioning God to change the political situation, and as influencing Brazil from within Brazil rather than from abroad. As Edir Macedo, head of *Universal*, says in his 2008 book *Plan For Power: God, Christians, and Politics*, “when it comes to evangelical votes, we’re dealing with two interests: the interest of Christians themselves in having genuine representatives and the interest of God in concluding his national project.”⁴²

Though at first, in the mid-twentieth century, Pentecostals in Brazil were known for withdrawing from the world and its concerns, including politics, the neo-Pentecostals have actively embraced and encouraged political participation.⁴³ The *Universal* in particular has led the move away from the classical Pentecostal practice of rejecting the material world as Edir Macedo and his church have actively embraced and encouraged political participation. *Universal* began to support candidates for public office in 1982 because, according to them, they came to understand that “political participation is necessary in the struggle against social injustice,” and Macedo has made getting evangelicals to the polls and into office one of his priorities.⁴⁴ This is commonly read both by non-evangelical Brazilians and by scholars as a very self-serving move, but here we will first look at *what* Macedo says and does before we question *why* he says and does it.

⁴² Edir Macedo with Carlos Oliveria, *Plano de poder: Deus, os cristãos e a política*, (Rio de Janeiro: Thomas Nelson Brasil, 2008), 123.

⁴³ For a thorough discussion of this withdrawal and emergence, see Paul Freston, *Evangelical Christianity and Democracy in Latin America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008).

⁴⁴ “IURD: 23 anos ultrapassando fronteiras,” *Plenitude* 72 (2000): 26.

Macedo has stated that “the project of nationhood desired by God” requires Christians “to wake up to the reality of the project, get involved, become engaged, and mobilize themselves to realize this divine dream.”⁴⁵ Macedo says it is necessary for Brazilian citizens to leave aside ideological and doctrinal differences in order to accomplish a common goal, which is “to execute the grand project of nationhood which has been idealized and intended by God.”⁴⁶ As in Nigeria Christians of all denominations come together to confront the Muslim “other,” so in Brazil they come together against the Catholic “other.” There is a shared belief in divinely sanctioned nationhood: the fact of the nation, the unquestionable divine necessity of its existence, nationhood as destiny. In both countries, God has a plan for the nation which evangelicals need to help Him fulfill. In Brazil, this plan is to be fulfilled by evangelical political involvement. Macedo wants Universal members to be the pioneers who motivate thousands of other Christians to participate in politics. “In this way,” he says, “we will change Brazil.”⁴⁷

There is much more faith in the electoral process in Brazil than in Nigeria. Brazil may be a very corrupt democracy, but Nigeria – in spite of the flirtations with real democracy discussed in Chapter Four – is currently so corrupt that it is hardly a democracy at all, more a plutocracy masquerading as a democracy. Macedo encourages people to learn about government and to vote. He does acknowledge the problem of

⁴⁵ Macedo, *Plano de poder*, 112.

⁴⁶ Macedo, *Plano de poder*, 52. This is also a longstanding trope of nationalist thought. See Kramer, *Nationalism*, 84-5 on the idea of the “extraordinary nation” as “the vehicle for God’s divine vision of human creativity” which, to be realized, “requires committed action from its people.”

⁴⁷ Macedo, *Plano de poder*, 111. In Brazil, unlike in Nigeria, the term “Christians” does *not* include Catholics.

corruption – indeed, he states that the first thing he would do as president, even though he claims no plans to run, is end corruption:

If I were president, this country would be different. My first act would be to prohibit the spending of a single cent without my authorization. You would see this country change. The corrupt would go hungry.⁴⁸

Despite the fact that there is evidence of corruption within the *Universal* and by *Universal* politicians,⁴⁹ Macedo pushes the belief that if Pentecostals get enough of their own into government, they will be able to clean up the political process.

The first step in getting involved in politics has been to educate people about the political process. For example, an article titled, “What do politicians do?” published in *Universal*’s magazine in 2002, states the dismaying fact that:

Yet another election is arriving and, well into the 21st century, many people don’t know the functions of senators, state and federal congressmen, and [local] councilmen. This means that many voters will go to the polls without knowing exactly what each candidate can do for the people.⁵⁰

The article goes on to break down the three branches of government and describe the responsibilities of each type of elected official; it is Civics 101 for Pentecostals.

Another part of the process has been fielding evangelical candidates for local, state, and national offices around the country. Macedo has declared that what God wants is a nation governed by God’s followers, stating that “every Christian, as citizen and

⁴⁸ Douglas Tavolaro, *O bispo: a história revelada de Edir Macedo* (São Paulo: Larousse do Brasil, 2007), 222.

⁴⁹ As historian Ben Cowan has put it, “The issue of corruption has dogged evangelical politicians ever since you could use the phrase,” noting that Matheus Iensen and Nilson Fanini were both accused of corruption in the 80s. Ben Cowan, personal correspondence, 3 February 2012.

⁵⁰ “O que fazem os políticos?” *Plenitude* 86 (2002): 14.

voter, can collaborate in many ways in order to construct this nation of God's dreams."⁵¹ The idea is to have a nation led by men and women who will do what God wants them to do, and a primary purpose of getting these politicians elected, according to Macedo, is to defend the rights of evangelicals. There is concern that elected officials will, in the words of *Universal* Bishop Carlos Rodrigues, confuse evangelicals with "bandits, law-breakers, or groups with so little importance that they can pass laws against our mission and our right to exist." As a result, he says, "it's necessary to make a lot of noise in order to guarantee our dignity and our right to speak about the Lord Jesus Christ."⁵² This is a reasonable concern in a country in which the Catholic Church and state were formally affiliated until 1890 and informally affiliated into the 1940s, with a legislative history of passing laws against non-Catholic religious groups, including evangelicals.

Nonetheless, most non-evangelical Brazilians are very cynical about Macedo and his church. Educating people about politics, getting them to the polls, and putting his pastors in office gives Macedo great power; he tells people how to vote and he gets his church's candidates elected.⁵³ He is very successful at this and eager to celebrate it.⁵⁴ One could argue – and many do – that getting his people into office is fundamentally a strategy to increase the power of his church and media empire (which includes, for example, the third-largest television network in Brazil) and to increase the amount of

⁵¹ Macedo, *Plano de poder*, 119.

⁵² Carlos Rodrigues, "É preciso gritar," *Plenitude* 62 (1998): 25.

⁵³ One way *Universal* instructs voters is by printing candidates' photographs and platform summaries in its magazine. See, for example, "Saúde e educação serão prioridades," *Plenitude* 92 (2002): 16-19.

⁵⁴ For example, a 2002 cover of *Universal*'s magazine displayed the photographs of nineteen recently elected evangelicals – the largest evangelical block in the history of the country – along with the headline, "Um novo Brasil" (translation: A new Brazil). *Plenitude* 91 (2002): cover.

money in his bank account. In other other words, one could argue that for Macedo, power is money. Videos like one showing Macedo gleefully counting money after a service in New York,⁵⁵ or on his yacht laughing with some of his pastors about how easy it is to get people to give their money to the church,⁵⁶ both of which went viral, certainly lend credibility to the cynical view of *Universal's* political activities. It is not unusual to see Macedo compared to the devil, as on the cover of a pamphlet which shows him reaching out to shake hands with a demon who is carrying a bag of dollar bills in one hand and a television in another.⁵⁷

Does *Universal's* political involvement actually have more to do with business than with making the nation of God's dreams? Is it a proactive manipulation of public perception in an attempt to obscure the fact that *Universal's* participation is really about making the church and Macedo even more powerful? On the one hand, politicians now have to pay attention to him. As Macedo's official biographer has written, "having Edir Macedo as an enemy has never been a good idea for those who depend on the lower classes to stay in power." On the other hand, Macedo still struggles to be heard. For example, he had a very difficult time getting a meeting with Lula's predecessors,

⁵⁵ This video has been posted on YouTube as "Edir Macedo ensinando como roubar os fiéis" (translation: Edir Macedo teaching how to rob the faithful"), posted 13 August 2009, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wMx1SzF1kb4&feature=related>.

