

Richard Burgess (2019forthcoming) Ogbu Kalu and African Pentecostalism. In Andrew Atherstone and David Ceri Jones (eds.), *Evangelicalism and its Historians*, Routledge Studies in Evangelicalism

Professor Ogbu Kalu, who died unexpectedly in 2009, was one of the leading African scholars working within the field of African church history. A native of Nigeria, Kalu worked for almost thirty years as a church historian at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, before his appointment in 2001 as Henry Winters Luce Professor of World Christianity and Mission at McCormick Theological Seminary, Chicago, Illinois. During his career he published over 150 articles and book chapters, as well as 18 books and edited volumes, on a wide range of subjects.¹ Kalu's earliest research was on Protestant religious practices in Jacobean England, although he soon turned his attention to the history of Christianity in Nigeria and Africa more widely. However, it was his latter research and publications on African Pentecostalism that cemented his reputation as a world class scholar.

Kalu was born in 1942 in Ohafia (now in Abia State) and studied at the Hope Waddell Training Institute, Calabar, a legacy of nineteenth and twentieth-century Presbyterian missionaries to Nigeria. In 1963, soon after Nigeria achieved its independence from Britain and joined the Commonwealth, Kalu left Nigeria to study history in Canada at McMaster University and the University of Toronto, where he earned a PhD in history in 1970. He subsequently obtained a Master of Divinity from Princeton Theological Seminary in 1974 and a Doctor of Divinity *honoris causa* in 1997 from the Presbyterian College, Montreal, Canada. In 1974, he returned to Nigeria, where he took a lectureship in the Department of Religious Studies at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, becoming Professor of Church History in 1978. Kalu was not only a world-class scholar but also a man of deep evangelical faith. For many years he served as an ordained elder in the Presbyterian Church in Nigeria and held various national leadership positions in the denomination.² Kalu's evangelicalism, together with his training as a historian and theologian, his African roots and international outlook informed his scholarship, as this chapter will show.

Kalu's academic career spanned some important historical developments in world Christianity. In particular, the second half of the twentieth century witnessed the shift in Christianity's centre of gravity southwards, which coincided with the dramatic growth of Pentecostalism in Africa, Latin America and Asia. This demographic shift has informed the analyses of world Christianity by church historians such as Andrew Walls, Dana Robert, Lamin Sanneh, and Philip Jenkins.³ Kalu himself observed at firsthand the astonishing growth of Pentecostalism in his homeland of Nigeria as well as the emergence of African Pentecostal

¹ In 2010, Africa World Press published a three volume collection of Kalu's articles and previously unpublished essays. The first volume contains sixteen chapters on Pentecostalism: *The Collected Essays of Ogbu Uke Kalu. Volume 1: African Pentecostalism: Global Discourses, Migrations, Exchanges and Connections*, edited by Wilhemina J. Kalu, Nimi Wariboko, and Toyin Falola (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2010). There are also chapters on Pentecostalism in the other two volumes. For a full list of Kalu's publications, see *The Collected Essays of Ogbu Uke Kalu*, 1:375-96.

² This brief biography is based on the following sources: Misty L. Bastian, 'Obituary. Professor Ogbu Uke Kalu (June 2, 1942 – January 7, 2009)', *Journal of Religion in Africa* 39 (2009), 360-1; Wilhemina J. Kalu, 'Biography', in *The Collected Essays of Ogbu Uke Kalu*, 1:xvi-xviii.

³ Andrew Walls, *The Missionary Movement in Christian History: Studies in the Transmission of the Faith* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1996); Lamin Sanneh, *Whose Religion Is Christianity? The Gospel Beyond the West* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2003); Dana Robert, *Christian Mission: How Christianity Became a World Religion* (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009); Philip Jenkins, *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002).

churches in the diaspora.⁴ During the 1990s, he increasingly turned his attention to African Pentecostalism as a field of research. This is reflected in the papers he presented at international conferences and in a number of his publications.⁵

This chapter examines Kalu's views on writing African church history, with a particular focus on his historiography of African Pentecostalism. His many publications on the subject culminated in *African Pentecostalism: An Introduction* (2008), a detailed and comprehensive study which engaged with key theoretical debates and contains a wealth of bibliographic references. Pentecostalism in all its diversity has attracted the attention of scholars from different academic disciplines, including theology, religious studies, missiology, history, sociology, anthropology, political science, and economics.⁶ As the leading African scholar in the field, Kalu's historiography of African Pentecostalism touched on such topics as mission, politics, economics, education, culture, gender, ecology, inter-religious violence and immigrant African Christianity. His significance for the study of African Pentecostalism is reflected in the number of references to his work in a recent edited volume on Pentecostalism in Africa,⁷ the most for any African scholar.

The chapter begins -by examining the relationship between evangelicalism, Pentecostalism, and the early African Instituted Churches (AICs) in Kalu's writings. Second, it discusses Kalu's approach to writing history and his particular understanding of church history as a theological and ecumenical enterprise aimed at empowering the whole 'people of God'. Third, it examines his motives for adopting an Africanist perspective which privileges the contributions of African protagonists to the development of Pentecostalism in Africa. Finally, it considers the importance Kalu attached to a contextual reading of African Pentecostal history and his attentiveness to political, economic and social influences on African responses to Christianity. It will be argued that Kalu's conception of church history as an empowerment project to be used for didactic purposes, combined with his status as a non-Western historian and scholar of world Christianity, shaped the way he wrote about African Christianity, including its Pentecostal expressions.

Evangelicalism, Pentecostalism, and African Instituted Churches (AICs)

For Kalu, an important consideration was the relationship between evangelicalism and Pentecostalism. In *African Pentecostalism*, he described Pentecostalism as the 'old Evangelicalism writ large', which 'set to work' the core message of evangelical Protestantism. However, he cautioned that 'in studying global Pentecostalism effort should be made to distinguish Pentecostalism from other forms of Protestant Christianity, just as the insiders do'. For Kalu, it was the manifestation of the charismatic gifts in the lives of believers that defined

⁴ Nigeria has the largest Pentecostal constituency on the continent, with approximately three-in-ten Nigerians identifying themselves as Pentecostal or charismatic. See Pew Research Center, *Spirit and Power: A 10-Country Survey of Pentecostals* (Washington: Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, 2006), 86.

⁵ See, for example, Ogbu U. Kalu, 'Wind of God: Evangelical Pentecostalism in Igboland, 1970-1990', The Pew Charitable Trust Seminar, New College, University of Edinburgh (December 1992); Ogbu U. Kalu, 'Who is Afraid of the Holy Spirit? The Pentecostal/Charismatic Debate in the Presbyterian Church of Nigeria', Commencement Lecture, Presbyterian College, McGill University (May 1996); Ogbu U. Kalu, 'The Third Response: Pentecostalism and the Reconstruction of Christian Experience in Africa, 1970-1995', *Journal of African Christian Thought* 1 (December 1998), 3-16; Ogbu U. Kalu, 'The Practice of Victorious Life: Pentecostal Political Theology and Practice in Nigeria, 1970-1996', *Mission* 5 (1998), 229-55.

⁶ *Studying Global Pentecostalism. Theories and Methods*, edited by Allan Anderson *et al* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2010); *The Cambridge Companion to Pentecostalism*, edited by Cecil M. Robeck and Amos Yong (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

⁷ *Pentecostalism in Africa: Presence and Impact of Pneumatic Christianity in Postcolonial Societies*, edited by Martin Lindhardt (Leiden: Brill, 2015).

