

**THE CIVIL WAR REVIVAL AND ITS PENTECOSTAL  
PROGENY: A RELIGIOUS MOVEMENT AMONG THE IGBO  
PEOPLE OF EASTERN NIGERIA (1967-2002)**

**by**

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## **Abstract**

This thesis is a study of a Christian movement among the Igbo people of Eastern Nigeria from its origins in the Civil War Revival (1967-73) to the present. It argues that the success of the revival depended upon a balance between supply and demand. Colonial legacies, Western missionary endeavours, decolonisation, and civil war not only created new religious demands, they contributed to the formation of a missionary fellowship, able to exploit the disorder of Igbo society and the failure of existing religious options to fulfil traditional aspirations.

The thesis shows that during its formative period the revival's Pentecostal progeny also benefited from this missionary impulse, and the flexibility of Pentecostal spirituality, which enabled it to adapt to meet consumer demands. It examines the way the movement has evolved since the 1970s, and argues that the decline of its missionary impulse, combined with a paradigm shift from holiness to prosperity teaching, and a propensity to schism, have imposed limitations on its potential as an agent of transformation. Finally, it shows that during the 1990s, a further shift has occurred towards a theology of socio-political engagement, and examines the implications of this for the movement's identity and influence in a pluralistic society.

## Acknowledgements

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## ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

**Shortened Names and Acronyms of Churches and Church/Christian Organisations** (where the shortened form is not an acronym, it is indicated in the text by the use of italics)

AACC	All Africa Conference of Churches
ABFG	All Believers Fellowship Group
AC	Apostolic Church
ACFM	All Christians Fellowship Mission
AG	Assemblies of God
AFC	Apostolic Faith Church
AICs	African Independent Churches
ALA	Amazing Love Assembly
BFM	Bible Faith Mission
CAN	Christian Association of Nigeria
CCN	Christian Council of Nigeria
CEM	Calvary Evangelistic Mission
CESM	Christian Evangelical Social Movement
CFG	Christian Fellowship Group
CJC	Church of Jesus Christ
CHC	Christ Holy Church
<i>Christ for All</i>	Christ for All Mission
CGC	Canaan Gospel Centre
CICCU	Cambridge Inter-Collegiate Christian Union
CM	Charismatic Ministry
CMS	Church Missionary Society
COCEN	Congress of Christian Ethics in Nigeria
COCIN	Church of Christ in Nigeria
CPM	Christian Pentecostal Mission
CU	Christian Union
ECWA	Evangelical Churches of West Africa
ECU	Evangelical Christian Union
FCS	Fellowship of Christian Students
FGS	Free Gospel Society
GCM	Gospel Crusaders Mission
<i>Grace of God</i>	Grace of God Mission International
HEC	Holiness Evangelistic Church
<i>Hour of Deliverance</i>	Hour of Deliverance Ministry
<i>Hour of Freedom</i>	Hour of Freedom Evangelistic Association
IFES	Inter-Varsity Fellowship of Evangelical Students
IMC	International Missionary Council
IVCU	Ibadan Varsity Christian Union
IVF	Inter-Varsity Fellowship
<i>Jesus the Way</i>	Jesus the Way Mission
<i>Keswick</i>	Keswick Convention
LDM	Last Days Messengers

LWM	Living Word Ministries
MVG	Master's Vessel Group
MVC	Master's Vessel Church
NDP	Niger Delta Pastorate
<i>National</i> or NEM	National Evangelical Mission
NEMA	Nigerian Evangelical Missions Association
NPC	Neo-Pentecostal Church
OAIC	Organisation of African Instituted Churches
PFN	Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria
QIM	Qua Iboe Mission
QIC	Qua Iboe Church
REPETHEC	Redeemed People's Theological College
<i>Riches of Christ</i> or <i>Riches</i>	Riches of Christ Mission
RPM	Redeemed People's Mission
<i>Salvation for All</i> <i>Save the Lost</i>	Salvation for All Mission Save the Lost Mission
SCM	Student Christian Movement
SIM	Sudan Interior Mission
STLM	Save the Lost Mission
SU	Scripture Union
SUM	Sudan United Mission
TREM	The Redeemed Evangelical Mission
UNN	University of Nigeria, Nsukka
UPPB	Ufuma Practical Prayer Band
VCM	Victory Christian Mission
WATC	World Action Team for Christ
WCC	World Council of Churches

#### **Other Abbreviations and Acronyms**

FESTAC	Festival of Arts and Culture
IMF	International Monetary Fund
KJV	King James Version
NASB	New American Standard Bible
NTA	Nigerian Television Association
NYSC	National Youth Service Corps
OI	Oral Interview
OIC	Organisation of Islamic Countries
OPEC	Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries
PC	Personal Communication
RSC	'Remembering the Seventies' Conference
SAP	Structural Adjustment Programme

# CHAPTER ONE

## CONSTRUCTING AFRICAN IDENTITIES

### 1. Introduction

People now became conscious of God. People now became serious in serving God, because everybody now was grateful to God for surviving. That is why the Pentecostal revival took place more in the eastern part of Nigeria, because we are the people that really tasted the civil war. So that zeal, the seriousness that people had, coming into the church, moving into the service of God. In fact, the Holy Ghost came down fully on people. There was manifestation of the power of God . . . People were now afraid of God. And that was why the power of God manifested. But when people can now go, do what they like, worship, lift up hands that are not holy, and still go back unharmed, they will go ahead and do it. So that is why Pentecostalism is now in decline now. But thank God, there is a little awareness coming up. And there is a revival also in place. The church has come to realise it has now come into decline . . . <sup>1</sup>

The above quotation is an excerpt from an oral commentary on the Civil War Revival and its Pentecostal progeny by one of my informants. I refer to it because it contains some of the themes that I explore in this thesis: explanations of the origins, growth, and decline of revivals (in terms of the interaction between divine initiative, local socio-political distress, and human agency); fervent evangelism and extensive conversions; the nature of revival experience; the emergence of indigenous Christian leaders; the moral and social consequences of revival; and its cyclical nature.

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<sup>1</sup> OI, Leo Anorue, Bukuru, 18.9.01. See Appendix 4.2 for a fuller transcript of oral interview.

In this study, I reflect upon a popular Christian movement that began among the Igbo people during the Nigerian civil war (1967-70), its influence upon African identity construction, and its engagement with local socio-political and economic realities. I begin the chapter by setting my work in the context of African Christian studies, before outlining the main questions that have guided the research and identifying some areas of recent debate. I then discuss my own background and show how this has influenced my own role as an actor in the research process. Finally, I examine various theoretical and methodological issues that have a bearing upon my thesis.

### 1.1 Telling the Story<sup>2</sup>

As one of the ‘great realities of twentieth century Africa,’ the Christian movement is an important aspect of African identity.<sup>3</sup> Since the 1960s, scholars have drawn attention to the African Christian identity crisis and the need to promote local identities in response to socio-cultural change.<sup>4</sup> As Walls notes, now that Africa has largely rejected the Western value setting of the Christian faith, and the centre of gravity of the Christian

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<sup>2</sup> This section draws upon two recent works by Africanists: Adrian Hastings, ‘African Christian Studies, 1967-1999: Reflections of an Editor’, *Journal of Religion in Africa*, 30.1, 2000, 30-44; David Maxwell, ‘Introduction. Christianity and the African Imagination’, in David Maxwell with Ingrid Lawrie (eds.), *Christianity and the African Imagination. Essays in Honour of Adrian Hastings*, Leiden: Brill, 2002, 1-24.

<sup>3</sup> Terence O. Ranger, ‘Religion, Development and African Christian Identity’, *Neue Zeitschrift für Missionswissenschaft*, 42.1, 1986, 44.

<sup>4</sup> For instance, in 1979 Pobee called attention to the feeling that Christianity had been an instrument of oppression in Africa, and the need to translate it into ‘genuine African categories’ if it was to be integrated into African society. J. S. Pobee, *Towards an African Theology*, Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1979, 18, 9, 16. See also K. Appiah-Kubi and Sergio Torres (eds.), *African Theology en Route*, Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1979, a collection of papers from the Pan-African Conference of Third World Theologians (December 17-23, 1977, Accra, Ghana), which address the African Christian identity crisis by seeking to integrate theology into local societies. More recently, Bediako has suggested that the civilising impulse of the European missionary enterprise has hindered the quest for an African Christian identity. Kwame Bediako, *Theology and Identity*, Oxford: Orbis Books, 1993, 226-52.

world has shifted from the North to the South, this task has become all the more urgent.<sup>5</sup>

In historiography, this was first reflected in the dramatic shift, under the influence of nationalist currents, away from European missionary history to an African Christian history.<sup>6</sup> History, it was said, had to ‘strengthen the self-awareness and identity of the Christian communities,’<sup>7</sup> and serve as an ‘empowerment for the future.’<sup>8</sup> Proponents of this ‘new history’ called for an approach ‘from below’ that focused on African responses to the gospel, rather than church institutions.<sup>9</sup> An intermediate stage, nationalist historiography, condemned ‘the European rape of Africa’ and the ‘Western historical canon of race’, which affected church historiography.<sup>10</sup> However, as Kalu has noted, ‘the irony of nationalist historiography is that while condemning missionaries, they fail to see that their own people, the Africans, were the real agents who spread Christianity.’<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Andrew F. Walls, ‘Africa and Christian Identity’, *Mission Focus*, 6.7, 1978, 13.

<sup>6</sup> For a helpful summary of recent developments in African Christian historiography, see Frans J. Verstraelen, ‘History of Christianity in Africa in the Context of African History – Four Recent Contributions Compared’, *Exchange*, 31.2, April 2002, 171-76.

<sup>7</sup> Frans J. Verstraelen, ‘Doing Christian History and Thought in an African Context. A Project of Scaffolding’, in Jan Platvoet, James Cox, and Jacob Olupona (eds.), *The Study of Religions in Africa, Past, Present and Prospects. Proceedings of the Regional Conference of the International Association for the History of Religions, Harare, 1992, Zimbabwe*, Cambridge: Roots and Branches, 1996, 323; Verstraelen, ‘Christianity in Africa’, 175.

<sup>8</sup> Ogbu U. Kalu, ‘African Church Historiography’, in Toyin Falola (ed.), *African Historiography*, Harlow: Longman, 1993, 167. Friedman makes a similar point when he states that making history is a way of producing identity, and that identity is ‘a question of empowerment.’ Jonathan Friedman, ‘The Past in the Future: History and the Politics of Identity’, *American Anthropologist*, 94.4, December 1992, 837.

<sup>9</sup> In Western historiography, history ‘from below’ was a reaction to elitism, an attempt to move the focus from ‘top people’s history’ to ‘people’s history’, in other words, a project of democratisation. Jeremy Black & Donald M. MacRaid, *Studying History*, Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2000, 109-13. In African Christian history, it was a call to write history about the beliefs and experiences of ‘common people’ rather than church institutions or Christian elites. Verstraelen, ‘Doing Christian History’, 323.

<sup>10</sup> Verstraelen, ‘Doing Christian History’, 324. Examples of nationalist historiography by Nigerian scholars include J. F. Ade Ajayi, *Christian Missions in Nigeria 1841-1891: The Making of a New Elite*,

The pursuit of a genuinely African Christian identity shifted in the late 1960s to the search for African initiatives, found mainly in the African initiated churches (AICs).<sup>12</sup> While the focus was on the churches themselves, some scholars also reflected on their revivalist roots. For instance, Turner and Peel both noted the importance of the 1930 Babalola Revival for the *Aladura* church movement in Nigeria.<sup>13</sup> This period also saw a number of historical and sociological studies on revival movements within East and West Africa, which focus on local agency, global influences, and the interaction between gospel and culture,<sup>14</sup> all themes I explore in my own research.

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London: Longmans, 1965; E. A. Ayandele, *The Missionary Impact on Modern Nigeria, 1842-1914. A Political and Social Analysis*, London: Longman, 1966.

<sup>11</sup> Kalu, 'African Church Historiography', 171.

<sup>12</sup> Barrett refers to this shift in the literature towards African initiative in his introduction to the papers from the 1968 Nairobi Workshop. David Barrett, 'Introduction', in David B. Barrett (ed.), *African Initiatives in Religion*, Nairobi: East African Publishing House, 1971, viii-ix. For examples, see H. W. Turner, *History of an African Independent Church*, 2 Vols., Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967; J. D. Y. Peel, *Aladura: A Religious Movement among the Yorubas*, London: Oxford University Press, 1968; F. B. Welbourn and B. A. Ogot, *A Place to Feel at Home*, London: Oxford University Press, 1966; David Barrett, *Schism and Renewal in Africa*, Nairobi: Oxford University Press, 1968; M. L. Daneel, *Old and New in Southern Shona Independent Churches, Vol.2*, The Hague: Mouton, 1974; Bengt Sundkler, *Zulu Zion and some Swazi Zionists*, London: Oxford University Press, 1976.

<sup>13</sup> Turner, *African Independent Church, Vol.1*, 16-25; Peel, *Aladura*, chapter three. In a subsequent article, Peel states that despite its expansion in the 1920s, the *Aladura* movement would have remained of minor importance if not for the 1930s revival. J. D. Y. Peel, 'The Aladura Movement in Western Nigeria', *Tarikh*, 3.1, 1969, 51.

<sup>14</sup> For the East African Revival, see Brian Stanley, 'The East African Revival: African Initiative Within a European Tradition', *The Churchman*, 92.1, 1978, 6-22; Catharine Robins, 'Tukutendereza. A Study of Social Change and Sectarian Withdrawal in the Balokole Revival of Uganda', Ph.D. thesis, Columbia University, 1975; Catharine Robins, 'Conversion, Life Crises, and Stability Among Women in the East African Revival', in Benetta Jules-Rosette, *The New Religions of Africa*, Norwood, New Jersey: Ablex Publishing Corporation, 1979, 185-202; Welbourn and Ogot, *A Place to feel at Home*. Two books written in the 1970s include short sections on the East Africa Revival. See Ian Linden, *Church and Revolution in Rwanda*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1977, 202-206; Adrian Hastings, *A History of African Christianity 1950-1975*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979, 52-3. For the Garrick Braide movement in Nigeria, see G. O. M. Tasié, *Christian Missionary Enterprise in the Niger Delta 1864-1918*, Leiden: Brill, 1978; G. O. M. Tasié, 'Christian Awakening in West Africa 1914-18: a Study in the Significance of Native Agency', in Ogbu U. Kalu (ed.), *The History of Christianity in West Africa*, London and New York: Longman, 1980, 293-308. For the revival in the Ivory Coast associated with William Wade Harris, see Gordon MacKay Haliburton, *The Prophet Harris: A Study of an African Prophet and his Mass Movement in the Ivory Coast and the Gold Coast 1913-1915*, London: Longman, 1971. For a descriptive overview of African revival movements, see J. Edwin Orr, *Evangelical Awakenings in Africa*, Minneapolis, Bethany Fellowship Inc., 1975.

Meanwhile, there was a move to integrate AICs and mission churches within a history of African Christianity as a whole.<sup>15</sup> This was followed in the 1980s by a renewed interest in mission-founded churches. More recently, a shift of interest has occurred from institutions to movements and from the study of ‘official’ missionary theology to popular Christianity.<sup>16</sup> Ranger describes religious movements as ‘widespread and grassroots adherence to religious ideas, symbols and rituals, sometimes brief in duration, sometimes long-lasting; sometimes lacking and sometimes acquiring formal organizational structures,’ and includes AICs and revivals within this spectrum.<sup>17</sup>

Since the late 1980s, there has been a growing interest in a new form of popular Christianity, which has swept across Africa since independence, the neo-Pentecostal or Charismatic movement. Gifford describes it as ‘Africa’s new Christianity’ and ‘undoubtedly the salient sector of African Christianity today.’<sup>18</sup> Kalu calls it the ‘third response’ to white cultural dominance within the Christian community, the earlier two being ‘Ethiopianism’ and the *Aladura* or Zionist churches.<sup>19</sup> A number of scholars have recognised its importance for the church in Nigeria,<sup>20</sup> where its origins lie in a

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<sup>15</sup> An early attempt was Edward Fasholé-Luke *et al.* (eds.), *Christianity in Independent Africa*, London: Rex Collings, 1978, a collection of studies on African Christianity (both mission-related and independent) selected from papers delivered at a major conference held in Jos, Nigeria, in 1975.

<sup>16</sup> According to Maxwell, ‘African Imagination’, 5, key elements of popular African Christianity include ‘pilgrimage and prayer, healing and exorcism, rain-making and miracle.’ And Hastings refers to the ‘popular religion’ found in AICs, in revival movements of the older Protestant churches, and in some sections of the Catholic Church, which include an emphasis on prayer and fasting, spirits, healing, and dreams. Adrian Hastings, *African Christianity. An Essay in Interpretation*, London: John Chapman, 1976, 55-56.

<sup>17</sup> Terence O. Ranger, ‘Religious Movements and Politics in Sub-Saharan Africa’, *African Studies Review*, 29.2, 1986, 1, 32, 37.

<sup>18</sup> Paul Gifford, *African Christianity. Its Public Role*, London: Hurst and Company, 1998, 333, 33.

<sup>19</sup> Ogbu U. Kalu, ‘The Third Response: Pentecostalism and the Reconstruction of Christian Experience in Africa, 1970-1995’, *Journal of African Christian Thought*, 1.2, 1998, 3.

<sup>20</sup> See for example Ogbu U. Kalu, *The Embattled Gods: Christianization of Igboland 1841-1991*, Lagos/London: Minaj Publishers, 1996; Ruth Marshall, ‘Pentecostalism in Southern Nigeria: An Overview’, in Paul Gifford (ed.), *New Dimensions in African Christianity*, Nairobi: AACC, 1992, 7-32; Rosalind I. J. Hackett, ‘Enigma Variations: the New Religious Movements in Nigeria today’, in A. F.

revival that flowed from two sources in the late 1960s and early 1970s.<sup>21</sup> The first of these was the ending of the Biafran civil war; the second was the rise of the Nigerian university system. Matthews Ojo, the main historian of the movement, has concentrated on its development in Western Nigeria, with its roots in the university campuses and the work of Scripture Union.<sup>22</sup> This thesis tells the story of the movement among the Igbo people of Eastern Nigeria, from its origins in the revival (1967-73) to the present day, and builds upon the work of Ogbu Kalu and his former students at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka.<sup>23</sup> It responds to the call by Walls to document the specifically African story of Christian expansion,<sup>24</sup> and the need to complement general studies of African Christianity with local case studies of grassroots belief and practice.<sup>25</sup>

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Walls, and Wilbert R. Shenk (eds.), *Exploring New Religious Movements. Essays in Honour of Harold W. Turner*, Elkhart, Indiana: Mission Focus Publications, 1990, 131-42; Matthews A. Ojo, 'The Contextual Significance of the Charismatic Movements in Independent Nigeria', *Africa*, 58.2, 1988, 175-92.

<sup>21</sup> Available evidence suggests that this new African Pentecostal wave arose first in Nigeria, as I will attempt to show in this thesis. See for example, Matthews A. Ojo, 'African Charismatics', in Stephen D. Glazier (ed.), *Encyclopedia of African and African-American Religions*, New York/London: Routledge, 2001, 2-3.

<sup>22</sup> See Matthews A. Ojo, 'The Growth of Campus Christianity and Charismatic Movements in Western Nigeria', Ph.D. thesis, London, 1987; Ojo, 'Contextual'; Matthews A. Ojo, 'The Charismatic Movement in Nigeria Today', *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, 3, 1995, 114-18.

<sup>23</sup> See for example Kalu, *Embattled Gods*, 267-86. Examples of studies by Kalu's students include Hilary C. Achunike, 'The Igbo Response to Christianity in North West Igboland 1970-1990', M.A. thesis, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, 1993; J. O. Anyaegbu, 'The Growth and Development of Pentecostal/Evangelical Movements in Igboland: A Case Study of North-West Igboland, 1965-1990', M.A. thesis, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, 1991; C. I. Ndubuisi, 'Evangelical Pentecostalism in Southern Igboland', M.A. thesis, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, 1991. Two North American scholars, Joel B. Kailing and Misty L. Bastion, have also produced studies on contemporary Igbo Pentecostalism. See Joel B. Kailing, 'Communication and the Development of Religious Culture: Pentecostal Evangelicalism in Nigeria's Igboland', Ph.D. thesis, University of Kentucky, 1993; Joel B. Kailing, 'A New Solution to the African Christian Problem', *Missiology*, 22, 1994, 489-506; Misty L. Bastion, 'A Tale of Two Visionaries: Father Edeh, Sister Kate and Visions of the Everyday in Southeastern Nigeria', paper presented at the Symposium 'Prophets, Visionaries and their Publics in the Afro-Atlantic World', University of Maryland-College Park, October 9 and 10, 1998, 1-46.

<sup>24</sup> A. F. Walls, 'Introduction: African Christianity in the History of Religions', in C. Fyfe and A. F. Walls (eds.), *Christianity in Africa in the 1990s*, Edinburgh: Centre of African Studies, 1996, 3.

<sup>25</sup> Paul Jenkins, 'The Roots of African Church History: some Polemic Thoughts', *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, 10, April 1986, 70; Terence O. Ranger, 'Introduction', in Terence O. Ranger and John Weller (eds.), *Themes in the Christian History of Central Africa*, Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1975, 3.

Igbo revivalists were drawn largely from the mission churches and many chose to remain within their ranks. This study limits itself to the revival itself and the Igbo-founded neo-Pentecostal churches that emerged in its wake. While there is a growing literature on contemporary African neo-Pentecostalism, there are few local historical studies of its actual origins.<sup>26</sup> Recently, Meyer has noted the lack of research examining how people move from African mission into independent churches and how actual secessions take place.<sup>27</sup> One objective of this study is to explore how and why this process occurred during the Civil War Revival. This is crucial for understanding the nature of the newer Pentecostal churches.<sup>28</sup> It also responds to Hastings' call for further discussion as to how far the current neo-Pentecostal wave differs from the earlier AIC movement, and the possible influence of global networks.<sup>29</sup>

Ranger has drawn attention to the need for 'inward-looking' Christian history at the same time as we explore outward-looking themes.<sup>30</sup> This work reflects on the encounter between a particular brand of Christianity and a local African society, and the process of (re-)conversion that transpired. As such, it explores the nature of revivalist and neo-Pentecostal experience. But it does so against the backdrop of local socio-political and economic developments, such as decolonisation and civil war, as well broader processes, such as modernisation and globalisation. By so doing, it hopes to

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<sup>26</sup> Exceptions include Ojo, 'Campus Christianity'; E. Kingsley Larbi, *Pentecostalism. The Eddies of Ghanaian Christianity*, SAPC Series 1, Dansoman, Accra-Ghana: Centre for Pentecostal and Charismatic Studies, 2001; Birgit Meyer, *Translating the Devil. Religions and Modernity among the Ewe in Ghana*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999; David Maxwell, *Christians and Chiefs in Zimbabwe. A Social History of the Hwesa People c. 1870s-1990s*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999.

<sup>27</sup> Meyer, *Translating the Devil*, 134-35.

<sup>28</sup> Peel, *Aladura*, 13, drew attention to the importance of exploring origins of African churches if we are to obtain an understanding of their nature in his study of the Nigerian *Aladura* movement.

<sup>29</sup> Hastings, 'African Christian Studies', 41-2.

<sup>30</sup> Ranger, 'Introduction', 3.

contribute to the ongoing discussion concerning African Christian identity in a global age.

The research process generated four inter-related questions, which define the contours of the thesis. Firstly, why did the movement grow where and when it did? This study attempts to explain the growth of the revival, and the provenance and popularity of its Pentecostal progeny, by examining local and global influences, exploring the issue of religious motivation, and investigating the nature of revival and neo-Pentecostal experience.<sup>31</sup> The second question focuses on consequences; how the movement has altered existing landscapes. The Nigerian religious landscape has changed beyond recognition since the 1960s, and a major objective of this study is to reflect upon the revival's contribution to this religious revolution. In addition, I explore its cultural and socio-political significance, and its potential for moral and social transformation. Thirdly, I consider how the movement's vision and values have evolved since the 1970s in response to local and global pressures, and reflect upon the possible consequences of this. The final question is a matter of great concern for contemporary Igbo neo-Pentecostals: how can the movement maintain its distinctive identity in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, and remain a vital force for renewal and transformation?

## **1.2 Explaining Patterns of Growth and Decline**

Most of the important questions about the revival are closely connected to explanations for its growth and decline. Scholars of various disciplines have speculated on the

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<sup>31</sup> Poloma and Pendleton refer to the importance of religious experiences in explaining the origins and growth of the global Pentecostal movement. See Margaret M. Poloma and Brian F. Pendleton, 'Religious

provenance and growth of revival movements, whether Evangelical or Pentecostal. These divide broadly into three approaches.<sup>32</sup> Firstly, theological or providential approaches, favoured by evangelical scholars, popular chroniclers, and the participants themselves. These emphasise the spontaneous and universal dimensions of revival, and argue for the priority of divine or supernatural causation. In this model, revival is interpreted primarily as a work of the Holy Spirit.<sup>33</sup>

The second explanatory model appeals to sociological factors and attempts to locate revivals within broader socio-political and economic developments in society. This is the approach adopted by a number of social historians and social scientists, and it divides broadly into two groups. Firstly, those who draw on theories of anomie, deprivation, and psychological maladjustment, and focus on the socially dysfunctional aspects of revival.<sup>34</sup> A problem with these studies is that they are limited by their authors' presuppositions about the nature of religious belief and experience, which is conceived as essentially irrational and psychologically unhealthy. For these scholars,

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Experiences, Evangelism, and Institutional Growth within the Assemblies of God', *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 28.4, 1989, 417.

<sup>32</sup> This section draws upon Cerillo's helpful summary of approaches to global Pentecostal origins. See Augustus Cerillo, 'Interpretative Approaches to the History of American Pentecostal Origins', *Pneuma*, 19.1, Spring 1997, 29-51. See also Grant Wacker, *Heaven Below. Early Pentecostals and American Culture*, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2001, 10; Grant Wacker, 'Bibliography and Historiography of Pentecostalism (U.S.)', in S. M. Burgess, Patrick H. Alexander, and Gary B. McGee (eds.) *Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1988, 65-76.

<sup>33</sup> See for example, Orr, *Africa*; Richard Lovelace, *Dynamics of Spiritual Life: An Evangelical Theology of Renewal*, Exeter: Paternoster Press, 1979; R. E. Davies, *I will Pour Out My Spirit: A History and Theology of Revivals and Evangelical Awakenings*, Tunbridge Wells: Monarch, 1992; Paul A. Pomerville, *The Third Force in Mission*, Peabody: Hendrickson, 1985, 52.

<sup>34</sup> Examples include E. P. Thompson's imaginative study of English Methodism (*The Making of the English Working Class*, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1963), in which he explained Methodist experience in terms of the psychic disturbances occasioned by war, food shortages, and drastic social change; and Robert M. Anderson's description of primitive Pentecostalism as the psychologically unhealthy and socially dysfunctional religious response of the marginalised poor to a rapidly industrialising and urbanising America (Robert Mapes Anderson, *Vision of the Disinherited: The Making of Modern Pentecostalism*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1979, especially pp. 223-40).

ecstatic religious experiences are a form of false consciousness, a temporary escape from life's hardships and humiliations.<sup>35</sup>

Other studies avoid the reductionism of socially-dysfunctional approaches by dwelling on the more positive functions of revivals (including early North American Pentecostalism), and taking religious motives seriously. Here revival is, for example, an attempt to resolve some form of collective identity crisis,<sup>36</sup> or a popular Christian response to conditions of rapid social change,<sup>37</sup> or a means of empowering the poor and disenfranchised.<sup>38</sup> The value of these studies lies in their positive assessment of religious experience and its liberating potential.<sup>39</sup>

Sociological explanations of contemporary African Pentecostal expansion by social historians and social scientists are usually situated within a framework of modernisation or globalisation, and the socio-political and economic processes associated with decolonisation.<sup>40</sup> Van Dijk describes Pentecostalism as a 'religion of modernity' that

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<sup>35</sup> For instance, Anderson, *Vision of the Disinherited*, 229, describes primitive North American Pentecostals as losing themselves in the 'almost wholly otherworldly, symbolic, and psychotherapeutic' benefits of supernaturalistic religion.'

<sup>36</sup> See for example William McLoughlin, *Revivals, Awakenings and Reform*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978; George A. Rawlyk, 'Writing about Canadian Religious Revivals', in Edith L. Blumhofer and Randall Balmer (eds.), *Modern Christian Revivals*, University of Illinois Press, 1993, 208-26; D. William Faupel, *The Everlasting Gospel. The Significance of Eschatology in the Development of Pentecostal Thought*, Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996, 190-93; Edith L. Blumhofer, *The Assemblies of God: A Chapter in the Story of American Pentecostalism*, Vol. 1, Springfield, Mo.: Gospel Publishing House, 1989, 110; Edith L. Blumhofer, *Restoring the Faith: The Assemblies of God, Pentecostalism, and American Culture*, Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1993, 72.

<sup>37</sup> For example, David Hempton, *The Religion of the People. Methodism and Popular Religion c. 1750-1900*, London and New York: Routledge, 1996, 27.

<sup>38</sup> For example, Harvey Cox, *Fire From Heaven: The Rise of Pentecostal Spirituality and the Reshaping of Religion in the Twentieth-First Century*, New York: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1995, 58, 60.

<sup>39</sup> For examples of studies on North American Pentecostalism that focus on its more positive functions, see Blumhofer, *Restoring the Faith*; Wacker, *Heaven Below*.

<sup>40</sup> This is reflected in the articles by Hackett, Marshall-Fratani, Meyer, and Maxwell in the *Journal of Religion in Africa* (28.3, 1998), and in Martin's overview of recent case studies on African

draws its appeals in Africa from the ways in which it ‘mediates, negotiates and mitigates modernity.’<sup>41</sup> Some studies focus on the modern preoccupation with rupture and autonomy. Here Pentecostalism’s appeal lies in the opportunities it provides for people to break free from the past,<sup>42</sup> or from traditional ties of commensality,<sup>43</sup> or for young people to assert themselves vis-à-vis gerontocratic authority,<sup>44</sup> or its creation of ‘autonomous space’ to contest power monopolies.<sup>45</sup>

The influence of globalising forces on local identities is also an important focus. Droogers argues that globalisation creates identity crises in local cultures, but also brings the solution in terms of Pentecostalism.<sup>46</sup> Some scholars have studied African neo-Pentecostalism as part of a global culture.<sup>47</sup> Others draw on Bayart’s notion of extraversion. Bayart suggests that external connections provide indispensable resources

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Pentecostalism. David Martin, *Pentecostalism: The World Their Parish*, Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2002, 132-52. See also Matthews A. Ojo, ‘Charismatic Movements in Africa’, in Fyfe and Walls (eds.), *Christianity in Africa*, 95-6; Cedric Mayrargue, ‘The Expansion of Pentecostalism in Benin: Individual Rationales and Transnational Dynamics’, in André Corten and Ruth Marshall-Fratani, *Between Babel and Pentecost. Transnational Pentecostalism in Africa and Latin America*, London: Hurst and Company, 2001, 277-78; David Maxwell, ‘Witches, Prophets and Avenging Spirits: The Second Christian Movement in North East Zimbabwe’, *Journal of Religion in Africa*, 25.3, 1995, 3.

<sup>41</sup> Rijk van Dijk, ‘Christian Fundamentalism in Sub-Saharan Africa: The Case of Pentecostalism’, Occasional Paper, Centre of African Studies, University of Copenhagen, February 2000, 6. Retrieved 07.05.04 from the World Wide Web: [http://www.teol.ku.dk/cas/nyhomepage/mapper/Occasional%Dijk%20\(Internet%20over\)doc](http://www.teol.ku.dk/cas/nyhomepage/mapper/Occasional%Dijk%20(Internet%20over)doc).

<sup>42</sup> Birgit Meyer, ‘Make a Complete Break with the Past: Memory and Postcolonial Modernity in Ghanaian Pentecostal Discourse’, in Richard Werbner (ed.), *Memory and the Postcolony. African Anthropology and the Critique of Power*, London/New York: Zed Books Ltd, 1998, 182-208.

<sup>43</sup> Maxwell, ‘Witches, Prophets and Avenging Spirits’, 316-17.

<sup>44</sup> Rijk van Dijk, ‘Young Born-Again Preachers in Post-Independence Malawi: the Significance of an Extraneous Identity’, in Gifford (ed.), *New Dimensions in African Christianity*, 58.

<sup>45</sup> Ruth Marshall, ‘Power in the Name of Jesus: Social Transformation and Pentecostalism in Western Nigeria “Revisited”’, in Terence O. Ranger and Olufemi Vaughan (eds.), *Legitimacy and the State in Africa*, London: Macmillans, 1993, 215.

<sup>46</sup> André Droogers, ‘Globalisation and the Pentecostal Success’, 1999, 19. Retrieved 18.07.03 from the World Wide Web: <http://casnws.scw.vu.nl/publicaties/droogers-globpent.html>.

<sup>47</sup> Karla Poewe (ed.), *Charismatic Christianity as a Global Culture*, Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1994; Irving Hexham and Karla Poewe, *New Religions as Global Cultures: Making the Human Sacred*, Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1997.

for African governments.<sup>48</sup> Hence, much recent writing on Pentecostalism in Africa focuses on the way participants negotiate global flows in order to appropriate the ‘goods’ of modernity for local consumption.<sup>49</sup> More controversial is the so-called ‘Americanisation thesis,’ which interprets contemporary African Pentecostalism as a North American import and a political tool of America’s Religious Right.<sup>50</sup> I return to the inter-related issues of globalisation and modernity later in the chapter.

While many sociological studies of revival movements focus on social context and consumer demands, others lay equal stress on the supply side of religion in terms of human agency.<sup>51</sup> Hempton’s studies on early Methodism are a case in point. He identifies the most basic prerequisite for religious revival as the existence of a ‘corps of dedicated revival preachers,’ stirred by vivid conversion experiences and able to exploit social margins in a rapidly expanding society undergoing profound change.<sup>52</sup>

Because of the importance of human agency, this thesis explores the issue of religious motivation. A more complete understanding of revival should start from the internal religious convictions of participants, and then proceed from there to the prevailing

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<sup>48</sup> Jean Francois Bayart, *The State of Africa: The Politics of the Belly*, London: Longmans, 1993, 25-6.

<sup>49</sup> Gifford, *African Christianity*, 321; Martin, *Pentecostalism*, 133; André Corten and Ruth Marshall-Fratani, ‘Introduction’, in Corten and Marshall-Fratani, *Babel and Pentecost*, 1-21; Ruth Marshall-Fratani, ‘Mediating the Global and Local in Nigerian Pentecostalism’, *Journal of Religion in Africa*, 28.3, 1998, 278-315; Rosalind I. J. Hackett, ‘Charismatic/Pentecostal Appropriation of Media Technologies in Nigeria and Ghana’, *Journal of Religion in Africa*, 28.3, 258-77.

<sup>50</sup> See for example, Steve Brouwer, Paul Gifford, and Susan D. Rose, *Exporting the American Gospel: Global Christian Fundamentalism*, London: Routledge, 1996; Paul Gifford, *The New Crusaders. Christianity and the New Right in Southern Africa*, London: Pluto, 1991; Paul Gifford, ‘Some Recent Developments in African Christianity’, *African Affairs*, Vol. 93, Issue 373, 1994, 516-20; Paul Gifford, ‘Prosperity: A New and Foreign Element in African Christianity’, *Religion*, 20, 1990, 373-88.

<sup>51</sup> For example, Richard Carwardine, *Transatlantic Revivalism: Popular Evangelicalism in Britain and America 1790-1865*, 1978, 57; Cox, *Fire From Heaven*; Hempton, *Religion of the People*; E. L. Blumhofer and Randall Balmer (eds.), ‘Introduction’, in Blumhofer and Balmer, *Revivals*, xii.

<sup>52</sup> Hempton, *Religion of the People*, 24-5.

social processes. My study will reflect on the way the revival's distinctive theology (or ideology),<sup>53</sup> spirituality, and interpretation of history contributed to the expansion of the movement by attracting recruits and motivating them to engage in mission. Here the issue of identity construction will be important.<sup>54</sup>

The third model for explaining revival is the historical roots approach. As Cerillo has noted, this fits more comfortably within the traditional concern of historians with issues of historical change and continuity.<sup>55</sup> For instance, a number of studies have traced the roots of the North American Pentecostal revival to the 19<sup>th</sup> century Holiness movement.<sup>56</sup> A similar approach is sometimes adopted to explain African revivals.<sup>57</sup>

In fact, debates about continuity and rupture have been a pervasive theme in recent

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<sup>53</sup> I define ideology in a neutral sense following Gramsci: 'a conception of the world that is implicitly manifest . . . in all manifestations of individual and collective life.' It inspires concrete attitudes and provides orientations for action. It becomes 'the terrain on which men move, acquire consciousness of their position, struggle, etc.' See Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, 1971, 328, 377, quoted in Tom Bottomore *et al.* (eds.), *A Dictionary of Marxist Thought*, Oxford: Blackwell Publisher Ltd., 1983, article on 'Ideology', 222. See also Luther P. Gerlach and Virginia H. Hine, *People, Power, Change: Movements of Social Transformation*, Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1970, xvii, who state that an ideology provides a conceptual framework for interpreting goals, and motivation for envisioning change.

<sup>54</sup> The connection between interpretations of history and identity construction is noted by Blumhofer, who argues that the restorationist view of history enabled poor and marginalised Pentecostals involved in the Azusa Street Mission to discover a 'new sense of purpose, importance, and identity' (Blumhofer, *Assemblies of God, Vol. 1*, 110).

<sup>55</sup> Cerillo, 'Origins', 50.

<sup>56</sup> See for example, Vinson Synan, *The Holiness-Pentecostal Movement in the United States*, Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1971, 115-16; David Dayton, 'From "Christian Perfection" to the "Baptism of the Holy Ghost"', in Vinson Synan (ed.), *Aspects of Pentecostal-Charismatic Origins*, Plainfield, New Jersey: Logos International, 1975, 41-54; Faupel, *Everlasting Gospel*; Walter J. Hollenweger, *Pentecostalism. Origins and Developments Worldwide*, Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, 1997, 182-89.

<sup>57</sup> Several scholars, for instance, have noted elements of continuity between the East African Revival and the British Keswick movement. See Stanley, 'East African Revival', 9-10; Kevin Ward, "'Tukutendereza Yesu': The Balokole Revival in Uganda", in Z. Nthamburi (ed.), *From Mission to Church: A Handbook of Christianity in East Africa*, Nairobi: Uzima Press, 1991, 113. The Keswick movement, named after a small village in the Lake District and inaugurated in 1875, is the English counterpart to the American Holiness movement. The majority of its leaders were either converts or evangelists during the 1857-8 American Holiness revival that arrived in Britain in 1859. Keswick was an important influence on the British missionary movement during the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. See Faupel, *Everlasting Gospel*, 68; Klaus Fiedler, *The Story of Faith Missions*, Oxford: Regnum Books International, 1994, 215-16.

literature on African revival movements and Pentecostalism. These studies emphasise both historical continuity with earlier forms of Christianity (missionary and African), and cultural continuity/rupture with African traditional<sup>58</sup> worldviews.<sup>59</sup>

Scholars have noted the cyclical nature of revival movements,<sup>60</sup> sometimes using the metaphor of ‘waves’ to describe the process of growth and decline, ebb and flow.<sup>61</sup> Decline does not mean death of the movement. As Fiedler observes, ‘Revivals start at a given point in church history and, after a time, fade out, but they do not disappear. Their teachings, their institutions and the fellowships they create continue to exist even after the revival fervour has waned.’<sup>62</sup>

Theological explanations tend to focus on the relationship between divine initiative, human agency, and the activity of hostile spiritual beings.<sup>63</sup> Within this framework, factors behind revival declension include irregular behaviour, prayerlessness,

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<sup>58</sup> It is difficult to find an appropriate term to describe non-Christian African religions. While ‘traditional’ suggests a static character, the alternative labels ‘indigenous,’ ‘African,’ and ‘local’ can equally be applied to Christianity. The term ‘primal’ suggests that these religious systems are both prior and primary, and represent a base language for the appropriation of other subsequent religions. See Harold W. Turner, ‘Primal Religions and Their Study’, in Victor C. Hayes (ed.), *Australian Essays in World Religions*, Adelaide: Australian Association for the Study of Religions, 1977, 28; A. F. Walls, *The Missionary Movement in Christian History: Studies in the Transmission of Faith*, Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1996, 119. In this thesis, I use the terms ‘primal’ and ‘traditional’ interchangeably.

<sup>59</sup> See for example Ogbu U. Kalu, ‘Preserving a Worldview: Pentecostalism in the African Maps of the Universe’, *Pneuma*, 2.2, Fall 2002, 110-37; Allan Anderson, *Zion and Pentecost. The Spirituality and Experience of Pentecostal and Zionist/Apostolic Churches in South Africa*, Pretoria: University of South Africa Press, 2000, 56-84; Hollenweger, *Pentecostalism*, 41-80; Cox, *Fire From Heaven*, 243-62.

<sup>60</sup> For example, Carwardine, *Transatlantic Revivalism*, 49; Rawlyk, ‘Canadian Religious Revivals’, 234; Lovelace, *Spiritual Life*, 61-72; Anderson, *Vision of the Disinherited*, 139; Margaret M. Poloma, ‘The Spirit Movement in North America at the Millennium: From Azusa Street to Toronto, Pensacola and Beyond’, *Journal of Pentecostal Theology*, 12, 1998, 102.

<sup>61</sup> For example, Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu, ‘Renewal within African Christianity: A Study of Some Current Historical and Theological Developments within Independent Indigenous Pentecostalism in Ghana’, Ph.D. thesis, University of Birmingham, 2000, 14.

<sup>62</sup> Fiedler, *Faith Missions*, 113.

<sup>63</sup> For example, Lovelace argues that as successive generations arise they become enticed by prevailing culture, and emptied of ‘experience of the Lord and his mighty acts,’ but in response to repentance and

opposition from other Christians, disunity, doctrinal error, legalism, a preoccupation with demons, and a decline in adventist beliefs.<sup>64</sup> As we will see, participant accounts of the Civil War Revival align themselves closely with this kind of explanation.

Sociological explanations sometimes describe the declension of revivals in terms of Weber's concept of the routinisation of charisma.<sup>65</sup> Weber refers to the quality of charisma, often associated with 'extraordinary powers' or prophetic authority, which enables an individual to attract followers. The routinisation of charisma occurs over time as charisma is distributed to others and becomes attached to an office or offices.<sup>66</sup> Scholars have transferred Weber's idea to revival movements and have noted their tendency to routinise charisma for the sake of the institution.<sup>67</sup> Poloma, for example, refers to the way that revival, as a 'social movement,' progresses through four stages: emergence, coalescence, bureaucratisation and decline, and suggests that the tensions

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prayer, God acts to reverse the cycle of decline by pouring out his Spirit. Meanwhile, behind the scenes a spiritual conflict is taking place, as demonic agents oppose the work of the Spirit (*Spiritual Life*, 62-8).

<sup>64</sup> See Lovelace, *Spiritual Life*, 239-79; Davies, *Revivals*, 248. For the East African Revival, see Max Warren, *Revival. An Enquiry*, London: SCM, 1954; Elizabeth Isichei, *A History of Christianity in Africa. From Antiquity to the Present*, Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1996, 141-42; Ward, 'Balokole Revival', 119-23; Richard Gehman, 'The East African Revival', *East African Journal of Evangelical Theology*, 1986, 51-3.

<sup>65</sup> Sociologists, social historians, and missiologists have referred to this process in their analysis of revivals. For example, Hempton, *Religion of the People*, 27; Rawlyk, 'Canadian Religious Revivals', 221; Maxwell, 'Witches, Prophets and Avenging Spirits', 334; Bryan Wilson, *Religion in Sociological Perspective*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982, 98-9; Hollenweger, *Pentecostalism*, 258-60.

<sup>66</sup> See Max Weber, *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization*, trans. and ed. by A. M. Henderson and Talcott Parsons, New York, 1964, 359-63 (orig. publ. 1947). Weber contrasts charismatic leadership with traditional (where obedience is based on custom) and rational-legal leadership (legally established and bureaucratic). As routinisation takes place, charismatic authority is replaced by traditional or rational-legal authority.

<sup>67</sup> Percy describes this as a 'sociological script' that charismatic movements follow. Martyn Percy, 'The City on a Beach: Future Prospects for Charismatic Movements at the End of the Twentieth Century', in Stephen Hunt, Malcolm B. Hamilton, and Tony Walter (eds.), *Charismatic Christianity. Sociological Perspectives*, London/Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 1997, 214. See also Margaret M. Poloma, 'The "Toronto Blessing": Charisma, Institutionalization, and Revival', *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 36.2, 1997, 269; Walter J. Hollenweger, *The Pentecostals*, London: SCM Press Ltd, 1972, 33; Hollenweger, *Pentecostalism*, 258.

between charisma and institutionalisation 'are usually resolved through social mechanisms to the detriment of the early charismatic flow.'<sup>68</sup>

Social scientists also explain the cyclical nature of revival movements with reference to secularisation. Based on their theory of religion as compensation, Stark and Bainbridge argue that secularisation actually stimulates revival as movements arise to 'restore the potency of the conventional religious traditions', in response to 'an unmet demand for more efficacious compensators.'<sup>69</sup> But revival is also 'chronologically vulnerable to secularisation and to the lack of long-term staying power . . . .'<sup>70</sup> Hence, Stark refers to the 'secularisation-revival circuit.'<sup>71</sup>

Finally, Africanist social scientists and historians sometimes link the cyclical nature of religious revival (traditional or Christian) to the cultural dynamic of periodic societal cleansing, when new spiritual means are found to expel evil and restore individual and collective well-being.<sup>72</sup> According to De Craemer, Fox, and Vansina, this may occur on a generational basis.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> Poloma, 'Spirit Movement', 102, 269. In fact, Poloma, 'Charisma, Institutionalization, and Revival', 258, questions whether it is possible for charisma and organisation to work together in a long-term revival.

<sup>69</sup> Rodney Stark and William S. Bainbridge, *The Future of Religion: Secularization, Revival and Cult Formation*, Berkeley, Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1985, 435.

<sup>70</sup> Stark and Bainbridge, *Future of Religion*, 435.

<sup>71</sup> Rodney Stark, 'Church and Sect', in P. E. Hammond (ed.), *The Sacred in a Secular Age: Towards a Revision in the Scientific Study of Religion*, Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1985, 146. On a slightly different note, Wilson notes that while revivals stimulate heightened religiosity, they are in fact 'unwitting vehicles of increased secularization' due to processes of rationalisation and disenchantment. See Wilson, *Sociological Perspective*, 152-53.

<sup>72</sup> J. D. Y. Peel, *Religious Encounter and the Making of the Yoruba*, Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2000, 313. See also W. De Craemer, R. Fox, and J. Vansina, 'Religious Movements in Central Africa: a Theoretical Study', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 18.4, 1976, 472; Maxwell, 'Witches, Prophets and Avenging Spirits', 334. Maxwell applies this idea to African Pentecostal movements, and suggests that in the case of Zimbabwe the means of renewal has increasingly become Christianised.

<sup>73</sup> De Craemer, Fox, and Vansina, 'Religious Movements', 472.

This thesis adopts a multi-causal approach to the origins, growth, and decline of revival movements, which draws upon material from each of the three explanatory models. Firstly, it proceeds on the assumption that the possibility of God acting in human history is valid, and is compatible with sociological and natural explanations of revival.<sup>74</sup> While it privileges participant accounts, which invariably explain revival in terms of divine causation, it also acknowledges that providential interventions cannot be verified by research and interpretative methods commonly used in historiography.

Secondly, it argues that the success of the revival and its Pentecostal progeny depended upon a balance between supply and demand. The revival itself provided a means for Igbos to resolve their collective identity crisis through their absorption into a dynamic missionary fellowship, whose ideology propelled those touched by the 'Spirit' into the margins of society where they were able to exploit the disorder, dislocation, and disruption caused by the forces of modernisation, decolonisation, and conflict. The formation of this band of itinerant preachers out of the furnace of the civil war crisis was principally responsible for the spread of the revival. But their efforts were successful because local conditions of socio-political distress created new religious demands as Igbos looked for practical solutions to current dilemmas through the lens of existing religious categories. Here the revival's willingness to take the African maps of the universe seriously was crucial. Part of its success lay in its continuity and discontinuity with existing religious forms. The revival introduced new ideas to the

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<sup>74</sup> This is the approach taken by Marsden in his sympathetic study of American Fundamentalism. See George Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture: The Shaping of Twentieth-Century Evangelicalism, 1870-1925*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1980, 229-30.

Igbo religious repertoire and new means to obtain old objectives. Nevertheless, its form was influenced by traditional religious aspirations and its roots in mission church spirituality.

Igbo-initiated neo-Pentecostal church expansion has also depended upon a balance between supply and demand, as the movement's inherent flexibility enabled it to adapt its message and methodology to suit local contexts affected by global flows. However, the most significant factor behind neo-Pentecostal growth, particularly in its formative period, has been its missionary impulse, which betrays its origins in the Civil War Revival.

This thesis will show that within a decade of its inception, despite numerical and territorial expansion, many features of the revival had declined, to the detriment of its original vision and its potential as an agent of transformation. While the movement's vulnerability to bureaucratisation and secularisation, due to local and global pressures, contributed to this decline, I will argue that it was the loss of its missionary and charismatic impulses, associated with a paradigm shift from holiness to prosperity teaching, and a propensity to schism, which were principally responsible.

### **1.3 Transforming the Landscapes**

This brings me to the second question that has guided my research, the movement's socio-cultural and political significance. As well as exploring issues of causation, I examine the way it altered existing religious, cultural, and socio-political landscapes.

Scholars have drawn attention to the social implications of revivals (evangelical and Pentecostal, African and global), and their potential as agents of social transformation and political critique.<sup>75</sup> As such, they belong to the broad social scientific category of social movements, and have socio-political significance.<sup>76</sup> Giddens describes social movements as ‘collective attempts to further a common interest or secure a common goal through action outside the sphere of established institutions.’ They usually arise in contexts where traditional political institutions are unable to cope with the challenges of the modern world, and are often international in scope.<sup>77</sup>

This thesis explores the movement’s social significance and pays close attention to two processes in African Christian history. On the one hand was a desire to contextualise the gospel by accommodating to existing cultural, religious, and social patterns. Walls refers to this as the ‘indigenising’ principle in Christian history. But there is a second, opposing principle, which Walls calls the ‘pilgrim’ principle. Not only does God take people as and where they are, he takes them in order to transform them.<sup>78</sup> These

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<sup>75</sup> See for example, Gerlach and Hine, *People*, xiv, whose research caused them to reject deprivation theory as a sufficient explanatory model, and to conclude that Pentecostalism and other movements were both the ‘cause and effect of social change.’ See also Lovelace, *Spiritual Life*, 358; Douglas Petersen, *Not by Might nor by Power: A Pentecostal Theology of Social Concern in Latin America*, Oxford: Regnum Books, 1996, 115; C. B. Johns, *Pentecostal Formation: A Pedagogy among the Oppressed*, Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993, 78; Ojo, ‘Charismatic Movements in Africa’, 109.

<sup>76</sup> An interest in social movements in the 1970s and 1980s is one reason that religion has returned to the mainstream of social scientific research. The proliferation of new religious movements, in particular, caught the attention of social movement scholars. See Helen Rose Ebaugh, ‘Return of the Sacred: Reintegrating Religion in the Social Sciences’, *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 41.3, September 2002, 390. For a discussion of Pentecostalism as a social movement, see Albert G. Miller, ‘Pentecostalism as a Social Movement: Beyond the Theory of Deprivation’, *Journal of Pentecostal Theology*, 9, 1996, 97-114.

<sup>77</sup> Anthony Giddens, *Sociology*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 2001, 439-40. See also Grace Davie, *Europe: The Exceptional Case. Parameters of Faith in the Modern World*, London: Darton, Longman, and Todd, 2002, 158-59.

<sup>78</sup> Walls, *Missionary Movement*, 7-8.

processes may intensify during periods of revival.<sup>79</sup> Ward, for example, notes that the East African Revival was both a ‘genuinely African expression of Christianity’ and a critique of local cultural values.<sup>80</sup> Some movements are more successful than others are at maintaining a creative balance between these two forces.

I will argue that the revival contained strong currents of accommodation and resistance. On the one hand, it reflected Igbo cultural assumptions and attempted to contextualise the gospel according to existing religious and cultural patterns, while at the same time challenging moral decay and social inequality within popular culture. As the movement progressed, however, and institutional forces set in, it gradually lost its counter cultural potential, relaxed its ethical demands, and moved towards a state of low tension with its social environment.

My examination of revivalist and neo-Pentecostal socio-political behaviour will require careful analysis. The movement went through several stages. Its civil war phase contained the seeds of a theology that provided an ideological basis for socio-political engagement through prayer, political activism, and social initiatives. But, for reasons that I explore in this thesis, participants failed to build upon this after the war. Since the late 1980s, however, some neo-Pentecostals have developed a socio-political theology

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<sup>79</sup> With respect to European and North American Evangelical awakenings, see David Bebbington, ‘Revival and Enlightenment in Eighteenth-Century England’, in Blumhofer and Balmer (eds.), *Revivals*, 21-23, 30; Richard Carwardine, ‘The Second Great Awakening in Comparative Perspective; Revival and Culture in the United States and Britain’, in Blumhofer and Balmer (eds.), *Revivals*, 93-4; A. F. Walls, ‘The Evangelical Revival, the Missionary Movement, and Africa’, in M. A. Noll, D. W. Bebbington, and G. A. Rawlyk (eds.), *Evangelicalism: Comparative Studies of Popular Protestantism in North America, the British Isles, and Beyond, 1700-1990*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1994, 310-30.

<sup>80</sup> Ward, ‘Balokole Revival’, 135-56. See also Kevin Ward, ‘Africa’, in Adrian Hastings (ed.), *A World History of Christianity*, London: Cassell, 1999, 224. Similarly, Hastings, *History of African Christianity*,

that moves beyond prayer to a more proactive engagement with socio-economic and political realities.

#### 1.4 Defining Revivals and African Pentecostalism

Most important terms are introduced and defined as they arise in the text. Here I confine myself to a discussion of two key terms.

##### 1.4.1 Revival

It is important to define what we mean by ‘revival’. As noted, theological and sociological definitions differ over the role played by divine initiative, but beyond that, there is a broad consensus.<sup>81</sup> I propose the following working definition:

A Christian revival is a communal event that assumes an element of decline, out of which believers are called to renewed heights of spiritual vitality and moral probity, issuing in efforts to spread the gospel in and beyond the local community, and resulting in a widespread sense of sorrow for sin, extensive conversion experiences, and altered religious and socio-cultural landscapes.

This definition distances itself from the modern use of the term, popular in Africa, to refer to organised evangelistic campaigns.<sup>82</sup> As Bebbington notes, we need to discriminate between ‘spontaneous popular revival, deeply rooted in the community,

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53, refers to evidence of both indigenisation and rejection of African customs in the East African Revival.

<sup>81</sup> For theological definitions, see Orr, *Africa*, vii; J. I. Packer, ‘Revival, Theology of’, in Sinclair B. Ferguson and David F. Wright (eds.), *New Dictionary of Theology*, Leicester: IVP, 1988, 588; Davies, *Revivals*, 15; Peter Hocken, ‘The Pentecostal-Charismatic Movement as Revival and Renewal’, *Pneuma*, Spring 1981, 34-5. For more sociological definitions by social historians, see Blumhofer and Balmer, ‘Introduction’, xi; Randall Balmer, *Encyclopedia of Evangelicalism*, Louisville/London: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002, 485; Richard Carwardine, *Transatlantic Revivalism*, xv; McLoughlin, *Revivals*, 2, 7-12.

and meetings carefully designed to promote the work of the gospel.’<sup>83</sup> Because of this, some have preferred the expression ‘renewal’ when writing about African revival movements.<sup>84</sup> While this makes room for spontaneity, revitalisation, and innovation within the Church, it takes insufficient account of the broader effects of the phenomenon in the wider community. This thesis uses the term ‘revival’ to describe the movement that began among the Igbos of Eastern Nigeria during the civil war, and reached its climax in 1970/’71.<sup>85</sup> It was also the expression generally used by participants to describe what happened, both at the time and retrospectively.<sup>86</sup> Henceforth, I will refer to it as the Civil War Revival.

#### **1.4.2 African Pentecostalism**

There has been an ongoing debate about the appropriateness of ‘Pentecostalism’ as an umbrella term for African movements and churches, which stress the experience of the Spirit. Western definitions that focus on historical continuity with the Azusa Street Revival or adherence to a doctrine of ‘initial evidence’ have proved inadequate, due to the great variety of movements elsewhere. This thesis follows Hollenweger and Anderson by adopting a more inclusive definition. They use the term ‘African

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<sup>82</sup> This is often traced to the North American revivalist, Charles Finney.

<sup>83</sup> David Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain. A History from the 1730s to the 1980s*, London: Unwin, 1989, 116.

<sup>84</sup> See for example Asamoah-Gyadu, ‘Renewal within African Christianity’, 36-7.

<sup>85</sup> It is difficult to know exactly when the revival began. Bolton regards 1970 as the starting-point. Frances Lawjua Bolton, *And We Beheld His Glory. A Personal Account of the Revival in Eastern Nigeria in 1970/’71*, Harlow: Christ The King Publishing, 1992. Okorocho suggests that it began during the civil war. Cyril C. Okorocho, *The Meaning of Religious Conversion in Africa. The Case of the Igbo in Nigeria*, Aldershot: Avebury, 1987, 274. This thesis follows Nebo, by taking 1967 (the beginning of the civil war) as the starting point. Chinedu Nebo, ‘West Africa’, in Cyril C. Okorocho (ed.), *The Cutting Edge of Mission. A Report of the Mid-Point Review of the Decade of Evangelism*, London: Anglican Communion Publications, 1996, 78.

<sup>86</sup> For example, Uchenna Emezue, Letter to Roberts, 31 August 1970; Okorocho, *Religious Conversion*, 274; Bolton, *Glory*; Ben. Chuka Osisioma, *The Ancient Pathway*, Enugu: Snaap Press, 1998, xi; Nnaji Chukwuka, *Looking Beyond the Night*, Enugu: Snaap Press, 1997.

Pentecostalism’ to describe any African church or movement that stresses the experience of the Spirit and the practice of spiritual gifts.<sup>87</sup> In this sense, it includes older AICs, called ‘prophet-healing churches’ by Turner,<sup>88</sup> mission-related Pentecostal churches, and newer (post-1970) African-founded Pentecostal churches, fellowships, and ministries. Members from each of these broad categories feature in the story of the Civil War Revival.

In Igboland, members of other churches usually refer to ‘prophet-healing’ AICs as prayer houses (*ulo ekpere*, Igbo),<sup>89</sup> ‘prayer-healing,’<sup>90</sup> *Aladura* (Yoruba: ‘praying’),<sup>91</sup> ‘spiritual,’<sup>92</sup> ‘white garment,’ or ‘hand-clapping’ (*uka akuluaka*, Igbo) churches, reflecting their interest in prayer, their stress on the Holy Spirit and belief in lesser spiritual beings, their preference for wearing white robes, and their lively worship. I use the term ‘prayer house’, as this was the most common designation used by my

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<sup>87</sup> Hollenweger, *Pentecostals*, 149; Allan Anderson, ‘Introduction: World Pentecostalism at a Crossroads’, in Allan H. Anderson and Walter J. Hollenweger (eds.), *Pentecostals after a Century. Global Perspectives on a Movement in Transition*, Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999, 20; Anderson, *Zion and Pentecost*, 26-7, 35-37. It was Robert Mapes Anderson, who suggested that the Pentecostal movement should be seen as a movement concerned primarily with the experience of the Holy Spirit and the practice of spiritual gifts. See Anderson, *Vision of the Disinherited*, 4. For a critique of inclusive definitions of Pentecostalism, see Gary B. McGee, ‘Pentecostal Missiology: Moving Beyond Triumphalism to Face the Issues’, *Pneuma*, 16.2, Fall 1994, 276-77.

<sup>88</sup> H. W. Turner, ‘A Typology of Modern African Religious Movements’, *Journal of Religion and Religions*, 1.1, 1967, 23. For a recent discussion of terminology, see Allan H. Anderson, *African Reformation. African Initiated Christianity in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century*, Trenton, New Jersey: Africa World Press, 2001, 10-11

<sup>89</sup> For example, G. C. Ikeobi, ‘Catholic Response to the Challenge of “Prayer Houses” - Origins of the “Tuesday Prayer” in Onitsha’, in V. A. Nwosu (ed.), *The Catholic Church in Onitsha. People, Places and Events (1885-1985)*, Onitsha: Etukokwu Press, 1985, 262-75; Bolton, *Glory*, 7; Charles Chikezie Agu, *Secularization in Igboland. Socio-religious Change and its Challenges to the Church Among the Igbo*, Frankfurt am Main/Bern: Verlag Peter Lang, 1989, 401.

<sup>90</sup> For example, Edmund Ilogu, *Christianity and Ibo Culture*, Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1974, 60-1.

<sup>91</sup> For example, Kalu, *Embattled Gods*; Anyaegbu, ‘Pentecostal/Evangelical’.

<sup>92</sup> For example, Augustine Iwuagwu, ‘The “Spiritual Churches” in the Eastern States of Nigeria (a Selected Study)’, Ph.D. thesis, University of Ibadan, 1971.

informants,<sup>93</sup> and to distinguish them from the various non-Christian ‘spiritualist’ groups that draw heavily upon traditional religious categories and/or popular ‘occult’ literature imported from abroad.<sup>94</sup> Due to their diversity and dynamic nature, they are difficult to classify with any precision, though various typologies have been proposed, which I discuss briefly in chapter two.

Different terms are used to denote the newer (post-1970) locally generated movements, ministries, and churches in Nigeria. In the literature, they are referred to variously as ‘charismatic’,<sup>95</sup> ‘Pentecostal’,<sup>96</sup> ‘neo-Pentecostal’,<sup>97</sup> ‘revivalist’,<sup>98</sup> ‘born-again’,<sup>99</sup> and ‘Evangelical-Pentecostal.’<sup>100</sup> ‘Pentecostal’ is the common term of self-designation, while ‘Charismatic’ usually refers to renewal movements within the mainline mission churches. In this thesis, I use the expression ‘neo-Pentecostal’ (or the abbreviation ‘NPC’) to denote the Igbo-founded churches, to distinguish them from the mission-

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<sup>93</sup> Though my informants usually used this as a generic term to describe Christian and non-Christian groups.

<sup>94</sup> In the literature, these groups are variously labelled ‘vitalistic’, ‘revivalistic’, ‘nativistic’, ‘neo-primal’ and ‘spiritual science.’ See Harold Turner, *Religious Innovation in Africa. Collected Essays on New Religious Movements*, Boston, Mass.: G. K. Hall & Co, 1979, 83-4; Hackett, ‘Enigma Variations’, 135-37; Kalu, *Embattled Gods*, 289.

<sup>95</sup> Ojo, ‘Charismatic Movements in Africa’, 92-3, uses the term ‘charismatic movements’ to distinguish them from the earlier mission-related Pentecostal churches. See also Hackett, ‘Charismatic/ Pentecostal’, 259, who prefers the term ‘charismatic,’ to distinguish the newer churches from the earlier wave of AICs. However, Hackett also notes that in Nigerian parlance ‘charismatic’ has tended to describe renewal movements within mainline churches. Ghanaian scholars writing about the Ghanaian context prefer the term ‘Charismatic Ministries’ or ‘Charismatic churches’, as this is the term used by the members themselves. See for example, Asamoah-Gyadu, ‘Renewal within African Christianity’, 29; Cephas N. Omenyo, ‘Charismatic Churches in Ghana and Contextualization’, *Exchange*, 31.3, 2002, 265.

<sup>96</sup> Hackett, ‘Charismatic/Pentecostal’, 259; Marshall-Fratani, ‘Global and Local’.

<sup>97</sup> Peel, *Religious Encounter*, 314.

<sup>98</sup> Hackett, ‘Enigma Variations’, 132.

<sup>99</sup> Kalu, ‘Third Response’, 7; Kalu, ‘Preserving a Worldview’, 123; Peel, *Religious Encounter*, 314-16. Marshall, ‘Pentecostalism in Southern Nigeria’, 8-9, prefers the term ‘born-again’ because of the importance of this experience for these churches’ self-identity. But this ignores the fact that in the case of civil war revivalists a definite ‘born-again’ identity existed prior to their introduction to Pentecostal doctrines. See chapter three, section 6.6.

<sup>100</sup> Kailing, ‘African Christian Problem’, 494-5; Kailing, ‘Pentecostalism’, 224; Ogbu U. Kalu, ‘The Wind of God: Evangelical Pentecostalism in Igboland, 1970-1990’, Pew Charitable Trust Lecture, Centre

related Pentecostal churches.<sup>101</sup> The term ‘Charismatic Ministry’ (CM) is used to describe the inter-denominational fellowship groups that arose within the ranks of the mainline mission churches during the revival, often around a charismatic individual(s), and formed the basis for the new churches.

### **1.5 A Personal Story**

I consider now my own interests and background, and the reasons for this present study. I am not an African, nor an active participant in the African Pentecostal movement. As such, I am aware of my limitations as an outsider, in terms of culture, race, and denominational affiliation. Yet in some respects, my personal story is similar to those I listened to when talking to former Igbo revivalists, and this has helped me to identify with, and understand their experiences.

I was ‘converted’ to evangelical Christianity in 1974 during a university mission led by the late David Watson, a popular Anglican Charismatic evangelist. In the late 1970s, I became actively involved in the ‘house church’ sector of the British Charismatic movement. The 1980s was a period of heightened interest in revival, fuelled by stirring sermons and popular historical accounts. As a member of a growing urban community church, I joined with others to pray for an ‘outpouring of the Spirit’ upon the nation. In 1995, I became a participant in the most intense period of spiritual activity in the British

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for the Study of Christianity in the Non-Western World, New College, University of Edinburgh, December, 1992, 1-13.

<sup>101</sup> The term ‘neo-Pentecostal’ movement was originally used to describe the outbreak of Pentecostal spirituality within Protestant mainline churches in North America from about 1960. See Vinson Synan, ‘Introduction’, in Synan (ed.), *Origins*, 3; Arnold Bittlinger, ‘Charismatic Renewal - An Opportunity for the Church’, in Arnold Bittlinger (ed.), *The Church is Charismatic: The World Council of Churches and the Charismatic Renewal*, Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1981, 10. Since the 1960s, many new Pentecostal churches have emerged from the movement.

Christian community for many years, the so-called ‘Toronto Blessing.’ Things I had only read about or heard second hand now became part of my own spiritual pilgrimage. At the time, there was great expectancy that this would be the forerunner of widespread revival in the nation. That this never occurred was a disappointment to many, and sharply divided the church. However, for myself, and for others, it was an enriching experience and left an indelible mark on our lives. These roots account for some of the underlying presuppositions present in this work.

Between 1990 and 1996 I worked in Nigeria with the Qua Iboe Fellowship (now Mission Africa), an interdenominational faith mission. My first assignment was as a lecturer in a small theological college in the Middle Belt, training pastors for the Qua Iboe Church of Nigeria (QIC), a large denomination with roots in the second wave of Western missionary activity that began in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. After a period of further training at London Bible College, I returned to Nigeria to teach at another QIC theological institution in the southeast, the heartland of QIC territory. Two developments reawakened my interest in revival, this time in an African context. The first related to internal changes taking place within the QIC due to exposure to Pentecostal influences. A group calling themselves the ‘revival movement’ challenged the existing church structures and traditional forms of worship inherited from Western missionaries. The church elders maintained control by prohibiting the public use of spiritual gifts, but this only heightened tensions and threatened to divide the church.

The discovery of two very different popular participant accounts of Nigerian revivals further stimulated my interest. The first was the 1927 ‘Spirit Movement’, associated

with the QIC itself.<sup>102</sup> This coincided with other similar movements in Nigeria, which together generated Nigeria's first wave of indigenous Pentecostal churches. The second was the Civil War Revival.<sup>103</sup> During my excursions into the surrounding area, I had noticed roads lined with church buildings, bearing exotic names. As a teacher serving the QIC, I felt unable to venture inside, but was aware of their Pentecostal nature, and keen to discover their history. Some originated during the colonial era, but many were of more recent origin. The Nigerian religious landscape had clearly changed radically since independence, and I wanted to know why.

The Civil War Revival offered a possible clue. On my return to England in 1996, I met Canon Dr. Cyril Okorocho, then Director for Mission and Evangelism of the Anglican Communion. Okorocho had participated in the revival as a teenager. One outcome of our discussion was my decision to embark on this project. The research process has included two periods of fieldwork in Nigeria. From April to June 1999, I was based in the city of Enugu, where I participated in a conference, entitled 'Remembering the Seventies', jointly organised by Professor Ogbu Kalu of the University of Nigeria, neo-Pentecostal pastor and former revivalist Amaechi Nwachukwu, and myself. Subsequently, I spent seven months (July 2001-January 2002) based in the city of Jos as a visiting lecturer at the Theological College of Northern Nigeria. During both visits, I was able to interact with former revivalists and participants in the neo-Pentecostal movement. While I do not suppose that what I say can adequately reflect the lived

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<sup>102</sup> J. W. Westgarth, *The Holy Spirit and the Primitive Mind. A Remarkable Account of a Spiritual Awakening in Darkest Africa*, London: Victory Press, 1946. Westgarth, a QIM missionary, was an eyewitness of the revival.

<sup>103</sup> Bolton, *Glory*. Bolton (née Egwu) is an Igbo, married to an Englishman, and now resident in London. Though written in a popular style, Bolton's account has proved a valuable resource. Her story focuses on

experience of the Civil War Revival and its Pentecostal progeny, I have tried, as much as I can, to identify with the people I am writing about.

## **2. Theoretical Considerations**

To understand the significance of revival and Pentecostal spirituality for Igbo Christian identity and patterns of growth, this thesis engages with a number of current theoretical debates. The inter-related processes of globalisation, modernisation, and secularisation contributed to the Igbo identity crisis and precipitated a search for new sources to reconstruct shattered identities. In this section, I reflect upon contemporary discussions of globalisation, modernisation, and secularisation, and the role of conversion, narrative texts, and local theologies in identity construction.

### **2.1 Globalisation and African Identity**

#### **2.1.1 Constructing Identities**

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her own experience of the revival in the Onitsha area of North-Western Igboland, and the years 1970-71. She left the area in 1972 for further studies in England.

Identity has become a central concern of recent social scientific and historical study.<sup>104</sup> This is reflected in the growing interest in studying the construction of religious identities in Africa.<sup>105</sup> Identity has to do with who we are in relation to others, and how we construct meaning.<sup>106</sup> Giddens identifies two types: social identity and self-identity. Social identity refers to the characteristics attributed to an individual by others, and places the person in relation to other individuals. It focuses on the way people share similar characteristics. Although individuals may have multiple social identities, most 'organise meaning and experience in their lives around a primary identity which is fairly continuous across time and place.' Self-identity, on the other hand, 'sets us apart as distinct individuals.'<sup>107</sup>

Among social scientists associated with the functionalist school, culture and identity are regarded as fixed and relatively unchanging, with little scope for human initiative and agency in identity construction. Culture and identity are viewed in essentialist terms. Culture - including religion as a cultural phenomenon - is bounded, with individual and collective identities shaped by processes of socialisation. Constructivist approaches, such as symbolic interactionism, have challenged this by suggesting that cultural reality

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<sup>104</sup> Karen A. Cerulo, 'Identity Construction: New Issues, New Directions', *Annual Review of Sociology*, 23, 1997, 385; Black & MacRaid, *Studying History*, 149. Writing in the mid-1990s, Kearney stated that 'the culture concept as the cornerstone of US anthropology is giving way to concern with identity.' See M. Kearney, 'The Local and the Global: The Anthropology of Globalization and Transnationalism', *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 24, 1995, 557.

<sup>105</sup> David Maxwell, "'Sacred History, Social History": Traditions and Texts in the Making of a Southern African Transnational Religious Movement', *Society for Comparative Study of Society and History*, 2001, 502; Maxwell, 'African Imagination', 3.

<sup>106</sup> Fiona Bowie, *The Anthropology of Religion*, Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2000, 71; Manuel Castells, *The Power of Identity*, Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1997, 6. Castells distinguishes between roles and identities. Roles are defined by 'norms structured by the institutions and organizations of society,' while identities are constructed by social actors through individuation and internalisation (*Identity*, 6-7).

<sup>107</sup> Giddens, *Sociology*, 29. See also Hans Mol, *Identity and the Sacred. A Sketch for a New Social-Scientific Theory of Religion*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1976, 65.

is in a constant state of flux.<sup>108</sup> Individuals and collectivities construct their identity through interaction and personal initiative.<sup>109</sup> Constructivism, therefore, stresses agency in identity construction. As Giddens notes, it ‘is the individual’s constant negotiation with the outside world that helps to create and shape his or her sense of self . . . . While the cultural and social environment is a factor in shaping self-identity, individual agency and choice are of central importance.’<sup>110</sup> The weakening of the impact of traditional and inherited conventions due to modernisation and globalisation has led to a shift away from the concept of fixed identities and essentialist notions of culture towards less stable concepts. This thesis, therefore, adopts a modified constructivist perspective, recognising both dynamism and order as components of culture and identity.<sup>111</sup>

### **2.1.2 Globalisation Theory**

The rising concern with identity is partly a reflection of a growing awareness of the way that societies and individuals are affected by global flows. In the globalised setting, the boundaries of autonomous cultures are becoming increasingly subject to interpenetration and perforation. Cultures are becoming ‘deterritorialised’ through flows of information, images, and people, such that individuals and communities are faced with a repertoire of cultural scripts with which to construct their identities.

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<sup>108</sup> See Peter Berger, & Thomas Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality*, Harmondsworth: Allen Lane, 1967; Herbert Blumer, *Symbolic Interactionism: Perspectives and Method*, Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1969; Castells, *Identity*, 7.

<sup>109</sup> For instance, Berger and Luckmann, *Social Construction*, 174, suggest that identity emerges from the interaction between the individual and society.

<sup>110</sup> Giddens, *Sociology*, 30. See also Castells, *Identity*, 7, who maintains that individuals and groups construct identities using a variety of building materials (from history, geography, collective memory, imagination, religion), which are then processed according to social determinants rooted in social structure.

Globalisation became a fashionable concept in the 1990s among social scientists, and there is now an extensive literature on the subject. Indeed, Waters describes it as *the* concept of the 1990s, ‘a key idea by which we understand the transition of human society into the third millennium.’<sup>112</sup> Economists, political scientists, and mass communication theorists were the first to address globalisation, and it has been increasingly used in debates within politics, economics, the media, and culture, including religion. In fact, interest in globalisation theory is one reason that religion has moved back into the mainstream of social scientific study since the 1980s.<sup>113</sup>

There has been considerable debate over the concept of globalisation, both in terms of definition and impact. As Giddens notes, while most people accept that there are important transformations occurring, ‘the extent to which it is valid to explain these as “globalization” is contested.’<sup>114</sup> Early approaches by economists, political scientists, and mass communication experts focused on homogeneity. Through the impact of flows of information, people, and goods, cultural difference was supposed to disappear.<sup>115</sup> Associated with this was the assumption that globalisation is Westernisation and is driven by imperialistic ambitions. A common interpretation of

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<sup>111</sup> For a discussion of essentialist and constructionist approaches to identity, see Kathryn Woodward, ‘Concepts of Identity and Difference’, in Kathryn Woodward (ed.), *Identity and Difference*, London: Sage, 1997, 8-47.

