

Redefining Contemporary African Pentecostalism: Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) in Sociological Retrospect

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Abstract

Nigeria's religious landscape has been significantly altered by contemporary African Pentecostalism, especially in relation to the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion). With an emphasis on theological, doctrinal, and structural shifts within the Nigerian Christian environment, this study critically investigates the relationship between Pentecostalism and Anglicanism. Anglican liturgy, leadership styles, and theological viewpoints have all been impacted by Pentecostalism, which is distinguished by its emphasis on the Holy Spirit, healing, miracles, and charismatic worship. The study investigates the influence of religious convergence in Nigeria using a qualitative research methodology that includes participant observation, interviews, and historical interpretation. It examined documents, interviewed 30 clergy, 25 pastors, and 400 church members, and observed worship styles, liturgical adaptations and theological discourse in 15 Anglican and Pentecostal churches to better understand their views on doctrinal revisions and worship customs. The research draws attention to the theological tensions between Pentecostal beliefs and Anglican orthodoxy, specifically with regard to spiritual warfare, commercialised miracles, and prosperity gospel theology. Pentecostalism has added modern music, lively singing, and interactive services to Anglican worship, but it has also sparked worries about the loss of traditional Anglican identity and theological purity in Nigeria. Pentecostal congregations in Nigeria have also been impacted by Anglicanism's theological instruction, liturgical traditions, and organised leadership, which has resulted in deeper doctrine, more organisation, the adoption of clerical vestments, and formal leadership structures. The paper contends that while Pentecostalism has revived Nigerian Christianity, unregulated theological revisions and consumerism offer serious concerns. The research promotes a balanced approach, emphasising theological depth, ethical leadership, and a Christ-centred religion that values both Anglican traditions and Pentecostal dynamism. Nigerian Christianity may handle these changes by promoting interdenominational discussion and theological clarity.

Keywords: African Pentecostalism, Church of Nigeria, Anglican Communion, Theological Interpretation, African Indigenous Churches.

Introduction

The Acts of the Apostles has been the primary source for the official story of Christian and Church origins since Eusebius. Despite criticisms of its reliability, the storyline remains dominant in the Church's self-understanding. New research challenges this paradigm, making it debatable whether reliable details about Christian origins can be derived from

Acts. The debate is still ongoing, but the implications are substantial (Boring, 1997). It encourages a critical re-examination of how we tell our story and how the Act's story has shaped our self-understanding as Christians and Pentecostals. This process can help re-examine how we tell our story and understand the roots of Christianity (Smith, 2009). The Disciples' message and proclamation were based on the initial belief in Jesus' resurrection. This belief led to a dramatic transformation of the apostolic band, from disillusionment to triumph, and their witness to a crucified felon as the risen Lord of life. Their transformation was fully realised in Pentecost, which is connected to their experience with the promised Spirit externally and internally (Anderson, 1970).

The term Pentecostalism comes from the event known as "Pentecost," which commemorates the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles and disciples on the Feast of Weeks in Jerusalem, as described in Acts 2:1–31. According to Acts 2:2–4, the Holy Spirit came to the 120 disciples on Pentecost via a series of outward signs, including verbal, visual, and aural (Vondey, 2017). The Holy Spirit was sent to inaugurate the foundation of Christianity in Jerusalem (Dzurgba, 2021). Pentecostalism is a Christian movement that emphasises personal encounters with God via baptism with the Holy Spirit (Vondey, 2017), with the possibility of people becoming "born again". It is a powerful and popular force in the Christian Churches today (Echeta, 2019). Its adherents do not have a single set of beliefs, making it a movement rather than a specific denomination (Barba, 2024).

Pentecostalism prioritises religious experience over creedal affirmations and dogma (Schwarz, 2004). According to Schwarz, charismatics, derived from the Greek term *Charismata*, meaning "gifts," are closely related to Pentecostals since they believe in the gifts of the Spirit but do not rely on speaking in tongues as the only proof of the Holy Spirit in the life of believers (Schwarz, 2004). Christian denominations argue for the timing and method of receiving the Holy Spirit. Some believe it is a requirement to accept Jesus as Lord and Saviour. In contrast, others believe it is received at baptism (Acts 2:38), through prayer, and the laying on of hands (Acts 9:17). Post-water baptism experiences, known as "the baptism of the Holy Spirit," also vary. Some Pentecostals believe speaking in tongues is a sign of being filled with the Spirit, while others believe there is only one Spirit. We receive it fully (Schwarz, 2004).

Pentecostalism is a global faith movement characterised by confessions of faith and doctrinal texts, influenced by charismatic and neo-charismatic movements. Some works emphasise Pentecostalism's doctrines and rationale, focusing on Scripture (Black, 2024). Some criticise the broad phenomenological and sociological definitions of Pentecostalism that academics have accepted. Chan contends that these definitions represent a reinterpretation of Pentecostalism (Chan, 2005). In contrast, Menzies feels that works about Pentecostals that are sociologically orientated frequently contain exaggerations and errors (Menzies, 2013). The decision, according to Chan, is whether to define Pentecostalism in terms of historical ties to a Pentecostal movement, emphasising history and theology, or concentrating on a collection of phenomenologically understood religious experiences, emphasising practice over theology (Chan, 2005). This method might only partially capture the Spirit of Pentecostalism.