⁵⁶ This video has been posted on YouTube as "Edir Macedo Ensinando a Roubar na Igreja Universal" (translation: Edir Macedo Teaching How to Steal in the Universal Church), posted 16 December 2007, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GUuQDL8Qnkg>.

⁵⁷ Gonalo Ferreira da Silva, *Briga do Bispo Macedo com o Diabo* (Rio de Janeiro: Academia Brasileira de Literatura de Cordel, 2008). This pamphlet, whose title means "Bishop Macedo's fight with the Devil," contains a poem and is part of a tradition of popular literature originating in the Northeast of Brazil.

Presidents Fernando Collor de Mello and Fernando Henrique Cardoso.⁵⁸ And it is true that Brazilian evangelical rights do need defending. So, are Brazilian evangelicals voting in order to put God's plan for Brazil into practice, or to put Macedo's plan for the *Igreja Universal do Reino de Deus* into practice? In either case, it is clear that the Brazilian Pentecostal focus, when it comes to politics, is voting, not prayer.

What These Examples Tell Us About Pentecostalism and National Identity

One of the most basic things about these stories of how Pentecostals engage in national politics is the way they prompt us to look at the how the religious sphere is a place where national identity is contested. Pentecostal Christians “other” Catholics in Brazil much as Christians of all denominations “other” Muslims in Nigeria. It is part of a very real struggle for political control over the nation. Who belongs in the nation? Who does the nation belong to? In a chapter on religion in his recent book on nationalism, Lloyd Kramer concludes that “nationalism tends to merge with or supplement religion rather than replace it.”⁵⁹ The material discussed in this chapter shows the opposite is true as well. While it is true that transnational religious identity can supplant national identity, religion can also merge with or supplement nationalism rather than replace it.

In Nigeria, we see this played out in the Southern/Northern, Christian/Muslim violence which has recently escalated with the increasing scale and frequency of the radical Islamist group Boko Haram's attacks. Journalistic reporting and scholarly investigation of these attacks, which tend to fit them into global meta-narratives of East versus West and the

⁵⁸ Tavolaro, *O bispo*, 217-20.

⁵⁹ Kramer, *Nationalism*, 83.

dangers of Muslim extremism, need to recognize that such attacks can also be read as physical responses to rhetorical and political aggression by Christian fundamentalists who are intent on defining Nigeria as a Christian nation. In order to understand radical Islam in places like Nigeria, we also need to understand radical Christianity.

In Brazil, national identity is contested in the religious sphere in a different way. There is the question of whether to be Brazilian means to be Catholic. Until very recently, it had always, absolutely meant this (albeit with some clever creative maladjustment by enslaved Africans), ever since Pope Alexander VI gave the land which is now Brazil to Portugal in 1494.⁶⁰ But things are changing with the increasing numbers of Pentecostals, as well as those who consider themselves Spiritist, spiritual, or “without religion.” With this increasing religious diversity, what does it mean to be Brazilian now? What is the *authentic* national identity?

In both places, there is confusion and debate over the relationship between religious identity and national citizenship. Of course, this is neither unique to Brazil and Nigeria nor to this particular moment in history. So why does it bear discussion? It bears discussion because the size and presence of the Pentecostal population in both countries allows us to examine how Pentecostals, once they reach critical mass, take on different projects depending on their national contexts. This may seem obvious, but it complicates much of the literature which tends to investigate the question of Pentecostalism and national politics as monolithic across national boundaries. This literature is part of the worthwhile project, stated at beginning of this chapter, of portraying Pentecostal identity as an alternative to national identity in order to

⁶⁰ “Creative maladjustment,” a term coined by Martin Luther King Junior, describes various forms of non-violent resistance. Here I mean to refer to the covert syncretism practice by many enslaved Africans, who continued to embrace their own spiritual beliefs in the guise of Catholicism.

help cease reifying the nation-state and begin focusing on transnational spaces and identities instead. However, it is possible to go too far in this direction.

Too global a focus can lead to a disregard of real historical differences between national contexts, circumstances, predicaments. This can lead in turn to mistaken assumptions and arguments about the global Pentecostal movement and its political significance, as if it were a singular movement with broadly-definable politics. While there certainly are similarities, this section's Brazil/Nigeria comparison has shown that the relationship between Pentecostalism and politics depends in large part on where people live, what they can imagine, and what they dare hope for themselves, for their nations, for the world. Transnational identity does not trump national identity. Instead, transnational and national identities coexist. They inform each other. This is something to keep in mind when considering not only Pentecostalism but also any transnational movement and the identity that belonging to it confers: the way transnational identity relates to national identity by sometimes replacing it, sometimes contesting it, and often contributing to it in a dialectic relationship. In the next section, we will look at this interplay as we move the focus outside of the national boundaries maintained thus far and into transnational spaces, looking at the ways Brazilian and Nigerian Pentecostals consider each other.

Brazil in Nigeria and Nigeria in Brazil: Redeemed and *Universal* Abroad

When asked by a Brazilian journalist why Nigeria's largest Pentecostal church, the Redeemed Christian Church of God, had expanded its work to Brazil, Redeemed's leader, Enoch Adeboye, explained that it was his former secretary's idea. Believing that God had

called him to work in Brazil, the secretary had moved to Brazil in 2006 and begun to organize meetings in a few Brazilian cities. A few years later, Adeboye told the journalist, “we believe that there is much potential for expansion in the country . . . because I know that the work of the [Brazilian] Pentecostal churches there has produced many results.” Confident of the impact his own church would eventually make, Adeboye continued, “I know we’re going to cover the entire nation of Brazil with temples.”⁶¹ While aware that Brazil had its own Pentecostal churches, Adeboye was unwilling to simply leave it to them to save the souls of Brazilians. This is because saving souls is not what Redeemed’s missionary activities abroad are really about. Instead, they are about making the church “international” and “global.” One of Adeboye’s favorite ways to describe Redeemed is “made in heaven, assembled in Nigeria, exported to the world.”⁶²

As discussed in the previous chapter, Redeemed is very similar to Brazil’s own *Igreja Universal do Reino de Deus*. One might expect *Universal* in Brazil and Redeemed in Nigeria – two of the giants of Pentecostalism – to be in competition with each other.⁶³ However, as this chapter will show, rather than acknowledge each other, *Universal* and Redeemed ignore each other. Both present themselves as the center of the evangelical universe, and both consider their countries to be the most evangelical in the world. The churches’ rank and file may have no idea of what’s happening on the other side of the Atlantic, but the leadership of each church is educated enough – and cunning enough – to know and to have chosen to

⁶¹ Denise Dweck, “O pastor Coca-Cola,” *Superinteressante*, 1 May 2009, 15.