<sup>112</sup> M. Waters, *Globalization*, London: Routledge, 1995, 1.

<sup>113</sup> Helen Rose Ebaugh, ‘Return of the Sacred’, 389-90. The sociologist Roland Robertson was especially responsible for calling attention to the relationship between globalisation and religion, and in particular the role of religious movements in heightening the consciousness of living in an increasingly interdependent world. See Roland Robertson, *Globalization, Social Theory and Global Culture*, London: Sage, 1992.

<sup>114</sup> Giddens, *Sociology*, 58.

<sup>115</sup> Birgit Meyer and Peter Geschiere, ‘Globalization and Identity: Dialectics of Flow and Closure. Introduction’, in Birgit Meyer and Peter Geschiere (eds.), *Globalization and Identity. Dialectics of Flow and Closure*, Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1999, 1-15.

globalisation was that the world was becoming increasingly uniform through technological, economic, and cultural flows emanating from the West. However, the more recent entry of anthropologists into the debate has made this one-sided emphasis problematic.<sup>116</sup> Meyer and Geschiere argue that the process of globalisation itself ‘appears to lead to a hardening of cultural contrasts or even to engender new oppositions.’ They suggest that the homogenising tendencies of globalisation imply continued or even reinforced cultural heterogeneity.<sup>117</sup> The consensus among scholars is that globalisation implies an intensification of worldwide social relations such that societies and cultures have become closer together, resulting in a compression of time and space, and stimulating processes of homogenisation and differentiation.<sup>118</sup>

Social scientists acknowledge that interactions between cultures and nations have occurred over a long period of human history.<sup>119</sup> Thus, Coleman observes that ‘world-wide interconnectedness . . . is not new in itself.’<sup>120</sup> These processes, which provide the historical roots for current developments, include the emergence of nation-states (stimulated by European colonisation), the effects of the technological and industrial revolutions, the growth of a world capitalist economy, and the missionary enterprises of

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<sup>116</sup> For example, A. Appadurai, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996, 11, who maintains that the discipline of anthropology has predisposed him towards the idea that ‘globalisation is not the story of cultural homogenization.’

<sup>117</sup> Meyer and Geschiere, ‘Globalization and Identity’, 2.

<sup>118</sup> See Anthony Giddens, *The Consequences of Modernity*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 1990, 64; Giddens, *Sociology*, 51-3; Robertson, *Globalization*, 8; Ray Kiely, ‘Globalisation, (Post-)Modernity and the Third World’, in Ray Kiely and Phil Marfleet (eds.), *Globalisation and the Third World*, London/New York: Routledge, 1998, 1-22; Kevin Robins, ‘Encountering Globalization’, in David Held and Anthony McGrew (eds.), *The Global Transformations Reader. An Introduction to the Globalization Debate*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 2000, 195-201.

<sup>119</sup> See for example, Robertson, *Globalization*, 58-60.

<sup>120</sup> Simon Coleman, *The Globalisation of Charismatic Christianity. Spreading the Gospel of Prosperity*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000, 52.

the world religions.<sup>121</sup> It is possible to regard globalisation either as the later stages of this process, associated with the development of a world market, Western imperialism, and modernity,<sup>122</sup> or as a long-term process, which accelerates under particular conditions (the spread of technologies, religions, literacy, empires, capitalism).<sup>123</sup> It is in the former sense that I use it here. This thesis argues that current developments involving the intensification of global processes have helped to shape contemporary Igbo neo-Pentecostalism. Yet because these processes were already present at the movement's inception, albeit on a smaller scale, the vision and values of the Civil War Revival continue to have relevance today.

Scholars differ over the impact of globalising processes on contemporary society. Held *et al.* divide participants in the debate into three schools of thought: sceptics, hyperglobalisers, and transformationalists. While 'sceptics' argue that globalisation is overrated, a primarily ideological or mythical construction, and differs from the past only in the intensity of interaction between nations, 'hyperglobalisers' insist that its effects can be felt everywhere.<sup>124</sup> This thesis aligns itself with the 'transformationalists' by taking a middle ground, which regards globalisation as a significant force behind a broad range of changes in economics, politics, and culture, but insisting that many of the old patterns remain.

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<sup>121</sup> Jeff Haynes (ed.), *Religion, Globalization and Political Culture in the Third World*, New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999, 15; Jan Nederveen Pieterse, 'Globalisation as Hybridization', in Frank J. Lechner and John Boli (eds.), *The Globalisation Reader*, Oxford: Blackwell, 2000, 101.

<sup>122</sup> Robertson is among those who see globalisation as a recent phenomenon.

<sup>123</sup> Pieterse, 'Globalization as Hybridization', 101.

<sup>124</sup> David Held *et al.*, *Global Transformations. Politics, Economics and Culture*, Cambridge: Polity, 1999, cited in Giddens, *Sociology*, 58-61; David Held and Anthony McGrew, 'The Great Globalization Debate: An Introduction', in Held & McGrew (eds.), *Global Transformations Reader*, 1-45.

### 2.1.3 Global Flows and Identity Construction

The open-ended flows of information, people, images, and commodities associated with globalisation have several consequences for identity construction. Firstly, different parts of the world are increasingly drawn into a global system, so that local happenings are shaped by events occurring elsewhere.<sup>125</sup> Secondly, globalisation creates global awareness.<sup>126</sup> Related to this is the way that people with a global outlook look to sources other than the nation-state to construct identity.<sup>127</sup> Within Africa, this has been exacerbated by the failure of nationalism, following colonialism, to provide a stable niche for identity construction. This ‘deterritorialisation’ of culture has resulted in what Marshall-Fratani refers to as an ‘explosion’ of multiple identities.<sup>128</sup> Finally, the complex interaction between globalising and localising tendencies (so-called ‘glocalisation’),<sup>129</sup> and the associated tension between cultural homogenisation and heterogenisation, can produce new cultural forms through a process of hybridisation,<sup>130</sup>

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<sup>125</sup> Kiely, ‘Globalisation’, 3; Giddens, *Sociology*, 61; Giddens, *Modernity*, 64.

<sup>126</sup> Jonathan Friedman, *Cultural Identity and Global Processes*, London: Sage, 1994, 198. Robertson, *Globalization*, 8, refers to the ‘intensification of consciousness of the world as a whole’ because of globalising processes. See also Kiely, ‘Globalisation’, 3.

<sup>127</sup> Giddens, *Sociology*, 56. Friedman, *Cultural Identity*, 86, suggests that national identities are being replaced by identities based on, for example, ethnicity, ‘race,’ local community, language, and ‘other culturally concrete forms.’

<sup>128</sup> Marshall-Fratani, ‘Global and Local’, 281-82.

<sup>129</sup> Robertson coined the term ‘glocalization’ to describe the interaction between globalising and localising forces, which he referred to as ‘the interpenetration of the universalization of particularism and the particularization of universalism (*Globalization*, 100). For further discussion, see Friedman, *Cultural Identity*, 199-210; Appadurai, *Modernity at Large*, 4-5; Meyer and Geschiere, ‘Globalization and Identity’, 2. For its application to religious movements, see David Lyon, ‘Wheels within Wheels: Glocalization & Contemporary Religion’, in Mark Hutchinson and Ogbu U. Kalu (eds.), *A Global Faith. Essays on Evangelicalism and Globalization*, Sydney: Centre for the Study of Australian Christianity, 1998, 47-68.

<sup>130</sup> The concept of ‘hybridity’ is not identical to that of syncretism. According to Bastion, syncretism is ‘based on the idea that there exist pure religious entities which can be normatively classified. The notion of hybridity refers on the contrary to the juxtaposition of various sources of borrowing, among them the contents of beliefs, patterns of transmission and communication, the recourse to the most archaic as well as the most modern mediations, and finally the eclectic and pragmatic use of models linked to market logic.’ See Jean-Pierre Bastion, ‘Pentecostalism, Market logic and Religious Transnationalism in Costa Rica’, in Corten and Marshall-Fratani (eds.), *Babel and Pentecost*, 169.

or precipitate resistance, resulting in the strengthening of local identities.<sup>131</sup> Thus, Meyer and Geschiere can speak of flow and closure, flux and fix with respect to cultural reality in an era of globalisation.<sup>132</sup> Individuals within so-called ‘receiving’ cultures are not passive but active agents, making use of globalising forces for their own purposes, and blending disparate cultural forms with their own traditions, resulting in ‘hybrid’ or ‘creole’ cultures.<sup>133</sup> This thesis will explore the implications of this for the Igbo people as they responded to global flows through Scripture Union, global Pentecostalism, and Western economic capitalism.

Some have argued that ‘glocalisation’ lies behind the upsurge of religious revival movements.<sup>134</sup> Beyer, for example, argues that the revitalisation of religion is ‘a way of asserting a particular (group) identity, which in turn is a prime method of competing for power and influence in the global system.’<sup>135</sup> Yet Beyer and other globalisation theorists who discuss religion, such as Robertson and Waters, do so without reference to Pentecostal expansion in Africa, possibly because it has largely occurred independently of Western religious initiatives.

### **2.1.4 Globalisation as a Carrier of Modernity**

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<sup>131</sup> Stuart Hall, ‘The Question of Cultural Identity’, in Stuart Hall, David Held, and Tony McGrew (eds.), *Modernity. An Introduction to Modern Societies*, Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1996, 626. See also Woodward, ‘Concepts of Identity’, 16; Robins, ‘Encountering Globalization’, 196.

<sup>132</sup> Meyer and Geschiere, ‘Globalization and Identity’, 3.

<sup>133</sup> Hannerz coined the term ‘creolization’ to refer to those processes in which cultural meanings and forms are shaped by the interaction between central and peripheral societies. He refers to the tendency to ‘give too little recognition to the generation of new culture at the periphery through the creative use of imported as well as local resources.’ Ulf Hannerz, *Cultural Complexity. Studies in the Social Organization of Meaning*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1992, 39.

<sup>134</sup> See for example, Pieterse, ‘Globalization as Hybridization’, 102; Peter Beyer, *Religion and Globalization*, London: Sage Publications, 1994; Gifford, *African Christianity*, 320-22; Paul Gifford, ‘The Complex Provenance of some Elements of African Pentecostal Theology’, in Corten and Marshall-Fratani (eds.), *Babel and Pentecost*, 78.

Other consequences of globalisation for African identity construction are linked to its role as a carrier of modernity and modernisation. However, modernity is experienced differently in different contexts, such that there are multiple modernities. What has to be explored, as Meyer has argued, is how people dealt and still deal locally with ‘globalising’ and ‘modernising’ forces.<sup>136</sup>

Various features of modernity and modernisation have flowed into Africa through global processes and have contributed to the African identity crisis. Firstly, the imposition of Western civilisation, education, and culture associated with colonialists and missionaries, which acted as an agent of secularisation. As Marfleet notes, change ‘in Africa, Asia and Latin America - “modernisation” - was seen as intimately connected with secularisation, with the retreat of ideas about the sacred, supernatural or otherworldly.’<sup>137</sup> Yet the secularising influence of Western modernity has provoked a search for local expressions of Christianity that resonate more closely with indigenous worldviews. The Civil War Revival was one of a succession of such initiatives in Igboland that helped to counter the secularising forces of modernity, as we see later. Globalisation theorists regard current religious resurgence in Africa as an important expression of a *unified* world, where religion as a transnational phenomenon spreads through global flows and takes on a special significance in response to weakened nation-states. While this neglects the concrete contexts in which these movements

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<sup>135</sup> Beyer, *Religion and Globalization*, 4.

<sup>136</sup> Meyer, *Translating the Devil*, xxii.

<sup>137</sup> Phil Marfleet, ‘Globalisation and Religious Activism’, in Kiely and Marfleet (eds.), *Globalisation and the Third World*, 186.

develop, and disregards the vitality of agency and local initiative, as Marfleet notes,<sup>138</sup> it does demonstrate the remarkable resilience of religion to secularising influences.

Individualism is a second feature of modernity exported to Africa through global processes. Friedman describes the modern individual as a ‘miniature society unto himself,’ whose sense of identity is disembodied from social relations. ‘By contrast, the subject of a kinship-ordered universe is not only constrained by a cosmological order. His very constitution is intimately bound up with forces that extend beyond the boundaries of his body.’<sup>139</sup> The separation of the subject from any fixed identity follows from this, resulting in an acute sense of alienation.<sup>140</sup> It is suggested that globalisation fosters the intrusion of a heightened sense of individuality, such that the self is released from the constraints of extended kin and local community.<sup>141</sup> As Corten and Marshall-Fratani observe, ‘rupture with the past’ is at the heart of modernity’s specific space-time conceptualisation.’<sup>142</sup> Various features of African revival movements point to the influence of Western individualism, such as the stress on personal conversion and deliverance, the pursuit of a gospel of individual prosperity, the focus on the nuclear family, and the rejection of traditional authorities. Yet the idea that globalisation and modernisation represent an onslaught on an otherwise African

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<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*, 186, 193, 209.

<sup>139</sup> Friedman, *Cultural Identity*, 194.

<sup>140</sup> *Ibid.*, 219.

<sup>141</sup> See David Martin, ‘Evangelical Expansion in Global Society’, paper presented to the Oxford Consultation. Christian Expansion in the Twentieth-Century Non-Western World, Currents in World Christianity Project, Oxford, July 14<sup>th</sup> -17<sup>th</sup> 1999, 6.

<sup>142</sup> Corten and Marshall-Fratani, ‘Introduction’, 14-5.

communal identity must be qualified. Van Dijk correctly notes the existence of cultural and historical forms of individualism in African societies.<sup>143</sup>

A third feature of modernity closely linked to individualism and autonomy of the self is moral relativism. Modernising processes through global flows have contributed to a breakdown in morality in Africa by weakening traditional social restraints and promoting individual freedom. Globalisation has also exposed African societies to consumer culture, materialism, and secularism, through incorporation into global economic processes. Meyer refers to the way early African Christian identity was influenced by the consumption of Western commodities, associated with colonialism and modernisation.<sup>144</sup> More recently, African Pentecostals have promoted economic individualism and an ethic of consumerism through their advocacy of prosperity teaching. For many, this has become a welcome addition to the repertoire of scripts available for local identity construction, and resonates with the traditional correlation between wealth and status acquisition, as we will see in chapter five.

This thesis will argue that globalisation contributed towards the Igbo crisis, and stimulated the search for new forms of identity. The Civil War Revival and its Pentecostal progeny became a rich resource for reinforcing local identities against the

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<sup>143</sup> Rijk van Dijk, 'The Soul is the Stranger: Ghanaian Pentecostalism and the Diasporic Contestation of "Flow" and "Individuality"', *Culture and Religion*, 3.1, 2002, 56. Van Dijk refers to the demands from family in Ghana that necessitate becoming something of a stranger to one's family circle to survive and supervise 'one's identity in opposition to those who want to keep hold on it. . .' ('Soul is the Stranger', 62). For the importance of both communalism and individualism within Igbo traditional culture, see Cyril C. Okorochoa, 'Religious Conversion in Africa: its Missiological Implications', *Mission Studies*, 9.2, 1992, 169; Stephen O. Okafor, 'The Quest for Authenticity in the Christianity of South-Eastern Nigeria', M.Phil. thesis, Leicester, 1980, 34-35; Ilogu, *Ibo Culture*, 17-18; Victor C. Uchendu, *The Igbo of Southeast Nigeria*, New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1965, 34, 19; Mazi Elechukwu Nnadibuagha Njaka, *Igbo Political Culture*, Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1999, 60.

corrosive impact of ‘globalising’ and ‘modernising’ forces. Hunter identifies three ‘ideal-typical’ possibilities for the community of faith in response to modernity: withdrawal, accommodation, or resistance.<sup>145</sup> This study will show that civil war revivalists and their Pentecostal heirs engaged in a bargaining process of accommodation and resistance. They embraced modern concerns for progress, rupture with the past, socio-economic mobility, and the use of modern technologies, but at the same time resisted secularisation, moral relativism, and, at least in the movement’s early stages, modern consumer culture.

## **2.2 Secularisation, Sacralisation, and Religious Pluralism**

It is beyond the scope of this thesis to engage in depth with the prolific debates on secularisation. I touch on it here because of my contention that the Civil War Revival helped to counter the secularising effects of modernity.

Until recently, secularisation theory dominated discussion by social scientists and historians about the relationship between religion and modernity. Woodhead and Heelas identify three sub-theses: disappearance (religion is on course to disappear), differentiation (the relocation of religion from the public to private domain), and deintensification (religion remains, but in a ‘weak’ form).<sup>146</sup> Bruce states that ‘there is actually nothing in the secularisation approach that rules out occasional signs of

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<sup>144</sup> Birgit Meyer, ‘Commodities and the Power of Prayer: Pentecostalist Attitudes Towards Consumption in Contemporary Ghana’, in Meyer and Geschiere (eds.), *Globalization and Identity*, 152.

<sup>145</sup> James D. Hunter, ‘What is Modernity? Historical Roots and Contemporary Features’, in Philip Sampson, Vinay Samuel, and Chris Sugden (eds.), *Faith and Modernity*, Oxford: Regnum Books International, 1994, 22-3.

<sup>146</sup> Linda Woodhead and Paul Heelas (eds.), *Religion in Modern Times*, Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2000, 307-8. For a critique of different uses of the term ‘secularisation’, see Larry Shiner, ‘The Concept of Secularization in Empirical Research’, *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 6, 1966, 207-20.

revival.’<sup>147</sup> Opinions differ over the causes of secularisation. Suggested processes include intellectual changes (associated with the rise of science and reason as dominant epistemological categories), socio-cultural differentiation (related to processes of modernisation), pluralisation (the loss of faith in the face of competition from alternative worldviews), and the ‘consumerisation’ of religion.<sup>148</sup>

Contemporary global religious resurgence has prompted some scholars to challenge the secularisation thesis.<sup>149</sup> So-called sacralisation theory focuses attention on religion gaining in strength in modern times. For example, Berger, an early advocate of secularisation theory, now believes that while modernisation has had some secularising effects, it has also triggered ‘powerful movements of counter-secularisation,’ particularly in Asia, sub-Saharan Africa, and Latin America.<sup>150</sup> Woodhead and Heelas identify three sub-theses on sacralisation, corresponding to the three sub-theses of secularisation: growth (by way of conversion), dedifferentiation (or deprivatisation), and intensification, where people with a ‘weak’, nominal religious affiliation come to adopt ‘stronger,’ more potent forms of religiosity.<sup>151</sup> This present study concurs with Woodhead and Heelas’s assertion that both trends, secularisation and sacralisation, are operative in the modern world. While secularisation occurs in particular circumstances,

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<sup>147</sup> Steve Bruce, *God is Dead. Secularization in the West*, Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2002, 173.

<sup>148</sup> Woodhead, and Heelas (eds.), *Religion in Modern Times*, 308; Hugh McLeod, *Secularization in Western Europe 1848-1914*, Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2000, 6-9; Steve Bruce, *A House Divided: Protestantism, Schism and Secularization*, London: Routledge, 1990, 29.

<sup>149</sup> See for example, José Casanova, *Public Religions in the Modern World*, Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1994; Peter L. Berger, ‘The Desecularization of the World: A Global Overview,’ in Peter L. Berger (ed.), *The Desecularization of the World. Essays on the Resurgence of Religion in World Politics*, Washington: Ethics and Public Policy Center; Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1999, 1-18; Grace Davie, *Europe: The Exceptional Case. Parameters of Faith in the Modern World*, London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 2002.

<sup>150</sup> Berger, ‘Desecularization of the World’, 3, 8.

<sup>151</sup> Woodhead and Heelas (eds.), *Religion in Modern Times*, 429.

in other contexts ‘religions retain their vitality, even grow.’<sup>152</sup> In my analysis of the revival and its Pentecostal progeny, I distinguish between numerical growth/decline, the movement’s public role, and the intensity of religious commitments.

A central issue of contemporary sociological debate is the precise relationship between religious pluralism (a symptom of modernity) and religious vitality. Secularisation theorists contend that in pluralist environments, religion ‘becomes increasingly a question of options, life-styles and preferences, to the point that it loses much of its *raison d’être*.’<sup>153</sup> The recent application of an economic market model to the study of religion, the so-called rational choice theory, has challenged this view.<sup>154</sup> It proceeds on the assumption that religious demand in societies remains constant, and that competitive pluralism increases religious vitality and participation. Such a theory assumes the possibility of choice, and argues that religion flourishes especially in unregulated contexts, such as North America. In this competitive environment, religious providers necessarily adapt their products to suit consumers.<sup>155</sup>

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<sup>152</sup> *Ibid.*, 2, 308.

<sup>153</sup> Davie, *Europe*, 15-6.

<sup>154</sup> This theory is associated with sociologists Rodney Stark, William Bainbridge, Roger Finke, and the economist Larry Iannaccone. See for example, Roger Finke and Rodney Stark, *The Church of America, 1776-1990: Winners and Losers in our Religious Economy*, New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1992; Rodney Stark and Laurence R. Iannaccone, ‘A Supply-side Reinterpretation of the Secularization of Europe’, *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 33, 1994, 230-52. It has been taken up in a less extreme form by social historians. See for example, Jeffrey Cox, *English Churches in a Secular Society: Lambeth 1870-1930*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982; Hempton, *Religion of the People*, 178. For a summary, see McLeod, *Secularization*, 9.

<sup>155</sup> Laurence R. Iannaccone, ‘Voodoo Economics? Reviewing the Rational Choice Approach to Religion’, *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 34.1, 1995, 77.

While I disagree with rational choice theorists over their tendency to shape the world to fit the explanation, and the contention that religious demand remains constant,<sup>156</sup> the economic market model is a helpful analytical tool for interpreting current religious trends in Nigeria, where freedom of religion is constitutionally guaranteed, and people tend to discard impotent religious forms in favour of more efficacious ones.<sup>157</sup> Its value lies in its presentation of churches as competing firms in a free marketplace, and its focus on suppliers *and* consumers of religious commodities. As noted, the Civil War Revival's success depended largely upon the maintenance of a balance between supply and demand. Socio-economic and political pressures created demands for alternative religious producers able to respond more efficiently to changing consumer requirements. The revival's missionary impulse provided competition for the mission churches, and broke their monopoly in a way that earlier initiatives failed to do. Since the 1970s, neo-Pentecostal expansion and fragmentation has ensured an increasing level of religious plurality. Neo-Pentecostals have also adapted their message to attract prospective customers. This thesis will explore the consequences of both these developments.

### **2.3 Conversion and Identity**

The movement's success depended largely upon its ability to trigger conversions. If we recall, conversion is a central theme in definitions of revival. It is also one of the

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<sup>156</sup> For extended critiques of rational choice theory, see N. J. Demerath, III, 'Rational Paradigms, A-Rational Religion, and the Debate Over Secularization', *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 34.1, 1995, 105-12; Mark Chaves, 'On the Rational Choice Approach to Religion', *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 34.1, 1995, 98-104; Steve Bruce, 'Religion and Rational Choice: A Critique of Economic Explanations of Religious Behavior', *Sociology of Religion*, 54, 1993, 193-205.

<sup>157</sup> For a recent application of this model to the contemporary Nigerian context, see Asonzeh F. K. Ukah, 'Advertising God: Nigerian Christian Video-Films and the Power of Consumer Culture', *Journal of Religion in Africa*, 33.2, 2003, 203-31.

distinctive emphases of evangelical religion. While studies on conversion go back to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, since the 1980s ‘conversion has been born again as a subject of research.’<sup>158</sup> Current debates are closely linked to the issues of identity and modernisation. Hefner, for example, argues that conversion ‘implies the acceptance of a new locus of self-definition’ and a ‘reconceptualized social identity.’<sup>159</sup> Crucial to the idea of identity construction during the Civil War Revival was the idiom of new birth. As Marshall-Fratani notes, in this experience ‘the individual is exhorted to make an absolute break with his personal as well as collective past.’<sup>160</sup> Becoming ‘born-again’, therefore, enables a person to construct a new identity and negotiate modernity.

Three fundamental issues have dominated research on religious conversion by religionists and social scientists. The first is the nature of the experience. Conversion as radical change is one theme that pervades the literature, whether theological or social scientific, and dates back to the Biblical use of the term.<sup>161</sup> But scholars disagree about the precise nature of the change involved, and how much change is enough to constitute conversion. I return to this theme in chapter three.

The second issue is the analytical status of converts’ accounts.<sup>162</sup> Recent research on African Pentecostal evangelism has provided many examples of contemporary

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<sup>158</sup> Norman Etherington, ‘Recent Trends in the Historiography of Christianity in Southern Africa’, *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 2.2, 1996, 218.

<sup>159</sup> R. W. Hefner, ‘Introduction: World Building and the Rationality of Conversion’, in R. W. Hefner (ed.), *Conversion to Christianity. Historical and Anthropological Perspectives on a Great Transformation*, Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1993, 17.

<sup>160</sup> Marshall-Fratani, ‘Global and Local’, 284-85.

<sup>161</sup> See for example, A. D. Nock, *Conversion, the Old and the New in Religion from Alexander the Great to Augustine of Hippo*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1933, 7; Stephen Neill, *The Unfinished Task*, London: Lutterworth Press, 1953, 44, 46; David A. Snow, and Richard Machalek, ‘The Sociology of Conversion’, *Annual Review of Sociology*, 10, 1984, 169-70; Lewis R. Rambo, *Understanding Religious Conversion*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1993, 2.

<sup>162</sup> Snow and Machalek, ‘Conversion’, 168; Etherington, ‘Historiography’, 215-16.

conversion for analysis.<sup>163</sup> However, evaluating conversion experiences is not straightforward. Converts are motivated by a wide variety of factors, which change over time. As Peel notes, the interplay of motivations that produce conversion can only be apprehended through individual case histories.<sup>164</sup> Peel also points out the difficulty of assessing the interiority of the experience, when there is little evidence about the inner states of the individuals concerned. Unlike Peel, I had access to a relatively large number of oral and written accounts produced by the converts themselves, sometimes close to the time of their conversion experience. In these, they present themselves as both active and passive agents. The problem arises of how to access motives for conversion from retrospective accounts, inevitably influenced by the expectations and discourses of the group into which the person is converted. Motives are vulnerable to reformulation and redefinition through interaction over time. Beckford argues from a sociological perspective that actors self-reported accounts of religious conversion cannot be taken as objective reports of experience, but are the creation of the convert, and combine 'personal experience with the expectations, theology, and symbolism of the group which the person wants to join.'<sup>165</sup> Despite this caveat, I proceed on the assumption that conversion narratives, while vulnerable to reformulation and coloured by the group's universe of discourse, are valuable sources for evaluating religious change.

Most research on conversion has focused on identifying causes. Broadly speaking, believers have speculated on the nature of the divine-human encounter, while social

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<sup>163</sup> Etherington, 'Historiography', 218.

<sup>164</sup> Peel, *Religious Encounter*, 226.

scientists have identified a range of social and psychological forces at work. In this thesis, I explore what conversion means to the convert, and because of this take religious motivation seriously.

Snow and Machalek identify three phases of research on causes.<sup>166</sup> The first was dominated by theological and psychological explanations.<sup>167</sup> The second saw the development of the ‘brainwashing’ or ‘coercive persuasion’ model of conversion. The publication of the Lofland-Stark conversion model in 1965 signalled the arrival of a third phase that relied on sociological thinking.<sup>168</sup> Some social scientists have focused on mono-causal explanations. Others, such as Lofland and Stark, see conversion as involving a variety of processes in interaction. As Hefner rightly insists, accounts of conversion must explore the interpenetration of psychological and socio-political factors.<sup>169</sup> My thesis will draw upon Rambo’s sequential stage model.<sup>170</sup> Rambo stresses the significance of both the external socio-cultural milieu, and internal motivations, experiences and aspirations. Particularly relevant is his assertion that the existing religious matrix gives shape to the conversion experience, and his argument

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<sup>165</sup> Robert Beckford, ‘Accounting for Conversion’, *British Journal of Sociology*, 19.2, June 1978, 149. See also Snow and Machalek, ‘Conversion’, 177.

<sup>166</sup> Snow and Machalek, ‘Conversion’, 178-84.

<sup>167</sup> For example, W. James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, New York: Longman, 1902; E. T. Clark, *The Psychology of Religious Awakening*, New York: Macmillan, 1929; Nock, *Conversion*.

<sup>168</sup> J. Lofland, ‘“Becoming a World-Saver” Revisited’, *American Behavioural Sciences*, 20, 1977, 805-18; Max Heirich, ‘Change of Heart: A Test of Some Widely Held Theories About Religious Conversion’, *The American Journal of Sociology*, 83.3, Nov. 1977, 653-80; J. Lofland and N. Skonovd, ‘Conversion Motifs’, *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 20, 1981, 373-85.

<sup>169</sup> Hefner, ‘Rationality of Conversion’, 28.

<sup>170</sup> Rambo, *Religious Conversion*, 44-55. Rambo’s model involves seven stages: context, crisis, quest, encounter, interaction, commitment, and consequences. He adapted it from the work of Lofland and Stark, and the missiologistical model of Alan R. Tippett. See Alan R. Tippett, ‘Conversion as a Dynamic Process in Christian Mission’, *Missiology*, 2, 1977, 203-21; Alan R. Tippett, *Introduction to Missiology*, Pasadena, California: William Carey Library, 1987, 74-8. Tippett’s model conceives conversion as a process involving a period of *awareness*, a point of *realization*, a period of *decision-making*, a point of *encounter*, and a period of *incorporation*. Tippett, *Missiology*, 76.

that some form of crisis (be it social, political, cultural, or religious) normally precedes conversion.<sup>171</sup>

The debate on African conversion was initiated by Horton, who argued that the response of traditional societies to the shattered boundaries of the microcosm, caused by exposure to modernising forces, is for less attention to be paid to the lower tier of lesser spirits and more to the upper tier occupied by the Supreme Being. Horton put forward the controversial thesis that even if confronted with modernity without the presence of Islam or Christianity, traditional religions had the capacity to develop a monotheistic cosmology.<sup>172</sup> Horton's intellectualist theory has met with critical response,<sup>173</sup> not least for its neglect of the religious dimension of world religions, its overemphasis on the 'boundedness of traditional communities,'<sup>174</sup> and its marginalisation of political and structural influences on conversion.<sup>175</sup> However, for all its limitations it does draw

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<sup>171</sup> Rambo, *Religious Conversion*, 17, 34, 46, 54.

<sup>172</sup> See Robin Horton, 'African Conversion', *Africa*, 41.2, 1971, 91-112; Robin Horton, 'On the Rationality of Conversion', Part 1, *Africa*, 45.3, 1975, 219-35. Horton takes as his point of departure Peel's 1968 study of *Aladura* Christianity, in which the author adopted an intellectualist explanation of the Aladura Church movement as an attempt to adapt traditional concepts of explanation, prediction, and control of events in a new and unfamiliar social situation resulting from modernisation. Thus, for Peel the hermeneutical key to conversion among the Yoruba was the concern for explanation, prediction, and control. Peel, *Aladura*.

<sup>173</sup> See Humphrey J. Fisher, 'Conversion Reconsidered: Some Historical Aspects of Religious Conversion in Black Africa', *Africa*, 43, 1973, 1, 27-40; Hefner, 'Rationality of Conversion'; Caroline V. Ifeka-Moller, 'White Power: Social-Structural Factors in Conversion to Christianity, Eastern Nigeria, 1921-26', *Canadian Journal of African Studies*, 8.1, 1974, 55-72; Emefie Ikenga-Metuh, 'Critique of Explanations of Conversions in Black Africa', in Emefie Ikenga-Metuh (ed.), *The Gods in Retreat. Continuity and Change in African Religions*, Enugu: Fourth Dimension Publishers, 1986, 257-79; Jehu Hanciles, 'Conversion and Social Change: A Review of the Unfinished Task in West Africa', *Currents in World Christianity. Christian Expansion in the Twentieth-Century Non-Western World*, paper presented at The Oxford Consultation, St. Catharine's College, Oxford, July 14<sup>th</sup> - 17<sup>th</sup>, 1999, 4-6.

<sup>174</sup> Hefner, 'Rationality of Conversion', 21, 23; Terence O. Ranger, 'The Local and the Global in Southern African Religious History', in Hefner (ed.), *Conversion*, 65-98.

<sup>175</sup> Ifeka-Moller, 'White Power'. In her social-structural approach, a critique of Horton's intellectualist theory, Ifeka-Moller argues that frustration at 'exclusion from sources of secular power' (i.e. communal deprivation) explains differential responses to mission church and *Aladura* Christianity in Eastern Nigeria. For Horton and Peel's rejoinder, see Robin Horton and J. D. Y. Peel, 'Conversion and Confusion: A Rejoinder on Christianity in Eastern Nigeria', *Canadian Journal of African Studies*, 10.3,

attention to the way modernising influences have provided significant motivation for conversion.

Research on Igbo Christian conversion has included contributions from historians, social anthropologists, and theologians (mainly Igbo scholars).<sup>176</sup> They divide loosely into two groups: those who focus on sociological factors and secular motives (functionalist approaches), and those who regard conversion as primarily a religious encounter, with sociological factors as catalysts. Representatives of the first group argue that instrumentalist factors, such as communal deprivation<sup>177</sup> or insecurity induced by the colonial encounter,<sup>178</sup> provided the primary motivation for conversion. Representatives of the second group present Igbo conversion in terms of a power encounter between two systems of salvation, and argue that inherited religious beliefs are the determinant factors. They do not deny the significance of sociological factors, but view them as catalysts rather than causes.<sup>179</sup>

This thesis adopts a holistic approach, acknowledging that conversion to Christianity has both social and religious causes. As Ikenga-Metuh rightly observes, scholars tend

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1976, 481-98. For further responses to Ifeka-Moller's thesis, see Okorochoa, *Religious Conversion*, 292; Ikenga-Metuh, 'Critique', 264-66.

<sup>176</sup> For surveys of works on Igbo conversion, see Okorochoa, *Religious Conversion*, 10-35; C. N. Ubah, 'Religious Change among the Ibo during the Colonial Period', *Journal of Religion in Africa*, 18, February 1988, 85-7.

<sup>177</sup> Ifeka-Moller, 'White power', 55-72.

<sup>178</sup> F. K. Ekechi, *Missionary Enterprise and Rivalry in Igboland 1857-1914*, London: Frank Cass, 1972, 114, 147-49. Ekechi also suggests that mission education and Western medicine provided significant motivation for conversion. Ekechi, *Missionary*, 149; F. K. Ekechi, 'The Medical Factor in Christian Conversion in Africa: Observations from South-Eastern Nigeria', *Missiology*, 21.3, 1993, 289-309.

<sup>179</sup> See for example, Okorochoa, *Religious Conversion*, 294-95, xi; Kalu, *Embattled Gods*, 318-19, 49, 334, 324. Kalu employs the concept of covenant and argues that Igbo appropriation of Christianity involved the breaking of existing primal covenants and the acceptance of a new covenant, a process that was often prolonged due to the enduring quality of inherited religion. The success of the missionary

to stress the one and underplay the other depending on their theoretical or faith assumptions.<sup>180</sup> Despite drawing attention to the importance of social factors, functionalist approaches are reductionist and treat religion in a highly rationalist manner.<sup>181</sup> This study stresses the primacy of religious motivation. Most research on African conversion has focussed on the colonial era. This thesis reflects on an encounter between a particular brand of Christianity and a local society in post-colonial Africa, and the process of (re)-conversion that transpired.

#### **2.4 Narrative, Oral History, and Identity Construction**

Among the current interests of Africanist historians and social scientists is concern about the power of texts and narratives, and their role in identity construction.<sup>182</sup> This thesis makes narrative (written and oral) central to how it deals with the past. It does so for reasons related to research objectives, theory, and method.

As noted, one of its aims is to tell the story of the Civil War Revival and its Pentecostal progeny from a participant point of view. This will involve relating local narratives of Christian conversion to the broader ‘metanarratives’ of decolonisation, modernisation, and globalisation. Secondly, it recognises how human subjects construct personal and social identities through the stories they listen to, and the stories they tell. In the case of Igbo revivalists, identity reconstruction began when they were ‘born-again’ through their encounter with the gospel story and the testimonies of their peers. As Peel notes, ‘Christian mission is about the effective telling of a story, and conversion occurs when

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endeavour, according to Kalu, depended upon the extent to which it touched the core of Igbo primal spirituality.

<sup>180</sup> Ikenga-Metuh, ‘Critique’, 270.

people are prepared to take that story as their own.’<sup>183</sup> However, it developed as they read their Bibles and identified themselves with the missionary community of the early Church. Finally, this study relies chiefly on narrative source material.<sup>184</sup> Jenkins stresses the need to ‘go to the people,’ rather than depend upon one-sided missionary accounts.<sup>185</sup> The only way to gain access to the stories of faith is by getting people to share their testimonies.

This brings us to current concerns over the notion of truth in historical studies, and post-modern criticisms about the possibility of obtaining knowledge about the past. Broadly speaking, there are three approaches to historiography: reconstructionist, constructionist, and deconstructionist (post-modern). The reconstructionist approach seeks to retrieve objective knowledge about the past as it actually happened, through empirical research and careful examination of relevant sources.<sup>186</sup> Constructionist approaches share the belief that the past is real, and that ‘history results from a conceptual dialogue between the historian and the past.’<sup>187</sup> On one end of the scale are the practical realists, who, responding to postmodernist attacks on ‘naive empiricism,’ acknowledge that while it is not possible to reconstruct the past as it actually happened, ‘the voices of the past remain in the documents.’ Post-empiricists, however, adopt a non-realist approach, insisting that history is the construction of the historian. Deconstructionist historians, influenced by linguistics and literary theory, deny the

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<sup>181</sup> Okorochoa, *Religious Conversion*, 19.

<sup>182</sup> Maxwell, ‘African Imagination’, 3.

<sup>183</sup> Peel, *Religious Encounter*, 310.

<sup>184</sup> Due to limitations of space, I have chosen to include most of the primary narrative material in the appendices and refer to them in the main text.

<sup>185</sup> Jenkins, ‘African Church History’, 68.

<sup>186</sup> Examples of reconstructionist historians include Geoffrey Elton and Arthur Marwick.

representational nature of language, and emphasise the fictive quality of the historical narrative.<sup>188</sup> As Peel notes, the ‘emphasis is strongly on the gap, rather than on the links, between signifier and signified.’<sup>189</sup> Because there is no one absolute way of viewing the world, deconstructionist approaches imply an inevitable relativism that does not privilege one narrative over another.<sup>190</sup> Post-modern approaches have also exposed the issue of power relations and subjectivity in historiography.<sup>191</sup>

This thesis adopts a practical, critical realist approach, recognising that while all history is interpretation and open to contestation, it is possible to obtain true, if partial, knowledge of the past through careful interrogation of the sources. Yet it also acknowledges that history, including oral history, is socially constructed and is often used as a political tool to assert the rights of one group over another, reinforce identity, or promote a particular ideological stance.

While recognising my limitations as an ‘outsider,’ this study attempts to explore the symbolic dimension of religious belief, and the way people from a different culture interpret and attach meaning to past religious experiences. It acknowledges that those who experience historical processes are the real experts, and that explanations for the

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<sup>187</sup> Alun Munslow, *The Routledge Companion to Historical Studies*, London: Routledge, 2000, 53. An example of a constructionist historian is R. G. Collingwood.

<sup>188</sup> Beverly Southgate, *History: What & Why? Ancient, Modern and Postmodern Perspectives*, London: Routledge, 1996, 4-5.

<sup>189</sup> J. D. Y. Peel, ‘For Who Hath Despised the Day of Small Things? Missionary Narratives and Historical Anthropology’, *Society for Comparative Study of Society and History*, 37.3, 1995, 584.

<sup>190</sup> Southgate, *History*, 7.

<sup>191</sup> Keith Jenkins, *Re-Thinking History*, London and New York: Routledge, 1991, 32, 57. Jenkins is an example of a historian who favours a post-modern approach to history. See Jenkins, *History*, chapter 3. For a critique of post-modern approaches to history, see Arthur Marwick, *The New Nature of History. Knowledge, Evidence, Language*, Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001, 241-60; George G. Iggers, ‘Rationality and History’, in Henry Kozicki (ed.), *Developments in Modern Historiography*, London/Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 1993, 19-39.

form, content, and growth of religious movements should start from the internal convictions of the participants themselves rather than social processes. Consequently, it privileges participant accounts of behaviour and belief by allowing informants to tell their stories in their own words, and uses oral histories to gain access to the past.<sup>192</sup> This approach is particularly helpful for exploring the personal and private dimensions of religious belief,<sup>193</sup> and the inner life of a movement,<sup>194</sup> rather than to extract facts.<sup>195</sup> However, in Africa oral sources are also important for constructing history, as they are often the only ones available.<sup>196</sup> Furthermore, oral history provides access to ‘hidden histories,’ the ‘stories of faith’ often ignored by socio-religious commentators.<sup>197</sup> This can help to counteract the bias that is often present in written historical sources, and challenge so-called ‘official’ histories.<sup>198</sup>

However, there are problems associated with the use of oral histories, related to the personal bias of interviewer and respondents, the unreliability of memory, and their

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<sup>192</sup> For the use of oral history to examine the religious beliefs of historical actors, see Sarah Williams, ‘The Problem of Belief: The Place of Oral History in the Study of Popular Religion’, *Oral History*, Autumn 1996, 27-34.

<sup>193</sup> *Ibid.*, 27.

<sup>194</sup> Alan Johnson, ‘Beyond the Smallness of Self: Oral History and British Trotskyism’, *Oral History*, Spring 1996, 43.

<sup>195</sup> See Alessandro Portelli, ‘What Makes Oral History Different’, in R. Perks and A. Thomson (eds), *The Oral History Reader*, London: Routledge, 1998, 67.

<sup>196</sup> Ogbu U. Kalu, ‘Doing Church History in Africa Today’, in Lukas Vischer (ed.), *Church History in an Ecumenical Perspective. Papers and Reports of an International Ecumenical Consultation, held at Basel, October 12-17, 1981*, Bern: Evangelische Arbeitsstelle Oekumene Schweiz, 1982, 87; Elizabeth Isichei, *A History of African Societies to 1870*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997, 8. Verstraelen, ‘Christianity in Africa’, 175, refers to the use of oral history (personal memories) and oral tradition (material handed down from generation to generation) as a ‘new methodology’ employed by historians of African Christianity.

<sup>197</sup> Robert Perks and Alistair Thomson, ‘Introduction’, in Perks and Thomson (eds.), *Oral History Reader*, ix; Jenkins, ‘African Church History’, 70, 68. Isichei refers to this as ‘truth from below,’ voices often ignored or undervalued. Elizabeth Isichei, *Voices of the Poor in Africa*, Rochester, New York: University of Rochester Press, 2002, 1.

<sup>198</sup> Johnson, ‘Oral History’, 42.

claim to be representative of a period or community.<sup>199</sup> Yet documentary sources are no less susceptible to bias and selectivity, and memory is more reliable than is often acknowledged.<sup>200</sup> I was surprised at the accuracy of my informants' memory of events that took place thirty years previously. I put this down to the depth and intensity of their involvement in what happened. Yet to counter these potential problems, I have augmented oral sources with a variety of written sources discovered during the research process.

Discrepancies did occur between different testimonies, and between oral and written accounts. Sometimes this was a question of memory, but it was also due to differing interpretations of the past. It was common, for example, for protagonists to present themselves as central figures in the movement and to marginalise others. An example occurred when I tried to interview a rather controversial Pentecostal figure. An Anglican leader, a former revivalist himself, advised me against this because in his opinion this man was only a peripheral figure. When we eventually met, I discovered he had an important story to tell. Of course, he too was probably distorting the past in his favour. But my point is that viewing the past through multiple lenses enables one to move closer to a holistic version of what happened.<sup>201</sup>

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<sup>199</sup> For discussions of problems associated with the use of oral history, see Alistair Thomson, Michael Frisch, Paula Hamilton, 'The Memory and History Debates: Some International Perspectives', *Oral History*, Autumn 1994, 33-43; Trevor Lummis, *Listening to History: The Authenticity of Oral Evidence*, London: Hutchinson, 1987; Trevor Lummis, 'Structure and Validity in Oral Evidence', in Perks and Thomson, *Oral History Reader*, 273-283; Peter Friedlander, 'Theory, Method and Oral History', in Perks and Thomson (eds.), *Oral History Reader*, 311-319; David K. Dunaway, 'Method and Theory in the Oral Biography', *Oral History*, Autumn 1992, 40-4.

<sup>200</sup> For instance, Lummis, 'Structure', 273, notes that it is the most recent memories that are usually lost first, while early memories remain clear.

A consideration of the validity, reliability, and representativeness of both oral and written sources will be important, particularly in the face of post-modern criticisms about the possibility of obtaining knowledge about the past. Nonetheless, I have proceeded on the assumption that despite the limitations of memory and the very real problem of bias, we do have access to the past both through oral testimony and through written text.

## 2.5 'Actual Life' Theologies

While it is not a theological work *per se*, this thesis necessarily deals with aspects of theology as they impinge upon identity construction, patterns of growth, and social influence. The construction of local theologies is one way of addressing the African Christian identity crisis. According to Bediako, African theology is faced with 'an essentially intellectual problem - how African Christianity . . . may set about mending the fabric of African identity.'<sup>202</sup> An urgent task, therefore, is to develop local theologies as a basis for African Christian identity in a global age.<sup>203</sup>

Post-colonial attempts to develop African theology have followed two broad routes. The first - African Christian theology - is concerned with cultural identity, and

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<sup>201</sup> The geographical development of the movement was also a factor. As we see later, the revival had several centres, and participants were often unaware of what was happening in other localities.

<sup>202</sup> Kwame Bediako, *Christianity in Africa: The Renewal of a Non-Western Religion*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1995, 5. See also Kwame Bediako, 'The Roots of African Theology', *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, April, 1989, 59-60, where he argues that identity is the hermeneutical key, the most helpful tool for interpreting early literature on African theology.

<sup>203</sup> This was one of the recommendations of a recent conference of African ecumenical theologians. It encouraged churches to promote local identities in response to globalisation by developing 'local theologies, christologies, pneumatologies, and ecclesiologies.' AACC/CIRCLE/CATI/EATWOT/OAIC Joint Theological Conference, Mbagathi, Nairobi, 14-18 August 2000: 'The Church Making a Difference in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century', Resolution 12.

liberation from cultural domination.<sup>204</sup> The second - Liberation theology - is concerned with socio-political and economic injustices, and concentrates on liberation from class domination and neo-colonialism through social change and praxis.<sup>205</sup> As Bediako has noted, the aim of the former is the integration of African pre-Christian religious experience and African Christian commitment.<sup>206</sup> Early African writers, mostly Western trained, engaged in a dispute with Western theology over the role of African's pre-Christian heritage and the foreignness of mission Christianity. At the heart of their method was the issue of identity as they set about seeking the 'authenticity of continuity',<sup>207</sup> between African primal religions and Christianity. The 1980s was a period of transition, as preoccupation with the religious past gave way to other concerns, such as Christology,<sup>208</sup> soteriology/conversion,<sup>209</sup> and the history of Christian expansion.<sup>210</sup> What African Christians would do with their Christian faith now determined how Christian thought would develop in Africa.<sup>211</sup> Faced with increasingly oppressive post-colonial states and the challenges of globalisation, theologians began to engage with socio-political issues such as liberation, democratisation, and reconstruction.<sup>212</sup>

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<sup>204</sup> Young refers to these theologians as the 'old guard.' Josiah Young III, *African Theology. A Critical Analysis and Annotated Bibliography*, Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1993, 13-24. They include John Mbiti, Vincent Mulago, Kwesi Dickson, and E. Bolaji Idowu

<sup>205</sup> Young refers to these theologians as the 'new guard' (*African Theology*, 25-33). They include Jean-Marc Éla, Engelbert Mveng, Eboussi Boulaga, and Mercy Oduyoye.

<sup>206</sup> Kwame Bediako, 'Types of African Theology', in Fyfe and Walls (eds.), *Christianity in Africa*, 56.

<sup>207</sup> Maxwell, 'African Imagination', 10.

<sup>208</sup> For example, Kwame Bediako, 'Biblical Christologies in the Context of African Traditional Religions', in Vinay Samuel and Chris Sugden (eds.), *Sharing Jesus in the Two-Thirds World*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984, 81-121; Charles Nyamiti, *Christ as our Ancestor - Christology from an African perspective*, Gweru: Mambo Press, 1984; Robert Schreiter (ed.), *Faces of Jesus in Africa*, London: SCM Press, 1992.

<sup>209</sup> Okorocho, *Religious conversion*.

<sup>210</sup> Lamin Sanneh, *Translating the Message - The Missionary Impact on Culture*, Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1989.

<sup>211</sup> Bediako, 'Types', 62.

<sup>212</sup> In 1978, Fasholé-Luke called for theologians in independent Africa to protest about the exploitation of black Africans by fellow black Africans, and develop theologies of liberation. See Edward Fasholé-

However, as Maxwell correctly observes, this Africanisation ‘from above’ often turns out to be as externally imposed as the early missionary enterprises themselves.<sup>213</sup> It reflects a tendency for African theologians to neglect the actual operation of the churches at the grassroots, and to deny any ontological reality to the old powers.<sup>214</sup> But there is an alternative channel of Africanisation, one that emerges ‘from below.’ Increasingly, scholars are giving greater recognition to ordinary African readers as partners in the process of biblical interpretation,<sup>215</sup> and paying closer attention to ‘actual life’ theologies, those emerging from the experiences of local African Christian communities as they reflect upon the Scriptures and their own context.<sup>216</sup> Often buried in sermons, songs, prayers, testimonies, and popular literature, these emerge as local churches seek to live out their faith.<sup>217</sup> There is also an awareness that fresh theological insights can emerge during historical moments of conflict, such as the crisis of colonialism,<sup>218</sup> or the more recent decolonisation process.

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Luke, ‘Introduction’, in Fasholé-Luke *et al.* (eds.), *Christianity in Independent Africa*, 359. For examples of political theologies, see Jean-Marc Éla, *African Cry*, Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1986; Eboussi F. Boulaga, *Christianity without Fetishes*, Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1984.

<sup>213</sup> Maxwell, *Christians and Chiefs*, 4.

<sup>214</sup> Martin, *Pentecostalism*, 142.

<sup>215</sup> See for example, Justin S. Ukpong, ‘Developments in Biblical Interpretation in Africa: Historical and Hermeneutical Directions’, in G. O. West and Musa W. Dube (eds.) *The Bible in Africa. Transactions, Trajectories and Trends*, Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2000, 23. See also Gerald West, ‘Reading the Bible Differently: Giving Shape to the Discourses of the Dominated’, *Semeia*, 73, 1986, 27, 38, who refers to the practice of ‘reading with’ ordinary readers of the Bible (those on the margins).

<sup>216</sup> Bediako, ‘Types’, 63; Bediako, *Christianity in Africa*, 38; Éla, *Faith*, 174; John Mbiti, *Bible and Theology in African Christianity*, Nairobi: Oxford University Press, 1986, 46-47, 229; James C. Okoye, ‘African Theology’, in K. Muller *et al.*, *Dictionary of Mission: Theology, History, Perspectives*, Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1997, 11.

<sup>217</sup> For instance, Hastings suggests that local church worship and ministry is the main source in the shaping of popular and preached theology in Africa. Adrian Hastings, ‘On African Theology’, *Scottish Journal of Theology*, 37, 1984, 369-70.

<sup>218</sup> For example, Éla suggests that to develop an African theology that is relevant to the ‘socio-historical dynamism of contemporary Africa’ we need to return to the crisis of colonialism: ‘An historical event of this magnitude cannot have left the popular imagination wholly indifferent and passive. We need to go back to actual history, and locate the most profound symbols of African culture in a broader context, a context that bears the marks of domination and conflict.’ Éla, *Faith*, 175.

As local Christian communities, AICs are now recognised as an important source for African theological reflection.<sup>219</sup> Theirs is an enacted theology, in contrast to the more formalised theology of the European mission churches. Recent attention has focused on contemporary African Pentecostalism as a form of Africanisation ‘from below’ with potential for identity construction.<sup>220</sup> Bediako calls for African Christians at the grassroots to tell their stories, so that they can be made available for analysis by the wider scholarly community.<sup>221</sup> This study adds to the repertoire of local theologies emerging from the African continent, and pays close attention to the way ordinary Africans read their Bibles. In response to an ongoing context of crisis, the Civil War Revival generated an evolving ‘actual life’ theology that contributed to its popularity. This functioned as an ideological construct, which influenced the way participants interpreted events around them and motivated their actions. It helped them adapt to changing socio-political and economic realities, and refashion their identity in terms of a missionary community.

### 3. Methodology

I consider next the methods I used to generate data, research questions, and hypotheses. I begin by reflecting on insights from two disciplines, anthropology and the study of religion, which have helped me to gain entry into the field and understand the

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<sup>219</sup> See Emmanuel Martey, *African Theology. Inculturation and Liberation*, New York: Orbis Books, 1993, 76; Pan African Conference of Third World Theologians, December 17-23, 1977, Accra, Ghana, ‘Final Communiqué’, in Appiah-Kubi and Torres (eds.), *African Theology*, 192-93; E. W. Fasholé-Luke, ‘Footpaths and Signposts in African Christian Theologies’, *Scottish Journal of Theology*, 34.5, 1981, 401; Kwesi Dickson, *Theology in Africa*, Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1984, 10, 113.

<sup>220</sup> See for example, Meyer, *Translating the Devil*, 134-5; Martin, *Pentecostalism*, 142; Maxwell, ‘African Imagination’, 11; Marshall-Fratani, ‘Power in the Name of Jesus’.

<sup>221</sup> Bediako, *Christianity in Africa*, 38.

movement from an insider point of view. I then describe the actual methodological strategies I employed as I engaged with the subjects of my research.

### 3.1 Ethnography, Phenomenology, and the Study of Religion

The emphasis of this study is on qualitative, rather than quantitative research. But these approaches are not mutually exclusive. As May has noted, qualitative researchers often resort to the language of quantification in their work, while surveys are often used to elicit questions of meaning.<sup>222</sup>

Scholars seeking to describe and explain African Christian initiatives have usually adopted an ‘etic’ (outsider) viewpoint, and have used criteria that are ‘external to the system’ under study.<sup>223</sup> However, a number of studies have used information from inside the movements, and have employed categories from outside<sup>224</sup> or have allowed participants to speak for themselves.<sup>225</sup> Cox notes the importance of listening to both ‘inside’ and ‘outside’ voices if we are to grasp the meaning of global Pentecostalism.<sup>226</sup> In this study, I follow those scholars of religion who stress the value of both etic and emic approaches in the analysis of religious movements,<sup>227</sup> while recognising the

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<sup>222</sup> Tim May, *Social Research. Issues, Methods and Process*, Buckingham, Philadelphia: Open University Press, 1997, 136.

<sup>223</sup> For example, Barrett, *Schism*; Welbourn and Ogot, *A Place to Feel at Home*.

<sup>224</sup> For example, G. C. Oosthuizen, *The Theology of a South African Messiah*, Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1967; H. W. Turner, *Profile through Preaching*, London: Edinburgh House, 1965; Allan Anderson, *Zion and Pentecost. The Spirituality and Experience of Pentecostal and Zionist/Apostolic Churches in South Africa*, Pretoria: University of South Africa Press, 2000.

<sup>225</sup> For example, George Franklin Pickens, ‘The “God Talk” of an African Christian Patriarch: The Formation and Presentation of Matthew Ajuoga’s “Johera Narrative”’, Ph.D. thesis, University of Birmingham, 1997.

<sup>226</sup> Harvey Cox, ‘Foreword’, in Anderson and Hollenweger (eds.), *Pentecostals After a Century*, 10.

<sup>227</sup> Kenneth Pike was the first to coin the words ‘etic’ and ‘emic’. See Kenneth Pike, ‘Etic and Emic Standpoints for the Description of Behaviour’, in Russell T. McCutcheon (ed.), *The Insider/Outsider Problem in the Study of Religion*, London: Cassell, 1999, 28-36. For a helpful discussion of problems associated with outsider and insider viewpoints in research on African religion, see Michael F. C.

limitations of my position as an outsider in terms of denominational affiliation, culture, race, and temporal distance.

Because of the nature of this thesis, I draw upon insights from disciplines other than those with which I am familiar. As local histories and theologies in Africa are rarely written down in a systematic fashion, and are often expressed in sermons, songs, prayers, and testimonies, I used methods drawn from ethnography and phenomenology to understand the perspectives, beliefs, and cultural contexts of the people under study, and to identify the theological and ideological assumptions behind their world-view. Ethnography is usually associated with anthropology and sociology, but in recent years has become an acceptable method in historical research. It focuses on the question: ‘What is the culture of this group of people?’<sup>228</sup> In my examination of the Civil War Revival and its Pentecostal progeny, oral histories, life stories, and documentary sources are read as ‘cultural texts,’<sup>229</sup> to illuminate the worldview and cultural traits of the historical actors. Participant observation is the primary ethnographical method of research. I adopted this approach in my study of NPCs linked to the revival. My membership of a similar faith community made it easier for me to become an active participant, rather than a detached observer, and this helped me to experience the ‘meanings and interactions of people from the role of an insider.’<sup>230</sup>

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Bourdillon, ‘Anthropological Approaches to the Study of African Religion’, in Platvoet, Cox, and Olupona (eds.), *Religions in Africa*, 139-154. For a recent study of African Pentecostalism that adopts this approach, see Asamoah-Gyadu, ‘Renewal within African Christianity’.

<sup>228</sup> M. Q. Patton, *Qualitative Evaluation and Research Methods*, Newbury Park, CA: Sage, 1990, 67.

<sup>229</sup> Dunaway, ‘Method and Theory’, 40.

<sup>230</sup> Danny L. Jorgansen, *Participant Observation: A Methodology for Human Studies*, London: Sage, 1989, 21.

I also used insights from the phenomenology of religion. Phenomenological inquiry focuses on the question: ‘What is the structure and essence of experience of this phenomenon for these people?’<sup>231</sup> As a method employed in the study of religion it is linked to the use empathy and *epoche* (suspension of belief), in an attempt to enter into the experiences and intentions of participants, and elicit the meanings they attach to religious acts.<sup>232</sup> I have followed Turner’s five principles for gaining an ‘inside’ view of a particular religious movement: sympathy, participation, partnership (establishment of a joint enterprise), openness, and listening.<sup>233</sup>

This was particularly important as I sought to gain access to the research field. During the ‘Remembering the Seventies’ Conference, we invited former revivalists to share their memories in a group context. This helped me to establish relationships of partnership with potential informants, and led to further opportunities to interview them on an individual basis. By first listening to them in this context I was able, I think, to gain their trust. And they were able to relate to me as a friend, who was sympathetic to their movement. During this initial period of field research, I also stayed with the senior pastor of a large neo-Pentecostal church, and attended their meetings, which were frequent.<sup>234</sup> This too helped me to establish a relationship of partnership and empathy, and facilitated my entry into the research field.

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<sup>231</sup> Patton, *Research Methods*, 69.

<sup>232</sup> Ninian Smart, *Dimensions of the Sacred*, London: Fontana Press, 1997, 1-2.

<sup>233</sup> Turner, *Religious Innovation*, 24.

<sup>234</sup> In 2000, I stayed for nearly two months with Rev. Amaechi Nwachukwu, senior pastor of Amazing Love Assembly, Enugu.

The methodological agnosticism<sup>235</sup> (or neutrality) associated with the phenomenological method can encourage the assumption that observations are objective. Van Dijk and Pels note that ‘ethnographic dialogue is always contextualised by a dialectics of power relationships that conditions and inhibits it.’<sup>236</sup> The imbalance of power can hinder effective communication. For example, respondents may give answers they think the interviewer wants to hear. It can also generate bias, as indifference to one’s own beliefs during research is difficult to sustain. Despite the desire to enter into a partnership of dialogue with the subjects of my research and allow participants to speak for themselves, I recognise that my role as an academic outsider, with control over the research process and the production of the text, makes me the dominant partner.<sup>237</sup> While this is not in itself ‘bad’, as Bowie has noted,<sup>238</sup> it needs to be made explicit. Bourdillon advises researchers to establish relationships that allow conversations between equals, rather than conversations controlled by the observer.<sup>239</sup> In this respect, I found it helpful to share my own beliefs with my informants and express a willingness to be challenged.<sup>240</sup> This seems to run contrary to the phenomenological ideal of maintaining *epoche*.

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<sup>235</sup> According to Bowie, the religious studies scholar Ninian Smart coined the term ‘methodological agnosticism’ to distinguish it from Peter Berger’s methodological atheism. Bowie, *Anthropology of Religion*, 29. But Poewe, ‘Charismatic Christianity’, 15, traces it to T. H. Huxley in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Methodological agnosticism is generally favoured over methodological atheism or theism in religious studies. For a discussion, see Poewe, ‘Charismatic Christianity’, 15-16.

<sup>236</sup> Rijk van Dijk and Peter Pels, ‘Contested Authorities and the Politics of Perception: Deconstructing the Study of Religion in Africa’, in Richard Werbner and Terence O. Ranger (eds.), *Postcolonial Identities in Africa*, London: Zed Books, 1996, 245.

<sup>237</sup> Jenkins, ‘African Church History’, 68, refers to centres and peripheries in writing history in an African context, where the academic world is the ‘centre’ possessing power and influence through its relationship to publication and teaching, and the local Christian community is the ‘periphery.’

<sup>238</sup> Bowie, *Anthropology of Religion*, 11. In fact, Moustakas suggests that subjectivity is indispensable in the research process, because personal knowledge is essential for understanding human experience. Clark Moustakas, *Heuristic Research*, Newbury: Sage, 1990, 9, 90.

<sup>239</sup> Bourdillon, ‘Anthropological Approaches’, 140.

<sup>240</sup> Fabian notes that anthropologists have come to realise the importance of regarding informants as active ‘subjects,’ able to challenge the ethnographer’s own ideologies and presuppositions, rather than

The phenomenological method usually means describing other people's customs and beliefs with as little judgement as possible. Gifford points out that attitudes of cultural superiority underlying much previous research, due to the link between social sciences and colonialism, have made Africanists sometimes reluctant to criticise the phenomena they study. This study follows Gifford's example, by attempting to describe the Civil War Revival and its Pentecostal progeny, but also to judge their adequacy.<sup>241</sup>

### 3.2 Engaging with the Subjects

Oral sources consisted of three groups: expatriate missionaries, former revivalists, who maintained their mission church affiliation, and NPC leaders and members. The majority of informants were former revivalists, who became neo-Pentecostal pioneers. Initially, I conducted interviews with a small number of Nigerians and ex-missionaries living in England. This allowed me to become familiar with the subject. Instead of imposing my own theoretical categories, I tried to let these emerge during the research process through interaction with primary and secondary sources. Here I gained helpful insights from Glaser and Strauss's 'grounded theory,' which is concerned with the 'discovery of theory from data' through inductive analysis.<sup>242</sup> Research questions

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passive objects. See Johannes Fabian, 'Six Theses Regarding the Anthropology of African Religious Movements', *Religion*, 11, 1996, 111.

<sup>241</sup> Gifford, *African Christianity*, 53. Gifford quotes Bourdillon: 'While we must try to understand how and why people think the way they do, we cannot totally absolve ourselves from the question of whether they are right or wrong, no matter how complex this question may be in certain situations (M. F. C. Bourdillon, 'On the Theology of Anthropology', *Studies in World Christianity*, 2.1, 1996, 49-50). For a discussion of the issue of judgement and its relationship to the phenomenological approach, see Bourdillon, 'Anthropological Approaches', 147-53. Bourdillon suggests the value of *epoche* lies in its instruction to listen, rather than its prescription to suspend judgement ('Anthropological Approaches', 148).

<sup>242</sup> B. G. Glaser and A. L. Strauss, *The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research*, New York: Aldine, 1967, 1. For more on grounded theory, see Nicholas Walliman, *Your*

emerged and were refined during the process of interviewing and engaging with the literature. Initial fieldwork in England also gave me an opportunity to conduct a number of pilot interviews, and develop appropriate interview schedules.<sup>243</sup> As I proceeded, I identified key themes and interconnections related to the revival. During two periods of field research in Nigeria, I carried out 90 interviews, and had informal discussions with 37 other informants. These included members of other ethnic groups, as well as some with no direct links to the revival.

To generate qualitative data, I used a combination of group discussions, individual interviews, and informal conversations. During the ‘Remembering the Seventies’ Conference, we invited participants to speak on a variety of topics related to the revival, and most talks were followed by group discussion. As well as being an efficient method for gathering information, it presented different perspectives on the past. In a group context, moreover, memories were triggered, facts verified, and views challenged. As anticipated, this led to further opportunities to interview revivalists on an individual basis. Here I had to choose the best approach to adopt. On the one hand, I wanted respondents to tell their own story, so that what was important for them emerged, together with the meanings they attached to their experiences. For this, a narrative or life story approach was appropriate.<sup>244</sup> However, I also wanted to extract information related to specific issues identified. This called for a semi-structured approach, and the use of an interview schedule.

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*Research Project. A Step-by-Step Guide for the First-Time Researcher*, London: Sage publications, 2001, 259-62.

<sup>243</sup> I have included my interview schedules in Appendix 1.

<sup>244</sup> For more on the narrative interview approach, see Uwe Flick, *An Introduction to Qualitative Research*, London: Sage, 1998, 77-113; D. Bertaux, (ed.), *Biography and History: The Life History*

Where time allowed, I used a narrative approach, and asked informants to relate their life story in three chronological stages. As well as acting as a guide, I hoped it would illuminate developmental processes. The first stage, intended to set the person in context, focused on pre-revival background. The second stage concentrated on the informant's civil war and revival experiences. The final stage was both retrospective and reflective. I asked informants to relate their experiences since the revival, and reflect on its significance both for themselves and for their communities.

As far as possible, I allowed respondents to tell their story with minimal intervention. What they did not say was as significant as what they did. I initiated each stage using a 'generative narrative question,' intended to stimulate the informant's main narrative. I then sought clarification and elaboration by asking 'probe' questions.<sup>245</sup> Finally, I asked more abstract questions related to meaning and theory. In the latter two stages, an interview schedule with a list of topics and related questions helped me identify areas overlooked or needing elaboration.

For many informants I used a semi-structured interview approach, especially when there were time constraints. This allowed freedom to express views, but also gave me an element of control over the interview process. My aim was to promote free-flowing conversations, in keeping with traditional Igbo methods for extracting information.<sup>246</sup> I

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*Approach in Social Sciences*, London: Sage, 1981; N. K. Denzin, *Interpretive Biography*, London: Sage, 1988.

<sup>245</sup> These terms are taken from Flick's discussion of narrative interviews (*Qualitative Research*, 99-104).

<sup>246</sup> Here I attempted to follow Okorocho's advice (*Religious Conversion*, 285). See also Jenkins, 'African Church History', 70, where he calls for researchers to engage in 'conversations', to learn what the people already know.

used a flexible interview schedule, which included relevant topics, with open-ended questions attached to each. This was used as a stimulus for discussion rather than as a rigid questionnaire, and was intended to generate a series of narratives and allow appropriate data to emerge. My research questions called for historical, phenomenological, and theological exploration, and my interview schedule reflected this. I began by focussing on personal experiences, beliefs, and interpretations, before moving on to questions related to the movement's history, form, and theological content. If informants are asked to relate the same areas of experience then comparisons can be made.

In my exploration of the revival itself, I selected informants using a combination of sampling techniques. Because of the nature of historical research, oral historians cannot use statistically valid sampling. I used purposeful sampling to select information-rich cases that would illuminate the central issues.<sup>247</sup> Many were church leaders, though not at the time of the revival. I also used quota sampling. In this, informants are selected according to categories that reflect the various types of experience within the particular group of interest. Quota sampling enables the researcher to compare and contrast the values and attitudes of different sectors within the group.<sup>248</sup> I selected informants based on geographical location, religious background and affiliation, gender, and education. Another method I used was snowball sampling. I asked informants to put me in touch

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<sup>247</sup> Patton, *Research methods*, 169

<sup>248</sup> Lummis, *History*, 35, 37. Quota sampling was first applied by Paul Thompson in the Oral History Archive at Essex University.

with others, who I was then able to interview. This process was repeated until a chain of informants was selected.<sup>249</sup>

In my investigation of NPCs, I used a case study approach, based on participant observation, interviews, documentary research, and survey questionnaires.<sup>250</sup> To gain an insight into the movement as a whole, with its different theological emphases and geographical centres, I visited as many NPCs as possible. My selection of churches depended largely upon access in the field. I only chose those that had direct links to the revival and reflected its different centres. I interviewed leaders from 26 neo-Pentecostal denominations (all founded by former Igbo revivalists),<sup>251</sup> attended meetings in 12,<sup>252</sup> and carried out case studies on eight, with headquarters in seven different cities.<sup>253</sup>

Ideally, I hoped to select NPC members based on age, role in society and church, and gender, but this was often not possible. Most interviews/communications were with

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<sup>249</sup> R. G. Burgess, *In the Field. An Introduction to Field Research*, London/New York: Routledge, 1990, 55.

<sup>250</sup> Yin notes that the case study approach's unique strength is its ability to deal with a full variety of evidence: documents, artefacts, interviews, and observations. Robert K. Yin, *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*, London: Sage, 1984, 20.

<sup>251</sup> These were Grace of God Mission, Salvation for All Mission, Overcomer's Bible Church, National Evangelical Mission, Travelling Gospel Mission, Living Faith Church (all with headquarters in Onitsha); Amazing Love Assembly, Victory Christian Mission, Jesus the Way Mission, Bread of Life Mission, Save the Lost Mission (Enugu); Master's Vessel Church, Calvary Evangelistic Mission, Canaan Gospel Centre (Umuahia); Living Word Ministries, All Believers Fellowship Group, Gospel Crusaders Mission (Aba); Holiness Evangelistic Church, Overcomers Christian Mission (Owerri); Last Days Messengers (Okigwe); Redeemed People's Mission, Bible Faith Mission (Jos); Pentecostal Life Bible Church (Bukuru); All Christians Fellowship Mission (Abuja); Christian Pentecostal Mission, The Redeemed Evangelical Mission (Lagos).

<sup>252</sup> These were Grace of God Mission (Enugu and Jos), Amazing Love Assembly (Enugu), Master's Vessel Church (Umuahia), Christian Pentecostal Mission (Mbubo and Jos), Overcomer's Bible Church (Onitsha), Gospel Crusaders Mission (Aba), Redeemed People's Mission (Jos and Bukuru), All Christians Fellowship Mission (Jos and Bukuru), Bible Faith Mission (Jos), Bible Pentecostal Life Church (Bukuru), Overcomers Christian Mission (Owerri), National Evangelical Mission (Ayangba).

<sup>253</sup> These were Grace of God Mission, Master's Vessel Church, Living Word Ministries, Amazing Love Assembly, Redeemed People's Mission, Bible Faith Mission, All Christians Fellowship Mission, and

male NPC leaders,<sup>254</sup> rather than lay members, due to limitations of time and accessibility. A danger was that my study could end up as an analysis of the faith of the clerical elite. I attempted to counter this by engaging in participant observation, and carrying out more in-depth studies of three denominations in Jos, Plateau State, using a questionnaire survey to gain access to membership at the grass-roots.<sup>255</sup>

I conducted all oral interviews in English,<sup>256</sup> and most were tape recorded with the consent of informants. After listening to the recordings, I then transcribed those relevant to the project. For informal conversations, and some formal interviews, notes were taken. In the Jos survey, 167 respondents from five separate congregations completed questionnaires. I asked pastors to distribute the questionnaires, and suggested they divide these equally between the Men's Fellowship, Women's Fellowship, and Youth Fellowship. Due to time restraints and logistical problems, not all were returned, and so sample sizes were small. Moreover, members were often reluctant to criticise their churches or their leaders. However, a general pattern did emerge, which I have used to supplement other data.

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Christian Pentecostal Mission. In the case of the latter, I visited congregations within Igboland and Jos city, but was unable to visit their headquarters in Lagos, or speak to their General Overseer.

<sup>254</sup> I conducted interviews or had personal communications with 54 NPC leaders. Of these 21 were NPC founders.

<sup>255</sup> As we will see in chapter four, from the early 1970s Igbo revivalists ventured beyond the borders of Igboland to urban areas in the Middle Belt and North, preaching the gospel and planting churches. This marked a new phase in the movement's development, and Jos subsequently became an important centre of Igbo neo-Pentecostal activity. The three Igbo-founded NPC denominations I studied were Redeemed People's Mission (RPM), All Christians Fellowship Mission (ACFM), and Bible Faith Mission (BFM). In the case of ACFM, I was able to visit its headquarters in Abuja and interview the General Overseer, but I carried out the survey within its Jos congregation.

<sup>256</sup> Most informants were comfortable in English. In fact, those NPCs I attended in urban areas preferred to conduct their services in English, sometimes with interpretation into the vernacular. The 'Remembering the Seventies' Conference was conducted entirely in English.

Interviews and surveys were not used in isolation. Verstraelen insists that African Christian historiography requires a methodology that combines the use of oral and written sources.<sup>257</sup> During research, I employed data triangulation to validate or challenge descriptions given, through a process of cross-verification. Oral histories and life stories were used in conjunction with primary and secondary written sources. These included popular revival accounts, private correspondence, missionary reports, locally produced church documents, and postgraduate theses written by Igbo scholars.<sup>258</sup> Unfortunately, the havoc wreaked by the civil war has meant that relatively few written documents have survived in Eastern Nigeria. However, I had access to a collection of private papers owned by Bill Roberts, who was based in Biafra during the war.<sup>259</sup> These proved a valuable resource to use alongside oral sources.

Data was subjected to qualitative and quantitative analysis. I coded qualitative material from interviews, observation, and written sources to organise it into categories and typologies, so that comparisons could be made and causal networks and relationships identified.<sup>260</sup> This facilitated the theorising process by generating research questions and hypotheses. Quantitative data from the Jos survey was processed and arranged in tables, which I include in the appendices. All the research material is used qualitatively and quantitatively in the thesis to arrive at ‘tendencies and emphases’ that reflect the general tenor of the movement.

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<sup>257</sup> Verstraelen, ‘Christianity in Africa’, 175.

<sup>258</sup> During field research, I consulted the library at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, where there is a collection of postgraduate theses written by students under the supervision of Professor Ogbu Kalu.

<sup>259</sup> My friendship with Bill Roberts facilitated my access to the field as many of my informants remembered his kindness and hospitality to them during the civil war.