According to Anderson, Pentecostalism has significantly impacted African Christianity, with the spirit churches (Aladuras) being a notable exception. They differ in various ways, including using healing symbols, power and protection symbols, leadership patterns, cultural adaptations, and different Church vestment. They also have a distinct perspective on African faiths and culture, healing methods, and their impact to Christianity in the larger African environment. This unique approach often clashes with those heavily influenced by Western Pentecostalism, causing tension (Anderson, 2019). Some autonomous Pentecostal churches have recently adopted liturgical customs like anointing oil and selecting apostles, bishops, and prophets that are more in line with African indigenous churches (Anderson, 2001). For more than a century, the AICs have been at the vanguard of contextualising Christianity in Africa, and African Pentecostalism is incredibly diverse and creative. One African reformation that has radically changed the nature of Christianity, including Orthodox churches, is the Pentecostalism of African Christianity in the twentieth century (Anderson, 2019). Therefore, contemporary African Pentecostalism has significantly influenced Nigeria's religious landscape, particularly in relation to the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion). Pentecostalism emphasizes healing, miracles, prosperity, and one-on-one experiences with the Holy Spirit, while Anglicanism has traditionally maintained theological orthodoxy and a structured liturgy. The growing interaction between Pentecostalism and Anglicanism in Nigeria has raised several theological, doctrinal, and sociological concerns. The challenge of preserving doctrinal purity is significant due to the significant theological differences between the two traditions. The Anglican Church faces challenges in maintaining traditional worship and doctrine due to the increasing popularity of Pentecostal expressions. The influence of Pentecostalism has also affected Anglican worship and leadership patterns, leading to shifts in music style, charismatic practices, and more lay involvement.

Statement of the Problem

Nigeria's religious landscape has been profoundly altered by contemporary African Pentecostalism, especially in relation to the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion). Pentecostalism places a strong focus on healing, miracles, prosperity, and one-on-one experiences with the Holy Spirit, whereas Anglicanism has historically upheld theological orthodoxy, historical continuity, and a structured liturgy. The growing interaction between Pentecostalism and Anglicanism in Nigeria has raised several theological, doctrinal, and sociological concerns. One major issue is the difficulty of preserving doctrinal purity due to the significant theological differences between the two traditions. The rise of prosperity gospel preaching, the commercialization of miracles, and an intense focus on spiritual warfare within Pentecostalism have led to debates about the authenticity of such practices in Christian faith. On the other hand, the Anglican Church has faced challenges in maintaining its traditional forms of worship and doctrine amid the increasing popularity of Pentecostal expressions. Furthermore, the rapid growth of Pentecostal churches, often without structured theological education or formal leadership, has introduced doctrinal

inconsistencies and ethical concerns. In some cases, pastors lacking theological training appear more concerned with material gain than with genuine spiritual growth, promoting a view of God that is based on exchange rather than faith. The influence of Pentecostalism has also affected Anglican worship and leadership patterns, leading to shifts in music style, openness to charismatic practices, and more lay involvement. These changes have raised concerns about the erosion of Anglican identity and the weakening of its distinct ecclesiastical structure. However, there remains a significant gap in the scholarly investigation of the reciprocal relationship between Pentecostalism and mainline denominations, particularly the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion). Therefore, this study aims to critically examine the impact of Pentecostalism on the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion), with a focus on the theological, doctrinal, and structural changes it has brought, as well as its broader implications for Christianity in Nigeria.

Objectives of the Study

1. To assess the doctrinal foundations of both Pentecostalism and Anglicanism in order to understand their theological congruencies and divergences within the Nigerian Christian landscape.
2. To critically examine the liturgical transformation within the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) as a result of Pentecostal influence, particularly in worship forms, musical expressions, and congregational participation.
3. To investigate how Pentecostalism has reshaped the structural and doctrinal frameworks of the Anglican Church, including leadership patterns and theological formation.
4. To evaluate the socio-religious implications of Pentecostal teachings in Nigeria, such as prosperity theology, healing narratives, and spiritual warfare ideologies, and their impact on Christian practice and public theology.
5. To explore how Anglican traditions have influenced Pentecostal churches, particularly through formal leadership structures, clerical vestments, and theological education initiatives.

Research Questions

1. What are the theological distinctions and shared beliefs between Pentecostal and Anglican traditions in Nigeria?
2. In what ways has Pentecostal worship altered the liturgical expressions of the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion)?
3. What changes in doctrine and leadership organization have emerged in the Anglican Church due to Pentecostal influence?
4. How have prosperity gospel messages and spiritual deliverance practices shaped religious life and perceptions of Christianity in Nigeria?
5. In what manner have Pentecostal churches adopted elements of Anglicanism in terms of ecclesiastical structure and theological training?

Conceptual Framework

Dairo claims that African Pentecostalism is gaining popularity in Africa's religious and political scene, citing a comprehensive and quickly developing literature on the subject. However, many concerns remain unsolved (Dairo, 2019). African Pentecostalism is the fastest-growing segment (Asamoah-Gyadu, 2005) of the Christian Movement in Africa and the world (Freston, 2001). Cox aligned that the movement is reshaping and redefining religion not only Christianity in the twenty-first century (Cox, 1996). Because of their emphasis on the post-conversion experience of "baptism of the Holy Spirit," which is different from conversion and is manifested by speaking in tongues, Bankole saw Pentecostal congregations as having a distinctive doctrinal system (Bankole, 2014). Ojo and Bankole claim that one of the hallmarks of African Pentecostalism is the Commission to witness on a worldwide basis. Therefore, this mandate has moved a phenomenon that deserves a global appellation (Ojo & Bankole, 2019).

Adesanya argues that African Pentecostalism is a pragmatic gospel movement that addresses issues like sickness, poverty, evil spirits, and sorcery. Its indigenous character offers answers to some fundamental questions and has succeeded in achieving miracles and fulfilling divine gifts (Adesanya, 2019). Olademo's comparative analysis identifies Pentecostalism as a distinct form of Christianity with unique characteristics compared to mainstream Christianity (Olademo, 2009). Pentecostals display religious features like the Holy Spirit's manifestation, spontaneous worship, eloquent leaders, women in ministry, and the prosperity gospel, which includes healing, breakthrough, anointing, and salvational teachings (Olademo, 2009). Osijonwo recognises that Pentecostalism is a Christian system of belief that highlights God's presence via the Holy Spirit's charismatic gifts and character. While there may be disparities in the manifestation of Holy Spirit gifts between denominations, this does not suggest a lack of God's power or influence. The same Holy Spirit generates holiness, a hallmark of an honest Christian, regardless of the degree of anointing or gifting (Osijonwo, 2019).