Pentecostal identity and set the movement apart from the older evangelicals.⁸ With reference to the African context, he drew attention to the family resemblance between Pentecostalism and evangelicalism, reflected in their common assertion of biblicism, conversionism, crucicentrism, and social activism.⁹ However, African Pentecostalism represented a ‘recovery of those pneumatic elements which had been discarded by liberal theology in its dance with the Enlightenment worldview’.¹⁰ It challenged missionary Christianity ‘to be more fully biblical’ and stimulated a variety of African initiatives which shared the evangelical emphasis on conversionism and evangelistic fervour.¹¹

Another of Kalu’s concerns was to delineate the relationship between Pentecostalism and the older African Instituted Churches (AICs), referred to variously in the literature as ‘Aladura’ (‘praying people’), ‘Zionist’ and ‘Spiritual’ churches. In 1996, he published *The Embattled Gods: Christianization of Igboland, 1841-1991*, a history of Christianity in his native Igboland.¹² One of the questions raised in the book is whether AICs, which arose during the early decades of the twentieth century, should be regarded as Pentecostal movements. On the one hand, Kalu referred to the common emphasis of both the AICs and Pentecostals on prayer, speaking in tongues, believers’ baptism, and ‘the presence and power of the Holy Spirit made evident in charismatic gifts’.¹³ Yet he insisted that the analysis of AICs should pay more attention to typology and in particular their relationship to the Bible and Christology because some groups incorporated traditional religious and ‘occult’ rituals and symbols into their spiritual practices.¹⁴ He identified the ‘affirmation of Jesus Christ as Lord’ as the crucial factor that distinguishes Christian from non-Christian groups or movements. The debate about the relationship between the AICs and Pentecostals was taken up in some of his later publications.¹⁵ Kalu identified two positions: those who emphasize the similarities between the two movements due to their shared worldview and pneumatic emphasis, and those who emphasize elements of discontinuity. He criticized the former for sometimes ignoring the insiders’ perspective and the demonization of AICs in African Pentecostal rhetoric.¹⁶ Kalu called for a return to theological and biblical analysis of Africa’s new religious movements in order to identify those groups which are a proper concern of church historiography and missiology.¹⁷

History as Theology and History as Science

⁸ Ogbu U. Kalu, *African Pentecostalism: An Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 8.

⁹ Ogbu U. Kalu, ‘A Trail of Ferment in African Christianity: Ethiopianism, Prophetism, Pentecostalism’, in *African Identities and World Christianities in the Twentieth Century*, edited by Klaus Koschorke (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2005), 19-47; Ogbu U. Kalu, ‘Pentecostal and Charismatic Reshaping of the African Religious Landscape in the 1990s’, *Mission Studies* 20 (2003), 90; Ogbu U. Kalu, ‘A Discursive Interpretation of African Pentecostalism’, *Fides et Historia* 41 (Winter/Spring 2009), 71-90.

¹⁰ Kalu, ‘A Discursive Interpretation’, 85.

¹¹ Ogbu U. Kalu, ‘Experiencing Evangelicalism in Africa: An Africanist Perspective’, in *The Collected Essays of Ogbu Uke Kalu. Volume 2: Christian Missions in Africa: Success, Ferment and Trauma*, edited by Wilhemina J. Kalu, Nimi Wariboko, and Toyin Falola (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2010), 191-2, 211, 233.

¹² Ogbu U. Kalu, *The Embattled Gods. Christianization of Igboland, 1841-1991* (Lagos: Minaj Publishers, 1996).

¹³ Kalu, *Embattled Gods*, 303.

¹⁴ Kalu, *Embattled Gods*, 289-304.

¹⁵ Ogbu U. Kalu, ‘The Estranged Bedfellows? Demonization of the Aladura in African Pentecostal Rhetoric’, *Mission: Journal of Mission Studies* 5 (1998), 229-55; Kalu, ‘A Discursive Interpretation’, 71-2; Kalu, *African Pentecostalism*, 65-82.

¹⁶ Kalu, *African Pentecostalism*, 71. Examples of scholars in the first group include Walter Hollenweger, Rosalind Hackett, Allan Anderson, Inus Daneel, Andrew Walls, and Kwame Bediako.

¹⁷ Kalu, *African Pentecostalism*, 82.

Kalu identified himself as a church historian with a critical yet confessional approach to Christian history. As an evangelical, one of his concerns was to make a distinction between church history and secular history, and to argue for the importance of adopting a theological perspective and a Christocentric understanding of the church and its story. While he welcomed the analyses of African Christianity by Africanist sociologists such as T. O. Beidelman, J. D. Y. Peel and Robin Horton, he was critical of social scientific interpretations of Christian presence which focus on forms of religious expression and social institutions but fail to understand the significance of inner religious experience and theological beliefs.¹⁸ According to Kalu, the Christian faith 'imposes a certain perspective on interpreting history ... It subjects our understanding of the past to the ultimate reason for creation as well as the future of creation'.¹⁹ For Kalu, there must be a balanced concern 'with the inward level of the religious as well as the outward level of political and economic interests, because religious expression, as opposed to religious experience, operates within cultural forms'. Thus, church history is the 'story of the pilgrim people of God and their experiences of God's redeeming grace in the midst of existence in various cultural and ecological milieux'.²⁰

Kalu's theological and confessional approach to Christian history is reflected in his treatment of African Pentecostalism. He wrote of the 'providential outflow of the Spirit', which operated in the early AICs and later flowed into the modern Pentecostal movement, mediated by 'African religious genius'.²¹ According to Kalu, the predominance of social scientists in the study of AICs has led to the prevalence of functionalist explanations of their provenance and growth. What must to be recovered is the significance of religious experience and the power of the gospel for African Christians. Thus, church history 'must interface with theology because of the nature of the church and the peculiarity of that branch of history'. It is a critical, but nonetheless confessional enterprise, which thrives on 'unabashed confession of the reality of Jesus Christ of Nazareth'.²² For Kalu, the historical discourse 'enables us to recover the purely religious dimension without necessarily subscribing to an obtuse version of providential historiography and without denying divine intervention in the process'.²³

In his article on 'Pentecostal and Charismatic Reshaping of the African Religious Landscape in the 1990s', Kalu discussed the various theories employed to explain the growth of Pentecostalism in Africa. As he noted, explanations of contemporary Pentecostal expansion in Africa have mostly employed the modernity/globalization discourse. The tendency has been to emphasize external influences and to 'diminish African religious creativity'.²⁴ Kalu drew on notions of the relationship between the transcendental and lived experience, and the resilience of religion in modern society, articulated by Peter Berger, Harvey Cox, and Waldo Cesar.²⁵ According to Kalu, the ordinary Pentecostal in Africa is 'less concerned with modernity and globalization and more about a renewed relationship with God, intimacy with the

¹⁸ Kalu, *Embattled Gods*, 9.

¹⁹ Ogbu U. Kalu, 'African Church Historiography: An Ecumenical Perspective', *Encounter* 50 (Winter 1989), 71.

²⁰ Ogbu U. Kalu, 'African Church Historiography', in *African Historiography: Essays in Honour of Jacob Adé Ajayi*, edited by Toyin Falola (London: Longmans, 1993), 172-3.

²¹ Kalu, *African Pentecostalism*, 73.

²² Kalu, *African Pentecostalism*, 82.

²³ Kalu, *African Pentecostalism*, 26.

²⁴ Kalu, 'Pentecostal and Charismatic Reshaping', 85.