I encountered some practical difficulties during my research. Repeated illness hindered my movements during my first period of fieldwork.<sup>261</sup> Sometimes access to sources was restricted, due to the reluctance of members and subordinate ministers to release information about their churches until I had met with the Founder or General Overseer. On occasions, people were understandably suspicious of a white outsider. It helped if my first contact with a church was through attendance at one of their meetings, though this was not always possible. The Jos religious riots in September 2001 posed a more serious difficulty. For ten days, we were confined to the college compound where I was working, and for weeks afterwards, there was considerable tension in the region. However, it did give me firsthand experience of how a crisis can affect a community and it was interesting how often conversations during that time dwelt on the Biafran conflict of thirty years previously.

#### **4. Overview**

In chapter two, I explore the socio-political, economic, and religious background to the revival and its Pentecostal progeny, and show how the crisis generated by colonial legacies, missionary ideologies, decolonisation, and conflict created a favourable environment for religious innovation. In chapter three, I discuss the revival's growth in terms of an economic model of supply and demand, and its relationship of continuity and rupture with existing religious landscapes. Igboland's moment of crisis not only created new religious demands, it contributed to the formation of a dynamic missionary fellowship. At the same time, I reflect upon the moral and social consequences of the

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<sup>260</sup> For more on the coding of qualitative data, see Walliman, *Research Project*, 260-61; May, *Social Research*, 124-26; Flick, *Qualitative Research*, 178-92.

<sup>261</sup> Eventually I decided to return home early because of this.

revival. In chapters four and five, I examine the provenance and popularity of the Igbo initiated neo-Pentecostal churches and link this to the revival's missionary impulse and the flexibility of Pentecostal spirituality. I attempt to show that the success of the new churches rested partly on their ability to adapt their message and methodology to suit local contexts increasingly affected by global and modernising processes. However, in their haste to respond to consumer demands they modified their message, to the detriment of the movement's original vision and values. This had socio-political implications. In chapter six, I trace the historical development of Igbo neo-Pentecostal socio-political theology and praxis from the revival to the beginning of the new millennium, and reflect on the movement's potential as an agent of social transformation in a pluralistic society.

## CHAPTER TWO

### SKETCHING THE LANDSCAPES

#### Introduction

In this chapter, I sketch the Igbo socio-political, economic and religious landscapes that provide the background to the Civil War Revival and its Pentecostal progeny. By the 1960s, most Igbos identified themselves as Christians.<sup>1</sup> Why did so many abandon their traditional religious heritage and embrace Christianity during the colonial era? What was the nature of this encounter and the depth of Igbo conversion prior to the civil war? The answers to these questions, the focus of this chapter, will help us understand Igbo responses to the Civil War Revival and the subsequent popularity of neo-Pentecostal spirituality.

As noted in chapter one, this thesis adopts a holistic approach, acknowledging that Christian conversion has both social and religious causes, but is best understood as a religious encounter, with sociological factors as catalysts. I begin by defining the contours of Igbo ethnic identity, and sketching the changing economic and socio-political landscapes. Colonial legacies, decolonisation, and conflict created a favourable environment for religious innovation. I follow this with an examination of Igbo inherited beliefs. This is important because Igbo converts to Christianity appropriated the gospel via existing religious categories. Cox describes primal religion

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<sup>1</sup> Elizabeth Isichei, 'Seven Varieties of Ambiguity: Some Patterns of Igbo Response to Christian Missions', *Journal of Religion in Africa*, 3, 1970, 212.

as a ‘receptor language’ for the translation of the Christian message,<sup>2</sup> and Bediako suggests that the ‘primal imagination’ may bring ‘its own peculiar gifts to the shaping of Christian affirmation.’<sup>3</sup> I then proceed to an historical and analytical examination of the religious changes that occurred prior to the civil war due to Western missionary ventures and local Christian initiatives. This provides the backdrop to the Civil War Revival and its Pentecostal progeny, the focus of the remaining chapters of my thesis.

The study of Igbo cultural history has included contributions from members of the British colonialist administration,<sup>4</sup> Christian missionaries,<sup>5</sup> and local indigenes.<sup>6</sup> While the former saw it as a step towards finding suitable institutions of governance, and Christian missionaries as a means of communicating a new reality, Igbos were more interested in reconstructing a group identity anchored in history, particularly important in the light of their experiences of colonialism and decolonisation.<sup>7</sup> Early studies by British colonial scholars focussed on external influences and ethnography.<sup>8</sup> Later,

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<sup>2</sup> James L. Cox, ‘The Classification “Primal Religion” as a Non-Empirical Christian Theological Construct’, *Studies in World Christianity*, 2.1, 1996, 68-9.

<sup>3</sup> Bediako, *Christianity in Africa*, 96.

<sup>4</sup> For example, P. A. Talbot, *The Peoples of Southern Nigeria*, London: Oxford University Press, 1969; C. K. Meek, *Law and Authority in a Nigeria Tribe*, London: Oxford University Press, 1957, orig. publ. 1937. Meek was a government anthropologist.

<sup>5</sup> For example, G. T. Basden, *Among the Ibos of Nigeria*, London, 1921; Basden, *Niger Ibos*, London: Seeley, 1966. Basden was a CMS missionary, based in southern Nigeria.

<sup>6</sup> The earliest was Olaudah Equiano, who Afigbo describes as the first Igbo historian and ethnologist. Equiano’s memoirs were first published in 1789. A. E. Afigbo, ‘Towards a History of the Igbo-Speaking Peoples of Nigeria’, in F. Chidozie Ogbalu and E. Nolue Emenanjo (eds.), *Igbo Language and Culture*, Ibadan: Oxford University Press, 1975, 13. Most Igbo studies belong to the post-independence period. See for example, Uchendu, *Igbo*; K. O. Dike, *Trade and Politics in the Niger Delta 1830-1885*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966; Ekechi, *Missionary Enterprise*; M. A. Onwuejeogwu, *An Igbo Civilization: Nri Kingdom and Hegemony*, London: Ethnographica, 1981.

<sup>7</sup> A. E. Afigbo, ‘Prolegomena to the Study of the Culture History of the Igbo-Speaking Peoples of Nigeria’, in Ogbalu and Emenanjo (eds.), *Igbo*, 28; Kalu, *Embattled Gods*, 29-30. Afigbo points out that the increasing number of Igbo historians interested in Igbo historical studies since the Biafran episode indicates the possible connection between Igbo interest in their culture history and ‘their crisis in modern times.’

<sup>8</sup> For example, the so-called ‘Oriental hypothesis’, which posited that the Igbo either had Hebrew or Egyptian origins, or were influenced by these cultures. For a discussion, see Afigbo, ‘Prolegomena’, 28-

nationalist historians tried to redress the balance by showing first that Igboland had a civilisation long before contact with Europeans, and secondly, the detrimental effects of the colonial project.<sup>9</sup> More recently, Igbo scholars have concentrated on explaining the evolution of Igbo culture in terms of the interaction between the people and their local environment.<sup>10</sup>

## **1. Socio-Political and Economic Landscapes (pre-2002)**

This section is primarily descriptive rather than analytical, and draws upon the work of scholars from a variety of disciplines,<sup>11</sup> supplemented by oral material from my own research.

### **1.1 Constructing Igbo Identity**

The Igbo are among the three major ethnic groups in present-day Nigeria (the other two being the Yoruba and Hausa-Fulani), and Igboland occupies a landmass of approximately 15,800 square miles, situated in the southeast.<sup>12</sup> According to Isichei, while the first human inhabitants probably came from areas further north, people have

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32. Examples of ethnographic studies include Basden, *Ibos of Nigeria*; G. I. Jones, 'Ecology and Social Structure among the North Eastern Ibo', *Africa*, 31, 1961, cited in Elizabeth Isichei, *A History of the Igbo People*, London and Basingstoke: The Macmillan Press Ltd., 1976, 290; Simon Ottenberg, 'Ibo Receptivity to Change', in W. R. Boscom M. J. Herskovits (eds.), *Continuity and Change in African Culture*, University of Chicago Press, 1959, 130-43.

<sup>9</sup> For example, Dike, *Trade and Politics*. Dike was associated with the Ibadan school of historiography, which developed at the University of Ibadan in the 1950s and determined the direction of modern Nigerian historiography into the 1970s. The Ibadan school were involved in a reconstruction of the African past in a form that could be used to further nationalist interests.

<sup>10</sup> See for example, Afigbo, 'Prolegomena', 34-51. While Afigbo maintains that the key to an understanding of Igbo cultural development lies in the interaction between the Igbo and their environment (especially their relationship to the land), he recognises the part played by external influences (both Nigerian and European).

<sup>11</sup> These include anthropologists, historians, political scientists and theologians.

<sup>12</sup> Arthur Nwankwo, 'The Igbo and the Tradition of Politics: An Overview'; in U. D. Anyanwu and J. C. U. Aguwa (eds.), *The Igbo and the Traditions of Politics*, Enugu: Fourth Dimension Publishers, 1993, 5;

lived in Igboland for at least five thousand years. The Igbo began to diverge from other related languages, such as Edo and Yoruba, perhaps four thousand years ago.<sup>13</sup>

Since the amalgamation of the Northern and Southern Protectorates in 1914, which ushered in the modern Nigerian state, different sets of essentially artificial administrative boundaries have been imposed on Igboland.<sup>14</sup> In 1951, the Macpherson constitution divided Nigeria into three regions, each dominated by a major ethnic group: the Eastern Region (predominantly Igbo and Christian), the Northern Region (predominantly Hausa-Fulani and Muslim),<sup>15</sup> and the Western Region (predominantly Yoruba, and Christian or Muslim).<sup>16</sup> This has had implications for Nigerian political culture ever since, which has been dominated by ethnic and religious politics. Nigeria obtained independence in 1960, and in 1967, the government created the first 12 states, with the bulk of Igboland occupying East Central State.<sup>17</sup> This increased to 19 states in 1975, 30 in 1991, and 36 in 1996. Present-day Igboland consists of five states: Abia, Imo, Anambra, Enugu, and Ebonyi.<sup>18</sup> There are also a number of peripheral Igbo-

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John Nwachimereze Oriji, *Traditions of Igbo Origin. A Study of Pre-colonial Population Movements in Africa*, New York/Bern: Peter Lang, 1994, 2; Uchendu, *Igbo*, 1. See Maps 2 & 3.

<sup>13</sup> Isichei, *Igbo People*, 3. The issue of Igbo origins remains an area of much speculation, partly due to the lack of oral tradition and written records. For further discussions, see Oriji, *Igbo Origin*; Don C. Ohadike, *Anioma. A Social History of the Western Igbo People*, Athens: Ohio University Press, 1994, 2-15; Basden, *Niger Ibos*, 411-23; Talbot, *Peoples of Southern Nigeria, Vol 2*.

<sup>14</sup> Isichei, *Igbo People*, 140.

<sup>15</sup> Islam reached the north in the 11<sup>th</sup> century, influencing the two Hausa states of Kano and Katsina. In the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, a reforming jihad by the Fulani cleric Uthman dan Fodiye overthrew the Hausa kings and set up the Sokoto Caliphate, a federation of emirates covering most of the north. It aimed at the formation of an Islamic state based on *Shari'a* (Islamic) law. Joseph Kenny, 'Sharia and Christianity in Nigeria: Islam and a "Secular" State', *Journal of Religion in Africa*, 26.4, 1996, 339-40; Paul Freston, *Evangelicals and Politics in Asia, Africa and Latin America*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001, 182.

<sup>16</sup> Later, the Mid-West Region (predominantly Edo) was created, carved out of the Western Region.

<sup>17</sup> See Map 4.

<sup>18</sup> See Map 1.

speaking groups west of the river Niger in Delta State,<sup>19</sup> and further south in Rivers State.<sup>20</sup> In addition, large diasporic communities exist in some of the major Nigerian urban areas, such as Lagos in the southwest, Kano, Kaduna, Jos, Zaria in the north, and Calabar in the southeast,<sup>21</sup> which as we will see facilitated the growth of the Civil War Revival and its Pentecostal progeny.

According to the contested 1963 census, Igbos numbered 9.3 million (16.6% of the total population of 55.6 million), compared to Hausa-Fulani (29.5%), and Yoruba (20.3%).<sup>22</sup> The 1991 census put the population of Igbo states at 10.7 million out of 88.5 million,<sup>23</sup> but this did not include Igbo communities outside Igboland. Based on projections from earlier censuses, the estimated Igbo population in 2000 was 19.9 million, compared to 20.3 million (Yoruba) and 35.3 million (Hausa-Fulani), out of 111.5 million.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Igbo-speaking groups west of the Niger divide into three main cultural divisions: Aniocha, Ika, and Ndokwa, but under British rule, they were grouped together under the name Western Igbo. They trace their origins to the 10<sup>th</sup> century AD, when some of their ancestors crossed the Niger in response to ecological crisis (caused by population density and soil deterioration). Since independence, they have chosen for themselves the name *ndi Anioma* (Igbo: those who live on the good and prosperous land). See Ohadike, *Anioma*, xv-xvi, 76.

<sup>20</sup> Igbo-speaking communities in Rivers State exist in Ahoada, Diobu, and Umuagbayi. See M. A. Onwuejeogwu, 'The Igbo Culture Area', in F. Chidozie Ogbalu and E. Nolue Emenanjo, *Igbo Language and Culture*, Ibadan: Oxford University Press, 1.

<sup>21</sup> Ottenberg, 'Ibo Receptivity', 130. For Igbo communities in Northern Nigeria, see Obiwu, *Igbos of Northern Nigeria*, Lagos: Torch Publishing Company Limited, 1996.

<sup>22</sup> Nigeria, *Nigeria Handbook*, Lagos: Academy Press Ltd, 22. Because of their political implications, census results in Nigeria are generally considered unreliable. The 1952-1953 census, which put Igbos at 17.9%, Yorubas at 16.6%, and Hausa-Fulani at 28.1%, was probably a more accurate reflection of the demographic balance of peoples, because the 1963 census was compiled in a more politically charged atmosphere, running up to the elections. For a discussion, see S. A. Aluko, 'How many Nigerians? An Analysis of Nigeria's Census Problems, 1901-63', *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 3.3, October 1965, 371-92.

<sup>23</sup> 1991 Census figures, quoted in Eghosa E. Osaghae, *Nigeria since Independence. Crippled Giant*, London: Hurst & Company, 1998, 232.

<sup>24</sup> Quoted in Patrick Johnstone and Jason Mandryk, *Operation World 21<sup>st</sup> Century Edition*, Carlisle: Paternoster Publishing, 2001, 487-88. Isichei estimated the Igbo population to be 20 million, out of 100 million, in the early 1990s, based on projections from the 1963 census. Isichei, *Christianity in Africa*, 155, 379. In 1998, Chris Ugokwe, chairman of the National Population Commission, estimated that Nigeria's population had risen to 108.5 million. 'Articles from October 1998 regarding Nigerian Population', retrieved from the World Wide Web: [http://www.motherlandnigeria.com/pop\\_articles.htm](http://www.motherlandnigeria.com/pop_articles.htm).

Before direct European contact, the Igbo consisted of over two hundred independent village groups, each composed of one or more villages.<sup>25</sup> Some scholars have suggested that Igbo ethnic identity was a European ‘invented tradition’ applied during the slave trade, and later by colonialists, to facilitate administration by promoting linguistic and cultural divisions.<sup>26</sup> However, this implies too one-sided a process, and overlooks local agency and initiative in identity construction. Anderson’s concept of ‘imagined communities’ is perhaps more appropriate.<sup>27</sup> As Ranger notes, identity is essentially a matter of imagination.<sup>28</sup> Early documents and traditions suggest that a pan-Igbo identity existed prior to the arrival of European colonialists,<sup>29</sup> but was reinforced when people left Igboland because of the slave trade, or when colonial conquest exposed the Igbo to global forces and an expanded universe. Under colonialism, a bounded Igbo ethnic identity replaced more fluid networks of

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<sup>25</sup> Ottenberg, ‘Ibo Receptivity’, 130. Villages commonly contained several hundred people, but in more densely populated areas some village-groups consisted of more than 5,000 members. See Daryll Forde and G. I. Jones, *The Ibo- and Ibibio-Speaking Peoples of South-Eastern Nigeria*, London: Oxford University Press for the International African Institute, 1950, 39.

<sup>26</sup> For example, Forde and Jones, *Ibo*, 9; Isichei, *Igbo People*, 19-20. In 1983, Ranger suggested that in pre-colonial Africa most Africans ‘moved in and out of multiple identities.’ With the colonial period, however, came a determination on the part of colonial administrators and missionaries to ‘make comprehensible the infinitely complex situation’ by imposing order on the ‘untraditional chaos.’ See Terence O. Ranger, ‘The Invention of Tradition in Colonial Africa’, in Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (eds.), *The Invention of Tradition*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983, 248-49.

<sup>27</sup> See Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, London: Verso, 1991. Anderson applies the term ‘imagined communities’ primarily to nationalities, and examines their creation and global spread, but suggests that ‘all communities larger than primordial villages of face-to-face contact . . . are imagined’, because many members do not know each other (*Imagined Communities*, 6).

<sup>28</sup> Terence O. Ranger, ‘The Invention of Tradition Revisited: The Case of Colonial Africa’, in Ranger and Vaughan (eds.), *Legitimacy and the State*, 82. In this article, Ranger describes his own movement away from the idea of ethnicity as an ‘invented tradition’ imposed by colonisers and missionaries upon passive African societies towards an emphasis on African initiative and imagination.

<sup>29</sup> For a discussion, see Oriji, *Igbo Origin*, 3-6. Oriji refers to two early publications, W. B. Baikie’s ‘Summary of an Exploring Trip up the Rivers Kwora and Chadda’ (*Journal of the Royal Geographical Society*, 25, 1855) and O. Equiano’s memoirs, and to oral traditions collected from Central Igboland, which suggest that many village group communities were conscious of belonging to the Igbo ethnic group prior to the advent of Europeans. In contrast, Isichei argues that there was no pan-Igbo consciousness or identity at this stage, except among the victims of the transatlantic slave trade. Isichei, *History of African Societies*, 245; Isichei, *Igbo People*, 19.

interactions. The combination of migration to urban areas outside Igboland (mainly for trade purposes)<sup>30</sup> and the Nigerian civil war further strengthened ethnic consciousness.

While there is considerable homogeneity, in terms of language, religion, economics, and politics, there is also cultural and genetic diversity, due to cross-fertilisation with neighbouring ethnic groups. This has given rise to the culture area approach adopted by anthropologists and historians.<sup>31</sup> A culture area is a geographically delineated territory, with common cultural traits. This thesis follows Kalu's scheme, which divides Igboland into nine culture areas: Western, North-Western, Northern, North-Eastern, Central, South-Western, Southern, Eastern, and Cross River.<sup>32</sup> I use it here as a tool for navigating Igbo territory, rather than to analyse cultural variations or differential responses to Christianity.

## 1.2 Socio-Political and Economic Cultures

Scholars have recognised the process of crisis and resolution as a paradigm for understanding many events in colonial and post-colonial Africa.<sup>33</sup> Periods of socio-

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<sup>30</sup> In urban areas, Igbo improvement unions, and later the Igbo State Union, formed the basis for social activity, thus reinforcing pan-Igbo identity. See A. E. Afigbo, *Ropes of Sand. Studies in Igbo History and Culture*, New York: University Press Ltd., 1981, 346.

<sup>31</sup> See for example, A. E. Afigbo, 'Igbo Cultural Sub-Areas: Their Rise and Development', in A. E. Afigbo (ed.), *Groundwork of Igbo History*, Lagos: Vista Books Limited, 1991, 144-60; Kalu, *Embattled Gods*, 9-10; Onwuejeogwu, 'Igbo Culture Area', 1-10.

<sup>32</sup> Kalu, *Embattled Gods*, 10. Earlier schemes divided Igboland into five major subcultural groups: the Northern or Onitsha Igbo (Nri-Awka, Enugu, Onitsha town); the Southern or Owerri Igbo (Isuama, Oratta-Ikwerre, Ohuhu-Ngwa, Isu-Item), the Western Igbo (Northern Ika, Southern Ika, and Riverain); the Eastern or Cross River Igbo (Ada, Abam-Ohafia, Aro); and the Northeastern Igbo (Ogu Uka, Abakalike and Afikpo groups). See Forde and Jones, *Ibo*, 10; Onwuejeogwu, 'Igbo Culture Area', 1-2. Ohadike has pointed out that historically Igbos 'have not described themselves as western, eastern, northern and southern, but as children of such and such a person, or as those who occupy such and such a land.' See Ohadike, *Anioma*, xvi.

<sup>33</sup> See for example, Weston La Barré, 'Materials for a History of Studies of Crisis Cults: A Bibliographic Essay', *Current Anthropology*, 12, February 1971, 3-44; Efraim Andersson, *Messianic Popular Movements in the Lower Congo*, Uppsala: Almqvist and Wiksells Boktryckeri, 1958; Barrett, *Schism*;

political and economic crisis may act as catalysts for religious change.<sup>34</sup> Colonialism and decolonisation have exposed African societies to several forms of stress, and have created individual and social crises. Within Igbo religious history, there have been two major communal crises, which have affected Igbo responses to Christianity. The first occurred with the invasion of Igbo territory by British colonialists and Christian missionaries, beginning in the mid-19<sup>th</sup>- century; the second began with the granting of independence in 1960. Decolonisation, civil war, and subsequent political instability and economic decline created a series of crises comparable in their impact to the colonial conquest, and precipitated further changes in the religious landscape.

### 1.2.1 The Pre-Colonial Era

Land (*ala*, Igbo) was at the centre of Igbo traditional existence. As Afigbo notes, it formed the basis of the economy, determined migration and settlement patterns, and influenced socio-political evolution.<sup>35</sup>

In contrast to traditional political systems in Western and Northern Nigeria, the Igbos had few centralised states and resisted any form of autocracy.<sup>36</sup> This is reflected in the popular Igbo adage, *Igbo amaghi eze* (Igbo: Igbos know no king).<sup>37</sup> Yet Igboland was not an acephalous society but consisted of largely autonomous, middle-level political

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Bengt Sundkler, *Bantu Prophets in South Africa*, London: Oxford University Press, 1961; Pickens, 'African Christian Patriarch'.

<sup>34</sup> Rambo, *Religious Conversion*, 44-55.

<sup>35</sup> Afigbo, 'Prolegomena', 41-2. See also Kalu, *Embattled Gods*, 36.

<sup>36</sup> Osaghae, *Crippled Giant*, 3.

<sup>37</sup> Exceptions were the monarchical state systems of Onitsha, Aboh, Oguta, Aguleri, Nri, and Arochukwu, which attributed their origins to outside kingdoms, such as Benin (Edo ethnic group) and Idah (Igala). According to Uchendu, *Igbo*, 39, these were not representative of the rest of Igboland. For more on monarchical political systems, see F. I. Nzimiro, *Studies in Ibo Political Structures. Chieftaincy and*

systems or mini-states,<sup>38</sup> and like other African societies was traditionally gerontocratic and hierarchical.<sup>39</sup> Igbos lived in large patrilineal village democracies or *umunnas* (Igbo: children of one father), each made up of *onumara* (Igbo: extended families). Onwuejeogwu identifies the *umunna* concept as a central Igbo cultural theme, which determines membership of the patrilineage, individual rights and duties, economic behaviour, and traditional political roles.<sup>40</sup> The viability of Igbo political units depended upon their land-administering functions and the ability to maintain control through land allocation. Consequently, in most areas the village-group was the largest grouping. Communities were generally ruled by the *ndi oha* (Igbo: the council of elders),<sup>41</sup> comprising the oldest members of specific families, assisted by age grades, kinship associations, and religious specialists.<sup>42</sup> Leadership was by consensus and based on age, physical ability, good character, and the possession of oracular, ritual or magical powers.<sup>43</sup> Moreover, rulers were part of the community, rather than externally imposed,<sup>44</sup> and traditional political institutions designed to ‘combine popular participation with weighting for experience and ability.’<sup>45</sup> As Ikime notes, ‘this was more of a government of the people for the people than modern democracies.’<sup>46</sup> Hence,

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*Politics in Four Nigerian States*, London: Frank Cass, 1972; Isichei, *Igbo People*, 23; Uchendu, *Igbo*, 44-5.

<sup>38</sup> Oriji, *Igbo Origin*, 10.

<sup>39</sup> Austin J. Shelton, *The Igbo-Igala Borderland. Religion and Social Control in Indigenous African Colonialism*, Albany: State University of New York Press, 1971, 7.

<sup>40</sup> Onwuejeogwu, ‘Igbo Culture Area’, 5-6.

<sup>41</sup> In some Igbo communities, the council of elders are called *ndi-ichie* (Anambra area) or *ama-ala* (Imo area).

<sup>42</sup> Isichei, *Igbo People*, 22; Emma O. Inyama, ‘Trends in Traditional Rulership in Igboland’, in Anyanwu and Aguwa (eds.), *Politics*, 218; J. C. U. Aguwa, ‘Theocratic Traditions and the Igbo Experience’, in Anyanwu and Aguwa (eds.), *Politics*, 26.

<sup>43</sup> A. I. Nwabughuogu, ‘Economic Aspects of Igbo Political Evolution’, in Anyanwu and Aguwa (eds.), *Politics*, 168.

<sup>44</sup> Inyama, ‘Traditional Rulership’, 218.

<sup>45</sup> Isichei, *Igbo People*, 21

<sup>46</sup> O. Ikime, *Groundwork of Nigerian History*, Ibadan: Heinemann, 1980, cited in Bolanle Awe, ‘Conflict and Divergence: Government and Society in Nigeria’, *African Studies Review*, 42.3, Dec. 1999, 6.

Ekeh can rightly claim that individual freedom and democracy were cherished commodities in Igbo societies.<sup>47</sup>

Religion was interwoven into the fabric of Igbo traditional political culture.<sup>48</sup> As noted, ritual agents, who mediated between the visible and invisible worlds, possessed considerable public authority, and in contrast to modern Western political systems, traditional Igbo political institutions looked to religious sources for legitimacy and validation.<sup>49</sup> Especially important were the built in restraints and moral sanctions based on religious principles, which governed political action and authority, and the belief that spiritual beings could exert control over earthly affairs.<sup>50</sup> This will be relevant when we discuss neo-Pentecostal political engagement in chapter six.

The main economic activities were agriculture and trade, and each community had a market located in its political and religious centre.<sup>51</sup> Prior to the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Igbo society discouraged the accumulation of wealth, and consequently lacked the extremes of wealth and poverty prevalent today. Consumer goods were limited, and most Igbos

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<sup>47</sup> Peter P. Ekeh, 'The Concept of Second Liberation and the Prospects of Democracy in Africa: A Nigerian Context', in Paul A. Beckett and Crawford Young (eds.), *Dilemmas of Democracy in Nigeria*, Rochester, New York: University of Rochester Press, 86. But Ekeh also refers to another tradition within Igbo political culture, the Igbo slave trade and the institution of *Osu* ('Second Liberation', 86). For the *Osu* caste system, see chapter three, section 5.1, footnote 190.

<sup>48</sup> Ogbu U. Kalu, 'Faith and Politics in Africa. Emergent Political Theology of Engagement in Nigeria', paper presented as the Paul B. Henry Lecture, Paul Henry Institute, Calvin College, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 2003, 1; Inyama, 'Religion and Political Culture', 111.

<sup>49</sup> J. C. U. Aguwa, 'Patterns of Religious Influence in Igbo Traditional Politics', in Anyanwu and Aguwa (eds.), *Politics*, 89, 91.

<sup>50</sup> Inyama, 'Religion and Political Culture', 111-12.

<sup>51</sup> Oriji, *Igbo Origin*, 6-7; M. M. Green, *Igbo Village Affairs*, London: Frank Cass and Co. Ltd., 1964, 33-7. Yam cultivation became the early economic basis of Igbo society, and was given ritual and symbolic significance in Igbo traditional life. Trade as a factor in Igbo economic culture arose in response to over exploitation of land, as locals were forced to look for alternative sources of revenue. It included exchanges of natural products, as well as locally produced textiles. See Afigbo, 'Prolegemona', 44-5; Isichei, *Igbo People*, 29.

preferred to exchange their assets for status symbols, such as titles, or use them to assist poorer relations, thus facilitating the redistribution of wealth.<sup>52</sup>

### 1.2.2 Colonial Legacies

The colonial era introduced new elements and altered Nigerian socio-political and economic landscapes, creating tensions that continue to be felt within post-colonial Igboland.<sup>53</sup> To assist colonial control, there was a shift to a more formal political structure, based on indirect rule, and designed to secure local cooperation. But in decentralised and fragmented societies like the Igbo, where a system of ‘warrant chiefs’ presiding over ‘native authorities’ was imposed, it alienated rulers from subjects, and ignored traditions of democracy.<sup>54</sup> Following communal resistance, colonial authorities added a council of elders in 1933/1934, to narrow the gap between ruler and subjects. Later, territorial, district, and local councils replaced native authorities

By the 1950s, a shift had occurred from age and integrity to wealth and education as the main qualifications for political leadership,<sup>55</sup> with opportunities now available for

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<sup>52</sup> Isichei, *Igbo People*, 34.

<sup>53</sup> Ranger notes the way that the dynamics of colonial Africa have continued to shape post-colonial societies. See Terence O. Ranger, ‘Postscript. Colonial and Postcolonial Identities’, in Werbner & Ranger (eds.), *Postcolonial Identities*, 280.

<sup>54</sup> The warrant chief system was originally designed for communities of the Oil Rivers (Ijo and Efik), with a tradition of powerful chiefs. Subsequently, when Lugard took over after the amalgamation, he used a system evolved in the Fulani emirates. Problems arose in Igboland mainly because the warrant chiefs were not representative of village groups and often abused their powers. Colonial administrators preferred to deal with a few ‘strong’ chiefs, whose delegated authority often extended far beyond their own village communities. For more on the effects of this system on Igbo political culture, see A. E. Afigbo, *The Warrant Chiefs: Indirect Rule in Southern Nigeria, 1891-1929*, New York: Humanities Press, 1972; Uchendu, *Igbo*, 46-8; Emma O. Inyama, ‘Trends in Traditional Rulership in Igboland’, in Anyanwu and Aguwa (eds.), *Politics*, 218-20; Toyin Falola, *The History of Nigeria*, Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1999, 70-2. Kalu, ‘Third Response’, 6, notes that colonial rule was undemocratic and undermined traditional systems of rule.

<sup>55</sup> A. I. Nwabughuogu, ‘Economic Aspects of Igbo Political Evolution’, in Anyanwu and Aguwa (eds.), *Politics*, 165-68; Isichei, *Igbo People*, 102-103. Isichei refers to the *ogaranya*, a social and economic

younger men with education, prominent traders, businessmen, and professional people to play prominent roles in local government.<sup>56</sup> However, the growing divergence between rulers and subjects continued, with authority weighted in favour of elders, and men of wealth and influence, who had become title-holders.<sup>57</sup>

The prominence of religion in Nigeria's post-colonial politics had its roots in the colonial era and the formation of the Nigerian state. The construction of artificial boundaries and the creation of the North-South divide led to increasing ethnic and religious rivalry.<sup>58</sup> The British policy of indirect rule strengthened Muslim predominance in the North by permitting the application of a limited version of *Shari'a* law.<sup>59</sup> Despite the 1914 amalgamation, the British reinforced the North-South divide by creating three regional governments in the 1940s and pursuing different regional policies for the three regions. By independence, the mainly Christian South was more advanced in terms of Western political ideals and education, due to greater exposure to

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class, distinguished by their many wives, children, and slaves, who acquired informal political power through the purchase of titles.

<sup>56</sup> Ottenberg, 'Ibo Receptivity', 131.

<sup>57</sup> J. O. Anyaegbu, 'Sabbatharianism in Igboland 1916-1990', Ph.D. thesis, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, 1993, 57; Uchendu, *Igbo*, 46.

<sup>58</sup> Gifford, *African Christianity*, 3-4. De Gruchy describes modern 'tribalism' in Africa as a creation of colonialism. John W. De Gruchy, *Christianity and Democracy*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995, 167. And Osaghae, *Crippled Giant*, 4, 6-7, describes Nigeria as a 'British colonial creation,' and the North-South separation in Nigeria as a 'structural flaw of colonial rule that had grave consequences for post-independence politics.' For more on the history of colonial rule and its legacy in Nigeria, see Falola, *History*, 67-94; Julius O. Ohonvbere and Timothy Shaw, *Illusions of Power. Nigeria in Transition*, Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, Inc., 1998, 1-30; William D. Graf, *The Nigerian State*, London: James Currey, 1988, 1-24; Isichei, *Igbo People*, 140-59.

<sup>59</sup> Freston, *Politics*, 182; Kenny, 'Sharia', 340.

Christian missionary schools.<sup>60</sup> As Osaghae notes, this gap had significant consequences for political and economic competition.<sup>61</sup>

But Enlightenment ideals introduced by colonialists and missionary education also resulted in a partial desacralisation of political space,<sup>62</sup> and helped to loosen individual ties with traditional religion and culture. The quest for Western education had further consequences, which contributed to the Igbo crisis, as the rise in expectations, accompanied by shrinking employment opportunities, led to an increase in crime and prostitution, particularly in urban areas.<sup>63</sup>

British colonialists laid the foundation of the modern Nigerian economy, which was based on the export of raw materials and stressed peasant production of cash crops and mineral extraction. British interests were predominant, as colonialists set about creating new markets for British industries and exploiting Nigeria's natural resources, to the detriment of local food production.<sup>64</sup> Colonialists provided basic infrastructures to facilitate trade, mostly established in urban areas, to the neglect of rural areas. Afigbo suggests that the main economic innovation under colonialism was the opportunity it

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<sup>60</sup> Matthews A. Ojo, 'The Church in the African State: The Charismatic/Pentecostal Experience in Nigeria', *Journal of African Christian Thought*, 1.2, December, 1998, 26. Most Nigerian schools were established by Christian missions. Osaghae, *Crippled Giant*, 5, notes that by 1950, there was only one Northern university graduate, compared to hundreds in the South.

<sup>61</sup> Osaghae, *Crippled Giant*, 5.

<sup>62</sup> Kalu, 'Faith and Politics', 1; Aguwa, 'Igbo Traditional Politics', 98. As Ellis and ter Haar note, religion and politics are both systems of ordering power. In modern Western traditions, these have been separated into two distinct spheres, and colonial governors and missionaries attempted to impose this distinction in Africa. Stephen Ellis and Gerrie ter Haar, 'Religion and Politics in Sub-Saharan Africa', *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, 36.2, 1998, 195.

<sup>63</sup> Isichei, *Igbo People*, 195-96. Kalu, *Embattled Gods*, 257, identifies the period 1945-66 as the 'hey-day of education in Igboland.'

<sup>64</sup> Awe, 'Government and Society in Nigeria', 8-9.

offered for those with no land to earn a living through salaried employment, thus freeing them from traditional control exerted through land allocation.<sup>65</sup>

Urbanisation was a direct outcome of colonialism,<sup>66</sup> and contributed towards the Igbo crisis. Most Igbos were not city dwellers, and prior to European contact, there were no major Igbo urban areas. However, by 1952, there were four - Enugu, Aba, Onitsha, and Port Harcourt.<sup>67</sup> Consequences of this trek to the urban centre in search of wage labour included social dislocation and isolation, a shortage of accommodation and amenities,<sup>68</sup> moral decline due to a weakening of traditional social control mechanisms,<sup>69</sup> and a loosening of ties to the traditional religious and social structures of the village.<sup>70</sup>

### 1.2.3 The Post-Colonial State<sup>71</sup>

Chabal has referred to Africa's current predicament as a combination of economic crisis, political instability, and global marginalisation.<sup>72</sup> Decolonisation brought about

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<sup>65</sup> Afigbo, *Ropes of Sand*, 347-48.

<sup>66</sup> Here I distinguish between traditional towns/cities and European initiated cities. Most traditional cities were located in Western Nigeria (Lagos, Ibadan, Benin City), and to a lesser degree in the North (Kano). In Igboland, urban centres developed through European initiative around existing towns (Onitsha, Umuahia), or modern cities (Enugu, Aba, Port Harcourt). See Unokanma Okonjo, *The Impact of Urbanisation on the Ibo Family Structure*, Verlag: Udobreger Gottingen, 1970, 69-79.

<sup>67</sup> Ilogu, *Ibo Culture*, 94. Based on the 1963 Census, population figures were as follows: Port Harcourt (179,563), Aba (131,033), Enugu (138,457), and Onitsha (163,932). Other smaller urban communities included Owerri (26,017), Nsukka (26,206), and Umuahia (28,844). See *Nigeria Handbook*, 26; Ray Ofoegbu, 'Urbanisation and the Rise of Modern Igbo Enterprise', in Afigbo (ed.), *Groundwork of Igbo History*, 585.

<sup>68</sup> Isichei, *Igbo People*, 207.

<sup>69</sup> Ilogu, *Ibo Culture*, 95.

<sup>70</sup> Afigbo, *Ropes of Sand*, 334; Eddi Onugha, personal reminiscence, May 2000 (Appendix 4.1, paragraph 5). Okorochoa, *Religious Conversion*, 154, identifies the 'urban man' [*sic*] as a new category of Igbo for whom the 'traditional values are too remote to have any hold on him.' The various associations or clan unions, formed in urban areas, acted to some extent as a substitute for rural community life. For more on these, see Ilogu, *Ibo Culture*, 95; Isichei, *Igbo People*, 218; Uchendu, *Igbo*, 81; Afigbo, *Ropes of Sand*, 345-46.

<sup>71</sup> For major milestones in Nigeria's post-colonial history, see Appendix 3.2.

<sup>72</sup> Patrick Chabal, 'The African Crisis: Context and Interpretation', in Werbner and Ranger (eds.), *Postcolonial Identities*, 29-54.

rapid social change within Nigeria. From being a society organised around the local community, Nigeria became a large-scale nation state. This was a direct result of the colonial project, and created profound tensions within Igbo society that continued to be felt following the granting of independence. The legacy of colonialism left the newly independent state with severe constraints. As De Gruchy notes, instead of the creation of genuinely African democracies, independence meant the ‘Africanisation of colonial institutions and economic structure and often the transference of political ineptitude and incompetence.’<sup>73</sup>

The process of decolonisation was rapid (1957-68), once it was realised that independence was inevitable, and was accompanied by an air of optimism due to a period of unprecedented global economic growth (1945-75).<sup>74</sup> The new government set about modernising according to Western models of development.<sup>75</sup> During the First Republic (1960-66), Igbo hopes were raised due to the improving economy, and the growth in secondary and tertiary educational institutions. Oil had taken over from agriculture as the mainstay of the economy, and by 1966, Nigeria, with an output of £N100 million, about two-thirds of which was in the East, ranked 13<sup>th</sup> among the world’s crude-oil producers.<sup>76</sup> Kalu describes them as ‘heady days characterized by new opportunities, improved quality of life and an onslaught on traditional values.’<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> De Gruchy, *Democracy*, 167-68.

<sup>74</sup> See Eric Hobsbawm, *Age of Extremes: the Short Twentieth Century, 1914-1991*, London: Abacus, 1995, 221.

<sup>75</sup> Gifford, *African Christianity*, 4.

<sup>76</sup> E. Wayne Nafziger, ‘The Economic Impact of the Nigerian Civil War’, *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, 10.2, July 1972, 233-34.

<sup>77</sup> Kalu, *Embattled Gods*, 268.

However, optimism gave way to disillusionment due to pervasive corruption, the collapse of the parliamentary democratic system in 1963, the contested 1964/5 elections, and the growth of regional and ethnic antagonisms.<sup>78</sup> The growing divergence between rulers and ruled continued as the new politicians took for granted the basic structures and assumptions of colonialism. In 1966, a military coup, followed by a counter-coup, left General Yakubu Gowon in charge. Meanwhile, a series of violent pogroms in the North resulted in a mass exodus of Igbos to their homeland,<sup>79</sup> and the declaration of the 'Republic of Biafra' in May 1967 by Colonel Odumegwu Ojukwu.<sup>80</sup> This provides the backdrop to the civil war, which broke out in July 1967.<sup>81</sup>

The series of crises following independence reached their climax with the cataclysmic effects of the war,<sup>82</sup> when an estimated three million Igbos died (over a quarter of the

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<sup>78</sup> Isichei, *Igbo People*, 241-42.

<sup>79</sup> The September/October 1966 pogrom was especially shocking. Isichei, *Igbo People*, 245, describes it as the most traumatic experience in Igbo history up to that time. Estimated numbers of those killed range from eight thousand to thirty thousand. Whatever the exact figure, the outcome was that Igbos felt alienated from the Federation, and over a million fled to their homeland. See Isichei, *Igbo People*, 245-46; John Oyinbo, *Nigeria: Crisis and Beyond*, London: Charles Knight, 1971, 70-1; Raph Uwechue, *Reflections on the Nigerian Civil War. Facing the Future*, New York: African Publishing Corporation, 1971, 45.

<sup>80</sup> For Nigeria's post-independence history and the build-up to the civil war, see Osaghae, *Crippled Giant*, 31-53; Falola, *History*, 95-114; Ihonvbere and Shaw, *Illusions of Power*, 31-48; Graf, *Nigerian State*, 25-40; Isichei, *Igbo People*, 241-47.

<sup>81</sup> The secession of Biafra was viewed differently from different perspectives. The Federal Government viewed it as rebellion, and consequently declared war. Most Biafrans, however, believed they were forced out of the Federation. See Uwechue, *Nigerian Civil War*, 51; Naomi Chazan *et al.*, *Politics and Society in Contemporary Africa*, Boulder, Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1992, 199.

<sup>82</sup> For eyewitness accounts of the civil war by Igbo writers, see Ben Gbulie, *The Fall of Biafra*, Enugu: Fourth Dimension Publisher, 1989; Alexander A. Madiebo, *The Nigerian Revolution and Biafran War*, Enugu: Fourth Dimension, 1980; Arthur A. Nwankwo, and Samuel U. Ifejika, *The Making of a Nation: Biafra*, London: C. Hurst and Co., 1969; Uwechue, *Nigerian Civil War*. For eyewitness accounts from Nigerian writers less sympathetic to the Biafran cause, see N. U. Akpan, *The Struggle for Secession 1966-1970*, London: Frank Cass, 1976; Elechi Amadi, *Sunset in Biafra*, London/Ibadan: Heineman, 1973; O. Obasanjo, *My Command: An Account of the Nigerian Civil War 1967-70*, London: Heinemann, 1981. Expatriate accounts include F. Forsyth, *The Biafra Story*, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1969; Isichei, *Igbo People*, 246-53; John de St. Jorre, *The Nigerian Civil War*, London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1972; A. H. M. Kirk-Greene, *Crisis and Conflict in Nigeria. A Documentary Sourcebook 1966-1970*, 2 Vols., London/New York/Ibadan: Oxford University Press, 1971. For Biafran territory at the beginning and end of the war, see Maps 4 & 5.

population).<sup>83</sup> The combination of social dislocation, growing fatalities, lack of food and medical facilities, air raids, and the threat of genocide created a series of individual and social crises that precipitated changes in the Igbo religious landscape, as we will see in chapter three. Many Igbos became refugees,<sup>84</sup> resulting in intense feelings of insecurity as they became separated from family, kinship group, and village. Abandoning one's village or town was also seen as a betrayal of one's ancestors.<sup>85</sup> Biafrans saw the conflict as a war for survival.<sup>86</sup> In Ojukwu's public speeches and Biafran propaganda, it was presented as 'genocide' and as a northern Islamic 'jihad'.<sup>87</sup> Consequently, most Igbo believed that to lose the war was as suicidal as to fight on.<sup>88</sup>

The war had enormous consequences for the economy of Biafra, which was left in ruins, with its infrastructure and utilities destroyed. There were also severe shortages of shelter, food, clothing, and medicines, as well as extensive loss of material possessions.<sup>89</sup> Nigeria considered starvation (by economic blockade) a legitimate

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<sup>83</sup> John E. Njoku, *The Igbos of Nigeria. Ancient Rites, Changes, and Survival*, Lewiston, New York: Edwin Mellin Press, 1990, 160.

<sup>84</sup> The refugee problem flowed from two sources: the Igbo exodus following the 1966 pogroms in the north, and the war itself. By July 1968, over 650 refugee camps existed, and at the end of the war there were between three to six million displaced persons and refugees. See Isichei, *Igbo People*, 246; Kalu, *Embattled Gods*, 269-70; Osaghae, *Crippled Giant*, 69; Anthony Haden-Guest, 'Legacy of a War: Special Report from Biafra', *The Daily Telegraph Magazine*, 23 August 1968, 12; James Wilde, 'Nigeria's Civil War: Hate, Hunger and the Will to Survive', *Time Magazine*, 23 August 1968, 22.

<sup>85</sup> See for example, Chukwuemeka Ike, *Sunset at Dawn*, Glasgow: Williams Collins and Co, 1976, 204, 207.

<sup>86</sup> OI, Chris Alagbu, 3.5.00, Enugu (Appendix 4.3).

<sup>87</sup> Osaghae, *Crippled Giant*, 66; Akpan, *Secession*, 122. In fact, one of the reasons given for seceding was the inability of the Federal government to protect the Igbo people from destruction.

<sup>88</sup> Cyril C. Okorochoa, 'Reconciliation: What Price? Some Biblical and Practical Reflections from Africa', in Barbara Butler (ed.), *Open Hands. Reconciliation, Justice and Peace Work around the World*, Bury St. Edmunds, Suffolk: Kevin Mayhew, 1998, 193.

<sup>89</sup> Osaghae, *Crippled Giant*, 69; Nafziger, 'Economic Impact', 239-40. The Biafran economy was geared towards mobilisation for the war and the production of bare necessities. Biafra received virtually no civilian goods from abroad, except food and other essentials from relief organisations, and inflation was rampant.

instrument of war and blocked the efforts of aid agencies to deliver relief to Biafra.<sup>90</sup> Time Magazine described Ojukwu's Biafra as 'a land of physical ruin,' with Biafrans starving to death at an estimated one thousand a day.<sup>91</sup> The tension within Igboland was exacerbated by a breakdown in traditional social morality,<sup>92</sup> as the struggle for survival resulted in an escalation of corruption, bribery, sexual promiscuity, prostitution, and armed robbery.<sup>93</sup> By the end of the war, morality and morale were at their lowest ebb.<sup>94</sup>

The main elements of post-civil war politics were instability, increasing divergence between ruler and subjects, a lack of national cohesion, Islamic hegemony, and economic crisis. Politics tended to be organised around ethnic, regional, and religious interests, while mismanagement and pervasive corruption resulted in economic decline,

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<sup>90</sup> Kalu, *Embattled Gods*, 269.

<sup>91</sup> Wilde, 'Nigeria's Civil War', 22.

<sup>92</sup> Okorocho, *Religious Conversion*, 123. See also Raymond Nwosu, Letter to Roberts, 22 September 1970: 'Of course the evil one seems to have been let loose at the end of the war and waywardness being the norm of majority of the society.'

<sup>93</sup> Matthew Hassan Kukah, 'Religion and Morality in Nigeria: A Christian Viewpoint', in J. A. Atanda, Garba Ashiwaju, and Yaya Abubakar, *Nigeria Since Independence. The First 25 Years, Volume IX, Religion*, Ibadan: Heinemann, 1989, 155. To halt this decline the Biafran government established tribunals to try cases of fraud, robbery, and corruption. In June 1969, it launched the 'Biafran Revolution,' symbolised by the 'Ahiara Declaration,' which condemned the moral breakdown in Igbo society and upheld the sanctity of life. O. B. C. Nwolise, 'The Social Consequences of the Civil War in Biafra', in T. N. Tamuno (ed.), *Nigeria Since Independence, Vol.III, The Civil War Years*, Zaria: Nigeria Since Independence History Project, 1984, 37-8.

<sup>94</sup> Okorocho, *Religious Conversion*, 116; Cyprian Ekwensi, *Survive the Peace*, London: Heinemann, 1976, 90; Chinua Achebe, *Girls at War and Other Stories*, London: Heinemann, 1972. Some informants said that armed robbery began after the civil war, as young men, who learnt to shoot in the army, came out with their guns. OI, John Onuora and Ifeyinma Orajekwe. Others described how girls, raped during the war, no longer considered sexual immorality to be wrong. OI, Chinedu Nebo, 4.5.00, Enugu; PC, Onunwe Udobata, 23.3.04, Birmingham. Due to the absence of their husbands, women were generally the family breadwinners, and for some, prostitution became a means of survival. Hilary C. Achunike, *Dreams of Heaven. A Modern Response to Christianity in North Western Igboland 1970-1990*, Enugu: Fourth Dimension Publishing, 1995, 57; Anyaegbu, 'Pentecostal/Evangelical', 24; PC, Onunwe Udobata, 23.3.04, Birmingham.

despite abundant natural resources.<sup>95</sup> Since 1970, there have been seven military regimes, and three civilian governments.<sup>96</sup>

Following the war, Gowon maintained national unity by promoting the ‘three Rs’ (Reconciliation, Rehabilitation, and Reconstruction) and implementing a national cohesion project.<sup>97</sup> From 1973, Nigeria also entered a period of economic boom due to substantial oil revenues.<sup>98</sup> Yet it was still a period of crisis for the Igbo people as many had lost family members and possessions during the war, and while Federal troops were relatively well contained, atrocities continued to occur.<sup>99</sup> Gratitude to Gowon for his magnanimity and restraint was tempered by local economic realities, and surviving the peace became almost as precarious as surviving the war. Schools and universities in the east did not resume immediately and jobs were scarce.<sup>100</sup> Sometimes government policies also hindered Igbo rehabilitation.<sup>101</sup> Examples included the freezing of Igbo

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<sup>95</sup> Osaghae, *Cripple Giant*, 14-15.

<sup>96</sup> See Appendix 3.2. See also Table 3.2, in Peter M. Lewis, Pearl T. Robinson and Barrett R. Rubin, *Stabilizing Nigeria. Sancitons, Incentives and Support for Civil Society*, New York: The Century Foundation Press, 1988, 34.

<sup>97</sup> Gowon’s national cohesion project included the setting up of ‘unity’ schools and introduction of the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) in 1973. Under the NYSC scheme, graduates of universities and polytechnics did a compulsory one year of national service outside their states of origin. Osaghae, *Crippled Giant*, 78.

<sup>98</sup> Nigeria joined the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) in 1971. For more on the positive and negative effects of crude oil on Nigeria’s economy, see Falola, *History*, 137-45; Ihonvbere and Shaw, *Illusions of Power*, 68-9; Graf, *Nigerian State*, 218-24; Toyin Falola and Julius Ihonvbere, *The Rise and Fall of Nigeria’s Second Republic: 1979-84*, London: Zed Books, 1985, 84-88. By 1974, oil revenues made up 80.8 % of Nigeria’s total revenue, and transformed Nigeria into the 30<sup>th</sup> wealthiest nation in the world. See Graf, *Nigerian State*, 219; Falola, *History*, 138.

<sup>99</sup> OI, Chris Alagbu, 3.5.00, Enugu (Appendix 4.3); Ben Onwochei, Letter to Roberts, 16 February 1970. Onwochei describes episodes of looting and kidnapping of young girls by Federal troops. One informant told me that many were killed in his community by Federal troops. OI, Rufus Ogbonna, 13.4.00, Ochadamu.

<sup>100</sup> Chris Onuoha, Letter to Roberts, 28 June 1970.

<sup>101</sup> Okwudiba Nnoli, *Ethnicity and Development in Nigeria*, Aldershot: Avebury, 1995, 142-43.

bank accounts,<sup>102</sup> the abandoned property policy,<sup>103</sup> the creation of states,<sup>104</sup> and the indigenisation of foreign economic enterprises.<sup>105</sup> In the words of one informant, there was ‘no good food, no good homes, no cars, no motorcycles, no fine shoe, no fine cloth, no fine homes.’<sup>106</sup>

The Gowon regime eventually fell into disrepute, accused of corruption, mismanagement, and reneging on its promises to return the nation to civilian rule.<sup>107</sup> In 1975, a military coup brought Lieutenant-General Murtala Mohammed to power, who embarked upon a campaign to ‘cleanse’ the public sector and society of corruption, and instil a sense of responsibility and discipline.<sup>108</sup> However, his assassination eight months later left General Olusegun Obasanjo in charge.

In 1979, Obasanjo successfully presided over the transition to civil rule, which ushered in the Second Republic, led by Shehu Shagari.<sup>109</sup> Like its predecessor, it was a dismal failure, as corruption reached new heights and political office became a means for

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<sup>102</sup> As well as freezing Igbo bank accounts, the government gave them only £20 each to reconstruct their lives, regardless of their financial situation. See Chinua Achebe, *The Trouble with Nigeria*, London: Heinemann, 1983, 45-6; OI, Felix Obiorah, 6.10.01, Umuahia.

<sup>103</sup> Despite Gowon’s efforts, Igbo property in the newly created Rivers State (and especially Port Harcourt) abandoned during the war was not restored to its owners. Siyan Oyeweso, ‘Gowon and Igbo Re-integration (1970-1975). A Retrospective Analysis’, in Siyan Oyeweso (ed.), *Perspectives on the Nigerian Civil War*, Lagos: Campus Press, 1992, 255.

<sup>104</sup> The formation of new states created an imbalance of political power and revenue allocation in favour of the Hausa-Fulani and Yoruba.

<sup>105</sup> The Gowon regime introduced this in 1974 to ‘indigenise’ the Nigerian economy and ensure that Nigerians were ‘the main beneficiaries of the country’s resources.’ Osaghae, *Crippled Giant*, 100-102. Unfortunately, Igbos were often too poor to buy shares, and it was left to Yorubas in the west to take over most enterprises. Ogbu U. Kalu, *Power, Poverty and Prayer: The Challenges of Poverty and Pluralism in African Christianity, 1960-1996*, Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2000, 145.

<sup>106</sup> OI, Eliezer Okoye, 13.5.00, Onitsha.

<sup>107</sup> Falola, *History*, 146-47; Osaghae, *Crippled Giant*, 78. The consensus was that Gowon was too weak to curb abuses of power and to control his corrupt lieutenants in a government dominated by patrimonialism and clientelism.

<sup>108</sup> Osaghae, *Crippled Giant*, 81-2. Mohammed replaced the existing State governors and retired or dismissed large numbers of civil servants.

personal accumulation due to petro-naira resources and permissive political culture.<sup>110</sup> In fact, oil revenues had reached a peak in 1980, and by 1983, the economy was in serious decline due to the 1981 oil glut and the global economic recession.<sup>111</sup> Economic recession, austerity measures, and gross government mismanagement led to severe problems of unemployment and inflation. While politicians continued to enrich themselves, the urban poor and rural peasants bore the brunt of economic neglect.<sup>112</sup> This generated an upsurge in civil disobedience, which in turn led to political repression, human rights violations, and press restrictions. Added to this was an escalation of religious violence between Christians and Muslims. All these factors - government corruption and mismanagement, economic recession, austerity measures, civil disobedience, repression, and religious violence - have become recurring themes within Nigerian political and economic culture.

The collapse of the Republic in 1983 brought Major General Muhammad Buhari to power, and ushered in an extended period of authoritarian rule and economic crisis, under successive military regimes, not previously experienced in Nigeria's postcolonial history.<sup>113</sup> The Babangida regime (1985-1993) was especially critical for neo-Pentecostal expansion and politic culture, as we will see later. The two main projects

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<sup>109</sup> Falola, *History*, 151.

<sup>110</sup> Falola, *History*, 167. 'Petro-naira' refers to revenue from petroleum products (the basic unit of Nigerian currency being the naira). There is an extensive literature on the Second Republic. See for example, Falola, *History*, 165-78; Falola and Ihonvbere, *Nigeria's Second Republic*; Graf, *Nigerian State*, 77-114; Ihonvbere and Shaw, *Illusions of Power*, 93-110. Ihonvbere and Shaw state that the 'scale of the plunder between 1979 and 1983 was unprecedented', and the 'criteria of success escalated from Mercedes-Benz to personal jets for "big men" and from stereos to VCR's for the middle class' (*Illusions of Power*, 106).

<sup>111</sup> See Graf, *Nigerian State*, 219; Falola, *History*, 179; Osaghae, *Crippled Giant*, 156-57. Oil revenues fell from \$25 billion in 1980 to \$6 billion in 1984. See Pade Badru, *Imperialism and Ethnic Politics in Nigeria*, Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, Inc., 1998, 92.

<sup>112</sup> Osaghae, *Crippled Giant*, 154.

<sup>113</sup> Falola, *History*, 176; Osaghae, *Crippled Giant*, 151-52, 163.

during his tenure were the IMF/World Bank Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP),<sup>114</sup> and the transition to civilian rule, which coincided with Africa's 'second liberation,' a period of widespread democratic change and economic reform.<sup>115</sup> Both were unsuccessful,<sup>116</sup> and both generated considerable civil disobedience.<sup>117</sup> Religion also attained a new level of political prominence.<sup>118</sup> As we see in chapter six, these developments had far-reaching consequences for neo-Pentecostal political engagement.

The democratic transition process was fraught with difficulties and threatened by civil unrest. Against all odds, elections took place in 1993 and were won by Chief M. K. O. Abiola, a businessman and Yoruba-Muslim.<sup>119</sup> Tragically, despite the relatively free and fair electoral process,<sup>120</sup> the elections were annulled, ushering in a period of civil strife and political violence unprecedented in Nigeria's post-civil war history.<sup>121</sup> Following Babangida's retirement, an interim civilian government, headed by Chief Ernest Shonekan, was formed, but from its inception, it faced severe problems of

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<sup>114</sup> For more on structural adjustment in Nigeria, see Thomas Biersteker, & Peter M. Lewis, 'The Rise and Fall of Structural Adjustment in Nigeria', in Larry Diamond, Anthony Kirk-Greene, and Oyeleye Oyediran (eds.), *Transition Without End. Nigerian Politics and Civil Society Under Babangida*, London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 303-32; A. O. Olukoshi (ed.), *The Politics of Structural Adjustment in Nigeria*, London: James Curry, 1993; Ihonvbere and Shaw, *Illusions of Power*, 114-23.

<sup>115</sup> Biersteker & Lewis, 'Structural Adjustment', 327.

<sup>116</sup> Though the World Bank presented Nigeria as an example of successful adjustment, economic recovery was far from impressive, with little improvement in general living standards. Osaghae, *Crippled Giant*, 196-202. The 1991 World Bank Report ranked Nigeria as 13<sup>th</sup> poorest country in the world, while the United Nations Development Programme concluded that it had one of the worst records for human deprivation. Cited in Osaghae, *Crippled Giant*, 204.

<sup>117</sup> Osaghae, *Crippled Giant*, 205; A. O. Olukoshi, 'Associational Life', in Diamond, Kirk-Greene and Oyediran (eds.), *Transition*, 379-80, 395. Civil associations organised anti-SAP strikes and demonstrations, and were at the centre of the struggle for democratisation, precipitated by Babangida's reluctance to complete the transition programme.

<sup>118</sup> Osaghae, *Crippled Giant*, 249-50; Toyin Falola, *Violence in Nigeria. The Crisis of Religious Politics and Secular Ideologies*, Rochester, New York: University of Rochester Press, 222.

<sup>119</sup> Early in its administration, the Babangida regime had set a mandatory limit of two parties, in an attempt to bring an end to ethnic politics. The two parties were the left-leaning Social Democratic Party (SDP) and the right-leaning National Republican Party (NRP). Abiola was the SDP candidate.

<sup>120</sup> The elections were among the best-conducted ever held in Nigeria. Osaghae, *Crippled Giant*, 239.

legitimacy, and was perceived as a continuation of the Babangida regime.<sup>122</sup> Before his retirement, Babangida appointed his protégées to key positions, and retained General Sani Abacha as defence minister.<sup>123</sup> The country was plunged into near anarchy, thus playing into the hands of Abacha, who had long entertained presidential ambitions.

Abacha's accession to power, after Shonekan's 'resignation', ushered in an era of despotism that lasted until 1998. Abacha was brazenly corrupt and presided over a repressive government that saw living standards reach their lowest level since the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>124</sup> Among other human-rights violations, Abacha imprisoned Abiola for treason after he declared himself President, and Obasanjo for his involvement in an alleged coup plot.<sup>125</sup> In his maiden speech, Abacha had announced a new transition programme, but then proceeded to obstruct democratic takeover at every turn. The combination of economic decline, human-rights violations, and the failure of the transition programme, resulted in an explosion of civil society and an escalation of riots, strikes, and protests. This led to a corresponding crackdown on pro-democracy groups, labour unions, and the popular press.<sup>126</sup>

In June 1998, Abacha died suddenly, and the military installed General Abdulsalami Abubakar, who promptly announced his intention to prepare the country for civilian

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<sup>121</sup> Osaghae, *Crippled Giant*, 254-5; Falola, *History*, 191. Osaghae suggests a number of factors behind the annulment: the unwillingness of the North to relinquish political control, and the personal problems Abiola had with the military. But the main reason was Babangida's reluctance to relinquish power.

<sup>122</sup> Falola, *History*, 196, describes the Interim National Government as a 'sham,' because it lacked legitimacy, credibility, and respect.

<sup>123</sup> Osaghae, *Crippled Giant*, 261. Abacha had been Babangida's right hand man and in government for many years. See, Falola, *History*, 195.

<sup>124</sup> Falola, *History*, 196.

<sup>125</sup> Obasanjo was imprisoned in March 1995.

<sup>126</sup> Osaghae, *Crippled Giant*, 296-97, 301; Falola, *History*, 198.

rule. He also released many political prisoners, including Obasanjo, by this time retired from the army, and promised to release Abiola, but the latter died while still in detention. Obasanjo won the 1999 elections. He also claimed a conversion to born-again Christianity while in prison, which made him popular with evangelicals and Pentecostals. Despite allegations of irregularities and corruption, the military accepted the result, and Obasanjo was sworn in as President.

## **2. The Igbo Religious Landscape (pre-1967)**

While socio-political and economic distress acted as a catalyst for religious change, inherited religious beliefs actually determined the shape of Igbo Christian conversion experiences. Here we are concerned with issues of continuity and change, so prevalent in discussions of African appropriations of Christianity.<sup>127</sup> I begin with a brief sketch of Igbo primal religion,<sup>128</sup> before exploring its encounter with Christianity.

### **2.1 Igbo Primal Cosmology and Concept of Salvation**

Scholars have noted the importance of traditional worldviews in understanding contemporary religious phenomena, and in particular African appropriations of Christianity.<sup>129</sup> As I will show later, part of the appeal of the Civil War Revival and its

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<sup>127</sup> For overviews, see Bediako, 'Roots'; Bediako, 'Types', 56-69; Kalu, 'Preserving a Worldview', 110-137.

<sup>128</sup> It is in my exploration of Igbo primal religious beliefs that I have been especially conscious of my status as an outsider. I have therefore depended heavily upon studies by Igbo scholars. My treatment is necessarily brief, and primarily descriptive rather than analytical. I am also aware that it does not take full account of the variation in belief systems among Igbo-speaking communities and their change over time.

<sup>129</sup> See for example, Bediako, *Christianity in Africa*, 91-108; Bediako, *Theology and Identity*; Okorocho, *Religious Conversion*; Walls, *Missionary Movement*, 119-39; John B. Taylor (eds), *Primal World Views - Christian Involvement in Dialogue with Traditional Thought-forms*, Ibadan: Daystar Press, 1976; Turner, 'Primal Religions', 27-37.

Pentecostal progeny lay in their willingness to take African maps of the universe seriously.

The Igbo worldview consists of two realms, the visible (*Uwa*) and the invisible (*Ala Mmuo*), existing in constant interaction with one another.<sup>130</sup> *Ala Mmuo* is filled with a variety of spiritual beings that influence the material universe:<sup>131</sup> *Chukwu* or *Chineke* (the Supreme Being and creator);<sup>132</sup> *Ndi Mmuo* (deities), which include *Ala* (Earth-Goddess, and custodian of social morality and fertility); *Alusi* (spirit-forces);<sup>133</sup> *Nna-anyi ha* (ancestors);<sup>134</sup> and a variety of evil spirits.<sup>135</sup> Two other important sources of power are *Ogwu* (medicines)<sup>136</sup> and *Amusu* (witchcraft). These are not spirit-forces, but are completely within the control of human beings.<sup>137</sup>

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<sup>130</sup> This is the final feature of Turner's six-feature framework for understanding the 'primal' worldview, and the one that Bediako considers the 'key to understanding the rest.' See Turner, 'Primal Religions', 27-37; Bediako, *Christianity in Africa*, 96.

<sup>131</sup> For more on Igbo cosmology, see Emezie Ikenga-Metuh, *God and Man in African Religion. A Case Study of the Igbo of Nigeria*, London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1981, 56-101; Okorocho, *Religious Conversion*, 52-55; Christopher I. Ejizu, 'Traditional Igbo Religious Beliefs and Ritual', in Afigbo (ed.), *Groundwork of Igbo History*, 806-14; Isichei, *Igbo People*, 24-29; Uchendu, *Igbo*, 11-5.

<sup>132</sup> Belief in a Supreme Being was not universal among Igbo-speaking peoples. Exceptions included some Igbo village groups in central Owerri area. Green, *Igbo Village Affairs*, 51-2.

<sup>133</sup> *Alusi* (or *Arusi*) are 'metaphysical forces' that may inhabit material objects, and belong to the clan. Ikenga-Metuh, *African Religion*, 72.

<sup>134</sup> *Nna-anyi ha* (or *Ndi-chie*) are regarded as the most benevolent intermediaries, responsible for the social-moral control of traditional life, under the presidency of *Ala*. Ejizu, 'Igbo Religious Beliefs', 813; Okorocho, *Religious Conversion*, 99.

<sup>135</sup> For Igbo conceptions of evil spirits, see Emezie Ikenga-Metuh, *Comparative Studies of African Traditional Religions*, Onitsha: Imico Publishers, 1992 (orig. publ. 1987), 155-56; Ikenga-Metuh, *African Religion*, 72, 35.

<sup>136</sup> As a generic term, *Ogwu* includes herbalism, modern medicines, charms, as well as various destructive concoctions. Okorocho, *Religious Conversion*, 91. Several informants told me that the use of protective charms was not especially common in Igboland, even during the civil war (PC, Stephen Okafor 31.1.01; PC, Udobata Onunwe, 23.3.04, Birmingham), though this was contradicted by others (for example, OI, David C. Amaechi, 9.10.01, Azuiyi-Oloko).

<sup>137</sup> Whereas *Ogwu* can be used for good or evil, *Amusu* is always used for harmful purposes. The Igbo distinguish between witches and sorcerers. A witch (*amusu*) or wizard (*ajalagba*) is a person whose spirit (*obi*) is able to leave their body (*aru*) while asleep, to afflict others or eat their souls. A sorcerer is one who uses medicine (*ogwu* or *nko nsi*) for evil purposes. See Ikenga-Metuh, *African Religion*, 100; Misty L. Bastion, "'Bloodhounds who have no Friends': Witchcraft and Locality in the Nigerian Popular Press', in Jean Comaroff and John Comaroff (eds.), *Modernity and its Malcontents. Ritual and Power in Postcolonial Africa*, University of Chicago Press, 1993, 133.

The Igbo concept of salvation is crucial for understanding the appeal of revival and neo-Pentecostal spirituality. Okorochoa has shown that the main goal of Igbo primal religion is the search for salvation in the form of *ezi-ndu* (Igbo: good life), and the most important factor that makes life viable is the gift of children to extend life, along with material prosperity, physical health, and more abstract ideas such as justice and peace.<sup>138</sup> *Ezi-ndu* is either enhanced or diminished through the manipulation of spiritual forces, and religious rituals, moral provisions and social relations are channelled towards its preservation.<sup>139</sup> Kalu rightly observes that in Igbo traditional thought salvation involves protection and deliverance from evil forces, achievement of success, and the acquisition of the good things of this life until old age (*nka na nzere*, Igbo), thus ensuring the attainment of ancestorhood.<sup>140</sup> Hence, salvation is understood primarily in terms of problem solving, protection, and provision in the here and now.

Okorochoa identifies four vital aspects of Igbo primal spirituality, linked to their concept of salvation, which influenced conversion to Christianity.<sup>141</sup> First, Igbos have a holistic understanding of their world and believe that invisible spiritual forces influence human affairs. Hence, religion permeates all aspects of life and considerable effort is devoted

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<sup>138</sup> Okorochoa, *Religious Conversion*, 69, 71-2. See also Ilogu, *Ibo Culture*, 123-24, 129; Kalu, *Embattled Gods*, 33; Ejizu, 'Igbo Religious Beliefs', 813. Okorochoa and Metuh provide evidence for this from Igbo proverbs, prayers, and names. See Okorochoa, *Religious Conversion*, 55-77; Emefie Ikenga-Metuh, *African Religions in Western Conceptual Schemes. The Problem of Interpretation (Studies in Igbo Religion)*, Onitsha: Imico Press, 1991 (orig. publ. 1985), 30.

<sup>139</sup> Okorochoa, *Religious Conversion*, 293; Ogbu U. Kalu, 'Continuity in Change: Pentecostalism in African Maps of the Universe', paper presented to the Seminar on Pentecostalism, Emmanuel College, University of Toronto, 1998, 7; Ilogu, *Ibo Culture*, 129

<sup>140</sup> Kalu, *Embattled Gods*, 30, 33, 43, 47. See also D. I. Nwoga, 'Nka na Nzere: The Focus of Igbo World View', 1984, 45-77; Austin Echema, *Corporate Personality in Traditional Igbo Society and the Sacrament of Reconciliation*, Bern/New York: Peter Lang, 1995, 62.

<sup>141</sup> Cyril C. Okorochoa, 'Religious Conversion in Africa', 168-69. I support Okorochoa's observations with reference to the work of other Igbo scholars.

to finding ways to manipulate these forces for the benefit of the community. Secondly, Igbos are pragmatic and success-oriented.<sup>142</sup> Any religious form that does not deliver the ‘goods’ (in terms of *ezi-ndu*) is discarded in favour of a more effective alternative.

Thirdly, like other African societies, Igbos have a keen sense of community.<sup>143</sup> A popular Igbo saying is *Igwe bu ike* (Igbo: unity is power).<sup>144</sup> Igbos are aware of their dependence on the kinship group, *umunna*, and seldom become detached from it wherever they live. Group solidarity permeates every facet of Igbo social life, including religion, which is communally regulated and expressed in a community setting.<sup>145</sup> As we see later, this was an important feature of revivalist and NPC spiritualities, which contributed to their popularity.

The Igbo concept of salvation has a communal dimension. Reciprocity and altruism are expressions of *ezi-ndu*, and generosity towards others is an indication that one is an *ezi mmadu*, a good or saved person. *Mma* (Igbo: goodness) is an important Igbo cosmological term, containing a bundle of meanings, including moral probity, wealth, health, and beauty. According to Bastion, productive persons are those who manifest ‘goodness’ by working hard, accumulating and redistributing wealth, and successfully

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<sup>142</sup> See also Uchendu, *Igbo*, 16, 19; Njaka, *Igbo Political Culture*, 60; Frank A. Salamone, ‘Continuity of Igbo Values After Conversion: A Study in Purity and Prestige’, *Missiology*, 3.1, 1975, 40.

<sup>143</sup> Okorochoa, ‘Religious Conversion in Africa’, 169; Okafor, ‘Christianity of South-Eastern Nigeria’, 34-35; Ilogu, *Ibo Culture*, 17-18; Uchendu, *Igbo*, 34, 19; Njaka, *Igbo Political Culture*, 60.

<sup>144</sup> Kalu, *Embattled Gods*, 274; Gregory E. M. Adibe, *The Crisis of Faith and Morality of the Igbo Christians of Nigeria*, Onitsha: Tabansi Press, 1992, 14.

<sup>145</sup> Okorochoa, ‘Religious Conversion in Africa’, 169.

rearing children, thus reproducing potential for the community at large.<sup>146</sup> This will be important when I consider Igbo neo-Pentecostal healing and prosperity theologies.<sup>147</sup>

Group expectations influence Igbo morality. The extended family system, age grade associations, and elders help to regulate morality and socialise young people into society's mores through a variety of mechanisms.<sup>148</sup> Thus, shame is a major deterrent to crime.<sup>149</sup> Later, I argue that community pressures influenced Igbo responses to the revival, and helped NPCs maintain their identity as separated communities.

Finally, Igbo traditional spirituality is power-oriented.<sup>150</sup> Like other African societies, Igbo traditional religion is concerned with the explanation, prediction, and control of space-time events, and the Igbo expect power to emanate from religious forms.<sup>151</sup> In their effort to survive, they wove enduring covenants with spiritual forces (initiated and sustained through ritual practices).<sup>152</sup> This had implications for Igbo appropriation of

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<sup>146</sup> Bastion, 'Witchcraft and Locality', 138. According to Bastion, wealth is redistributed in the community through participation in title taking, credit associations, and the establishment of patron-client relations with the less fortunate.

<sup>147</sup> See chapter five, section 4.

<sup>148</sup> Ogbu U. Kalu, 'Gods as Policemen: Religion and Social Control in Igboland', in Jacob K. Olupona and Sulayman S. Nyang (eds.), *Religious Plurality in Africa. Essays in honour of John S. Mbiti*, Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 1993, 115; Adibe, *Faith and Morality*, 11.

<sup>149</sup> Uchendu, *Igbo*, 17. The issue of whether Igbo society is a shame- or guilt-oriented culture remains open to debate. Like Uchendu, Okorochoa, *Religious Conversion*, 138, maintains that fear and shame, rather than guilt, dominated Igbo traditional attitudes to sin. However, Echema, *Traditional Igbo Society*, 46-7, argues that this does not preclude the possibility that Igbos have a sense of guilt. See also Ilogu, *Igbo Culture*, 129. For more on the issue of guilt and shame in African societies, see F. B. Welbourn, 'Some Problems of African Christianity: Guilt and Shame', in C. G. Baeta (ed.), *Christianity in Tropical Africa. Studies Presented and Discussed at the Seventh International African Seminar*, University of Ghana, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1968, 182-95.

<sup>150</sup> Okorochoa, 'Religious Conversion in Africa', 168, 171.

<sup>151</sup> Okorochoa, *Religious Conversion*, xi, 196-98, 294.

<sup>152</sup> Kalu, *Embattled Gods*, 30. According to Kalu, traditionally the Igbo have covenanted with over a thousand spiritual beings in their encounter with their environment. See also Ejizu, 'Igbo Religious Beliefs', 814-17.

revival and neo-Pentecostal spirituality, for as Okorochoa asserts, African conversion was a ‘conscious and rational . . . movement in the direction of power.’<sup>153</sup>

Igbos have a precarious vision of the universe and believe that powerful forces exist, which may prevent people from enjoying *ezi-ndu* and fulfilling their destiny. These fall into two categories. Afflictions can result from the activity of witches, sorcerers, or evil spirits. However, the Supreme Being, deities, or ancestors can also inflict misfortune or withdraw protection as punishment for violations of the moral code (*omenala*, Igbo).<sup>154</sup> The belief in punishment and rewards is strong. *Chineke* imparts power to enhance life only on those who live according to *ofo-na-ogu* (Igbo: justice and fair play with innocence),<sup>155</sup> and conduct their lives according to *omenala*. Thus, fear of sin’s consequences is a dominant factor in traditional morality.<sup>156</sup> Failure to comply with *omenala* incurs the wrath of the gods, the withdrawal of their protection, and a reduction in the workings of power. It is the experience of wrath and its consequences (in the form of affliction), which creates an awareness of sin and calls for cleansing rituals to be performed.<sup>157</sup> This will be important when I consider the ethical implications of the revival.<sup>158</sup>

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<sup>153</sup> Okorochoa, ‘Religious Conversion in Africa’, 171.