Woodhead compared evangelical and Pentecostal Christianity, highlighting their achievements. Evangelicals affirm the Bible's authority, human sinfulness, Jesus Christ's redemption, family values, and active evangelisation. They emphasise firsthand encounters with the holy and spiritual "birth." Evangelicalism, rooted in early modern Christian confessionalism, prioritises collaboration over intra-Protestant rivalry. They value experience and validation over differences in church membership, regardless of affiliation. They prioritise experiences and affirmations over differences in churchmanship. Charismatic Christianity, another pan-denominational movement that encompasses Pentecostalism and may sometimes be referred to as Pentecostal Christianity, has also affected evangelicalism in its increasing focus on the significance of personal experience. The immediate experience of God as the Holy Spirit is emphasised in charismatic Christianity. Consequently, evangelical Protestantism currently encompasses a range of viewpoints. The most conservative evangelicals, often known as fundamentalists, who uphold the supreme and unquestionable authority of Scripture, represent one extreme.

Charismatic evangelicals, on the other hand, believe in the inspired word of God and the direct experience of the Holy Spirit (Woodhead, 2004). Wealth-seeking and economic hardship may have contributed to the emergence of Pentecostal groups. However, because these churches are sympathetic to the situation of Nigerians and their cultural contexts, they may also inspire Christians and significantly influence the gospel's dissemination. The religious and sociocultural landscape of the nation is being significantly impacted by them (Ngbea, 2012).

The spiritual family of God, a Christian community established by the Holy Spirit via believers' testimonies of God's deeds in Jesus Christ, is what Pentecostalism stands for. Christ is the primary tenet of this unity, founded on God's written Word. Pentecostals and members of a genuine church pledge allegiance to the Word, solid theology, moral rectitude, conscience-stirring, prayer and fasting, and readiness to perform any good deed. The belief in a single body, Spirit, hope, the Lord, faith, baptism, and God is the foundation of this unity (Eph. 4:4-6) (Kore, 2013). Anderson correctly described the concept of the genuine Church as the global Church, where all redeemed people belong, and local churches where Christians are dedicated to evangelism, pastoral care, discipline, baptism, the Lord's Supper, and worship of God. True friendship among churches is only possible when they are devoted to the gospel (Anderson, 1992). Therefore, Pentecostals are orthodox in Nigeria, evangelical Christians who believe in the Holy Spirit baptism, distinct from regeneration, and marked by "signs following" (including the gifts listed in 1 Corinthians 12:8-10). Their faith is based on God's Word in Scripture and is centred on Christ and his crucified state, who now pours the Holy Spirit of promise upon his Church, as described in the book of Acts (Menzies, 2020).

Research Design

A historical-theological research design is used to trace the evolution of Pentecostalism and its influence on Anglicanism in Nigeria. This involves analyzing primary and secondary sources, including theological texts, church records, and scholarly articles.

Data Collection Methods

1. **Document Analysis** – A review of books, journal articles, and church documents related to Pentecostalism and Anglicanism in Nigeria.
2. **Interviews** – Structured and semi-structured interviews with 30 Anglican clergy, 25 Pentecostal pastors, and 400 church members to understand their perspectives on doctrinal shifts and worship practices.
3. **Participant Observation** – Attending services in both 15 Anglican and Pentecostal churches to observe worship styles, liturgical adaptations, and theological discourse.

Data Analysis

Thematic analysis is used to categorise and analyse data on theological, doctrinal, and structural developments in the Church of Nigeria. Comparative analysis is used to illustrate the contrasts and similarities between the Pentecostal and Anglican traditions.

Research Validation

The study used a combination of document review, direct observation, and interviews to confirm the trustworthiness of its qualitative research on the influence of Pentecostalism and Anglicanism in Nigeria. This approach reduced personal bias and provided a clearer view of the study's reliability. Peer review was conducted with academic peers to identify errors and misunderstandings, while reflexivity was maintained by keeping personal notes about experiences, decisions, and possible biases. The study provided detailed descriptions of events, practices, and settings, allowing others to understand the context and make judgments about the applicability of the findings.

Scope and Limitations

The study focuses primarily on the Nigerian context, with limited reference to global Pentecostal movements. Data collection is confined to selected Anglican dioceses and Pentecostal churches, which may not fully represent national trends. This methodology ensures a comprehensive understanding of how Pentecostalism has influenced the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) while maintaining academic rigour and objectivity.

Ethical Considerations

All participants were informed of the study's academic purpose and consented to interviews. Anonymity was maintained where requested. The research was conducted with respect for denominational doctrines and practices, ensuring objectivity and scholarly integrity.

Anglicanism and Pentecostalism in Nigeria

Despite the presence of Rev. Thomas Birch Freeman in the region, Yoruba enslaved people who converted to Christianity returned to Badagry, Nigeria, after the British government outlawed the slave trade in 1807. There, Samuel Ajayi Crowther and Rev. Henry Townsend brought Christianity to the native population of Badagry, Yourbaland, and Nigeria in 1842 (Ajayi, 2007). In 1864, Rev. Samuel Ajayi Crowther was elected, consecrated and posted to the See of the Niger. Samuel Ajayi Crowther was gifted in languages "glossolalia" (Lum & Harvey, 2018; Whelan, 2007), particularly that of Acts. 2:5-7, which is one of the core beliefs of the Pentecostals. Crowther produced a Yoruba dictionary and translated the Bible into Yoruba. In 1843, he released a grammar book and then a Yoruba translation of the Anglican Book of Common Prayer. In 1852, he also put together a Yoruba language vocabulary. Crowther released an Igbo primer, a Nupe language primer in 1860, and a comprehensive Nupe grammar and vocabulary in 1864 after the British Niger Expeditions (Oluniyi, 2017).

Christianity witnessed tremendous expansion after 1885 in Nigeria (Falk, 2015). Today, the Church of Nigeria is the Anglican Communion's second-biggest and largest province in Africa (McKinnon, 2020), with over 18 million members (Munoz, 2016).