²⁵ Peter Berger, *A Rumour of Angels: Modern Society and the Rediscovery of the Supernatural* (London: Allen Lane, 1970); Harvey Cox, *Fire from Heaven: The Rise of Pentecostal Spirituality and the Reshaping of Religion in the Twenty-First Century* (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1995); Waldo Cesar, 'Daily Life and Transcendence in Pentecostalism', in Richard Shaull and Waldo Cesar, *Pentecostalism and the Future of the Christian Churches: Promises, Limitations, Challenges* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2000), 3-111.

transcendental, empowerment by the Holy Spirit and protection by the power in the blood of Jesus as the person struggles to eke out a viable life in a hostile environment'.²⁶

Kalu's book *Clio in a Sacred Garb* (2008) offers an insight into his understanding of the relationship between church history and theology in the context of changing paradigms of historiography in the academy. 'Clio' is the ancient muse of history. In the opening chapter, Kalu referred to the epistemological crisis in the discipline of church history brought about by encounters with modernist and postmodernist currents within the wider discipline of history in Europe and North America.²⁷ In explaining this crisis, he briefly surveyed developments within historiography over the previous two centuries which have influenced the discipline of church history. He began by referring to the nineteenth-century German school of 'scientific' historiography, made famous by Ranke's declaration that history is a record of 'what really happened in the past' and could be recovered by rigorous, scientific, archival research. He then quoted E. H. Carr's assertion that the cult of the 'fact' has 'blinded people to the shaping power of the historian'. According to Kalu, Carr's 1961 Trevelyan Lecture at Cambridge 'stripped the ideological and epistemological trappings of yesteryears and inadvertently set the relativist agenda on a course he would rather have avoided'.²⁸ Finally, Kalu touched on postmodern theories of history and the approaches of deconstructionist historians Keith Jenkins and Hayden White who cast doubt upon the possibility of obtaining knowledge about the past and adopted 'an unrepentant relativist posture in which the historian is privileged'.²⁹ For Kalu, the 'taunting of Clio's garb by the modern guild of church historians' arises from this larger crisis in the temple of Clio caused by a major shift in the theory of knowledge.³⁰

In building a case for 'theological' church history, Kalu referenced the work of American church historians George Marsden and Mark Noll who have both grappled with the crisis in the discipline surrounding the relationship between theology and history and the question of how Christian historians can relate their faith to their scholarship.³¹ In 1992, Marsden gave the presidential address to the American Society of Church History, entitled 'The Ambiguities of Academic Freedom'. In his paper, Marsden challenged an idea of academic freedom which disdained religion and argued for the inclusion of Christian scholarship in the academy.³² The excerpt quoted by Kalu dwells on the dilemma faced by Christian historians in the American academy. On the one hand, Marsden lamented the way that many historians of Christianity had acted as though they believed that relating their faith to their history would disqualify them from professional respectability. On the other hand, he anticipated a new era of openness to 'explicit academic commitment' and recommended that

²⁶ Kalu, 'Pentecostal and Charismatic Reshaping', 88.

²⁷ Ogbu U. Kalu, *Clio in a Sacred Garb. Essays on Christian Presence and African Responses, 1900-2000* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2008), 8.

²⁸ Kalu, *Clio*, 11.

²⁹ Kalu, *Clio*, 12.

³⁰ Kalu, *Clio*, 9.

³¹ See George Marsden, *The Soul of the American University: From Protestant Establishment to Established Unbelief* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994); Mark Noll, *From Every Tribe and Nation: A Historian's Discovery of the Global Christian Story* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2014); Mark Noll, 'The Challenges of Contemporary Church History, the Dilemmas of Modern History, and Missiology to the Rescue', *Missiology: An International Review* 14 (January 1996), 47-64; Mark Noll, 'The Potential of Missiology for the Crises of History', in *History and the Christian Historian*, edited by R. A. Wells (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998), 106-123.

³² George Marsden, 'The Ambiguities of Academic Freedom', *Church History* 62 (June 1993), 221-36. For an expanded version, see *The Soul of the American University*. For discussion of Marsden's works, see *American Evangelicalism: George Marsden and the State of American Religious History*, edited by Darren Dochuk, Thomas S. Kidd and Kurt W. Peterson (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2016).

‘committed scholars should not be deterred from attempting critical and self-critical history that is frankly shaped by their commitments’.³³ Kalu warmed to this approach.

From his vantage point as both an African church historian and scholar of world Christianity, Kalu criticized those Western church historians ‘who are in bondage to the tyranny of [the] modern worldview and secular social-science models’ for ‘diminishing the *geist* of the profession’ and ignoring the miraculous and experiential dimensions.³⁴ In order to gain respectability in the academy, these historians display an ‘aversion to Clio’s sacred garb in the academy of the learned’. The crisis is complicated, according to Kalu, by ‘the emergence of new voices from what had been the periphery of Christendom and who delight in the muse’s sacred garb’.³⁵ Following Noll, Kalu pointed to the significance for church historiography of Christianity’s unprecedented worldwide resurgence in a wide range of cultures. In many of these cultures, religion is at the centre of public life, and ‘for the largest number of Christians in the world, God intervenes directly in their everyday lives through the power of the Holy Spirit’.³⁶ The experiences of Christians in the non-Western world, therefore, open new opportunities for telling the stories of people’s encounters with the gospel without the constraints of the Enlightenment worldview prevalent in Western historical scholarship.³⁷

According to Kalu, the crisis in Clio’s temple had implications for the discipline of church history in relation to definition, ideological underpinning, mode of representation, and method. He defined church history as ‘the story of the presence of the kingdom of God in communities and their responses to this major fact in time perspective’. For Kalu, the subjects of church history are the people of God who serve as witnesses of ‘the presence of the kingdom of God’ as they engage in mission. Thus, Christian historians should not be ashamed to talk about the ‘kingdom of God’ in their scholarship as long as they are explicit about their ideological commitment.³⁸ In fact it is this ideological commitment that differentiates church history from other forms of social history. Elsewhere, Kalu insisted that the faith commitment and bias of the church historian should not be a problem as long as the hermeneutical principles employed to interpret the past are exposed and open to dialogue and appraisal.³⁹ The mode of representation in church history, according to Kalu, is ‘pre-eminently narrative because testimonies are stories of experiences designed to inspire, teach and correct’. However, relating one’s scholarship to one’s faith should not preclude rigorous research and analysis because the progress of the gospel in a community is often affected by socio-economic and political contexts which must be carefully analyzed.⁴⁰ Kalu expanded upon this elsewhere in a discussion of appropriate methods for studying the complexities of African Pentecostal/charismatic movements. In order to gather data at the grassroots level in different cultural contexts, he stressed the importance of supplementing archival and library research with oral sources.⁴¹ However, the historian must be attentive to insider and outsider perspectives; on the one hand, subjecting oral sources to critical appraisal, and on the other, taking care not to distort the evidence to fit a biased interpretation.⁴²

One criticism levelled against Kalu by some scholars within the field is that his confessional approach to historiography hinders dialogue with others studying African

³³ Marsden, ‘Ambiguities’, 235.

³⁴ Kalu, *Clio*, 16.

³⁵ Kalu, *Clio*, 8.

³⁶ Kalu, *Clio*, 16.

³⁷ Kalu, *Clio*, 18.

³⁸ Kalu, *Clio*, 16.

³⁹ Kalu, *Embattled Gods*, 8.

⁴⁰ Kalu, *Clio*, 16-17.

⁴¹ Ogbu U. Kalu, ‘Doing Church History as an Empowerment Project: The Study of Charismatic-Pentecostalism in Africa’, in *The Collected Essays of Ogbu Uke Kalu*, 1:360.

⁴² Kalu, ‘Doing Church History’, 362.