<sup>154</sup> When this occurs it is believed to be for the ultimate good of the individual and community. Ikenga-Metuh, *African Traditional Religions*, 150-51.

<sup>155</sup> The term *ofo-na-ogu* derives from two Igbo words: *ofo* and *ogu*. *Ofo* is the most important symbol of the ancestors, and represents authority, justice, and truth. *Ogu* has to do with moral probity. According to Okorochoa, *Religious Conversion*, 100, ‘*Ofo* is used for oath-taking to determine the presence or otherwise of *ogu* on the part of the one who swears.’

<sup>156</sup> *Ibid.*, 130-31, 138.

<sup>157</sup> Ikenga-Metuh, *African Religion*, 4, 109; Okorochoa, *Religious Conversion*, 138, 293-94.

<sup>158</sup> See chapter three, section 4.6 & 5.1.2.

To maintain the cosmological balance, ensure the ongoing experience of *ezi-ndu*, and realise one's destiny (*Chi*), various preventive and purificatory rites are performed.<sup>159</sup> These immunise potential victims against the attacks of evil spirits, witches, or sorcerers. When a person actually experiences affliction, a *dibia-afa* (Igbo: diviner)<sup>160</sup> is consulted to ascertain the cause, and prescribe appropriate actions needed to restore *ezi-ndu*.<sup>161</sup> Sin pollutes the individual or community (and hence, the land), and must be cleansed to ward off the wrath of the gods.<sup>162</sup> This will be relevant later when I consider the appeal of ritual cleansing rites in Igbo prayer houses,<sup>163</sup> and neo-Pentecostal prayer strategies.<sup>164</sup>

The eschatological aspect of *ezi-ndu* is summed up in the term *ahamefula* (Igbo: that my name may not be obliterated); hence, the value placed on children, and the efforts to live a good life to attain ancestorhood and eventually return to the world through reincarnation.<sup>165</sup> Though there is no concept of a future day of judgement,<sup>166</sup> there is a belief in posthumous moral redress. As Metuh observes, 'the good go to *Ala Mmuo*, the spirit-land, where they continue to live a life similar to their earthly life and are allowed to reincarnate, while the bad are banished to *Ama nri mmuo na mmadu*, the Igbo hell,

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<sup>159</sup> Okorochoa, *Religious Conversion*, 293-94; Ikenga-Metuh, *African Religions in Western Conceptual Schemes*, 4.

<sup>160</sup> *Dibia* is a generic term, which includes traditional priests, diviners (*dibia-afa*), soothsayers, medicine men, and herbalists. They may or may not belong to the *Oha Dibia*, the league of indigenous healers, who were custodians of traditional morality, in conjunction with *Ala* and the ancestors. For more on the role of *dibia*, see Okorochoa, *Religious Conversion*, 88, 141-42; Francis Arinze, *Sacrifice in Ibo Religion*, Ibadan: J. S. Breton, 64; Uchendu, *Igbo*, 81.

<sup>161</sup> Okorochoa, *Religious Conversion*, 142-43; Ilogu, *Ibo Culture*, 53

<sup>162</sup> Okorochoa, *Religious Conversion*, 139. In fact, the one who sins is referred to as *onye arulu ani* (Igbo: one who pollutes the land). See Adibe, *Faith and Morality*, 13. Purificatory rites include open confession of 'sin', ritual cleansing, and sacrifices.

<sup>163</sup> See chapter two, section 2.4.3 & 2.4.4.

<sup>164</sup> See chapter five, section 4.2 & chapter six, section 3.3.

<sup>165</sup> Okorochoa, *Religious Conversion*, 162, 180-81.

<sup>166</sup> *Ibid.*, 162.

and turn into frustrated wandering spirits.’<sup>167</sup> I return to this when I consider the eschatological dimensions of the revival in chapter three.<sup>168</sup>

## 2.2 The Missionary Enterprise (1857-1967)<sup>169</sup>

Igbo traditional religious beliefs clashed with the evangelical culture exported from missionary metropolitan centres in the West. I begin this section with an overview of the missionary enterprise prior to the civil war, before examining the influence of ideology on missionary endeavours. This will provide important clues to the appeal of revival and neo-Pentecostal spirituality in post-colonial Nigeria.

### 2.2.1 Mission Churches

The explorations on the River Niger (1830-1857) laid the foundations for the Christianisation of Igboland.<sup>170</sup> During the 1857 expedition, the Anglican CMS opened the first permanent missionary base at Onitsha, North-Western Igboland,<sup>171</sup> and until 1885, it remained the only missionary organisation active within Igboland.<sup>172</sup>

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<sup>167</sup> Metuh, *African Religion*, 138.

<sup>168</sup> See chapter three, section 5.1.2.

<sup>169</sup> For important landmarks in the missionary enterprise in Igboland, see Appendix 3.1. For an oral account of the encounter between missionary Christianity and Igbo traditional religion during the colonial era, and its relationship to the Civil War Revival, see Appendix 4.1.

<sup>170</sup> The purpose of these expeditions was two-fold: to open up trade with the indigenous population, and to investigate their receptivity to religious and secular education.

<sup>171</sup> The Church Missionary Society (CMS) is an Anglican missionary society, founded in 1799. In 1985, it changed to the Church Mission Society. For more on the Niger Mission and the early CMS missionary enterprise in North-Western Igboland, see Kalu, *Embattled Gods*, 81-2; Ilogu, *Ibo Culture*, 56-7; Isichei, *Igbo People*, 160-65; Jocelyn Murray, *Proclaim The Good News. A Short History of the Church Missionary Society*, London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1985, 56-8.

<sup>172</sup> Until 1870, the Niger Mission operated in the vicinity of Onitsha. Kalu, *Embattled Gods*, 83. An outstanding feature was the role of indigenous agents as the early missionaries were Africans from Sierra Leone, often of Igbo descent, who were later joined by local indigenes. Isichei, *Igbo People*, 160-61; Ogbu U. Kalu, ‘Color and Conversion: The White Missionary Factor in the Christianization of Igboland, 1857-1967’, *Missiology: An International Review*, 18.1, January 1990, 61-74; Kalu, *Embattled Gods*, 69-72; *Ibo Culture*, 56-7.

The high imperial era (1880 to about 1920) saw a significant increase in European missionary recruitment due in part to the influence of evangelical revivalism and Keswick spirituality.<sup>173</sup> Interdenominational rivalry was an important theme. Following the Berlin Conference (1884-85) and the subsequent scramble for Africa, missionary societies competed for territory. From 1892 until their reunion in 1931, there were two Anglican bodies, the CMS and the Niger Delta Pastorate (NDP). The NDP flourished in southern Igboland.<sup>174</sup> Meanwhile, in 1905 the CMS established a base in Owerri, Central Igboland, from where it spread rapidly. Presbyterians opened their first Igbo station in 1888, and were largely responsible for the Christianisation of Cross River Igboland, the territory of the Eastern Igbo.<sup>175</sup> Methodists entered Igboland in 1910, and established a chain of missions along the Port Harcourt to Enugu railway line, but their comparative failure to develop a 'native' agency hindered their progress.<sup>176</sup> The first faith mission to enter Igboland was the Qua Iboe Mission, which established a station at Oloko, Southern Igboland in 1920.<sup>177</sup> The French Holy Ghost Roman Catholic Missionary Society arrived in 1885, and opened a mission in Onitsha.<sup>178</sup> Subsequently, Igboland became the centre of Catholic missionary activity

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<sup>173</sup> A. F. Walls, 'Protestant Missionary Motivation in the Imperialist Era: The British', *International Bulletin Missionary Research*, 6.2, 1982, 63; Brian Stanley, *The Bible and the Flag*, Leicester: Intervarsity Press, 1990, 82; Isichei, *Christianity in Africa*, 92.

<sup>174</sup> By 1925, there were three hundred NDP stations in its 'Interior Mission.' Isichei, *Igbo People*, 175.

<sup>175</sup> *Ibid.*, 161. But Presbyterian activity in Igboland did not really take off until the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and though their impact was substantial, for the most part it remained localised until the 1960s. For more on the Presbyterian mission in Igboland, see Kalu, *Embattled Gods*, 134-36, 216-38; E. A. Udo, 'The Missionary Scramble for Spheres of Influence in South-eastern Nigeria 1900-52', in Kalu (ed.), *Christianity in West Africa*, 161-62; Udobata R. Onunwa, 'Christian Missionary Methods and their Influence on Eastern Nigeria', in Ikenga-Metuh (ed.), *Gods in Retreat*, 63-4.

<sup>176</sup> These were Primitive Methodists, rather than Wesleyan Methodists. The Wesleyans concentrated initially on Western Nigeria. In 1932, the two groups amalgamated to become the Methodist Mission. For more on Methodist mission activity in Igboland, see Kalu, *Embattled Gods*, 178-84; Isichei, *Igbo People*, 179-80.

<sup>177</sup> W. L. Wheatley, *Sunrise in Nigeria. A Record of Missionary Service from 1920 to 1952*, Belfast: Qua Iboe Mission, 1977, 11. See also, Udo, 'Scramble', 163-73.

<sup>178</sup> Later, Irish Holy Ghost Fathers replaced French Holy Ghost Fathers, and Onitsha became the headquarters of Catholic mission in Eastern Nigeria. For the Roman Catholic mission in Igboland, see P.

in Nigeria.<sup>179</sup> One legacy of interdenominational struggle for domination was religious disunity, which continued as a feature of the Christian landscape throughout the colonial period.<sup>180</sup>

Church historians acknowledge that a turning point occurred from 1906 with a mass movement to Christianity involving Protestants and Roman Catholics.<sup>181</sup> The first 50 years of Christian mission in Igboland yielded about one thousand baptised Igbo converts, but by 1910, Christians in Eastern Nigeria outnumbered those west of the Niger.<sup>182</sup> This rapid expansion, described by Ekechi as a ‘religious revolution,’ followed the British conquest of the Igbo interior.<sup>183</sup> Missionaries were able to travel with relative security, and many Igbo communities were exposed to missionary influence.<sup>184</sup> They saw the missions as allies against the violence of conquest,<sup>185</sup> and interpreted their defeat, and the white man’s relative prosperity, as evidence that their

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B. Clarke, ‘The Methods and Ideology of the Holy Ghost Fathers in Eastern Nigeria 1885-1905’, in Kalu (ed.), *Christianity in West Africa*, 36-75; Nicholas Ibeawuchi Omenka, *The School in the Service of Evangelization. The Catholic Educational Impact in Eastern Nigeria 1886-1959*, Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1989; V. A. Nwosu, ‘The Growth of the Catholic Church in Onitsha Ecclesiastical Province’, in A. O. Makozi and Afolabi Ojo (eds.), *The History of the Catholic Church in Nigeria*, Lagos: Macmillan Nigeria, 1982, 38-55; Kalu, *Embattled Gods*, 89-108.

<sup>179</sup> Omenka, *School*, 27-8, suggests that Catholic success in Igboland was due to Igbo susceptibility to change, their propensity to seek external linkages, and their predilection for Western education.

<sup>180</sup> Udo, ‘Scramble’, 178.

<sup>181</sup> Kalu, *Embattled Gods*, 13; Ekechi, *Missionary Enterprise*, xiii; Isichei, *Igbo People*, 165. Hastings includes this movement in his examination of five significant West African conversion movements during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, though his focus is the Catholic Mission. From 1906 to 1918, the Catholic community increased from under 5,000 to approximately 74,000. Adrian Hastings, *The Church in Africa 1450-1950*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994, 443-53. According to Isichei, *Christianity in Africa*, 271, there were 2,500 Catholics in the Onitsha-Owerri vicariate in 1906, and this had risen to 58,000 by 1926.

<sup>182</sup> Isichei, *Igbo People*, 165; Ayandele, *Missionary Impact*, 343, 345. The 1921 census claimed 284,835 out of 3,927,419 Igbo were Christians. Quoted in Isichei, *Igbo People*, 161.

<sup>183</sup> Ekechi, *Missionary Enterprise*, 114, 149. The arrival of missionaries at Owerri, Central Igboland, precipitated the mass movement. As Okorochoa notes, rather than having to plead to be allowed to stay, the missionaries found that people were appealing to them to come and were even willing to pay for the schools, which they wanted so desperately (*Religious Conversion*, 207-208).

<sup>184</sup> Isichei, *Igbo People*, 166-67.

<sup>185</sup> Ekechi, *Missionary Enterprise*, chapter 8; Isichei, *Igbo People*, 167.

gods had failed and the new should be given a chance.<sup>186</sup> A key factor was the close association between mission and education. Nineteenth century Igbo communities had shown little interest in Western education because it seemed to offer few opportunities. This changed when Western education offered an escape from the tyranny of the Warrant Chief and opened new employment opportunities.<sup>187</sup> Education became the principal means of evangelisation, and different missions established schools in villages and towns in their efforts to expand.<sup>188</sup> Okorochoa argues that the quest for education and the opportunities it offered in terms of enhanced status and prosperity was a search for salvation in terms of *ezi-ndu*.<sup>189</sup>

Protestant cooperation has been neglected in Nigerian nationalist historiography, which has tended to focus on missionary rivalry.<sup>190</sup> Despite disagreements, Protestant missions formed a united front against Roman Catholics and established comity agreements, resulting in the partition of Eastern Nigeria into five Protestant denominational districts: CMS, NDP, Presbyterian, Qua Iboe Mission, and Methodist.<sup>191</sup> While Roman Catholics refused to recognise these agreements,<sup>192</sup> Protestants continued to contest mission boundaries until 1932 when they became

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<sup>186</sup> Okorochoa, *Religious Conversion*, xi, 223-25. See also Walls, *Missionary Movement*, 89.

<sup>187</sup> Isichei, *Igbo People*, 166-67.

<sup>188</sup> Roman Catholics were more successful than Protestants at using the school system as a method of evangelisation, and by 1960, 40 % of the education was under their control. See Clarke, 'Holy Ghost Fathers', 48; Ward, 'Africa', 220; Nwosu, 'Catholic Church in Onitsha', 42-3.

<sup>189</sup> Okorochoa, *Religious Conversion*, 234-35. See also Eddi Onugha, personal reminiscence, May 2000 (Appendix 4.1, paragraph 4).

<sup>190</sup> See for example, Ekechi, *Missionary Enterprise*; Udo, 'Scramble', 159-60. One Igbo historian who has redressed the balance is Ogbu U. Kalu. See his *Divided People of God. Church Union Movement in Nigeria: 1867-1966*, London/New York: NOK Publishers, 1978.

<sup>191</sup> They also embarked on a number of joint ventures, and between 1936 and 1961 established the Women's Training College at Umuahia, two secondary schools for boys at Enugu and Abakaliki, a theological college at Umuahia, and Queen Elizabeth II Hospital at Umuahia. See Udo, 'Scramble', 177.

<sup>192</sup> Udo, 'Scramble', 177. See also Kalu, *Embattled Gods*, 129; Ekechi, *Missionary Enterprise*, 136.

fixed.<sup>193</sup> Anglicans occupied Northern, North-Western, North-Eastern, and Central Igboland, but were especially dominant in the urban areas of Onitsha and Owerri.<sup>194</sup> Methodists occupied Southern Igboland, the Okigwe-Isuikwuato corner of Central Igboland, and established a strong base in Umuahia. Later, they moved into the North-Eastern culture area and the urban areas of Enugu and Abakaliki.<sup>195</sup> Presbyterians were initially restricted to Cross River Igboland, but during the 1960s spread further afield.<sup>196</sup> The Qua Iboe Mission continued to work mainly in the Aba area of Southern Igboland. Meanwhile, Roman Catholics established churches and schools throughout Igboland.<sup>197</sup> Later, Africans disputed these boundaries, and during the remainder of the colonial era, Protestant denominations spread beyond the territory allotted to them. But for a long period, religious pluralism was mainly confined to urban areas.

Catholic and Protestant missions in Africa experienced contrasting fortunes during the inter-war years. Protestant missionary dominance in Igboland was effectively reversed, as Catholic missionaries moved increasingly into education and used the school as an instrument of evangelisation.<sup>198</sup> For Protestant missions and the CMS in particular, there was a steady decline in missionary recruitment for economic and intellectual

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<sup>193</sup> Udo, 'Scramble', 164-73. The American Baptists and the Lutheran Church of North America, as relative latecomers, did not participate in comity agreements. Baptists worked mainly in Western Nigeria at this stage. Their work in Igboland started as early as 1917 in Ihiagwu, near Owerri, but remained localised. They eventually spread to other parts of Igboland: Imerienwe (1947); Enugu (1950); Onitsha (1953). Peter Nlemadim DomNwachukwu, *Authentic African Christianity. An Inculturation Model for the Igbo*, New York/Bern: Peter Lang, 2000, 57-61; Isichei, *Igbo People*, 182. The Lutherans entered Igboland in 1936.

<sup>194</sup> Kalu, *Embattled Gods*, 130.

<sup>195</sup> *Ibid.*, 130; Kalu, *Divided People of God*, 117. Based on a survey carried out in 1963, there were approximately 390 Methodist congregations in the Umuahia District, which included Umuahia, Abakaliki, and Enugu circuits. R. T. Parson and R. N. C. Nwosu, *Christian Ministry - Vital Issues*, Ibadan, 1965, 77ff., cited in Kalu, *Divided People of God*, 117.

<sup>196</sup> Presbyterians spread to Port Harcourt, Aba, Abakaliki, Mbawsi, Umuahia, and Enugu. See DomNwachukwu, *Igbo*, 62-4.

<sup>197</sup> Kalu, *Embattled Gods*, 130; Udo, 'Scramble', 159-79; Isichei, *Christianity in Africa*, 265-66.

reasons. Financial trouble resulted in a drop in recruitment levels, except among conservative evangelicals. However, the main factor was a theological shift from fundamentalism to liberalism, which shattered Western evangelical unity during the 1920s.<sup>199</sup> This affected the CMS and the Student Christian Movement, and had repercussions in Nigeria. The formation of the Ruanda Mission in 1926 as an independent wing of the CMS meant that East Africa tended to attract conservative evangelical CMS recruits, and West Africa, liberals.<sup>200</sup> I return to this later when I consider the work of Scripture Union.

During the 1950s, the ‘paternalistic benevolence’ of the inter-war years gradually gave way to a more self-critical awareness and recognition of the validity of African experience.<sup>201</sup> This intellectual vitality was more apparent within Protestantism than Roman Catholicism, which would have to wait until the effects of the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) had filtered down before any significant reform could take place. Mission churches continued to increase at a prodigious rate, and the quality of church institutions (schools and medical facilities) improved.<sup>202</sup> Mainline churches in Nigeria

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<sup>198</sup> Hastings, *Church in Africa*, 559, 562; Hastings, *History of African Christianity*, 58.

<sup>199</sup> Hastings, *Church in Africa*, 551.

<sup>200</sup> Stanley, ‘East African Revival’, 7; Kevin Ward, ‘“Taking Stock”: The Church Missionary Society and its Historians’, in Kevin Ward and Brian Stanley (eds.), *The Church Missionary Society and World Christianity 1799-1999*, Grand Rapids, Mich./Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmanns Publishing Company, 2000, 35; PC, Bill Roberts, 24.2.03, Cullompton. According to Ward, ‘Balokole Revival’, 114, the Ruanda Mission was ‘an attempt to remain loyal to CMS and yet to stand for a distinctively conservative evangelical point of view at a time when CMS was being assailed by disputes over “modernism” or liberal theology.’

<sup>201</sup> This was partly due to the influence of CMS Secretary Max Warren, the principal Protestant mission strategist, described by Hastings as a man of ‘considerable historical and cultural sensitivity’ (*Church in Africa*, 567).

<sup>202</sup> For example, the 1953 census classified 64 % of Owerri Province, 28 % of Enugu Province, and 26 % of Onitsha as Christian. See Ifeka-Moller, ‘White Power’, 62-3.

obtained a degree of autonomy,<sup>203</sup> and by the 1960s, they represented the dominant brand of Christianity in Igboland.<sup>204</sup> As we see in chapter three, most civil war revivalists were drawn from the ranks of the four largest mainline mission churches: Anglican, Methodist, Presbyterian, and Roman Catholic.

However, from the 1950s, there was also a growing conservative evangelical presence in Igboland. The Sudan Interior Mission (SIM), part of the Faith Missions movement, was influenced by the North American Holiness movement through its founder Rowland Bingham.<sup>205</sup> Bingham entered Nigeria in 1901, and established his first mission station at Patigi in 1902.<sup>206</sup> SIM's goal was to reach Muslims, and due to comity agreements agreed to concentrate on the Middle Belt and the North. Its early opposition to the 'school approach' to evangelism hindered its progress, but after it opened its first school in 1930 it expanded rapidly,<sup>207</sup> and by 1940, had planted 62 mission stations. SIM was committed to indigenous church principles, and in 1954, its

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<sup>203</sup> Methodists became an autonomous body, Methodist Church Nigeria, in 1962. 'The Methodist Church in Nigeria', *Outline. An Information Sheet for Preachers, Speakers at World Church/OM Meetings and Others*, n.d, 1. The Presbyterian Church Nigeria became an autonomous, self-governing body in 1960. See 'Presbyterian Church of Nigeria', *United Bible Society Bulletin* 82, 19; Kalu, *Divided People of God*, 10. The Anglicans and Catholics did not obtain the same degree of independence, though the Anglican Province of West Africa was formerly established in 1951, and the Catholic Church hierarchies were set up in British West Africa in 1950.

<sup>204</sup> This was especially true of the Anglican and Roman Catholic communities. According to the 1963 Census figures, there were 103,250 Anglicans and 723,568 Catholics in Owerri Province, and 101,356 Anglicans and 548,106 Catholics in Onitsha Province. Quoted in Kalu, *Embattled Gods*, 178.

<sup>205</sup> For more on the early history of SIM, see Fiedler, *Faith Missions*, 48, 50-1.

<sup>206</sup> The main written sources for SIM/ECWA history in Nigeria used here are Yusufu Turaki, *An Introduction to the History of SIM/ECWA in Nigeria, 1893-1993*, Jos: Challenge Press, 1993; W. Harold Fuller, *Aftermath. The Dramatic Rebirth of Eastern Nigeria*, Toronto: Sudan Interior Mission, 1970; ECWA No.1 Church, Enugu, 'Information Brief', January 2000; P. B. Clarke, *West African Christianity*, London: Edward Arnold, 1986. Turaki is a former General Secretary of ECWA. Fuller was Deputy Field Director of SIM from 1968 to 1972, and later Deputy General Director of SIM. I have also relied on oral sources (PC, Joseph Chukwu Egbah, 12.10.01, Aba; PC, Mr Haney, 12.10.01, Aba; OI, James Ukaegbu, 10.10.01, Umuahia; OI, Bill Roberts, 23.7.99, Cullompton).

<sup>207</sup> Clarke, *West African Christianity*, 105.

Nigerian churches became an autonomous body called the Evangelical Churches of West Africa (ECWA), with its headquarters in Jos.<sup>208</sup>

The spread of SIM/ECWA to Igboland occurred gradually through indigenous and missionary initiative. During the 1950s, Igbos converted in the north through ECWA requested SIM to extend their work to the east. SIM responded by working through its media ministries (African Challenge magazine and Radio ELWA).<sup>209</sup> In 1957, it appointed field representatives in Aba and Enugu, and during the 1960s opened bookshops in Enugu and Port Harcourt. Meanwhile, some Igbo ECWA members had returned to the east to engage in evangelistic activity and plant churches.<sup>210</sup> During the 1966 pogroms in the north, many more Igbos returned to the east, including ECWA pastors and members, and this added momentum to the work. By 1967, ECWA had planted a small number of ECWA churches in rural areas and major cities (such as Enugu, Umuahia, Aba, and Onitsha), which later attracted young people associated with SU and the Civil War Revival. ECWA's growing popularity in Igboland was partly a response to perceived nominalism and liberalism within the mainline churches.

As noted, interdenominational cooperation was a feature of the Protestant missionary movement in Igboland. The roots of the Nigerian church union movement, a major ecumenical initiative, go back to the early missionary enterprise in the east when

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<sup>208</sup> ECWA was divided into District Church Councils (DCCs) and Local Church Councils (LCCs).

<sup>209</sup> Literature from SIM African Challenge influenced several former Igbo revivalists, including J. M. J. Emesim and Paul Nweke. See Anyaegbu, 'Pentecostal/Evangelical', 18, 201-10.

<sup>210</sup> In 1963, ECWA established LCCs at Aba and Isukwuato, and in 1965, created the Eastern DCC, with headquarters at Umuahia. Among early ECWA pioneers in Igboland were Frank Agbaduru, P. N. Ejike, W. O. Madubuko, S. Umune, R. O. Onokala, and J. C. Egboh. Onokala was ECWA pastor in Umuahia during the civil war. Egboh became ECWA pastor in Onitsha after the war. Another important figure

mission field exigencies encouraged ‘cooperation and comity’ among different Protestant groups.<sup>211</sup> They found they shared a common goal (the propagation of the gospel) and a common enemy (the Roman Catholic Church). The 1910 Edinburgh Conference was an early catalyst.<sup>212</sup> A year later, an interdenominational conference in Calabar passed a resolution accepting the principle of organic unity. Though the initial impulse for unity came from missionaries, Africans later took up the vision. The influence of the WCC,<sup>213</sup> the example of the South India scheme,<sup>214</sup> the Lambeth Conference of 1958, the advent of political independence, and theological reflection on the nature of the church, all added impetus to the project.<sup>215</sup>

The impulse for church union was stronger in the east than in Western Nigeria,<sup>216</sup> and the 1947 Onitsha Conference involving Anglicans, Presbyterians, Methodists, Qua Iboe Mission, and the Sudan United Mission (SUM) defined the contours of the proposed union. The Baptists and SIM refused to participate, and later QIM and SUM withdrew.<sup>217</sup> Significantly, none of the churches that arose from indigenous initiatives were invited to participate. So negotiations continued between the three largest mission

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was Mike Bonomi, who became the pastor of ECWA in Enugu immediately after the war. This became an important Scripture Union meeting place.

<sup>211</sup> Kalu, *Divided People of God*, 3. For more on the Church Union Movement in Nigeria, see Kalu, *Divided People of God*; O. U. Kalu, ‘The Shattered Cross: the Church Union Movement in Nigeria 1905-66’, in Kalu (ed.), *Christianity in West Africa*, 340-64; G. E. Igwe, *Church Union in Nigeria*, Umuahia: Ark Publishers, 2000; Hastings, *History of African Christianity*, 162-63.

<sup>212</sup> Church unity as an essential element of effective mission was a major theme at the 1910 Edinburgh World Missionary Conference. See Timothy Yates, *Christian Mission in the Twentieth Century*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994, 29.

<sup>213</sup> World Council of Churches, formed in 1948.

<sup>214</sup> Church union in South India resulted in the formation of the Church of South India in 1947. It was an amalgamation of many mainline groups, including Anglicans, Congregationalists, and Methodists. See R. E. Frykenberg, ‘India’, in Hastings (ed.), *World History of Christianity*, 188.

<sup>215</sup> Hastings, *History of African Christianity*, 161; Kalu, *Divided People of God*, 10.

<sup>216</sup> Kalu, ‘Church Union’, 341.

<sup>217</sup> QIM and SUM withdrew when they realised that the goal went further than federalism. Kalu, *Divided People of God*, 22.

churches in Igboland (Anglican, Methodist, and Presbyterian). The new united church (set to be launched on 11<sup>th</sup> December 1965) would have been by far the largest Protestant church in black Africa, but at the last moment the scheme collapsed, not over doctrinal differences or the issue of episcopacy, but over property rights, personality clashes, inter-ethnic and interdenominational rivalries.<sup>218</sup> However, deeper issues lay beneath the surface. Kalu refers to disagreements over what kind of united church was envisioned (whether a truly indigenous church or one ‘imprisoned within a foreign structure’), and to an emphasis on organisational issues rather than mission and worship.<sup>219</sup> For reunion to be successful, it must go hand in hand with renewal. Moreover, church unity need not necessarily involve organisational union. This will be important when I consider the Civil War Revival.

### 2.2.2 The Scripture Union

Scripture Union (SU) was another significant conservative evangelical influence.<sup>220</sup> As we see in chapter three, it laid the foundation for the Civil War Revival.<sup>221</sup> Its growth among Igbo young people was closely linked to Western liberal-modernist controversies. This issue prompted the Cambridge Inter-Collegiate Christian Union (CICCU) to break away from the Student Christian Movement (SCM) in 1910.<sup>222</sup>

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<sup>218</sup> Hastings, *History of African Christianity*, 162-63; Igwe, *Church Union*, 70; Kalu, *Divided People of God*, 68; Kalu, ‘Church Union’, 360.

<sup>219</sup> Kalu, *Divided People of God*, 74.

<sup>220</sup> In a recent address, Augustus Mbanaso, SU (Nigeria) National Chairman, described SU as the ‘foremost Evangelical Movement’ in Nigeria during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. See Augustus Mbanaso, ‘Keynote Address by the National Chairman’, First Scripture Union (Nigeria) Summit, Camp of Faith Okigwe, 16<sup>th</sup> October 1999, 5.

<sup>221</sup> For more on the early history of SU in Britain, see Nigel Sylvester, *God’s Word in a Young World. The Story of Scripture Union*, London: Scripture Union Publishing, 1984, 11-53; Ojo, ‘Campus Christianity’. It was originally called the Children’s Special Service Mission (CSSM), but adopted the name Scripture Union in 1960. Sylvester, *Scripture Union*, 116-17.

<sup>222</sup> SCM was originally established as an evangelical mission-orientated organisation in British and American universities, but as direct missionary work declined, it began to focus on theological and socio-

CICCU was a branch of SCM, but its members were mainly conservative evangelicals, opposed to the liberalism of SCM. This led to the formation of the Inter-Varsity Fellowship (IVF) in 1920 and the Inter-Varsity Fellowship of Evangelical Students (IFES) in 1947. Since then, a clear distinction has existed between the SCM and the more conservative evangelical IVF or Evangelical Christian Unions (ECU), as its member branches were known.<sup>223</sup> This had implications for the work of SU Nigeria.

Igbo Presbyterian Francis Akanu Ibiam introduced SCM into Igboland after his return to Nigeria in 1935 following medical training in Scotland, but for some years, it remained outside the educational institutions.<sup>224</sup> In 1944, SCM work in Eastern and Western Nigeria was amalgamated, and in 1948 was introduced into the University of Ibadan, where British expatriate teachers reinforced its status.<sup>225</sup> Until the mid-1960s, it remained the only interdenominational student organisation in the universities of Ibadan, Ife, Lagos, and Nsukka,<sup>226</sup> but by the end of the decade, it was in decline, largely due to the increasing influence of SU and the ECUs, introduced into universities by British lecturers as an alternative evangelical witness.

Despite pressure from liberalism, SU maintained its strong conservative evangelical stance, partly due to its links with the IVF and British Christian Unions. SU work in Nigeria was directed towards young people, rather than children, and in this, it was

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political issues. In an attempt to contextualise the gospel and become relevant to a new scientific generation, it became committed to liberal Christianity, with a critical approach to the Bible. For more on SCM, see S. Bruce, 'The Student Christian Movement and the Inter-Varsity Fellowship: a Sociological Study of Two Student Movements', Ph.D. thesis, University of Stirling, 1980; Ojo, 'Campus Christianity'; Ojo, 'Contextual', 176-77; Sylvester, *Scripture Union*, 115-16. For a critical history of CICCU, see Oliver R. Barclay, *Whatever Happened to the Jesus Lane Lot?*, Leicester: IVP, 1977.

<sup>223</sup> For details of the split, see Douglas Johnson, *Contending for the Faith: A History of the Evangelical Movement in the Universities and Colleges*, Leicester: IVP, 1979, 66-83.

<sup>224</sup> Ojo, 'Contextual', 176-77.

influenced by the Nigerian context. SU required a literate environment, and this was found in the secondary schools and colleges.<sup>227</sup> Its work in Nigeria actually began in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, long before the introduction of SCM and the ECUs, but was initially limited to the circulation of Bible reading notes.<sup>228</sup> It almost disappeared in the 1940s, but was resurrected by British expatriate teachers, who introduced it into secondary schools. Most were former members of the British IVF, and later a close relationship developed between SU and the ECUs.<sup>229</sup> In the early 1950s, SU in Nigeria flourished as more expatriate Christians arrived as teachers and government workers,<sup>230</sup> and by 1960, there were 22 SU groups in Western Nigeria, 11 in the East, and 38 in the North.<sup>231</sup> The same year, students at the universities of Ibadan, Lagos, and Nsukka began meeting to read SU literature as a supplement to their SCM activities, and in 1961, the Ibadan Varsity Christian Union (IVCU) was formed out of an existing SU group.<sup>232</sup> Later, IVCU became an early focal point of Nigerian neo-Pentecostal activity.

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<sup>225</sup> For the introduction of SCM into Western Nigeria and especially the University of Ibadan, see Ojo, 'Contextual', 176-77.

<sup>226</sup> Ojo, 'Contextual', 177.

<sup>227</sup> *Ibid.*, 177.

<sup>228</sup> It was apparently introduced by CMS missionaries in 1884, and by 1892, a SU group had started to meet at Onitsha, North-Western Igboland. Ojo, 'Contextual', 177; Sylvester, *Scripture Union*, 150; T. J. Dennis, Letter Home, 21 January 1895, cited in John Goodchild, 'Dennis and the Ibo Bible. The Missionary Work of Tom Dennis in Nigeria and the Creation of the Union Ibo language', unpublished manuscript, 1997, 26, 55.

<sup>229</sup> Ojo, 'Contextual', 177-78. Actually, the relationship between the SU and the CUs can be traced to the early 1880s in Britain, when SU established links with CICC. See Sylvester, *Scripture Union*, 45.

<sup>230</sup> An agriculturalist called John Dean became the first SU Travelling Secretary in Nigeria. Dean became a Christian while studying at Cambridge University. In 1956, he became a missionary teacher with the Sudan United Mission (today, Action Partners) at the Boys' Secondary School, Gindiri, and in 1957 was seconded to SU.

<sup>231</sup> Sylvester, *Scripture Union*, 216, 152-53. The groups in the North belonged to the autonomous Fellowship of Christian Students (FCS), formed in Northern Nigeria in 1957, with first John Dean, then Reuben Ariko and Emmanuel Oladipo as successive general secretaries. As it was thoroughly evangelical, it was felt unnecessary to form SU groups in the north.

<sup>232</sup> Ojo, 'Contextual', 177-78.

The first SU school groups in Igboland were established at Umuahia in 1955 and Enugu in 1957,<sup>233</sup> and by 1966, the number of groups in the East had grown to approximately thirty.<sup>234</sup> In 1966, Bill Roberts became the first SU travelling secretary in the East, based in Umuahia.<sup>235</sup> As we see in chapter three, Roberts became a key figure during the Civil War Revival, and its main expatriate influence.<sup>236</sup> In the early 1960s, Igbo students started a SU group in the newly opened University of Nigeria at Nsukka (UNN), Northern Igboland.<sup>237</sup> Following the 1966 pogroms, Igbo students from Ibadan and other Western Nigerian universities relocated to UNN. This was an important factor in SU's growth in the East, as the influx of ECU members helped to revive the small SU group at UNN, which was soon re-organised and renamed the Christian Union, following the model of IVCU, Ibadan. After the closure of UNN (due to the war) some of these ECU members joined Roberts and shared leadership of SU Umuahia, which became the focal point of early revivalist activity.<sup>238</sup>

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<sup>233</sup> A. U. Mbanaso, 'School Ministry: The Experience of Yesteryears', *Plumblin. The Journal of the Pilgrims Ministry, S.U. (Nigeria)*, 1992 Maiden Edition, 10-11; Ojo, 'Campus Christianity', 79.

<sup>234</sup> Nigel Sylvester, Letter to S.U. Biafra, 13 September 1968; Ojo, 'Campus Christianity', 68-9, 79; J. O. Onuora, 'The Radicalization of the Scripture Union during and immediately after the Civil War', paper presented at the Remembering the Seventies Conference, Enugu, 28.4.00, 2; Mbanaso, 'School Ministry', 10. SU groups existed in some of the more prestigious Protestant mission schools in the East, such as Hope Waddell Training Institute (Calabar), Dennis Memorial Grammar School (Onitsha), Methodist College (Uzuakoli), and the Government Colleges at Umuahia, Owerri, Afikpo, and Enugu. See Onuora, 'Radicalization', 2. But it was the group at Government College Umuahia, which was the strongest.

<sup>235</sup> Minutes, Scripture Union Overseas Committee meeting, 17 January 1966.

<sup>236</sup> Roberts grew up in the Anglican Church, and was converted in 1954. After a brief spell in Nigeria during his National Service, he became a student at Cambridge University, where, like members of Ruanda Mission a generation earlier, he was involved with CICCU. OI, Bill Roberts, 23.7.99, Cullompton; Roberts, *Life and Death*, 12. For a photograph of Roberts, see Plate 2.2.

<sup>237</sup> S.E. Ifere, *God's Response to Nigeria. The Story of NIFES*, Jos: NIFES Press, 1995, 23.

<sup>238</sup> J. O. Onuora, 'Radicalization', 8-9. Onuora himself had been a student at the University of Ibadan, where he was a member of IVCU, which at the time was led by Mike Oye. Following relocation to UNN he became an ECU leader prior to the war. In June 1967, UNN closed, and Onuora stayed with Roberts for six months, helping to plan and lead SU Umuahia activities. OI, John Onuora, 30.4.00, Enugu; Roberts, *Life and death*, 36; Roberts, Letter to Harold Ling, SU London, August 1967.

There were several reasons for SU's growth and popularity.<sup>239</sup> First, the Nigerian educational system was expanding rapidly, and SU was welcomed into schools as most were still run by Christian missions. Its conservative evangelical stance proved an attractive alternative to the more liberal SCM and the dominant brand of mission church spirituality. Secondly, large numbers of Christian expatriates arrived to work in Nigeria, and they were responsible for starting SU groups in Nigerian educational institutions. There was also an element of prestige attached to the presence of a white travelling secretary, and this encouraged cooperation from British mission churches. Thirdly, SU policy of promoting indigenous leadership, a subject I return to later. Another factor was SU's efforts to contextualise the gospel and relate the Bible to contemporary life.<sup>240</sup> Finally, SU's interdenominational policy meant that members could participate fully while still maintaining their church affiliation. In fact, SU was arguably more successful at promoting unity and cross-denominational fertilisation than the church union movement. I return to this in chapter three. Yet like ECWA/SIM, SU adopted an anti-Pentecostal stance, which limited its appeal. As we see later, this had repercussions during the Civil War Revival.

### **2.3 Missionary Ideology**

To appreciate changes in the religious landscape during the colonial era, and the context in which the Civil War Revival flourished, I now consider the ideological base of the missionaries.<sup>241</sup> Comaroff and Comaroff suggest that the making of any historical actor

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<sup>239</sup> Ojo, 'Campus Christianity', 80; Sylvester, *Scripture Union*, 211, 223-25, 244-45.

<sup>240</sup> The publication of the first edition of the Nigerian version of SU daily Bible-reading notes in 1963 contributed to this. However, SU continued to use English as the main language of worship and study at this stage. OI, Udobata Onunwe, 23.3.04, Birmingham.

<sup>241</sup> Ogbu U. Kalu, 'The Task', in Kalu (ed.), *Christianity in West Africa*, 3; Kalu, *Embattled Gods*, 53.

is crucial to his or her making of history.<sup>242</sup> Two particular aspects of missionary ideology influenced the shape of Igbo Christianity, and provide important clues to the popularity of the revival.

### **2.3.1 A Failure to Implement Indigenous Church Principles**

An important aspect of early missionary thinking was the indigenous church concept and the ‘three self’ policy promoted initially by CMS Secretary Henry Venn (1841-1872).<sup>243</sup> Venn anticipated the formation of self-governing, self-supporting, and self-propagating indigenous churches, and hoped to shift the focus from a civilising mission, promoting European ways, to the adoption of African ones, and the promotion of local agency.<sup>244</sup> Venn’s accession to the office of CMS Secretary coincided with the Niger Expedition, and his thinking influenced early Protestant missionaries in Nigeria.<sup>245</sup>

During the high imperial period, there was a partial reversal of this approach, as European missionaries, influenced by Keswick spirituality, gradually replaced local leaders.<sup>246</sup> The purge of the Niger Mission and the humiliation of Bishop Crowther precipitated the first wave of Nigerian independency, as ‘African’ or ‘Ethiopian’ churches were founded in Western Nigeria as a response to white discrimination of African agents. In the east, Anglican congregations of the Niger Delta became an

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<sup>242</sup> John and Jean Comaroff, *Ethnography and the Historical Imagination. Studies in the Ethnographic Imagination*, Boulder, Colorado/Oxford: Westview Press, 1992, 183.

<sup>243</sup> See Hastings, *Church in Africa*, 293-98; Yates, *Christian Mission*, 35; Murray, *Church Mission Society*, 42, 49-50.

<sup>244</sup> Hastings, *Church in Africa*, 290.

<sup>245</sup> Walls, ‘Protestant Missionary Motivation’, 60, notes that due to a lack of missionaries and the dangers attached to living in the interior, there were pragmatic as well as theological reasons for Venn’s indigenous church policy.

<sup>246</sup> Stanley, *Bible and the Flag*, 115; Hastings, *Church in Africa*, 389; Walls, ‘Protestant Missionary Motivation’, 62; Isichei, *Igbo People*, 160-61.

independent self-supporting Pastorate within the Anglican Church, and by 1921, there were 29,225 Christians attached to the African churches of Lagos, and an almost equal number attached to churches of local origins, though most were located outside Igboland.<sup>247</sup>

Africanisation was even slower within the Roman Catholic Mission. During the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, RCM missionaries showed little confidence in indigenous lay agency, preferring to rely upon European and ‘native’ clergy.<sup>248</sup> Commitment to a sacramental approach to evangelisation (a ministerial function) and focus on the school approach, made them reluctant to use African catechists.<sup>249</sup> Despite a shift from ‘paternalism’ and the notion of white superiority during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century,<sup>250</sup> this attitude persisted. Yet Igbo agents were largely responsible for evangelisation and pastoral care during the mass movement to Catholicism that occurred after 1906.<sup>251</sup>

During the inter-war years, the Protestant missionary enterprise was influenced by J. H. Oldham, Secretary of the Edinburgh Conference and later the IMC.<sup>252</sup> Oldham was a firm advocate of the civilising potential of Christianity and the ‘benefits’ of imperialism. The new generation of missionaries believed in the enduring quality of the colonial order, insisted on the retention of control, and felt that the achievement of an

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<sup>247</sup> James B. Webster, *The African Churches among the Yoruba 1888-1922*, Oxford, 1964, 95-6. See also Isichei, *Christianity in Africa*, 179-80; Kalu, *Embattled Gods*, 170. Isichei, *Igbo People*, 181, states that by 1925 there were 20 United Native African churches in Aba, with 4,000 adherents.

<sup>248</sup> Omenka, *School*, 271. Though the first Igbo priest, John Anyogu, was not ordained until 1930.

<sup>249</sup> Clarke, ‘Holy Ghost Fathers’, 41, 49, 50; Hastings, *Church in Africa*, 453.

<sup>250</sup> Clarke, ‘Holy Ghost Fathers’, 57.

<sup>251</sup> Hastings, *Church in Africa*, 450-51, makes the point that between 1906 and 1918 the number of Catholic missionaries in Igboland remained at around 30, while the number of Igbo catechists increased from 33 in 1906 to 552 in 1918.

<sup>252</sup> The International Missionary Council, founded in 1921.

indigenous church could safely be left on hold. Little attention was given to the formation of African clergy, and by 1950, no African Anglican diocesan bishop had been appointed since the death of Crowther. However, at local church level, pastoral care and evangelism remained largely in the hands of local catechists and the small number of ordained Africans.<sup>253</sup> The situation was similar within the Roman Catholic Mission.<sup>254</sup>

During the 1950s, with independence looming, and missionary recruitment levels low following World War II, there was growing awareness of the need to increase the number of ordained Africans and improve their level of training. Yet despite the granting of a level of autonomy to Anglican and Catholic communities, there was only a limited transfer of ecclesiastical authority.<sup>255</sup> While there was a steady increase in the number of ordained African clergy, especially within Catholic ranks, the training of catechists for lower, localised ministries was neglected. Prodigious church growth meant that the burden of congregational responsibility rested largely with catechists, often ageing and untrained, and increasingly with lay members.<sup>256</sup> But clericalism and hierarchical structures remained dominant features of mainline churches in the 1960s.

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<sup>253</sup> Hastings, *Church in Africa*, 550-55.

<sup>254</sup> Hastings, *History of African Christianity*, 60-1.

<sup>255</sup> By 1960, there were Nigerian Anglican diocesan bishops in Lagos, Ibadan, Ondo-Benin, and the Niger Delta, but Igboland remained under the authority of the British Archbishop C. J. Patterson, based in Onitsha. Hastings, *History of African Christianity*, 112-13; Kalu, *Divided People of God*, 68-9. Despite the rise in number of African Catholic priests, there was a corresponding reluctance by the Roman Catholic Mission to appoint African priests to the episcopate, though by 1960 there were Igbo bishops over the dioceses of Umuahia, Port Harcourt, and Enugu. Omenka, *School*, 277. In Onitsha Archdiocese, there were 15 Igbo priests in 1960 (compared to 112 expatriate clergy), with responsibility for approximately 380,890 Catholics. The first Igbo Archbishop was Frances Arinze, appointed in 1967 over the Onitsha Archdiocese. Hastings, *Church in Africa*, 170; V. A. Nwosu, 'The Era of Archbishop Charles Heerey 1931-1967', in V. A. Nwosu (ed.), *The Catholic Church in Onitsha. People, Places and Events (1885-1985)*, Onitsha: Etukokwu Press, 1985, 62; Nwosu, 'Catholic Church in Onitsha', 45.

Kalu has argued that the missionary response to decolonisation was to maintain control by adopting a policy of ‘passive revolution.’<sup>257</sup> Yet this was hindered on two fronts: from the centre by the moratorium debate, and from the fringes by various forms of independency, especially during the 1970s.<sup>258</sup> I examine the latter in chapter three. Moratorium became an issue during the 1958 IMC meeting in Ghana, following an appeal by Walter Freytag for fewer missionaries.<sup>259</sup> This call was to become more strident in the 1970s, and reflected African dissatisfaction with the missionary version of indigenisation.<sup>260</sup> Meanwhile, during the 1960s, while older missions were trying to diminish their presence, new missionaries were arriving from other more ‘theologically conservative’ groups, such as SIM.<sup>261</sup>

SU was more successful at devolving power and developing an indigenisation strategy in Nigeria. It did this by a process of ‘Nigerianisation’ that involved leadership training courses, one-to-one discipleship, and the placement of Nigerians in key leadership positions.<sup>262</sup> In chapter three, I examine the significance of this for the Civil War Revival. In 1966, Mike Oye’s appointment as the first Nigerian travelling secretary was

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<sup>256</sup> Hastings, *History of African Christianity*, 167.

<sup>257</sup> According to Haynes, Gramsci used this term to refer to the way a dominant socio-political group may have to change its way of wielding power if it wants to maintain its hegemony. Jeff Haynes, *Religion and Politics in Africa*, London: Zed Books, 1996, 105. The reluctance to relinquish control on the part of mission authorities is noted by Beetham and Taylor, both of whom served the home base of missionary organisations. See T. S. Beetham, *Christianity and the New Africa*, London: Praeger, 1967, 24, 29, 151; J. V. Taylor, ‘Selfhood: Presence or Personae?’, in Peter Beyerhaus and Carl F. Hallencreutz (eds.), *The Church Crossing Frontiers: Essays on the Nature of Mission: In Honour of Bengt Sundkler*, Studia Missionalia Upsaliensia, 11, Gleerup, Uppsala: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1969, 171-76.

<sup>258</sup> Ogbu U. Kalu, ‘Passive Revolution and its Saboteurs: African Christian Initiative in the Era of Decolonization’, paper presented to the ‘Missions, Nationalism, & the End of the Empire’ conference, Currents of World Christianity Project, University of Cambridge, 6-9 September 2000, 1, 8-16. Missionary reluctance to devolve power meant that this decolonisation process within the mission churches extended across the broad period 1955 to 1975.

<sup>259</sup> Hastings, *History of African Christianity*, 120.

<sup>260</sup> For more on the moratorium debate, see Hastings, *Essay in Interpretation*, 22-36.

<sup>261</sup> By 1966, SIM had 648 missionaries in Nigeria. See Hastings, *History of African Christianity*, 165.

<sup>262</sup> Ojo, ‘Campus Christianity’, 85-7. See also Sylvester, *Scripture Union*, 211.

an important landmark. Oye became a symbol of SU ‘Nigerianisation’ and later a key figure during the Civil War Revival.<sup>263</sup> The establishment of Pilgrims groups in 1967 to cater for school leavers also encouraged the development of Igbo Christian leadership.<sup>264</sup> SU adopted a policy of national autonomy in Africa aimed at fostering financial and governmental independence, and in 1966, SU Nigeria became an autonomous body.<sup>265</sup>

### 2.3.2 The Legacy of Enlightenment Thinking

Early Protestant missionaries came to Africa with an ideology shaped by the forces of revivalism and Enlightenment thinking.<sup>266</sup> As a ‘child of the evangelical and pietist movements,’<sup>267</sup> the modern missionary movement spawned a generation of missionaries convinced that the preaching of the Cross was what the ‘heathen’ needed to hear,<sup>268</sup> and inclined to approach the world in terms of a dualistic conception of God and the devil.<sup>269</sup> But it was also influenced by Enlightenment assumptions, not only in its

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<sup>263</sup> Andrew Olu Igenozu, ‘Contextual Balancing of Scripture with Scripture: Scripture Union in Nigeria and Ghana’, in G. O. West and Musa W. Dube (eds.), *The Bible in Africa. Transactions, Trajectories and Trends*, Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2000, 294. Although he is a Nigerian, Oye was born in Ghana. In 1962, he came to Nigeria to study at the University of Ibadan, where he joined the IVCU and became its President in 1965. After his graduation, he worked from 1966 to 1972 as an SU travelling secretary, based mainly in Western Nigeria. He is now an ordained Methodist minister. OI, Mike Oye, 6.5.00, Enugu. See Plate 3.6.

<sup>264</sup> SU Pilgrims groups were originally the idea of Bill Roberts and his Igbo colleague Augustus Mbanaso, a former student at the Government Secondary School Umuahia and a member of SU Umuahia during the war. He is now a medical doctor and National Chairman of SU Nigeria. OI, Augustus Mbanaso, 12.1.01, Umuahia; Mbanaso, ‘Keynote Address’, 2; Bill Roberts, Pilgrims of the Scripture Union Newsletter No. 1, January 1967.

<sup>265</sup> Sylvester, *Scripture Union*, 225.

<sup>266</sup> A. F. Walls, ‘Missionary Vocation and the Ministry: the First Generation’, in Kalu (ed.), *Christianity in West Africa*, 22-35; A. F. Walls, ‘Christian Scholarship in Africa in the Twenty-first Century’, *Transformation. An International Dialogue on Mission and Ethics*, 19.4, October 2002, 223-25; Stanley, *Bible and the Flag*, 61-2; Fiedler, *Faith Missions*, 13.

<sup>267</sup> Walls, ‘Christian Scholarship in Africa’, 223. See also, Walls ‘Missionary Vocation’, 22.

<sup>268</sup> Stanley, *Bible and the Flag*, 62.

<sup>269</sup> Meyer, *Translating the Devil*, 40-3, notes this of German Pietism influenced by the 19<sup>th</sup> century Protestant Awakening.

concern with education and health care, and its confidence in science,<sup>270</sup> but especially in its emphasis on the all-sufficiency of reason.<sup>271</sup> As missionaries preached the gospel, they also promoted an Enlightenment worldview. Enlightenment thinkers constructed a ‘frontier’ between the empirical and spiritual worlds. Empiricists and rationalists insisted that we can know nothing about the spiritual world, or went further by denying its existence altogether. As Walls correctly observes, the Christian Enlightenment ‘accepted the frontier between the worlds, but asserted that there were identifiable crossing places,’ such as the incarnation, the resurrection, and revelation. Theology’s task was to police these frontiers and adapt Christianity to modern rational thinking. During the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, some Western theologians responded to the Enlightenment by developing liberal theology, which explained the miracles of the Bible scientifically, and discarded belief in the devil and demons. Others accepted that some features of the New Testament, such as prophecy and healing, were ‘frontier crossings formerly in use but no longer available.’<sup>272</sup> While many pastors were inspired by the Enlightenment and adopted liberal theology, Pietists and Puritans still endorsed traditional diabolology and soteriology. Protestant revivalism, reacting against Enlightenment assumptions, attacked liberal theology,<sup>273</sup> and promoted belief in the devil, heaven and hell, and the need to evangelise the ‘heathen.’ Nevertheless, the Enlightenment left its mark on Protestant missionary thinking.

It was within this framework that the gospel came to Igboland and was appropriated by local communities. Early CMS missionaries were evangelical, and their goal was to

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<sup>270</sup> Walls, ‘Christian Scholarship in Africa’, 223.

<sup>271</sup> Stanley, *Bible and the Flag*, 63.

<sup>272</sup> Walls, ‘Christian Scholarship in Africa’, 223-24.

preach the gospel, promote individual conversion, and plant local churches.<sup>274</sup> Initially they concentrated on evangelism. Because of their belief in human depravity and their focus on the Cross, they conceived their task in terms of a ‘crusade’ against idolatry.<sup>275</sup> Consequently, they demonised traditional religion and opposed local cultural practices. Evangelism and civilisation, the Bible and the plough, became the twin goals of early missionary endeavour in Igboland.<sup>276</sup> Nevertheless, early missionaries and Igbo communities had one point in common - they accepted the ontological reality of demons.

But as time went on, missionaries and local church leaders were increasingly likely to regard traditional spirits and witchcraft as figments of the imagination.<sup>277</sup> Following the Berlin Conference (1884), the school system took over as the principal missionary strategy. Missionary education, which promoted Enlightenment assumptions and attacked local worldviews, became a force for secularisation and an agent of modernisation.<sup>278</sup> This precipitated a spiritual crisis, as ‘vital dimensions of the African spiritual universe remained outside the scope of the Christian faith.’<sup>279</sup> The gap between received theology and inherited worldview proved harmful, particularly in

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<sup>273</sup> McLoughlin, *Revivals*, 108-09; Stanley, *Bible and the Flag*, 62.

<sup>274</sup> Yates, *Christian Mission*, 35; Hastings, *Church in Africa*, 293; Murray, *Church Missionary Society*, 38, 42.

<sup>275</sup> Stanley, *Bible and the Flag*, 63-5; Isichei, ‘Igbo Response’, 210; Ekechi, *Missionary Enterprise*, 186.

<sup>276</sup> Kalu, *Embattled Gods*, 307.

<sup>277</sup> Isichei, *Voices of the Poor*, 225; Walls, ‘Christian Scholarship in Africa’, 224; Hastings, *Essay in Interpretation*, 62; Kalu, *Embattled Gods*, 264.

<sup>278</sup> Kalu, *Power*, 14; Ubah, ‘Religious Change’, 82; Agu, *Secularization in Igboland*, 268; J. D. Y. Peel, ‘An Africanist Revisits Magic and the Millennium’, in Eileen Barker, James A. Beckford, and Karel Dobbelaere (eds), *Secularization, Rationalism and Sectarianism: Essays in Honour of Bryan Wilson*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993, 89. Walls, *Missionary Movement*, 134-35, notes that Christianity and forces of change associated with modernisation can hasten secularisation by reducing the scope of primal religion in traditional societies. See also H. W. Turner, ‘The Place of Independent Religious Movements in the Modernization of Africa’, *Journal of Religion in Africa*, 2.1, 1969, 43-63.

<sup>279</sup> Hanciles, ‘Conversion and Social Change’, 11.

moments of crisis, when churches were often unable to solve problems associated with witchcraft. Even with the ideological sea change during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, when the need to recognise positive elements within receptor cultures was appreciated, missionaries still regarded traditional religion with suspicion. Adaptation was usually limited to local customs, rather than issues such as healing and protection from evil. As Isichei notes, the antithesis between Igbo traditional religion and missionary Christianity concerned assumptions about the ends which religion is supposed to serve. Igbo religion was directed towards temporal blessings; missionary Christianity towards the dangers of hell and the joys of heaven.<sup>280</sup>

This provoked a variety of responses from Igbo communities during the colonial era.<sup>281</sup> First, there were the traditionalists,<sup>282</sup> who resisted Christianity and intensified their commitment to their inherited religion.<sup>283</sup> The second group adopted a form of dual allegiance to both traditional and Christian beliefs, reflecting the eclectic nature of Igbo spirituality.<sup>284</sup> Sometimes, first and second generation Christians preferred to combine elements from the old and new, creating a synthesis that incorporated ‘all that religion has always meant to them in the past.’<sup>285</sup> At moments of crisis, they were prone to revert to old ways of problem solving.<sup>286</sup> Other second generation Christians, due to

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<sup>280</sup> Isichei, ‘Igbo Response’, 216.

<sup>281</sup> For different Igbo responses to Christianity during the colonial era, see Eddi Onugha, personal reminiscence, May 2000 (Appendix 4.1).

<sup>282</sup> Here I follow Okorochoa and Isichei by using the term ‘traditionalist’ to refer to Igbo who have rejected Christianity and remain openly committed to primal religious beliefs and practices. Okorochoa, *Religious Conversion*, 126; Isichei, ‘Igbo Response’, 222.

<sup>283</sup> Isichei, ‘Igbo Response’, 222. See Appendix 4.1, paragraphs 2 & 3.

<sup>284</sup> *Ibid.*, 222; Okorochoa, *Religious Conversion*,

<sup>285</sup> Okorochoa, *Religious Conversion*, 267. See also Isichei, ‘Igbo Response’, 220; Isichei, *Christianity in Africa*, 267.

<sup>286</sup> See Appendix 4.1, paragraphs 5 & 6. Schreiter refers to this as the problem of dual systems, when people follow the religious practices of two distinct systems, especially in times of distress. Robert Schreiter, *Constructing Local Theologies*, Maryknoll, New York: Orbis, 1985, 145, 148.

the twin processes of secularisation and urbanisation, became divorced from their cultural heritage and had little exposure to traditional religion.<sup>287</sup> Finally, some Igbos appropriated mission Christianity wholeheartedly and rejected all external forms of the old religion. These converts showed little regard for indigenisation.<sup>288</sup>

None of these responses proved satisfactory. There were persistent conflicts between converts who rejected primal religion, traditionalists, and those with dual allegiance. The negative attitude of Western missionaries left a legacy of ‘two faiths in one mind,’<sup>289</sup> and encouraged the persistence of primal religious beliefs and practices after conversion.<sup>290</sup> As Okorochoa notes, Igbo converts continued to view religion in terms of power, and salvation to include *ezi-ndu*.<sup>291</sup> Some scholars suggest that traditional religion still ruled the minds of most Igbo Christians during the colonial era.<sup>292</sup> While this is probably an overstatement, the old covenants proved far more resilient than expected, and were often inadequately challenged by mission Christianity.<sup>293</sup>

## 2.4 Local Initiatives (1914-1967)

The failure of Western missions to implement fully programmes of indigenisation and adaptation precipitated a series of local initiatives that generated new denominations.

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<sup>287</sup> Isichei, ‘Igbo Response’, 212, 220-21; Okorochoa, *Religious Conversion*, 154. See Appendix 4.1, paragraphs 1 & 5.

<sup>288</sup> Isichei, *Christianity in Africa*, 267. See Appendix 4.1, paragraphs 2 & 3.

<sup>289</sup> Okorochoa, *Religious Conversion*, 271, 262.

<sup>290</sup> Isichei, *Christianity in Africa*, 296; Salamone, ‘Igbo Values’, 34; Okorochoa, *Religious Conversion*, 261, 295; Agu, *Secularization in Igboland*, 331-33; Christopher I. Ejizu, ‘Endurance of Conviction: The Persistence of the Traditional World-view in Igbo Christian Converts’, *Neue Zeitschrift für Missionswissenschaft*, 43.2, 1987, 127.

<sup>291</sup> Okorochoa, *Religious Conversion*, 261, 295.

<sup>292</sup> See for example, Ubah, ‘Religious Change’, 87-8; Salamone, ‘Igbo Values’, 34.

As indigenous movements with an emphasis on the Spirit, they mobilised neglected forces in the church and responded more effectively to consumer demands. They are important because they prepared the ground for Pentecostal infiltration into mission churches, influenced many civil war revivalists and neo-Pentecostal pioneers, and provided the Pentecostal backdrop to the Civil War Revival.

### 2.4.1 Typologies

New religious movements, of which AICs are a part, have captured the imagination of scholars from different disciplines. Since Sundkler's regional study in 1948, there has been a vast and complex array of literature both from within and outside the movement. The diversity and dynamic nature of these movements makes classification difficult. Walls reminds us that 'motion is of the essence of movements,' and sometimes they develop 'toward a classical type of Christian affirmation, sometimes away from it.'<sup>294</sup> Rigid typologies run the risk of being too complex or simply misleading, due to a tendency for making sweeping generalisations not sufficiently grounded in empirical data, or importing European categories not always familiar to the churches themselves. Hence, Turner advises us to think of a typology of 'tendencies and emphases,' rather than of individual religious movements.<sup>295</sup>

Various typologies have been attempted since Sundkler's two-fold classification: Ethiopian and Zionist.<sup>296</sup> Anthropologists and sociologists tend to focus on non-

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<sup>293</sup> Kalu, *Embattled Gods*, 324-26.

<sup>294</sup> Walls, *Missionary Movement*, 113.

<sup>295</sup> Turner, *Religious Innovation*, 80.

<sup>296</sup> Sundkler, *Bantu Prophets*, 53. For discussions on typology and proposals for alternative schemes, see Turner, 'Typology'; Turner, *Religious Innovation*, 8; Hackett, 'Enigma Variations'; Kalu, *Embattled Gods*, 287-306; Bryan Wilson, *Magic and Millennium. A Sociological Study of Religious Movements of*

religious criteria, such as acculturation,<sup>297</sup> or ‘response to the world,’<sup>298</sup> while mission-oriented and theologically concerned scholars tend to concentrate on which forms can be considered Christian, and how African responses to the gospel are shaped by local heritage and global flows.<sup>299</sup> In this section, I use a simple typology to navigate the territory, recognising that such categorisation does not do justice to their diversity. Social historians and anthropologists have shown the degree to which African religious movements are responsive to local forces, and should not be considered apart from popular culture.<sup>300</sup> Hence, I draw upon typologies derived from data collected in Nigeria, and particularly those devised by Hackett and Kalu.<sup>301</sup>

Two related criteria for analysis are used. The first is sociological, and focuses on the extent to which a group or movement is influenced by local or global forces and draws upon indigenous as opposed to imported sources.<sup>302</sup> All the movements I examine were locally instituted and to varying degrees made use of global resources, but some forged

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*Protest among Tribal and Third-World Peoples*, London: Heinemann, 1973, 18-26; Bennetta Jules-Rosette, ‘Tradition and Continuity in African Religions. The Case of New Religious Movements’, in Jacob K. Olupona (ed.), *African Traditional Religions in Contemporary Society*, New York: Paragon House, 1991, 150-51; Anderson, *African Reformation*, 10-22.

<sup>297</sup> For example, J. W. Fernandez, ‘African Religious Movements: Types and dynamics’, *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 2.4, 531-49; J. W. Fernandez, ‘African Religious Movements’, *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 7, 1978, 201-202. In anthropological discourse, acculturation is understood as a process whereby a foreign culture invades and dominates an existing culture, resulting in a new synthesis.

<sup>298</sup> Wilson, *Magic and the Millenium*, 18-26.

<sup>299</sup> For example, Turner, ‘Typology’, 1-34; Rosalind I. J. Hackett, *Religion in Calabar. The Religious Life and History of a Nigerian Town*, London: Mouton de Gruyter, 1989, 204; Hackett, ‘Enigma Variations’, 137-141; Kalu, *Embattled Gods*, 288-304.

<sup>300</sup> See for example, Terence O. Ranger and I. Kimambo, *The Historical Study of African Religion*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972; Ranger, ‘Religious Movements and Politics’. Fabian, ‘Theses’, 116-24, suggests that we should regard African religious movements as expressions of emerging popular culture, influenced by local and global processes, and interpret them as such.

<sup>301</sup> Hackett’s data is drawn mainly from her research among the Efik-Ibibio, southeastern Nigeria. See Hackett, *Religion in Calabar*. Kalu draws primarily upon empirical research within Igboland.

<sup>302</sup> This was one of Hackett’s criteria for classification. For Hackett, an African new religious movement is ‘an indigenously created religious organization stemming from social and religious encounter, and selecting and combining local and exogenous elements in diverse and dynamic ways’ (‘Enigma Variations’, 140).

formal links with overseas organisations. Thus, I distinguish between mission-related movements/churches and prayer houses. The second is theological, and focuses on relationship to the Bible and Christology. I follow Kalu by dividing prayer houses into two broad categories: evangelical and zionist.<sup>303</sup> Evangelical-type groups are Bible oriented, Christocentric, and opposed to traditional religious practices and ‘occult’ activity. Zionist-type groups tend to lack a clear Christological focus, and are more likely to incorporate rituals and symbols derived from inherited or imported sources other than the Bible. These indices are important because in revivalist and neo-Pentecostal rhetoric prayer houses were often demonised for misuse of the Bible, failure to preach the gospel, and incorporating traditional and/or imported ‘occult’ symbols and practices.

#### **2.4.2 Revival Movements and Pentecostal Churches**

Local initiatives divide broadly into two periods. From 1914 to 1939, a series of revivals, with Pentecostal overtones, swept through Igboland, coinciding with similar movements in Western Nigeria and the continent as a whole.<sup>304</sup> Several themes recur in these initiatives that are characteristic of revivals generally.<sup>305</sup> Firstly, there were elements of continuity and discontinuity with previous movements. Each new wave brought renewal to existing churches, often generating new theological emphases, and left traces of its influence once its charismatic impulses had subsided. Each movement contributed to the contextualisation of the gospel and the resacralisation of the religious

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<sup>303</sup> Kalu, *Embattled Gods*, 289, calls for a return to theological and biblical analysis of African new religious movements, to identify those groups that are a proper concern of church historiography and missiology. He identifies the ‘affirmation of Jesus Christ as Lord’ as the crucial factor that distinguishes Christian from non-Christian groups or movements. Evangelical- and zionist-type prayer houses are designated Christian. Others (messianic, revivalistic, vitalistic and nativistic) are non-Christian.

<sup>304</sup> Hastings, *History of African Christianity*, 68.

landscape. Secondly, they generally appealed to the margins of the church but were rejected by the centre, resulting in schisms, new denominations, and increased plurality. Finally, each movement was a response to local concerns, but was influenced by global forces.

The first wave of revival was associated with the prophetic figure Garrick Sokari Braide,<sup>306</sup> a member of the Anglican NDP in Rivers State. Turner describes it as the first Pentecostal movement in Nigeria,<sup>307</sup> though it had no links with global Pentecostalism. Local response was spectacular, mainly due to Braide's healing gifts and crusade against idolatry, 'a radical departure from the conversion by catechism approach of the established church.'<sup>308</sup> Braide's ministry appealed to the margins of the church but was rejected by the centre,<sup>309</sup> and in 1916, he and his followers broke with the Anglican Church. Though it was never his intention to start a new church, some of his followers formed the Christ Army Church.<sup>310</sup> In 1916, the Braide movement spread to southern Igboland, an area already influenced by mission churches, and the Christ

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<sup>305</sup> For a brief discussion of revival characteristics, see Fiedler, *Faith Missions*, 113-14.

<sup>306</sup> The main sources used here for the Garrick Braide movement are Kalu, *Embattled Gods*, 144-54; Tasié, 'Christian Awakening'; Frieder Ludwig, 'Elijah II. Radicalisation and Consolidation of the Garrick Braide Movement 1915-1918', *Journal of Religion in Africa*, 23, 1993, 296-317; A. W. Banfield, 'A Prophet in Iboland', *The Bible in the World*, London British and Foreign Bible Society, 12, July 1916, 137-38; Lamin Sanneh, *West African Christianity: The Religious Impact*, London: Hurst & Co., 1983, 182-84; Isichei, *Christianity in Africa*, 286-88.

<sup>307</sup> Turner, *Religious Innovation*, 2. On the other hand, Peel, *Religious Encounter*, 314, suggests that Pentecostalism first appeared in Nigeria in 1930-31, when the *Aladura* revival established links with the British Apostolic Church.

<sup>308</sup> Hanciles, 'Conversion and Social Change', 12. According to Sanneh, *West African Christianity*, 182, the number of baptised Christians in the NDP churches rose from 902 in 1909 to 11,694 in 1918, the year of Braide's death.

<sup>309</sup> For instance, Anglican Bishop Johnson initially welcomed the movement but later objected to Braide's faith-healing practices and mass baptisms, and the use of the title 'prophet' by his followers. Kalu, 'Third Response', 7, states that another reason for opposition was the threat posed by Braide to white control of the NDP.

<sup>310</sup> Between 1918 and 1921, Braide's followers numbered approximately 43,000, though these were split between three main factions: the Niger Delta Native Church, the Christ Army Church, and the Christ Army Church - Garrick Braide Connexion.

Army Church became Igboland's first prayer house, and a precursor of modern Igbo Pentecostalism.<sup>311</sup>

The Faith Tabernacle was the other precursor of modern Pentecostalism in Igboland, despite its anti-Pentecostal stance.<sup>312</sup> While it was a local initiative with no Western missionary involvement, its early progress in Nigeria shows the importance of external links. The denomination's origins were in the North American Holiness Movement,<sup>313</sup> and its subsequent spread to Nigeria occurred through literature and correspondence rather than missionary agents. Links were established independently with individuals in Western Nigeria and Eastern Nigeria.<sup>314</sup> Key actors in the east were E. T. Epelle, an Anglican NDP minister influenced by the Braide movement, and Elijah Obimba, an Igbo member of the NDP, based near Aba. The critical year was 1925, when Epelle joined Obimba to oversee the work of Faith Tabernacle in Igboland.<sup>315</sup> Though it remained a relatively small denomination in the east, Faith Tabernacle is important because it helped to introduce the 'faith alone' concept to the church in Eastern

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<sup>311</sup> Braide himself never entered Igboland. The movement produced many converts, especially in the Owerri area, but by the late 1920s it was a spent force, and a decade later only a few Christ Army Church congregations survived in Igboland, partly due to competition from other missions. However, its legacy has remained, and many of the movement's converts joined mission churches. During research I saw very few Christ Army Church congregations in Igboland.

<sup>312</sup> Kalu suggests that Faith Tabernacle provided the earlier charismatic 'flares' connected to the Braide Movement with Biblical moorings, holiness ethics, and other tenets of the evangelical faith movement, such as conversionism, premillennial eschatology, and faith-healing. Ogbu U. Kalu, 'Doing Mission through the Post Office: Naked Faith People of Igboland, 1920-1960', unpublished paper, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, n.d, 13-14.

<sup>313</sup> For Faith Tabernacle's origins in North America, see Kalu, 'Naked Faith People, 3-5; Sanneh, *West African Christianity*, 184-85; Hastings, *Church in Africa*, 514-17. Links with North America were established when a Yoruba Christian, David Odubanjo, entered into correspondence with Alexander Clark, Pastor of Faith Tabernacle in America, in 1919.

<sup>314</sup> For the origins of Faith Tabernacle in Western and Eastern Nigeria, see Kalu, 'Naked Faith People'; Peel, *Aladura*; Turner, *African Independent Church, Vol.1*; A. O. Iwuagu, 'The "Spiritual" Churches in the Eastern States of Nigeria', Ph.D. thesis, University of Ibadan, 1971, 126-41.

<sup>315</sup> Kalu, 'Naked Faith People', 9-11; Iwuagu, 'Churches', 139-67.

Nigeria.<sup>316</sup> It also had close connections with two mission-related churches that trace their origins in Igboland to the 1930s: the Apostolic Church and the Assemblies of God, both important Pentecostal influences during the Civil War Revival.

The Apostolic Church was the first denomination with global Pentecostal links to enter Igboland, and it has left its mark on the religious landscape. Not only was it one of the largest Pentecostal churches prior to the civil war, it also experienced a number of secessions.<sup>317</sup> Apostolic Church origins in the British Pentecostal movement are well documented,<sup>318</sup> as is its entry into Western Nigeria in 1931 through links established with the Nigerian Faith Tabernacle Church.<sup>319</sup> Its spread to Igboland was an indigenous venture, though British Apostolic missionaries played an active role. The church entered Igboland through local agents in 1931, but was properly established in 1932, when Pastor Albert Emetanjo was sent from Calabar to Aba, to gather up existing assemblies and form them into districts.<sup>320</sup> In November 1932, Apostolic missionaries Idris Vaughan and George Perfect visited Calabar and southern Igboland, following invitations from Faith Tabernacle leaders.<sup>321</sup>

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<sup>316</sup> Iwuagu, 'Churches', 126.

<sup>317</sup> Iwuagu, 'Churches', iv-v, refers to it as the Apostolic Church movement and suggests that after its spread to Eastern Nigeria, it 'broke into many schismatic movements.' However, some of these schisms occurred in Ibibioland, southeastern Nigeria.

<sup>318</sup> See for example James E. Worsfold, *The Origins of the Apostolic Church in Great Britain, with a Breviate of its Early Missionary Endeavours*, Julian Literature Trust: Wellington, New Zealand, 1991, 71-2, 258.

<sup>319</sup> Worsfold, *Origins*, 71-2, 258-75; T. N. Turnbull, *What God Hath Wrought. A Short History of the Apostolic Church*, Bradford, 1959, 72; I. J. Vaughan, *Nigeria. The Origins of Apostolic Church Pentecostalism, with Particular Reference to the Years 1931-52 together with some Personal Reminences of I. J. Vaughan*, n.publ., 1991; Isichei, *Christianity in Africa*, 280; Peel, *Aladura*.

<sup>320</sup> Apostle Dr. Monday Mboko Anyachor, *History of the Apostolic Church in Igboland*, Owerri: Ihem Davis Press Ltd, 1998, 12. Anyachor, the present Superintendent of the Igbo field of the Apostolic Church, kept a record of the work of the church in Igboland from 1932 (when he was converted) to 1994. According to Kalu, *Embattled Gods*, 170, the church was carried to Aba initially through Efik traders, possibly affected by the Calabar revival. Emetanjo later became Vaughan's guide and interpreter. See Vaughan, *Apostolic Church*, 91.

<sup>321</sup> Isichei, *Christianity in Africa*, 288; Vaughan, *Apostolic Church*, 39; Anyachor, *Apostolic Church*, 12.