⁶² Minabere Ibelema, “Redeemed Way to ‘Rebrand’ Nigeria,” *Redemption Light*, May 2009, 36.

⁶³ Personal communications with Rosalind Hackett, 21 April 2011; David Lehmann, 30 May 2011; and Afe Adogame, 14 May 2011.

disregard the other. They carefully control their public images by failing to fairly represent their biggest rivals, instead operating in a willful ignorance which allows them each to exaggerate their own global significance.

This final section examines how Redeemed and *Universal* have described their missionary work abroad. Both Nigeria's Redeemed and Brazil's *Universal* have active evangelical projects. They send pastors around the world to build congregations and establish churches, with Redeemed claiming a presence in 110 countries⁶⁴ and *Universal* in over 170.⁶⁵ Their global presence, both brick-and-mortar and virtual, is one of their defining features. This section looks particularly at how Redeemed has described its work in Brazil and how *Universal* has described its work in Africa. How have they talked about this work? What discursive strategies have they used? What does their rhetoric reveal about their global ambitions? This last section shows that Redeemed and *Universal* both use a rhetoric of grandiose claims which exaggerates their actual impact abroad. They both represent themselves as global institutions, belonging in same frame as empires, multinational corporations, and global NGO's, but they do so for different reasons, reasons which have to do with the very different ways in which Brazil and Nigeria are viewed in the global arena. When it comes to evangelical work abroad, Redeemed aims to represent the entire nation of Nigeria, while *Universal* represents only itself.

Redeemed in Brazil is not actually about Redeemed in Brazil, neither to Brazilians nor to Nigerians. To Brazilians, the Nigerian church is about Brazil; it is either cause for

⁶⁴ Rebecca Bible-Davis, *Enoch Adeboye: Father of Nations* (Charlotte, NC: Biblos Publishers, 2009), 257.

⁶⁵ "A IURD no mundo," *Plenitude* 146 (2007): 33.

further concern over the exploitative influence of Pentecostalism in the lives of poor Brazilians or cause for celebration of *Universal's* successful missionary efforts in Africa. To Nigerians, meanwhile, Redeemed in Brazil is fundamentally about Nigeria; Redeemed's global expansion, real and exaggerated, is used as evidence of Nigeria's special relationship with God. Members of Redeemed like to portray Nigeria as the evangelical epicenter of the world, and members of *Universal* like to portray Brazil in the same way. This shared belief fundamentally informs all their work. In what follows, we investigate Brazilian responses to Redeemed's presence in Brazil, considering these responses in relation to how *Universal* describes its own presence in Africa. After establishing that both churches exaggerate their global significance, we then explore differences in their rhetoric, asking what purposes their representational strategies serve and why.

Similarities: Claims of Global Significance

Redeemed's presence in Brazil first came to the Brazilian public's attention in 2009 through the interview with Adeboye described above, which was published in a special edition of one of the country's most widely-read magazines⁶⁶ and then discussed in the evangelical blogosphere. One of the blogs which first reported on its arrival illustrated the post with a drawing of \$100 bills changing hands and a headline which roughly translates as, "You Ain't Seen Nothing Yet!"⁶⁷ Another blog used the same illustration a few weeks later in a post

⁶⁶ *Superinteressante* is an occasional special publication of *Veja*, a popular news-gossip weekly. *Veja* is published by Editora Abril and is one of the most widely-read magazines in Brazil.

⁶⁷ "Notícias do 'mundo' Gospel: Você ainda não viu nada!" Comunidade Cristã Graça e Vida (blog), posted 9 April 2010, accessed 21 November 2010, <http://www.gracaevida.com/blog/?p=422>.

titled “Se não ba\$stasse...” which means “As if it weren’t enough...”⁶⁸ Almost all of the blogs shared this attitude: You think our *Igreja Universal* is bad? Wait til you see this Nigerian church! In Brazil, the story of Redeemed’s arrival was immediately incorporated into the longstanding conversation over the profoundly controversial *Universal*. Redeemed has been perceived in Brazil through a Brazilian lens, its story predetermined by Brazil’s existing narrative.

The blogosphere’s reports on Redeemed’s arrival in Brazil were all responses to the interview with Adeboye, which was conducted by journalist Denise Dweck and published under the headline “The Coca-Cola Pastor.” It began:

Enoch Adeboye transformed a Nigerian church into a global religious power. Now he has a new goal: to save Brazilians’ soul[s].⁶⁹

The interview was introduced with an overview of Adeboye and Redeemed which related that, under his leadership, Redeemed has grown to 5,000 churches in 117 countries with five million followers in Nigeria alone, “an accomplishment comparable with the church of the Brazilian Bishop Edir Macedo here with the *Igreja Universal do Reino de Deus*.” Adeboye, it is noted, wants even more: one member of his church in every household in the world. “If Coca-Cola can do it, we can do it,” he says. According to this introduction, Redeemed has begun to build churches in eight Brazilian cities and plans, according to Adeboye, “to cover Brazil with churches.”⁷⁰

⁶⁸ “Se não ba\$stasse...,” Na Colorida Caminhada Figurada da Realidade Desbotada (blog), posted 1 May 2009, accessed 12 March 2011, <http://vinniciusalmeida.wordpress.com/2009/05/01/e-nao-batasse/>.

⁶⁹ Dweck, “O pastor Coca-Cola,” 15.

⁷⁰ Dweck, “O pastor Coca-Cola,” 15. Adeboye often describes his goal to establish Redeemed churches within a five minute walk of every person in developing countries and a five minute drive of every person in developed countries.

The question of exploitation dominates the discourse on Pentecostalism in Brazil, and it was the second issue Dweck raised with Adeboye. She said to him, “Some critics say that the success [of the Pentecostal churches] comes from the focus on financial prosperity.”

Adeboye disposed of this thinly-veiled accusation quickly, responding:

This is not the motive for the growth of our church. Our objective is the prosperity of the soul, which is connected to the health and the living conditions of each person. God will be in charge of guaranteeing this prosperity of the soul if the faithful live in holiness.

Two questions later, Dweck picked up this line of questioning again:

Your church preaches that prayer can cure diseases, even AIDS. Isn't this an exaggeration?⁷¹

To this, Adeboye offered one of his favorite explanations: doctors are mechanics, but God built the car. When there's no way to repair a carburetor, only God can help. With that, Dweck let the topic go.

What is interesting here is less the answers to these questions than the fact that they were the second and fourth ones asked. This demonstrates the typical approach of the Brazilian media to the Pentecostal churches, and especially to *Universal*. It is a suspicious, skeptical approach.⁷² Unlike the Nigerian media, which celebrates pastors in its many tabloids and magazines, the Brazilian press tends to associate all reports of miracles, healing, and prosperity with charlatanism. While the majority of Christian Nigerians belong to Pentecostal churches, the majority of Brazilians are critical of them. And because Redeemed,

⁷¹ Dweck, “O pastor Coca-Cola,” 15-6.

⁷² For an excellent discussion of the relationship between *Universal* and the media, see Patricia Birman and David Lehmann, “Religion and the Media in a Battle of Ideological Hegemony: The Universal Church of the Kingdom of God and TV Globo in Brazil,” *Bulletin of Latin American Research* 18 (1999): 145-164.

in its introduction to Brazilians, is immediately associated with *Universal*, we see in the blogospheric response that Brazilians are immediately critical of Redeemed as well.