Christianity who do not share the same presuppositions. Paul Kollman refers to Kalu's overt theological agenda, demonstrated by his 'willingness to invoke God's action (or the Holy Spirit) as a historical cause of African Christian vitality', which distanced him from other scholars and determined his assessment of non-theological approaches to Pentecostal Christianity. As Kollman notes, acknowledging believers' accounts of their religious experiences need not imply accepting the truth of their assertions.⁴³ In a critical review of *African Pentecostalism*, Jane Soothill took issue with Kalu's disparagement of Western social scientists and their 'functionalist' approach to the history of Pentecostalism in Africa. She criticized him for creating a false dichotomy with his own confessional approach. Soothill suggested that church history may be read alongside sociological and anthropological works, and that Kalu's insider's account was 'at its best when it highlights some of the problems inherent in the representation of others by scholars who do not share their subjects' social or spiritual worldview'.⁴⁴

However, an evaluation of Kalu's approach must take account of his reasons for writing church history and his intended audience. He conceived church history partly as a didactic enterprise aimed at empowering the Christian community which can only be achieved if the ideological premises are explicitly stated.⁴⁵ The challenge for church historians is 'how to tell the story of a particular manifestation of the kingdom of God, in a particular place, in such a manner that it is authentic and empowering'. Church history, for Kalu, is a particular way of understanding the world and the meaning of life; it is the 'memory of the people of God, a pilgrim people that constantly re-tell stories about the loving and reconciling acts of God in Christ and the Holy Spirit'. As such, it can become a 'catalyst for change, calling back the Christian community to the essence of their being a light, salt and all the warm imageries used to empower people in the quest for justice'.⁴⁶ An important question, for Kalu, was how the writing of history could become a 'means of reflection, renewal and redirection to a better future'.⁴⁷

An Ecumenical Enterprise

Kalu's concern to pursue a scientific study of history with a theological bias was reflected in his ecumenical approach to African church historiography.⁴⁸ His championing of an ecumenical perspective was partly influenced by his participation in ecumenical consultations in West Germany and Kenya during the 1980s, which resulted in a series of publications under the general editorship of the ecumenist and theologian Lukas Vischer.⁴⁹ According to Kalu, the concept of *oikumene*, a geographical term referring to the whole inhabited earth, is an appropriate one through which to read African church history because it calls for a wider

⁴³ Paul Kollman, 'Classifying African Christianities: Past, Present, and Future: Part One', *Journal of Religion in Africa* 40 (2010), 14-15.

⁴⁴ Review by Jane Soothill, *Sociology of Religion* 71 (2010), 132.

⁴⁵ Kalu, *Clio*, 16-17.

⁴⁶ Kalu, 'Doing Church History', 354-5.

⁴⁷ Kalu, 'African Church Historiography' (1989), 77.

⁴⁸ Ogbu U. Kalu, 'Introduction: The Shape and Flow of African Christian Historiography', in *African Christianity: An African Story*, edited by Ogbu U. Kalu (Pretoria: University of Pretoria Press, 2005), 21.

⁴⁹ *Church History in an Ecumenical Perspective: Papers and Reports of an International Ecumenical Consultation held in Basel*, edited by Lukas Vischer (Bern: Evangelische Arbeitsstelle Oekumene Schweiz, 1982); *Towards a History of the Church in the Third World: Papers and Report of a Consultation on the Issue of Periodisation*, edited by Lukas Vischer (Bern: Evangelische Arbeitsstelle Oekumene Schweiz, 1985); *African Church Historiography: An Ecumenical Perspective*, edited by Ogbu U. Kalu (Bern: Evangelische Arbeitsstelle Oekumenen Schweiz, 1988).

understanding of the church.⁵⁰ Theologically, it refers to ‘God’s creation, lordship and rulership over the whole inhabited earth and human history’.⁵¹ For Kalu, church history was, therefore, ‘the story of God’s presence in human communities and their responses to divine love in time perspective’, rather than the story of church institutions or the activities of Western missionaries. The ecumenical perspective, according to Kalu,

reconstructs from the grassroots the experience of men and women in a community and the meaning of Christ in their midst. It assumes that as the Spirit of God broods over the whole inhabited earth, human beings would increasingly recognize the divine presence and their lives would be changed in the encounter.⁵²

By calling for an ecumenical perspective, he was concerned that African church history should assist modern churches to deal with the new social problems thrown up by rapid social, economic and political change in Africa.⁵³

In advocating an ecumenical approach, Kalu rejected other patterns of Christian historiography in Africa as inadequate. First, the institutional approach which begins with the arrival of missionaries and charts the growth of institutions and their encounter with local traditions. Church history must go beyond the institution and instead focus on the people.⁵⁴ For Kalu, the institutional approach diverges from biblical models of the church, which suggest a ‘non-institutional’ and ‘prophetic’ people proclaiming the good news. It also supports denominationalism which hinders African Christians from seeing themselves as Africans rather than ‘products of warring confessional groups in Europe’.⁵⁵ Kalu criticized the institutional approach for imprinting ‘the image of God as a stranger to the Africans’ world’.⁵⁶ A second genre is missionary historiography. According to Kalu, these are usually imbued with missionary ideology, based on missionary sources, and designed to tell the stories of cross-cultural initiatives by Western missionaries. Thus, missionary historiography is often hagiographic and scornful of indigenous non-European cultures.⁵⁷ The final genre discussed by Kalu was the nationalist approach to African church historiography, exemplified in Nigeria by Ade Ajayi and Emmanuel Ayandele, which arose partly as a reaction to the tendency of missionary histories to ignore the role of African agents and denigrate indigenous cultures.⁵⁸ Nationalist historiography flourished in the 1960s and 1970s and followed the renaissance of African secular historiography catalysed by the Nigerian historian Kenneth Onwika Dike at the University of Ibadan.⁵⁹ Although Kalu regarded the nationalist perspective as a welcome corrective, he criticized it for often ignoring the religious dimension and for failing to appreciate the value of missionary historiography and the role of Western missionaries.⁶⁰

In a review of Kalu’s work, Clifton Clarke suggests that his ecumenical perspective is problematic due to the difficulties of settling on ecclesiological principles that will be

⁵⁰ Kalu, ‘Shape and Flow’, 21.

⁵¹ Kalu, ‘African Church Historiography’ (1989), 75.

⁵² Kalu, ‘Shape and Flow’, 22.

⁵³ Kalu, ‘African Church Historiography’ (1989), 75.

⁵⁴ Kalu, ‘African Church Historiography’ (1989), 72, 77.

⁵⁵ Kalu, ‘Shape and Flow’, 14.

⁵⁶ Kalu, ‘African Church Historiography’ (1989), 72.

⁵⁷ Kalu, ‘Shape and Flow’, 15.

⁵⁸ J. F. Ade Ajayi, *Christian Mission in Nigeria 1841-1891: The Making of a New Elite* (London: Longman, 1965); Emmanuel A. Ayandele, *The Missionary Impact on Modern Nigeria, 1842-1914* (London: Longman, 1966).

⁵⁹ Kalu, ‘African Church Historiography’ (1989), 73. Dike trained a group of scholars, including E. B. Idowu and J. F. Ade Ajayi.

⁶⁰ Kalu, *Embattled Gods*, ix.

acceptable to everyone.⁶¹ This presupposes a particular understanding of the ecumenical task as addressing the differences between churches and encouraging inter-church cooperation. However, Kalu's ecumenical vision for African church historiography was broader than this. According to Kalu, an ecumenical perspective calls for a 'wholistic' church history which avoids the narrow confines not only of denominationalism, but also of nationalism, institutionalism and elitism.⁶² First, it focuses on African responses to Christianity but also pays heed to denominations and the influence of missionary ideology which informed their policies and strategies in the mission field. Second, it sets the story within local cultural contexts and shows the impact of socio-economic, political and ecological factors on the patterns of Christian presence.⁶³ Third, ecumenical church history is a perspective 'from below', which requires historians to be sensitive to the voices of the marginalized and the poor.⁶⁴ Fourth, it calls for a dialogical and irenic approach towards non-Christian religions and traditions of non-European societies, and recognizes the resilience of the African traditional worldview among Christians. Finally, an ecumenical approach should make the writing of history a 'process of liberating, self-discovery for the individual as well as the community', a means of reflection, renewal and redirection to a better future.⁶⁵ As will be seen, Kalu sought to encompass all these different dimensions in his historiography of African Pentecostalism.