Revival added impetus to Apostolic Church growth in Eastern Nigeria. A return visit to Calabar by Vaughan in 1933 coincided with a period of stress in the area caused by the fear of witchcraft. Vaughan's acceptance of the reality of witchcraft, in contrast to some mission church leaders, and his proclamation of Christ's power, appealed to local demands and resulted in the formation of new churches.<sup>322</sup> By 1938, the Apostolic Church in Igboland had grown to 13 districts with over 120 assemblies, and in 1940 Vaughan arrived as their first Missionary Superintendent.<sup>323</sup>

Two schisms in the late 1930s affected Apostolic Church progress in Igboland, both reactions against the dominance of non-Igbo leaders over local churches.<sup>324</sup> In 1941, a more serious schism in Western Nigeria over the use of medicine led to the formation of the Christ Apostolic Church and the subsequent shift in focus of Nigerian Apostolic Church work to the east.<sup>325</sup> Its initial reluctance to open schools also hindered its progress in Igboland, but by 1964, Apostolic Church membership had grown to around

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<sup>322</sup> Vaughan, *Apostolic Church Pentecostalism*, 42-50; Parry Selby, Letter to author, 14 April 2001. Selby was not an eyewitness of the revival, but he arrived in southeastern Nigeria in 1954 and gathered information about what happened.

<sup>323</sup> See Apostle Dr. Monday Mboko Anyachor, 'Welcome to Igbo Field of the Apostolic Church, Nigeria', May 1998, 1-2; Anyachor, *Apostolic Church*, 13-15; Vaughan, *Apostolic Church*, 94. At this stage, the main districts were Aba (22 congregations), Nbwasi (17), Oloko (14), Enugu (7), Umuahia (4), and Port Harcourt (5); and Igboland was divided into two sectors: Port Harcourt and Aba, each under the leadership of an apostle. By 1940, the church in Igboland had achieved Area status with Amumara as the administrative headquarters of the Area.

<sup>324</sup> The leaders of the two schisms were among the first Igbo Apostolic pastors. In 1937, J. W. Wankey left to form the Christ Apostolic Church Gospel Mission (or Apostolic Church of God). In 1939, J. Anyahuru, the first Igbo apostle, formed the True Apostolic Church, taking with him 75 assemblies in the Aba Division. In 1949, they merged to become the Apostolic Christian Church Mission. See Anyachor, *Apostolic Church*, 36-8; Sunday Chibuzo Chuta, 'Africans in the Christianization of Southern Igboland 1875-1950', Ph.D. thesis, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, 1986, 291-97.

<sup>325</sup> For more on this development, see Worsfold, *Origins*, 273-75; Sanneh, *West African Christianity*, 194-95; Peel, *Aladura*. Apostolics in Igboland did not entirely escape the effects of the schism. In 1953, the churches in the Asaba district joined the Christ Apostolic Church. See Anyachor, *Apostolic Church*, 48-9.

15,000,<sup>326</sup> though it remained a relatively minor presence compared to mainline mission churches. The Igbo field of the Apostolic Church continued under the supervision of British missionaries until 1980, except during the civil war when the incumbent Superintendent, G. S. Selby, was forced to leave.<sup>327</sup> It has retained the Faith Tabernacle emphasis on Biblicism, conversionism, and faith healing, and has added the Apostolic teaching on Holy Spirit baptism, and the five-fold ministries of apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers.

British Apostolic missionary S. G. Elton served as a link between the two major strands of intensive revivalist and Pentecostal activity in Nigeria (1914-1939 and 1967-1975).<sup>328</sup> Elton was an important influence during the Civil War Revival and an early mentor to Igbo neo-Pentecostal pioneers.<sup>329</sup> He began his missionary career in 1934, based in Ilesha, Western Nigeria, and in 1953, invited a team from the North American Latter Rain movement to conduct evangelistic campaigns across the south.<sup>330</sup> The delegation arrived via Ghana,<sup>331</sup> and their visit precipitated a fresh wave of Nigerian

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<sup>326</sup> Anyachor, 'Igbo Field', 2-3.

<sup>327</sup> In Selby's absence, Apostle Anyachor was appointed Superintendent of the Igbo field until 1972. He was reappointed in 1980, when Selby retired from the field. Anyachor, *Apostolic Church*, 72; G. S. Selby, Letter to the author, 14 April 2001.

<sup>328</sup> Kalu, 'Naked Faith People', 14.

<sup>329</sup> Kalu, 'Continuity in Change', 10; Kalu, *Embattled Gods*, 278; Kalu, 'Third Response', 7.

<sup>330</sup> The Latter Rain movement originated in Canada during the late 1940s, and was related to the 'Healing Revival' in North America associated with William Branham, T. L. Osborn, and Gordon Lindsay. For the Latter Rain movement, see R. Riss, 'The Latter Rain Movement of 1948', *Pneuma*, 4.1, Spring 1982, 35; R. Riss, *A Survey of 20th century Revival Movements in North America*, Peabody, Mass.: Hendricksons, 1988, 108; Blumhofer, *The Assemblies of God*, 53; Worsfold, *Origins*, 304; Peter Hocken, *Streams of Renewal. The Origins and Early Development of the Charismatic Movement in Great Britain*, Exeter: The Paternoster Press, 25-6.

<sup>331</sup> The Apostolic delegation included Thomas Wyatt, F. C. Poole (Superintendent of the Apostolic Church in the United States), and Adam McKeown, the brother of James McKeown, pioneer of the Church of Pentecost in Ghana. See Robert W. Wylie, 'Pioneers of Ghanaian Pentecostalism: Peter Anim and James McKeown', *Journal of Religion in Africa*, 6.2, 1974, 119; J. A. Hewitt, 'Thomas Wyatt', in Burgess, Alexander, and McGee (eds.), *Dictionary*, 906.

Pentecostal activity, though it remained relatively localised.<sup>332</sup> British Apostolic leaders were unhappy with Elton's initiative and recalled him. Subsequently, he returned to Nigeria as an independent missionary, representing American Pentecostal organisations and supported initially by the Latter Rain movement. This released him to work more widely across Nigeria and placed him in a position where he could later influence leaders of the Civil War Revival.<sup>333</sup>

The Assemblies of God (AG) Nigeria was another major Pentecostal influence during the revival.<sup>334</sup> Its origins and subsequent growth again show elements of continuity and rupture with previous movements, as well as the importance of local and extraneous influences. AG was the first Igbo-founded Pentecostal church, and like the Apostolic Church traces its origins in Igboland to the 1930s. It was a local initiative with roots in a revival that occurred in the southern Igbo townships of Umuahia and Port Harcourt, but later it established links with the North American Assemblies of God.<sup>335</sup> As with

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<sup>332</sup> Large healing crusades were held in Lagos, Ibadan, Ilesha, and other towns in Western Nigeria. Three members of the Latter Rain team, Fred Poole, Stanley Hammond, and Adam McKeown, also visited Igboland in 1953, where they held an evangelistic campaign at Nbawsi, hosted by the Apostolic Church. Yet its impact upon the Apostolic Church in Igboland was limited.

<sup>333</sup> Kalu, 'Naked Faith People', 14; Anyachor, *Apostolic Church*, 81; Anyachor, 'Igbo Field', 3; G.S. Selby, Letter to author, 14 April 2001.

<sup>334</sup> The main sources I use for the origins and growth of AG Nigeria are G. M. Alioha, *The Grain of Mustard Seed (The History of Assemblies of God, Nigeria)*, Aba: Assemblies of God Press, 1984 (orig. publ. 1975); R. I. Ebuade *et al.*, *The Growth of Assemblies of God in Nigeria*, Aba: Assemblies of God Press, 1989; J. Eziegbo *et al.*, *A Biography of Rev Dr. Matthew Obiayolam Ezeigbo*, Aba: Assemblies of God Press, n.d.; Kalu, *Embattled Gods*, 170-71; Kalu, 'Continuity in Change', 10; C. S. Ndubuisi, 'Fifty Years of Assemblies of God Mission in Igboland, 1930-80', Ph.D. thesis, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, 1992; Agbo Amechi Agbo, 'Historical Development of Revival and Revivalism in the Assemblies of God Nigeria', M.Th. thesis, Theological College of Northern Nigeria, 1999; Gary B. McGee, *This Gospel shall be Preached. A History and Theology of Assemblies of God Foreign Missions to 1959*, Springfield, Missouri: Gospel Publishing House, 1986; Everett A. Wilson, *Strategy of the Spirit. J. Philip Hogan and the Growth of the Assemblies of God Worldwide, 1960-1990*, Carlisle: Paternoster, 1997, 185-86.

<sup>335</sup> The General Council of the Assemblies of God (AG) in North America was formed to counter the extreme individualism in the Pentecostal movement, and to organise and assist Pentecostal mission activities in the aftermath of the Azusa Street revival. AG Nigeria became one of the strongest indigenous churches in their foreign missions programs. For more on AG's early history in North America, see Blumhofer, *American Pentecostalism*; Anderson, *Vision of the Disinherited*; Faupel,

other movements of renewal and revival, it was embraced by the margins but rejected by the centre. Early protagonists were lay members of Faith Tabernacle, who eventually left to form the Church of Jesus Christ, following opposition from their denominational leaders. Faith Tabernacle teaching on salvation, faith healing, and ethical rigorism appealed to the young revivalists, but their exposure to North American Pentecostal literature stimulated a quest for Holy Spirit baptism, which resulted in their rejection and resignation in August 1934. Within a month of their separation from Faith Tabernacle, they experienced ‘an outpouring of the Holy Spirit,’ which precipitated a fresh wave of evangelistic activity, resulting in rapid growth.<sup>336</sup> Meanwhile, they were actively pursuing links with overseas organisations and in 1939, affiliated with the North American Assemblies of God.<sup>337</sup> Assemblies of God Nigeria pursued a policy of indigenisation,<sup>338</sup> but prior to the Civil War Revival expanded slowly compared to other denominations,<sup>339</sup> due in part to an early reluctance to engage in social welfare projects and use the schools approach to evangelism. In 1961, Matthew Ezeigbo became the

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*Everlasting Gospel*; D. W. Dayton, *The Theological Roots of Pentecostalism*, Metuchen, N.J: The Scarecrow Press, 1987; Cerillo, ‘Origins’, 29-52; Hollenweger, *Pentecostals*, 33-40; McGee, *Gospel*.

<sup>336</sup> By December 1934, there were six Church of Jesus Christ congregations: Old Umuahia, Port Harcourt, Umuahia Ngwa, Umuoba, Okaiuga, and Ogwe. In 1935, two churches were planted in Enugu (the location of the present headquarters of AG Nigeria). Sometimes whole congregations joined them, as was the case with several Apostolic churches. By the late 1930s, AG Nigeria had moved beyond Igboland and planted churches in the Benin Province of Western Nigeria (1937), and the northern cities of Kafanchan, Kaduna, Zaria, and Kano (1938/39).

<sup>337</sup> A similar agreement was made with a group of Apostolic churches in southeastern Nigeria, who had made contact with AG North America independently, but this fell through due to allegations of misconduct. Consequently, the early headquarters of AG Nigeria was at Old Umuahia. AG missionary W. L. Shirer became Divisional Supervisor, and George Alioha, Assistant Divisional Supervisor.

<sup>338</sup> For AG missions strategy and implementation of indigenous church principles, see Gary B. McGee, ‘Assemblies of God Overseas Missions. Foundations for Recent Growth’, *Missiology: An International Review*, 16.4, October 1988, 427-38; McGee, *Gospel*, 195-99; Ebuade *et al.*, *Assemblies of God*, 105.

<sup>339</sup> AG Nigeria church growth is difficult to determine. According to Brierley, by 1961 AG Nigeria had established approximately 130 congregations, with a membership of 23,000. By 1965, this had increased to approximately 256 churches. Peter Brierley (ed.), *World Churches Handbook*, London: Christian Research, 1997, 630. But Turner, *Religious Innovation*, 127, estimates the membership in 1961 at closer to 60,000. Ndubuisi suggests that by 1964 there were 148 congregations in Igboland. Ndubuisi, ‘Assemblies of God Mission’, cited in Kalu, *Embattled Gods*, 171. Churches were planted in the Igbo townships of Aba (1943) and Onitsha (1956), the Western Nigerian cities of Ibadan (1948) and Lagos

first indigenous National Superintendent, and in 1964, the Nigerian District of the Assemblies of God Nigeria became an autonomous body.

### 2.4.3 Prayer Houses

A further wave of Pentecostal activity began in the 1940s and consisted of smaller groups, often associated with charismatic figures possessing healing and visionary gifts, and bearing a close resemblance to the Garrick Braide movement in terms of their focus on 'prophetism,' symbolic ritual, and lack of formal global connections. Some were imported from Western or south-eastern Nigeria; others grew directly out of Igbo soil. Again there were elements of continuity and discontinuity with previous movements, and influences from local and global forces. For instance, most that arose during the 1940s were related in some way to the Apostolic Church movement. But as they lacked any formal Western links, these groups generally took on more local colour in their quest to relate their indigenous heritage to the symbols and message of Christianity. They are important here because many civil war revivalists and neo-Pentecostals patronised them during the 1960s, when dual allegiance to mission church and prayer house was relatively common.<sup>340</sup>

In contrast to Western and south-eastern Nigeria,<sup>341</sup> prayer houses were of relatively minor importance in Igboland prior to the 1960s and the civil war.<sup>342</sup> This was partly

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(1962/3), and the Middle Belt and Northern townships of Jos (1943), Lafia, Sokoto, Gusau, Maiduguri, and Gyom, among others.

<sup>340</sup> See Bolton, *Glory*, 17, 64.

<sup>341</sup> For the progress of the *Aladura* movement in Western Nigeria see Peel, *Aladura*; Turner, *African Independent Church, Vol. I*. An important study of indigenous churches in southeastern Nigeria is Kenneth Enang, *Salvation in A Nigerian Background: Its Concepts and Articulation in the Annang Independent Churches*, Berlin: Verlag von Dietrich Reimer, 1979. See also Friday Mbon, 'The Social Impact of Nigeria's New Religious Movements', in J. A. Beckford (ed.), *New Religious Movements and Rapid Social Change*, London: Sage, 1986, 177-196. None of the prayer houses (or 'new religious movements') mentioned by Mbon had their provenance within Igboland.

due to Igbo loyalty to mission churches and the relative strength of Anglican and Roman Catholic churches.<sup>343</sup> As Kalu notes, many Igbos believed that the church of the white missionaries was the ‘real thing.’<sup>344</sup> It was only when they had failed to meet consumer demands and nationalist fervour had removed the constraints to patronising alternatives that prayer houses flourished.<sup>345</sup> Mission church members tended to disparage them, regarding them as superstitious and unsophisticated, especially those imported from Western Nigeria.<sup>346</sup> This is reflected in the Igbo saying, *Ada eji anya di mma eje uka ekpere* (Igbo: No sane or clear-minded person goes to prayer houses).<sup>347</sup> Those who attended often acted surreptitiously, hiding their white garments until they had arrived at the worship-ground.<sup>348</sup>

I begin with Igbo-founded prayer houses. During the late 1930s and 1940s, most were associated with the Apostolic Church movement,<sup>349</sup> rather than AG, possibly because of the latter’s Igbo roots, its relative freedom from missionary control, and promotion of indigenous church principles, which made secession less likely. As noted, two schisms

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<sup>342</sup> Isichei, *Christianity in Africa*, 291; Kalu, *Embattled Gods*, 269, 321; Anyaegbu, ‘Pentecostal/Evangelical’, 17; Martina Ekwueme, ‘Independency in Igbo Historiography’, M.A. thesis, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, 1989, 50. Turner, *African Independent Church, Vol. 1*, 8, mentions at least 140 distinct religious bodies active in Eastern Nigeria during the 1960s, though many were small ‘healing homes’ and located in the southeast rather than Igboland. In 1972, Epelle noted that 57 African initiated denominations had been identified in Eastern Nigeria, but most of these originated and prospered in Ibibioland, south-eastern Nigeria. E. M. T. Epelle, ‘The Sects’, *West African Religion*, nos. 13-14, Sept-Dec 1972, 43-4. According to Anyaegbu, ‘Pentecostal/Evangelical’, 17, until the 1960s, there were only three prayer houses active in North-Western Igboland: Christ Holy Church, Ufuma prayer house, and the Christ Apostolic Church. For prayer houses in Igboland before 1967, see Appendix 2.1.

<sup>343</sup> OI, Stephen Okafor, 16.12.98, London. See also Hackett, *Religion in Calabar*, 119, who mentions the major Igbo presence in Calabar from the 1940s to the civil war, and notes the Igbo loyalty for the two ‘traditional’ Igbo churches - Anglican and Catholic.

<sup>344</sup> Kalu, *Embattled Gods*, 321.

<sup>345</sup> Kalu, ‘Color and Conversion’, 70.

<sup>346</sup> Isichei, *Christianity in Africa*, 291; Agu, *Secularization in Igboland*, 401; Ikeobi, ‘Catholic Response’, 266; OI, Chris Alagbu, 3.5.00, Enugu.

<sup>347</sup> Quoted in Achunike, ‘Igbo Response to Christianity’, 105-6.

<sup>348</sup> Kalu, *Embattled Gods*, 269; OI, Chris Alagbu, 3.5.00, Enugu.

occurred in the late 1930s, resulting in the formation of the Christ Apostolic Church Gospel Mission (1937) and True Apostolic Church (1938). During the 1940s, there were at least two further secessions: Abosso Apostolic Faith Church<sup>350</sup> and St. Joseph's Chosen Church of God,<sup>351</sup> both started by former Igbo Apostolic Church members.

Christ Holy Church, founded in 1947 by the late Agnes Okoh, also had links with the Apostolic Church movement.<sup>352</sup> It is currently one of the largest Igbo-founded prayer houses, and a member of the Organisation of African Instituted Churches (OAIC).<sup>353</sup> It was a local initiative, but during its early history was influenced by extraneous sources. Agnes Okoh (later the Holy Prophetess *Odozi-Obodo*) claimed a call to ministry through divine revelation after being healed from a long-standing illness. In 1947, she opened a prayer house in Onitsha, North-Western Igboland, and gained a large following due to her healing and prophetic gifts.<sup>354</sup> After a visit from a group attached to the Christ Apostolic Church, Western Nigeria, she called her prayer house Christ Apostolic Church *Odozi Obodo*,<sup>355</sup> and in the early 1970s it was registered as Christ Holy Church. It fits the profile of Kalu's evangelical-type prayer house due to its strong

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<sup>349</sup> For a detailed examination of prayer houses linked to the Apostolic Church movement, see Iwuagu, 'Churches', chapters 12-15.

<sup>350</sup> Abosso Apostolic Faith Church was founded in 1941 by the late Daniel Ejeofor. Members wear white garments during communal worship. In 1993/94, there was a schism resulting in the formation of Divine Abosso Apostolic Faith Church. OI, B. O. Ndumele, 11.01.02, Umuahia.

<sup>351</sup> St. Joseph's Chosen Church of God was founded by the late Apostle Joseph Ikechukwu in 1947. Initially he called his church the Apostolic Chosen Church of God. St. Joseph's Chosen Church of God has a strong evangelistic emphasis, and uses 'holy water' in its healing rituals. OI, Godwin Ikwunze, 8.10.01, Umuahia; Anyachor, *Apostolic Church*, 69. See Plate 1.4.

<sup>352</sup> Information on Christ Holy Church is based on interviews (N. O. Umeh and Nicholas Udemba), personal observation, and church documents.

<sup>353</sup> In 2001, Christ Holy Church claimed to have 720 branches across Nigeria, and has recently spread to Ghana. *Glad News Magazine. Publication of Christ Holy Church*, 2001, 1.

<sup>354</sup> Her predictions concerning the Nigerian civil war have become part of the church's official history. Apparently she predicted both its advent and ending. *Glad News Magazine. Publication of Christ Holy Church*, 7, 9.

<sup>355</sup> As opposed to Christ Apostolic Church Babalola (Western Nigeria).

Christological and evangelistic emphasis. Christ Holy Church describes itself as a Pentecostal, spiritual, and evangelical church, upholds the Bible as the word of God, and in its mission statement claims to ‘worship the triune God in holiness . . . and spread the good news of our Lord Jesus across borders, race and cultures urgently . . . till Jesus Christ returns again.’<sup>356</sup> Though it has undergone changes, including the introduction of modern musical instruments, the church still uses ‘holy water’ for healing, and ministers wear white garments.

During the 1950s, other Igbo-founded prayer houses emerged.<sup>357</sup> Perhaps the most popular was the Ufuma Practical Prayer Band (UPPB), which had important links to the Civil War Revival.<sup>358</sup> Established in 1958 as a fellowship affiliated to the Anglican Church, UPPB developed around the ministry of a prophetess called Madame Nwokolo, and its popularity rested upon her apparent healing ministry and the group’s strong interdenominational emphasis.<sup>359</sup> Since the 1970s, it has become an independent body with branches throughout Nigeria. UPPB fits the profile of Kalu’s zionist-type prayer

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<sup>356</sup> *Glad News. Publication of Christ Holy Church*, 4.

<sup>357</sup> These included Christ Apostle Church - *Onu Uzo Ndu* (The Gate of Life), a breakaway from the Christ Army Church in 1953; Holy Chapel of Israel Church; and True Church of God (1953). See Iwuagwu, ‘Churches’; Nathaniel Ndiokwere, *Prophecy and Revolution: The Role of Prophets in the Independent African Churches and in Biblical Tradition*, London: SPCK, 1981 64-71; Richard T. Curley, ‘Dreams of Power: Social Process in a West African Religious Movement’, *Africa*, 53.3, 1983, 20-37.

<sup>358</sup> Several key figures of the Civil War Revival, including Stephen Okafor, Raphael Okafor, and Arthur Oruizu, were formerly members of UPPB. The main written sources used for UPPB’s history are David C. Okeke, ‘Report: Ufuma Praying Band’, 1972 (Harold Turner Collection); V. A. Nwosu, *Prayer Houses and Faith Healing*, n.publ., 1971 (Harold Turner Collection). Okeke and Nwosu were members of the Anglican and Roman Catholic Churches respectively, and both visited Ufuma as observers. Other written sources included Ilogu, *Ibo Culture*, 60-1; Ikeobi, ‘Catholic Response’, 266-67; Augustine O. Iwuagwu, ‘The Healing Ministry in the Church in Nigeria’, *West African Religion*, 17.1, 1976, 45-54; Christopher I. Ejizu,, ‘Dialogue at the Depth-Level. Inculturation of Prayer in the Nigerian Church’, *Neue Zeitschrift für Missionswissenschaft*, 46.1, 1990, 32. I also interviewed several ex-members of UPPB, including Stephen Okafor and Raphael Okafor.

<sup>359</sup> UPPB’s interdenominational emphasis meant that initially it was endorsed by the Anglican Church and received official approval from Archbishop Patterson. Madame Nwokolo and her husband were active members of Holy Trinity Anglican Church (Ufuma), but UPPB attracted both Protestants and Roman Catholics, and by 1972, had established approximately 30 branches.

house due to the ritual nature of its liturgy (which included fasting, the use of candles, ‘holy water’, and oil for healing), its lack of a clear Christological focus, and its reluctance to engage in evangelistic activity.

During the 1950s, we also see the emergence of the first of many Igbo-founded sabbatarian groups, the Christ Healing Sabbath Mission, founded in 1956 by Mark Onuabichi.<sup>360</sup> These prayer houses vary considerably, ranging from those that incorporate traditional practices, such as ancestor worship and animal sacrifices, to those with a more Christological focus. Their roots in Igboland go back to Dede Ekeke Lolo, who was briefly associated with the Garrick Braide movement.<sup>361</sup> During the 1960s, they multiplied and diversified,<sup>362</sup> attracting clientele from mainline churches, including some who subsequently became involved in the Civil War Revival.<sup>363</sup>

Prayer houses from Western Nigeria arrived in Igboland in the 1940s, but did not become popular until the 1960s. Initially they attracted non-indigenes, but later were patronised by Igbos, dissatisfied with mission church spirituality.<sup>364</sup> Yoruba

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<sup>360</sup> For more on the sabbatarian prayer houses in Igboland, see Anyaegbu, ‘Sabbatharianism?’, Kalu, *Embattled Gods*, 298-303.

<sup>361</sup> Lolo was mentor to a group of a young men, who later became the founders of different sabbath missions. One of these was Mark Onuabichi, who carried the movement into North-West Igboland. Among Onuabichi’s protégées was Michael Amakeze, founder of Holy Sabbath of Christ the King Mission, the first zionist-type sabbatarian prayer house in Igboland. Anyaegbu, ‘Sabbatharianism’, 85-90; Kalu, *Embattled Gods*, 299-300; PC, unidentified member, Holy Sabbath of Christ the King Mission, Enugu, 26.5.00.

<sup>362</sup> Ikenga R. A. Ozigboh, ‘A Century of New Religious Movements in Nigeria, 1888-1990’, unpublished paper, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, n.d., 5.

<sup>363</sup> For example, Frances Lawjua Bolton and her sister briefly attended the Holy Sabbath of Christ the King Mission prior to becoming involved in the revival. Bolton, *Glory*, 52-3

<sup>364</sup> Nwanunobi, ‘Sects’, 120-21. Okorochoa, *Religious Conversion*, 239-40, refers to some well-educated Igbos, who opened a branch of the Cherubim and Seraphim Society during the early 1960s, because they felt the local mission churches lacked power to solve their problems. One informant told me that when he joined the Cherubim and Seraphim Society in Enugu after the war all its members were Igbo. OI, Mike C. Okoye, 2.9.01, Jos.

immigrants or Igbos who had lived in the West introduced them, and they were more successful in urban areas such as Aba and Owerri, where there were a large proportion of non-indigenes.<sup>365</sup> Rural areas were usually more resistant to innovations. The first to arrive was the Cherubim and Seraphim Society, introduced in 1944 by a Yoruba woman called Deborah Phillips.<sup>366</sup> The Christ Apostolic Church followed in 1953,<sup>367</sup> and the Church of the Lord (*Aladura*) in 1956.<sup>368</sup> Their initial unpopularity was partly due to their roots in Yoruba culture and domination by non-indigenes.<sup>369</sup> However, as with other prayer houses, it was also due to Igbo loyalty to mission churches.

#### 2.4.4 Protest Movements or Mission Churches?

These local initiatives mobilised neglected forces by providing space for women and young people to participate in ministry. They also alleviated the dilemma of dual allegiance to church and traditional cult by responding more effectively to consumer demands.<sup>370</sup> To the extent that they challenged the Enlightenment assumptions of mission churches and resisted the secularising forces of modernity associated with colonialists and missionaries, they were religious protest movements.<sup>371</sup> But by

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<sup>365</sup> Horton and Peel, 'Conversion', 493; Nwanunobi, 'Sects', 122, 125; Kalu, *Embattled Gods*, 291.

<sup>366</sup> Kalu, *Embattled Gods*, 170, 291; Chuta, 'Christianization of Southern Igboland', 302-303. Cherubim and Seraphim Society came to Aba in 1944 and Owerri in 1956. DomNwachukwu, *Igbo*, 66. Writing in 1972, Epelle suggests that the Cherubim and Seraphim was the largest of the 'sects' in Igboland ('Sects', 43-51).

<sup>367</sup> Kalu, *Embattled Gods*, 104; OI, Innocent Nwani, 27.5.00, Enugu. An Igbo man called O. N. Godwin brought Christ Apostolic Church to Igboland. In 1979, he left Christ Apostolic Church to form Christ Ascension Church, a large Pentecostal denomination with headquarters in Enugu. See Plate 9.4.

<sup>368</sup> Turner, *African Independent Church, Vol. 1*, 82-7. According to Turner, Church of the Lord (*Aladura*) was started in Aba by an Igbo pastor and two Yorubas, who had belonged to the church in Western Nigeria. Subsequently, branches were established in Port Harcourt and Enugu.

<sup>369</sup> *Ibid.*, 87-8. Turner suggests that one reason for their unpopularity was their centralised, authoritarian leadership styles, which corresponded with Yoruba traditional society and conflicted with Igbo democratic culture.

<sup>370</sup> Kalu, 'Continuity in Change', 4.

<sup>371</sup> Protest or resistance theories dominated early literature on African religious innovation. Some scholars argued that AICs were responding to socio-political oppression associated with colonialism. See for example, Andersson, *Messianic Popular Movements*, who maintained that AICs in the Congo were

focussing solely on reaction to the limitations of foreign missions we fail to appreciate the innovations and creativity of local agents whose primary motivation was to respond to the gospel and engage in mission activity during moments of individual and collective crisis in ways appropriate to local culture. Many of these initiatives were ‘mission churches’ rather than ‘protest movements,’ as Daneel has noted of Shona AICs in Zimbabwe,<sup>372</sup> and their distinctive spirituality developed as participants read their Bibles through cultural lenses and responded to consumer demands in a situation of rapid social change and an atmosphere of heightened spiritual and evangelistic fervour due to the influence of the Spirit. During the period 1914 to 1939 in particular, Igbo initiatives were primarily movements of conversion rather than secession, and were attempts to ‘reproduce missionary Christianity rather than to reject it,’ as Hastings has noted of AICs in general.<sup>373</sup> Thus they not only mobilised neglected forces, they effectively enculturated the gospel in Igbo soil, and prepared the ground for Pentecostal infiltration of mainline churches in the 1970s by their presentation of charismatic experiences, such as healing,<sup>374</sup> dreams, and visions, as a normal feature of corporate church life.<sup>375</sup> In many cases, they continued the iconoclastic strategy and maintained

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evidence of African desire for independence. Others argued that they were movements of religious protest, and in particular a reaction to mission church spirituality. See Barrett, *Schism*; John S. Pobee & Gabriel Ositelu II, *African Initiatives in Christianity: The Growth, Gifts and Diversities of Indigenous African Churches - A Challenge to the Ecumenical Movement*, Geneva: WCC, 1998, 3. For critiques of religious protest theories, see Hastings, *History of Christianity in Africa*, 69-70; Anderson, *African Reformation*, 29, 33-34; M. L. Daneel, *Quest for Belonging: Introduction to a Study of African Independent Churches*, Gweru: Mambo Press, 1987, 99; M. L. Daneel, ‘African Initiated Churches in Southern Africa: Protest Movements or Mission Churches’, paper presented at the Oxford Consultation. Christian Expansions in the Twentieth-Century Non-Western World, Currents in World Christianity Project, St Catherine’s College, Oxford, July 14<sup>th</sup> -17th 1999, 15.

<sup>372</sup> Daneel, ‘Mission Churches’, 15-6.

<sup>373</sup> Hastings, *Church in Africa*, 531.

<sup>374</sup> Hastings, *History of African Christianity*, 72, regards the main motivation of AICs as the ‘establishment of accessible rites of healing with a Christian reference and within a caring community by gifted and spiritual individuals claiming an initiative effectively denied them in the older churches.’ See also Cox, *Fire from Heaven*, 247.

<sup>375</sup> Droogers refers to this as the ‘normalisation of religious experience,’ the ‘acceptance of views and practices initially considered abnormal as normal.’ He suggests that Pentecostalism makes possible the

the strong ethical stance of the early missionaries. This was especially the case with evangelical mission-oriented movements such as the Braidists, Apostolic Church, and Assemblies of God, though more recent prayer houses like Christ Holy Church and St. Joseph's Chosen Church of God adopted a similar posture.<sup>376</sup>

However, in Igbo evangelical parlance other prayer houses were less discriminating in their approach to traditional allegiances and popular culture, creating hybrid forms of spirituality that bore little resemblance to biblical Christianity.<sup>377</sup> Turner refers to the 'pagan' features of some Nigerian independent churches, which included a 'subordinate cult of angels' and employment of 'mystic words of power.'<sup>378</sup> Some of these rituals, which included the use of candles, incense, incantations, and purification rites, had their origins in traditional piety and extraneous 'occult' literature.<sup>379</sup> This was one reason why many Igbo Christians deserted zionist-type prayer houses in the 1970s, as we see in chapter three.

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normalisation of healing, prophecy, dreams, and visions in Christian worship. André Droogers, 'The Normalisation of Religious Experience: Healing, Prophecy, Dreams, and Visions', in Poewe (ed.), *Charismatic Christianity*, 33.

<sup>376</sup> Kalu, 'Third Response', 10; Ozigboh, 'New Religious Movements', 9; Ebuade *et al.*, *Assemblies of God, Nigeria*, 31; Turner, *Religious Innovation*, 122; Anyachor, *Apostolic Church*, 16, 38; *Glad News*, 5-6.

<sup>377</sup> See for example, Bolton, *Glory*, Kalu, *Embattled Gods*, 322.

<sup>378</sup> Turner, *Religious Innovation*, 170. A letter co-written by Igbo revivalists Stephen Okafor, Raphael Okafor, and Arthur Oruizu (all former members of UPPB) outlines what in their opinion were some common prayer house activities: the use of candles during prayer and deliverance; animal sacrifices to cleanse from 'sin;' the employment of visions, incantations, and palmistry; the use of 'occult' and 'mystic' books; and sexual immorality (often involving the prophet). See Stephen Okafor, Raphael Okafor, and Arthur Oruizu, Letter to SU Executive Committee (Enugu), 1970, quoted in Bolton, *Glory*, 11-20.

<sup>379</sup> Bolton, *Glory*, 9; Okafor, Okafor, and Oruizu, Letter to SU Executive Committee, quoted in Bolton, *Glory*, 12, 14. In a letter written soon after the war, Stephen Okafor accuses UPPB of 'unintentionally practicing occultism.' Stephen Okafor, Letter to Bill Roberts, early 1970. However, in a recent interview, he denied that it was an occult group. OI, Stephen Okafor, 16.12.98, London. Another informant told me that while he was a member of Cherubim and Seraphim Society in Enugu after the

## 2.5 Religious Culture in the 1960s

By the 1960s, the charismatic impulses of early Igbo revival movements had waned and the churches they generated had declined in Pentecostal vigour, resulting in a loss of democratic potential and missionary fervour. Both the Apostolic Church and Assemblies of God were a relatively minor presence compared to the mainline churches.<sup>380</sup>

In contrast, prayer houses expanded rapidly, initially as an urban phenomenon.<sup>381</sup> The stresses associated with urbanisation and unemployment stimulated a quest for practical solutions to current dilemmas, making the problem solving approach of the prayer houses appealing. And sometimes founding a ‘church’ solved the problem of unemployment.<sup>382</sup> But for some prayer houses, this pragmatic emphasis was also part of their undoing as clientele were dominated by those motivated by a search for practical solutions rather than a commitment to membership. Dual allegiance to mission church and prayer house was never a satisfactory state of affairs. Resistance to globalising and modernising influences also detracted from their appeal, especially among educated upwardly-mobile youth in post-colonial Nigeria.

However, two prayer houses, started during the 1960s, later had important links to the Civil War Revival, and consequently attracted a large membership. Both founders,

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war, the group used ‘occultic techniques’ derived from the *Sixth and Seventh Books of Moses*. OI, Mike C. Okoye, 2.9.01, Jos.

<sup>380</sup> Ndubuisi, ‘Assemblies of God Mission’, xii-xiii, states that the growth of AG Nigeria during the period 1970 to 1984 was far greater than during the period 1943 to 1969. Of course, this was partly due to rapid population growth, which favoured church expansion.

<sup>381</sup> Kalu, *Embattled Gods*, 321; Isichei, *Christianity in Africa*, 291; Nwanunobi, ‘Sects’, 120.

<sup>382</sup> Isichei, *Christianity in Africa*, 290.

Victor Onuigbo and Godson Ogbansiegbe, were former mission church members,<sup>383</sup> but stood firmly in the tradition of other Igbo prophetic figures, although their churches fit the profile of Kalu's evangelical-type prayer house. Onuigbo's call to ministry occurred through a series of visionary and auditory experiences, and in 1966 he started the Holy Church of God in Enugu, a 'white garment' church with an emphasis on prophecy and healing. Onuigbo subsequently became involved in the revival, and his church underwent a metamorphosis.<sup>384</sup> Ogbansiegbe founded the Christian Fellowship Group in 1967. His life story describes his call to start a new church through an audible voice and after a long illness. Subsequently, his ministry as an itinerant evangelist took him all over Nigeria, and he became a popular preacher during the Civil War Revival. For a while, Christian Fellowship Group was one of the largest churches in Aba.<sup>385</sup>

The extent to which Igbos had abandoned traditional religion and embraced Christianity by the 1960s is difficult to determine due to a lack of consistent church records following the civil war.<sup>386</sup> Missionary historiography, and sometimes Igbo scholarship,<sup>387</sup> painted a picture of the triumphant conquest of Igboland by Christian agents and the defeat of Igbo gods, especially during the period 1901 to 1961. Popular

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<sup>383</sup> Victor Onuigbo was brought up in an Anglican family. The late Godson Ogbansiegbe was a former Methodist.

<sup>384</sup> OI, Victor Onuigbo, 1.5.00, Enugu; OI, Amaechi Nwachukwu, 6.6.00, Enugu. Later Onuigbo changed the name of the church to Victory Christian Mission, and since the 1970s it has become a large Pentecostal denomination, similar to Igbo NPCs. For a photograph of Onuigbo, see Plate 9.5.

<sup>385</sup> Rev. Godson C. D. Ogbansiegbe, *The Manual of the Christian Fellowship Group*, n.publ., n.d; PC, J. D. C. Ogbansiegbe, 12.10.01, Aba. For a photograph of CFG, see Plate 1.3.

<sup>386</sup> Many records were destroyed during the war. Kalu, *Embattled Gods*, 313.

<sup>387</sup> See Ubah, 'Religious Change', 85, who asserts that by 1960 'only a small number of the people born since about 1920 openly professed Igbo traditional religion'; and Ejizu, 'Endurance of Conviction', 134, who states that 'on any simple head count, most Igbo people will claim to be baptised Christians. . .' See also Isichei, 'Igbo Response', 212. More recently, Isichei has stated that 'statistics give part of the answer, suggesting that many though not all Igbos have become Christians, though there is a staunch rearguard of elderly traditionalists. . . The extent of the Christianisation of Igboland is a question of depth

literature and oral evidence provide a more nuanced account. Novels are useful sources of information for social historians, and despite the effects of distorted lenses novelists are sensitive observers of society. A major interest of Igbo novelists has been the clash between Christianity and Igbo culture. For instance, Achebe identifies three distinct groups during the 1950s: those who had rejected Christianity and remained committed to inherited beliefs; those who had embraced Christianity; and those in urban settings who appeared indifferent to religion and spirituality. The important distinction for Achebe is between religious (Christians or traditionalists) and non-religious people.<sup>388</sup> Okorocho's oral material suggests the continuing presence of Igbo traditionalists, the strong influence of *dibia-afa*, and the persistence of traditional religious practices and values among Igbo Christians.<sup>389</sup> My research also indicates that traditional religious practitioners still exercised significant influence in urban and rural communities during the 1960s, though relatively few Igbos defined themselves exclusively as traditionalists without any church affiliation.<sup>390</sup> Out of 79 former revivalists contacted, only five (6.3 %) said that one or both of their parents were traditionalists with no church affiliation, a further six (7.6 %) said their parents attended church *and* engaged in traditional religious practices, while 36 (45.6 %) claimed to have had no personal experience of traditional religion. These figures should be treated with caution, due to the size of the sample, and because a significant proportion of respondents did not state whether or not they had engaged in traditional religious practices. Out of 11 written conversion testimonies produced during the war, only one (9 %) described his parents as 'idol

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and sincerity, as well as of numbers' (*Igbo people*, 183). Isichei is a British scholar (married to an Igbo), who lived for many years in Nigeria.

<sup>388</sup> Chinua Achebe, *No Longer at Ease*, London: Heinemann, 1980.

<sup>389</sup> Okorocho, *Religious Conversion*, 133-40, 154, 274.

worshippers,' and two (18 %) admitted having participated in traditional religious practices.<sup>391</sup>

According to informants, *dibia-afa* operated mainly in villages,<sup>392</sup> and Igbos patronised them to achieve certain ends, such as protection from their enemies,<sup>393</sup> the achievement of success, healing,<sup>394</sup> and the acquisition of children. Rural communities continued to make covenants with a variety of deities. For instance, one revivalist recalled that each New Year members of his village would renew their covenant with the local deity.<sup>395</sup> Another informant, the grandson of the local chief priest, regularly participated in traditional practices prior to becoming born-again.<sup>396</sup> There was also widespread belief in witchcraft and evil spirits,<sup>397</sup> including 'mami-wata' spirits<sup>398</sup> and *ogbanje*,<sup>399</sup> both important sources of misfortune in Igbo cosmology.

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<sup>390</sup> This is based largely on oral testimonies from former revivalists. See especially Onugha's personal reminiscence (Appendix 4.1, paragraphs 1, 5 & 6). See also OI, Rufus Ogbonna, Udobata Onunwa, John Onuora, Nnenna Chukwuma.

<sup>391</sup> One informant told me that many parents of SU members attended church and engaged in traditional religious practices. OI, Udobata Onunwe, 23.3.01, Birmingham.

<sup>392</sup> However, some members of urban associations or clan unions continued to practice traditional religion, and *dibia-afa* operated in urban areas. OI, Udobata Onunwa, 25.1.01, Birmingham.

<sup>393</sup> Written testimonies, Sammy Onwitalu, Benjamin Onwochei, 1969. Both Onwitalu and Onwochei were taken by their parents to *dibia* as a precautionary measure prior to entering secondary school.

<sup>394</sup> OI, Benjamin Ikedinobi and Nnenna Chukwuma.

<sup>395</sup> Uchenna Emezue, 'New Year's Victory', written testimony, 1969 (Appendix 4.5.1). Apparently, members of the local Methodist church, including Emezue's father, participated in this traditional ceremony. OI, Samson Onyeoziri, 10.10.01, Umuahia.

<sup>396</sup> OI, Samson Onwubiko, 10.10.01, Umuahia.

<sup>397</sup> OI, Benjamin Ikedinobi and Nnenna Chukwuma.

<sup>398</sup> According to Bastion, 'mami wata' is a water spirit, which 'afflicts her victims in a most "modern" way: promising them riches (like fine automobiles, wristwatches and even computers) but usually giving them disease and death when they transgress one of her prohibitions.' M. L. Bastion, 'Married in the Water: Spirit Kin and other Afflictions of Modernity in Southeastern Nigeria', *Journal of Religion in Africa*, 27.2, 1997, 123-24. Novelist Chukwuemeka Ike refers to the continuing belief in 'mami-wata' spirits during the 1960s within Onitsha, adjacent to the River Niger. Chukwuemeka Ike, *Sunset at Dawn*, Glasgow: Williams Collins and Co, 1976, 110-111. For more on 'mami-wata' spirits, see Chinonyelu Moses Ugwu, *Healing in the Nigerian Church. A Pastoral-Psychological Exploration*, Bern: Peter Lang, 1998, 145-48.

<sup>399</sup> Within Igbo society, *Ogbanje* (returning children) are one of the most feared afflictions believed to be caused by evil spirits. According to Bastion, they are spirits who 'manifest themselves in human flesh by taking over or causing a pregnancy and finally suffer themselves to be born into the world of human

Another popular strand of Igbo spirituality during the 1960s included various groups that drew heavily upon a tradition of secret knowledge and mysticism contained in popular literature imported from overseas.<sup>400</sup> Hackett labels them ‘spiritual science movements’ and ‘neo-primal’ groups, and notes the influence of imported organisations such as the Rosicrucians (AMORC) and the Grail Movement, both active in Nigeria from the 1920s.<sup>401</sup> Their spirituality is rooted in traditional religion but with a modern, up-to-date face, well suited to a post-colonial context, and is a reflection of the widening horizons of many Nigerians.<sup>402</sup> Groups that were popular in Igboland during the 1960s included the Rosicrucians, Freemasonry, and Ogboni Fraternity.<sup>403</sup>

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beings’ (‘Married in the Water’, 118). For more on the concept of *Ogbanje* and its continuing influence within Igbo society, see Okorochoa, *Religious Conversion*, 174-75, 272; E. Ilogu, ‘Christ Healing Church - A Study of the Sociology of one Independent African Church’, *West African Religion*, 8, July 1970, 13, 16; Ugwu, *Healing*, 145, 159-86; Isichei, *Igbo People*, 26.

<sup>400</sup> Examples of imported ‘occult’ literature include the *Gospel of Thomas* and the *Sixth and Seventh Books of Moses*. During field research in Enugu, I came across a shop called the ‘Spiritual Bookshop’, which was selling an assortment of ‘occult’ literature (including the *Sixth and Seventh Books of Moses*), incense and ‘medicines.’ The *Sixth and Seventh Books of Moses* is a collection of spells and incantations intended to conjure up spirits.

<sup>401</sup> Hackett, ‘Enigma Variations’, 135-139. See also Turner, *Religious Innovation*, 172; Isichei, *Christianity in Africa*, 295; Okorochoa, *Religious Conversion*, 288; Kalu, *Embattled Gods*, 292-93. Many of these groups have arrived in Nigeria since the civil war (through Nigerians travelling abroad, missionary activity, or literature), but Rosicrucianism, Freemasonry, and the Ogboni Fraternity were popular in the 1960s and earlier. Founders of indigenous spiritual science movements have usually been members of imported groups, established in Nigeria since 1925. See Hackett, ‘Enigma Variations’, 136; Isichei, *Christianity in Africa*, 295.

<sup>402</sup> Hackett, ‘Enigma Variations’, 139.

<sup>403</sup> Bolton, *Glory*, 6; Augustine Nwodika, ‘The Relationship of the Movement with the Churches in the Seventies’, RSC, 29.4.00, Enugu (Appendix 4.7.1, paragraph 4); OI, Ken Okeke, 17.12.98, London. Okeke told me that he was influenced by the Rosicrucians prior to becoming born-again, and in her revival account, Bolton refers to the conversion of two ‘Ogboni men’ during a ‘crusade’ in 1970 (*Glory*, 104). She also refers to the conversion of a ‘Free Mason and an occultist,’ who had ‘read many books on witchcraft, magic and the occult . . . to acquire spiritual power’ (*Glory*, 97-8). The Ogboni Cult, originally formed among the Yoruba Ijebu people, was reorganised in 1914 as a ‘Christian’ cult by Anglican J. A. J. Ogunbiyi. Ogunbiyi was subsequently expelled from the Anglican Church. In 1932, it was revived as the Reformed Ogboni Fraternity, and lost most of its Christian elements. Members of any religion were able to join. See Efim Ayankop, *Reformed Ogboni Fraternity*, n.publ., 1975.

The narrative accounts of former revivalists paint a vivid picture of their perception of prevailing Christian culture immediately prior to the war. One recalls large numbers of Igbos flocking into mainline churches every Sunday but in moments of crisis resorting to ‘spiritualists’ or traditional practitioners.<sup>404</sup> Another describes the churches’ powerlessness and their tendency to focus on baptism rather than gospel preaching.<sup>405</sup> According to Roberts, the SU travelling secretary, nominal Christians dominated the ranks of the three main Protestant mission churches (Anglicans, Methodists, Presbyterians) during the 1960s, and most Western missionaries and local church leaders promoted a liberal version of Christianity.<sup>406</sup> While these accounts represent typical revivalist and evangelical critiques of nominal Christianity, and should be treated with caution, they also represent valid perspectives, which need to be respected and understood. They describe a church community so shaped by Western Christianity and Enlightenment assumptions that it was unable to respond satisfactorily to consumer demands, and bore little resemblance to the pragmatic brand of religious problem-solving mechanisms familiar to the Igbo. Though most Igbos retained an ‘enchanted’ worldview, they belonged to churches that ‘officially’ embraced a theology affected by the Enlightenment.

## Conclusion

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<sup>404</sup> Bolton, *Glory*, 4-5. This assessment of mission church spirituality was quite common among former Igbo revivalists. See for instance Eddi Onugha, personal reminiscence, May 2000 (Appendix 4.1, paragraph 5).

<sup>405</sup> Uchenna Emezue, ‘New Year’s Victory’ (Appendix 4.5.1). See also Bolton, *Glory*, 4-5, who refers to the tendency of mission churches in the 1960s to preach salvation through baptism and ‘good works,’ rather than the atoning work of Christ.

<sup>406</sup> PC, Bill Roberts, 24.2.03, Cullompton. This was also the assessment of former CMS missionary Anne Goodchild, and former revivalist Frances Lawjua Bolton. PC, Anne Goodchild, 19.4.01, Birmingham; Bolton, *Glory*, 5.

Within Igbo history, periods of socio-political distress have created favourable contexts for religious innovation and initiative. However, this chapter has argued that Igbo Christian conversion is essentially a religious transaction determined by the traditional search for power to enhance life, with sociological factors as catalysts. Due to the influence of Enlightenment values, the colonial encounter between Igbo primal religion and mission Christianity precipitated a crisis of identity and left a legacy of ‘two faiths in one mind’ that encouraged dual allegiance among Igbo converts. This identity crisis was exacerbated by the reluctance of mission church authorities (both white missionary and black African) to devolve power and provide space for ministry at the grassroots.

To an extent, the various local initiatives and innovations that burst upon the scene from 1914 alleviated these dilemmas by counteracting the secularising influences of mission Christianity, mobilising neglected forces, and responding more effectively to consumer demands. But by the 1960s, neither the mission-related Pentecostal churches nor the prayer houses posed a significant threat to the hegemony of mainline churches. It was within SU ranks that a new wave of revival would arise at a critical moment in Igbo history. This is the focus of chapter three.

## CHAPTER THREE

### THE CIVIL WAR REVIVAL (1967-73)

#### **Introduction**

In the last chapter I sketched the background to the Civil War Revival. Here I discuss why it flourished where and when it did, and reflect upon the nature of the revival experience and its influence upon existing religious and socio-cultural landscapes. In keeping with evangelical discourse, Igbo revivalists believed the movement was first and foremost a work of the Spirit.<sup>1</sup> But it was also a response to local contingencies, and must be understood against the backdrop of the civil war crisis.

The revival's success rested on a balance between supply and demand. The combined effects of decolonisation, modernisation, and conflict created new religious demands. But the primary reason for growth lay in the revival's missionary impulse, and the formation of a band of itinerant preachers out of the furnace of the civil war. Other features examined in this chapter, such as extensive conversion experiences, radical holiness ethic, the erosion of boundaries, and the stress on divine healing, flowed from this missionary impulse.

I begin by examining the effects of the war on existing religious forms. This is important because the revival's success rested partly on the loss of efficacy of other religious options. I then give an overview of the revival, based on participant accounts.

The main focus will be a detailed analysis of the movement, using a multi-disciplinary approach to arrive at tentative answers to the above stated questions. Again I take note of elements of continuity in change, local and global influences, and opposing currents of accommodation and challenge.

## **1. Expanding Religious Markets**

If we recall, religious pluralism, linked to an expanding religious marketplace, was a feature of Igbo society during the 1960s. Western education and urbanisation loosened ties with traditional control structures, and increased the level of individual autonomy and choice. But the various religious options available experienced different fortunes during the civil war.

### **1.1 Igbo Primal Religion**

Periods of crisis can precipitate processes of revitalisation and a reassertion of primal religious values and practices.<sup>2</sup> During the war, there was an increasing demand for traditional religion, and especially those aspects that emphasised ‘control and prediction of space time events,’ such as divination and magic.<sup>3</sup> To solve their pressing problems and ward off danger, many Igbos reverted to the old ways as a means of gaining access

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<sup>1</sup> See for example, John Onuora, ‘Round Table Discussion’, RSC, Enugu, 28.4.00; Raphael Okafor, ‘The Role of Fasting and Personal Evangelism in the Seventies Movement and Civil War Religiosity’, RSC, 28.4.00, Enugu; OI, Leo Anorue, 18.9.01, Jos (Appendix 4.2).

<sup>2</sup> Walls, *Missionary Movement*, 119-139; Rosalind I. J. Hackett, ‘Revitalization in African Traditional Religion’, in J. K. Olupona (ed.), *African Traditional Religions in Contemporary Society*, New York: Paragon House, 1991, 135-48; Isichei, ‘Igbo Response’, 221.

<sup>3</sup> Kalu, *Embattled Gods*, 270, 272. See also Kalu, ‘Passive Revolution’, 18. Walls, however, suggests that in the initial stages of the war there was a virtual disappearance of traditional religious practices. Andrew F. Walls, ‘Religion and the Press in “the Enclave” in the Nigerian Civil War’, in Fasholé-Luke *et al.*, *Christianity in Independent Africa*, 208.

to the power inherent in their indigenous piety.<sup>4</sup> One informant recalled that ‘very few people went to the war without something covering them, in the name of one fetish or the other . . . most of the dead bodies would have charms.’<sup>5</sup> Biafran soldiers consulted traditional priests for protection, to appropriate ‘power’ for the war, and to locate enemy soldiers.<sup>6</sup>

As well as the individual use of protective charms, Igbo communities employed communal rituals to acquire protection. One was the guardian shrine (*egbo*, Igbo), located along village entrance pathways or at the access points to family compounds, and intended to protect the community from evil of any kind, whether intruders or evil spirits.<sup>7</sup> Another was the institution of *Igba-ndu* (Igbo: covenants), described by Okorochoa as the strongest assertion of the rule of *ofo-na-ogu* (Igbo: social justice) in Igbo society.<sup>8</sup> During the war, soldiers and politicians entered into covenant with one another to reinforce their relationships in the face of a common enemy.<sup>9</sup> *Igba-ndu* was also used to protect local communities from the constant threat of saboteurs. In this

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<sup>4</sup> PC, Stephen Okafor, 31.1.01; OI, Ifeyinma Orajekwe, 1.5.00, Enugu; OI, Tony Okeke, 20.10.01, Enugu. Okeke himself admitted to consulting ‘witchdoctors’ and preparing charms to protect himself, even though he was a Roman Catholic at the time. According to Okafor, the majority of Igbos resorted to ‘traditional means’ of problem solving during the war.

<sup>5</sup> OI, David C. Amaechi, 9.10.01, Azuiyi-Oloko.

<sup>6</sup> Okorochoa, *Religious Conversion*, 253; PC, Udobata Onunwa, 25.1.01, Birmingham. Ike, *Sunset at Dawn*, 74, refers to an occasion when the assistance of a famous herbalist was called upon to ‘save’ Enugu. Ellis notes the similar use of ‘spiritual medicine’ by soldiers during the Liberian civil war to make themselves invulnerable to bullets and successful in battle. Stephen Ellis, *The Mask of Anarchy. The Destruction of Liberia and the Religious Dimension of an African Civil War*, London: Hurst and Company, 1999, 261.

<sup>7</sup> PC, Stephen Okafor, 31.1.01. For more on Igbo guardian shrines, see Simon Ottenberg, ‘Statement and Reality; The Renewal of an Igbo Protective Shrine’, *International Archives of Ethnography*, 51, Amsterdam, 1968, 143-44. In this study of the Afikpo village-group, Eastern Igboland (population, 30,000), Ottenberg notes that during the war *egbo* shrines were set up at the entrance of all the local compounds. See also Okorochoa, *Religious Conversion*, 201.

<sup>8</sup> Okorochoa, *Religious Conversion*, 116. See also Jude Emeka Madu, ‘*Igba-Ndu* (Covenant-Making) among the Igbos’, Ph.D. thesis, University of Jos, 1998, 7, xv, 15.

<sup>9</sup> Okorochoa, ‘Reconciliation’, 192.

case, community members were required to show their loyalty by swearing on the *ofo*, the Igbo symbol of authority.<sup>10</sup>

By the end of the war there was an urge to reassert traditional standards of morality, and purify the land of pollution (*alu*, Igbo)<sup>11</sup> caused by the ethical consequences of the war.<sup>12</sup> Okorochoa notes that in most towns of the Owerri-Igbo area (the focus of his research), elders and church leaders hired priests of ‘powerful’ deities to help renew the force of *omenala* (the moral code) in society.<sup>13</sup>

But despite evidence for increased traditional religious activity, several factors associated with the war militated against it. The refugee problem uprooted people from their local communities, loosening their ties with ancestors and local shrines.<sup>14</sup> A second factor was the relief operation, closely associated with Christian organisations. Caritas, the Roman Catholic relief agency, was especially apt to use the offer of relief as a means of proselytism.<sup>15</sup> Finally, the war helped to desacralise Igbo traditional religion. Agu alludes to this in his study of secularisation in Igboland. In the course of

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<sup>10</sup> For an example, see Ike, *Sunset at Dawn*, 61. One informant recalled an occasion during the war when everyone was required to gather at his local village shrine to swear their innocence on the *ofo*. Christians were given the alternative option of swearing on the Bible at St. Paul’s Catholic Church, but first had to join others at the traditional shrine. PC, Stephen Okafor, 31.1.01. For more on the ritual of *igba-ndu*, see Okorochoa, *Religious Conversion*, 112-16; Madu, ‘*Igba-Ndu*’; C. I. Ejizu, *Ofo Igbo Ritual Symbol*, Enugu: Fourth Dimension Publishers, 1986, 63; Adibe, *Faith and Morality*, 28-2.

<sup>11</sup> *Alu* is caused by any breach of *Nso ala* (Igbo: prohibitions of the Earth Deity), and is believed to result in land and human infertility. This can only be removed by purification rites. Some, but not all, *Nso ala* have to do with issues of morality. See Ikenga-Metuh, *African Religions in Western Conceptual Schemes*, 90.

<sup>12</sup> See chapter two, section 1.2.3. One informant told me that due to post-war poverty many Igbo women had sexual intercourse with Hausa soldiers and traders for money, and this sometimes took place in traditional shrines and churches, thus polluting the land. PC, Udobata Onunwe, 23.3.04, Birmingham.

<sup>13</sup> Okorochoa, *Religious Conversion*, 127, 116.

<sup>14</sup> OI, Rufus O. Ogbonna, 13.4.00, Ochadamu; Ike, *Sunset at Dawn*, 204. In Ike’s story, which deals with the dilemma faced by refugees during the civil war, the abandonment of one’s village or town was considered a betrayal of one’s ancestors.

fighting, young people sought refuge in the ‘Evil Forest,’ the reserved areas of the deities, and in the traditional shrines. ‘They literally trampled underfoot traditional religious objects and places - and they did not die!’<sup>16</sup> In the aftermath of the war, many Igbos became disillusioned with their old gods and ancestors, who had failed to protect them and give them victory.<sup>17</sup>

## 1.2 Prayer Houses

Prayer houses were another religious option available to those looking for protection and security.<sup>18</sup> As noted in chapter two, they had not been a significant presence before the war due to the strength of the mission churches. But the Biafran crisis exposed the frailties of mission church spirituality and the inflexibility of their organisational structures. In their quest for quick solutions to their problems, an increasing number of Igbos began to patronise prayer houses, often located near refugee and army camps.<sup>19</sup> Their popularity rested on their close affinity to Igbo traditional piety, their pragmatic approach to religion, and their promises of protection and security.<sup>20</sup> Clientele included

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<sup>15</sup> Roberts, S.U. Prayer Letter No. 15, 7 November and 8 December 1968; OI, Rufus O. Ogbonna, 13.4.00, Ochadamu.

<sup>16</sup> Agu, *Secularization in Igboland*, 325, 327. Ellis, *Mask of Anarchy*, 274-75, refers to a similar process in his study of the Liberian civil war, where fighters showed disrespect to traditional religious practitioners and ransacked the Sande and Poro bushes, ‘reservoirs of tribal secrets.’ See also I. N. C. Aniebo, *Of Wives, Talismans and the Dead*, London: Heinemann, 1983, 116-17. In this short story, first published in 1971 (*Sunday Times*, Lagos, 17 May 1971, 10-12), Aniebo provides a penetrating assessment of the way the war changed the attitude of the youth to Igbo traditional beliefs and practices.

<sup>17</sup> Peter A. Okoroafor, *William Okoye: Called to Serve. A Biography*, Abuja: The Whole Gospel Publications, 39.

<sup>18</sup> Kalu, *Embattled Gods*, 270, 272; Kalu, ‘Passive Revolution’, 18.

<sup>19</sup> Achunike, *Dreams of Heaven*, 55-6; Ogbu U. Kalu, ‘Religions in Nigeria: An Overview’, in Atanda, Ashiwaju and Abubakar, *Nigeria Since Independence*, 15. Hastings, *History of African Christianity*, 250, notes that the proliferation of prayer houses in Igboland during the late 1960s/early 1970s reflected the religious situation during and immediately after the civil war.

<sup>20</sup> OI, Chris Alagbu and David Amaechi; Victor Onuigbo, ‘The Metamorphosis of Prayer Houses into Living Churches’, RSC, 28.4.00, Enugu.

members of the Biafran army, as well as refugees.<sup>21</sup> Many former revivalists became members prior to their conversion to ‘born-again’ Christianity.<sup>22</sup> Out of 79 contacted, at least 19 (24.1 %) attended prayer houses during the war while maintaining their mission church affiliation. These included SU leaders and neo-Pentecostal church pioneers.<sup>23</sup> In the aftermath of the war, some prayer houses became a target of revivalist critique and evangelistic ventures, and consequently lost many of their members.<sup>24</sup>

### 1.3 Mission Churches

Several factors contributed to a decline in mission Christianity during the war. First, many Igbos found the brand of Christianity represented by the mainline churches lacked the power to help them cope with the stresses engendered by the war. In this they were influenced by their traditional religious heritage. As noted in chapter two, the Igbo expect power to emanate from religious forms, and for Christianity to achieve what their primal religion was fulfilling for them.<sup>25</sup> During the war, they looked for religious support to protect them from death, and render them successful in battle. When they did

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<sup>21</sup> Accounts by former Biafrans suggest that large numbers of Igbos patronised prayer houses during the war. For instance, Akpan, *Secession*, 196, claimed that an estimated 50 % of the Igbo population were clients, including the majority of Biafran commanders. See also Madiebo, *Nigerian Revolution*, 357-58; Gbulie, *Biafra*, 108.

<sup>22</sup> Bolton, *Glory*, 10; OI. Ifeyinma Orajekwe, 1.5.00, Enugu. Both Bolton and Orajekwe had contact with prayer houses before becoming involved in the revival. And former revivalist Stephen Okafor claimed that most SU members in Onitsha belonged to prayer houses. See Okafor, Okafor, and Oruizu, Letter to SU Executive Committee, quoted in Bolton, *Glory*, 17; Minutes of the 4<sup>th</sup> East Central State Subcommittee of Scripture Union held on 4 December 1970.

<sup>23</sup> The early leaders of SU Onitsha, Emmanuel Ekpunobi, Wilson Uzumegbunam, and Eliezer Okoye, all had contact with prayer houses, as did NPC pioneers Benson Ezeokeke (*Salvation for All*), Benjamin Ikedinobi (*Riches of Christ*), Amaechi Nwachukwu (Amazing Love Assembly), Tony Okeke (*Save the Lost*), William Okoye, Mike Okoye (All Christians Fellowship Mission), Obiorah Ezekiel (Christian Pentecostal Mission), and Mike Okonkwo (The Redeemed Evangelical Mission).

<sup>24</sup> For a revivalist’s account of his experience of attending a prayer house during the war, see OI, David Amaechi, 9.10.01, Azuiyi-Oloko (Appendix 4.7.4).

<sup>25</sup> Okorochoa, ‘Religious Conversion in Africa’, 169.

not find this in mainline churches, many resorted to alternative means by appealing to traditional ritual agents or attending one of the prayer houses.

A second factor was the departure of expatriate missionaries and the flight of local church clerics in the face of Nigeria's advancing army, which left congregations short of leaders. The rigidity of their hierarchical structures, and their dependence on ordained ministry, made it difficult for them to adapt to new situations. Ojo states that most Protestant church activities collapsed during the war.<sup>26</sup> Oral accounts suggest otherwise. Church meetings, albeit on a limited scale, continued in urban areas until overrun by federal troops.<sup>27</sup> The conduct of the British government also caused some Igbos, influenced by socialist ideologies, to react against mission Christianity. From their perspective, so-called 'Christian Britain' supported genocide in Biafra, and they attacked the mission churches as 'agents of imperialism and bastions of neo-colonialism.'<sup>28</sup> This negative attitude was reinforced by the relief operation, a responsibility shared by the mission churches. Unfortunately the behaviour of some of their relief personnel exposed them to severe criticism. There were accusations of corruption and uneven distribution of supplies.<sup>29</sup> At the end of the war many Igbos felt disappointed in God and disillusioned with mission Christianity due to their defeat at

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<sup>26</sup> Ojo, 'Campus Christianity', 100.

<sup>27</sup> OI, Bill Roberts, Eze N. Eze, and Chinedu Nebo. For example, mission churches in Umuahia continued to meet for Sunday worship until the town fell in April 1969.

<sup>28</sup> Kalu, *Embattled Gods*, 272. See also, Kalu, 'Passive Revolution', 18; Walls, 'Religion and the Press', 210-11. One informant told me that at the outset of the war he 'hated' white people because from his perspective they were offering Bibles and relief to Igbos, and supplying arms to Nigeria. OI, Uchenna Emezue, 10.10.01, Umuahia.

<sup>29</sup> OI, Victor Onuigbo, 1.5.00, Enugu; E. Obiechina, *A Study of Onitsha Market Pamphlets*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973, 112-13. See excerpt from a popular Onitsha market pamphlet quoted by Obiechina (Appendix 4.4). In a letter written during the war, Roberts stated that while the policy of the Protestant WCC was to feed everybody within their area according to their need, the Roman Catholics often used their food to gain converts. Bill Roberts, S.U. Prayer Letter No.15, 7 November and 8 December, 1968.

the hands of the Nigerians.<sup>30</sup> In accordance with their traditional religious heritage, which associates divine blessing with social justice, most had believed the Biafran cause to be a just one.<sup>31</sup>

The effect of the war on mission-related Pentecostal churches is difficult to determine. The Apostolic Church expressed disappointment over the Home Mission's apparent indifference to their plight, and suffered the effects of dislocation caused by the refugee problem.<sup>32</sup> The Assemblies of God seemingly benefited as displaced members planted new churches in their villages.<sup>33</sup> I found no evidence that either group received a significant influx of members from mainline churches, probably due to the latter's anti-Pentecostal stance. After the war, however, both experienced rapid growth as members became caught up in the revival.<sup>34</sup> To this we now turn.

## 2. The Story of the Revival

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<sup>30</sup> Achunike, *Dreams of Heaven*, 59, 65. Several revivalist narratives confirm this. See for example, OI, Chris Alagbu, 3.5.00, Enugu; Raphael Okafor, 'The Role of Fasting and Personal Evangelism in the Seventies Movement and Civil War Religiosity', RSC, 28.4.00, Enugu; Sam Okoli, Letter to Roberts, 7 June 1970.

<sup>31</sup> Okorochoa, *Religious Conversion*, 116, suggests that Igbo passion for social justice was the decisive factor in Igbo secession immediately prior to the war, rather than the desire for oil revenues, or Ojukwu's personal ambition. The Igbo considered the pogroms of 1966 great injustices against them as a people, and were convinced of the justness of their cause and the support of *Chineke*.

<sup>32</sup> Anyachor, 'Igbo Field', 3.

<sup>33</sup> Kalu, *Embattled Gods*, 270. One informant told me that AG's indigenous policy contributed to its growth during the war. OI, C. O. Osueke, 9.10.01, Enugu.

<sup>34</sup> Informants from the Apostolic Church and Assemblies of God attested to the rapid growth of their respective denominations as a result of the revival, as did other former revivalists. See G. P. Selby, Letter to author, 14 April, 2001; Anyachor, 'Igbo Field', 4; OI, D. O. Iwuagwu, Don Odunze, Felix Obiorah, Raphael Okafor, C.O. Osueke. Members of both denominations attended SU activities during and after the war. According to church records, AG Nigeria experienced a 50 % growth in attendance

## 2.1 The Civil War Phase (1967-69)

The Civil War Revival followed the contours of Igbo history and proceeded in several distinct stages. The first occurred soon after the outbreak of war. Due to the closure of educational institutions many young people began to congregate at SU headquarters in Umuahia,<sup>35</sup> which had become the capital of Biafra following the fall of Enugu. At the time Bill Roberts was the British SU representative in the east.<sup>36</sup> His decision to remain during the war made a great impression upon the youth, particularly as Britain had come out in support of the federal government of Nigeria.<sup>37</sup>

As the war escalated, many secondary school students found refuge with Roberts at SU headquarters, where they met regularly for Bible study and prayer, and learnt to live as a community. At this stage, the main impetus for their coming together was social. They were forced together by the circumstances of the war. After secondary school, most would normally have proceeded to university, but as this was no longer possible they remained in Umuahia, where they were mentored by Roberts and senior SU

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during the years 1970/71, from 40,000 to 60,000. See 'Statistics of Growth of Assemblies of God in Nigeria from General Council Records 1970-97', cited in Agbo, 'Revival and Revivalism', 86-7.

<sup>35</sup> During the war, SU headquarters was located at Mission Hill, Umuahia, where the Methodist Lay Training Centre was based. See Bill Roberts, *Pilgrims of the Scripture Union*, Newsletter No. 2, June 1967. Today it is the base of the Methodist Theological Institute. See Plate 2.1.

<sup>36</sup> Roberts moved to Umuahia from Uzuakoli in January 1967. Onuora, 'Radicalization', 2; Roberts, *Pilgrims of the Scripture Union*, Newsletter No. 2, June 1967.

<sup>37</sup> The majority of missionaries left Biafra before or during the war, though most medical personnel stayed behind. Among those who remained were CMS missionaries Anne Goodchild (née Travis), Jenny Kelsey (née Carey), Dianne North; and American Baptist Emma Harris. Bolton, *Glory*, 99; OI, Anne Goodchild and Jenny Kelsey. All Assemblies of God missionaries in Igboland left Biafra, on the advice of their home mission. See Ralph L. Cimino, *Linking Hands to Plant the Church. A Compilation of the Profiles of the Assemblies of God Missionaries in Nigeria*, Springfield, Missouri, 1999. Some Roman Catholic priests remained.

members.<sup>38</sup> Initially, most of the youth were members of Anglican and Methodist churches, the main denominations in the area. Out of 22 informants attached to SU Umuahia during the war, 11 (50 %) were Anglicans, seven (32 %) were Methodists, two (9 %) were Presbyterians, and two (9 %) were Assemblies of God members.

The second stage was a period of mobilisation. As Igbo urban centres fell to federal troops, revivalists migrated to rural areas where they reported a favourable response to their message.<sup>39</sup> The fall of Umuahia in April 1969 was a critical event, and provided the main impetus for this second phase. SU members later referred to it as the ‘dispersion of Umuahia.’<sup>40</sup> SU headquarters subsequently moved to Mbanjo, an area in Central Igboland, and during the next six months the number of SU groups in Biafra increased from 25 to 85, most started by young people nurtured within the ranks of SU Umuahia. By the end of the war, many villages and refugee camps had become centres of renewal.<sup>41</sup>

## 2.2 The Post-Civil War Phase (1970-73)

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<sup>38</sup> Some senior SU members were former Evangelical Christian Union (ECU) members who had joined Roberts following the closure of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka (UNN) at the beginning of the war. OI, John Onuora, 30.4.00, Enugu; Roberts, *Life and death*, 36; Bill Roberts, Letter to Harold Ling, SU London, August 1967; Bill Roberts, ‘News From the East’, April 1970.

<sup>39</sup> OI, Cyril Okorocho, 8.2.99, Woking.

<sup>40</sup> Roberts, *Life and Death*, 79; OI, Uchenna Emezue, 11.10.01, Umuahia; Nnenna Okoye, written testimony, 1969.

<sup>41</sup> Daphne Beauchamp, ‘First-hand News from Biafra’, *Life of Faith*, January 10, 1970; Bill Roberts, S.U. Prayer Letter No.17, 7 October 1969; written testimonies, Ben Onwochei and Nnenna Okoye; OI, Cyril Okorocho, 8.2.99, Woking; OI, Augustus Mbanaso, 12.1.01, Umuahia. See also extract from one of Bill Roberts’ letters, cited in Sylvester, *Scripture Union*, 220: ‘Within six months, the twenty-five SU groups at the time of our evacuation increased to eighty-five. Groups were to be found here, there and everywhere, in villages, churches of all denominations, ammunition factories, hospitals, army camps and refugee camps.’ Plate 2.4 shows a Christian meeting at SU leader Matthias Eluwah’s convalescent camp.

The climax of the revival occurred in the aftermath of the war. Prior to this, access to cities had been severely restricted because they were the main focus of the conflict, but now the movement was able to penetrate the urban areas. As revivalists migrated to metropolitan centres in search of employment or to reclaim homes, they carried the revival message with them. It was still a period of crisis. Many had lost family members as well as possessions. Educational institutions in the east did not resume immediately and jobs were scarce, so there were many young aspiring evangelists with time on their hands. Preaching the gospel became their full-time occupation.<sup>42</sup> A new wave of revival swept through Igboland, again centred on Scripture Union.

### **2.2.1 SU Township Groups**

Soon after the war, young people reactivated SU township groups in all the major Igbo urban areas.<sup>43</sup> By this time, SU Pilgrims groups, intended to cater for school leavers, had replaced the school groups as the focus of SU in the east.<sup>44</sup> One reason for this was that most schools were run by mainline mission churches, who objected to the radical behaviour of SU members and consequently closed the groups down. But it was also an example of the indigenisation of global flows as SU Nigeria adapted its ministry to include young adults.<sup>45</sup> The government takeover of schools, however, made it possible for SU to re-enter secondary schools in 1971.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> OI, Thompson Nwosu, 31.8.01, Jos.

<sup>43</sup> See Figure 1.

<sup>44</sup> See chapter two, section 2.3.1, footnote 264.

<sup>45</sup> Ojo, 'Contextual', 182.

<sup>46</sup> Emeka Enwezor, 'The Role of School Christian Groups in the Seventies', RSC, 28.4.00, Enugu; Chinedu Nebo, 'Protagonists and Critics (Persecution) in the Seventies', RSC, 29.4.00, Enugu (Appendix 4.7.2, paragraph 12). By January 1971, out of 275 secondary schools in East Central State, 75 had SU groups. Sam C. Nnamuah, Letter to Roberts, 21 January 1971. The government of East Central State took over sole responsibility for public education in 1970. A. E. Afigbo, 'The Missions, the State and

In Onitsha, North-Western Igboland, a SU group was started early in 1970 by Emmanuel Ekpunobi, a former associate of Roberts. Ekpunobi started the group in his home as a means of discipling his converts, and it grew rapidly as increasing numbers of young people joined its ranks.<sup>47</sup> Some of these later became NPC pioneers.<sup>48</sup> In Enugu, North-Eastern Igboland, a SU group started meeting in the home of Justin Ogugua, another former associate of Roberts,<sup>49</sup> after people had begun to congregate there immediately after the war.<sup>50</sup> The group grew rapidly once its Sunday afternoon meeting had become an evangelistic guest service, and in May 1970, they moved first to the ECWA/SIM church premises and a month later to St Andrew's Presbyterian Church to accommodate their members.<sup>51</sup> SU members became aggressive evangelists, and by 1971, the Enugu SU township group had become the largest in Nigeria, with members responsible for starting other groups in surrounding schools.<sup>52</sup>

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Education in South-Eastern Nigeria, 1956-71', in Fasholé-Luke *et al.*, *Christianity in Independent Africa*, 176.