Following the Azusa Street Revival in 1906, modern Pentecostalism expanded to Africa and prioritised global evangelisation. Using strategies like door-to-door evangelism, gatherings, and "tent crusades," there are currently many Pentecostal churches in Africa that are self-governing, self-propagating, and self-supporting (Corten, 2001). According to Benjamin and Nche, Pentecostalism, which emerged in Nigeria about 1910, had a tremendous effect on Anglicanism and other Orthodox Church traditions (Benjamin & Nche, 2013). In fact, in 1905, Garrick Sokary Braide, the pioneer of faith healing services in Nigeria (Fatokun, 2006), started preaching the Gospel of Christ and emphasised conversion, destruction of idols, faith healing (Ukachi, 2013), prophetic healing, divine revelation, spiritual gifts, prayer and fasting, and abstinence from alcoholic drinks (Ayegboyin & Ishola, 2013). His revivalist movements reached some parts of the CMS Niger Delta Churches and the southern part of Nigeria. There was the case of "Precious Stone", which started in Ijebu-Ode, the southwestern part of Nigeria, around 1918 due to the outbreak of an epidemic that killed about two hundred thousand people. It was also a prayer movement within the Anglican Church led by Daddy Ali and later J.B. Eshinshinade and Sophia Odunlami. They were storing rainwater, consecrating it, and administering it to heal people; unfortunately, they were later rejected from the Church because of the infant baptism controversy (Osijonwo, 2019). Furthermore, Moses Orimolade started as an itinerant evangelist; he later became a sexton of Holy Trinity Anglican Church, Ebute-Ero, Lagos, in 1924, but he left the Church when his style and message came under the criticism of the vicar, Rev. T.A.J. Ogunbiyi, and later founded the Cherubim and Seraphim Movement. Josiah Oluwalowo Oshitelu was also dismissed from the Anglican Church on charges of unorthodox beliefs and erroneous practices; he was a former pupil teacher and catechist in Ogun State around 1925 (Osijonwo, 2019). He later founded Church of the Lord (Aladura). Enoch Adejare Adeboye, a former Anglican member, and his father, a lay reader, shared a robust Anglican heritage before joining the Redeemed Christian Church of God around 1973 (Daniels, 2024).

Much has been written about the fantastic success of Christianity in modern Nigeria and its unmatched rise since Nigerian independence in 1960. Unfortunately, Christian martyrdom has been higher in Nigeria than in any other nation in the world (Maxey & Ozodo, 2017), including in the more widely publicised Middle Eastern religious conflicts. However, despite the persecution, the Nigerian Church continued to expand (Mandryk, 2010). The Pentecostalism church's expansion was greatly influenced by the charismatic revival of the 1970s, which made it one of the largest Christian groups in Africa. Nonetheless, the most significant Christian organisation in Africa is still the Anglican and Roman Catholic Church (Kalu, 2008). In 1978, Sharing of Ministries Abroad (SOMA) was established as a global Anglican institution to spread charismatic teachings and thoughts. As a mission agency, SOMA aims to strengthen the Body of Christ, renew the Holy Spirit, and facilitate short-term cross-cultural missions for personal, Church, and community transformation. African

ecstatic Christianity has also influenced Anglican experiences in the Caribbean, Latin America, and portions of Africa, notably Nigeria, where African Independent Churches operate (Maiden, 2017). The Anglican Church has several traditions, including Catholic, Evangelical, Liberal, Conservative, Charismatic/Pentecostal, and Traditional styles. Archbishop George Carey emphasises that Anglicanism encompasses many ideas and traditions. The fundamental discrepancy is between the Low-Church tradition (evangelicals) and the High-Church tradition (Anglo-Catholics), both of which sprang from English Christianity. This disparity has affected many other Anglican Communion churches due to the influences of missionary organisations (Osijonwo, 2019).

Pentecostalism is broadly divided into four subcategories (Burgess, 2011): Classical Pentecostals, Older Independent and Spirit Churches, Older Church Charismatics, and Neo-Pentecostal and neo-charismatic Churches, which can be broadly understood (Lytton, 2024). A strict ethical code is one of the distinguishing features of classical Pentecostal denominational Churches in Africa. The Churches that fall into this category in Nigeria include The Apostolic Church, Assemblies of God, the Apostolic Faith and Foursquare Gospel Church. Some Charismatic Churches like Deeper Life Bible Church and Mountain of Fire and Miracle Ministries equally share in this Classical Pentecostal (Fatokun, 2006). The majority of converts adhere to a strict holiness code of conduct in social life, adhering to perfectionist doctrine, personal ethics, and biblical inerrancy (Marshall, 1993). They are prohibited from lying, cheating, stealing, gossiping, taking bribes, and engaging in other sins. They also enforce other moral codes, limiting contact between members of different sexes. Churches enforce strict dress codes and discourage members from wearing earrings, necklaces, curls, and transparent materials. They also discourage active participation in politics, believing it would jeopardise their spiritual life and hope of heaven due to the corrupt worldly system (Fatokun, 2006).

Older Independent and Spirit Churches are churches in China, India, and sub-Saharan Africa with a theology consistent with Pentecostalism, though not always claiming Pentecostal affiliation. Older Church Charismatics are non-Pentecostal denominations that share many doctrinal tenets with Pentecostals. Charismatic refers to theological inclination, while Pentecostal has denominational implications. For instance, the Assemblies of God cannot be a charismatic Pentecostal, and a charismatic Presbyterian cannot be a Pentecostal Presbyterian. In the 1960s, the Charismatic Movement gave rise to Charismatics. Neo-Charismatic and Neo-Pentecostal churches are separate denominations that have been greatly impacted by the Charismatic Movement and traditional Pentecostalism. These megachurches, commonly referred to as the "Third Wave," tend to be more charismatic or Pentecostal in their doctrine. The Pentecostal revival in the early 20th century and the Charismatic Movement in the 1980s and 1990s were the first waves of the Spirit. The Third Wave includes denominations like Vineyard and Calvary Chapel (Anderson, 2010). Today, from every indication, Nigeria could be described as the central hub of the Pentecostal force in Africa, with Pastor Enoch Adeboye, Bishop David Oyedepo, Pastor Williams F. Kumuyi, Pastor Chris Okotie, Pastor Chris Oyakhilome, Pastor Ayo Orisajefor, Pastor Matthew

Asimolowo, Bishop David Abioye, Pastor Paul Enenche, Pastor David Ogbueli, Pastor Paul Adefarasin, etc.