An Africanist Approach

A recurring theme in Kalu's historiography, in keeping with his ecumenical and theological perspective, was an attempt to tell the story of Christianity in Africa in ways that recovered the African voice and privileged the contributions of African agents rather than placing Western missionaries at the centre. His intention was to correct misrepresentations in histories of Western missions in Africa which overemphasized the role of non-African agents. Kalu's focus on African agency was also influenced by his conception of church history as an empowerment project and reflected wider concerns in African Christian historiography to reinforce the identities of Christian communities who have lost their own story through contact with the Western world. Proponents of this new history called for an approach 'from below' which focused on African responses to the gospel rather than church institutions.⁶⁶

Kalu's emphasis on African agency is perhaps best represented in his edited volume *African Christianity: An African Story* (2005), a collection of essays by African scholars encompassing the whole span of African church history. Contributors included Afe Adogame, Akintunde Akinade, J. Kwabena Gyadu, Jehu Hanciles, Tinyiko Maluleke, and J. N. K. Mugambi. In the preface, Kalu wrote: 'The effort in this book is ideologically-driven: to build up a group of African church historians who will tell the story as an African story by intentionally privileging the patterns of African agency without neglecting the roles of various missionary bodies'.⁶⁷ Following the lead of Africanist scholars such as Andrew Walls, Kwame Bediako and Lamin Sanneh, Kalu suggested that historians of African Christianity should turn

⁶¹ Clifton R. Clarke, 'Ogbu Kalu and Africa's Pentecostalism: A Tribute Essay', in *Pentecostal Theology in Africa*, edited by Clifton R. Clarke (Eugene, Oregon: Pickwick Publications, 2014), 11.

⁶² Kalu, 'African Church Historiography' (1989), 75.

⁶³ Kalu, *Embattled Gods*, ix-x.

⁶⁴ Kalu, 'African Church Historiography' (1989), 75.

⁶⁵ Kalu, 'Shape and Flow', 23.

⁶⁶ For developments in African Christian Studies, see Adrian Hastings, 'African Christian Studies, 1967-1999: Reflections of an Editor', *Journal of Religion in Africa* 30 (2000), 30-44; David Maxwell, 'Introduction. Christianity and the African Imagination', in *Christianity and the African Imagination. Essays in Honour of Adrian Hastings*, edited by David Maxwell with Ingrid Lawrie (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 1-24.

⁶⁷ *African Christianity: An African Story*, edited by Kalu, xi.

their attention from the 'mode of transmission' towards the 'mode of appropriation'.⁶⁸ This was exemplified in his essay 'Experiencing Evangelicalism in Africa: An Africanist Perspective', which told the story of African encounters with evangelicalism, including its Pentecostal and charismatic variants, through more than two millennia. His explicit goal was to imprint an Africanist perspective by showing how Africans challenged the missionary version of evangelicalism and carried the burden of evangelization. Despite missionary efforts to control forms of expression, the effect of Bible translation and the 'power of the gospel' was to stimulate a range of African initiatives. These included mission-founded Protestant churches, but also African Instituted Churches of the 'Ethiopian', Zionist/Aladura and Pentecostal variety. Ethiopianism emerged from 1860 as a cultural protest against white dominance in colonial Christianity. The Zionist or Aladura tradition, which arose between the two world wars, was a charismatic religious response to Western missionary theology. The Pentecostal movement that flourished in two phases, under colonialism and in the midst of the politics of independence, represented a third response to Western cultural dominance over the Church in Africa.⁶⁹ These three movements, which spanned the twentieth century, were portrayed by Kalu as a 'trail of ferment' running through the entire continent caused by Africans when they encountered the gospel. What emerged was a form of Christianity under indigenous leadership, at once conservative evangelical and biblicist, yet with a charismatic flavour characterized by an emphasis on vibrant worship, prophecy, healing, and evangelistic fervour.⁷⁰

Kalu's Africanist approach is reflected in his historiography of early evangelicalism and its impact in West Africa through the combined forces of abolitionism and revivalism.⁷¹ One of his concerns was to show the contributions of both white abolitionists and black missionaries to the anti-slavery cause, which was 'pursued with a strong evangelical Christian rhetoric'.⁷² The social activist component of evangelicalism, which 'insisted on applying the ethical implications of equality of all human beings before God to social problems', challenged the support for slavery prevalent within most Christian denominations.⁷³ During the nineteenth century, evangelicals such as William Carey and Thomas Fowell Buxton linked mission to commerce and civilisation as a means of establishing an enabling environment for combatting slave traders. Henry Venn, secretary of the Church Missionary Society, promoted the 'three-selves' of self-support, self-government and self-propagation as the means of nurturing a viable indigenous Church. However, this was only part of the story. In keeping with his Africanist perspective, Kalu highlighted three other developments which influenced early evangelical endeavours in West Africa: African Americans, emboldened by evangelical spirituality, developed a strong motivation to evangelize Africa; the West Indies became a 'recruiting ground for missions in West Africa'; and African American missionaries 'groomed' the 'recaptives' (liberated slaves) rescued in Sierra Leone and Liberia to serve as missionaries to their homelands. According to Kalu, 'recaptives' such as Samuel Adjai Crowther defined the nature of Christian presence in the Victorian period, characterized by an evangelical spirituality, evangelization of the interior, dialogue with Muslims, Bible translation, and maintenance of schools and hospitals.⁷⁴

Kalu's conviction that African church historiography should focus on African agency, rather than external influences, was reflected in his treatment of African Pentecostalism.

⁶⁸ Kalu, 'Shape and Flow', 6.

⁶⁹ Kalu, 'Experiencing Evangelicalism', 191-233; Kalu, 'Third Response', 3.

⁷⁰ Kalu, 'Trail of Ferment', 19-47.

⁷¹ Kalu, 'Experiencing Evangelicalism', 192; Ogbu U. Kalu, 'West African Christianity', in *The Collected Essays of Ogbu Uke Kalu*, 2:177.

⁷² Kalu, 'Experiencing Evangelicalism', 194.

⁷³ Kalu, 'Experiencing Evangelicalism', 194.

⁷⁴ Kalu, 'Experiencing Evangelicalism', 195-7; Kalu, 'West African Christianity', 180-1.