Just as Dweck did in her introduction, commenters on blog posts about the Adeboye interview were quick to compare Redeemed with *Universal*. The prevalent attitude of the comments was, to put it plainly: if this church is the real thing, let's welcome it, but if it's like *Universal*, we better watch out. For example, one commenter wrote, "I just ask that it hasn't come to shame the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ," but "if it's to glorify that name of Christ then let it be welcome."⁷³ Another wrote, "I've never heard of this church, but if its objective is to win souls, preach the gospel to all, amen and thanks be to God, but if it's just like *Universal*, fine, so we'll preach the truth!"⁷⁴ A third declared, "If it's that 'Give me! Give me! So you can go to heaven . . .?' then, frankly, another *Universal* is too much!"⁷⁵ Striking a similar note, yet another warned, "Be careful, there are MIRACLES and MIRACLE\$ and it's up to you to tell one from the other."⁷⁶ Other commenters fretted about false Christians, deception, and exploitation. Their responses demonstrate the widely held attitude that, as one

⁷³ Celio Silva, comment on "Comparada com a Igreja Universal, a 'Coca-Cola das Igrejas' chega ao Brasil," Gnotícias (website), posted 17 July 2009, accessed 20 November 2010, <http://noticias.gospelmais.com.br/comparada-com-a-igreja-universal-a-coca-cola-das-igrejas-chega-ao-brasil.html>.

⁷⁴ Wal, comment on "Comparada com a Igreja Universal, a 'Coca-Cola das Igrejas' chega ao Brasil," Gnotícias, posted 20 July 2009.

⁷⁵ Fabio, comment on "Comparada com a Igreja Universal, a 'Coca-Cola das Igrejas' chega ao Brasil," Gnotícias, posted 19 July 2009.

⁷⁶ Carlos Roberto, comment on "Comparada com a Igreja Universal, a 'Coca-Cola das Igrejas' chega ao Brasil," Gnotícias, posted 13 October 2009.

puts it, “religion today has become a kind of commerce with much false religion” and, with the arrival of Redeemed, there may be “still more coming.”⁷⁷

Most of the dozens of commenters shared this worry that Redeemed will end up being another exploitative church. As one blogger wrote, “it’s not enough to fight against the neopentecostal empires already in Brazil” because now there are foreign versions to contend with, churches which also embrace the “the myth that the God-product offers everything we ask for with faith, as long as we offer our “Sacrifice to God.”⁷⁸ Another blog warned, “Be careful with false churches, with false miracles, with wolves and with lies!”⁷⁹ The Redeemed-as-*Universal* narrative leaves just two options for Redeemed: either prove itself to be a real church or turn out to be another *Universal*. The commenters were quite aware that the discourse is already established; as one declared, “the polemics have begun.”⁸⁰

Some of the comments on the Adeboye interview did more than warn of the need for investigation. Instead, they went so far in their projections of the *Universal* narrative on Redeemed that they claimed such investigations have already occurred. At least five blogs repeated the “news” first reported on Notícias Cristãs that Redeemed’s promises of a cure for AIDS and of financial prosperity have attracted the attention of authorities who are concerned with charlatanism, even though the actual *Superinteressante* article said nothing of

⁷⁷ Genilson, comment on "Comparada com a Igreja Universal, a 'Coca-Cola das Igrejas' chega ao Brasil," Gnotícias, posted on 19 July 2009.

⁷⁸ "Se não ba\$stasse...", Na Colorida Caminhada.

⁷⁹ Renan Silva, comment on "Comparada com a Igreja Universal, a 'Coca-Cola das Igrejas' chega ao Brasil," Mais Jesus (website), posted 30 July 2009, accessed 7 February 2011, <http://maisjesus.net/noticias/10-brasil/206-comparada-com-a-igreja-universal-a-coca-cola-das-igrejas-chega-ao-brasil.html>.

⁸⁰ Karla Cristina, comment on "Comparada com a Igreja Universal, a 'Coca-Cola das Igrejas' chega ao Brasil," Gnotícias, posted 17 July 2009.

the sort. There is a history of this in Brazil – *Universal* head Edir Macedo’s arrest for charlatanism in 1992, the widely-reported (though officially unconfirmed) money-laundering investigation into *Universal’s* finances by the US Department of Justice in 1996, and a litany of rumors – which colored the Brazilian responses to Adeboye.

Another assertion in the *Gnotícias* report was that Redeemed wants to get twenty million Brazilian followers, making Brazil the country with the most Redeemed converts in the world. This is a fascinating absurdity. The interview said nothing of the sort. In fact, it made it clear that Brazil is not even a major focus for Redeemed. Redeemed had only begun mission work in Brazil three years earlier, and the evidence that it has made much headway towards its stated goal of covering Brazil with churches is scant even now. Given the church’s emphasis on media and technology, one would expect Redeemed in Brazil to have at least a modest web presence. In fact, there are just three underdeveloped, rarely visited websites.⁸¹ The extent of the physical presence of Redeemed in Brazil seems to be just one small community in Minas Gerais which meets in four borrowed locations and possesses no actual church building.⁸²

One of the most surprising comments was found on the *Gnotícias* blog, where a man named Ramon Britto wrote that he really liked what Adeboye said in the interview about “how the Africans owe so much to us Brazilians who for many years evangelized Africa and taught them to live in holiness . . . according to the true Gospel.” Britto said that he agreed

⁸¹ Of these three sites, two are blogs (which, requiring no technical skill to set-up, are the easiest way to establish a web presence): CristãosRedimidos.blogspot.com with one post in 2008 and 1482 total visitors, and GeraçãoEleita2011.blogspot.com with three posts in 2011 and 1682 visitors. There is also one website which was established in 2010: IgrejaRedimidosEmDeus.org, a single page describing a church in Uberlandia, Minas Gerais. As of May 2011, this site was no longer available.

⁸² More investigation is needed. I plan to visit this community on my next research trip to Brazil.

with Adeboye that “in Brazil there are now only vestiges of true Christianity” and that the time has come for Brazilians to reap “what we sowed when we evangelized Africa” with the arrival of Africans to remind Brazilians “of the essence of Jesus Christ’s teachings.”⁸³ The fact of the matter, however, is that Adeboye did not say any of those things about Brazil.

As anyone with a basic understanding of missionary history can tell you, Brazil and Latin America have generally been the recipients of missionary activity, not the agents. And while it is true that Brazil did produce some missionaries in the twentieth century, the majority concentrated their actions in the interior of their own country. Brazil was not the source of Africa’s Christianity, as Britto claims it was, and the arrival of Redeemed in Brazil is by no means an example of an African church bringing the Gospel back to its land of origin. Redeemed’s history is tied up in networks of American, European, and West African evangelism; Brazilians had nothing to do with it.⁸⁴

So, do we just dismiss Britto’s claims that Brazil evangelized Africa as those of one ignorant blog commenter who wrongly thinks that Brazilians were responsible for bringing Christianity to Africa? That would seem to be the logical thing to do, but it would be a mistake. Britto’s comment is in fact an excellent example of the kind of thinking that is encouraged – even produced – by *Universal*. In *Plenitude*, *Universal*’s monthly magazine, claims like this one are common:

⁸³ Ramon Britto, comment on "Comparada com a Igreja Universal, a 'Coca-Cola das Igrejas' chega ao Brasil," Gnotícias, posted 2 January 2010.