Contemporary Issues with African Pentecostalism in Nigeria

According to Jones, the prosperity gospel's faulty conception of the relationship between God and humanity makes it a false gospel. If this is true, man is the measure of everything, God is unimportant, and grace is rendered obsolete. This perspective reduces God to a "cosmic porter" who attends to the wants and desires of his creation, turning the connection between God and man into a transaction. This viewpoint is insufficient and unbiblical because it is not found in the Scripture (Jones, 2024). Because prosperity theology emphasises faith, money, and health as essential Christian advantages, it has drawn interest from religious and secular African institutions. The Pentecostal theology of prosperity and blessing has attracted public comments and scrutiny due to its hermeneutical, exegetical, and application analysis and practices (Iluno, 2019). This theology raises socio-religious concerns and theological discourse. Despite using scriptural citations, it presents as a rhetorical and experimental teaching rather than a written theology. This has led to public comments, reactions, and scrutiny.

Some Pentecostal preachers frequently claim miracles in Nigeria, including reviving the dead, curing HIV and AIDS, and making the barren conceived. Numerous accounts of people being healed and delivered from various diseases exist, but the validity of some claimed miracles remains to be determined (Ademiluka, 2023) because some of the purported miraculous healings appear to be exaggerated, illogical, and contrived. With so many people falling for phoney miracle workers, Nigeria's search for miracles has turned into a social problem. Because the receivers concentrate on the preacher rather than God, many miracles in Nigeria are human-initiated. Indeed, another divergence from the New Testament model of miracles is the commercialisation of miracles by some Nigerian Pentecostal ministers. This incorrect belief in miracles has been made worse by Nigeria's economic predicament, which is marked by corruption and poor management (Ademiluka, 2023).

In many African Pentecostal contexts, pastors hold a central role of influence that often extends beyond conventional religious or societal boundaries. Their authority is not solely derived from formal theological training or denominational structures but is often based on claims of spiritual endowment, divine calling, and their responsiveness to community needs. These leaders are frequently regarded as spiritual mediators, counsellors, or even community figures of last resort. However, this high level of trust and influence can become problematic. In some cases, it has led to instances of financial manipulation, abuse of power, and sexual misconduct. Such occurrences highlight deeper issues within the structure and culture of leadership in Pentecostal circles. The authority of pastors in these settings is shaped by a mixture of doctrinal beliefs, cultural expectations, and socio-economic factors. This makes it essential to reflect critically on how such leadership is exercised and to establish safeguards that protect both spiritual integrity and human dignity (Ogunbiyi, 2025).

In Nigeria, African Pentecostal churches typically promote monogamous marriage as the biblical standard, which often clashes with the traditional acceptance of polygamy in many communities. This creates difficulties for converts who practice polygamy, as they may be asked to end relationships with additional wives and face exclusion from church leadership or social acceptance within the congregation. Church leaders also find it challenging to offer care that respects both church teachings and the complicated realities of polygamous families. While the church's stance is partly motivated by concerns for women's well-being and family harmony, it can sometimes come across as insensitive to cultural traditions. Furthermore, the legal system in Nigeria recognizes polygamous unions under customary and Islamic law, but not under civil law, adding another layer of complexity for Pentecostal believers navigating these differing expectations (Ogunbiyi, et al, 2025).

African Pentecostalism has been beneficial in involving and engaging Nigerian youth, but there are complaints about its handling of misbehavior or restlessness among young people recently. The African Pentecostal movement in Nigeria often overlooks socio-economic issues like unemployment, insurgency, gender equality, poverty, and corruption that exacerbate young dissatisfaction. It can lead to alienation and separation among young people, potentially leading to rebellion or joining underground groups in society. Pentecostal youth activities in Nigeria have minimal influence due to their independence from government or civil society efforts, as well as their meagre finances. They frequently emphasise supernatural treatments while ignoring practical aid such as therapy, rehabilitation, and empowerment. Vulnerable or financially suffering teenagers may be exploited and depressed as a result of their basic financial needs, church requests for donations, and other religious pressures. To effectively manage adolescent restlessness, Pentecostal churches should use more inclusive, holistic approaches and place a greater focus on divine solutions (Ogunbiyi et al., 2025).

In many Nigerian Pentecostal churches, depression is often seen mainly as a spiritual problem caused by sin, demonic forces, or a lack of faith. This narrow view oversimplifies what is actually a complex mental health issue and can lead to people feeling blamed for their condition. Those who are struggling might hide their pain because the culture encourages always showing faith and victory. As a result, some avoid seeking professional help since therapy or medication might be viewed as a sign of weak belief. This situation sometimes leads to harmful practices, like long deliverance rituals or demanding money for healing, which can make things worse. Ethically, this raises serious concerns because it overlooks the full reality of a person's experience and can harm their dignity. To better support those with depression, Pentecostal communities should adopt a more balanced view—one that recognizes mental health struggles as real and encourages compassion. It should also involve educating church leaders about mental health and encouraging a mix of spiritual support and professional care, so healing addresses the whole person, not just the spiritual side (Ogunbiyi, et al, 2025).

With churches emerging in various settings, including shops, factories, hotels, and public and private schools, the number of Pentecostal churches in Nigeria has increased

dramatically (Ogunbade, 2020). Despite lacking theological training, some church pastors value materialism, wealth, and self-promotion more than the standard and high calibre of biblical doctrines, values, and character. As a result of their teachings, there is now an increase in immodest dressing, sexual immorality, family disintegration, and moral laxity among members. This is due to the belief that the Lord looks at the heart rather than outward appearance (Onah & Agbo, 2021). Some Pentecostal pastors are accused of pressuring Christians into paying more than 10% as tithes by claiming that those who do not pay tithe would not be blessed, get to paradise, or get healed (Adediran & Ayantoye, 2024).