According to Kalu, Pentecostal historiography differed from missionary historiography because ‘local actors were crucial in the story of the early movement and are still reshaping the faces of the movement characterized by rapid growth’.⁷⁵ Challenging Western accounts of African Pentecostalism that place undue emphasis on globalization, Kalu reasserted its roots in African soil and the contributions of African protagonists to its growth and popularity. For Kalu, contemporary Pentecostalism was another phase of the African ‘quest for power and identity’.⁷⁶ He challenged the dominant Northern discourse, which traces the genealogy of global Pentecostalism to the Azusa Street revival in Los Angeles.⁷⁷ The Azusa Street revival, according to Kalu, was essentially a North American event with religious antecedents such as the holiness movement. In other regions, protagonists experienced ‘the move of the Spirit independently’.⁷⁸ For Kalu, a global perspective must recognize the ‘integrity of multiple contexts’ and attend to the ways in which charismatic spirituality is appropriated and lived in response to the challenges from indigenous cultures, ecosystems and other competing religious traditions.⁷⁹

Significant features of Kalu’s portrayal of African Pentecostalism as an African story include its missionary impulse and its recovery of charismatic practices such as healing and power-oriented evangelism.⁸⁰ He argued that one of movement’s major characteristics was its intensive evangelistic fervour geared towards the re-evangelization of the continent.⁸¹ In various publications, Kalu described the evangelistic vigour of youthful charismatic preachers in African countries during the 1970s; the employment of media technology as a tool of evangelization from the 1980s; leadership training in response to Pentecostal growth during the 1990s; the activities of African missionaries in the diaspora; and the shift to holistic models of mission, which combine evangelism with social action.⁸²

A consistent theme in Kalu’s scholarship was the extent that African patterns of response to Christianity are determined by primal religious structures. According to Kalu, it is important to begin African church history from African primal religion and to explore the influence of existing religious experience on the reception and growth of Christianity in the continent. Adopting a cultural discourse approach, Kalu argued that people appropriate the gospel through the prism of their own worldviews and cultures, demonstrating the indigenizing capacity of the gospel to answer questions raised within the interiors of those cultures.⁸³ This was reflected in his studies of early African responses to Christianity during colonialism which paid close attention to pre-existing primal religious structures. For example, he devoted a chapter to Igbo primal religion in *The Embattled Gods*. According to Kalu, one of the reasons that Africans absorbed evangelical spirituality early in their contact with Christianity was that they found resonances between their own traditional religious worldview and the world of the Bible.⁸⁴ For Kalu, this was an important factor behind the implosion of Aladura spirituality whose ‘pneumatic challenge to mainline churches tapped the vibrancy of primal African

⁷⁵ Kalu, *African Pentecostalism*, 22.

⁷⁶ Kalu, *African Pentecostalism*, 4.

⁷⁷ See David Martin, ‘The Global Expansion of Radical Primitive Christianity’, *Princeton Seminary Bulletin* 26 (2005), 111-22; Cox, *Fire From Heaven*; Paul Gifford, *African Christianity: Its Public Role* (London: Hurst, 1998), 321-22; Dale Irvin, ‘Pentecostal Historiography and Global Christianity: Rethinking the Question of Origin’, *Pneuma* 27 (2005), 35-50.

⁷⁸ Kalu, *African Pentecostalism*, 13.

⁷⁹ Kalu, *African Pentecostalism*, 17.

⁸⁰ Kalu, *African Pentecostalism*, 126.

⁸¹ Ogbu U. Kalu, ‘Pentecostalism and Mission in Africa, 1970-2000’, *Mission Studies* 24 (2009), 10.

⁸² Kalu, ‘Pentecostalism and Mission’; Kalu, *African Pentecostalism*, 123-36.

⁸³ Kalu, ‘A Discursive Interpretation’, 80.

⁸⁴ Kalu, ‘Experiencing Evangelicalism’, 233.

spirituality', substituted 'black for white power in church matters', and 'incorporated ingredients of African culture in polity, liturgy, ethics and doctrine'.⁸⁵

The continuity between African 'maps of the universe' and biblical theology was also an important element in the interpretative framework employed by Kalu to explain the salience of Pentecostalism in Africa and the African diaspora.⁸⁶ Conceiving African Christianity as always building on pre-existing African cultural realities enabled Kalu to identify a line of continuity through the various phases of evangelical revivalism in Africa culminating in contemporary Pentecostal and charismatic expressions.⁸⁷ According to Kalu, African Pentecostalism can best be understood 'within the strand of African church historiography that has urged attention to the connection between religious ecology and the forms of Christian allegiance'.⁸⁸ Here he engaged in contemporary debates regarding cultural processes within the anthropological literature on African Pentecostalism. Kalu identified two discourses. The first emphasizes discontinuity and argues that Pentecostals try to destroy the past by their disavowal of African traditional religious and cultural practices. He referenced Birgit Meyer's study of the Ewe people in Ghana whose appropriation of Pentecostalism entailed a 'complete break with the past'.⁸⁹ The second draws attention to areas of resonance between Pentecostalism and 'African maps of the universe'.⁹⁰ In the literature on African Pentecostalism, Kalu is usually placed alongside those scholars who stress the indigenous origins of African Pentecostalism and its continuity with African primal religion.⁹¹

Kalu argued that Pentecostalism had grown in Africa 'because of its cultural fit into indigenous worldviews and its response to the questions that are raised within the interior of the worldviews'.⁹² Contrary to the early missionary attitude, urging rejection, Pentecostals perceive a resonance between the Bible and African indigenous religions. In particular, Kalu identified a shared belief in the influence of an invisible spiritual world over the visible material world, the efficacy of words and prayer rituals for influencing the powers, and the salience of revelatory phenomena such as dreams and visions.⁹³ The major contribution of Pentecostalism, according to Kalu, is how it addresses the continued reality of these forces, drawing upon the pneumatological resources of biblical theology. He contrasted this with missionary theology which he suggested has imbibed the Western Enlightenment worldview and muted the charismatic elements of the gospel.⁹⁴

Kalu's continuity thinking is reflected in his treatment of African prosperity theology.⁹⁵ Contemporary debates centre on its provenance and popularity, and the meaning attached to

⁸⁵ Kalu, 'Shape and Flow', 7; Ogbu U. Kalu, 'Preserving a Worldview: Pentecostalism in the African Maps of the Universe', *Pneuma* 24 (Fall 2002), 115.

⁸⁶ Kalu, 'Preserving a Worldview', 110-137.

⁸⁷ Kalu, 'Trail of Ferment', 19-47.

⁸⁸ Kalu, 'Preserving a Worldview', 137.

⁸⁹ See Birgit Meyer, "'Make a Complete Break with the Past": Memory and Postcolonial Modernity in Ghanaian Pentecostalist Discourse', *Journal of Religion in Africa* 28 (1998), 316-49.

⁹⁰ See David Maxwell, 'Witches, Prophets and Avenging Spirits', *Journal of Religion in Africa* 25 (1995), 309-39; J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu, *African Charismatics: Current Developments Within Independent Indigenous Pentecostalism in Ghana* (Leiden: Brill, 2005). For discussion of continuity/discontinuity debates within the anthropology of Christianity/Pentecostalism, see Joel Robbins, 'Anthropology of Religion', in *Studying Global Pentecostalism*, edited by Anderson et al, 156-78; Joel Robbins, 'On the Paradoxes of Global Pentecostalism and the Perils of Continuity Thinking', *Religion* 33 (2003), 221-31; Andre Droogers, 'The Cultural Dimension of Pentecostalism', in *The Cambridge Companion to Pentecostalism*, edited by Robeck and Yong, 203-7.

⁹¹ Martin Lindhardt, 'Charismatic Christianity and Tradition in Contemporary Tanzania', in *Pentecostalism in Africa*, edited by Lindhardt, 165.

⁹² Kalu, *African Pentecostalism*, 170.

⁹³ Kalu, *African Pentecostalism*, 178-81; Kalu, 'Preserving a Worldview', 115.

⁹⁴ Kalu, 'Preserving a Worldview', 130, 137; Kalu, 'Pentecostal and Charismatic Reshaping', 90.