⁸⁴ Any connection with the Brazilian returnee community in Lagos was extremely unlikely; the “Brazilians” were a community of Catholics living in Lagos Island near Tinubu Square, an economically mixed neighborhood far from the poor, mostly illiterate community of Ebute Metta where Redeemed was founded in 1952.

The African continent came to know the word of God, brought by the Igreja Universal, through Bishop Gonçalves, in September of 1992. On January 20th of the next year Bishop Marcelo Crivella arrived in Africa to expand the work to the rest of the countries.⁸⁵

The implication of this statement is a patent absurdity: that Africa did not know the word of God – Christianity – until *Universal* brought it there in 1992.

Taking another look at the statement may raise doubts that this is what was intended – perhaps it is simply awkward syntax which makes it seem as if *Universal* is claiming to be Christianity’s original messenger in Africa – but other *Plenitude* declarations make this unlikely. Consider this one, published two years later:

The work of evangelization in South Africa began in 1992 in the midst of apartheid. And, ever since, many Africans have been rejecting primitive religious practices and beginning to glorify Jesus.⁸⁶

As if these are the only two options in South Africa – primitive religions or *Universal* – when the truth of the matter is that South Africa has been a site of Christian missionary activity since the seventeenth century and a center of independent African Christianity since the late 1800s. The type of Christianity *Plenitude* brags about bringing to South Africa in yet another article, “a revolution of new and marvelous teachings” of how God wants to bless everyone with “healing, prosperity, [and the] power to subjugate spells and demons,” perfectly describes the practices of the tens of millions of members of South Africa’s own charismatic churches.⁸⁷

⁸⁵ “IURD: 23 anos ultrapassando fronteiras,” *Plenitude* 72 (2000): 24.

⁸⁶ “Colhendo os frutos de um intenso trabalho de evangelização,” *Plenitude* 87 (2002): n/a.

⁸⁷ “Africa do Sul: no rufar dos tambores africanos eco a uma nome. . . JESUS!,” *Plenitude* 66 (1999): 5.

This is *Universal* propaganda, plain and simple. Here is an especially egregious example:

Beyond the beating of the drums, a new sound echoes, breaking through the jungle, vibrating in every throat, beating in every chest, emerging from the heart of South Africa: the praising of the Lord Jesus Christ. Despite being a country traditionally oriented toward witchcraft, voodoo and spirit worship, the reality is that many Africans have converted to the Gospel, leaving behind these tribal and primitive practices. It hasn't been easy, but determination hasn't failed *Universal's* pastors and workers who have, over time, developed an intensive evangelization work. Many natives are converting to the Word, recognizing Jesus as their only Lord. The African is by nature humble and simple, and has been the victim of abuse and oppression for many years. Although the English colonizers were Protestants, the people had never known a church that interested them like the Universal Church of the Kingdom of God has done.⁸⁸

What does this kind of ahistorical, racist narrative do? It supports and re-enforces the Africa conceived by the conventional Brazilian imaginary: Africa as either the ancient Africa of slaves, Candomblé, capoeira, and drums or a modern Africa of famine and violence. This Africa is most often a static, undifferentiated, quasi-mythological place of tradition and war. Children are still taught that Africans hid in caves to escape the white men with guns who had come to enslave them, paying no mind to the intra-African political and cultural processes which enabled much of the transatlantic slave trade.⁸⁹ In Brazil, there is generally more interest in how African culture has influenced Brazilian culture than in Africa itself. *Universal* takes advantage of this situation in order to exaggerate its global influence.

⁸⁸ "Africa do Sul," 4.

⁸⁹ Alfredo Boulos Júnior, *Os Africanos E Seus Descendentes No Brasil: A Resistência Quilombola* (São Paulo: Editora FTD S.A., 2002), 8.

The editors of *Plenitude* believe they can get away with publishing this misinformation because they know just how little the majority of Brazilians know about Africa. They promote these ideas in order to build up their own work, to make *Universal* seem more significant than it actually is. They can describe the work their pastors have done learning to sing in the language of the South African people and “to understand such an exotic culture” as if they were the first to study an African language in order to evangelize and they know there will be little resistance to the idea of Africa as exotic and primitive. And if Africa is exotic and primitive, then Brazil must be contemporary and modern.

Returning to the Adeboye interview and the responses to it, we see that there is a fierce nationalism at play in *both* narratives, the Nigerian *and* the Brazilian. Redeemed’s purpose in coming to Brazil was to build up Nigeria as the center of the evangelical universe; meanwhile, evangelical Brazilians welcomed Redeemed in order to build up Brazil as the center of the evangelical universe. For example, on the blogs, one man declared that Redeemed, if it is indeed a legitimate church, should be welcomed “so that Brazil will be the greatest evangelical country in the world!”⁹⁰ Redeemed represents itself as an internationally important church and is therefore perceived as an internationally important church.

Universal, meanwhile, represents itself as having been responsible for bringing Pentecostal Christianity to the continent of Africa. The strategy of both churches is to claim global significance in order to bolster domestic power – namely money and votes – and this claim is more important than fact.

⁹⁰ Elizeu Almeida, comment on "Comparada com a Igreja Universal, a 'Coca-Cola das Igrejas' chega ao Brasil," Gnotícias, posted 20 July 2009.

Differences: Contexts and Motivations

Universal and Redeemed both exaggerate their successes and claim to be at the very center of the evangelical universe, but they have different motivations for doing so. Redeemed aims to represent all of Nigeria on the world stage. *Universal* aims to represent only itself.

Beginning with Redeemed, we see that representing itself as bringing revival to the rest of the world is the way Redeemed contributes to a particular (Christian) project of Nigerian national renewal. As discussed in the previous chapter, millions of Nigerians believe that Nigeria has a special relationship with God and are invested in the project of ensuring and proving the vitality of the Nigerian nation through making it (appear to be) an international center of evangelical Christianity. A recent article in Redeemed's monthly magazine, *Redemption Light*, declares that "God has a mighty plan for Nigeria" and while "the devil is determined that the name of Nigeria will stink all over the world," the devil "is wasting his time."⁹¹

This view that the devil is interfering with Nigeria's success is commonly held by Nigerian evangelicals. Nigeria, to put it bluntly, is in trouble, but there is a way out. The *National Prayer Handbook*, the first of at least three similar books published by the national Prayer For The Nation organization over the past decade, after frankly describing the nation's "tough and rough times," declares, "No satanic force can withstand the onslaught of the effectual fervent prayers of the church."⁹² Revival has come to be seen by millions of Nigerians as the key to Nigeria's healing, the only path out of its current crisis.

⁹¹ E.A. Adeboye, "The Red Sea, Bondage and Freedom," *Redemption Light*, October 2009, 7.

⁹² Moses Aransiola, *Prayer for the Nation National Prayer Handbook: Nigeria Shall be Saved* (Ibadan: Feyisetan Press, 2002), 17-18, emphasis his.

Why is Nigeria's Redeemed in Brazil? For the same reason Redeemed is anywhere: to prove that, as a prophecy made to the leaders of Prayer For The Nation puts it, "Nigeria is a chosen nation in God's plan."⁹³ In order to be globally relevant in positive way, to matter to the rest of the world for something besides the usual reasons Nigeria finds itself in headlines – internet fraud, religio-ethnic violence, or oil pipeline troubles, to name a few – Nigeria needs God *and* needs to make sure the rest of the world knows they have Him. *Universal*, meanwhile, is less concerned with Brazil than with *Universal* itself. Indeed, as Brazil is still an overwhelmingly Catholic country (even if nominally so), *Universal* could not credibly claim to represent Brazil abroad the way Redeemed does for Nigeria.