<sup>47</sup> OI, Emmanuel Ekpunobi, 24.10.01, Awka; Emmanuel Ekpunobi, written testimony, 1969. Ekpunobi was brought up in Onitsha, but became a member of SU Umuahia during the war and was involved in the relief effort. After the war, he returned to Onitsha to resume studies at the Anglican Dennis Memorial Secondary School. In 1971, he left to attend the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. Ekpunobi is now an Anglican priest and Principal of St Paul's University College, Awka (an Anglican theological seminary).

<sup>48</sup> Early SU Onitsha leaders, later responsible for starting autonomous CMs and NPCs, included Wilson Uzumegbunam (All Believers Fellowship Group), Eleazer Okoye (Travelling Gospel Team), Paul Nweke, Augustine Nwodika, Emeka Eze (*Riches*), Benson Ezeokeke (*Christ for All*).

<sup>49</sup> Ogugua was a member of SU Enugu when war broke out, but left when Enugu fell to federal troops. In 1969, he spent a short period at SU headquarters (Umuahia). See Justin O. Ogugua, written testimony, 1969 (Appendix 4.5.2).

<sup>50</sup> After the war, Enugu replaced Umuahia as capital of East Central State. Most school leavers, and unemployed and displaced civil servants, moved to Enugu in search of jobs. The SU offices and Bible study centres became a refuge for migrant jobseekers. OI, Udobata Onunwe, 23.3.04, Birmingham.

<sup>51</sup> Monica Chigozie Ezenwa, Letter to Roberts, 14 September 1970; J. C. Rosebud Okorochoa, Letter to Roberts, 9 July 1970. Mike Bonomi and James Ukaegbu, pastors of ECWA and the Presbyterian Church respectively, were both sympathetic to the revival, in contrast to most mission church leaders. By July 1970, a young woman called Amauche Obijiofor had taken over leadership following the departure of Ogugua. See Grace Iwuora, Letter to Roberts, 15 July 1970; Amauche Obijiofor, Letter to Roberts, 9 July 1970. Obijiofor later married Chris Okeke, the present General Secretary of SU Nigeria. For a photograph of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, see Plate 1.2.

<sup>52</sup> S. C. A. Chukwuka, 'The Pilgrims Ministry: Its Developmental Stages', *Plumblin* (*The Journal of the Pilgrims Ministry, S.U. Nigeria*), 1992 Maiden Edition, 7; Monica (Chigozie) Ezenwa, Letter to Roberts, 14 September 1970. Early in 1971, the SU headquarters for the three Eastern States moved from Umuahia to Enugu. Scripture Union Nigeria, News/Prayer Letter, January - March 1971.

Similar developments occurred in urban centres further south. SU Umuahia restarted after Peter Nwangwu and Raymond Nwosu, former members of Roberts's leadership team, returned to the SU headquarters soon after the war.<sup>53</sup> One SU member noted in June 1970: 'The SU House here in Umuahia has become a very busy Youth centre. Enthusiastic youths turn up in vast numbers from the town and its environs, especially for the guest services . . .'<sup>54</sup> SU township groups in Aba and Owerri also resumed soon after the war.<sup>55</sup>

Other local SU groups sprang up in churches and schools within close proximity to these cities. Meanwhile, SU work outside the urban areas expanded rapidly as schools reopened and dispersed members started new groups in towns and villages throughout Igboland.<sup>56</sup> By January 1971, there were 173 SU groups in schools and churches across East Central State, compared to 160 in Western State, 48 in Mid-Western State, and 30 in South-Eastern State.<sup>57</sup>

### 2.2.2 Charismatic Ministries

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<sup>53</sup> Roberts, *Life and Death*, 58; Bill Roberts, Scripture Union Prayer Letter No. 19, 25 March 1970. See Plate 2.3 for a photograph of Raymond Nwosu.

<sup>54</sup> Sam Okoli, Letter to Roberts, 7 June 1970. Later, Felix Obiorah, founder of one of the early CMs, became President of SU Umuahia.

<sup>55</sup> OI, John Ugah, 7.6.00, Enugu; OI, Rosebud Eluwah, 13.10.01, Aba; Raymond Nwosu, Letter to Roberts, 22 September 1970. Aba township group quickly became one of the largest in Nigeria.

<sup>56</sup> John Onuora, Letter to Roberts, 2 August 1970.

<sup>57</sup> Sam C. Nnamuah, Letter to Roberts, 21 January 1971; Scripture Union Nigeria, News/Prayer Letter, January - March 1971. At the time there were a total of 422 groups in Nigeria, distributed as follows:

Igbo-founded charismatic ministries (CMs) were among the earliest to emerge in Africa,<sup>58</sup> and in contrast to Western Nigeria, where CMs arose mainly on university campuses,<sup>59</sup> it was the SU township groups that provided the foundation for their emergence in Igboland.<sup>60</sup> Consequently, they initially attracted a wider cross-section of society than their counterparts in the west. Here I disagree with those scholars who suggest that the Nigerian charismatic movement had its deepest roots and found most of its early leaders within the university campuses and among the educated elite.<sup>61</sup> In the east, most founders of CMs did not attend university. Out of 16 informants, who founded Igbo CMs during the 1970s, five had primary level education only, eight secondary, and three tertiary.<sup>62</sup> Moreover, members were initially drawn from a broader social base. Most early post-war converts in Onitsha, for example, were semi-literate traders and craftsmen, many of whom joined in CM activities.<sup>63</sup> By 1973, there

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Lagos (33), Ijebu-Ode (33), Ibadan (24), Akure (70), Mid-Western State (48), East Central State (173, including 95 Church groups), South Eastern State (30), and Rivers State (11).

<sup>58</sup> The first Igbo-founded CM was started in 1969. In Ghana, for example, the first was Enoch Agbozo's Ghana Evangelical Society (GES), founded in 1975. Larbi, *Pentecostalism*, 296. Though Anim suggests GES started in 1973. Emmanuel Anim, 'Who Wants to be a Millionaire? An Analysis of Prosperity Teaching in the Charismatic Ministries (Churches) and Its Wider Impact', Ph.D. thesis, All Nations Christian College. In Malawi, the first CM started around 1980, though the movement began in the early 1970s. Van Dijk, 'Young Born-Again Preachers', 61, 55; Kalu, *Power*, 113.

<sup>59</sup> See Matthews A. Ojo, 'Deeper Christian Life Ministry: A Case Study of the Charismatic movements in Western Nigeria', *Journal of Religion in Africa*, 18.2, 1988, 141-62; Ojo, 'Contextual', 175-92.

<sup>60</sup> OI, Mike Oye, 6.5.00, Enugu.

<sup>61</sup> See for example, Ojo, 'Contextual', 175; Peel, *Religious Encounter*, 314; Kalu, 'Third Response', 7. Ojo, 'Church', 28, states that by 1974 ten CMs had been established by Nigerian graduates to continue their campus activities, including *Hour of Freedom* and Master's Vessel Group (MVG). As we will see, *Hour of Freedom* was started by Stephen Okafor, a trader with primary level education. MVG was co-founded by Felix Obiorah, a graduate from the Federal College of Agriculture, Umodike. Unlike CMs in the west, MVG and *Hour of Freedom* had no early links with university campuses. OI, Stephen Okafor and Felix Obiorah.

<sup>62</sup> As far as I know, only one Igbo CM was founded by a SU member attending university. Uchenna Emezue, co-founder of Canaan Gospel Centre (CGC), was a student at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. But like *Hour of Freedom* and MVG, CGC had no connections with university campus activities. Some CM founders subsequently attained higher levels of education.

<sup>63</sup> OI, Emmanuel Ekpunobi, 24.10.01, Awka.

were at least 13 Igbo-founded CMs, most started by young men without tertiary education.<sup>64</sup>

The most important CM for the progress of the revival was the Hour of Freedom Evangelistic Association, based in North-Western Igboland. In 1969, three young men were converted from a prayer house background. Their names were Stephen Okafor, Raphael Okafor (not related), and Arthur Oruizu, members of Ufuma Practical Prayer Band (UPPB). *Hour of Freedom*, the platform for their ministry, was started towards the end of 1969 while the war was still in progress, and soon became the main vehicle for the spread of the revival.<sup>65</sup>

Stephen Okafor, a trader from the village of Ojoto, was the leader of *Hour of Freedom*. Brought up a Roman Catholic, he became a member of UPPB in 1963, where he occupied a position of influence and claimed a close association with the prophetess, Madame Nwokolo.<sup>66</sup> In 1969, a friend introduced him to Roberts and the SU group at Mbanda, and later that year he was ‘born-again.’<sup>67</sup> Immediately he returned to Ufuma, hoping to convert his fellow members, and was joined by Raphael Okafor and Oruizu, both members of the Anglican Church.<sup>68</sup> It was not long before all three were expelled

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<sup>64</sup> These were *Hour of Deliverance*, *Hour of Freedom*, MVG, Last Days Messengers, *Riches of Christ*, Holiness Evangelistic Association, Redeeming Time Pilgrims Mission, Christian Revivalist Missionary Team, Calvary Evangelistic Mission, Save the Lost Programme, Central Christian Fellowship Association, Bethel Fellowship Group, and Canaan Gospel Centre. See Figure 1 for early CMs in Igboland.

<sup>65</sup> OI, Stephen Okafor, 16.12.98, London; OI, Raphael Okafor, 85.00, Enugu.

<sup>66</sup> OI, Stephen Okafor, 16.12.98, London.

<sup>67</sup> OI, Stephen Okafor, 16.12.98, London. Okafor was converted on 13 October 1969, while listening to a sermon preached by Bill Roberts. Stephen Okafor, Letter to Roberts, early 1970. According to Anyaegbu, ‘Pentecostal/Evangelical’, 22, Okafor was sent to Roberts by Madame Nwokolo of UPPB to obtain relief material from the WCC relief centre.

<sup>68</sup> OI, Stephen Okafor, 16.12.98, London. Prior to joining UPPB, Raphael Okafor and Oruizu were members of the Cherubim and Seraphim Society. Raphael Okafor subsequently became the General

from the prayer house because of their overt preaching activities. They then became itinerant evangelists and founded *Hour of Freedom*.<sup>69</sup>

*Hour of Freedom* had its headquarters at Ojoto,<sup>70</sup> but Stephen Okafor recognised the strategic importance of Onitsha, and soon established a base at 22 Amobi Street.<sup>71</sup> Initially, it encountered opposition from SU Onitsha because of its Pentecostal emphasis and aggressive evangelistic style. Yet it was not long before SU members joined the ranks of *Hour of Freedom*, resulting in its rapid expansion. As the revival spread, interdenominational fellowship groups affiliated to *Hour of Freedom* were started all over Igboland, including Enugu, Aba, and Owerri. Like SU, *Hour of Freedom* did not believe in starting new churches. Later, however, these fellowship groups became the basis for the formation of many neo-Pentecostal churches.

Soon after the formation of *Hour of Freedom*, two events occurred that acted as catalysts for the new wave of revival and helped to introduce Pentecostal spirituality into SU in the east. Both were indirectly related to the civil war. Firstly, Mike Oye and Muiyiwa Olamijulo, SU travelling secretaries from the Yoruba tribe in the west, came to Biafra to engage in relief work. Oye and Olamijulo were Pentecostals from the Apostolic Faith Church,<sup>72</sup> and products of the relationship between SU and the growing

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Secretary of SU Nigeria, and today is an ordained Anglican priest, based in Enugu. During the civil war he was an Anglican chaplain to the Biafran army. OI, Raphael Okafor, 8.5.00, Enugu. For a photograph of Raphael Okafor, see Plate 3.1.

<sup>69</sup> OI, Stephen Okafor, 16.12.98, London. Despite leaving Nigeria in 1972, Stephen Okafor is still acknowledged as the leader of *Hour of Freedom*.

<sup>70</sup> This is still the headquarters of *Hour of Freedom* today.

<sup>71</sup> Among Igbo revivalists in Onitsha this location attained a similar position of prestige to Azusa Street in the North American Pentecostal revival.

<sup>72</sup> The Apostolic Faith Church (AFC) traces its roots to the North American Azusa Street Revival. The Nigerian branch was started in 1944 in Lagos by Timothy Oshokoya, a former Apostolic Church

Christian Union (IVCU) at the University of Ibadan.<sup>73</sup> Their arrival in Igboland sparked off a new wave of revivalist activity, and helped to unite the revival in Eastern and Western Nigeria.

Another important milestone was the arrival from Western Nigeria of the Igbo evangelist J. M. J. Emesim, described by Anyaegbu as the ‘apostle of Pentecostalism in North-Western Igboland.’ A former Anglican, Emesim had migrated to Lagos in 1961, where he was introduced to Pentecostal doctrine, and later formed the Hour of Deliverance Ministry as a vehicle for training workers for the evangelisation and rehabilitation of Igboland.<sup>74</sup> When the war ended Emesim resigned from his job and returned to the east. In August 1970, Stephen Okafor invited him to be the guest speaker at an evangelistic campaign at Awka-Etiti, near Onitsha, and in Kalu’s words, ‘he simply set the whole area ablaze.’<sup>75</sup> He called on his audience to repent from their sins, accept Jesus as their personal saviour, and receive Holy Spirit baptism. Following

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member, and later an evangelist with Christ Apostolic Church. His links with the Apostolic Faith Church, Oregon, developed after reading their literature. In 1987, AFC membership in Nigeria was 20,000, compared to a global membership of 54,000. See Gordon J. Melton, *The Encyclopaedia of American Religions*, Tarrytown, NY: Triumph Books, 1991, 351; Benjamin Steward, *Historical Background of Churches in Nigeria*, Lagos: Interwale Press, 1984, 27-8. For a history of AFC in Nigeria, see *The Man With A Vision. The Biography of Timothy Gbadebo Oshokoya*, Lagos: The Apostolic Faith, n.d.; ‘Back to the Beginning’, *Gospel News in Africa, A News Magazine of The Apostolic Faith Church in Africa*, April-June 2001, 1-5; ‘The Man with a Vision’, *Gospel News in Africa, A News Magazine of The Apostolic Faith Church in Africa*, April-June 2001, 6-7.

<sup>73</sup> The University of Ibadan was the first university in Nigeria and a centre of charismatic renewal in Western Nigeria. Ojo, ‘Contextual’, 179. For Mike Oye, see chapter two, section 2.3.1, footnote 263. Oye experienced Spirit baptism in 1964. Olamijulo became SU travelling secretary in 1969 and is now a district overseer of the Apostolic Faith Church in Akwa Ibom state. OI, Mike Oye and Muiyiwa Olamijulo.

<sup>74</sup> The sources used here for Emesim are Anyaegbu, ‘Pentecostal/Evangelical’, 201-10; Kalu, *Embattled Gods*, 277; Achunike, *Dreams of Heaven*, 58. Converted in 1964 through the advocacy of a missionary from the People Church of Toronto (founded by revivalist Oswald J. Smith), Emesim was introduced to Pentecostalism by Souls in Christ Crusade Ministry. When war broke out he joined Light Apostolic Church in Lagos, who sheltered him until tensions eased in 1968. There is some disagreement over when Emesim started *Hour of Deliverance*, but it was probably during the war while he was in Lagos. For a photograph of Emesim, see Plate 3.5.

the crusade, he set up a Bible school in Igboland, which became the training ground for many future Igbo neo-Pentecostal leaders.<sup>76</sup>

In Central Igboland, the Holiness Evangelistic Association in Owerri was the first CM to emerge from the revival. Accounts differ as to its early history. Here we encounter one of the problems associated with oral sources, where the tendency is for participants to present themselves as central figures, while marginalising others. According to one version, it was started by Alexander Ekewuba in 1970, and subsequently handed over to his half-brother, Chima Amadi. Ekewuba initially used SU as the platform for his evangelistic activities and for a time was leader of *Hour of Freedom* in Owerri.<sup>77</sup> Another account suggests Amadi started it in 1971, after he had linked up with a group of SU secondary school students, eager to evangelise their communities.<sup>78</sup> Either way, the Holiness Evangelistic Association followed the pattern of other CMs, with members continuing to attend different churches, until it too eventually became a church.

Meanwhile in Umuahia developments were underway, which would culminate in the formation of Master's Vessel Group, the third major Igbo CM formed after the war. Following a call to full-time ministry, Felix Obiorah, President of SU Umuahia, approached the Anglican Church for ordination. When they turned him down, he joined

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<sup>75</sup> Kalu, *Embattled Gods*, 277. According to Anyaegbu, 'Pentecostal/Evangelical', 32-3, this event introduced many Igbo NPC pioneers to Pentecostal spirituality.

<sup>76</sup> Among those who trained at Emesim's Bible college were Edozie Mba (*Riches of Christ*), Wilson Uzumegbunam (All Believers Fellowship Mission), Benson Ezeokeke (*Salvation for All*), Dominic Onuigwe (National Evangelical Mission), Obiorah Ezekiel (Christian Pentecostal Mission), Edward Ezensafor (Our Generation Gospel Ministries), and Nnaji Chukwuka (Revival Time Ministry). Emesim also influenced Paul Nweke, General Superintendent of *Grace of God*.

<sup>77</sup> OI, Alexander Ekewuba, 17.1.02, Owerri. Ekewuba has been referred to as the 'father of indigenous Pentecostalism' in Imo State. As well as claiming to have founded Holiness Evangelistic Association, he

his friend Joshua Uhiara, another Anglican and fellow SU leader, to pray and engage in evangelistic activities. In November 1971, they formed the Master's Vessel Group. Their vision - based on the Bible text 2 Tim 2:21<sup>79</sup> - was to recruit 'vessels' for the evangelisation of Igboland.<sup>80</sup>

In Aba, Emmanuel Okorie founded the Christian Revivalist Missionary Team as a platform for his evangelistic ministry. Okorie was one of Roberts's protégées in Umuahia, and after the war, while still in secondary school, helped to reactivate the SU township group in Aba. For a while he operated under the umbrella of the Qua Iboe Church, a large denomination in the area, but also held evangelistic campaigns in the southeast and Middle Belt.<sup>81</sup> A branch of *Hour of Freedom* also existed in Aba, later absorbed into *Riches of Christ*, the first major NPC formed after the war.

Eventually each of these CMs underwent a transition to denominational status, a subject I return to in chapter four.

### **3. Global Flows and Local Identities**

I turn now to an analysis of the revival and a discussion of growth factors in terms of an economic model of supply and demand. I also reflect upon the nature of revival

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also started two other indigenous NPCs, Redeeming Time Pilgrims Mission in 1973, and Overcomers Christian Mission in the mid-1980s.

<sup>78</sup> OI, Kenneth Eboh, 16.11.02, Owerri. Amadi was a mechanic prior to becoming a pastor.

<sup>79</sup> 2 Tim 2: 21 - 'Therefore, if a man cleanses himself from these things, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified, useful to the Master, prepared for every good work' (NASB).

<sup>80</sup> OI, Felix Obiorah, 6.10.01, Umuahia. Obiorah was a member of SU Umuahia during the civil war. He told me that Roberts played an important role in his conversion. See Plate 4.1 for a photograph of Obiorah. Another NPC pioneer Godwin Nwosu told me that he too was a co-founder of MVG. According to Nwosu, Obiorah attended his church (Bethel Gospel Mission) before MVG itself became a church. Nwosu is the brother of Thompson Nwosu, founder of Redeemed People's Mission (RPM), Jos. He is now RPM pastor in Umuahia. OI, Godwin Nwosu, 10.10.01, Umuahia.

experience and its effects upon existing landscapes. Themes characteristic of earlier waves of revival and Pentecostal activity were present during the revival. As we will see, there were elements of continuity and rupture with existing religious forms, strong currents of accommodation and challenge, and significant influences from local and external forces. I begin by examining the influence of two carriers of global religious culture.

### **3.1 Scripture Union**

As noted, the primary reason for the revival's success lay in its missionary impulse, which was kindled within the SU fellowship groups during the war. Most revivalists were mission church members (see Table 3.1), and participated in SU activities.<sup>82</sup>

As a transnational organisation, SU acted as a globalising force in Igboland and a bearer of evangelical religious culture. However, global flows can strengthen local identities, and precipitate resistance and heterogeneity. As Appadurai notes, forces from various metropolises brought into new societies tend to become indigenised.<sup>83</sup> SU supplied participants with a new repertoire of images and narratives for identity construction. In particular, it expanded their world by providing access to an 'imagined community,' with global dimensions and missionary ambitions. But these images and narratives underwent transformations as revivalists appropriated them for local consumption. An important objective is to examine the way participants negotiated the local and the global in their search for new forms of individual and collective identity. During the

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<sup>81</sup> OI, Emmanuel Okorie, 17.1.02, Aba. Okorie later founded of Living Word Ministries, a large NPC with strong North American links. See chapter four, section 3.1, and Plate 4.4.

<sup>82</sup> Almost without exception, informants involved in the revival were members of SU.

revival, local distinctiveness and global generality occurred simultaneously, in interconnected ways.

**Table 3.1 Church Affiliation of 79 Former Revivalists in 1970/71<sup>84</sup>**

<b>DENOMINATION</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
Anglican	34	43.0
Methodist	9	11.4
Presbyterian	3	3.8
Roman Catholic	7	8.9
Qua Iboe Church	5	6.3
ECWA	3	3.8
Assemblies of God	5	6.3
Prayer houses	4	5.1
Other Protestant	4	5.1
Unknown	5	6.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>100</b>

SU's evangelical and ecumenical religious culture was a suitable medium for the expression of revival Christianity. Hanciles suggests that new socio-political developments and accompanying economic change require 'new responses and a further re-shaping of spiritual maps.'<sup>85</sup> If we recall, by the 1960s a nominal form of Christianity dominated the ranks of mainline churches.<sup>86</sup> The mission-related Pentecostal churches offered an alternative option, but had declined in Pentecostal vigour due to the combined effects of bureaucratisation and ageing, and were regarded with suspicion by mainline churches. The Civil War Revival was a radical response to perceived deficiencies within existing Christian communities, and SU provided a safe

<sup>83</sup> Appadurai, *Modernity at Large*, 32.

<sup>84</sup> Based on oral interviews with 79 former revivalists. In the case of prayer houses, I only include those participants who did not adopt dual allegiance to mission church and prayer house. The four revivalists were members of either Christ Holy Church or St. Joseph's Chosen Church of God.

<sup>85</sup> Hanciles, 'Conversion and Social Change', 17.

environment for these sentiments to be expressed. As an evangelical movement, SU stressed personal conversion, devotion to the Bible, a life of active service, and an emphasis on the Cross. Along with its commitment to ecumenical principles, its relative freedom from missionary control, and its focus on youth, this made it an ideal vehicle for the revival. Aside from its Pentecostal emphasis, most of the features that were present during the revival were already in place within SU, albeit on a smaller scale. Yet despite its commitment to evangelical and ecumenical ideals (which emanated from its Western metropolitan centres), SU set in motion certain trends that hastened the fragmentation of the movement, as autonomous CMs emerged from its ranks. This section will include an analysis of these trends.

### **3.2 Biblical Texts in Critical Contexts**

Among other labels, revivalists were referred to as ‘Bible carriers,’ due to their habit of carrying their Bibles as a form of symbolic identity marker, signifying their membership of the global ‘born-again’ community.<sup>87</sup> But the Bible was more than this. It became an important source for the reconstruction of Igbo Christian identity and the production of an African theology ‘from below’ that appealed to consumer demands.

While its role as the universal Christian text has acted as a homogenising and restraining influence upon global Christianity, the Bible has also precipitated local initiative and difference, and stimulated hybrid forms of spirituality. Scholars have noted that re-readings of the Bible can precipitate local revivalist activity and new

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<sup>86</sup> A situation of nominal Christianity has often precipitated periods of revival in Africa. See for example, Ward, ‘Balokole Revival’, 114, on the East African Revival.

religious movements in Africa.<sup>88</sup> During the civil war, young people, exposed to the influence of SU, began to study their Bibles as never before.<sup>89</sup> The combined effects of cultural nationalism and the Biafran crisis led to a greater degree of Bible reading autonomy among the Igbo.<sup>90</sup> This was reinforced by SU policy, which encouraged its members to read the Bible systematically, ask questions, and apply it to their lives.<sup>91</sup> These were crucial factors in the recovery of an evangelical spirituality and sparked off a new wave of intense evangelistic activity, which became the dominant feature of the revival. Out of 33 informants, 14 (42.4 %) said that Bible study/teaching was a prominent feature of the movement (see Table 3.2). As the ‘pre-eminent African text,’<sup>92</sup> the Bible played a significant role in shaping the lives of Igbo revivalists, and stimulated an unprecedented outbreak of revivalist activity.

Soon after the beginning of the war, Roberts started a Sunday afternoon Bible study meeting for local youth at SU Umuahia headquarters, and this continued until their

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<sup>87</sup> OI, Charles Igwilo and Chris Alagbu; Raymond Nwosu, Letter to Roberts, 12 April 1971; Justin O. Ogugua, written testimony, 1969 (Appendix 4.5.2, paragraph 3). Ogugua refers to the pocket Bibles they carried as ‘SU badges.’

<sup>88</sup> See for example Bennetta W. Jules-Rosette, ‘The Sacred in African New Religions’, in James A. Beckford and Thoman Luckmann (eds.), *The Changing Face of Religion*, London: Sage Publications, 1989, 148; Klaus Fiedler, ‘The Charismatic and Pentecostal Movements in Malawi in Cultural Perspective’, *Religion in Malawi*, 9, 1999, 28; Maxwell, ‘African Imagination’, 14; Barrett, *Schism*, 165; David B. Barrett, ‘Interdisciplinary Theories of Religion and African Independence’, in Barrett (ed.), *African Initiatives*, 152-53.

<sup>89</sup> Anthony O. Nkwoka, ‘The Role of the Bible in the Igbo Christianity of Nigeria’, in G. O. West and Musa W. Dube (eds.), *The Bible in Africa. Transactions, Trajectories and Trends*, Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2000, 328. During the war, Igbo SU members regarded the Bible as one of their most prized possessions. One described it as his ‘best companion,’ another as his ‘only priceless property.’ See written testimonies, Emma Ekpunobi, Chioma Amalu, 1969.

<sup>90</sup> Nkwoka, ‘Role of the Bible’, 328.

<sup>91</sup> Igenzoa, ‘Scripture Union’, 293-94. The publication of daily reading notes in English (Daily Power and Daily Guide) and Igbo (*Inye Aka*) was an important means of exposing young people to the whole Bible.

<sup>92</sup> Maxwell, ‘African Imagination’, 13.

evacuation in April 1969.<sup>93</sup> Subsequently, Bible study groups in towns and villages throughout Igboland became the launching pads for significant mission initiatives.<sup>94</sup> Most CMs began as Bible study groups associated with SU.<sup>95</sup>

**Table 3.2 Revival Features (33 Respondents)<sup>96</sup>**

FEATURE	N	%	FEATURE	N	%
Evangelism	33	100	Adventism	15	45.5
Spirit Baptism	28	84.8	Bible Study	14	42.4
Conversions	26	78.8	Songs/worship	9	27.3
Holiness	23	69.7	Persecution	7	21.2
Healing	20	60.6	Prophecy	5	15.2
Prayer	18	54.5	Deliverance	3	9.1
Unity & Love	17	51.5	Social Concern	2	6.1

The Bible was a means of adapting to new and often critical contexts, and a basis for challenging existing religious options and lifestyles. According to SU travelling secretary Olamijulo, one ‘benefit’ of the war was the re-emergence of Bible-based Christianity, and a return to New Testament belief and ethics in the east.<sup>97</sup> If we recall, pragmatism is an important aspect of Igbo indigenous spirituality.<sup>98</sup> Consequently, SU’s emphasis on the biblical text as authoritative and life transforming proved attractive to young people looking for practical help during a time of severe stress. As

<sup>93</sup> Bill Roberts, Letter to Harold Ling, S.U. London, August 1967. By the end of 1968, the SU weekly programme at Umuahia was as follows:

Sunday            3 p.m.    Bible study, with Guest Service on last Sunday of month.  
 Tuesday         4 p.m.    Meeting with nurses and wounded soldiers at nearby hospital.  
 Wednesday     3 p.m.    Fellowship meeting - Bible study, talks, prayer.

See Bill Roberts, S.U. Prayer Letter No. 15, 7 November and 8 December 1968.

<sup>94</sup> OI, Cyril Okorochoa, 8.2.99, Woking.

<sup>95</sup> Ojo, ‘Charismatic Movement in Nigeria’, 115.

<sup>96</sup> Based on oral interviews with former revivalists.

<sup>97</sup> Muiyiwa Olamijulo, ‘Report of visit to the East Central State’, 15 June-30 Sept, 1970.

<sup>98</sup> See chapter four, section 2.1.

they read their Bibles, they found it resonated with their own experiences of crisis.<sup>99</sup> Bible texts were a source of comfort for some; a guide to others;<sup>100</sup> and played an important role in conversion experiences,<sup>101</sup> problem-solving,<sup>102</sup> and ethical renewal.<sup>103</sup>

The revival enabled the youth to read the Bible through fresh lenses and cast a critical eye over existing religious forms. Many concluded that mainline churches were dominated by compromise with the ‘world’ and mixed with traditional religious practices.<sup>104</sup> This new appreciation of the Bible’s authority caused the young revivalists to reject other religious options, resulting in an exodus from the prayer houses, and a repudiation of ‘traditional’ cultural beliefs and practices after the war.<sup>105</sup> Later, it contributed to the emergence of CMs, as revivalists became dissatisfied with mainline church spirituality and its inability to meet the new demands thrown up by the civil war crisis.

The demonisation of prayer houses became a popular theme in post-war revivalist discourse. Members were assumed to be in bondage to the devil and deceived by false

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<sup>99</sup> For instance, one former revivalist identified his own experience of suffering during the civil war with Jesus’ teaching about the escalation of conflicts during the last days in Matt 24:6-13. Felix Okafor, written testimony, 1969.

<sup>100</sup> Written testimonies, Nnenna Okoye, Benjamin Onwochei, Chioma Amalu, 1969.

<sup>101</sup> Written testimonies, Uchenna Emezue, John Nwangwu, Dennis Okafor, 1969. Okafor’s decision to accept Christ at a SU Guest service on 26 November 1967 was influenced by his exposure to the following Bible texts: John 3:16, Rom 5:8, Rom 6:23, and Rev 3:20.

<sup>102</sup> John Nwangwu, written testimony, 1969.

<sup>103</sup> Benjamin Onwochei, written testimony, 1969.

<sup>104</sup> Okorochoa, *Religious Conversion*, 274. For example, one former revivalist’s criticism of Christians joining the traditional *Ozo* Society was based on his understanding of the Bible text 1 Cor 5:17: ‘Therefore, if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come’ (NASB). Stephen Okoroafor, Letter to Roberts, 22 July 1971.

<sup>105</sup> Hackett, ‘Charismatic/Pentecostal’, 261.

prophets.<sup>106</sup> Revivalists criticised the prayer houses for incorporating elements of indigenous religion and ‘occultism’ into their belief systems and rituals, for failing to preach the gospel, and for the magical use of the Bible.<sup>107</sup> One informant commented that members ‘read the Bible to acquire power and perform their miracles, to fight their enemies, but not to change their lives.’<sup>108</sup> Their visionary practices were also deemed demonic and further suspicion was generated by the alleged immoral lifestyles of some of the leaders.<sup>109</sup> However, the issue of typology is important here. If we recall, prayer houses like Christ Holy Church and St. Joseph’s Chosen Church of God strongly opposed both traditional religious practices and ‘occult’ activity. Other groups were less discerning, however, and became the target of revivalist critique.

The Bible fuelled the Igbo imagination, and provided a rich source for new ideas and new means to attain old objectives. Revival doctrine and practice were rooted in what Kalu refers to as a hermeneutic of ‘experiential literalism,’ where experience and Scripture are maintained in a ‘dialectical relationship.’<sup>110</sup> Poewe maintains that literal, as opposed to symbolic, interpretations of the Bible ‘can lead to new discoveries and

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<sup>106</sup> Bolton, *Glory*, 6-8; Okafor, Okafor, and Oruizu, Letter to SU Executive Committee, 17. A member of SU Enugu Central township group wrote in 1971: ‘those who have been bound by satanic Prayer bands have received the Lord through this Group and many who do not ever go to church now share Christian fellowship with us.’ Rosebud Okorochoa, Letter to Roberts, 31 May 1971.

<sup>107</sup> See Bolton, *Glory*, 8-10; Okafor, Okafor, and Oruizu, Letter to SU Executive Committee, quoted in Bolton, *Glory*, 12-17; OI, Raphael Okafor, 8.5.00, Enugu (Appendix 4.7.5).

<sup>108</sup> OI, Eliezer Okoye, 13.5.00, Onitsha.

<sup>109</sup> OI, Chinedu Nebo, 4.5.00, Enugu; OI, Raphael Okafor, 8.5.00, Enugu (Appendix 4.7.5); Rosebud Okorochoa, Letter to Roberts, 31 May 1971; Okafor, Okafor, and Oruizu, Letter to SU Executive Committee, quoted in Bolton, *Glory*, 16-17, 14.

<sup>110</sup> Kalu, ‘Preserving a Worldview’, 134; Kalu, ‘Third Response’, 11. Here Kalu draws upon Johns’s observation that a Pentecostal hermeneutic is ‘praxis-oriented,’ such that personal experience is constantly being critically analysed in the light of Scripture. See Johns, *Pentecostal Formation*, 86-7. See also Ojo, ‘Church’, 29: ‘Charismatic movements are intensely biblical, so most of their doctrinal emphases and practices are rooted in the literal interpretation of Bible verses.’ For more on SU’s hermeneutical approach, see Igenzoa, ‘Scripture Union’, 295-97.

breakthroughs.’<sup>111</sup> This hermeneutical approach contributed to the revival’s emphasis on ethical rigorism and Christian unity, and its appropriation of Pentecostal spirituality. Young people searched their Bibles and found within its pages an answer to their quest for power. Their intention, as Okorochoa has noted, was to ‘recover the fervour and power of the first-generation converts, through a radical biblical literalism.’<sup>112</sup> Eddi Onugha’s revival narrative illustrates this well. It shows the dialectical relationship that existed between Christian experience and Scripture during the revival, and the way that literal readings of the Bible generated faith and precipitated quests for providential interventions.<sup>113</sup>

The Bible played a critical role in the formation of missionary communities by providing an ideological basis for evangelistic activity and ingredients for evangelistic discourse.<sup>114</sup> The use of badges and stickers with Scripture texts was a novel approach to evangelism adopted by some participants.<sup>115</sup> Revivalists also combined oral communication with the distribution of Scripture tracts, and this approach was apparently instrumental in winning many new converts.<sup>116</sup> Out of 47 informants ‘born-again’ during the revival (1967-73), six (12.8 %) said that a Christian tract played a significant role in their conversion experience. Protagonists believed that the Word itself, not just the messenger, was replete with spiritual potency. However, in contrast

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<sup>111</sup> Poewe, ‘Introduction’, 21.

<sup>112</sup> Okorochoa, *Religious Conversion*, 274.

<sup>113</sup> Eddi Onugha, personal reminiscence, May 2000 (Appendix 4.1, paragraphs 7 & 8).

<sup>114</sup> See Roberts, *Life and Death*, 45; Ojo, ‘Church’, 29. This is also evident in revivalist narratives. See Justin O. Ogugua, written testimony, 1969 (Appendix 4.5.2); Peter Ekwo, ‘The Role of Bible Study and Print Media during the Seventies’, RSC, 28.4.00, Enugu; Emezue, ‘New Year’s Victory’, (Appendix 4.5.1); Raphael Okafor, Diary entries, quoted in Bolton, *Glory*.

<sup>115</sup> PC, Chris Alagbu, 28.4.00, Enugu. Alagbu himself used to have Scripture texts sown into his clothes.

<sup>116</sup> OI, Ifeyinma Orajekwe and Augustine Nwodika; Raphael Okafor, Diary, 4 May 1971, quoted in Bolton, *Glory*, 120; Bolton, *Glory*, 155.

to prayer houses, where the Bible was sometimes used in a magical fashion,<sup>117</sup> revivalists assumed a literate audience and expected the words they proclaimed, displayed, and distributed to bring enlightenment and ‘new life’ through the agency of the Spirit.

#### **4. Paths to Conversion**

I now consider the issue of conversion, a key feature of revivals generally,<sup>118</sup> and reflect upon religious motivation and consumer demands during the Civil War Revival.

##### **4.1 Born-again Conversion**

The Civil War Revival was associated with evangelistic initiatives geared towards radical conversion. Twenty-six (78.8 %) out of 33 informants said that widespread conversion experiences were a prominent feature of the movement (Table 3.2). This emphasis on personal conversion, an element of SU spirituality, points to the influence of Western individualism spread through global flows. As one former revivalist recalled, ‘the coming of the revival emphasised the need to have a personal experience with the God of Christianity . . . to give up traditional Christianity, and really seek for a personal relationship.’<sup>119</sup>

In revivalist discourse, conversion was understood as a process culminating in the crisis experience of being ‘born-again’ through repentance and faith in Christ. So definite

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<sup>117</sup> For instance, during her visits to a prayer house, Bolton recalled instructions to recite certain psalms, and on one occasion was beaten with Bibles as part of a deliverance ritual (*Glory*, 52-3).

<sup>118</sup> See for example, Blumhofer and Balmer, ‘Introduction’, xi; McLoughlin, *Revivals*, xiii, 2; Carwardine, *Transatlantic Revivalism*, xv.

<sup>119</sup> Eddi Onugha, personal reminiscence, May 2000 (Appendix 4.1, paragraph 7).

was this experience that some informants could recall the exact date it occurred.<sup>120</sup> ‘Born-again’ terminology was a prominent feature of SU teaching and conversion narratives.<sup>121</sup> Converts talked about ‘being saved,’ ‘receiving Jesus,’ ‘surrendering to Christ,’ and being ‘born-again.’ As Castells notes, the personal experience of being born-again provides a basis for constructing a sense of autonomy and identity.<sup>122</sup> The metaphor of new birth captured the Igbo imagination at an unprecedented moment of crisis in their history.

If we recall, the combination of urbanisation associated with modernisation, and social dislocation caused by the civil war, contributed to increasing religious pluralism and an expanding religious marketplace, as existing traditional social and religious ties were loosened. This facilitated the process of autonomy of the individual, including religious choices, and created an environment favourable to religious conversion.

#### 4.2 A Variety of Converts

Rambo’s insightful treatment of religious conversion provides us with a helpful framework for understanding religious change during the revival. He identifies a range of conversion processes. Three are especially relevant: *intensification*, the revitalised commitment to a faith which the convert has had previous, if nominal, affiliation;

<sup>120</sup> For example, Uchenna Emezue, Letter to Roberts, 28 September 1973 (Appendix 4.7.3, paragraph 1).

<sup>121</sup> Achunike, *Dreams of Heaven*, 56; Anyaegbu, ‘Pentecostal/Evangelical’, 21. One former member of SU Umuahia recalled that Roberts’s teachings were ‘based mainly on John chapter three, new birth, regeneration, salvation, and then forgiveness of sin, change of life.’ OI, Ndubueze Oti, 23.5.00, Enugu. See also Bill Roberts, Letter to S.U. Groups Area Representatives, from S.U. Headquarters, Umuozu-Mbano, 20 November 1969: ‘It has been a great joy to meet many whose lives have been transformed from being an ordinary Church member to a very lively born again Christian.’ For revivalist narratives, see Uchenna Emezue, ‘My Journey into Life’, written testimony, October 1969 (Appendix 4.6.2, paragraphs 1, 7 & 9); Nwodika, ‘Churches in the Seventies’ (Appendix 4.7.1, paragraphs 1); Ume Kalu, ‘What God has done for me’, written testimony, October 1969 (Appendix 4.6.1, paragraph 1).

*institutional transition*, the change of an individual or groups from one community to another within a major tradition; and *tradition transition*, the movement from one major religious tradition to another.<sup>123</sup> Igbo conversion to Christianity was a dynamic process of transformation in response to fresh challenges and changing contexts. For those who encountered the revival, conversion sometimes involved a transition from traditional religion to Christianity, but more often a movement from a nominal form of Christianity to a revitalised ‘born-again’ faith commitment. A third category included members of mainline churches, who later converted to Pentecostalism. For many, conversion involved a combination of these processes, sometimes taking place over a prolonged period. As such, the revival resacralised the landscape in Christian terms by precipitating multiple conversions and intensifying existing religious commitments.

The conversion of traditionalists was not especially common. One reason was the revival’s status as a youth movement in a gerontocratic society. Most traditionalists were older, and disinclined to heed the radical message of the young revivalists, especially if delivered in English with little sensitivity to local social structures, which was often the case.<sup>124</sup> Another reason was SU’s initial reluctance to carry the gospel across church boundaries into the streets and marketplaces. *Hour of Freedom* popularised open-air evangelistic campaigns and broadened the revival’s appeal. However, while many traditionalists attended these events, relatively few became

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<sup>122</sup> Castells, *Identity*, 22.

<sup>123</sup> Rambo, *Religious Conversion*, 13-14.

<sup>124</sup> OI, Udobata Onunwa, 25.1.01, Birmingham. This does not mean that older men and women were immune to the effects of the revival. One revivalist mentions a SU meeting in Uzuakoli where ‘hundreds’ of young boys and girls, old men and women confessed their sins and accepted Christ.’ Chioma Amalu, written testimony, 1969. Another referred to the conversion of his father (a traditionalist) at a SU meeting in Umuahia during the war, two years before his death. Uchenna Emezue, Letter to Roberts, 24 May 1971.

Christians.<sup>125</sup> Usually, those converted from a traditional religious background had some prior contact with Christianity, perhaps through attending a mission school.<sup>126</sup> Most revival converts were mission church members, often with dual allegiance to one of the prayer houses or ‘occult’ societies.<sup>127</sup>

### 4.3 Power for Living

During the revival, why did so many Igbos reject existing religious options in favour of born-again Christianity? Maxwell notes that the success of new forms of African popular Christianity ‘lay in both their continuity and discontinuity with what had gone before.’<sup>128</sup> If we recall, Igbo converts appropriate the gospel via existing religious categories. Despite the variety of motivational factors involved, I agree with Okorochoa that the quest for power to enhance life (*ezi-ndu*, Igbo) is the hermeneutical key to understanding Igbo conversion during the revival.<sup>129</sup> This search for power was a pervasive theme in Igbo society and the dominant orientation of the Igbo towards all religion. It took prospective converts along a variety of paths prior to the actual moment of conversion, and was often intensified during periods of personal stress. As noted in chapter two, *ezi-ndu* embraces physical health, material prosperity, fertility,

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<sup>125</sup> PC, Stephen Okafor, 31.1.01.

<sup>126</sup> I interviewed six former revivalists converted from a traditionalist background during the revival, but all had been previously exposed to Christian influences. Five of them were introduced to Christianity when they entered mission schools.

<sup>127</sup> For members of secret or ‘occult’ societies converted during the revival, see Bolton, *Glory*, 104, 97-8; Raphael Okafor, Diary entries, 19 March 1971, 27 March 1971, quoted in Bolton, *Glory*, 105, 111. Revivalists regarded those converted from this kind of background as special trophies. For example, Raphael Okafor’s diary entry of 27 March 1971: ‘About thirty people accepted the Lord, including one occultist.’

<sup>128</sup> Maxwell, ‘African Imagination’, 7. See also Hastings, *Essay in Interpretation*, 44-5.

<sup>129</sup> Okorochoa, *Religious Conversion*, 206, 278; Okorochoa, ‘Religious Conversion in Africa’, 171. The main focus of Okorochoa’s research is the religious encounter between missionaries and Igbo traditionalists during the colonial era, but he maintains that the search for power to enhance life continued as a factor in Igbo conversion in later contexts, and in the rise of new religious movements, including new forms of Christianity.

individual success, communal satisfaction, and practical guidance - all fruits of power looked for in Christianity.

However, ‘rupture’ was also an important element in Igbo Christian conversion, as new contexts created new demands and exposed the deficiencies of existing religious options. The revival introduced new ideas to the Igbo religious repertoire, and new means to attain old objectives. And sometimes these objectives themselves were transformed in the process of conversion. Here Peel’s concept of transvaluation is helpful. He suggests that in the Yoruba context, missionary preaching challenged the ends of indigenous piety by making out ‘that the most important human objectives lay beyond earthly existence, not within it.’<sup>130</sup>

#### **4.4 Power for Healing and Deliverance**

For some Igbos, the search for salvation was initiated by a quest for healing or deliverance, though this was not common among informants, and clashed with ‘official’ SU theology. For one informant, the conversion process began with a quest for healing from barrenness,<sup>131</sup> in accord with Igbo traditional aspirations for children to extend life and perpetuate the family name.<sup>132</sup> Another told me of his conversion after becoming seriously ill during the war. Despite seeking assistance from *dibia* and medical doctors, and attending a prayer house, his condition failed to improve. Finally, in 1971, a friend persuaded him to visit Stephen Okafor at *Hour of Freedom* headquarters, where he

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<sup>130</sup> Peel, *Religious Encounter*, 165.

<sup>131</sup> OI, Mrs. B. C. Ikedinobi, 12.5.00, Onitsha.

<sup>132</sup> See Okorochoa, *Religious Conversion*, 66.

received healing after prayer.<sup>133</sup> In revivalist discourse, the experience of healing did not guarantee conversion. In this case, my informant was persuaded to ‘make a conscious confession of Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour.’<sup>134</sup> Here is an example of what Lofland and Skonovd refer to as ‘experimental’ conversion, involving the active exploration of religious options, a consumerist approach characteristic of an expanding religious marketplace.<sup>135</sup> It supports the economic market model proposed by rational choice theorists, where religion is expected to flourish in a competitive environment.

Entries in Raphael Okafor’s diary suggest that a quest for healing was sometimes a motive for attending *Hour of Freedom* events. For example, the entry of 1 May 1971: ‘Divine healing from Exodus 14.13-16 preached by brother Stephen. People flocked to the altar call for deliverance . . . it was at Nnewi that the greatest number of miraculous healings was recorded.’<sup>136</sup> Yet prayers for healing were normally accompanied by a call for repentance and an invitation to receive Christ.

#### **4.5 Surviving the War and the Peace**

For some revivalists, born-again conversion was a direct consequence of their war experience, and was again linked to the pursuit of spiritual power and abundant life. Kukah maintains that the war created a sense of disillusionment with the secular order,

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<sup>133</sup> OI, Benjamin Ikedinobi, 12.5.00, Onitsha.

<sup>134</sup> Another former revivalist told me that during the war many came to him to receive healing prayer, because they ‘recognised the presence of power,’ but this did not always lead to their conversion. OI, Cyril Okorochoa, 8.2.99, Woking.

<sup>135</sup> John Lofland and Norman Skonovd, ‘Conversion Motifs’, *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 20, 1981, 373-85.

<sup>136</sup> Quoted in Bolton, *Glory*, 119.

a craving for spirituality, and a search for alternative means of ‘surviving the peace.’<sup>137</sup> One informant, a Yoruba who experienced the revival in Eastern and Western Nigeria, told me that ‘spiritual hunger’ was greater among Igbos because of the suffering they endured.<sup>138</sup> Out of 43 informants ‘born-again’ during the revival, 11 (26 %) said the Biafran crisis had contributed to their conversion. This supports Rambo’s assertion that some form of crisis can act as an initiator of conversion processes.<sup>139</sup>

During the war, SU in the east experienced a significant increase in converts.<sup>140</sup> Feelings of insecurity and anxiety for the future made many Igbos more receptive to the gospel and intensified their religious quest. Sometimes this resulted in the rejection of other religious options in favour of revival Christianity, as they sought for power to counteract evil and acquire protection.<sup>141</sup> Fear of not surviving the war was one reason given for conversion to ‘born-again’ Christianity.<sup>142</sup> If we recall, old age with dignity (*nka na nzere*, Igbo) constitutes the goal of Igbo traditional life, and consequently many

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<sup>137</sup> Matthew Hassan Kukah, ‘The Politicisation of Fundamentalism in Nigeria’, in Gifford (ed.), *New Dimensions in African Christianity*, 195.

<sup>138</sup> OI, Muyiwa Olamijulo, 17.1.02, Ikot Enwang. See also OI, Augustine Nwodika, Augustus Mbanaso, and Leo Anorue. Another revivalist compared the SU fellowship groups in Igboland with those in the south-east immediately after the war: ‘The Fellowship there and at Calabar were quite strong though they have never known the type we knew at Umuahia because we knew the nakedness of life. We saw and experienced the cruelty of man to man but were never denied of the unending goodness of the Lord most High.’ Raymond Nwosu, Letter to Roberts, 22 September 1970.

<sup>139</sup> Rambo, *Religious Conversion*, 44, 54-6. See also John Lofland and Rodney Stark, ‘Becoming a World-Saver: A Theory of Conversion to a Deviant Perspective’, *American Sociological Review*, 30, 1965, 864.

<sup>140</sup> Roberts, Letter to Dan Onwukwe, 11 April 1970; OI, Bill Roberts, 23.7.99, Cullompton.

<sup>141</sup> OI, Don Odunze, Onyinye Ogbonna, and Ndubueze O. Oti. See also Achunike, *Dreams of Heaven*, 57. According to informants, many Igbo young people made bargains with God during the war, promising to serve him wholeheartedly if he protected them. Several revivalists stated that the war made them more ‘consecrated’ to God and increased their Christian commitment. See written testimonies, Felix Okafor, Nnenna Okoye, Dennis Okafor; Sam Okoli, Letter to Roberts, 7 June 1970; Matthias U. J. Eluwah, Letter to Roberts, 26 February 1970.

<sup>142</sup> OI, Don Odunze, Ndubueze O. Oti, Thompson Nwosu, and Wilson Uzumegbunam.

Igbos are fearful of dying prematurely.<sup>143</sup> For those who accepted the revival message, its emphasis on the imminent return of Christ enabled them to break free from their fear of death and fix their eyes on heaven.<sup>144</sup> After the war, many Igbos interpreted their survival as evidence of God's providential power and this too precipitated a search for salvation.<sup>145</sup>

War trauma and deprivation also intensified religious commitments by dealing a severe blow to materialistic lifestyles and future ambitions, and creating a crisis of identity. The Igbos, as we have noted, are an achievement-orientated society where success and status, linked to material prosperity, are prevailing cultural themes.<sup>146</sup> The war precipitated a dialogue in Igbo hearts and minds as they searched for new meanings to explain present dilemmas and new means to reconstruct shattered identities.<sup>147</sup> One former revivalist recalled that before the war Igbos

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<sup>143</sup> Kalu, *Embattled Gods*, 30; Okorocho, *Religious Conversion*, 73. Okorocho, *Religious Conversion*, 70, quotes an Igbo traditional prayer:

<i>Nnaa hu lee</i>	Our beloved Fathers,
<i>Biko nyenu anyi ndu O.</i>	Please give us life.
<i>Ezi ndu, Ogologo ndu</i>	Viable life, long live.
<i>Na ahu ike n'odinma</i>	Good health and wellbeing.
<i>Onwu Egbuchulanyi!</i>	May we not die before our time!

<sup>144</sup> An example was Nnenna Chukwuma, who told me that her fear of dying, intensified by her experience of air raids, contributed to her conversion. OI, Nnenna Chukwuma, 26.5.00, Enugu.

<sup>145</sup> For example, Okoroafor, *William Okoye*, 39: 'The few survivors, the maimed inclusive, appreciated the mercies and the lovingkindness of the Almighty God who alone made all things work well for them. Many began to seek after the Most High in spirit and truth.'

<sup>146</sup> Uchendu, *Igbo*, 16, 92; Okorocho, *Religious Conversion*, 193.

<sup>147</sup> For example, OI, Felix Obiorah, 6.10.01, Umuahia: 'I think there were a lot of resources in the country in those days, and every person was just thinking how much you can get, especially in this part of the country. . . But the war disenchanting everybody and impoverished everybody. People who were millionaires, at the end of the war they were given £20 period. It levelled everybody . . . So they had to find some meaning somewhere. Life didn't mean much anymore. People lost dear ones during the war. And then people were famished with hunger, and that kind of thing. You just begin to think that there has to be meaning somewhere.'

had a notion of the ‘other’, but the main thing was to work hard, make money, build a big house, live well. And then the war upturned all that. Some of them lost everything they had. . . . They began to think about what life was all about, and that gave rise to them going to listen [to the gospel] for the first time. In other words . . . God used that to get our attention, which is the positive side of the war.<sup>148</sup>

The example of Frances Lawjua Bolton (née Egwu) is a case in point. A nominal Anglican and member of the educated elite,<sup>149</sup> her family lost everything during the war and were forced to become refugees. This initiated a search for salvation that culminated in her conversion through contact with SU.<sup>150</sup> Another informant described the crisis he experienced after the war when he found himself unable to continue his education and with no employment prospects. His religious quest was precipitated by the example of a friend who ‘was going through the same situation, the same hunger, the same deprivation, but he had attached a different meaning to life than I had.’<sup>151</sup> Sometimes conversion narratives contained contrasts between losses incurred during the war and gains from the experience of ‘new life in Christ.’ One SU member wrote, ‘Though I might have lost dear ones in the war and lost some years of education yet my gain is greater for I gained the greatest and the best which is my salvation.’<sup>152</sup>

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<sup>148</sup> OI, Ken Okeke, 17.12.98, London.

<sup>149</sup> Bolton’s father, John Egwu, was a leading Igbo pharmacist and Presbyterian elder, and her mother was the first Igbo female pharmacist. Her uncle was Sir Francis Akanu Ibiam, the first governor of Eastern Nigeria. OI, Frances Lawjua Bolton (née Egwu), 23.5.99, Loughton; Bolton, *Glory*, 48.

<sup>150</sup> OI, Frances Lawjua Bolton, 23.5.99, Loughton. Bolton told me that before the war ‘life was good.’ But partway through the war she began to suffer from ‘psychosomatic quadriplegia,’ which she put down to shock.

<sup>151</sup> Meshak Ilobi, personal reminiscence, May 2000.

<sup>152</sup> Elizabeth Onukwue, Letter to Roberts, 23 May 1971.

These examples support Stark and Bainbridge's theory of religion as compensation.<sup>153</sup> In each case, born-again Christianity offered compensations to those suffering forms of deprivation and loss associated with the war. Here the revival represented a rupture with traditional thought and challenged the Igbo concept of 'life' with its focus on this-worldly blessings. It emphasised the future enjoyment of 'heaven' as compensation for present sufferings, and injected purpose and meaning into the experience of adversity by stressing its redemptive qualities. Where I disagree with Stark and Bainbridge is their argument that the persistence of needs that cannot be met in this world explains why people believe in a next world. In line with traditional thought patterns, Igbo revivalists expected compensations in this world as well as the next.

#### 4.6 A Quest for Ethical Renewal

For many informants, the quest for ethical renewal was a prominent feature of their conversion narratives. Invariably the actual moment of 'new birth' was preceded by a period of 'conviction of sin,' either alone<sup>154</sup> or in a communal setting,<sup>155</sup> and on occasions a desire for moral transformation actually initiated a religious quest.<sup>156</sup>

An important theme in revival narratives was the way people were sometimes overwhelmed with a sense of sorrow for sin, usually in response to preaching and orchestrated by the Holy Spirit.<sup>157</sup> The revival provided a safe setting for such

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<sup>153</sup> See Stark and Bainbridge, *Future of Religion*.

<sup>154</sup> For example, written testimonies, Chima Amalu, Ume Kalu, and Uchenna Emezue (Appendices 4.6.1 & 4.6.2); OI, Wilson Ezeofor, 25.9.01, Jos; Bolton, *Glory*, 55.

<sup>155</sup> For example, Nnenna Okoye, written testimony, 1969; Meshak Ilobi, personal reminiscence, May 2000; OI, Godwin Nwosu, 10.10.01, Umuahia.

<sup>156</sup> For example, Uchenna Emezue, 'New Year's Victory' (Appendix 4.5.1).

<sup>157</sup> A similar phenomenon was noted by eyewitnesses of other African revivals; for example those associated with the Ruanda Mission in East Africa, the World Evangelization Crusade in the Congo

sentiments to be expressed.<sup>158</sup> One informant told me that during *Hour of Freedom* events, people would sometimes spontaneously fall down and weep as they confessed their sins,<sup>159</sup> and Bolton's eyewitness account describes scenes of mass emotional outbursts as people came under 'conviction of sin' in response to gospel preaching. After public confession of sin, feelings of joy replaced feelings of sorrow.<sup>160</sup> Of course, one must take care when assessing such anecdotal evidence. Blumhofer and Balmer remind us that revivals are communal events, and while not denying the workings of the Spirit, suggest that the sheer force of group behaviour has a powerful influence on the behaviour of individuals.<sup>161</sup>

Why was there this urge for radical change, and what did it represent? Most revival converts would have said it was due to the influence of the Spirit, their response to the Bible and evangelical preaching,<sup>162</sup> their exposure to the testimonies and lifestyles of revivalists,<sup>163</sup> and their fear of imminent judgment (hell). However, it was also consistent with 'moral' explanations for misfortune and the search for power in traditional piety. If we recall, Igbos traditionally associate moral probity with the acquisition of power and divine blessings (*oguwu ike* or 'moral probity is the source of

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(1953), the Qua Iboe Church in southeastern Nigeria (1927), and the Sudan United Mission in Northern Nigeria (1972). See *Ruanda Notes*, January 1937, 45-50; *Ruanda Notes*, April 1934, 20; *World Conquest*, Nov.-Dec. 1953, 1, 4; *World Conquest*, Jan.-Feb. 1954, 1, 4-5; J. E. Church, *Quest for the Highest: An Autobiographical Account of the East African Revival*, Exeter: Paternoster Press, 1981, 99; Westgarth, *Holy Spirit*, 27, 42-3; David and Bridget Williams, *The Wind Blowing*, Sidcup: SUM, 1973, 10, 21.

<sup>158</sup> OI, Frances Lawjua Bolton, 23.5.99, Loughton.

<sup>159</sup> OI, Raphael Okafor, 8.5.00, Enugu. See also Okafor, Diary, 10 October 1971, quoted in Bolton, *Glory*, 132; OI, Paul Nwachukwu, 12.5.00, Onitsha.

<sup>160</sup> This occurred in 1971 at a week-long programme in Bolton's home town of Unwana, organised by *Hour of Freedom*. Bolton, *Glory*, 126-28.

<sup>161</sup> Blumhofer and Balmer, 'Introduction', xii. See also Rambo, *Religious Conversion*, 16; Lofland and Skonovd, 'Conversions Motifs', 373-85.

<sup>162</sup> Okoroafor, *William Okoye*, 42.

<sup>163</sup> Nnenna Okoye, written testimony, 1969.

genuine power'). This is reflected in the Igbo personal name *Ogubuike* (Igbo: power comes to those who pay attention to moral probity), and the Igbo concept of the 'good person' (*ezi-mmadu*, Igbo). Thus, the pursuit of a moral lifestyle is closely linked to a quest for power to enhance life, both now and in the hereafter.<sup>164</sup>

As noted above, for some Igbos the catastrophic conditions induced by the war precipitated a quest for ethical renewal;<sup>165</sup> hence, the appeal of revival Christianity with its promise of power for moral and social transformation. In their testimonies, converts refer to the impotence of existing religious options in this respect. Igbo traditional religion expects its adherents to secure salvation through moral rectitude, and while there are rituals for cleansing 'sin' and warding off the wrath of the gods, 'no lasting remedy is provided for man's guilt.'<sup>166</sup> In revivalist narratives, similar sentiments are expressed of mainline mission churches and prayer houses. Converts refer to the 'hypocritical' and immoral lifestyles of members and leaders, and the stress on religious ritual and outward behaviour rather than new birth.<sup>167</sup> In mainline churches, baptism,

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<sup>164</sup> Okorochoa, *Religious Conversion*, 117-18.

<sup>165</sup> This was more so at the end of the war when a good deal of heart-searching went on. Some Igbos began to realise that blame for the war did not rest entirely with the other side. See Roberts, *Life and Death*, 29; OI, Paul Nwachukwu, 12.5.00, Onitsha; written testimonies, Raymond Nwosu, Simon Ugwuoke, 1969. For instance, Ugwuoke wrote: 'We are praying that God may bring an end to this war. God searches our hearts for repentance. Just as He heard the Israelites when they repented and called on Him, so would He also hear us. There is evil everywhere in Biafra and we must fight against it. Do you think that it is impossible for God to stop this war now? It is not. But we are prolonging the war by our evil ways.' See also Emmanuel Ekpunobi, written testimony, 1969: 'I am one of those who believe that the Almighty Father can stop this war if only we turn from our evil ways and call Him in Truth and Spirit.' Others asked different questions. For instance, one informant told me that he often read from the book of Habakkuk, which poses the question, why does God allow the wicked to 'swallow up those more righteous than they?' Hab 1:13 (NASB). OI, Udobata Onunwe, 23.3.04, Birmingham.

<sup>166</sup> Okorochoa, *Religious Conversion*, 293.

<sup>167</sup> For mainline mission churches, see OI, Chinedu Nebo, John Onuora, Godwin Nwosu, and Wilson Ezeofor; Ume Kalu, 'What God has done for me' (Appendix 4.6.1, paragraph 1); Elizabeth Onukwue, Letter to Roberts, 23 May 1971. Onukwue refers to church leaders as 'Pharisees,' who hold the form of religion but deny its power. See also Uchenna Emezue, 'New Year's Victory' (Appendix 4.5.1, paragraph 1). There is conflicting evidence as to the moral standards of prayer houses. Bolton gives a negative assessment (*Glory*, 10), as does Raphael Okafor in his description of UPPB. OI, Raphael

communion, and church attendance were the primary marks of Christian identity.<sup>168</sup> The revival reintroduced the evangelical doctrines of sin and hell, judgment and grace into the Igbo religious repertoire. The evangelical concept of sin, as an intrinsic disposition, and salvation as transformation, conflicted with Igbo notions of *mmehie* (Igbo: wrongdoing),<sup>169</sup> and the ability of individuals to save themselves through personal effort and religious ritual.

Like other African groups,<sup>170</sup> Igbos traditionally understand 'sin' in terms of specific moral and social acts, rather than feelings of internal sinfulness,<sup>171</sup> and the focus is on consequences (affliction) rather than agency.<sup>172</sup> But revival Christianity insisted that inner 'heart sins,' such as pride, jealousy, covetousness, and anger, also rendered the individual guilty before God,<sup>173</sup> and it created an awareness of sin irrespective of the experience of affliction. With its focus on 'new life in Christ,' the revival offered the promise of redemption and transformation, and appealed to those looking for power to

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Okafor, 8.5.00, Enugu (Appendix 4.7.5). Stephen Okafor, 'Quest for Authenticity', 165, is more positive about UPPB. Generally, however, in revivalist discourse neither the mission churches nor the prayer houses provided access to the kind of power that would enable them to live holy lives.

<sup>168</sup> Nnenna Okoye, written testimony, 1969; Uchenna Emezue, 'New Year's Victory' (Appendix 4.5.1, paragraph 1); Uchenna Emezue, 'My Journey into Life' (Appendix 4.6.2, paragraph 2); Ume Kalu, 'What God has done for me' (Appendix 4.6.1, paragraph 1).

<sup>169</sup> The Igbo word *mmehie* refers to 'wrong actions' or 'moral faults.' Okorocho, *Religious Conversion*, 118; Echema, *Traditional Igbo Society*, 52. *Ajo ihe* is a generic term denoting anything they consider evil, whether physical, moral, social, or religious, including hostile spiritual forces. Ikenga-Metuh, *African Religion*, 110.

<sup>170</sup> For example, the Yoruba of Western Nigeria, and the Ewe of Ghana. See Peel, *Religious Encounter*, 179-80; Birgit Meyer, 'Modernity and Enchantment: The image of the Devil in Popular African Christianity', in Peter van der Meer (ed.), *Conversion to Modernities: The Globalisation of Christianity*, New York/London: Routledge, 1996, 215. See also Laurenti Magesa, *African Religion. The Moral Traditions of Abundant Life*, Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1997, 161-62.

<sup>171</sup> Ikenga-Metuh, *African Religion*, 4, 109; Okorocho, *Religious Conversion*, 293-94.

<sup>172</sup> See chapter two, section 2.1. According to Echema, *Traditional Igbo Society*, 52, moral offences endanger the 'ontological equilibrium' of the community. A similar concept of evil is held by the Ewe of Ghana. For a discussion, see Meyer, *Translating the Devil*, 85-8.

<sup>173</sup> See for example, Ume Kalu, 'What God has done for me' (Appendix 4.6.1, paragraph 3); Uchenna Emezue, 'My Journey into Life' (Appendix 4.6.2, paragraphs 2 & 3); Emmanuel Ekpunobi, written testimony, 1969. This was also characteristic of other African revivals - for example, in East Africa and

break from past associations with traditional religious practices, leave behind old habits, and live a consecrated life. The message of groups like *Hour of Freedom* was liberating because it presented a new way of receiving as opposed to achieving *ezi-ndu*.

#### 4.7 The Conversion Ritual

In revivalist discourse, the actual moment of ‘new birth’ was often presented as a power encounter between competing religious options. Sometimes this was dramatic, especially in the case of traditionalists or those involved in some form of ‘occult’ activity. In these instances, conversion was invariably accompanied by a demonstration of power, a miraculous healing for example,<sup>174</sup> or a visual display of Christ’s power over malign spirits.<sup>175</sup> Onwubiko’s narrative captures this well. He describes two separate encounters with traditionalists during campaigns conducted in the 1970s. In each case, the critical moment came with a visual ‘power encounter’ between two rival factions, resulting in a drift in the direction of power. The metaphor of war was sometimes employed. In Onwubiko’s account, conversion was presented as a spiritual conflict between good and evil. ‘Witches and wizards’ and traditional religionists were portrayed as enemies of Christ, disrupting the gospel’s progress.<sup>176</sup>

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the Congo. See Ward, ‘Africa’, 224. See also eyewitness accounts in *World Conquest* (May-June 1954, 5) and *Ruanda Notes* (Oct. 1936, 12; July 1937, 23).

<sup>174</sup> I have already mentioned the case of Benjamin Ikedinobi, whose parents were traditional religionists. See section 4.4 of this chapter. SU travelling secretary Muyiwa Olamijulo records the case of a traditionalist in Abakaliki, North-Eastern Igboland, converted after his child was apparently raised from the dead following prayer. Muyiwa Olamijulo, S.U. Travelling Secretary, Eastern Newsletter No.6, January 1973.

<sup>175</sup> Bolton records a dramatic encounter between a ‘native doctor’ (referred to in her narrative as a ‘servant of Satan’) and three SU girls soon after the war, which resulted in his ‘deliverance’ and conversion. Bolton, *Glory*, 40-1.

<sup>176</sup> OI, Samson Onwubiko, 10.10.01, Umuahia (Appendix 4.5.4).

Most conversion experiences, however, were described in less dramatic terms, as a personal encounter with Jesus Christ and a relief from guilt, resulting in inner peace.<sup>177</sup> Rambo refers to ‘surrender’ as essential to the appropriation of a new life.<sup>178</sup> A number of informants allude to this in their conversion stories, either as a description of their ‘new birth,’<sup>179</sup> or a crisis experience subsequent to it.<sup>180</sup>

Through the experience of being ‘born-again,’ participants constructed new identities by taking the gospel narrative as their own.<sup>181</sup> As a Christian rite of passage, enacted in a context of crisis, it marked the transition from one stage of life to another, and involved symbolic performances, deconstructive and reconstructive rituals. Iconoclasm, altar calls, public confession of sin,<sup>182</sup> and water baptism were the most visible conversion rituals, and participants believed each to be infused with spiritual significance. Hine refers to such commitment rituals as ‘bridge-burning events.’ They help to consolidate the conversion process by publicly dramatising change and providing the person with powerful subjective experiences.<sup>183</sup> They are especially important in contexts where religion is a public and social affair, played out before Christians and non-Christians, as was the case in Igboland. Spontaneous public confession of sin was another way the revival departed from traditional practice. In traditional culture, individuals are sometimes required to confess their sins to

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<sup>177</sup> For example, Ume Kalu, ‘What God has done for me’ (Appendix 4.6.1, paragraphs 2 & 3); Uchenna Emezue, ‘My Journey into Life’ (Appendix 4.6.2, paragraph 9); John Nwangwu, written testimony, 1969; OI, Benson Ezeokeke, 11.5.00, Onitsha.

<sup>178</sup> Rambo, *Religious Conversion*, 132.

<sup>179</sup> For example, written testimonies, Uchenna Emezue and Sammy Onwitalu, 1969.

<sup>180</sup> For example, Sam Okoli, Letter to Roberts, 7 June 1970; John Nwangwu, written testimony, 1969.

<sup>181</sup> See Peel, *Religious Encounter*, 310; Maxwell, ‘African Imagination’, 3.

<sup>182</sup> Public confession of sin was relatively common, though it never became institutionalised as it did during the East African Revival. OI, Cyril C. Okorochoa, 8.2.99, Woking; Bolton, *Glory*, 127; Stanley, ‘East African Revival’, 15.

community elders or priests, as part of the cleansing ritual, but usually after the actual discovery of an offence or an experience of affliction. In addition, some Igbo communities have annual rituals of public confession and cleansing held in local shrines.<sup>184</sup> But spontaneous confession in a public setting was rare.<sup>185</sup>

Marshall notes that stories of conversion to born-again Christianity contrast helplessness and sinfulness with ‘empowerment that new life in Christ brings . . . .’<sup>186</sup> Revivalist conversion narratives were full of such contrasts. For example, one former revivalist compared his old life as a ‘camouflaged bad boy’ with the ‘new man’ he became after his conversion.<sup>187</sup> Born-again conversion provided an opportunity for Igbos to make a clean break from their individual and collective pasts, and forge new identities, especially appealing following the traumatic events of the war.<sup>188</sup>

## 5. Transforming the Landscapes

I now move from motives to consequences, and consider the effects of the revival on local religious and social landscapes.

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<sup>183</sup> Virginia H. Hine, ‘Bridge Burners: Commitment and Participation in a Religious Movement’, *Sociological Analysis*, 31, 1970, 61-6.

<sup>184</sup> OI, Udobata Onunwe, 23.3.04, Birmingham. Wrong-doings confessed included adultery, stealing, lying, witchcraft, bribery, and the use of charms. The ritual was limited to adult males, and women were not allowed to participate.

<sup>185</sup> See Okorochoa, *Religious Conversion*, 139, 144; Ikenga-Metuh, *African Religion*, 113; Echema, *Traditional Igbo Society*, 84.

<sup>186</sup> Marshall, ‘Power in the Name of Jesus’, 223

<sup>187</sup> Uchenna Emezue, ‘My Journey into Life’ (Appendix 4.6.2, paragraphs 3 & 9).

<sup>188</sup> This concurs with Ellis’ research on the Liberian civil war, where he notes the attraction of Christian teaching on conversion for ex-fighters, who wanted to make a radical break with their pasts. Ellis, *Mask of Anarchy*, 268. See also Maxwell, *Christians and Chiefs*, 205-207.

## 5.1 Competing for Control of the Moral Landscape

The revival suspended what would have been massive moral depravity in our country.

The war made beasts out of people. After the war, people were now like animals.<sup>189</sup>

Chinedu Nebo's narrative (Appendix 4.8.2) contains several themes that recur in revivalist moral discourse: the contrast between the chaotic moral field induced by the civil war and the counter force of the revival; deviant sexual behaviour, crime, and corruption (especially government) as symptoms of moral decay; revivalist antipathy towards cultural practices that discriminate and divide (in this case, the *Osu* caste system);<sup>190</sup> the dangerous allurements of wealth; the role of the Bible in promoting ethical behaviour; the importance of capturing the minds of young people; a belief in the potentiality of individual conversions to transform society; and the link between ethics and divine service.

Revival Christianity presented Igbo society with a moral challenge at a time when traditional social controls were breaking down due to increasing urban migration and the Biafran crisis.<sup>191</sup> During the war itself, SU members gained a reputation for moral probity as they engaged in relief work, an area riddled by corruption.<sup>192</sup> Afterwards,

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<sup>189</sup> OI, Chinedu Nebo, 4.5.00, Enugu (Appendix 4.8.2, paragraph 1).

<sup>190</sup> Nebo maintains that the revival challenged the *Osu* caste system. According to another informant, in 1955 the Eastern Nigerian Regional House of Assembly passed a Bill abolishing it, but this was not fully implemented. OI, Udobata Onunwe, 23.3.04, Birmingham. For more on the *Osu* caste system and its continuing social influence in post-colonial Igboland, see Okorocho, *Religious Conversion*, 147-50, 275-77. Okorocho states that though the *Osu* is no longer a slave, he still bears the stigma of his forebears, and the institution has persisted despite Christianity.

<sup>191</sup> See chapter two, sections 1.2.2 & 1.2.3. According to Okorocho, *Religious Conversion*, 153, urbanisation was the greatest force in the destruction of Igbo traditional society.

<sup>192</sup> OI, Bill Roberts, 23.7.99, Cullompton; Roberts, S.U. Prayer Letter No. 15, 7 November/8 November 1968.. According to one former revivalist, SU members managed to stamp out corruption at the WCC relief store where he worked. Sammy Onwitalu, written testimony, October 1969. Another described the way he was restrained from stealing food during his work as a storekeeper at the WCC relief centre,

the revival helped restrain the moral depravity induced by the war by creating an ethical awareness, particularly among young people. Revivalists denounced ‘worldly’ behaviour and traditional practices. In this respect, they bore a close resemblance to van Dijk’s ‘young puritan preachers’ in post-independence Malawi.<sup>193</sup>

### 5.1.1 New Birth as Transformation

In revivalist discourse, the experience of ‘new birth’ resonated with modern concerns for ‘rupture from the past’ and transformation of the self. However, at the same time, the revival’s notion of conversion departed from modern obsessions with consumption, materialism, and moral relativism. It enabled participants to relinquish ‘worldly’ behaviour and cultivate counter cultural lifestyles.<sup>194</sup> As Corten and Marshall-Fratani argue, becoming born-again is ‘an event of rupture, with the self as it was, but also with the world as it is.’<sup>195</sup> Roberts, the SU travelling secretary, referred to ‘the miracle of conversion,’ and the way that ‘people were absolutely transformed in their behaviour and their practices’ during the war.<sup>196</sup> The revival developed around a doctrine of radical anti-materialism and strict personal ethics, closely linked to the message of the Cross and a belief in the imminent return of Christ.<sup>197</sup> ‘Take the whole world, but leave me Jesus’ was a line from a popular song. ‘Repentance’ and ‘holiness’ were consistent

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Ubulu-Ihejiofor, by his reluctance to compromise his Christian faith and his desire to set a good example to others. Dennis Okafor, written testimony, October 1969.

<sup>193</sup> See Rijk Van Dijk, ‘Young Puritan Preachers in Post Independence Malawi’, *Africa*, 62.2, 159-80.

<sup>194</sup> In his account, Roberts recalls young people telling him that the experience of ‘new birth’ enabled them to ‘resist the powerful influence of their pagan surroundings and live as they realized really committed Christians should.’ Roberts, *Life and Death*, 39.

<sup>195</sup> Corten and Marshall-Fratani, ‘Introduction’, 7.

<sup>196</sup> OI, Bill Roberts, 23.7.99, Cullompton; Roberts, Letter to SU Groups Area Representatives in Biafra, SU Headquarters, Umuozu-Mbano, 20 November 1969.