The Influences of Pentecostalism on the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion)

The Pentecostal movement has significantly influenced the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) and other mainline churches in Nigeria, making it a significant religious influencer (Ugwuewo, 2023). First, the liturgy is a form of worship that provides structure and form to our worship. It originated in Jewish worship, dating back 3,000 years, and is characterised by congregational and participative practices. The main goal is to sacrifice reverence and worship to the Most High God. Because of Pentecostalism, the Anglican Church has included contemporary musical instruments in its liturgical worship, enabling Anglican worship to include drumming, dancing, clapping hands, and chorus singing. Other orthodox Churches have also generally adopted this strategy since it has grown in popularity and is consistent with contemporary trends.

Many examples of Jesus' healings deal with demonic deliverance (Luke 11:14-23, Matt. 8:28-34, Luke 8:26-39) (Hunter-Urban, 2019). Pentecostals believe in the Holy Spirit's power over demons, obtained through prayer and fasting. Their growth is attributed to their belief in deliverance from evil spirits, with a focus on healing and divine intervention, making it a significant aspect of their faith (Adesanya, 2019). A church service that includes spiritual warfare, demon casting, and prophetic and healing ministry is known as a revival and deliverance service. Members and participants are typically urged or encouraged to fast while attending the program since it has several spiritual advantages, aids their healing or deliverance processes, and is safe (Adesanwo, 2018). Healing, revival, and deliverance services are typically held weekly in Pentecostal churches; recently, some traces of these services have been found in some Anglican churches, particularly those dominated by Igbos and Yorubas.

The media is essential for spreading knowledge and increasing awareness, especially in the context of Pentecostal congregations. The internet has enabled the gospel to reach people worldwide, and Pentecostals are becoming more conscious of how technology may support mission expansion and evangelical objectives. The global internet is a vital component of globalisation and a dynamic platform for Pentecostal congregations. In Nigeria, for example, the Living Faith Church Worldwide, sometimes called Winners Chapel, has a new website used to market goods and teachings. Oyedepo and his wife's books are available on the website, which encourages users to download, purchase online, or get help from the Church (Kuponu, 2015). The Anglican Church and other institutions amid COVID-19

responded quickly by using social media to broadcast their services and events. However, previously, the majority of the Anglican Churches and orthodox Churches exhibited a lack of interest in social media, especially streaming channels (Wobodo, 2020).

The egalitarian ethos of Pentecostalism appeals significantly to many Nigerian Christians, particularly young people, women, and the uneducated, who were previously under-represented in the structure and leadership of most orthodox churches. It emphasises that authority and power can only manifest if given by the Holy Spirit, not in a religious bureaucracy, theological education and official ordination. Because of this fundamental principle, young people and women have many chances to serve in Pentecostal churches as preachers, evangelists, and healers (Moon, 2024). At the parish, archdeaconry, and diocese levels, the Anglican Church has begun letting lay preachers and youth groups participate in Sunday services, parish fellowship, and vigils.

Since the Christian Students' Social Movement of Nigeria was established in 1977 to highlight spiritual forces and promote reform via prayer, Pentecostalism has played a prominent role in Nigerian national politics. Pentecostal pastors, such as Pastor Chris Okotie and Pastor Tunde Bakare, have reportedly indicated interest in running for president and have done so at the national or primary levels. Okotie is looking for political parties to adopt him to promote reconciliation and reconstruction (Ikem, 2020). According to the Primate of the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion), the Church must uphold biblical values and constitutional political provisions, so he has admonished bishops and clergy to encourage their parishioners to join political parties and run for office in Nigeria.

The Influences of Orthodoxy/Anglicanism on Pentecostalism in Nigeria

Bishops govern the Anglican Church in a hierarchical structure, including the House of Bishops, House of Clergy, and House of Laity. The Church's objectives include advancing the Christian faith, promoting Scripture's authority, and fostering Anglican fellowship. Each Diocese within the Anglican Communion is autonomous despite shared traditions and doctrines. The Diocesan Bishop, Archdeacons, and other clergymen, catechists, lay readers, or paid employees must retire at 70 years old, but clergy may retire before 70 with the approval of the Diocesan Board, subject to the Anglican Communion Constitution. According to Daniels, the general overseer of the Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG), Pastor Enoch Adeboye, announced leadership changes in 2022 after some well-known individuals retired. All RCCG pastors will be eligible to retire at age 70; however, some may be assigned to less essential positions after they retire (Daniel, 2024). Most Pentecostal churches have lately adopted the titles of bishop, presbyter, reverend, and priest to become constitutionally based organisations.

Additionally, they de-secularise their leadership structure and impose retirement ages for their successors. Bishop David Oyedepo revised the Faith Tabernacle and the Living Faith Church Worldwide constitution in 2024. The new constitution de-secularises church leadership and limits successors to a single seven-year tenure, and the Board of Trustees must approve any additional terms. Future apostles serving on the Commission can only

serve for a maximum of 65 years. The Executive Council is now a Council of Priests, and vice presidents are now presbyters. Local churches will use separate boards for internal management. The line of succession, particularly in prominent Pentecostal churches, has lately become more constitutionally based than Holy Spirit-led. However, the issue remains whether the constitution is a Holy Spirit-based document or a means of preventing particular senior pastors from succeeding themselves.

Clergy often dress in church vestments both during and after services. While orthodox churches, Roman Catholic, Anglican, and Methodist churches hardly ever operate without them such as chasuble, amice, cincture, cope, surplice, rochet, chimere, mitre, cassock, stole, pectoral cross and clerical skirt and collar; certain Pentecostally related groups, such as Baptists, Adventists, and new generation churches, wear them sparingly. General, episcopal, and Holy Communion vestments are the three categories Anglican garments fall into (Imasuen & Atowoju, 2009). Interestingly, some Pentecostal overseers and pastors have developed an addiction to wearing orthodox vestments, which the early Pentecostal fathers disapproved of and condemned. Some are now wearing these vestments to informal events and outings.