Universal takes a different tack. While both churches can be fairly described as businesses, only *Universal* actively embraces this label. For example, the discussion of *Universal*'s "religious empire" in the authorized Macedo biography explicitly compares the church to a multinational corporation, stating that "the presence of the church is greater than that of many important multinationals." The biographers, following Macedo's lead, go on to compare *Universal* to specific companies. "Philip Morris," they write, "owner of the Marlboro brand of cigarettes, is in 160 countries and McDonalds, the famous fast food network, is in 118," while "Universal is already in 172 countries."⁹⁴ And what matters is not what *Universal* does in these 172 countries – how large its presence is, how many churches it has, how many worshippers their churches attract, how many of

⁹³ Aransiola, *Prayer for the Nation*, 25.

⁹⁴ Douglas Tavolaro, *O bispo: a história revelada de Edir Macedo* (São Paulo: Larousse do Brasil, 2007), 245.

those worshippers are not expatriate Brazilians – but rather the fact that that *Universal* is in those 172 countries at all. Again, it is the myth of international significance that matters, in this case building up *Universal* as multi-national corporation to be reckoned with. This assertion seems credible given *Universal's* power as a Brazilian media conglomerate,⁹⁵ but *Universal's* influence abroad is not nearly as substantial as the church likes to claim.

Unlike Redeemed, *Universal* makes no claims to represent or serve the nation. Macedo says that sending *Universal* pastors abroad is “our country’s biggest exportation project.” In this statement, he implicitly compares his church with the nation of Brazil and all of the country’s industrial projects; *Universal's* project is separate from the national project, serving its own purposes, making and meeting its own goals. Macedo’s principal objective, like any CEO’s, is growth, and he said as much at a meeting with *Universal* pastors from around Latin America in 2007.⁹⁶ Macedo’s goal is to erect a cathedral in the capital city of every country in which *Universal* has a presence.⁹⁷ Discussions of Redeemed abroad are used to prove Nigeria’s significance in the world; the biography’s discussion of *Universal* abroad is used to prove *Universal's* significance in the world.

We see, then, that even though much of the discourse of global significance created by each institution is similar, their purposes are different. Another way this difference of

⁹⁵ As discussed in Chapter Five, *Universal* has owned Brazil’s third largest television network, the São Paulo-based Rede Record, since 1990, and currently owns radio stations across the country. The Birman and Lehmann article, cited in footnote 13, is a good source for more information on *Universal's* media presence.

⁹⁶ Tavolaro, *O bispo*, 245, 248.

⁹⁷ As of 2007, *Universal* had already purchased land in 18 cities, including Lagos. Tavolaro, *O bispo*, 254.

purpose emerges is in the question of cooperation. Simply put: Redeemed cooperates with other churches and *Universal* does not. For example, one of Redeemed's projects is the Africa Missions Initiative, established in order "to spread the gospel to rural parts of Nigeria and Africa as a whole by assisting, equipping and helping to sustain existing mission network[s] as well as planting mission fields where none is in existence."⁹⁸ Redeemed will support others' mission efforts. *Universal*, however, only establishes its own churches, albeit with less branding.⁹⁹ And, unlike Adeboye, Macedo insists on claiming that his church has a unique message. When asked how *Universal* has managed to penetrate into so many different countries and cultures (a partisan question to begin with, of course, because it assumes *Universal* really has "penetrated" in the ways it claims), he answers:

The secret is faith. The universalization of our message is in the nature of the message itself: the contents of the Bible are universal and speak to all peoples, because the spirit is one.¹⁰⁰

Macedo insists on the uniqueness of his church's message, that *Universal* is the only church that truly understands the Bible and knows how to universalize its contents.

Adeboye, meanwhile, makes no such claim for Redeemed. The two leaders utilize a similar rhetoric, but that rhetoric serves different ends.

The roles that Adeboye and Macedo play in the way their institutions enact their global ambitions are different as well. Adeboye is at the center of Redeemed's bid to make Nigeria matter. There is an assumption by some outsiders, as seen on the Brazilian

⁹⁸ "That Africa May Be for Jesus," *Redemption Light*, July 2002, 18.

⁹⁹ In fact, *Universal* will even change its name in countries where it is unwelcome or has received negative publicity.

¹⁰⁰ Tavolaro, *O bispo*, 253.

blogs, that Redeemed is regarded with the same suspicion in Nigeria as *Universal* is in Brazil. But Adeboye is actually viewed in a very different way in Nigeria than Macedo is in Brazil. Adeboye is a Big Man, linking the local to the global, praised by businessmen, politicians, and presidents. He is respected by professionals and academics, many of whom attend his monthly Holy Ghost Services and maintain second homes at Redemption Camp. While other celebrity pastors may be regarded as charlatans, Adeboye is generally treated with respect, even as some of his church's practices may be seen as suspect. Indeed, Redeemed in Nigeria is often seen as the most legitimate of a large and growing crop of charismatic churches and ministries. Meanwhile, Macedo is routinely ridiculed, judged, and disdained. Academics and professionals are more likely to pass around YouTube videos of him counting piles of money or poems debating whether he is "a divine Messiah or an agent of evil"¹⁰¹ than to attend one of his churches.¹⁰²

Both countries are very corrupt, so why is it that Nigerians often look the other way with Adeboye but Brazilians usually do not with Macedo? It has to do with strength of nation, with how much each church is or is not needed in the construction and maintenance of national pride. Macedo is a sideline to the main story about Brazil's emerging superpower status, where Lula and Dilma and a host of businessmen, soccer players, and lingerie models play the starring roles. Macedo is not crucial to Brazil; if anything he is a liability, his church evidence of irrationality unbecoming of a modern emerging superpower. Brazil does not need

¹⁰¹ Gonçalo Ferreira da Silva, *Briga do Bispo Macedo Com o Diabo* (Rio de Janeiro: Academia Brasileira de Literatura de Cordel, 2008), 8.

¹⁰² As David Lehmann has pointed out, however, one must be careful not to overstate the extent to which Macedo is ridiculed, as he has also come to be widely respected as a canny businessman. Lehmann, personal communication, 30 May 2011.

Macedo, but Nigeria does need Adeboye, because he helps counter public perception by showing rest of world, through the global reach of his church, that Nigerians are capable of organization and efficiency.

Minabere Ibelema, a communication studies professor and longtime Nigerian resident of the United States, makes this point in an editorial published in a 2009 issue of *Redemption Light*. Arguing that “there is no way to make Nigeria recede from the world’s consciousness” as “we cannot stop 419” – the infamous Nigerian internet scams – he proposes that the best way to “rebrand” Nigeria is to promote Redeemed as “Nigeria’s most notable export.”¹⁰³ Ibelema argues that the church is not notable because it brings healing and miracles to the world, which is what Redeemed likes to say about itself, but because it shows the world a disciplined, highly organized country:

The point here is not the evangelical mission. It is the vision and organization acumen of a Nigerian institution that is helping define Nigeria. Except for an occasional article in black magazines . . . the only in-depth articles about Nigeria in U.S. publications are about its failures. The RCCG is already changing that.¹⁰⁴

Evidence of this change includes the *Newsweek* article listing Adeboye as number 49 on a list of the world’s 50 “global elite” in 2009¹⁰⁵ and the New York Times Sunday Magazine feature published a few months later on Nigerian Pentecostalism in the United States.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰³ Ibelema, “Redeemed Way to ‘Rebrand’ Nigeria,” 36. “Rebranding” refers to a national campaign undertaken by Nigerian Minister of Information and Communications Dora Akunyili in 2009.