⁹⁵ Kalu, *African Pentecostalism*, 255-63.

prosperity teaching in the African context. Some scholars have emphasized its foreign origins and form in Africa.⁹⁶ Others have stressed the role of indigenous agents in adapting prosperity teaching for local consumption in contexts of economic distress where it was common for traditional peoples to associate the deities with prosperity.⁹⁷ According to Kalu, the prosperity message ‘flowed into Africa’ from North America, but also from other places such as the United Kingdom, the West Indies, and Asia, through media and the visits of foreign evangelists. However, its popularity rested on its resonance ‘with African indigenous concepts of salvation, abundant life, and the goals of worship’, and the hope it offered to those faced with contemporary challenges of poverty.⁹⁸ Kalu criticized Paul Gifford for portraying African prosperity theology in standardized North American form rather than indigenously developed as a poverty-alleviation strategy.⁹⁹ However, as Clifton Clarke notes, the relationship between African innovation and the American prosperity gospel is more nuanced than Kalu’s ‘African indigenous position’ might suggest. According to Clarke, ‘many African Pentecostal preachers have embraced Western capitalist ideology for self-interest and personal gain’. The challenge is how to ‘affirm the African cultural idiom of prosperity’ while ‘exorcising individual greed and exploitation’. In this regard, Clarke contends that the social scientific analyses of scholars such as Gifford provide an important sociological critique.¹⁰⁰

A Contextual Approach

Alongside religious factors, Kalu’s historiography was also attentive to political, economic, and social influences on African responses to Christianity. A few examples will suffice. First, Kalu’s analysis of early African Christianity explored the effects of colonialism and the First World War. He argued that the war created conditions that encouraged the development of African church leaders and stimulated outbursts of charismatic revivalism outside the mainline churches. The disruption of missionary facilities and personnel provided space for Africans to assume positions of leadership. The return of African soldiers following demobilization was partly responsible for the spread of the influenza epidemic (1918-1925) to sub-Saharan Africa. The devastating effects of the epidemic, combined with an intensification of racist policies and political disenfranchisement, aided the upsurge of *Aladura* churches in Nigeria and Zionist churches in South Africa as people gathered to pray for the healing of victims.¹⁰¹

A second example is Kalu’s examination of the effects of African nationalist movements and decolonization on the churches. He argued that just as the two world wars ‘increased African confidence and shifted the vision of cultural nationalism to the quest for political independence, so were the efforts of missionaries to consolidate denominationalism

⁹⁶ Paul Gifford, ‘Prosperity: A New and Foreign Element in African Christianity’, *Religion* 20 (1990), 373-88; Paul Gifford, *Ghana’s New Christianity: Pentecostalism in a Globalizing African Economy* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2004), 49-52.

⁹⁷ Matthews A. Ojo, *The End-Time Army: Charismatic Movements in Modern Nigeria* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press: 2006), 208; Richard Burgess, *Nigeria’s Christian Revolution. The Civil War Revival and its Pentecostal Progeny* (Milton Keynes: Regnum/Paternoster, 2008), 232-5; Rosalind I. J. Hackett, ‘The Gospel of Prosperity in West Africa’, in *Religion and the Transformation of Capitalism: Comparative Approaches*, edited by Richard H. Roberts (London: Routledge, 1995), 199-214.

⁹⁸ Kalu, *African Pentecostalism*, 259.

⁹⁹ Kalu, *African Pentecostalism*, 194.

¹⁰⁰ Clifton Clarke, ‘Ogbu Kalu and Africa’s Christianity: A Tribute’, *Pneuma* 32 (2010), 119.

¹⁰¹ Kalu, ‘West African Christianity’, 199; Kalu, *African Pentecostalism*, 24; Ogbu U. Kalu, ‘African Christianity: From the World Wars to Decolonisation’, *The Cambridge History of Christianity, volume 9: World Christianities c.1914-c.2000*, edited by Hugh McLeod (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 206, 209.

confronted by intensified, subversive, indigenous initiatives'.¹⁰² Kalu drew on Antonio Gramsci's notion of passive revolution, whereby a dominant political group may change its way of exercising power in order to maintain it. The goal of decolonisation, which involved a limited transfer of power, was to retain sufficient economic resources to exert control over the future development of the continent. Kalu's argument was that missionaries shared a similar tactical response to decolonization so as to retain control over the churches using indigenous personnel and resources. This was the main thrust of the missionary policy of indigenisation, intended to preserve missionary structures while enabling broader African participation.¹⁰³ However, their efforts were sabotaged by the moratorium debate, which advocated the withdrawal of Western missionaries, and by various forms of local charismatic independency.¹⁰⁴ Kalu referred to the emergence of youthful charismatic preachers during the 1970s whose activities challenged the hegemony of the mission churches and generated a proliferation of new Pentecostal churches in such countries as Nigeria, Kenya and Malawi.¹⁰⁵

A third example of Kalu's contextual approach to Pentecostal historiography is his exploration of the political engagement of African churches in postcolonial Africa. The model of evangelical political engagement in Africa inherited from Europe and North America separated religion and politics into two distinct spheres. When independence came, many churches colluded with the new governments and failed to produce a 'political reinterpretation of the gospel'.¹⁰⁶ Kalu showed how the Second Liberation in Africa, which involved the challenge of one-party states and military rule, enlarged the political space for religious leaders and organizations, and stimulated a new Christian theology of political engagement.¹⁰⁷ An important issue raised in the literature is whether Pentecostal culture leads to political quiescence.¹⁰⁸ Some have argued that the African Pentecostal focus on prosperity teaching, deliverance practices, and individual salvation discourages political engagement and diverts attention from the structural causes of poverty.¹⁰⁹ Kalu was one of the first scholars to stress the political import of African Pentecostalism from the 1980s.¹¹⁰ His treatment of Pentecostal political theology explored the strategies employed to influence the political sphere.¹¹¹ Here he

¹⁰² Ogbu U. Kalu, 'African Christianity: An Overview', in *African Christianity: An African Story*, edited by Kalu, 39.

¹⁰³ Kalu, 'From the World Wars to Decolonisation', 212-3, 215.

¹⁰⁴ Ogbu U. Kalu, 'Passive Revolution and its Saboteurs: African Christian Initiative in the Era of Decolonization', paper delivered at the 'Missions, Nationalism, and the End of Empire' conference, Currents in World Christianity Project (University of Cambridge, 6-9 September 2000).

¹⁰⁵ Kalu, 'Pentecostalism and Mission', 9-45; Kalu, *African Pentecostalism*, 88-102; Kalu, 'Preserving a Worldview', 123-9.

¹⁰⁶ Ogbu U. Kalu, 'Tools of Hope: Stagnation and Political Theology in Africa, 1960-95', in *A Global Faith: Essays in Evangelicalism and Globalization*, edited by Mark Hutchinson and Ogbu U. Kalu (Sydney: CSAC, 1998), 199.

¹⁰⁷ Kalu, 'Tools of Hope', 199; Ogbu U. Kalu, *Power, Poverty and Prayer: The Challenges of Poverty and Pluralism in African Christianity, 1960-1996* (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2000), 93-102, 148; Ogbu U. Kalu, 'Faith and Politics in Africa: Emergent Political Theology of Engagement in Nigeria', in *The Collected Essays of Ogbu Uke Kalu. Volume 3: Religions in Africa: Conflicts, Politics and Social Ethics*, edited by Wilhemina J. Kalu, Nimi Wariboko, and Toyin Falola (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2011), 11-30.

¹⁰⁸ Amos Yong, *In the Days of Caesar. Pentecostalism and Political Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI.: Eerdmans, 2010), 4-14.

¹⁰⁹ Gifford, *Ghana's New Christianity*; Ruth Marshall, 'Power in the Name of Jesus: Social Transformation and Pentecostalism in Western Nigeria "Revisited"', in *Legitimacy and the State in Twentieth-Century Africa*, edited by Terence O. Ranger and Olufemi Vaughan (London: Macmillan, 1993), 229-30; Daniel Jordan Smith, "'The Arrow of God": Pentecostalism, Inequality, and the Supernatural in South-Eastern Nigeria', *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute* 71 (2001), 602.

¹¹⁰ Kalu, 'Practice of Victorious Life', 229-55.