Beginning at the parish level, the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) has a strict selection procedure for church ministry. After completing a thorough exam, candidates are allocated to theological institutes. They have extensive training in establishments approved by the Diocese. Some candidates may be morally and spiritually bankrupt due to inadequate auditing and selection procedures. The seminaries of the Church of Nigeria require a school certificate with at least five credits in English, mathematics, and Christian Religious Studies. English language, Christian religious studies, and two more subjects are included in the UTME (JAMB) test. Authentic baptism and confirmation certificates, medical clearance, and other test results are required of candidates (Ogunbiyi, et al, 2024). Early Pentecostal fathers prioritised baptism with the Holy Spirit and His gifts as evidence of salvation, focusing on personal experiences, speaking in tongues, teaching or healing, and active church service participation as the basic ordination requirements. They considered seminary education a waste of time and believed that all pastors needed was biblical knowledge, interpretations, and other Holy Spirit gifts. Recently, major Pentecostal churches in Nigeria have established their seminary and school of theology, providing comprehensive pastoral and religious education and university-affiliated courses for their pastors in training as a core ordination requirement in Nigeria.

Orthodox/Anglican church hymns are pieces of music written for Christian worship that are frequently performed with an organ accompaniment and led by a choir and congregation. These include hymns for processions, introits, graduals, offertories, excursions, and recessions. Saint Paul urged the churches at Ephesus and Colossa to sing hymns and psalms for mutual support and edification. Christians have sung these hymns in both public and private devotions from the beginning of time (Matthew 26:30; Acts 16:25; Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16). Early church songs that are not included in the Bible are being sung today (Matthew-Green, 2007). In addition to buying pipe organs and employing orthodox

organists and choir directors to teach and perform them, Pentecostal churches are introducing mass choruses for song performances, e.g., Mountain of Fire Ministries.

In contrast, early African Pentecostal fathers believed that yelling, jumping, and robust dancing were the proper means to demonstrate joy and gratitude to God and that hymn-based ceremonies were dull and inflexible. Ayegboyin and Ishola highlight the African Pentecostals' unique, accessible, and lovelier mode of worship. They argue that the Africans enjoy a more demonstrative form of worship, where participants' hearts and souls are involved, unlike the passive members in mission churches who allow only clergy and critical officials to be dramatis personae (Ayegboyin & Ishola, 2013).

Discussion of Findings

This study underscores the evolving religious terrain in Nigeria, where Pentecostalism and Anglicanism have increasingly converged, giving rise to a hybridised ecclesiastical culture that reflects both tension and transformation. The analysis reveals that Pentecostalism, once seen as an outsider to traditional Christian orthodoxy, now shapes and is simultaneously shaped by the ecclesiastical traditions of the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion). This interplay is neither passive nor uniform but represents a complex negotiation of identity, theology, worship and practice.

1. Liturgical and Theological Convergence

This study underscores the evolving religious terrain in Nigeria, where Pentecostalism and Anglicanism have increasingly converged, giving rise to a hybridised ecclesiastical culture that reflects both tension and transformation. The analysis reveals that Pentecostalism, once seen as an outsider to traditional Christian orthodoxy, now shapes and is simultaneously shaped by the ecclesiastical traditions of the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion). This interplay is neither passive nor uniform but represents a complex negotiation of identity, theology, worship and practice. Anglican liturgical rites, known for their structured worship, are distinct from the more expressive, often charismatic style of African Pentecostalism in Nigeria. While some Anglicans have adopted some Pentecostal elements, the two traditions differ in their emphasis on tradition, sacrament, and the role of the Spirit. It was discovered that the term "Anglocostalism" describes the phenomenon of Anglicans incorporating Pentecostal practices into their worship (Zink, 2012), such as more praise and worship music, or prayer in tongues, altar calls, extemporaneous prayer, rhythmic music, testimonies, revival meetings, vigils, healing sessions, especially in dioceses with high youth participation and urban congregations. While some Anglicans may adopt Pentecostal elements, the underlying theology and liturgical practices of the two traditions remain distinct. The influence of Pentecostalism on the Anglican Church has led to debates about the nature of worship, the role of the Spirit, and the balance between tradition and innovation.

2. Ecclesiastical Titles and Institutional Identity

The research also reveals significant structural and leadership shifts in Nigerian Pentecostalism, as several Pentecostal congregations and pastors have lately been spotted using Anglican clergy titles such as "Archbishop", "Primate", "Bishop", "Venerable", and "Reverend", titles that they once condemned. This adoption is viewed as a means for Pentecostal churches to achieve status and power by adopting the hierarchical systems of the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) (McKinnon, 2021). This adoption expresses a desire for institutional continuity, management and integrity and goes beyond simple ornamentation.

3. Theological Education and Clerical Formation

Many Pentecostal churches in Nigeria have indeed embraced theological and seminary education, though there are varying degrees of involvement and historical context. While some Pentecostal leaders previously lacked formal theological training, a significant number of prominent Pentecostal denominations now have established theological institutions to train pastors and leaders (Ogunewu, 2022; Richie, 2020). This mirrored Anglican seminary education reflects a growing understanding of the importance of sound theological education, pastoral competence, and institutional sustainability for ministry and leadership in African Pentecostalism. Several prominent Pentecostal churches in Nigeria, such as the Church of God Mission, Redeemed Christian Church of God, and Deeper Life Bible Church, have established their own theological institutions.

4. Media, Technology, and Ecclesial Adaptation

The influence of media and digital technology emerged as a critical finding. Pentecostal churches have leveraged media—particularly social media, livestreaming, and internet-based evangelism—with impressive effectiveness. This has not only amplified their reach but also influenced Anglican communication strategies. In response, Anglican parishes, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic in Nigeria, began to embrace digital platforms for worship, discipleship, and outreach. This technological embrace represents a significant departure from earlier Anglican conservatism regarding media use and suggests an evolving ecclesial imagination driven by necessity and innovation.