¹⁰⁴ Ibelema, “Redeemed Way to ‘Rebrand’ Nigeria,” 36.

¹⁰⁵ "E. A. Adeboye: A Pentecostal Preacher from Nigeria has made big plans to save your soul," *Newsweek*, 5 January 2009, 77. This list was widely cited and linked to in the Nigerian blogosphere.

¹⁰⁶ Andrew Rice, “Mission From Africa,” *The New York Times Magazine*, published online 8 April 2009, <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/04/12/magazine/12churches-t.html?pagewanted=all>.

Ibelema quotes from *Newsweek* to prove his point: “The church he [Adeboye] has built echoes his personality: it is disciplined, nurturing, systematic.”¹⁰⁷

Adeboye is the only African on the *Newsweek* list. That means the supposedly most influential man in all of Africa is a pastor, evangelist, and religious entrepreneur from a nation where, searching for a positive definition for their country, millions have decided on God.¹⁰⁸ The devil is the cause of all the problems; God is the solution. Spiritual warfare will drive out the devil, fix all the problems, and make Nigeria the godliest country in the world, the center of the Christian universe, the global hub of the holy business of bringing spiritual warfare and the power of the blood of Jesus to the rest of the world. Adeyobe has even prophesied that “Nigeria is going to be the Christian Mecca of the World.”¹⁰⁹

The mission of evangelizing the world, shared by both Redeemed and *Universal*, is fundamental to the reverse missionization narrative which has been embraced by both churches, though for different reasons. For Redeemed, it is about the status of the Nigerian nation in the world. Claims of reverse missionization are about how Redeemed’s influence abroad helps Nigeria. The idea, as expressed in a 1998 *Redemption Light* article, is that “we have come a full circle and Nigeria, the most populous African nation, is now exporting the light to the rest of the world that’s gone blind.”¹¹⁰ In other words, through the global reach of Redeemed, Nigeria is reclaiming its rightful place as the leading African nation. A more

¹⁰⁷ Ibelema, “Redeemed Way to ‘Rebrand’ Nigeria,” 36.

¹⁰⁸ I borrow this idea of a “positive definition” for one’s country from a fictional character in Jonathan Franzen, *The Corrections* (New York: Picador, 2002), 447.

¹⁰⁹ Tosin Onayiga, “Nigeria: The Beautiful Bride,” *Redemption Light*, October 1998, 24.

¹¹⁰ Tosin Onayiga and Bukonla Akinwande, “Holy Ghost International,” *Redemption Light*, October 1998, 5.

recent *Redemption Light* article observes that the African continent is shaped like a gun and Nigeria is located where the trigger would be, so that “Nigeria is the trigger of Africa and . . . what is going to come out of that gun is a revival that is going to go round the whole world.” This revival will foil the devil’s plan to ensure that “the name of Nigeria will stink all over the world.”¹¹¹ Nigerians who are opening churches in other countries are thus taking part in a Nigerian-led global revival which will redeem Nigeria and (re-)establish its significance in Africa and in the rest of the world.

Adeboye, as Redeemed’s leader, is esteemed by many precisely for this reason: because he is improving Nigeria’s international reputation. According to Prince Samuel Adedoyin, quoted in *Redemption Light*:

I think he is a vessel to be able to let the world know that there are some gifted African Christian leaders who would help the world spiritually. And that would affect Nigeria’s image abroad. So he is helping the country not only spiritually but also industrially even though he is not an industrialist.¹¹²

In a remarkable echo of independence era discourse, this comment is about (still!) needing to prove to the rest of the world that Africans are capable of leadership, that they have something to offer to the rest of the world. Decades after independence, we have this statement about Africans’ value as full human beings. This could not be more unlike Brazil, with its very different colonial history, much longer independence, and celebratory self-image. Brazil does not have the same axe to grind, the same need to prove itself. Much has changed in the last three decades (since the end of the dictatorship and return to democracy), in the last decade (with the rise of Latin American neo-liberalism and the so-

¹¹¹ Adeboye, “The Red Sea,” 7.

¹¹² Tai Adeloje, “Pastor E.A. Adeboye in the eyes of others,” *Redemption Light*, March 1998, 8.

called decline of the American empire), and especially in the last few years (the global recession, the shifting world order, the emergence of the BRIC(Sa) nations).¹¹³ Because of these differences, the reverse missionization narrative serves a very different purpose in Brazil than it does in Nigeria. It is not about establishing the importance of Brazil and proving the value of what Brazil has to offer the world. In fact, it is not about Brazil at all; it is about *Universal* itself.

Conclusion

In conclusion, direct South-South comparisons like the one I have undertaken in this chapter are critically important to our understandings of transnational movements in the contemporary world. They illuminate our assumptions, highlight the differences we unwittingly overlook, and clarify the similarities which may not be what we expect them to be. Yet we must be careful not to assume South-South mutual intelligibility and cooperative effort. This final section has shown that, although most scholars familiar with global charismatic/Pentecostal Christianity assume that *Universal* and Redeemed must be in competition for members,¹¹⁴ in truth they both operate in blissful, willful ignorance of each other. The world is a big place and, so far, there are plenty of Christians to go around. Neither competing nor cooperating, these churches share strategies for representing themselves and manipulating public perceptions of their achievements and their influence, but they do so for different reasons.

¹¹³ BRIC(Sa) refers to Brazil, Russia, India, China (and South Africa).

¹¹⁴ See footnote number 63.

Scholars, politicians, and activists alike embrace the idea of the global South. We like the handy analytical term it provides, the way it semantically empowers a region by giving it a title unrelated to its former colonial status, the way it updates outdated “Third World” vocabulary. We appreciate its political heft and promise of solidarity. But it is a mistake to presume that the global South always unites regions with more similarities than differences, or that these regions see themselves as more similar than different, or that they all define themselves against the United States and Europe rather than against each other. We have become accustomed to thinking of the world as “the West and the rest,” but if Nigeria and Brazil are any example, many institutions in “the rest” do not actually think of their countries in those terms. It is possible for nations simultaneously to define themselves against the “West” *and* against each other.

Furthermore, this chapter sheds light on the global Pentecostal movement as a whole by showing that Pentecostal identity does not necessarily weaken or replace national identity. Instead, it may also bolster and inform and even define national identity. Pentecostal efforts abroad provide a means for a particular kind of national identity to be broadcast at home, and the evangelical efforts of contemporary Pentecostal churches can be understood as having as much to do with strengthening national pride and defining a particular national character as they have to do with becoming part of a global movement. Indeed, all global movements have their material bases in particular localities within particular national boundaries. The “global Pentecostal movement” is as much national as it is transnational. In some ways, it is even more so.

EPILOGUE

In April 2012, as I was finishing the first draft of this dissertation, I took part in a symposium on Black Women and Pentecostalism in Diaspora at Bowdoin College. I was the only historian to present a paper; the rest were given by sociologists, anthropologists, ethnomusicologists, theologians, and scholars of religious studies. Together, our work examined the United States, Jamaica, Haiti, Granada, Brazil, Ghana, Mozambique, and Nigeria. At the final session, after all the papers had been presented and we were discussing what the edited volume would look like, one participant pointed out that, of course, we would need to define what we mean by Pentecostalism.¹ This led to the most heated exchange of the weekend. We agreed that definition was necessary, but could not agree how to do it.