¹¹¹ See Kalu, *African Pentecostalism*, 187-223; Kalu, *Power, Poverty and Prayer*, 27; Kalu, 'Practice of Victorious Life', 229-55.

took issue with Paul Gifford, who suggested that the Pentecostal tendency to spiritualize politics through prayer and deliverance practices contributed little to the debate on modern government and discouraged a life of activism in politics.¹¹² Kalu conceptualized the political arena in broad terms to include conventional political practices such as electoral politics alongside more implicit, covert strategies such as preaching, prophecy and prayer. He argued that the patterns of Pentecostal political engagement are partly determined by the nature of African political culture, and in particular the ‘magical substratum’ that undergirds it and sacralizes the political order in primal society. This is evident in the way political elites employ ‘occult’ idioms and rituals to acquire and retain power. Kalu suggested that the Pentecostal political response is to mine the interior of the primal religious worldview and address the spirits that govern the structures of the public sphere.¹¹³

Pentecostal political engagement in Africa became more visible in the 1990s. Kalu used the South African term ‘Tembisa’, meaning ‘hope’, to encapsulate the eschatological vision of Pentecostal political theology, which entails the intrusion of the ‘not-yet’ into the ‘here-and-now’.¹¹⁴ Pentecostal strategies of political engagement in Africa provide ‘tools of hope’ for those living in contexts dominated by poverty, political corruption and violence, neopatrimonialism, and abuse of human rights. Kalu identified several strands of Pentecostal political theology and practice which belie the movement’s apolitical image. The first centres on rebuilding the individual by creating ‘new empowering tools of hope and new sources of security’ in contexts of insecurity and hopelessness caused by political instability. The main means of achieving this is the promotion of prosperity and success-oriented theologies that encourage the individual to fight back and to refuse to accept defeat.¹¹⁵ The second strand of Pentecostal political theology involves the employment of prayer and deliverance practices as tools to counter poverty and social injustice brought about by the abuse of power.¹¹⁶ According to Kalu, Pentecostal prayer in Africa is a form of political praxis, a strategy of ‘political dissent’ and ‘an exercise of political power at the level of infrapolitics,’ reflected in the Pentecostal tendency to organize prayer retreats at critical moments in the life of African nations.¹¹⁷ The final strand is the increasing tendency for African Pentecostals to engage in electoral politics by voting ‘godly’ candidates into office or by running for political office themselves.¹¹⁸ Kalu concluded that the rise of Pentecostalism in Africa has more political significance than has typically been realized by a narrow conception of what constitutes the political arena.¹¹⁹

In his latter years, following his relocation to Chicago, Kalu turned his attention to immigrant African Christianity in Europe and North America, and specifically the Pentecostal dimension.¹²⁰ At the time of his death he was working on a book manuscript on the topic and was scheduled to be a keynote speaker at a conference in Birmingham on transnational

¹¹² Gifford, *Ghana’s New Christianity*, 169, 172. For Kalu’s critique of Gifford, see Kalu, *African Pentecostalism*, 192-9.

¹¹³ Kalu, *African Pentecostalism*, 197, 199-201.

¹¹⁴ Kalu, *African Pentecostalism*, 211; Kalu, ‘Practice of Victorious Life’, 252.

¹¹⁵ Kalu, *African Pentecostalism*, 213-4; Kalu, *Power, Poverty and Prayer*, 127.

¹¹⁶ Kalu, *African Pentecostalism*, 219; Kalu, *Power, Poverty and Prayer*, 128-9; Kalu, ‘Third Response’, 14.

¹¹⁷ Kalu, *African Pentecostalism*, 219. For a discussion of Kalu’s portrayal of spiritual warfare prayer as political practice, see Andreas Heuser, ‘Encoding Caesar’s Realm: Variants of Spiritual Warfare Politics in Africa’, in *Pentecostalism in Africa*, edited by Lindhardt, 275, 278-9.

¹¹⁸ Kalu, *African Pentecostalism*, 219, 221; Kalu, ‘Practice of Victorious Life’, 251.

¹¹⁹ Kalu, *African Pentecostalism*, 222.

¹²⁰ Ogbu U. Kalu, ‘The Andrew Syndrome: Models for Understanding Nigerian Diaspora’, in *African Immigrant Religions in America*, edited by Jacob K. Olupona and Regina Gemignani (New York: New York University Press, 2007), 61-85; Ogbu U. Kalu, ‘African Pentecostalism in Diaspora’, *PentecoStudies*, 1 (2010), 9-34; Kalu, *African Pentecostalism*, 271-91.

Pentecostalism in Europe.¹²¹ Kalu's analysis of what he termed 'reverse flow' employed the globalization discourse to explore the emergence and growth of African diaspora churches. According to Kalu, global inequalities determine the conditions that create emigration and the direction of migration. The 'dark side of globalization' creates the economic problems that drive people to migrate, and the wealth of the global north attracts migration from struggling economies burdened by foreign debt.¹²² Although African immigrant churches in the northern hemisphere are predominantly Pentecostal, Kalu argued that 'reverse flow' was not an invention of Pentecostalism, but a consequence of moratorium, a more strident version of the indigenization project which reflected African impatience with the pace and results of mission-initiated indigenization. As part of the moratorium debate, some African leaders argued that cross-cultural mission was not a monopoly of white people but included Christians from non-Western societies.¹²³ The growth of African Pentecostal churches in Europe and the United States escalated during the 1980s when African Christians encountered racism in the mainline churches. Kalu raised the question whether the practice of reverse mission was succeeding as the African diaspora churches were generally failing to attract members from outside their particular ethnic and national bases. His answer was that the growth of African immigrant Pentecostalism represents a new phase in Christian mission which promises to 'transform the Christianity of the new immigrant destinations'.¹²⁴ Even if African Pentecostals focused on immigrant populations, they were still engaged in mission outside their homelands and sometimes in countries that sent missionaries to Africa. According to Kalu, reverse flow 'is not cross-cultural mission directed to the northern globe but the capacity to participate in mission showing that we are all one body and that the monopoly of evangelization was not restricted to one group of people'.¹²⁵

Conclusion

The scope of Kalu's writings on African Pentecostalism encompassed a broad range of topics, historical eras, and geographical terrains. Despite his life being unexpectedly cut short through illness, he left an indelible footprint on the field of Pentecostal historiography and is rightly regarded as one of the leading scholars of African Pentecostalism. Kalu's determination to focus on African agency and patterns of appropriation has challenged the dominant Northern discourse, which places undue emphasis on the influence of globalization and external forces, and has changed the way African Pentecostalism is portrayed within world Christianity. In his scholarship, he was not afraid to engage robustly with prevailing theories, supporting his arguments with rigorous historical research and contextual precision. Yet he was also explicit about his ideological commitment to writing church history from a theological and ecumenical perspective. This chapter has shown how Kalu's conception of church history as an empowerment project intended for didactic purposes, combined with his status as a non-Western historian and scholar of world Christianity, shaped the way he wrote about African Pentecostalism. However, his impact went well beyond his writing. Besides his teaching, Kalu was mentor to a host of younger scholars in Nigeria and the United States. For Western and non-Western scholars alike, he served as a model of how Christian historians can relate their faith to their scholarship without losing their professional credibility in the secular academy.

¹²¹ GloPent Conference: 'Transnational Pentecostalism in Europe', University of Birmingham, United Kingdom, February 2009.

¹²² Kalu, 'African Pentecostalism in Diaspora', 23.

¹²³ Kalu, *African Pentecostalism*, 275-7.

¹²⁴ Kalu, 'African Pentecostalism in Diaspora', 31.

¹²⁵ Kalu, 'African Pentecostalism in Diaspora', 32.