5. Polity, Egalitarianism, and Youth Inclusion

Another profound finding is the sociological impact of Pentecostal egalitarianism on Anglican polity. Pentecostalism's openness to the leadership of women, youth, and non-theologically trained individuals has challenged Anglican clerical elitism. In response, Anglican organisations have gradually made room for auxiliary roles and ministries such as lay reader, evangelist, youth, choir, and women's and girls' organisations. While these changes remain modest and largely contextual, they reflect a subtle reconfiguration of Anglican authority in light of Pentecostal populism.

6. Political Engagement and Public Witness

The socio-political dimension of this religious transformation is equally significant. Pentecostal leaders in Nigeria have increasingly positioned themselves as public intellectuals and political actors, engaging national discourse on governance, politics, morality, and development. While the Anglican Church in Nigeria may have a long history of promoting a certain way of life, such as a focus on personal piety and good works, there's a growing awareness among its leadership and members that they need to be more engaged in the political sphere to affect real change in Nigeria (Danfulani, 2019). Recently, the Anglican Church, traditionally more reserved in political matters, has begun to encourage its members—clergy and laity alike—to participate in politics, advocate for social justice, and uphold biblical values in public life. This political awakening is partially inspired by Pentecostal activism and reflects a theological shift from ecclesiastical insularity to public engagement.

7. Ethical Challenges and Religious Commodification

At the same time, the study draws attention to some disturbing developments. In some Pentecostal churches, religious experiences have been turned into commodities—evident in the sale of anointing oils, so-called miracle tickets, and manipulative fundraising. These practices raise serious ethical questions. They do not reflect the true message of the gospel and have, unfortunately, appeared in some Anglican settings as well, especially where people, out of desperation, are willing to go to any length to receive miracles. This is not just a doctrinal issue but a moral one. It calls on the Church to speak out boldly and stand against the growing trend of treating faith like a market product.

8. Reciprocal Influence and Ritual Reversal

Another observation is the recent shift in some Pentecostal churches towards practices they once openly rejected. Some Pentecostal leaders now wear robes during services and celebrate Holy Communion with formality and ritual—clearly influenced by Anglican tradition. This shows that, while Pentecostalism has brought more flexibility and informality into Anglican worship, it has also taken on aspects of Anglican order and appearance. What this reveals is that no church tradition exists in isolation. Each one is influenced, over time, by the others it comes in contact with.

Recommendations and Conclusion

African Pentecostalism has revitalised Nigerian Christianity with energy, innovation, and grassroots mobilisation. Anglicanism, on the other hand, has offered Pentecostalism a model of ecclesial order, theological depth, and institutional continuity. Both traditions have strengths and limitations, but their interaction has the potential to yield a more holistic expression of the Christian faith—one that is both rooted in Scripture and responsive to social realities. The study hereby recommends the following:

1. **Doctrinal Integrity and Theological Education** – Both Pentecostal and Anglican churches should emphasise sound biblical teaching and formal theological training to prevent doctrinal errors and promote a balanced Christian faith.
2. **Balanced Worship Practices** – While Pentecostal-style worship has revitalised Anglican liturgy, the Church should ensure that its traditional values are not lost. A blend of structured liturgy and contemporary worship can enhance spiritual engagement while maintaining Anglican identity.
3. **Ethical Leadership and Governance** – Pentecostal churches should adopt more structured leadership and accountability systems, while the Anglican Church should remain open to Spirit-led leadership without compromising its governance principles.
4. **Regulation of Prosperity Gospel Teachings** – The Church should address the excesses of prosperity theology and commercialised miracles by refocusing on the core message of the gospel—salvation, holiness, and service to God.
5. **Media and Technological Advancements** – The Anglican Church should further embrace digital evangelism, following the example of Pentecostal ministries that effectively use social media and online platforms for outreach and discipleship.
6. **Interdenominational Cooperation** – Both movements should engage in dialogues and collaborations to foster unity, doctrinal soundness, and collective efforts toward societal transformation.

The interplay between Pentecostalism and the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) has led to significant theological, liturgical, and structural changes within Nigerian Christianity. Pentecostalism has infused Anglican worship with vibrancy, while Anglican traditions have introduced order and theological depth into some Pentecostal practices. However, challenges such as doctrinal inconsistencies, the commercialisation of religion, and leadership concerns remain. This study highlights the need for a balanced approach, where both movements retain their distinct identities while embracing healthy exchanges. By fostering theological depth, ethical leadership, and Christ-centred teachings, Nigerian Christianity can thrive as a dynamic and spiritually enriching faith tradition.

Contribution to Knowledge

The paper explores the relationship between Pentecostalism and the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion), focusing on the rise of “Anglocostalism,” a term that captures the blending of Pentecostal worship expressions with Anglican liturgy. It traces noticeable changes in Anglican church life, such as shifts in doctrine, adjustments to church structures, and evolving leadership patterns. The research draws on interviews, field observations, and document analysis to show that many Anglican churches now include healing and deliverance services, spontaneous worship, online evangelism, and greater involvement of youth and lay members. At the same time, some Pentecostal churches have begun to adopt Anglican traits like clerical robes, formal titles, hierarchical leadership, and seminary-based ministerial training. The paper also points out areas of concern within Pentecostal practice, including the commercial use of miracles, aggressive fundraising, and prosperity preaching,

and suggests that these trends call for stronger doctrinal grounding and ethical oversight. In addition, the political activity of Pentecostal leaders has encouraged Anglicans to become more publicly engaged, leading to growing advocacy for Christian participation in governance and social issues. By placing these interactions in a wider African historical and cultural frame, the study adds to the understanding of Indigenous church developments and shows that mutual influence can bring meaningful reform. It ends by recommending constructive dialogue between the two traditions as a way to strengthen the Christian witness in Nigeria without losing their individual identities.

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