<sup>197</sup> Okorochoa, *Religious Conversion*, 274; Nebo, ‘Protagonists and Critics (Appendix 4.7.2, paragraphs 1, 2 & 7); Bolton, *Glory*, 142-44; OI, Raphael Okafor, 8.5.00, Enugu. An emphasis on the imminent return of Christ as a motivation for holiness was a recurring theme in revivalist narratives. See for example, Nwodika, ‘Churches in the Seventies’ (Appendix 4.7.1, paragraph 6).

themes in revivalist discourse, revival songs<sup>198</sup> and sermons.<sup>199</sup> Out of 33 respondents, 23 (70 %) stated that ‘holiness’ was a dominant feature of the revival (Table 3.2).

Moral transformation as a central motif of the conversion ritual is noted by scholars,<sup>200</sup> and supported by testimonies of former Igbo revivalists. The ‘language of transformation,’ to use Rambo’s phrase, was a common element in conversion narratives. One revivalist described the testimonies she listened to during a SU leaders training conference: ‘More often than not the testimonies I heard were of how people had been doing what was wrong, then after knowing Christ and accepting Him as their Saviour, they changed.’<sup>201</sup> In revivalist discourse, authentic conversion always involved transformation.

The case of Ume Kalu captures this well.<sup>202</sup> Kalu’s conversion affected him in a number of ways. There were psychological changes. He reported a new sense of peace, contentment, and lack of anxiety. His religious behaviour changed, and he gained a new sense of mission. Christian meetings and fellowship took on new meaning, and he no longer felt ashamed of his faith. He describes changes in his ethical behaviour, both

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<sup>198</sup> Nebo, ‘Protagonists and Critics’.

<sup>199</sup> Repentance, holiness, and purity, linked to the Cross, were consistent themes in revivalist preaching. See entries in Raphael Okafor’s diary for 14 April, 30 July, 1971, quoted in Bolton, *Glory*, 117, 130. Popular topics during Bible conferences and retreats included obedience, sanctification, discipleship, the Rapture, and prayer. See Osioma, *Ancient Pathway*, xi-xii. See also Chukwuka, *Beyond the Night*, 14.

<sup>200</sup> See for example, Stephen Neill, *The Unfinished Task*, London: Lutterworth Press, 1953, 44, 46; A. D. Nock, *Conversion, the Old and the New in Religion from Alexander the Great to Augustine of Hippo*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1933, 7; Rambo, *Religious Conversion*, 2.

<sup>201</sup> Jessie Ilonuba, written testimony, 1969. One informant, reflecting on his experience in the 1970s, suggested that sometimes these testimonies appeared formulaic and stereotyped, implying that they were as much a reflection of group expectation as objective accounts of actual experience. OI, Udobata Onunwe, 23.3.04, Birmingham. See chapter one, section 2.3 where I discuss this.

<sup>202</sup> Ume Kalu, ‘What God has done for me’ (Appendix 4.6.1, paragraph 3). Kalu was converted in September 1967 after attending SU meetings in Umuahia, and is now a medical doctor at Amachara Hospital, near Umuahia.

on a personal and social level. He no longer compromised with the ‘world’, and became more obedient and less proud. In revivalist rhetoric, the concept ‘world’ is used to describe a way of life dominated by selfishness and alienation from God. Kalu began to love his family and friends in a new way. Finally, there were changes in his relationship with God. He became more devoted to Bible study and prayer. God was no longer an abstract concept, but a living reality. He reported a new openness to the Holy Spirit. Though he refers to changes that began when he confessed his sins and gave his life to God, he anticipates an ongoing process of transformation.

### 5.1.2 Motivating Factors

Why was there this urge for ethical renewal after conversion? According to informants, it was created by the action of the Holy Spirit, their exposure to the Bible and Christian instruction,<sup>203</sup> their desire for intimate fellowship with God,<sup>204</sup> their belief in the imminent return of Christ,<sup>205</sup> and their ambition to be effective missionary agents.<sup>206</sup>

Roberts and other Protestant missionaries in Igboland sometimes attended the annual Keswick Bible conventions when home on furlough.<sup>207</sup> At SU meetings in Umuahia, Bible talks were given on Keswick themes such as ‘Absolute Surrender’ and ‘Brokenness,’ and members read books on holiness and victorious Christian living.<sup>208</sup>

The language of Keswick is also evident in testimonies written by revivalists during the

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<sup>203</sup> For example, Kalu, ‘What God has done for me’ (Appendix 4.6.1, paragraph 5). See also, written testimonies, John Nwangwu & Ben Onwochei, 1969; Peter Ekwo, ‘The Role of Bible Study and Print Media during the Seventies’, RSC, 28.4.00, Enugu.

<sup>204</sup> Nnenna Okoye, written testimony, 1969.

<sup>205</sup> Nwodika, ‘Churches in the Seventies’ (Appendix 4.7.1, paragraph 6).

<sup>206</sup> Bolton, *Glory*, 143-44.

<sup>207</sup> For more on the relationship between Keswick and the modern missionary movement, see Fiedler, *Faith Missions*, 210-46.

<sup>208</sup> Written testimonies, Chioma Amalu, Nnena Okoye, 1969; OI, John Onuora, 30.4.00, Enugu.

war.<sup>209</sup> There are affinities here with the East African Revival, where Stanley has argued that the Keswick tradition, with its emphasis on holiness and victorious Christian living, proved attractive to Africans discouraged about the shallow experience of Christianity within their community and the continuing commitment of many church members to traditional beliefs and practices.<sup>210</sup> Keswick taught three steps to spiritual power: full surrender of one's self to Christ; being filled with the Spirit; and power for service. Thus, a close link is made between a consecrated lifestyle and effective service. As Fiedler observes, the Spirit-filled, or sanctified, life is marked by power over sin and expresses itself in service to others.<sup>211</sup> Igbo revivalists believed that a holy life was necessary for effective witness.<sup>212</sup>

Strong adventist beliefs also inspired the pursuit of a rigorous Christian life.<sup>213</sup> Fifteen (46 %) out of 33 informants said that an emphasis on the imminent return of Christ was a prominent feature of the revival (Table 3.2).<sup>214</sup> Participants were encouraged to prepare for the rapture by shunning unnecessary material and carnal pleasures, and maintaining a life free from sin.<sup>215</sup> In this respect, the Civil War Revival bore a close

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<sup>209</sup> For example, there are references to 'total surrender,' 'forsaking self,' the 'victorious life,' and 'brokenness.' See Sam Okoli, Letter to Roberts, 7 June 1970; written testimonies, John Nwangwu, Raymond Nwosu, Sammy Onwitalu, Nnenna Okoye, 1969.

<sup>210</sup> Stanley, 'East African Revival', 13.

<sup>211</sup> See Fiedler, *Faith Missions*, 215.

<sup>212</sup> Written testimonies, Ben Onwochei, Chioma Amalu, Ume Kalu. The link between holiness and effective service is also reflected in the name of one of the early CMs, Master's Vessel Group, whose vision, based on the Bible text 2 Tim 2:21, links purity with effective service. See section 2.2 of this chapter.

<sup>213</sup> Nwodika, 'Churches in the Seventies' (Appendix 4.7.1, paragraph 6).

<sup>214</sup> Informants said that this actually formed part of the main message of the revival, along with the call to repentance and faith in Christ. See OI, Augustine Nwodika and Chinedu Nebo.

<sup>215</sup> Meshak Ilobi, personal reminiscence, May 2000.

resemblance to early North American Pentecostalism, where adventist beliefs and associated rewards/judgments, also provided strong incentives for holy living.<sup>216</sup>

There are elements, here, of continuity and rupture with traditional beliefs. If we recall, traditionally the Igbos *do* have a belief in posthumous moral redress, but this does not include the concept of a future ‘day of judgment,’ or a promise of a ‘new heaven and earth’ as a reward for good conduct. The main incentive for moral probity in traditional thought was to obtain blessings in this life, which would then reverberate in the afterlife. Yet as Peel has argued, the idea of posthumous moral redress becomes more appealing under conditions of confusion and social dislocation, where people are ‘forced to confront their experiences much more as individuals.’<sup>217</sup>

The continued association of moral probity with divine favour and acquisition of power in revivalist discourse does suggest the enduring influence of indigenous values,<sup>218</sup> as does the stress on the moral conditions of effective prayer, which corresponded with Igbo traditional piety, where worshippers protest their innocence before *Chineke* in their quest for life.<sup>219</sup> Yet there are important differences. In revivalist narratives, the urge

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<sup>216</sup> Frank D. Macchia, ‘God Present in a Confused Situation: The Mixed Influence of the Charismatic Movement on Classical Pentecostalism in the United State’, *Pneuma*, 18.1, Spring 1996, 34.

<sup>217</sup> Peel, *Religious Encounter*, 176.

<sup>218</sup> For example, in his diary Raphael Okafor refers to a Christian gathering he addressed on the combined themes of ‘Purity for Power and Christian Discipline’ and ‘Go back to the Cross.’ Raphael Okafor, *Diary*, 30 July 1971, quoted in Bolton, *Glory*, 130-31. See also, Nwodika, ‘Churches in the Seventies’ (Appendix 4.7.1, paragraph 16); OI, Leo Anorue, 18.9.01, Jos (Appendix 4.2, paragraph 3).

<sup>219</sup> Okorocho, *Religious Conversion*, 131.

for moral purity was linked to a desire to respond to God's love as 'father,'<sup>220</sup> and become an effective channel of his power to others.<sup>221</sup>

### 5.1.3 Imagining Sanctification<sup>222</sup>

How then did the actual process of sanctification take place in revivalist imagination? Important clues are found in two inter-related theological discourses, both prominent in participant accounts, and drawn from biblical motifs, which resonated with contemporary culture and context. Firstly, the discourse of spiritual warfare, and the image of God/Christ as victorious king, subduing his enemies. Here the believer is an actor in a cosmic drama, part of an 'invading army,'<sup>223</sup> resisting the temptations of the devil, fighting the forces of 'heathendom,' and rejecting the enticements of the 'world,' through the power of the Holy Spirit and the redemptive work of Christ. For example, one former revivalist writes, 'The devil may try his best, but we are confident that our God is always on the throne. Temptations will always come but we are more than conquerors through Him who died for us. Sin has no more dominion over us . . .'<sup>224</sup> In Uchenna Emezue's 'New Year's Victory,' an account of SU exploits in his home village of Ossah, Christian commitment is presented as a 'clash with the world,' represented by 'heathen practices,' traditional 'priests,' community elders, and even parents. 'The christian life starts by being tired of the world and ends in being at war

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<sup>220</sup> Okorochoa notes that Igbo traditionalists do not offer prayers to *Chineke* as Father, but to 'our fathers (the Ancestors).' Okorochoa, *Religious Conversion*, 89.

<sup>221</sup> See Nwodika, 'Churches in the 70s' (Appendix 4.7.1, paragraph 16).

<sup>222</sup> In revivalist discourse the term 'sanctification' was used to describe the actual process of moral transformation in Christian experience. For example, see written testimonies, Ben Onwochei, Felix Okafor, 1969.

<sup>223</sup> For example, Uchenna Emezue, Letter to Roberts, 24 May 1971: 'From Jan. 2, a team led by Emmanuel Okorie "invaded" an interior village at Nsukka . . . They received the good news joyfully and willingly brought out their shrines for destruction.' See also Nnamdi Okagbue, Letter to Roberts, 3 February 1971.

with it. No energy or power of our own is required in the battle. Christ is the Captain and Strength and He fights it by His Spirit.’<sup>225</sup> In this discourse, protagonists become active agents in the sanctification process by resisting temptations to compromise with the ‘world,’ but they do so by drawing upon divine resources through prayer. As relief workers, they resist temptations to steal;<sup>226</sup> they refuse to cheat in exams,<sup>227</sup> or use ‘look and crook’ (bribery) to gain employment;<sup>228</sup> they abstain from sexual immorality; and resist communal pressure to participate in traditional religious practices.<sup>229</sup> The image of the Devil figures prominently in this drama, but as a defeated foe,<sup>230</sup> and surprisingly, no explicit link is made between exorcism and sanctification.

The discourse of family, and the image of God as benevolent ‘father,’ nurturing and disciplining his children, is also prominent in revivalist narratives.<sup>231</sup> Here the focus is on personal relationship (fellowship), ongoing obedience, maturity through suffering, and mutual support. Peel refers to the way narratives of being tested through suffering are used to redeem feelings of failure.<sup>232</sup> One revivalist, reflecting on his war experiences, wrote, ‘We could so easily harden our hearts or even blame God for

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<sup>224</sup> Raymond Nwosu, Letter to Roberts, 22 September 1970.

<sup>225</sup> Emezue, ‘New Year’s Victory’ (Appendix 4.5.1, paragraph 8).

<sup>226</sup> Written testimonies, Ume Kalu, Ben Onwochei, Chioma Amalu, Dennis Okafor, 1969.

<sup>227</sup> Emmanuel Ekpunobi, Letter to Roberts, 19 January 1971; Uchenna Emezue, Letter to Roberts, 28 September 1973 (Appendix 4.7.3, paragraph 1); Elizabeth Onukwue, Letter to Roberts, 23 May 1971. ‘Expo’ (exposing question papers before the exam) became a widespread problem after the war as Igbo youth endeavoured to make up for lost years of education. Good exam results were important for gaining employment. OI, Ifenyinma Orajekwe, 1.5.00, Enugu.

<sup>228</sup> Uchenna Emezue, Letter to Roberts, 28 September 1973 (Appendix 4.7.3, paragraph 2).

<sup>229</sup> Emezue, ‘New Year’s Victory’ (Appendix 4.5.1, paragraphs 4-8); Simon Ugwuoke, written testimony, October 1969; Uchenna Emezue, Letter to Roberts, 28 September 1973 (Appendix 4.7.3).

<sup>230</sup> Matthias Eluwah, Letter to Roberts, 31 May 1971; Raphael Okafor, Diary, 11 April 1971, quoted in Bolton, *Glory*, 116.

<sup>231</sup> See for example, John Nwangwu, Letter to Roberts, 19 May 1971; Rosebud Okorochoa, Letter to Roberts, 31 May 1971; Nnenna Okoye, written testimony, 1969. Okoye actually quotes Heb 12:5-6: ‘My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord . . . For the Lord disciplines those whom He loves . . . whom He receives’ [*sic*].

<sup>232</sup> Peel, *Religious Encounter*, 17.

injustice, indulge in self-pity, or despair, or live in a state of apathy, and in all not learn the lesson that our loving Father would have us learn from the recent tribulation.’<sup>233</sup> In this model, sanctification occurs through intimate fellowship with the ‘Father’ and following the way of the Cross. Along the way, encouragement is provided by God’s providential control over life circumstances<sup>234</sup> and by fellowship with Christian ‘brethren.’<sup>235</sup> This discourse represents a rupture with traditional piety, which has no notion of God as ‘father’ or the redemptive possibilities of suffering.<sup>236</sup>

The influences of Keswick are apparent in both discourses.<sup>237</sup> For example, one revivalist wrote, ‘From the Bible I have also been taught that I can only live a victorious life as long as I TRUST, not TRY; as long as I “abide in the Vine”, and keep looking unto Jesus, depending completely on Him . . .’<sup>238</sup> Another commented that ‘if I was to have full enjoyment in the Lord, I had to forsake self, I had to be broken, I had to be pounded like foo-foo . . . if we must enjoy real fellowship . . . we must be broken at the foot of the cross.’<sup>239</sup> The link between brokenness (through suffering) and sanctification was a common theme in participant accounts. Out of their experiences of

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<sup>233</sup> Sam Okoli, Letter to Roberts, 7 June 1970.

<sup>234</sup> A popular text in revivalist narratives was Rom 8:28: ‘And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose’ (NASB). See Rosebud Okorochoa, Letter to Roberts, 31 May 1971; written testimonies, John Nwangwu and Ume Kalu, 1969. Kalu writes: ‘I have come, in all my circumstances and needs, to depend fully on Rom.8.v.28.’

<sup>235</sup> Kalu, ‘What God has done for me’ (Appendix 4.6.1, paragraph 5).

<sup>236</sup> Okorochoa, *Religious Conversion*, 89; Nwala T. Uzodinma, *Igbo Philosophy*, Lagos: Lantern Books, 1985, 160.

<sup>237</sup> In chapter one (footnote 57), I referred to the Keswick movement as the English branch of the Holiness movement. For more on Keswick teaching, see section 6.6 below.

<sup>238</sup> Benjamin C. Onwochei, written testimony, 1969.

<sup>239</sup> Nnenna Okoye, written testimony, 1969. Okoye mentions the interrelated terms ‘broken’ and ‘break(ing)’ 12 times.

crisis, revivalists developed a theology of suffering ‘from below’ that embraced the Cross as a crucial element in the sanctification process.<sup>240</sup>

#### 5.1.4 Erecting Moral Boundaries

Strict moral codes of behaviour became ways of expressing ‘born-again’ identity and maintaining community boundaries, as participants erected barriers between themselves and the world. As one revivalist told me: ‘. . . if you are not holy, you are not one of us.’<sup>241</sup> Informants said one could clearly identify revivalists in the early 1970s by their quality of life, their radical stance on ethical issues, and their outward behaviour.<sup>242</sup>

Boundary markers were sometimes spatial (the SU fellowship group, for example), sometimes dress codes,<sup>243</sup> but more often abstention. Revivalists abstained from immorality,<sup>244</sup> marriage to non-Christians,<sup>245</sup> corruption and stealing in the workplace,<sup>246</sup> cheating in exams, smoking, alcohol consumption and dancing.<sup>247</sup>

Barriers were also erected through abstinence from traditional rituals and participation in Christian alternatives.<sup>248</sup> Crossing these boundaries was dangerous, and carried the

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<sup>240</sup> This is evident in revival narratives. See for example, Elizabeth Onukwue, Letter to Roberts, 23 May 1971: ‘I pray for daily sanctification and brokenness at calvary.’ See also written testimonies, Felix Okafor and Nnenna Okoye, 1969; Nebo, ‘Protagonists and Critics’ (Appendix 4.7.2, paragraph 2). Nebo mentions some of the Bible texts that were popular among revivalists and resonated with their experiences of crisis in the aftermath of the war.

<sup>241</sup> OI, Augustine Nwodika, 8.5.00, Enugu.

<sup>242</sup> OI, Nnenna Chukwuma and Amaechi Nwachuwu.

<sup>243</sup> OI, Nnenna Chukwuma, 26.5.00, Enugu; Osioma, *Ancient Pathway*, xi. According to Chukwuma, women wore ‘long gowns,’ tied their hair, and wore head coverings.

<sup>244</sup> Gladys Ekwo, ‘The Role of Women in the Seventies’, RSC, 29.4.00, Enugu (Appendix 4.5.5, paragraph 2); Peter Ekwo, ‘The Role of Bible Study and Print Media during the Seventies’, RSC, 28.4.00, Enugu; OI, E. Odiaka, 12.5.00, Onitsha. Several informants referred to 1 Tim 5:2 as an important text during the revival: ‘Treat younger men as brothers . . . and younger women as sisters, with absolute purity’ (NASB).

<sup>245</sup> Osioma, *Ancient Pathway*, xi-xii.

<sup>246</sup> ‘More Church Growth; Less Christian Character’, *The Christian Compass*, Vol. 2, No. 11, n.d., 10; Chukwuka, *Beyond the Night*, 16.

<sup>247</sup> Ekwo, ‘Role of Women’; OI, Nnenna Chukwuma, and Augustine Nwodika.

<sup>248</sup> Emezue, ‘New Year’s Victory’ (Appendix 4.5.1).

risk of backsliding, so they were reinforced through participation in prayer vigils, Bible studies, and fellowship meetings.

But these barriers were permeable. Revivalists hoped that widespread conversions and individual transformations would provoke ethical renewal and cultural reformation within their communities. According to informants, the revival acted as a moral restraint,<sup>249</sup> and challenged popular cultural practices,<sup>250</sup> traditional marriage patterns, and religious festivals.<sup>251</sup> In the workplace, business and government employers sought out ‘born-again’ because of their reputation for honesty,<sup>252</sup> and in the community, parents were sometimes won over by the example of their children.<sup>253</sup>

## **5.2 Contesting Boundaries and Reconstructing Collective Identities**

Revival spirituality reflected local community aspirations, and it was the SU fellowship groups and CMs that became prime venues for revivalist communal activity. Carwardine has noted the potential of revivals for creating and sustaining a sense of community, both locally and more widely. Though revival conversions are the ‘ultimate expression of Protestant individualism,’ revivals themselves are only possible because ‘geographically and psychologically displaced men and women corporately yearned for a shelter in which to “belong”.’<sup>254</sup> One reason the Civil War Revival flourished was that it allowed access to a caring egalitarian community at a time of

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<sup>249</sup> According to informants, this restraint was felt within local communities and government circles. OI, Uchenna Emezue, Chinedu Nebo; Raymond Nwosu, Letter to Roberts, 12 April 1971.

<sup>250</sup> OI, Chinedu Nebo, 4.5.00, Enugu (Appendix 4.8.2, paragraph 1).

<sup>251</sup> OI, Uchenna Emezue, 11.10.01, Umuahia. An example of revivalists challenging Igbo traditional religious festivals is given in Emezue’s ‘New Year’s Victory’ narrative (Appendix 4.5.1).

<sup>252</sup> ‘More Church Growth; Less Christian Character’, *The Christian Compass*, Vol. 2, No. 11, n.d., 10; Chukwuka, *Beyond the Night*, 16.

<sup>253</sup> Uchenna Emezue, Letter to Roberts, 28 September 1973 (Appendix 4.7.3, paragraph 2).

collective identity crisis, when existing social and economic relationships were disintegrating due to the combined effects of modernisation and conflict; a community not based on territorial lines, but on a shared set of meanings that allowed members to identify and interact with others. The revival enabled participants to construct new identities based on their mutual membership of a dynamic missionary fellowship, rather than along denominational or ethnic lines.<sup>255</sup>

As the refugee problem escalated, a growing number of Igbos became separated from kinship networks. SU, with its stress on Christian fellowship, offered the possibility of an alternative family based on a common spiritual experience, and provided individuals with new opportunities for survival. Bonds with Christian ‘brethren’ replaced those with kin. As one member of SU Umuahia remarked, ‘When in trouble there are sisters and brothers to help me.’<sup>256</sup> Seventeen (52 %) out of 33 respondents said that Christian unity and ‘love for the brethren’ were prominent features of the revival (Table 3.2), and both were consistent themes within revivalist discourse. During interviews, informants spoke of the strong bond of intimacy and mutuality that was part of church life during the early 1970s. Holiness and Christian love were often closely linked in revivalist discourse.<sup>257</sup>

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<sup>254</sup> Carwardine, ‘Second Great Awakening’, 94.

<sup>255</sup> There are similarities here with the East African Revival, which according to Ward has been conceived as a ‘protest against the increasing individualism and functionalism of life, a re-assertion of traditional face-to-face values and human relationships’ (‘Balokole Revival’, 136). See also Stanley, ‘East African Revival’, 16; Robins, ‘East African Revival’, 194.

<sup>256</sup> Kalu, ‘What God has done for me’ (Appendix 4.6.1, paragraph 5).

<sup>257</sup> For example, Emmanuel Agonmo, ‘The Love of God among the Brethren in the Seventies’, RSC, 29.4.00, Enugu.

The revival community crossed existing lines of demarcation and challenged denominational, ethnic, and social boundaries. Turner's concept of liminality is helpful here.<sup>258</sup> He suggests that the liminal or middle phase of the ritual process can precipitate intense feelings of fellowship, as ritualists are released from structure into *communitas*. When applied to revivals, periods of religious ecstasy can trigger conditions of 'spontaneous *communitas*,' where for awhile participants inhabit a space freed from societal norms. Boundaries are contested, new bonds of intimacy created, and collective identities restructured and reconstructed.

### **5.2.1 Eroding Denominational and Ethnic Boundaries**

For revivalists, this was particularly significant in the light of the failure of the Church Union project discussed in chapter two.<sup>259</sup> However, the revival community was no ecumenical scheme produced by ecclesiastical mergers. It brought together people, divided by denomination and creed, on the basis of their mutual membership of SU and their common experience of being 'born-again.' This was partly a response to the civil war. In Igbo townships, shared feelings of insecurity and deprivation reinforced existing religious bonds and eroded denominational barriers. In refugee camps, Christians worshipped together regardless of denominational allegiances.<sup>260</sup> Eating, sleeping, and praying in communal settings became potent symbols for the expression

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<sup>258</sup> Victor Turner, *The Ritual Process. Structure and Anti-Structure*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1974, 128-29; Victor Turner, 'Betwixt and Between: the Liminal Period in *Rites de Passage*', in William A. Lessa and Evon Z. Vogt (eds.), *Reader in Comparative Religion: an Anthropological Approach*, New York: Harper Collins, 1979, 234-43. A number of scholars have applied Turner's concepts of ritual liminality and *communitas* to religious revival and Pentecostal activity. See for example, Rawlyk, 'Canadian Religious Revivals', 213-14; Daniel E. Albrecht, 'Pentecostal Spirituality: Looking Through the Lens of Ritual', *Pneuma*, 14.2, Fall 1992, 121-25.

<sup>259</sup> See chapter two, section 2.2.1.

<sup>260</sup> OI, R. O. Ogbonna, 13.4.00, Ochadamu.

of revivalist Christianity during and after the war.<sup>261</sup> Though this reflected cultural models of commensality and fulfilled the social functions of local kinship groups, revivalists interpreted it as a work of the Spirit and a consequence of the new birth.<sup>262</sup> After all, they reasoned, it bore a close resemblance to early church practice in Acts.<sup>263</sup>

Despite its ecumenical stance, SU was partly responsible for loosening the ties of its members with existing churches, and precipitating the rise of autonomous CMs. In the immediate post-war period, the SU group, which met on Sunday afternoon, became the focus of fellowship for an increasing number of young people in Igbo urban areas, and members maintained only a loose attachment to their churches, often migrating from one to another, or attending several different ones.<sup>264</sup> SU contributed to trans-denominational mobility because it brought members of different churches into close contact and fostered a sense of unity based on a common experience, rather than along organised denominational lines.

The revival also eroded ethnic consciousness, heightened by the war, and contributed towards reconciliation and restoration of peace.<sup>265</sup> Yoruba Christians from Western

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<sup>261</sup> This shared life together was often alluded to in revivalist discourse. See for example, OI, Augustine Nwodika, 8.5.00, Enugu; Nwodika, 'Churches in the Seventies' (Appendix 4.7.1, paragraph 18).

<sup>262</sup> OI, Augustine Nwodika, 8.5.00, Enugu.

<sup>263</sup> OI, Mike Oye, 6.5.00, Enugu.

<sup>264</sup> OI, Ken Okeke, 17.12.00, London. During fieldwork I interviewed several former revivalists, who said they attended a variety of different churches each Sunday in the early 1970s. For instance, one member of SU Enugu told me that most Sundays he would attend Anglican, ECWA, and Apostolic Faith churches. OI, Chris Alagbu, 3.5.00, Enugu. Another said he attended Anglican, Assemblies of God, ECWA, and Apostolic Faith in Enugu. OI, Mike Okoye, 2.9.00, Jos. An Anglican member of SU Onitsha said that he sometimes 'fraternised' with Assemblies of God, ECWA, and Foursquare Gospel churches. OI, Emmanuel Ekpunobi, 24.10.01, Awka.

<sup>265</sup> Of course the revival was not the only means of reconciliation. Other Christian communities in Western and Northern Nigeria, not directly influenced by the revival, welcomed Igbo Christians back into the Federation. The Federal Government's policy of 'No Victor, no vanquished' and its implementation of the three 'Rs' also facilitated Igbo recovery.

Nigeria were important here. During the war, they sometimes provided shelter for Igbo Christians, and afterwards SU groups in the west warmly welcomed their Igbo brethren.<sup>266</sup> Ojo mentions the conciliatory role of the World Action Team for Christ (WATC), a Yoruba-founded CM, which organised national congresses in Igbo cities during the early 1970s.<sup>267</sup> But it was the close relationship between Igbo revivalists and Yoruba SU travelling secretaries Oye and Olamijulo, which epitomised the erosion of ethnic consciousness within the revival community. In 1969, Oye and Olamijulo migrated to the east to engage in relief work under the auspices of SU, and formed a close alliance with their Igbo counterparts.<sup>268</sup> Subsequently, Oye opened his home in Akure as a place of refuge and rehabilitation for young Igbo Christians suffering the traumatic effects of the war. Oye also teamed up with Igbo revivalist Cyril Okorochoa to carry the revival message into schools and colleges in the west.<sup>269</sup> Meanwhile, Olamijulo remained in the east until 1976 in his capacity as SU travelling secretary.<sup>270</sup>

The traditional Igbo response to injustice is to demand for revenge.<sup>271</sup> The revival challenged this. Consider this testimony from a former Igbo revivalist:

You are my brother if you are born-again in Christ; you are my brother, whether you are Yoruba or Hausa . . . the Lord used it [the revival] to heal many hurts. For there

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<sup>266</sup> For instance, Western Nigerian Christians sheltered the Igbo revivalist J. M. J. Emesim and SU General Secretary Daniel Onwukwe (an Igbo) during the war. One revivalist described the reception he received from SU Western Nigeria during a visit to Ibadan after the war: 'I got there and found nothing but love; the warmth of their reception overwhelmed me.' Matthias Eluwah, Letter to Roberts, 23 March 1970. See also Raymond Nwosu, Letter to Roberts, 30 April 1970: 'The brethren from the west have been so good to us since the end of the war . . .'

<sup>267</sup> WATC held congresses in Owerri (1971) and Port Harcourt (1973). See Ojo, 'Contextual', 180.

<sup>268</sup> OI, Muyiwa Olamijulo, 17.1.02, Ikot Enwang.

<sup>269</sup> OI, Cyril Okorochoa, 8.2.99, Woking; OI, Mike Oye, 6.5.00, Enugu..

<sup>270</sup> OI, Muyiwa Olamijulo, 17.1.02, Ikot Enwang.

<sup>271</sup> Okorochoa, 'Reconciliation', 197.

were many Igbos who had sworn to remain in perpetual enmity with everyone else who had been involved in killing, in starving us to death. But the Lord removed the bitterness, removed the sore, and caused us to come together.<sup>272</sup>

Okorochoa believes this was one factor that brought healing to the nation.<sup>273</sup> A remarkable phenomenon was the migration of Igbos to the north so soon after the war, and only a few years after the 1966 pogroms when many of their people had been slaughtered.

### **5.2.2 Challenging Gerontocratic Structures and Gender Boundaries**

Like many African Christian initiatives, the revival appealed especially to youth and women. This was partly because it offered access to a space relatively free from the control of elder males. But by doing so, it awakened old tensions as ‘born-again’ youth felt free to challenge traditional gerontocratic authority in church and community. Poewe has argued that revivals are ‘Protestant ways of recruiting the next generation.’<sup>274</sup> Early Igbo revivalists were predominantly young people situated on the fringes of the church and nurtured within SU ranks. Though the revival eroded existing denominational barriers, later fresh ones were erected, partly precipitated by generational struggles.

If we recall, despite its decentralised political structures and fragmented communities, Igbo society was traditionally gerontocratic and hierarchical, and by the 1960s, this was clearly reflected in mission church structures, which were dominated by elders and

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<sup>272</sup> Meschak Ilobi, personal reminiscence, May 2000.

clergy. SU had a democratising influence, creating ministry opportunities for young people disillusioned by the established church and bored with the routine of life. But SU went further by equipping the youth with tools to challenge gerontocratic authority. This was an important factor in the emergence of CMs. Community elders, traditional priests, and church leaders constantly challenged and opposed the young protagonists over their overt evangelistic activities and ethical rigorism. Van Dijk argues that the born-again identity fosters a sense of assertiveness among the youth, because it carries with it a religious and moral authority that is believed to lie outside the control of the elderly.<sup>275</sup> In the case of Igbo revivalists, the experience of being born-again functioned as a protest against gerontocratic authority and created ‘free’ individuals able to embrace modernity’s call for a ‘break with the past.’ Unfortunately, it also helped to weaken the tradition of ‘obedience’ and respect for parents and elders, a process already set in motion by other modernising forces such as Western education and urbanisation, as well as the civil war.<sup>276</sup>

An example of this occurred in the village of Ossa, Umuahia, during the war.<sup>277</sup> In this instance, ‘born-again’ conversion enabled young revivalists to challenge their elders in an unprecedented way, and express in public that they had made a complete break with

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<sup>273</sup> Okorochoa, ‘Reconciliation’, 197.

<sup>274</sup> Poewe, ‘Introduction’, 13.

<sup>275</sup> Van Dijk, ‘Young Born-Again Preachers’, 59, 77.

<sup>276</sup> OI, Udobata Onunwe, 23.3.04, Birmingham. See Nwodika, ‘Churches in the Seventies’ (Appendix 4.7.1, paragraph 3); Nebo, ‘Protagonists and Critics’ (Appendix 4.7.2, paragraph 10). One informant told me that young people conscripted into the army found themselves in command of older ‘fathers,’ which disrupted Igbo society. OI, Uchenna Emezue, 10.10.01, Umuahia.

<sup>277</sup> Emezue, ‘New Year’s Victory’ (Appendix 4.5.1).

their former traditions, and with unconverted friends and family.<sup>278</sup> Here we must proceed with caution. In one sense, the born-again experience is a ‘conversion to modernity,’<sup>279</sup> but Marshall-Fratani is correct when she states that though conversion is a choice, it does not imply the creation of the ‘autonomous secular subject of “modernity”.’ The convert is freed from the past, but is consecrated to a higher power and incorporated into a new community.<sup>280</sup> This is important in our context because, as the above example demonstrates, Igbo revivalists constantly appealed to a higher authority - either the Christian God or the Bible - as justification for confronting their elders. And freed from the restrictions of traditional commensality, they found themselves accountable to an alternative ‘born-again’ community. Moreover, the challenge to gerontocratic authority proceeded from the revival’s missionary impulse, rather than a desire to break free from the control of elder males.

The revival also challenged gender boundaries. The traditional role of Igbo women is ambiguous.<sup>281</sup> Like elsewhere in Africa,<sup>282</sup> Igbo society is patriarchal, with women occupying a subordinate role in family and political life. Yet according to Anyanwu, ‘domination and oppression of women by men were not welcome in Igbo indigenous politics.’<sup>283</sup> And Van Allen maintains that women had a significant role in traditional

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<sup>278</sup> Referring to the Nigerian context, Marshall-Fratani describes friends and family members who are not born-again as ‘dangerous strangers,’ because the power of ‘blood and amity’ threatens the ‘new life in Christ.’ Marshall-Fratani, ‘Global and Local’, 285-86.

<sup>279</sup> Peter van der Meer, *Conversion to Modernities: the Globalization of Christianity*, London: Routledge, 1996; Rijk van Dijk, ‘Time and Transcultural Technologies of the Self in the Ghanaian Pentecostal Diaspora’, in Corten and Marshall-Fratani, *Babel and Pentecost*, 216; Meyer, *Translating the Devil*, xxi.

<sup>280</sup> Marshall-Fratani, ‘Global and Local’, 286.

<sup>281</sup> For the role of women in Igbo traditional life, see Joseph Therese Agbasiere, *Women in Igbo Life and Thought*, London and New York: Routledge, 2000.

<sup>282</sup> For example, the Hwesa people of Zimbabwe. See Maxwell, *Christians and Chiefs*, 107, 134.

<sup>283</sup> U. D. Anyanwu, ‘Gender Question in Igbo Politics’, in Anyanwu and Aguwa (eds.), *Politics*, 119. See also DomNwachukwu, *Igbo*, 43. In contrast, Inworogu states that in Igbo traditional culture, women

political life.<sup>284</sup> But the introduction of ‘native administration’ under colonial rule, and the influence of missionaries and mission schools, weakened Igbo women’s traditional autonomy and capacity to participate in local politics.<sup>285</sup>

In the traditional religious arena, Igbo women enjoyed relative freedom, sometimes fulfilling a prophetic role, though the priesthood remained largely a male preserve.<sup>286</sup> But the missionary movement reinforced the assumption that their proper role was as Christian helpmates rather than leaders.<sup>287</sup> Hence, women frequently occupied marginal positions in mission church structures, even though they usually outnumbered men. Clergy were predominantly male, and there was little opportunity for women to acquire leadership positions. It was in the prayer houses that women found space for ministry, even though they were usually barred from the highest echelons of authority. As Hackett observes, these churches provided the structure whereby women could ‘acquire and exercise responsibility.’ A prophetess or senior lady member might command the respect of the church, even if this was in an indirect way through divine revelation, or through being the wife of the pastor.<sup>288</sup> Those women who actually

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are treated virtually as slaves of men. Grace O. Inworogu, ‘Impact of Christianity on Family-Life among the Igbo of South-East Nigeria’, M.A. thesis, Evangelical Theological Seminary, Jos, 1999, 74-5.

<sup>284</sup> Judith Van Allen, “‘Sitting on a Man’: Colonialism and the Lost Political Institutions of Igbo Women”, in Roy Richard Grinker and Christopher B. Steiner (eds.), *Perspectives on Africa. A Reader in Culture, History and Representation*, Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1997, 536.

<sup>285</sup> According to Van Allen, British colonialists failed to understand the political institutions of Igbo women, and missionaries made no attempt to protect Igbo women’s political role because they believed their aim was to cultivate Christian wives and mothers, rather than female political leaders. Igbo women also had less access to mission education, considered essential for political leadership. Van Allen, ‘Igbo Women’, 542-48.

<sup>286</sup> Udobata Onunwe, *Studies in Igbo Traditional Religion*, Obosi, Anambra: Pacific Publishers, 1990, 65; DomNwachukwu, *Igbo*, 42-3; Ejizu, ‘Igbo Religious Beliefs’, 817; Ikenga-Metuh, *Comparative Studies*, 206.

<sup>287</sup> Van Allen, ‘Igbo Women’, 547-48.

<sup>288</sup> Rosalind I. J. Hackett, ‘Power and Authority in Nigeria’s Independent Churches’, *West African Religion*, 21.2, 1983, 47. See also Rosalind I. J. Hackett, ‘Women and New Religious Movements in Africa’, in Ursula King (ed.), *Religion and Gender*, Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1995, 257-90.

founded prayer houses usually continued in leadership, but often in a subordinate role to other male leaders. In the case of Christ Holy Church, for example, the late prophetess Agnes Okoh is revered as founder, but it was her son, Marius Okoh, who became the first General Superintendent. It is a large denomination with over 700 branches, yet has no female pastors,<sup>289</sup> though women do fulfil a prophetic role as ‘visioners.’

SU empowered women, and gave them opportunities for leadership and ministry. Two young girls, Grace Iwuora and Nnenna Okoye, were members of Roberts’s core leadership team during the war,<sup>290</sup> and others occupied key leadership positions in SU township groups.<sup>291</sup> Like other movements of revival (evangelical and Pentecostal),<sup>292</sup> the Civil War Revival enabled women to occupy positions alongside men as gospel carriers,<sup>293</sup> and it was within SU ranks that they honed their evangelistic skills. This is reflected in Gladys Ekwo’s revival narrative, which contrasts the status of women in the ‘world’ with their position in the ‘born-again’ community. According to Ekwo, the revival ‘liberated’ women to serve God on equal terms with men, and gave them a voice

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<sup>289</sup> *Glad News. Publication of Christ Holy Church*, 2001, 1.

<sup>290</sup> Roberts, *Life and Death*, 58; Bill Roberts, Scripture Union Prayer Letter No. 14, 8 August 1968. Okoye actually headed up the committee in Roberts’s absence. This may have been because she was slightly older than the others and a university graduate. Rosebud Okorochoa was SU area representative of Owerri area in 1969. See Leaflet listing SU Groups in Biafra, 1969. For a photograph of Grace Iwuora, see Plate 2.3.

<sup>291</sup> Amauche Obijiofor, Rosebud Okorochoa, and Grace Iwuora were among the early leaders of the SU township group in Enugu. Grace Iwuora, Letter to Roberts, 15 July 1970; Amauche Obijiofor, Letter to Roberts, 9 July 1970; OI, Rosebud Okorochoa, 13.10.00, Aba. Frances Lawjua Bolton, Eunice Eboh, Rhoda Morah, and Nkechi Okoli were SU leaders in Onitsha during the early 1970s. Bolton, *Glory*, 112, 117, 148.

<sup>292</sup> See for example, Hempton, *Religion of the People*, 33, 196; Fiedler, *Faith Missions*, 113; David Martin, *Tongues of Fire: the Explosion of Protestantism in Latin America*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1990, 166, 181; Poloma, ‘Charisma, Institutionalization and Social Change’, 247-48. With respect to the East African Revival, see Isichei, *Christianity in Africa*, 242; Ward, ‘Balokole Revival’, 134-35. Cox, *Fire from Heaven*, 137, points out that from the beginning of the Pentecostal movement women have been the principal carriers of the Pentecostal message. See also Edith L. Blumhofer, ‘Women and American Pentecostalism’, *Pneuma*, 17.1, Spring 1995, 19, who maintains that while women have been excluded for the most part from institutional positions in American Pentecostalism, they have been supported as evangelists.

to proclaim the gospel. Though they encountered opposition from those who objected to women preachers on biblical grounds, God vindicated them by giving them success. During the revival, Ekwo recalls, women ‘brought many men into the fold, and they are great men today in the Lord.’<sup>294</sup>

The role of young women is captured in Raphael Okafor’s diary, a record of *Hour of Freedom* activities.<sup>295</sup> Entries show their active involvement, even though men continued to fulfil most official preaching engagements and retained overall leadership of the movement. For example, Lawjua Egwu, an 18-year-old secondary school student, worked alongside Raphael Okafor, supporting him in prayer, leading worship, counselling new converts, and occasionally giving talks.<sup>296</sup> Rhoda Morah founded a CM called Aguata for Christ, which subsequently became the National Evangelical Mission, one of the largest Igbo-founded neo-Pentecostal churches.<sup>297</sup> Eunice Eboh was another important figure. She was leader of the SU group at the Anglican Girls Secondary School, which helped to open up SU Onitsha to the ministry of *Hour of Freedom*. Those who followed these young girls into *Hour of Freedom* included future NPC pioneers.<sup>298</sup>

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<sup>293</sup> Bolton, *Glory*, 155-56.

<sup>294</sup> Ekwo, ‘Role of Women’ (Appendix 4.5.5). Ekwo (née Ugorji) was responsible for starting the Women’s Fellowship of SU in the early 1970s. For a photograph of Gladys Ekwo, see Plate 3.4.

<sup>295</sup> Quoted in Bolton, *Glory*. Women were also allowed space to preach in Master’s Vessel Group, Umuahia, during the 1970s. OI, Nnenna Chukwuma, 26.5.00, Enugu.

<sup>296</sup> Bolton, *Glory*, 89-90. See Raphael Okafor’s diary entries, 7 April 1971, 21 March 1971, 14 April 1971, quoted in Bolton, *Glory*, 114, 110, 117.

<sup>297</sup> For Morah, see Bolton, *Glory*, 40, 112. For Aguata for Christ, see Anyaegbu, ‘Pentecostal/Evangelical’, 32; Achunike, *Dreams of Heaven*, 58-9.

<sup>298</sup> PC, Stephen Okafor, 19.1.00. See also Raphael Okafor, Diary, 28 March 1971 (Bolton, *Glory*, 112); Bolton, *Glory*, 40, 54, 57.

The patronage of older women was also important.<sup>299</sup> One was Agunyenwa Egwu, Lawjua's mother, who for a time allowed SU Onitsha to meet in her home.<sup>300</sup> Another was her friend Dinah Erinne, who as Principal of the Anglican Girls Secondary School invited Stephen Okafor and Muyiwa Olamijulo to hold a retreat for her students in 1970.<sup>301</sup> When the local Anglican Church closed its doors to *Hour of Freedom*, Erinne allowed the group access to the school premises. She also helped to negotiate peace between *Hour of Freedom* leaders and the Anglican Bishop in Onitsha.<sup>302</sup> These two older women were among the first members of SU Onitsha to participate in *Hour of Freedom* activities.<sup>303</sup>

Through their membership of SU and participation in the revival, youth and women challenged gerontocratic structures and male dominance within the church, and helped facilitate the emergence and sustenance of CMs.

### 5.2.3 Challenging Missionary and Clerical Control

The revival also challenged colour boundaries, missionary hegemony, and clerical control. The relationship between white missionaries and African Christians is best summed up in the example of Roberts, the SU travelling secretary, described by one of his African colleagues as a 'black man at heart,' because he ate their food, shared his clothes with them, slept in the same room, and used his salary to feed them.<sup>304</sup> Again,

<sup>299</sup> See Kalu, 'Passive Revolution', 21.

<sup>300</sup> Bolton, *Glory*, 80; Frances Lawjua Bolton, *On a Botanical Ramble. Mercy Agunyenwa Egwu In Memoriam*, n.publ., 2001. Mrs Egwu later became a deaconess in *Grace of God*, the largest Igbo-founded NPC.

<sup>301</sup> Anyaegbu, 'Evangelical/Pentecostal', 27.

<sup>302</sup> Okafor, Diary, 17 May 1971, cited in Bolton, *Glory*, 160.

<sup>303</sup> PC, Stephen Okafor,, 19.1.00.

<sup>304</sup> OI, Uchenna Emezue, 11.1.01, Umuahia. See also Roberts, *Life and Death*, 67-8.

there are affinities with East Africa, where the revival made it possible for missionaries and Africans to have fellowship on equal terms.<sup>305</sup> It was Roberts's willingness to remain in Biafra and open his home to Igbo young people, which initially endeared him to them.<sup>306</sup>

The revival also contributed to the development of an indigenous Christian community. Bays suggests that revivalism is an 'effective means for indigenous Christian leaders to break free of domination by missions.'<sup>307</sup> As noted in chapter two, the Civil War Revival 'sabotaged' missionary attempts to retain control of the church following independence, and became a vehicle for African indigenous initiative.<sup>308</sup> Prior to 1967, SU work in the east consisted of school visitation, SU camps and rallies, and literature distribution. These activities aimed at conversion and discipleship, and exposed young people to the Bible.<sup>309</sup> Though the war adversely affected SU work in Nigeria, it had a positive effect on Roberts's activities. Schools in the east closed for the duration of the war and travel was severely restricted. This meant that there were no more school visitations, no camps, and no books imported for literary ministry (due to the economic blockade).<sup>310</sup> But because SU activities were initially restricted to Umuahia, it allowed a community of committed lay young people to develop around Roberts and his co-

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<sup>305</sup> See Stanley, 'East African Revival', 16.

<sup>306</sup> Roberts, *Life and death*, 67; Bill Roberts, Prayer Letter No.11, 13 September 1967.

<sup>307</sup> Daniel H. Bays, 'Christian Revival in China 1900-1937', in Blumhofer and Balmer (eds.), *Revivals*, 175. This feature of revival in missionary contexts has been noted by several scholars. See for example, Gary B. McGee, 'Pentecostal Phenomena and Revivals in India: Implications for Indigenous Church Leadership', *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, July 1996, 112-17

<sup>308</sup> Kalu, 'Passive Revolution', 22.

<sup>309</sup> OI, Bill Roberts, 23.7.99, Cullompton; Ojo, 'Campus Christianity', 98. The main features of SU school work were the promotion of daily Bible reading, talks, the sale of Christian literature, camp organisation, rallies and leadership courses. SU camps involved Bible study and games. Ojo, 'Campus Christianity', 79; Onuora, 'Radicalization', 3.

<sup>310</sup> Ojo, 'Campus Christianity', 98.

workers. This group later became the mainspring of the revival during its civil war phase.

If we recall, a key factor in SU growth within Nigeria was its policy of national autonomy, and its promotion of indigenous leadership and financial independence.<sup>311</sup>

Historians have acknowledged the contribution of both white missionaries and African agents to the introduction and expansion of Christianity in Igboland.<sup>312</sup> Though the

Civil War Revival was primarily an African initiative, many have paid tribute to the role played by Roberts.<sup>313</sup> Early in his ministry, Roberts recognised the need to train

indigenous leaders, and this became an urgent priority when the war situation made his own future uncertain.<sup>314</sup> Initially, he worked with some of the more senior SU

members, and early in 1968 formed a planning committee to help organise SU activities.<sup>315</sup> A significant step in the process of indigenisation took place when

Roberts went on leave in mid-1968. In his absence, Igbo lay Christians took sole responsibility for SU work in the east.<sup>316</sup> When he departed finally, towards the end of

1969, SU work in the east was left entirely in Nigerian hands.

Roberts influenced many post-war revival leaders during their formative years. Two members of his leadership team, Chris Onuoha and John Onuora, became acting SU

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<sup>311</sup> Sylvester, *Scripture Union*, 225; Ojo, 'Campus Christianity', 85.

<sup>312</sup> See for example, Kalu, 'Color and Conversion', 61-74.

<sup>313</sup> Sylvester, *Scripture Union*, 223-24. Former Igbo revivalist John Onuora described Roberts as 'God's prime agent for revival during the civil war' ('Radicalization', 8), and Uchenna Emezue referred to him as the 'single seed' from which the movement began. OI, Uchenna Emezue, 10.10.01, Umuahia.

<sup>314</sup> OI, Bill Roberts, 23.7.99, Cullompton.

<sup>315</sup> Roberts, *Life and Death*, 41, 57. Early Igbo SU leaders in Umuahia included John Onuora, Raymond Nwosu, and Cyril Okorocho. Onuora and Okorocho left Umuahia in early 1968. Roberts, *Life and Death*, 58; OI, Okorocho, 8.2.99, Woking. The first planning committee consisted of Ben Onwochei,

travelling secretaries in East Central State,<sup>317</sup> and most of those responsible for reactivating SU township groups were closely associated with SU Umuahia.<sup>318</sup> These fellowship groups soon became centres of intense evangelistic activity and the platform for significant mission initiatives, as a host of evangelists emerged from their midst. The revival was a rediscovery of lay ministry, and an avenue for the recruitment of a new generation of Igbo indigenous leaders. As such, it challenged clerical<sup>319</sup> and missionary control, and facilitated the rise of independent CMs.

Most founders and leaders of Igbo-founded CMs in the early 1970s were nurtured within SU ranks during the revival, and many were actually introduced to born-again Christianity through contact with existing members or attendance at SU events. I interviewed 12 men who founded CMs between 1969 and 1973.<sup>320</sup> All were members of SU, and seven were SU converts.<sup>321</sup> At least five were influenced by Roberts in their

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Nnenna Okoye, Grace Iwuora, Peter Nwangwu, Ume Kalu, and his brother Okwun, all in their teens and early twenties. Roberts, *Life and Death*, 58. For some SU Umuahia leaders during the war, see Plate 2.3.

<sup>316</sup> Roberts, *Life and Death*, 63.

<sup>317</sup> Chris Onuoha, Letter to Roberts, 28 June 1970; OI, John Onuora, 30.4.00, Enugu. Onuoha and Onuora took over from Oye and Olamijulo. In October 1970, they were replaced by the British missionary Jane Sutton when they resumed their university studies. In January 1971, Sutton moved from Umuahia to Enugu. Sam C. Nnamuah, Letter to Roberts, 21 January 1971.

<sup>318</sup> These included Emmanuel Ekpunobi (Onitsha), Justin Ogugua, Amauche Obijiofor, Rosebud Okorochoa (Enugu), Emmanuel Okorie (Aba), Peter Nwangwu, Raymond Nwosu, Felix Obiorah (Umuahia).

<sup>319</sup> The capacity of revivals to pose a threat and a challenge to clerical control has been noted by scholars. See for example, Gerald F. Moran, 'Christian Revivalism and Culture in Early America: Puritan New England as a Case Study', in Blumhofer and Balmer (eds.), *Revivals*, 47; Hempton, *Religion of the People*, 7.

<sup>320</sup> These were Stephen Okafor, Raphael Okafor (*Hour of Freedom*), Emmanuel Okorie (Canaan Gospel Centre and Christian Revivalist Missionary Team), Uchenna Emezue, Samson Onyeoziri (Canaan Gospel Centre), Nnaji Chukwuka (Light of Life Ministry), Felix Obiorah, Godwin Nwosu (Master's Vessel Group), Alexander Ekewuba (Holiness Evangelistic Association), Eliezer Okoye (Travelling Gospel Team), Samson Onwubiko (Calvary Evangelistic Mission), Tony Okeke (Save the Lost Programme).

<sup>321</sup> These were Stephen Okafor, Raphael Okafor, Emmanuel Okorie, Nnaji Chukwuka, Godwin Nwosu, Uchenna Emezue, and Samson Onyeoziri.

formative years.<sup>322</sup> I also interviewed 13 others who belonged to these groups during the early 1970s. Again all were SU members and eight were SU converts. Invariably, CM founders used SU as a platform prior to forming independent ministries.

## 6. Missionary Impulses

Attention so far has focussed on consumer demands and social consequences. But the supply-side of the revival was crucial. Normally conversion involved some form of interaction with individual and/or group advocates. Scholars have noted the importance of friendship and kinship networks for the conversion process.<sup>323</sup> Out of 43 informants converted during the revival, 27 (63 %) said that individual advocates played a significant role in their conversion experience, either through personal witness (lifestyle<sup>324</sup> and verbal), or invitations to group meetings where they encountered the gospel.<sup>325</sup> Invariably these advocates were members of SU. A common setting for the ritual of conversion was the SU Guest service. For at least 20 (47 %) of my informants this was the occasion of their conversion to born-again Christianity. After the war, evangelistic campaigns organised by CMs like *Hour of Freedom* and Master's Vessel Group became venues for extensive conversions.

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<sup>322</sup> These were Stephen Okafor, Uchenna Emezue, Samson Onyeoziri, Emmanuel Okorie, and Felix Obiorah. Okafor and Emezue were converted through Roberts. See written testimonies, Stephen Okafor, Uchenna Emezue. Okorie, Emezue, Obiorah, and Onyeoziri regularly attended SU Umuahia during the war. OI, Stephen Okafor, Emmanuel Okorie; Stephen Okafor, Letter to Roberts, 20 October 1969; Uchenna Emezue, 'My Journey into Life' (Appendix 4.6.2).

<sup>323</sup> For example, Lofland and Skonovd, 'Conversion Motifs', 373-85; Rambo, *Religious Conversion*, 17, 107-108.

<sup>324</sup> OI, Bill Roberts, 23.7.99, Cullompton; Bill Roberts, Letter to S. U. Groups Area Representatives in Biafra, S. U. Headquarters, Umuozu-Mbano, 20 November, 1969. Several informants stated that exposure to the transformed lifestyles of others contributed to their conversion.

<sup>325</sup> One informant told me that during the war new people usually attended SU guest services through personal invitation by friends. OI, Ndubueze O. Oti, 23.5.00, Enugu. This was also the case with

As I have argued, the Civil War Revival provided a means for Igbos to resolve their collective identity crisis through their absorption into a dynamic missionary fellowship, whose ideology was shaped by a conversionist stance, an adventist belief system, and a dualistic worldview, a conviction that souls were in the grip of the Devil and perishing without Christ. This ideology awakened a ‘passion for the kingdom’ that propelled those touched by the ‘Spirit’ into the margins of Igbo society and beyond. The formation of this band of itinerant preachers out of the furnace of the civil war was principally responsible for the spread of the revival.

Historically, revivals have been associated with mission endeavours at home and abroad.<sup>326</sup> Though initially restricted to the Biafran enclave, the Civil War Revival fuelled significant mission initiatives that eventually reached beyond the borders of Igboland. All informants agreed that evangelism was *the* major feature of the revival (Table 3.2). As Hastings observed of earlier ‘prophet’ movements, civil war revivalists were ‘taking on the missionary’s task because it seemed so important.’<sup>327</sup>

Again, there were elements of continuity in change, and influences from local and global forces. The revivalists adapted their message and strategies to cater for consumer demands, but also challenged existing religious institutions with their aggressive and innovative evangelistic style. The content of their message and method of transmission were shaped by their local context, religious heritage, reading of the Bible, and external influences.

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evangelistic meetings organised by CMs like *Hour of Freedom*. See Raphael Okafor, *Diary*, 11 April 1971, cited in Bolton, *Glory*, 116.

<sup>326</sup> See for example, Walls, ‘Evangelical Revival’, 310-32; Fiedler, *Faith Missions*, 112-24.

## 6.1 'Repent or Perish'

The revival message was Christological in focus and aimed at conversion, reflecting its evangelical roots in SU. The person of Christ, the Cross, the new birth, and the 'Second Coming' were prominent themes in revival sermons,<sup>328</sup> songs,<sup>329</sup> and tracts. 'Repent or perish' was a common refrain,<sup>330</sup> as revivalists exhorted their audience to be 'born-again' in preparation for Christ's imminent return. Their target audience included those within mainline churches and prayer houses. As noted, the strong focus on the imminent return of Christ and the realities of heaven and hell in revivalist discourse and gospel presentation conflicted with traditional religious beliefs and was often absent from mainline church and prayer house sermons.

I have noted the strong ethical content of revivalist preaching. According to informants, the revival message departed from 'orthodox' (mainline church) and prayer house preaching at precisely this point. Revivalists presented the new birth and gift of the

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<sup>327</sup> Hastings, *Church in Africa*, 531.

<sup>328</sup> See Bolton, *Glory*, 137-38. This is evident from the sermon Bible texts used by preachers at *Hour of Freedom* events recorded in Raphael Okafor's diary entries. Sermon themes included the following: 'Go back to the cross,' 'The peace of God,' 'The second coming of Christ,' 'Jesus is the same yesterday, today and forever.' See Raphael Okafor, Diary entries, March-December 1971, cited in Bolton, *Glory*, 106-36. See also Osioma, *Ancient Pathway*, xi.

<sup>329</sup> OI, Chinedu Nebo, 4.5.00, Enugu (Appendix 4.8.2, paragraph 3); OI, Frances Lawjua Bolton, 23.5.99, Loughton; Meshak Ilobi, personal reminiscence, May 2000. See Appendix 4.9 for a selection of songs sung during the revival.

<sup>330</sup> This phrase was based on the Bible text Luke 13:3: 'I tell you, no, but, unless you repent, you will also likewise perish' (NASB). See for example, Amaechi Nwachukwu, 'Repent or Perish', *LivingSpring*, 1998, 16 (article adapted from a Sunday Morning sermon): 'In the early 70's, when I gave my life to Christ, the Christian message was simple. Repent or perish! It was a powerful tool of evangelism then and is still the same today. . . Our primary text will be Luke 13:1-9.' See also OI, Leo Anorue, John Onuora; Nebo, 'Protagonists and Critics'; Ben Onwochei, written testimony, 1969; Nnaji, *Beyond the Night*, 14; Achunike, *Dreams of Heaven*, 58.

Spirit, rather than human effort or religious ritual, as the source of ethical renewal.<sup>331</sup> Emphasis was on ‘grace’ rather than law. For instance, *Hour of Freedom* evangelist Stephen Okafor told me that a major thrust of their message was ‘freedom’ from the legalistic and ritualistic demands of prayer houses like UPPB.<sup>332</sup> Another revivalist wrote that many first encountered teaching on the ‘new birth’ when they attended SU Bible study meetings during the war: ‘New birth . . . was an experience completely foreign to us. We were taught that joining a church and living respectably was all that God required.’<sup>333</sup> Later, as we will see, revivalists added the Pentecostal doctrine of Holy Spirit baptism to their religious repertoire.

## 6.2 Seizing the Landscape

Aggressive evangelism was a hallmark of the revival during its early stages.<sup>334</sup> This grew in intensity and scope as protagonists embraced the Pentecostal experience and recruited increasing numbers of young people into their ranks. Lines from a popular revival song show how they conceived their mission:

We are able to go up and seize the country,  
To possess the land from Jordan to the sea.  
Though the giants may be there on our way to hinder,  
God will surely give us the victory.  
And so move on to the battlefield,

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<sup>331</sup> Felix Okafor, written testimony, 23 October 1969. Okafor recalls that despite engaging in periods of prayer and fasting, and maintaining ‘good conduct,’ he only found ‘salvation’ when he received Christ through the advocacy of former revivalist and Apostolic Church evangelist Teddy Igbokwe.

<sup>332</sup> OI, Stephen Okafor, 16.12.98, London.

<sup>333</sup> Emezue, ‘New Year’s Victory’ (Appendix 4.5.1, paragraph 1).

<sup>334</sup> Accounts given by former revivalists capture this well. See section 4.5 of Appendices.

Move on to the battlefield with Jesus.<sup>335</sup>

Using a variety of strategies, revivalists seized hold of the landscape, to use Ranger's phrase,<sup>336</sup> but had to compete with other religious groups for territorial control.<sup>337</sup> The metaphor of battle captured the revivalist imagination and enabled them to refashion their identity in terms of an all-conquering army, invading enemy territory, particularly poignant in the light of their civil war experiences.

Evangelism was already an integral part of SU ministry before the war, but during the revival, it intensified. One advantage SU had over the churches was its informal organisation. With no building and no rigid ecclesiastical structure, SU Umuahia was able to continue holding meetings. Weekday camp-like activities were one example of the way revivalists adapted their evangelistic strategies to suit new and challenging contexts.<sup>338</sup> SU offered young people, separated from kinship groups and friends, the possibility of an alternative network of relationships. Talks, discussion groups, chorus singing, communal meals, and games, proved attractive to young people, bored,

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<sup>335</sup> Quoted in Bolton, *Glory*, 140. See Appendix 4.9. This was sung during the 'Remembering the Seventies' Conference in Enugu as an example of songs from the revival. It is not of indigenous origin, but Igbo adapted it to suit local styles.

<sup>336</sup> Terence O. Ranger, 'Religion, Development and African Christian Identity', in K. Holst-Peterson (ed.), *Religion, Development and African Identity*, Uppsala: Scandinavian Institute of African Studies, 1987, 37-41.

<sup>337</sup> Other groups competing for control included Protestant and Roman Catholic mission churches, SCM groups, prayer houses, and traditional religionists. See Nnamdi Okagbue, Letter to Roberts, 3 February 1971; Rosebud Eluwah, Letter to Roberts, 31 May 1971; Raymond Nwosu, Letter to Roberts, 12 April 1971; Emezue, 'New Year's Victory' (Appendix 4.5.1).

<sup>338</sup> The idea was a joint initiative, involving Roberts and his Igbo colleague, Peter Nwangwu. The first day (13 September 1967) twenty came. Bill Roberts, Scripture Union Prayer Letter No.11, 13 September 1967. Soon numbers increased, until they were getting over one hundred. Activities continued until the evacuation of Umuahia in 1969, but attendance fluctuated. Bill Roberts, Pilgrims of the Scripture Union, Newsletter No.3, for the Republic of Biafra, 26 March 1968.

isolated, and hungry.<sup>339</sup> Later, SU provided plots of land for farming, a strategy in keeping with the Biafran government's 'war on hunger' policy, which encouraged people to grow their own food.<sup>340</sup> Some who came simply for food and fraternity were later converted.<sup>341</sup>

A turning point occurred in October 1967 when Roberts observed a new interest in the gospel and decided to organise evangelistic 'guest services.' These continued on a monthly basis until the evacuation of Umuahia 18 months later, and became a focal point for SU's evangelistic activity. Apart from one occasion when Roberts spoke, all the preachers at SU guest services were Nigerian.<sup>342</sup> Popular speakers included Godson Ogbansiegbe, founder of Christian Fellowship Group,<sup>343</sup> Presbyterian pastor James Ukaegbu,<sup>344</sup> and George Onugha, Principal of the Assemblies of God Bible School.<sup>345</sup> These men provided a link with earlier movements and influenced the shape of the revival. Ogbansiegbe was credited with introducing the term 'revival' and the practice

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<sup>339</sup> Bill Roberts, Prayer Letter No.11, 13 September 1967; Roberts, *Life and Death*, 33-4; OI, Cyril Okorocho, 8.2.99, Woking.

<sup>340</sup> OI, Cyril Okorocho, 8.2.99, Woking; Roberts, *Life and Death*, 36. Because of the economic blockade food was scarce and prices were high.

<sup>341</sup> Among these were NPC pioneers Uchenna Emezue and Emmanuel Okorie, both converted in 1967 during the civil war. Uchenna Emezue, 'My Journey into Life' (Appendix 4.6.2); OI, Emmanuel Okorie, 17.1.02, Aba; OI, Cyril Okorocho, 8.2.99, Woking.

<sup>342</sup> Roberts, *Death and Life*, 38, 40; Isaac Iheukwumere, Letter to Roberts, 29 July 1968; Bill Roberts, S.U. Prayer Letter No. 17, 7th October 1969. Many were converted during these guest services, with attendance sometimes reaching as high as three hundred. One of the early 'guest service' converts was Emmanuel Okorie (see above).

<sup>343</sup> See chapter two, section 2.5.

<sup>344</sup> Ukaegbu became an ECWA pastor in Jos before the civil war, but during the 1966 pogroms he returned to Umuahia, where he opened a branch of ECWA. He was also an itinerant evangelist with New Life For All, a popular evangelistic programme initiated in Nigeria's Middle Belt by SIM missionary Gerald Swank in 1964. In 1968, Ukaegbu trained for the Presbyterian ministry and after the war pastored the Presbyterian Church in Enugu for four years. In 1987, he was elected Moderator of the Presbyterian Synod and until recently was its Director of Missions, based in Umuahia. OI, James Ukaegbu, 10.10.01, Umuahia; PC, John Onuora, 7.1.02, Enugu. For more on New Life For All, see Eileen Lagaar, *New Life for All*, London: Oliphants, 1969; Nanwul Gutip, *Church of Christ in Nigeria. COCIN: Birth and Growth*, Jos: CrossRoads Communications, 1998, 150-60.

<sup>345</sup> John Nwangwu, written testimony, 1969; PC, Bill Roberts, 10.4.01.

of ‘altar calls’ to the group at Umuahia. Guest services were referred to as ‘revivals’ and people were encouraged to come forward and ‘give their lives to Christ.’ This was a more aggressive form of evangelism than previously employed by Roberts and his co-workers.<sup>346</sup> As members of SU Umuahia dispersed throughout Biafra, they started new groups, and by the end of the war were holding guest services in ten different centres instead of one.<sup>347</sup> Roberts believed they were an effective means of ‘bringing many into a saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ,’ but was uncomfortable with the excessive emotionalism and long appeals for salvation that were sometimes present.<sup>348</sup>

The influence of SU Umuahia is captured well in Justin Ogugua’s narrative. Following a visit in January 1969, he returned to Ihiala with a new eagerness to share the gospel. He ‘witnessed for Christ’ on the bus home, to his work colleagues, in market stalls, and in the local hospital. Within a month a local SU group started, which became the base for further evangelistic initiatives. Their ‘gospel message’ received a mixed reception, but gradually people began ‘to understand the difference between being religious and being a Christian.’ In revivalist rhetoric, the term ‘religious’ had negative connotations, implying a nominal form of Christianity, which stressed outward ritual rather than personal faith in Christ. Ogugua equates this with the Roman Catholic Mission, the main denomination in the area.<sup>349</sup>

Innovative use of music was another way revivalists adapted their strategies to attract prospective converts. Songs were a feature of SU activities during the war and proved

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<sup>346</sup> OI, Cyril C Okorochoa, 8.2.99, Woking.

<sup>347</sup> Bill Roberts, S.U. Prayer Letter no.17, 7 October 1969.

<sup>348</sup> Bill Roberts, Letter to S.U. Groups Area Representatives, from S.U. Headquarters, Umuozu-Mbano, 20 November 1969. Roberts organised weekly training in evangelism for SU members, and weekly follow-up meetings for new converts, which consisted of teaching on prayer, Bible study, fellowship, witnessing, and the Holy Spirit. Roberts, *Life and death*, 40-1.

popular within a culture where music is an important element of indigenous piety. Initially they sang mainly Western gospel songs rather than ones produced locally. Roberts also admitted his aversion to loud noise and his resistance to clapping or the use of African drums.<sup>350</sup> But later, new songs were composed in English and the vernacular. Biafran soldiers used to march to battle singing songs, and post-war revivalists adopted this approach as they trekked from place to place to spread the gospel.<sup>351</sup> Cox suggests that one reason the Pentecostal message was carried so far so fast in its early years was that music became its principal medium.<sup>352</sup> During the Civil War Revival, singing choruses was both an act of worship, a conscious effort to attract people to listen to their message, and a channel through which the message was conveyed.<sup>353</sup>

Members of SU Umuahia became aggressive evangelists, visiting homes, market stores, army camps, refugee camps, and hospitals to preach and pray for the sick and wounded.<sup>354</sup> With the close of the war and removal of restrictions, there was a significant increase in evangelistic activities, particularly in urban areas. Enthusiastic young Christians, stirred by vivid conversion experiences, carried the gospel onto the streets and organised extensive evangelistic campaigns, where they not only called on people to repent, but offered prayers for healing and deliverance. This approach was

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<sup>349</sup> Justin Ogugua, written testimony, 1969 (Appendix 4.5.2).

<sup>350</sup> Bill Roberts, Prayer Letter No.11, 13 September 1967; Uchenna Emezue, 'My Journey into Life' (Appendix 4.6.2); Roberts, *Life and Death*, 40-1; OI, Bill Roberts, 23.7.99, Cullompton. During the war, SU Umuahia started an evangelistic singing group called the 'Peacemakers.'

<sup>351</sup> PC, Chris Alagbu, 28.4.00, Enugu; Bolton, *Glory*, 44.

<sup>352</sup> Cox, *Fire from Heaven*, 121.

<sup>353</sup> OI, Chris Alagbu, 3,5,00, Enugu; PC, E. Odiaka, 12.5.00, Onitsha.

<sup>354</sup> Kalu, 'Passive Revolution', 17-18; Justin Ogugua, written testimony, 1969 (Appendix 4.5.2). Although Umuahia remained the centre of the revival until April 1969, there were others in the Biafran

generally absent in existing religious institutions, and created tensions between revivalists and their elders in church and community.<sup>355</sup>

*Hour of Freedom* popularised ‘crusade’ evangelism during the revival. Here global influences came into play. Stephen Okafor was impressed by the emphasis on mass evangelism in the writings of American Pentecostal, T. L. Osborn.<sup>356</sup> This approach clashed with official SU policy, and sometimes created tensions between leaders and members. Okafor and his co-workers carried the gospel beyond church boundaries, often trekking long distances to do so, and encouraged new recruits to organise ‘crusades’ in their hometowns or villages. Altar calls featured strongly, and there were reports of widespread conversions.<sup>357</sup> Other groups employed similar strategies,<sup>358</sup> and revivalists also engaged in mission initiatives outside Igboland, as we will see in chapter four.

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enclave who engaged in aggressive evangelism independently from SU. One was Paul Nweke (now, Nwachukwu), who later became a NPC pioneer. OI, Paul Nwachukwu, 12.5.00, Onitsha.

<sup>355</sup> This approach to evangelism was not encouraged within mainline churches or zionist-type prayer houses like UPPB. Evangelical-type prayers houses, such as Christ Holy Church and St. Joseph’s Chosen Church of God, were exceptions. Assemblies of God was also more proactive in its approach, and regularly held open-air ‘crusades.’

<sup>356</sup> See for example, T. L. Osborn, *Soulwinning out where the Sinners are*, 7<sup>th</sup> Edition, Tulsa: Osborn Foundation, 1966, 49: ‘For years I have stood on crude open-air platforms before multitudes of underprivileged people, interspersed with lepers, demoniacs, witchdoctors, and hopelessly diseased victims. I have preached Christ to these masses when it was all I could do to hold back tears of human sympathy.’ Osborn refers to two types of evangelism practiced by the early Christians in the book of Acts: mass evangelism and personal evangelism. I came across this book in an Igbo Christian bookshop. It had been reprinted by former Igbo revivalist and NPC pioneer Jonathan Ikegwonu, co-founder of Save the Lost Mission, and founder of Life Care Ministry International.

<sup>357</sup> OI, Stephen Okafor, 16.12.98, London; Stephen Okafor, Letter to Roberts, early 1970. In early 1970, some members of *Hour of Freedom* walked from Awka-Etiti (near Onitsha) to Umuahia, a distance of approximately 175 miles. Bolton refers to this as the ‘Great Trek’ (*Glory*, 42-4). Another informant referred to a later ‘trek’ (from Onitsha to Aba) involving eighteen revivalists. Benjamin Ikedinobi, group discussion, 29.4.00, Enugu. Along the way, they sang songs, preached the gospel, and conducted ‘crusades.’

<sup>358</sup> For example, evangelistic teams from SU Enugu township group visited virtually all the surrounding villages. OI, Chinedu Nebo and Rosebud Eluwah. Both Nebo and Eluwah were SU leaders in Enugu during the early 1970s.

A typical *Hour of Freedom* meeting lasted from 1.00 pm to 8.00 pm,<sup>359</sup> and consisted of worship and preaching, interspersed with prayers and testimonies. Choruses, sung in English or the vernacular, were often of local origin. The sermon was the focus of the meeting, usually delivered in English by a male leader of *Hour of Freedom* or a visiting evangelist, with Igbo interpretation.<sup>360</sup> The ‘altar call’ was an important ritual and provided an opportunity for people to receive prayer for ‘salvation,’ healing, Holy Spirit baptism, and occasionally deliverance. Counselling and follow-up of new converts took place after the meeting.<sup>361</sup>

Rufus Ogbonna’s oral account of revivalist activity in Aba captures the post-war atmosphere well. In keeping with evangelical discourse, it represents the revival as a human response to divine initiative. Evangelistic enthusiasm was a ‘work of the Holy Spirit,’ but was carefully staged and planned by local Christians, convinced they possessed the truth. Their goal was to ‘campaign for souls’ by presenting the gospel to people in their homes and on the streets. Open-air ‘crusades’ and house-to-house evangelism were the preferred methods of transmission. But the Spirit’s assistance, as the principal agent of conversion, was solicited through prayer. Finally, evangelism was a communal activity that eroded denominational barriers and fostered Christian unity.<sup>362</sup>

But the urge to engage in aggressive evangelism also led to tensions within SU and directly contributed to the formation of autonomous CMs. The latter’s commitment to

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<sup>359</sup> Bolton, *Glory*, 156.

<sup>360</sup> Visiting evangelists at *Hour of Freedom* events included Godson Ogbansiegbe (Christian Fellowship Group) and J. M. J. Emesim (*Hour of Deliverance*). Bolton, *Glory*, 113, 120-22.

mission was reflected in the names they adopted, such as Hour of Freedom Evangelistic Association, Holiness Evangelistic Association, Save the Lost Programme, Last Days Messengers, and National Evangelistic Association. As an organisation SU was also committed to evangelism but tended to restrict its evangelistic activities to its own groups and was reluctant to move beyond these boundaries. When, for example, *Hour of Freedom* first carried the gospel onto the streets of Onitsha and engaged in ‘mass evangelism,’ they encountered opposition from SU leaders.<sup>363</sup> It was similar in other Igbo urban areas. In Umuahia, Obiorah and Uhiara started the Master’s Vessel Group as an independent evangelistic ministry because they felt constrained by SU policy.<sup>364</sup> Tensions also occurred in Enugu township group when members began to engage in house to house evangelism and organise open-air crusades.<sup>365</sup>

### 6.3 Power Encounter

As noted earlier, iconoclasm, as an expression of Christian victory, was another strategy employed during the revival. This was reminiscent of early mission initiatives in Igboland, but had declined among second-generation converts.<sup>366</sup> Revivalists, themselves chiefly third-generation Christians, preached a message that was equally intolerant of traditional and ‘occult’ practices. They required those involved in ‘traditional’ and ‘occult’ activity to demonstrate their commitment to ‘born-again’

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<sup>361</sup> See Raphael Okafor’s diary entries, cited in Bolton, *Glory*, 106-36; Bolton, *Glory*, 156-57.