Here was a group of experts debating the two central questions of this dissertation: Just what *is* this thing called Pentecostalism? What is it that Pentecostals *do*? And, furthermore, who gets to decide? An argument was made that if a person defines herself as Pentecostal, then we should consider her Pentecostal, without parsing her theological beliefs or worship practices. This may be a fair argument for the North American context, with its clear – even reified – denominational distinctions, but what about those of us who study Pentecostalism in regions of the world without clear practical distinctions between

¹ Jane Soothill, an anthropologist who studies Ghanaian Pentecostalism, was the one to raise this issue.

evangelicals, Pentecostals, mainline Protestants, and even Catholics and Anglicans, areas which have seen, to borrow John Burdick's phrase, "the Pentecostalization of the evangelical arena"?² What do we do in places where practitioners are unconcerned with labels, where even educated people are hard-pressed to distinguish between mainline and Pentecostal churches, where American and European denominational distinctions have little meaning? What about in places where "Pentecostal" is as much a political affiliation as a theological description, such as in Nigeria, where the Christ Apostolic Church, long considered a standard-bearer of the Aladura movement, is now describing itself as "the first Pentecostal church in West Africa" in order to assert its place in a significant global movement?³

As our discussion about how to define Pentecostalism continued, I found myself surprised by what I wanted to say. Even though I was one of only two historians in the room, I argued against defining Pentecostalism historically. After doing my best to sort out its origins – a project which has taken me to four continents over the course of nearly eight years – I have concluded that Pentecostalism's rhizomic roots are nearly impossible to untangle. Attempting to do so, as I did in the first two chapters of this dissertation, is a very useful project but is not a definitive one. For example, one can trace the influence of African spiritual practices on the development of American and Latin American Pentecostalism, but one can also trace the influence of European folk Catholicism or Wesleyan Methodism as

² John Burdick used this phrase when he introduced his paper, "Voices of God: Race and Gender in Black Gospel Music in Brazil," given at the Bowdoin College Symposium on Black Women and Pentecostalism in Diaspora, 22 April 2012.

³ See the proposal for "The Wind Blows Where It Will": Transnational Formations in Early African Pentecostalism, An International Conference on the Origins of Christ Apostolic Church in Nigeria and Ghana," originally scheduled to be held at Joseph Ayo Babalola University, Osun, Nigeria, 16-18 January 2012.

well. Identifying roots is inconclusive; the existence of one root cannot discount the possibility of another.

Tracking the historical origins of Pentecostalism can certainly do many valuable things. It can help us understand the development of transnational networks; the interplay between traditions, beliefs, practices, and politics; the remarkably wide variety of reasons for the religion's growth; the problems with conventional wisdom presuming it to be an American-based missionary movement. But tracking these historical origins does not fully illuminate just what Pentecostalism is. In order to do that, we need to look also at the role Pentecostalism plays in people's lives, in their relationships with their selves, their families, their nations, the world. This is what the remaining four chapters aimed to do.

As a whole, this dissertation traced out connections and flows of Pentecostal practices, agents, texts, and rhetoric across national and transnational spaces and decades in order to reveal the interactions and juxtapositions left hidden by individual national and broad global perspectives. The dissertation I thought I would write was about shared cosmology as a spiritual explanation of Pentecostal growth in Nigeria and Brazil. The dissertation I ended up writing worked with the material I found to fill the holes I discovered in the historical narratives of Brazilian and Nigerian Pentecostal history while also taking on a larger question: just what is this global Pentecostal movement?

Pentecostalism is simply too adaptable, too complicated, and too beautifully messy a mix of foreign and indigenous, global and local, transnational and national to permit any single, comprehensive, historical narrative of its emergence, growth and development as a global phenomenon. The Azusa Street story may work for American Pentecostalism, but the

Pentecostals that exist in the rest of the world are not simply outgrowths of the American movement. Pentecostalism's secret is its slipperiness. In this way, Pentecostalism, as a term and concept, is very much like globalization as a term and concept. We talk about it as if we know what it is, as if its meaning is understood, as if the emperor really is clothed in golden robes we all can see. But as David Lehmann, a pioneer in the study of Latin American Pentecostalism, said at a recent seminar, we really can't encapsulate what Pentecostalism is anymore.⁴ As I have insisted throughout this dissertation, it is different things to different people in different places. We do not need a single narrative of how this "American spiritual revolution"⁵ has been "globalized;" we need a collection of narratives of the very specific, historically-produced networks which constitute this global religion.

Yet there is still a question to be answered. Just what connects all these different versions of Pentecostalism which I claim exist? My answer is found in the Bible. Instead of defining Pentecostalism by a common historical origin – and by defining, I mean deciding what counts as part of the the global Pentecostal movement, in all its myriad forms in all its various locations – I have decided that I prefer an expansive, phenomenological definition rooted in the day of Pentecost as described in the Book of Acts, when Jesus's apostles gathered together, the Holy Spirit descended on them in flames of fire, and they spoke in tongues, saw visions, made prophecies, and dreamed dreams. Pentecostals believe that the age of signs and wonders has not passed. Pentecostalism is Christianity centered on receiving

⁴ David Lehmann made this comment at the "Brazil in Africa: Africa in Brazil" workshop at Cambridge University, 31 May 2011.

⁵ Theologian Harvey Cox has described "the pentecostal revolution" as "a genuinely American spiritual revolution if ever there was one." While I admire much of what Cox has written about the movement, I disagree with this assessment. See Harvey Cox, *Fire From Heaven: The Rise of Pentecostal Spirituality and the Reshaping of Religion in the Twenty-First Century* (Cambridge, MA: Da Capo Press, 1995), 30.

the gifts of the Holy Spirit as the apostles did on that day of Pentecost and as all those who accepted Jesus as their savior did on the days that followed, when they were saved⁶ and able to “rest in hope” with glad hearts.⁷

This brings me to the subject that launched this project in the first place – the question of hope – and it is here that I want to conclude. Pentecostalism may be the post-communist, post-socialist world’s largest, most powerful, most significant, most global movement. Hundreds of millions of people around the world live their hopes – for themselves, for their nations, for the world – through their Pentecostal beliefs and practices. Pentecostalism promises a better world in this lifetime, in this world, as it is right now. It offers, as theologian Harvey Cox has described it, “a vital hope and an alternate vision of what the world should be.”⁸

Each individual, as an individual, with an individual relationship with the Holy Spirit, can find health and prosperity and love. There is no need to work with others; there is a sense of community for those who want it, but many attend Pentecostal churches alone. There is no need to work for large-scale societal change; leaders encourage voting and praying for the nation, but most Pentecostals are concerned with their own troubles. Pentecostalism does not insist on engagement with the larger needs of society. It does not demand political action or community organizing. It does not require revolution, at least not in older senses of the term. Any Pentecostal revolution is first and foremost a personal revolution – a *revelation*. Accept

⁶ Acts 2:21 (NRSV).

⁷ Acts 2:26 (NRSV). Here Peter is quoting King David in Psalm 16:9.

⁸ Cox, *Fire From Heaven*, 24.

Jesus into your heart, be saved, be healed, and prosper. Pentecostalism is the future. It is where people want to live. Pentecostalism is the lived experience of hope.

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