<sup>362</sup> OI, Rufus Ogbonna, 13.4.00, Ochadamu (Appendix 4.5.3).

<sup>363</sup> OI, Stephen Okafor, 16.12.98, London. Okafor was critical of SU’s official policy of restricting its evangelistic activity to its own groups and its reluctance to conduct open-air campaigns. Evidence suggests that during the war SU members at the grassroots were not constrained by SU policy. See comments above, and Justin Ogugua’s written testimony (Appendix 4.5.2).

<sup>364</sup> OI, Felix Obiorah, 6.10.01, Umuahia.

<sup>365</sup> OI, Rosebud Eluwah, 13.10.01, Aba.

<sup>366</sup> Kalu, *Embattled Gods*, 319; Okorocho, *Religious Conversion*, 211. Okorocho laments the indiscriminate iconoclasm of early mission Christianity, which did not distinguish between the

Christianity by burning their shrines, idols and other traditional or ‘occult’ paraphernalia. This was the strategy adopted by *Hour of Freedom*.<sup>367</sup> The destruction of previous objects of worship and ‘occult’ material was considered a mark of repentance, but was also part of a power-encounter motif, a demonstration of the superior power of Christ over alternative sources of power, whether Igbo gods or other malign forces. During the revival, this sometimes occurred spontaneously,<sup>368</sup> but usually as an orchestrated strategy.<sup>369</sup>

Central to this power encounter motif was an emphasis on healing that partly arose in response to the civil war crisis and socio-economic climate. Twenty (61 %) out of 33 informants said this was a major feature of the revival (see Table 3.2). Prayer-healing rituals evolved in the early stages of the revival, but became more sophisticated and popular after the war. Members of SU Umuahia would regularly visit the local hospital to pray for the sick or wounded,<sup>370</sup> but it was in rural areas, where access to medical facilities was restricted, that the practice was more commonplace. One informant told me he began to pray for the sick in 1968 when he became cut off behind enemy lines. ‘There was no hospital, there was nowhere to go, the whole place was sealed off, and I

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‘reprehensible aspects of indigenous life and innocuous practices which formed part of the traditional heritage.’

<sup>367</sup> PC, Stephen Okafor, 31.1.01.

<sup>368</sup> For example, Augustine Nwodika, who worked with *Hour of Freedom*, recalled that during the revival people would sometimes spontaneously throw away their ‘juju’ when they encountered God. OI, Augustine Nwodika, 8.5.00, Enugu.

<sup>369</sup> One revivalist referred to the occasion when he returned to his family compound during the revival and ‘filled with the power of the Holy Ghost’ destroyed the idols that were there. Simon Ugwuoke, written testimony, 1969. Another described an evangelistic venture in 1971 when villagers ‘brought out their shrines for destruction.’ Uchenna Emezue, Letter to Roberts, 24 May 1971.

<sup>370</sup> OI, Bill Roberts, 23.7.99, Cullompton. See also Justin Ogugua’s written testimony, where he refers to an occasion in 1969 when he prayed for the healing of a sick woman in his local hospital (Appendix 4.5.2, paragraph 4).

just prayed, people got well.<sup>371</sup> The Bible and American Pentecostal literature also acted as stimulants for revivalist healing rituals,<sup>372</sup> and by 1971, healing prayers had become a regular feature of evangelistic events organised by *Hour of Freedom* and other CMs.<sup>373</sup> Yet it was not until 1973 that this practice became a dominant feature of the movement.<sup>374</sup> Healing rituals became popular because they resonated with biblical and traditional worldviews, and appealed to those affected by the civil war crisis.<sup>375</sup>

In evangelical parlance, revivals are often associated with renewed interest in spiritual conflict and demonology.<sup>376</sup> Deliverance prayer sometimes occurred during the Civil War Revival, usually in an evangelistic setting, but was not a common theme in revivalist narratives.<sup>377</sup> Only three (9 %) out of 33 informants said this was a prominent feature (Table 3.2), and 12 (36 %) said it was an emphasis that emerged later. Raphael Okafor's diary records occasions when prayers for deliverance were offered during

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<sup>371</sup> OI, Cyril Okorochoa, 8.2.99, Woking.

<sup>372</sup> OI, Cyril Okorochoa, 8.2.99, Woking; OI, Frances Lawjua Bolton, 23.5.99, Loughton; Raymond Nwosu, written testimony, 1969. Literature produced by American Pentecostals T. L. Osborn and Gordon Lindsay was especially influential. Simon Ugwuoke, written testimony, 1969; Bolton, *Glory*, 153.

<sup>373</sup> Raphael Okafor's diary entries are filled with references to healing prayers, usually in the context of *Hour of Freedom* evangelistic campaigns. See for example, diary entries for 13 March, 4 April, 5 April, 7 April, 14 April, 1 May, 1971, quoted in Bolton, *Glory*, 107-25. Other revivalists who regularly prayed for the sick were Godson Ogbansiegbe (Christian Fellowship Group) and Teddy Igbokwe (Apostolic Church). Raymond Nwosu, Letter to Roberts, 12 April 1971; OI, D. O. Iwuagwu, 23.10.01, Enugu.

<sup>374</sup> OI, Paul Nwachukwu and Augustine Nwodika; Bolton, *Glory*, 41, 123; Muiyiwa Olamijulo, Scripture Union Eastern Prayer Letter No. 6, January 1973.

<sup>375</sup> I was unable to find evidence for post-war healing movements directed towards helping people come to terms with memories of violence and guilt, such as those documented by Werbner and Maxwell in southern Africa. See Richard Werbner, *Tears of the Dead. The Social Biography of an African Family*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1991; Maxwell, 'Witches, Prophets and Avenging Spirits, 326-29.

<sup>376</sup> See for example, Lovelace, *Spiritual Life*, 134-35; Stephen Hunt, 'Deliverance: The Evolution of a Doctrine', *Themelios*, 21.1, 1995, 11.

<sup>377</sup> This was the view of a number of my informants, including NPC pioneers and those who remained within mainline churches. For example, one stated: 'In the '70s, there wasn't a lot of deliverance, in fact it was almost unheard of. We do what we call "spiritual warfare." We would pray against all the forces of darkness, bind them and all that. We didn't work very much with demons, arresting people and casting out demons and doing deliverance.' OI, Chinedu Nebo, 4.5.00, Enugu.

*Hour of Freedom* evangelistic campaigns,<sup>378</sup> and several former revivalists told me they were involved in ‘deliverance ministry’ during the early 1970s.<sup>379</sup> I also interviewed one informant who recalled his experience of deliverance from ‘evil spirits’ in 1971, following prayer by Stephen Okafor.<sup>380</sup> Those who underwent deliverance normally had some previous contact with prayer houses, ‘occult’ groups, or traditional religion.

#### **6.4 Motivating Factors**

Why was there this sense of urgency to preach the gospel, and where did the youthful evangelists acquire the courage to confront their elders in church and community? Here we return to Emezue’s narrative account of evangelism in Ossah village, and the discourse of spiritual warfare. If we recall, the identity of being born-again equipped revivalists with tools to challenge gerontocratic authority. In this case, the young protagonists imagined themselves caught up in a cosmic battle and confronted by hostile forces. Their new identity, forged from personal experience and biblical motifs, enabled them to preach the gospel to parents, community elders, and traditional religious practitioners without fear or shame. The Bible not only formed an authoritative base from which to challenge their community, it shaped their conception of the missionary task itself. Preaching the gospel was an act of obedience, and an urgent priority, because ‘souls were passing to eternity without Jesus.’ As an army engaged in combat they anticipated opposition, and welcomed suffering as an

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<sup>378</sup> For example, entries for 5 April, 1 May, 1971, quoted in Bolton, *Glory*, 113, 119.

<sup>379</sup> These were Augustine Nwodika, Wilson Ezeofor, Victor Onuigbo, Benjamin Ikedinobi, Samson Onwubiko. Emmanuel Okorie, founder of Living Word Ministries, also engaged in deliverance ministry in the early 1970s. See Emmanuel Okorie, ‘Deliverance from Demons’, *Nuggets. The Apostolic People*, 14 October 2001, 1. SU travelling secretary Mike Oye told me that when he visited Umuahia in 1969 ‘almost anything you can think of in the book of Acts was happening; there were healings, there were deliverances.’ OI, Mike Oye, 6.5.00, Enugu.

<sup>380</sup> OI, Benjamin Ikedinobi, 12.5.00, Onitsha.

opportunity to ‘glorify His Holy Name.’ But Christ, their ‘Captain and Strength,’ was ready to fight for them. In keeping with traditional thought, they believed that prayer went straight to the divine source of power. ‘We went on our knees and prayed for more power . . . our fears were transformed into power and we started thanking God for counting us worthy to suffer for the Name . . . .’ And they discovered, as they ‘moved out in groups,’ that they could draw strength from one another. So the combined effects of their ‘born-again’ experience, Bible texts, prayer, and Christian fellowship were sufficient to sustain them when God granted ‘an occasion to stand for Him.’<sup>381</sup>

In revivalist discourse, adventist beliefs also added urgency to evangelism. Protagonists were motivated by an expectation of Christ’s imminent return and saw themselves as God’s end time messengers.<sup>382</sup> There are echoes here of early Pentecostal missionary fervour, which was characterised by a similar eschatological urgency.<sup>383</sup> In the case of Igbo revivalists, this conviction was derived from the Bible and Christian literature, but was strengthened by the war situation.<sup>384</sup> Similar beliefs continued to influence their gospel presentation after the war.<sup>385</sup>

## 6.5 Pentecostal Infiltration

<sup>381</sup> Uchenna Emezue, ‘New Year’s Victory’ (Appendix 4.5.1).

<sup>382</sup> OI, Stephen Okafor, 16.12.98, London; Nnaji Chukwuka, ‘Obstacles to Evangelism in the 1970s’, RSC, 29.4.00, Enugu; Nwodika, ‘Churches in the Seventies’ (Appendix 4.7.1, paragraph 17). In fact, as noted above, one of the earliest Igbo-founded CMs called itself the ‘Last Days Messengers.’

<sup>383</sup> L. Grant McClung, Jr., ‘Pentecostal/Charismatic Perspectives on a Missiology for the Twenty-First Century’, *Pneuma*, 16.1, Spring 1994, 14; Faupel, *Everlasting Gospel*, 21.

<sup>384</sup> OI, Cyril Okorochoa, 8.2.99, Woking; OI, Stephen Okafor, 16.12.98, London.

<sup>385</sup> For instance, referring to the 1970s revivalists, Osisioma, *Ancient Pathway*, xii, wrote, ‘Evangelism was their priority, holiness was their goal, and the Rapture was their hope and song.’. See also Nebo, ‘Critics and Protagonists’, who stated that the expectancy of Christ’s imminent return was behind everything revivalists did and said, including evangelism. And Stephen Okafor of *Hour of Freedom* believed that aggressive evangelism would hasten the return of Christ, a conviction he derived from the Bible. OI, Stephen Okafor, 16.12.98, London. See also Hackett, ‘Charismatic/Pentecostal’, 262, on Nigerian and Ghanaian neo-Pentecostalism: ‘the millennialist beliefs of the charismatic groups add urgency to their evangelism and inspire one and all to be agents of God’s work in these endtimes.’

Holy Spirit baptism also equipped protagonists with tools to challenge their communities, and preach the gospel with authority. There has been a tendency among scholars of contemporary African Christianity to blur the distinction between ‘born-again’ and neo-Pentecostal identity.<sup>386</sup> Igbo neo-Pentecostalism emerged from the womb of the Civil War Revival. Yet in revivalist discourse, a clear distinction is made between new birth and Holy Spirit baptism. A definite ‘born-again’ identity existed prior to the introduction of Pentecostal doctrines.<sup>387</sup>

During the revival, why did so many members of mainline churches embrace the Pentecostal experience, and how did this process take place? To answer these questions, I return to the issue of conversion, and take note of elements of continuity and rupture, as well as local and external influences. Revival narratives suggest that Pentecostal appropriation was consistent with the quest for power to enhance life and was stimulated by local contingencies and external forces. But in contrast to new birth, Pentecostal conversion was primarily associated with power for *service*.

In its early civil war phase, the revival had no close links with Pentecostal denominations. The Assemblies of God (AG) did have a strong base in Umuahia, but most early protagonists were Anglicans and Methodists. As the movement progressed,

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<sup>386</sup> See for example, Marshall-Fratani, ‘Global and Local’, 285; Marshall, ‘Pentecostalism in Southern Nigeria’, 8; Hackett, ‘Charismatic/Pentecostal’; Gifford, *African Christianity*, 34; Kalu, ‘Preserving a Worldview’, 123; Kalu, ‘Third Response’, 8; Van Dijk, ‘Young Puritan Preachers’. One reason for the use of this term by scholars to signify the neo-Pentecostal community is its contemporary use by African Christians themselves, both inside and outside the movement. For the Igbo context, see Amaechi Nwachukwu, ‘How Born Again are the Born-again?’, *LivingSpring*, May/June 1997, 3-7; OI, Rufus Ogbonna, 13.4.00, Ochadamu (Appendix 4.5.3).

<sup>387</sup> This is evident from Emezue’s narrative of revivalist activity in Ossah, written in 1969 (Appendix 4.5.1). Emezue told me he did not experience Spirit baptism until 1973. OI, Uchenna Emezue, 11.10.01, Umuahia. See also Nwodika, ‘Churches in the Seventies’ (Appendix 4.7.1, paragraph 1).

a growing desire developed among members of SU Umuahia for a deeper experience of the Spirit, for revival to break out in the land, and for increased effectiveness in witness.<sup>388</sup> Gradually two distinct but inter-related strands of discourse on the Holy Spirit emerged, both drawing upon biblical motifs and Western theological traditions.

As noted earlier, Keswick teaching was an important early influence. This branch of the Holiness Movement regarded 'full surrender' as the decisive crisis experience after conversion, enabling the individual to receive the infilling of the Spirit by faith.<sup>389</sup> The later Keswick tradition, reacting against the divisive nature of the Pentecostal doctrine of initial evidence, taught that the fullness of the Spirit is obtained through growth in sanctification rather than a second experience involving empowering for service.<sup>390</sup>

Early revival narratives contain both versions. For example, a member of SU Umuahia wrote, 'I accepted Christ as my personal saviour on Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> November 1967 . . . but was not separate from the world. Not until 13<sup>th</sup> February 1968 I decided and surrendered my life absolutely to Him.'<sup>391</sup> Rather than using the term 'baptism of the Holy Spirit,' early revivalists talked about 'being surrendered to Jesus' or 'being set on fire for Christ.'<sup>392</sup> Roberts himself was heartened by this new interest in the Holy

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<sup>388</sup> Bill Roberts, S.U. Prayer Letter No.15, 7/8 November, 1968; Roberts, *Life and Death*, 69.

<sup>389</sup> See Fiedler, *Faith Missions*, 215.

<sup>390</sup> See Lovelace, *Spiritual Life*, 121-22.

<sup>391</sup> John Nwangwu, written testimony, 1969. See also Raymond Nwosu, written testimony, 1969.

<sup>392</sup> OI, Cyril Okorochoa, 8.2.99, Woking. For some revivalists, the fire motif was associated with a religious experience whereby individuals felt the sensation of fire on their bodies and sometimes saw flames of fire while praying. This was interpreted as the work of the Spirit purifying them from sin and giving renewed zeal for evangelism.

Spirit, but taught that the fullness of the Spirit was a ‘continual, day by day, process’ of yielding in obedience to God.<sup>393</sup>

The gradual infiltration of Pentecostal doctrine occurred from the movement’s inception, initially through AG members attached to SU Umuahia, keen to promote Spirit baptism and ‘tongues’ as initial evidence.<sup>394</sup> But its introduction was contested. Here the global evangelical culture exported by SU’s metropolitan centres in the West clashed with local aspirations.<sup>395</sup> Roberts and senior SU members resisted Pentecostal doctrine and practice because they felt it was divisive and threatened the unity of the fellowship. They also believed that focussing on signs, such as tongues and healing miracles, could distract people from seeking after the infilling of the Holy Spirit.<sup>396</sup> Yet as SU groups were established further afield, exposure to Pentecostal influences increased. More members came from Pentecostal churches and AG pastors became

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<sup>393</sup> Roberts, *Life and Death*, 69; OI, Bill Roberts, 23.7.99, Cullompton. See also OI, John Onuora, 30.4.00, Enugu: ‘We talked about the fullness of the Spirit . . . as you yield yourself, as you study the Bible and obey God and lead a consecrated life, he will become more and more manifest in you.’

<sup>394</sup> At least three AG members were attending SU Umuahia meetings as early October 1967 (Ndubueze Oti, Chukwuma Iroezi, and Isaac Ihukwumere). OI, Ndubueze Oti, 23.5.00, Enugu; PC, Isaac Ihukwumere, 12.10.01, Aba.

<sup>395</sup> See Nwodika, ‘Churches in the Seventies’ (Appendix 4.7.1, paragraph 2). In the early 1970s, SU Nigeria issued a statement on the charismatic movement which it circulated among SU groups. Apparently, it was an attempt to curtail excesses and discourage any behaviour that might interfere with SU’s interdenominational stance. OI, Daniel Onwukwe, 15.1.02, Owerri. Onwukwe was Secretary of SU Nigeria in the early 1970s. The following is a statement on the doctrine of the Spirit written by Tony Wilmot (a British expatriate worker and SU leader) and adopted by SU Nigeria Council in May 1970: ‘The Scripture Union recognises that the Scriptures teach both the baptism of the Spirit and the gifts of the Spirit. We hold the person and work of the Holy Spirit to be subjects of great preciousness to the believer and we notice with regret that these subjects, which call for great reverence, have in recent times become increasingly matters of contention. It is our united resolution that preaching likely to stimulate contention about gifts such as ‘tongues’ or healing or miracles shall not be given at Scripture Union meetings or in association with the name of the Scripture Union. We counsel all staff workers, voluntary helpers and speakers at Scripture Union meetings to exercise restraint in this matter. Let everything be done decently and in order: make love your aim. The fruit of the Spirit is self-control.’ The Scripture Union (Nigeria), Minutes of the 6<sup>th</sup> Meeting of Council, 2 May 1970, Ibadan, 3.

<sup>396</sup> Bill Roberts, S.U. Prayer Letter No. 15, 7 November and 8 December 1968; John Onuora, ‘Round Table Discussion’, RSC, 28.4.00, Enugu. Towards the end of the war, the SU committee in Biafra expressed concern over the infiltration of Pentecostal doctrine and practice over the previous 18 months.

regular speakers at evangelistic guest services. Towards the end of the war, SU members began to leave the mainline churches to join AG and other Pentecostal churches, a development opposed by Roberts and some senior SU leaders.<sup>397</sup> Thus, there were clear elements of continuity between the Civil War Revival and earlier movements of Pentecostal activity.

After the war, there was a significant shift away from the Keswick emphasis on ‘full surrender’ towards a full-blown theology of Holy Spirit baptism. This gradually came to dominate the revival and provided the foundation for other features such as tongues, healing miracles, holiness, and prophecy. Twenty-eight (85 %) out of 33 informants said that Spirit baptism was a prominent feature of the revival (Table 3.2), and 67 (85 %) out of 79 former revivalists spoken to claimed to have received the experience. Out of 33 revivalists, who told me the timing of their ‘baptism,’ five (15 %) received before the war,<sup>398</sup> two (6 %) during the war, 20 (61 %) between 1970 and 1973, four (12 %) between 1974 and 1979, and two (6 %) between 1980 and 1989. The experience sometimes occurred spontaneously in private or in communal settings, particularly in the early post-war phase of the revival, but also at special meetings set aside for Christians to ‘pray through.’<sup>399</sup>

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These included the doctrine of initial evidence, healing without the use of medicine, an overemphasis on fasting, and excessive emotionalism. Bill Roberts, S.U. Prayer Letter No.18, 29 December 1969.

<sup>397</sup> OI, Cyril Okorochoa, 8.2.99, Woking; Bill Roberts, S.U. Prayer Letter No.18, 29 December 1969. Roberts’s opposition had more to do with his concern over maintaining unity than an antipathy towards Pentecostal doctrine and practice.

<sup>398</sup> Two of these were AG members at the time.

<sup>399</sup> OI, Frances Lawjua Bolton, 23.5.99, Loughton; OI, Augustine Nwodika, 8.5.00, Enugu; OI, Chinedu Nebo, 4.5.00, Enugu. For instance, out of 20 informants who received the ‘baptism’ between 1970 and 1973, six received on their own; four during communal prayer meetings (with no advocate); three through the laying on of hands; one while preaching; and six in an unknown context. *Hour of Freedom* organised meetings specifically for Christians where teaching was given on Spirit baptism and participants were encouraged to receive the experience. OI, Raphael Okafor, 8.5.00, Enugu.

Pentecostal infiltration after the war was facilitated by local contingencies, exposure to the Bible and American Pentecostal literature,<sup>400</sup> and human agency. The departure of Roberts towards the end of 1969 was a significant event, as was the spread of the revival to other urban areas where protagonists encountered a variety of Pentecostal influences. In the Onitsha area, for example, SU members became more receptive when *Hour of Freedom* evangelist Stephen Okafor started to promote Spirit baptism after working alongside Pentecostal SU travelling secretaries Oye and Olamijulo in early 1970.<sup>401</sup> The arrival of J. M. J. Emesim and the presence of Pentecostal speakers at SU Onitsha events were also significant developments.<sup>402</sup> In other Igbo urban centres, the attitude of SU members changed as they read American Pentecostal literature, and mixed freely with Pentecostals from AG and other groups.<sup>403</sup> There was also a snowballing effect as revivalists observed the impact of Spirit baptism upon their friends.<sup>404</sup> Sometimes Pentecostal manifestations occurred without any apparent external influences, as in the case of one SU group in Umuahia, who experienced a spontaneous ‘outpouring of the Holy Spirit,’ accompanied by the gift of tongues, after a

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<sup>400</sup> I have noted the influence of books written by Osborn and Lindsay. Several former revivalists told me that Osborn’s teaching helped to introduce an emphasis on Spirit baptism into the revival. OI, John Onuora, 30.4.00, Enugu; OI, Raphael Okafor, 8.5.00, Enugu.

<sup>401</sup> OI, Stephen Okafor, 16.12.98, London. Okafor told me he received the ‘baptism’ himself while preaching at an evangelistic event in 1970. His *Hour of Freedom* colleague Raphael Okafor ‘received’ during an all night prayer meeting in August 1970. OI, Raphael Okafor, 8.5.00, Enugu.

<sup>402</sup> These included Ogbansiegbe of CFG, Emesim (*Hour of Deliverance*), and various AG pastors. OI, Emmanuel Ekpunobi, 24.10.01, Awka. British Pentecostal missionary S. G. Elton was also a guest speaker at a ‘crusade’ organised by SU Onitsha in 1972. Achunike, *Dreams of Heaven*, 59.

<sup>403</sup> For example, Timothy Uhiara of Master’s Vessel Group received the ‘baptism’ in 1974 after reading Lindsay’s books on the Holy Spirit. OI, Timothy Uhiara, 16.10.01, Umuahia. And Amaechi Nwachukwu, a member of AG in the early 1970s, recalled praying for leaders of SU Enugu to receive Holy Spirit baptism (OI, 6.6.00, Enugu). In Aba, CFG was an important early influence. OI, Felix Obiorah and Uchenna Emezue.

<sup>404</sup> Several informants told me they became more receptive to Spirit baptism after seeing the effect it had on others. OI, Nnenna Chukwuma, Paul Nwachukwu, Benjamin Ikinobi.

period of prayer and fasting in early 1970.<sup>405</sup> Subsequently, Pentecostalism spread throughout the work of SU in the east.

Pentecostal appropriation was closely associated with the significant increase in evangelistic activity after the war and the search for power to enhance life. New challenges require new responses. If we recall, power encounter was an important mission strategy and revivalists wished to demonstrate Christ's superiority over alternative power brokers. One informant told me, 'People are suffering and they needed a demonstration of power . . . the occult people are there, the native doctors are there; we must demonstrate the power of the Holy Spirit.'<sup>406</sup> The Pentecostal message was attractive because of its close correspondence to traditional religious piety and biblical motifs. It emphasised the power of the Spirit, accepted the reality of the old gods (while demonising them), and provided alternative means for healing and protection from evil. As such, it represented a form of Africanisation 'from below', different from that later proposed by African theologians.<sup>407</sup>

If we move from motives to consequences, the consensus among informants was that Spirit baptism empowered them for more effective service, giving increased 'boldness'

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<sup>405</sup> This occurred in the SU group at Olokoro, Umuahia. OI, Thompson Nwosu, 31.8.01, Jos. One informant told me of an occasion while he was preaching when the Spirit came on people and they began to spontaneously speak in tongues. Chinedu Nebo, group discussion, 29.4.00, Enugu. See also, Bolton's testimony of Spirit baptism in May 1970 (*Glory*, 60): 'I started to go to 22 Amobi Street to pray with the brethren. Stephen, the brethren at Amobi Street and associated Christians became regular visitors at our house. It was during one of these visits to our house, about May 1970, that I was baptised in the Holy Spirit. No one had preached to me about this. I was not consciously seeking Him. But as I prayed joy filled my heart. . . And as we continued to pray the Saviour Himself stood before me. . . After a while I realised I could not understand the words that were coming from my lips. . . I was speaking in a new tongue.'

<sup>406</sup> OI, Raphael Okafor, 8.5.00, Enugu.

<sup>407</sup> See my discussion in chapter one, section 2.5. See also Meyer, *Translating the Devil*, 134-40; Martin, *Pentecostalism*, 142.

to witness and ability to exercise spiritual gifts, especially healing. In nearly every case, informants knew they had received when they spoke in tongues.<sup>408</sup> Cox believes that tongues-speaking, as ecstatic utterance, is an example of Pentecostalism's 'power to tap into a deep substratum of human religiosity.'<sup>409</sup> It was especially appealing in the Igbo context, where ecstatic states are traditionally associated with spiritual empowerment, divination, and prophecy.<sup>410</sup> Moreover, as a form of cathartic expression it allowed Igbos to express their sense of injustice and loss following the war.

Prophecy was a feature of the revival, though not a major emphasis, and sometimes took place in an evangelistic setting during prayer meetings.<sup>411</sup> Revival movements have often been accompanied by a belief in contemporary revelations of the Spirit,<sup>412</sup> though in the case of the Civil War Revival this was not always associated with Spirit baptism.<sup>413</sup> Prophecies were usually in the form of exhortation rather than prediction, and closely aligned with Scripture.<sup>414</sup> After the war, prophecies were sometimes

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<sup>408</sup> Out of 23 revivalists, who told me of the consequences of their 'baptism,' 18 (78 %) said that it made them more effective in Christian ministry and at least 19 (82 %) said that they received the ability to speak in tongues. For an example, see Nwodika, 'Churches in the Seventies' (Appendix 4.7.1, paragraph 1); OI, Augustine Nwodika, 8.5.00, Enugu.

<sup>409</sup> Cox, *Fire From Heaven*, 91.

<sup>410</sup> Okorochoa, *Religious Conversion*, 141-2; Onunwa, *Igbo Traditional Religion*, 58-93; Simon Ottenberg, 'Humerous Masks and Serious Politics among the Afikpo Ibo', in Grinker and Steiner (eds.), *Perspectives on Africa*, 434.

<sup>411</sup> I use the term 'prophecy' in a broad sense to include visions and dreams that are not necessarily expressed in oracular speech. One revivalist wrote in 1972 about SU bands in his school where members 'see vision, prophesy and dream.' Chuma G. Obijiofor, Letter to Roberts, 24 August 1972. See also OI, Benson Ezeokeke, 11.5.00, Onitsha. Several informants said that prophecy was not a common phenomenon during the revival. OI, Ifenyinma Orajekwe, 1.5.00, Enugu; OI, Frances Lawjua Bolton, 23.5.99, Loughton; OI, Raphael Okafor, 8.5.00, Enugu. It was Raphael Okafor of *Hour of Freedom* who told me that sometimes direction was given to them through prophecy in an evangelistic setting.

<sup>412</sup> Lovelace, *Spiritual Life*, 262.

<sup>413</sup> For example, dreams and visions were sometimes features of conversion narratives and calls to Christian ministry. This was the case with a number of my informants. OI, Paul Nwachukwu, Benson Ezeokeke, Augustine Nwodika.

<sup>414</sup> OI, Raphael Okafor and Benson Ezeokeke; Bolton, *Glory*, 130. Although one informant told me of a 'revelation' he received in 1969 that the war would soon end. OI, Cyril Okorochoa, 8.2.99, Woking.

directed towards exposing sin or warning against imminent dangers, but more often contained words of consolation.<sup>415</sup> It is surprising that prophecy was relatively rare during the revival considering its location in a context of crisis.<sup>416</sup> One reason for the reluctance of some revivalists to focus attention upon extra-biblical revelation was their background in the prayer houses, which they maintained laid excessive emphasis on visions and dreams.<sup>417</sup>

Pentecostal infiltration exacerbated tensions within SU and contributed towards the emergence of CMs, as some members claimed authority to challenge the authority structures in church and community.<sup>418</sup> The flexible structures of SU facilitated the introduction of Pentecostal spirituality into its ranks, as members from mission churches mixed freely with those from Pentecostal churches, and gradually assimilated their doctrine of Spirit baptism and their experience of charismatic gifts. The insistence on tongues as initial evidence aggravated tensions within SU and aroused the hostility of mainline church authorities.

## Conclusion

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According to another informant, Stephen Okafor predicted that his wife, who was barren, would have a child. OI, Benjamin Ikedinobi, 12.5.00, Onitsha.

<sup>415</sup> OI, Raphael Okafor, Thompson Nwosu, Leo Anorue; Bolton, *Glory*, 130. See Raphael Okafor, Diary, 19 October 1971 (Bolton, *Glory*, 150) for an example of a prophetic warning.

<sup>416</sup> Various scholars have noted the connection between prophets/prophecies and local/large-scale crises. See for example, Douglas M. Johnson and David M. Anderson, 'Revealing Prophets', in Douglas M. Johnson and David M. Anderson (eds.), *Revealing Prophets; Prophecy in Eastern African History*, London: James Currey, 1-26; Bastion, 'Two Visionaries', 4.

<sup>417</sup> OI, Frances Lawjua Bolton, 23.5.99, Loughton.

<sup>418</sup> For example, see Nwodika, 'Churches in the Seventies' (Appendix 4.7.1, paragraph 8); Chukwuka, *Beyond the Night*, 21-3 (Appendix 4.7.6).

The Biafran crisis exposed the deficiencies of existing religious options and created a favourable environment for a revival that was evangelical in its origins, due to its SU roots, but quickly acquired a Pentecostal spirituality. The revival flourished because it adapted successively to new and challenging contexts. It resacralised the landscape in Christian terms by bringing renewal to existing churches, generating new theological emphases ‘from below,’ and precipitating fresh mission initiatives. Many Igbos found the dominant brand of Christianity, represented by mainline churches, lacked the power to help them fulfil their deep-seated aspirations, cope with the stresses engendered by the war, and engage effectively in mission. Hence their attraction to ‘born-again’ Christianity with its potential for transformation, and to Pentecostalism with its reliance on direct experience of the divine, its affirmation of lesser spiritual entities, and its promise of power for healing and deliverance. The revival was a response to the crisis generated by decolonisation and civil war, but received significant impulses from outside and was part of a larger global movement.

It also challenged the moral economy and contested existing denominational, social, and ethnic boundaries. As a lay movement, it provided new opportunities for neglected forces and contributed to the development of an indigenous Christian community free from missionary and clerical control. More importantly, perhaps, it provided a means for Igbos to resolve their collective identity crisis through their absorption into a dynamic missionary fellowship. And it was the formation of this band of itinerant preachers, which was principally responsible for its success.

Despite its ecumenical and evangelical ideals, SU set in motion certain trends that hastened the fragmentation of the movement as autonomous CMs emerged from its ranks. By opening up space for young people to assume leadership roles and acquire ministerial skills, SU sowed seeds of dissent within gerontocratic and male-dominated structures of society as members responded to modernity's call to make a clean break from the past. No longer content to remain on the margins, their aggressive evangelistic style, radical stance on moral issues, and adoption of Pentecostal spirituality created tensions within SU and alienated the young revivalists from elders in church and community. As the SU fellowship became the source of spiritual sustenance for a growing number of young people, links with existing denominations became increasingly fragile, facilitating the emergence of CMs. Yet it is uncertain whether these would have evolved into fully-fledged churches if several other conditions had not been in place. This will be the focus of chapter four.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### THE GENESIS OF IGBO-INITIATED NEO-PENTECOSTAL CHURCHES (1970-83)<sup>1</sup>

#### **Introduction**

The previous chapter explored the growth of the revival and the emergence of autonomous CMs against the background of the civil war crisis. This chapter focuses on factors behind their transition to denominational status. Something of the atmosphere of the times is captured in an account written by former revivalist Nnaji Chukwuka. Though it is clearly a nostalgic view of the past, written in a popular style, it does give some idea of the processes at work during the 1970s that led to the formation of new churches. Most of the elements are there: the otherworldly preoccupations and evangelistic fervour of revivalists; their relatively humble beginnings; the persecution meted out by mission church authorities; the multiplication

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<sup>1</sup> As far as I am aware, the first Igbo initiated NPC was Emesim's Hour of Deliverance Ministry, which functioned as a church as early as 1970, though it did not establish other branches until 1988. According to Anyaegbu, 'Pentecostal/Evangelical', 51, Emesim ordained his Bible school students, baptised members, and conducted worship services. But *Hour of Deliverance's* history is distinct from most other early NPCs in Igboland because of its origins in Western Nigeria. I have chosen 1983 as a cut off point for this chapter because by this time most of the early secessions from mission churches had taken place. It also marked the end of the Second Republic. Exceptions were Okorie's Living Word Ministries, which started in 1985 (though LWM's first church was planted in 1986), and Nwachukwu's Amazing Love Assembly (ALA), founded in 1986. However, both Okorie and Nwachukwu spent a number of years studying overseas during the late 1970s and early 1980s. Okorie eventually returned from the US to Nigeria in 1983. Nwachukwu returned earlier after studying in the US (at Wheaton College) and UK (University of Aberdeen), but then took up a senior appointment with ECWA in the Middle Belt. See Harry T. Nze, 'Emma Okorie. The Man Who Sees the Invisible', *The Forum. A Publication of Christian Men's Forum of Living Word Ministries*, n.d, 7; OI, Amaechi Nwachukwu, 6.6.00, Enugu; *Agape Bible College. A Publication of Amazing Love Assembly*, August 1997, 2; Brochure introducing Amazing Love Ministry, 5-6.

of charismatic fellowship groups, and their eventual transition to denominational status.<sup>2</sup>

Compared to Western Nigeria, this transition was relatively swift and was partly precipitated by local contingencies. It led to significant mission initiatives but ultimately resulted in the movement's fragmentation as institutional forces overtook charismatic impulses and leaders struggled for control. Peel refers to the crucial importance of studying origins of African churches if one is to understand their nature.<sup>3</sup> While there is a considerable body of literature on the origins and growth of early AICs,<sup>4</sup> there is comparatively little on African NPCs. Although the two groups arose in different settings, both emerged during periods of rapid social change and in contexts dominated by mainline churches. In this chapter, I draw upon material relating to AICs and new religious movements in Africa.

I also use insights from the sociology of religion, and in particular the church-sect typology, derived from Weber and Troeltsch.<sup>5</sup> In sociological discourse, a church is a large well-established religious institution, like the Anglican or Catholic Church. Sects are voluntary associations, with membership based on certain qualifications (a conversion experience, for example), and existing in a state of tension with their social environment and established churches. They tend to cultivate counter cultural lifestyles

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<sup>2</sup> Chukwuka, *Beyond The Night*, 21-3 (Appendix 4.7.6). See also Uchenna Emezue, Letter to Roberts, 28 September 1973 (Appendix 4.7.3).

<sup>3</sup> Peel, *Aladura*, 13.

<sup>4</sup> For example, Barrett, *Schism*, 83-158; Daneel, *Quest for Belonging*, 68-101; Hastings, *Church in Africa*; Turner, *Religious Innovation*; Welbourn and Ogot, *A Place to Feel at Home*.

<sup>5</sup> Ernst Troeltsch, *The Social Teaching of the Christian Churches*, 2 Vols., Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981 (orig. publ. 1931).

and regard themselves as ‘protest movements.’<sup>6</sup> Other authors have further developed the church-sect typology to include the denomination. A denomination is a sect that has lost its radical edge and become institutionalised.<sup>7</sup> For Stark and Bainbridge, the key criteria of sects are deviance and breakaway from established religious organisations.<sup>8</sup> Another important distinction is between church-like tendencies of compromise with the world and the sectarian orientation of hostility towards the world.<sup>9</sup>

Wilson identifies a variety of religious sects. Instead of classifying them theologically in terms of doctrine or sociologically by the degree of institutionalisation achieved, he analyses them in terms of their dominant social orientation or ‘response to the world.’ Wilson applies this model to movements outside western Christendom, and examines ideal-types of sectarian response to the world and their transformations as they attain denominational status.<sup>10</sup> Of particular relevance are Wilson’s conversionist sects, associated with evangelical Protestantism, revivalism, and global Pentecostalism, which emphasise individual change as the appropriate response to a corrupt world. Members of conversionist sects initially gather around the ministry of the revivalist whose

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<sup>6</sup> Bryan Wilson, *Religious Sects. A Sociological Study*, London: World University Library, 1970, 28-35. See also Bryan Wilson, *The Social Dimensions of Sectarianism. Sects and New Religious Movements in Contemporary Society*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990, 106, 115-16; Wilson, *Sociological Perspective*, 91-93; David Martin, and Peter Mullen, *Strange Gifts? A Guide to Charismatic Renewal*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1984, 61-2.

<sup>7</sup> Niebuhr was the first to note the tendency for sects to become denominations. See H. R. Niebuhr, *The Social Sources of Denominationalism*, New York: World Publishing, 1957.

<sup>8</sup> Rodney Stark and William Sims Bainbridge, ‘Of Churches, Sects, and Cults: Preliminary Concepts for a Theory of Religious Movements’, *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 18.2, 1979, 125.

<sup>9</sup> For further discussion of the church-sect-denomination typology, see Malcolm B. Hamilton, *The Sociology of Religion. Theoretical and Comparative Perspectives*, London and New York: Routledge, 1995, 193-206.

<sup>10</sup> Wilson, *Magic and Millennium*, 18-9, 22-6. Wilson devised a seven-fold typology based on different responses to the world: conversionist, revolutionist, introversionist, manipulationist, thaumaturgical, reformist, and utopian. Among other groups, Wilson applied his model to the *Aladura* churches in Western Nigeria.

activity led to their conversion.<sup>11</sup> More recently, Wilson has distinguished between world-denying, world-indifferent, and world-enhancing sectarian responses.<sup>12</sup>

There is some disagreement as to the appropriateness of using the church-sect typology as a descriptive model for analysing African religious movements. Scholars who use the term ‘sect’ to describe AICs usually do so in a loose sense to distinguish them from the mainline churches,<sup>13</sup> but sometimes pejoratively to connote deviancy or separatist tendencies, or to reinforce the allegation that they recruit members from existing denominations.<sup>14</sup> Some have criticised its use in an African context because of its Western orientation,<sup>15</sup> and its tendency to present local movements as sectarian responses rather than indigenous initiatives with different cultural and historical roots than those of more established denominations.<sup>16</sup> However, despite its roots in Western culture, I find it useful for analysing the tension between revivalism and institutionalisation in Nigeria, and the dialectic between sectarian and church-like orientation to the world. As Hackett notes of Nigerian AICs in general,<sup>17</sup> most Igbo NPC leaders were raised in mission churches and aspired to a structured ‘Western-type’

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<sup>11</sup> Wilson, *Religious Sects*, 41-2, 51.

<sup>12</sup> Wilson, *Sociological Perspective*, 111-12. According to Wilson, world-denying sects emphasise the evil of the world; world-indifferent sects tolerate the world but encourage members to pursue puritan lifestyles; world-enhancing sects encourage members to enjoy life in the world.

<sup>13</sup> See for example, C. O. Nwanunubi, ‘Sects as an Urban Phenomenon in Contemporary Eastern Nigeria’, *Anthropos*, 75, 1-2, 1980, 117-28; Epelle, ‘Sects’, 43-51; Ilogu, *Ibo Culture*, 59; Harriet D. Lyons and Andrew P. Lyons, ‘Magical Medicine on Television: Benin City, Nigeria’, paper presented at the 84<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the American Anthropological Association, Washington D. C., December, 1985, 7; Ozigboh, ‘New Religious Movements’.

<sup>14</sup> This is more often the case with Roman Catholic scholars. See for example, Benignus Chukwunedum Ogbunanwata, *New Religious Movements or Sects. A Theological and Pastoral Challenge to the Catholic Church*, Bern: Peter Lang, 2001; A. Shorter, *The African Synod. A Personal Response to the Outline Document*, Nairobi: St. Paul’s Publications, 1991, 92. Shorter writes: ‘African Catholics float between their own parish churches and the mass rallies and meetings of the sects.’

<sup>15</sup> Turner, *Religious Innovation*, 58.

<sup>16</sup> Jules-Rosette, ‘Tradition and Continuity’, 152-53.

church. Here I use it in a neutral sense as an analytical device for exploring the processes of change that occurred as Igbo initiated CMs evolved into denominations and as the new churches themselves underwent transformations. Igbo CMs and early NPCs fitted the profile of Wilson's 'world-denying' and conversionist sects, and bore a close resemblance to Marshall's 'holiness' churches, referred to in her study of Nigerian Pentecostalism.<sup>18</sup> Later, as they became increasingly institutionalised, and modified their message, they moved closer to Wilson's world-enhancing sects, as we see in chapter five.

I begin with a historical overview of NPCs during their formative years based on participant accounts, before proceeding to a critical analysis of causative factors. I focus on factors relating to origins, rather than subsequent growth, even though they sometimes overlapped.

## **1. A History of Neo-Pentecostal Church Beginnings (1970-83)<sup>19</sup>**

### **1.1 Early NPCs in Igboland (1970-77)**

In Nigeria, the institution of Sunday services and the employment of full-time workers heralded the transition of CMs to denominational status.<sup>20</sup> Ojo suggests that this phase

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<sup>17</sup> Rosalind I. J. Hackett, 'Thirty Years of Growth and Change in a West African Independent Church: A Sociological Perspective', in Rosalind I. J. Hackett (ed.), *New Religious Movements in Nigeria*, New York: Edwin Mellen Press, 1987, 161-77.

<sup>18</sup> Marshall, 'Power in the Name of Jesus', 216-17, distinguishes between 'holiness' churches, which stress strict personal ethics and shun worldly possessions, and 'pentecostal' churches, which have gradually adopted a 'doctrine of prosperity.'

<sup>19</sup> For a chronological list of NPCs linked to the Civil War Revival, along with founders and approximate number of branches, see Appendix 2.2. For their location in Igboland and their interconnections, see Figure 2.

began from about 1983,<sup>21</sup> but in Igboland it occurred significantly earlier. The early history of Igbo-founded NPCs is complex, and here I offer only a brief overview based on culture areas. Most trace their roots to one of the CMs mentioned in chapter three, and were founded by former SU members. Invariably, their headquarters are in urban areas, but they have established branches in rural constituencies.

Revivalists founded two important churches in Central Igboland during the 1970s. In 1972, the late Gabriel Nwokoro, a former Methodist and itinerant evangelist, started Last Days Messengers (LDM) in Okigwe,<sup>22</sup> and in 1976, Holiness Evangelistic Mission (now Holiness Evangelical Church) became the first major NPC in Owerri, formed out of the Holiness Evangelistic Association and with links to *Hour of Freedom*.<sup>23</sup>

Several new churches started in Southern Igboland. Master's Vessel Group became a church in 1976 (Master's Vessel Church), though it began to exhibit denominational

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<sup>20</sup> Ojo, 'Deeper Christian Life Ministry', 150-51; Ojo, 'Charismatic Movements in Africa', 101-2. Wilson, *Sectarianism*, 115-16, suggests that an important element in the evolution of sects to denominations is the acquisition of a paid ordained ministry or professionally religious elite.

<sup>21</sup> Ojo, 'Charismatic Movements in Africa', 101. Ojo draws most of his data from Western and Northern Nigeria. One of the earliest NPCs in Western Nigeria was Deeper Life Bible Church, founded by W. F. Kumuyi, which became a denomination in 1982. David Oyedepo, another leading Yoruba neo-Pentecostal, opened the first branch of Living Faith Church in Kaduna in 1985, though Oyedepo's ministry, Faith Liberation Hour Ministries, was founded in 1983 at Ilorin. Ojo, 'Deeper Christian Life Ministry', 150; Ojo, 'Charismatic Movements in Africa', 98; Karl Maier, *This House has Fallen. Nigeria in Crisis*, London: Allen Lane. The Penguin Press, 2000, 264. Arguably, the earliest Nigerian NPC was the late Benson Idahosa's Church of God Mission International, based in Benin City, Mid-Western Nigeria, which started as a Bible study group in 1970 and became a church in 1972. Ojo, 'Charismatic Movements in Africa', 97; Lyons and Lyons, 'Magical Medicine', 9-12; Ruthanne Garlock, *Fire in His Bones: The Story of Benson Idahosa*, Plainfield, New Jersey: Logos Books, 1980.

<sup>22</sup> Here I encountered some of the problems associated with oral sources. According to Felix Obiorah (Master's Vessel Church), Nwokoro was converted in Kaduna (Northern Nigeria) and returned to the east during the September 1966 pogroms. During the war he was involved with SU Umuahia and subsequently joined Master's Vessel Group, but left to start his own church in 1972 due to its inability to support him financially. OI, Felix Obiorah, 6.10.01, Umuahia. According to Nwokoro's wife, LDM was originally started in 1966 but took off fully in 1972 when her husband returned to Okigwe after the war. PC, Mrs C. U. Nwokoro, 17.10.01, Okigwe.

tendencies as early as 1974. It has grown slowly, partly because its co-founder Felix Obiorah left Nigeria in 1974 to study in North America.<sup>24</sup> In 1974, Gospel Crusaders Mission started in Aba as a breakaway from Ogbansiegbe's Christian Fellowship Group.<sup>25</sup>

In North-Western Igboland, the earliest NPC was Emesim's Hour of Deliverance Ministry, though most early NPCs were founded by former *Hour of Freedom* members. The most important was Riches of Christ Mission, started in 1973 by Edozie Mba, Paul Nweke (now Nwachukwu), Augustine Nwodika, Emeka Eze, and Charles Nwafor.<sup>26</sup> Within two years, it had approximately 80 congregations, formed from the original *Hour of Freedom* fellowship groups, with major branches in Onitsha, Enugu, and Aba. Although a relatively small denomination today, it is important because former members started many other new denominations.<sup>27</sup> In 1974, two other important churches started in North-Western Igboland: Christ for All Mission in Onitsha, founded

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<sup>23</sup> OI, Kenneth Eboh, 16.1.02, Owerri; Anyaegbu, 'Pentecostal/Evangelical', 54. Branches of Holiness Evangelistic Church are distributed quite widely in Nigeria.

<sup>24</sup> Most of MVC's branches are within Igboland. OI, Felix Obiorah, 6.10.01, Umuahia. Several other churches also started in the vicinity of Umuahia during the 1970s, but all have remained relatively small: Bethel Gospel Mission (1972), Calvary Evangelistic Mission (1973), Canaan Gospel Centre (1977), and Believers Gospel Mission. OI, Godwin Nwosu, Samson Onwubiko, Samson Onyeoziri.

<sup>25</sup> Most Gospel Crusaders Mission branches are within the vicinity of Aba. OI, Martins N. Iheaka, 14.10.00, Aba. For a brief history of Christian Fellowship Group, see chapter two, section 2.5.

<sup>26</sup> OI, Augustine Nwodika, 8.5.00, Enugu. Before becoming NPC pastors, Mba was a secondary school student preparing to study medicine at university, Nweke was a businessman/trader, and Nwodika a cobbler. OI, Paul Nwachukwu and Udobata Onunwa; Anyaegbu, 'Sabbatharianism', 181-89. For photographs of Nwachukwu and Nwodika, see Plates 3.3 and 3.5.

<sup>27</sup> These included *Grace of God*, Onitsha (1978), All Believers Fellowship Group, Aba (1978), All Christians Fellowship Mission, Abuja (1979), Bible Faith Mission, Jos (1979), Living Faith Church, Onitsha (1985), Bread of Life Mission, Enugu (1988), Higher Dimensions Ministries, Nkpor (1988), Overcomer's Bible Church, Onitsha (1991), Throne of Grace Church, Enugu (2000).

by Anglican and SU leader Benson Ezeokeke,<sup>28</sup> and Save the Lost Mission in Nnewi, founded by Tony Okeke, a former Roman Catholic.<sup>29</sup>

There were elements of continuity between NPCs and earlier waves of Nigerian Pentecostal and prayer house activity. Out of 43 NPC leaders interviewed, at least 14 (33 %) had some contact with prayer houses prior to the revival.<sup>30</sup> At least four others also had prayer house connections: Dominic Onuigwe (National Evangelical Mission), Obiorah Ezekiel (Christian Pentecostal Mission), J. M. J. Emesim (*Hour of Deliverance*), and Mike Okonkwo (TREM).<sup>31</sup> Several Igbo NPC pioneers worked with the Free Gospel Society (FGS), a Lagos-based prayer house with a strong evangelistic emphasis.<sup>32</sup>

Some NPC pioneers were former members of mission related Pentecostal churches. Mba of *Riches* was introduced to Pentecostal experience at an Assemblies of God

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<sup>28</sup> Ezeokeke was President of SU Onitsha. From 1972 to 1974 he attended Emesim's Bible College before starting *Christ for All*. OI, Benson Ezeokeke, 11.5.00, Onitsha. See Plate 4.2.

<sup>29</sup> Okeke was leader of SU Nnewi and attended *Hour of Freedom* activities before founding his own ministry, Save the Lost Programme in 1972. Influenced by Elton and Idahosa, he started Save the Lost Mission with two colleagues, John Okafor and Jonathan Ikegwonu. Central Christian Fellowship Mission also started in Nnewi, founded by former Roman Catholic Peter Maduako. OI, Tony Okeke, 20.10.01, Enugu; Anyaegbu, 'Pentecostal/Evangelical', 61-3. For a photograph of Okeke, see Plate 4.3.

<sup>30</sup> These included Benson Ezeokeke (*Salvation for All*), Eliezer Okoye (Travelling Gospel Team), Amaechi Nwachukwu (Amazing Love Assembly), Tony Okeke (*Save the Lost*), Benjamin Ikedinobi (Overcomer's Bible Church), Victor Onuigbo (Victory Christian Mission), William Okoye, Mike Okoye (All Christians Fellowship Mission), Leo Anorue, Aso Egwu (Redeemed People's Mission).

<sup>31</sup> Onuigwe was a former member of Saviour Apostolic Church, an *aladura* church with origins in Ibadan, Western Nigeria. PC, Stephen Okafor, 22.5.02. Ezekiel's prayer house background is less clear. One informant told me he was a member of UPPB. OI, Thompson Nwosu, 31.8.01, Jos. Emesim attended Light Apostolic Church in Lagos during the civil war, and Okonkwo was a pastor with United Church of Christ, an Igbo-founded prayer house. OI, Bartholemew Ogbonna, 8.1.02, Enugu.

<sup>32</sup> FGS was founded in 1956 by J. O. Martins, former member of Christ Apostolic Church. Steward, *Churches in Nigeria*, 44. Among NPC leaders who worked with FGS were Obiorah Ezekiel, Evans Daniel (Christian Pentecostal Mission), Thompson Nwosu (Redeemed People's Mission), Joseph Onuchukwu (*Grace of God*), and Dominic Onuigwe (National Evangelical Mission). Nwodika, co-founder of *Riches*, was a pastor with Gospel Faith Mission, another Lagos-based prayer house, which broke away from the Christ Apostolic Church in 1955. Steward, *Churches in Nigeria*, 41-3. By 2001, it

crusade in Lagos in 1972, and attended the Foursquare Gospel Church, where he was baptised by Wilson Badejo, the present General Overseer. Later, he became a member of AG in Enugu.<sup>33</sup> Victor Onuigbo, founder of Victory Christian Mission in Enugu, was a former member of Assemblies of God and Christ Apostolic Church.<sup>34</sup> As noted, former Apostolic Church missionary S. G. Elton served as a link between the two major periods of revivalist activity in Igboland.

### 1.2 Ecumenical Impulses and the Propensity to Schism (1976-83)

By the mid-1970s, the ecumenical impulses of the revival, which were still influencing emerging churches, had begun to give way to schismatic tendencies.<sup>35</sup> The need for institutional norms resulted in conflicts as leaders struggled for ascendancy. Problems began to emerge among leaders of *Riches* in 1975, and the following year Nweke and Nwodika broke away to form Jesus the Way Ministry, after allegations of sexual misdemeanour and authoritarianism against Mba, the General Overseer.<sup>36</sup> Over the next year and a half, *Jesus the Way* grew rapidly as many *Riches* congregations joined them and other churches were planted. Conflicts also arose among the leadership of *Save the Lost* and for a time Okeke left to pursue an independent evangelistic ministry.

In 1978, a number of NPCs in the Onitsha area of North-Western Igboland, came together to form Grace of God Mission, a development later referred to as the 'New

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had an approximate membership of 150,000 in 1,300 congregations. Johnstone and Mandryk, *Operation World*, 488.

<sup>33</sup> Anyaegbu, 'Sabbatharianism', 181-82.

<sup>34</sup> OI, Victor Onuigbo, 1.5.00, Enugu.

<sup>35</sup> Kalu, *Embattled Gods*, 279.

<sup>36</sup> Kalu, *Embattled Gods*, 280; Anyaegbu, 'Pentecostal/Evangelical', 57. Anyaegbu's information was based on oral interviews with Paul Nweke and A. Onuorah, early leaders of *Jesus the Way*.

Move.’ This had a significant impact upon the neo-Pentecostal landscape.<sup>37</sup> Here again we encounter problems associated with historical sources and conflicting accounts. The consensus among informants was that it was initiated by a prophecy delivered by a visiting Yoruba Pentecostal from Lagos, encouraging the merger of *Riches* and *Jesus the Way*, and promoting the idea of one united church in each urban location, with Onitsha as the centre of Nigerian Christianity. It was not intended that older denominations (Pentecostal or non-Pentecostal) should be included in this initiative.<sup>38</sup> Other groups subsequently joined *Riches* and *Jesus the Way*, removing their signboards as a symbolic expression of their ecumenical sentiments.<sup>39</sup> Benson Ezeokeke was appointed National Chairman of *Grace of God*, Paul Nweke, National Superintendent, and Augustine Nwodika, pastor of the headquarters church at Onitsha.

There were differing reactions to the ‘New Move’ among neo-Pentecostals. Some referred to it as a fresh wave of revival.<sup>40</sup> Others disapproved because they felt it failed

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<sup>37</sup> Okoroafor, *William Okoye*, 118; “‘Dawn of a New Anointing’”. Supplement on Grace of God Mission International Inc.’, *Prophecy. The Messiah is Coming*, 1996; Chukwuka, *Beyond the Night*, 38.

<sup>38</sup> OI, Benjamin Ikedinobi and John Ugah; Anyaegbu, ‘Pentecostal/Evangelical’, 57. Ugah, a pastor with *Jesus the Way* at the time, told me that the prophecy was delivered by Samuel Adeyemi. An alternative account is given by Kalu, *Embattled Gods*, 278, who maintains that Elton played a crucial role in the merger. Elton is said to have expressed his concern to Onitsha neo-Pentecostals in 1974 over the divisions that were occurring. Subsequently, they named the new church *Grace of God* because they saw Elton’s actions as evidence of the ‘grace of God’ bringing reconciliation. But it is unlikely that this meeting took place in 1974, as the schism within *Riches* did not occur until 1976. Furthermore, Paul Nweke (Nwachukwu) told me that Elton was against the merger because he believed it would not last. OI, Paul Nwachukwu, 12.5.00, Onitsha.

<sup>39</sup> According to Nwodika, up to 23 churches ‘pulled down their signboards’ and joined *Grace of God*. OI, Augustine Nwodika, 8.5.00, Enugu; Nwodika, ‘Churches in the Seventies’ (Appendix 4.7.1, paragraph 13). Those who joined included *Christ for All*, Fullness of Christ Mission, and Believers Gospel Mission.

<sup>40</sup> For example, Augustine Nwodika. OI, Augustine Nwodika, 8.5.00, Enugu. Note the following excerpt from an Igbo neo-Pentecostal publication: ‘. . . during the great revival which blew across east of the Niger in 1978, when there was an amalgamation of various church denominations with their founders to form Grace of God Mission.’ ‘Supplement on Grace of God Mission’, *Prophecy. The Messiah is Coming*, 1996, 21.

to deal with the issues that had caused divisions in the first place.<sup>41</sup> One informant objected because he felt it was being imposed from above and was associated with legalistic tendencies. He also disagreed with the designation of Onitsha as the ‘Christian headquarters’ of Nigeria.<sup>42</sup> Among those who chose not to join were *Save the Lost* and National Evangelical Mission. Some *Jesus the Way* churches outside Onitsha also refused to join and up to today have retained their independence and their name.<sup>43</sup> Meanwhile, Wilson Uzumegbunam, former leader of SU Onitsha and *Riches of Christ* pastor in Aba, broke away to form All Believers Fellowship Group.<sup>44</sup> So even in the midst of this ecumenical initiative, there were voices of dissent.

Unfortunately, the movement’s fissiparous nature again reared its head as leadership struggles within *Grace of God* led to further fragmentation. In 1979, Mba withdrew taking some of his pastors with him. *Riches* continues to this day, but as a relatively small denomination.<sup>45</sup> In 1980, Ezeokeke returned from attending Morris Cerullo’s School of Ministry in America,<sup>46</sup> and subsequently left *Grace of God* over disagreements with Nweke and Nwodika. He then founded Salvation for All Mission, but had to start from scratch because most branches of the original *Christ for All*

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<sup>41</sup> For example, John Ugah, pastor of *Jesus the Way* church in Aba, who chose not to join the merger. OI, John Ugah, 7.6.00, Enugu. Ugah is the present General Overseer of *Jesus the Way*.

<sup>42</sup> OI, Wilson Ezeofor, 25.9.01, Jos. Ezeofor had been a pastor with *Riches* prior to starting his evangelistic activity in the Middle Belt.

<sup>43</sup> OI, John Ugah, 7.6.00, Enugu. *Jesus the Way* congregations in Aba and Enugu chose not to join.

<sup>44</sup> Most branches of All Believers Fellowship group are located in the vicinity of Aba. OI, Wilson Uzumegbunam, 13.10.01, Aba. For a photograph of Uzumegbunam, see Plate 3.2.

<sup>45</sup> In 1988, Mba returned from a visit to the United States a confirmed sabbatarian, and this prompted some of his pastors to break away to form Bread of Life Ministry (headquarters, Enugu).

<sup>46</sup> Morris Cerullo (1931- ) was an ordained Assemblies of God minister in North America. He began a healing ministry in the 1950s and was associated initially with the Voice of Healing organisation linked to Gordon Lindsay and the Healing Revival (1948-mid-1950s). His own organisation is called World Evangelism, based in San Diego, where an annual school for training ministers is held. See J. R. Zeigler, ‘Cerullo, Morris’, in Burgess, Alexander, and McGee, *Dictionary*, 126.

remained with *Grace of God*.<sup>47</sup> Today, *Grace of God* is the largest Igbo initiated NPC, with approximately 1,100 congregations.<sup>48</sup>

### 1.3 Igbo Neo-Pentecostal Initiatives outside Igboland (1973-83)

Igbos were among the earliest neo-Pentecostals to engage in cross-cultural mission initiatives within Nigeria.<sup>49</sup> This was partly a consequence of the revival's strong missionary impulse. However, it was also linked to Igbo mobility and migratory habits. Population density, limited land resources, and Igbo emphasis on individual achievement prompted many to cross local borders for trade purposes.<sup>50</sup>

Of special interest are those who ventured north and planted churches in the Middle Belt and Northern Nigeria. Early attempts by revivalists in 1970 had proved largely unsuccessful,<sup>51</sup> but as peace returned and the nation attained a level of stability, many Igbos migrated north for business and trade or were sent there as part of their National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) programme,<sup>52</sup> among them Christians influenced by the

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<sup>47</sup> OI, Benson Ezeokeke, 11.5.00, Onitsha. According to Ezeokeke, while he was away Nweke and Nwodika usurped his position and this caused ill feeling at the time, which continues to this day.

<sup>48</sup> This information was supplied by Joseph Onuchukwu, National Secretary of *Grace of God* in 2001. OI, Joseph Onuchukwu, 23.5.00, Enugu. In 1996, *Grace of God* had approximately 500,000 'worshippers' across the nation. Based on *Grace of God* church records, quoted in 'Supplement on Grace of God Mission', *Prophecy. The Messiah is Coming*, 1996, 14. For a photograph of Grace of God Mission's new headquarters (under construction at the time), see Plate 5.2.

<sup>49</sup> Here I include Winter's E-2 evangelism in the category *cross-cultural mission*. Winter distinguishes three kinds of evangelism: same culture (E-1), culture closely related to one's own (E-2), and culture different from one's own (E-3). He differentiates between evangelism (presenting the gospel to one's own people) and missions (crossing cultural boundaries). See R. D. Winter, 'The New Macedonia: A Revolutionary New Era in Mission Begins', in J. D. Winter and S. C. Hawthorne (eds.), *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement. A Reader*, Pasadena, California: William Carey Library, 1992 (orig. publ. 1981), B-159.

<sup>50</sup> Ottenberg, 'Ibo Receptivity', 140.

<sup>51</sup> For instance, Cyril Okorocho and Mike Oye embarked on an evangelistic journey towards the end of 1970. But when they ventured north they encountered opposition from New Life for All over their Pentecostal emphasis. OI, Cyril Okorocho, 23.8.98, Woking. For New Life for All, see chapter three, footnote 344.

<sup>52</sup> For the NYSC programme, see chapter two, footnote 97.

revival and eager to spread the good news. Other revivalists went with the express purpose of holding evangelistic campaigns and planting churches. It is remarkable that so many were prepared to return to an area where a few years previously their relatives had been slaughtered during the 1966 pogroms. Here we concentrate on initiatives directly associated with the Civil War Revival and its Pentecostal progeny.<sup>53</sup>

I was able to study three NPCs with headquarters in the Middle Belt: All Christians Fellowship Mission (ACFM), Redeemed Peoples Mission (RPM), and Bible Faith Mission (BFM), all started by former Igbo revivalists during the 1970s. Prior to their arrival, Assemblies of God was the most active Pentecostal church in the Middle Belt and the North. ACFM was founded by William Okoye, a trader and businessman, who fought in the Biafran Army, and was converted in 1971.<sup>54</sup> RPM was founded by Thompson Nwosu, an apprentice mechanic, who also fought for Biafra and was converted in 1970 through SU Umuahia.<sup>55</sup> Wilson Ezeofor, converted through SU

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<sup>53</sup> One important initiative, beyond the scope of this study, is an indigenous mission agency called CAPRO, founded in the northern city of Zaria in 1975 by young people associated with NYSC. Two of the principal actors, Bayo Famunore and Peter Ozodo, were influenced by the Civil War Revival. Though he is a Yoruba, Famunore attended the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, from 1971 to 1974, where he was ECU President. OI, Bayo Famunore, 21.12.01, Jos. Peter Ozodo, an Igbo from the Midwestern region, attended the University of Ife, where he too became ECU President. Ozodo was influenced more by the revival in Western Nigeria. OI, Peter Ozodo, 1.10.01, Jos. For more on CAPRO and other Nigerian indigenous mission agencies, see Matthews A. Ojo, 'The Dynamics of Indigenous Charismatic Missionary Enterprises in West Africa', *Missionalia*, 25.4, December 1997, 537-61; Ojo, 'Church', 30-1.

<sup>54</sup> A Roman Catholic, Okoye owned a shoe business, and came into contact with the revival and some of its leading protagonists when he moved to Onitsha following his conversion. In 1973, he joined the newly formed *Riches of Christ* and soon after became a pastor and church-planter. For a biography, see Okoroafor, *William Okoye*. For a photograph of Okoye, see Plate 11.1.

<sup>55</sup> Nwosu was converted after listening to a message delivered by SU leader Felix Obiorah, co-founder of Master's Vessel Group. He then joined a SU group in Umuahia and became actively involved in the revival, while continuing to attend his local Anglican church. In 1971, Pastor J. O. Martins invited Nwosu to join Free Gospel Society in Lagos, and two years later transferred him to Jos as their representative in Northern Nigeria. OI, Thompson Nwosu, 31.8.01, Jos. For a photograph of Nwosu, see Plates 10.1 & 8.3.

Onitsha in 1972, founded BFM.<sup>56</sup> Okoye and Ezeofor worked as pastors with *Riches of Christ* prior to leaving Igboland.

The first major missionary enterprise began in Jos city in September 1973, when Nwosu was transferred there under the auspices of FGS.<sup>57</sup> He launched his ministry with a citywide ‘crusade,’<sup>58</sup> and followed this up with similar events in different localities, including the major northern cities of Zaria, Bauchi, and Maiduguri. At this stage, most converts were turned over to Assemblies of God, the main Pentecostal church in the region, and SU Jos became Nwosu’s home base. But this changed when the FGS gave him permission to start churches, and in 1976, they began a Sunday morning worship service in Jos. In 1977, Nwosu resigned from FGS over the alleged immorality of its founder, and as a result, his congregation lost its premises and most of its equipment. In May 1977, RPM started meeting in a small converted ‘garri’ shed in a run-down district of Jos, with about 100 members (mostly Igbo, but with a small number of Yoruba and indigenes). It was the third Pentecostal church to be established in Jos, after the Assemblies of God and All Christians Fellowship Mission.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> OI, Wilson Ezeofor, 25.9.01, Jos. Ezeofor was at secondary school at the time of his conversion. Afterwards he attended New Anointing Bible College, the training institution for prospective ministers of *Riches of Christ*, National Evangelical Mission, and *Save the Lost*.

<sup>57</sup> OI, Thompson Nwosu, 31.8.01, Jos; Thompson Nwosu, ‘Account of Rev N. C. Thompson’s Stewardship’, paper presented at the celebration of Thompson’s 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary as a minister, Redeemed People’s Mission, Jos, 4 November 2001. Igbos who came to the north as pastors/evangelists tended to change their names to disguise their ethnic origins in an effort to prevent any hindrance to the gospel so soon after the civil war. Thompson Nwosu changed his name to N. C. Thompson.

<sup>58</sup> See Thompson Nwosu, ‘Redeemed People’s Mission at 25. Goodwill Message from the General Superintendent’, 1998. The invited speakers at this crusade were Agemiro Fagiro (from Latin America), Obiorah Ezekiel (Free Gospel Society, Lagos), Evangelist Brown, and Gabriel Nwokoro (Last Days Messengers, Okigwe).

<sup>59</sup> OI, Thompson Nwosu, 31.8.01, Jos; Nwosu, ‘Goodwill Message’.

The year 1975 proved decisive for Igbo initiatives in the north. Ezeokeke of *Christ for All* held an evangelistic campaign and planted a church in the northern Muslim stronghold of Kano. He followed this with similar campaigns across the north, resulting in the planting of other churches, later absorbed into *Grace of God* when *Christ for All* merged with *Riches*.<sup>60</sup> The same year also saw the launch of two other major initiatives outside Igboland. As noted in chapter three, a young teacher called Rhoda Morah formed Aguata for Christ in 1974 as a ministry to evangelise her local community in North-Western Igboland. This eventually became a fully-fledged NPC called National Evangelical Mission (NEM), once its mission focus had shifted to northern Nigeria. Prior to this, Morah had handed over leadership to two associates, Benjamin Ogbuezobe and Dominic Onuigwe.<sup>61</sup> Ogbuezobe became overall leader, and Onuigwe, evangelism director with responsibility for overseeing their mission initiatives in the north.<sup>62</sup> In 1975, they planted the first Pentecostal church in the northern city of Maiduguri and have since become one of the largest Igbo-founded NPCs.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> OI, Augustine Mbamalu, 19.11.01, Jos. Mbamalu is a former revivalist, converted in 1972 after listening to the preaching of Stephen Okafor of *Hour of Freedom*. He looked upon Ezeokeke as one of his mentors. Joseph Onuchukwu, National Secretary of *Grace of God*, gave a similar account but did not refer to Ezeokeke. OI, Joseph Onuchukwu, 22.10.01, Enugu.

<sup>61</sup> Rhoda Morah handed over leadership responsibility when she left to get married.

<sup>62</sup> Onuigwe was an associate of Emesim and worked closely with *Hour of Freedom*. For a while, he was also attached to Free Gospel Society in Lagos. Today, he is the General Overseer of NEM. OI, Wilson Ezeofor, 25.9.01, Jos.

<sup>63</sup> OI, Bitrus K. Pathel, 18.11.01, Bukuru. Pathel pastored the Maiduguri NEM church from 1985 to 1986 and told me that it was planted by an Igbo man called T. C. Okurah. But in a report written in 1998, Nwosu of RPM stated that NEM ‘hijacked’ the Free Gospel Society group he had started after a crusade he held there in 1974. Nwosu, ‘Goodwill Message’. The headquarters of NEM is at Onitsha, and more recently they have opened other branches within Igboland. OI, Francis B. Amaechi, 15.5.00, Onitsha.

William Okoye also launched his ministry in 1975.<sup>64</sup> As a trader, he regularly visited the Middle Belt and often used these excursions to preach the gospel. But on this occasion, accompanied by two associates (Wilson Ezeofor and Ephraim Nweke), he conducted an evangelistic campaign in the Middle Belt town of Gboko, the heart of Tiv territory, and followed this with similar events in other urban areas across the Middle Belt and the north, planting churches to cater for the many converts. Initially, they called themselves Freedom in Christ Church, with Okoye as General Overseer and Ezeofor, his lieutenant. In 1976, they planted a church in Jos, which for a time became their headquarters. Disagreements led to Ezeofor's resignation in 1978,<sup>65</sup> and the following year he founded Bible Faith Mission in Jos.<sup>66</sup> Meanwhile, Okoye changed the name of his church to All Christians Fellowship Mission (reflecting his concern for church unity), and in 1979, moved his headquarters to Abuja, the present Federal Capital of Nigeria.<sup>67</sup>

One of the more successful Igbo ventures outside Igboland began in Western Nigeria. Christian Pentecostal Mission was founded by Obiorah Ezekiel Nwogu, converted in 1970 from an Anglican and prayer house background through the advocacy of Raphael Okafor, co-leader of *Hour of Freedom*.<sup>68</sup> Soon after, Ezekiel moved to Lagos where he

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<sup>64</sup> This account is based on the following written and oral sources: Okoroafor, *William Okoye*; Richard Nduul *et al.*, 'Rev. Okoye, Reaping the Reward of Faithfulness', *The Compassion. A Quarterly News Magazine of All Christians Fellowship Mission*, 1992; OI, William Okoye, Mike C. Okoye, Wilson Ezeofor.

<sup>65</sup> Okoye and Ezeofor disagreed over the 'New Move' that culminated in the formation of *Grace of God*. Okoye supported it, while Ezeofor opposed it. Ezeofor also felt that Okoye was becoming too legalistic in his approach.

<sup>66</sup> All the branches of BFM are within Plateau State. OI, Wilson Ezeofor, 25.9.01, Jos.

<sup>67</sup> William Okoye is recognised as one of the pioneers of Pentecostalism in the Middle Belt.

<sup>68</sup> Anyaegbu, 'Pentecostal/Evangelical', 81-82; OI, Thompson Nwosu, 12.12.01, Jos; PC, Raphael Okafor, 7.1.02, Enugu. Both Ezekiel (as he is popularly known) and Raphael Okafor are from Awka-Etiti in North-Western Igboland. Ezekiel was a trader with primary level education when he left Igboland for Lagos. PC, Godwin Nwosu, 15.10.01; OI, Udobata Onunwe, 23.3.01, Birmingham.

joined Free Gospel Society as an evangelist.<sup>69</sup> In 1977, like Nwosu of RPM, Ezekiel left FGS and started the Christian Pentecostal Mission in Lagos, one of the largest NPCs in Nigeria.<sup>70</sup>

## 2. Predisposing Conditions

I now move on to an analysis of causative factors and follow Barrett by distinguishing between predisposing conditions that prepare the soil for independency and precipitating factors or ‘flashpoints.’<sup>71</sup> As noted, with the emergence of CMs in the early 1970s processes were already underway that would culminate in the formation of independent NPCs. But this transition might never have happened if other conditions had not been in place.

### 2.1 Sociological Factors

#### 2.1.1 Local Socio-political and Economic Cultures

Barrett argues that independency is primarily a ‘tribal phenomenon, and can therefore legitimately be studied by means of tribal analysis.’<sup>72</sup> Here I consider three features of Igbo society that facilitated the transition of CMs to independent status.

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<sup>69</sup> Raphael Okafor told me that he was responsible for introducing Ezekiel to FGS. OI, Raphael Okafor, 7.1.02, Enugu.

<sup>70</sup> ‘Divine Restoration’, *The Pentecostal Family. A Publication of the Christian Pentecostal Mission*, August 1999, 7; OI, Emeka Ibekwe, 16.10.01, Umuahia. According to an alternative version, CPM was started in 1977 by Emmanuel Ugbaja, Francis Nwaka, and some associates, but was subsequently handed over to Ezekiel after a financial crisis. Steward, *Churches in Nigeria*, 62-3.

<sup>71</sup> Barrett, *Schism*, 110. Barrett refers to certain predisposing factors that create a *tribal zeitgeist* or climate of opinion.

<sup>72</sup> Barrett, *Schism*, 58.

The first is associated with socio-political structure. Bosch suggests that a society's traditional structures may encourage or discourage the formation of independent churches. Schism is less likely among groups with centralised hierarchies than among those organised in smaller independent groups.<sup>73</sup> In Igboland, the absence of a centralised political structure at local level allowed room for initiative and made mainline churches more susceptible to fragmentation.<sup>74</sup> This is one possible reason why Igbo NPCs emerged earlier than their counterparts in Western Nigeria, where Yoruba political structures are more centralised.

A second contributory factor is linked to the degree of social differentiation within Igbo society and church life. Stark and Bainbridge argue that social differentiation within a religious organisation increases the tendency towards sectarian schism. The potential for conflict is heightened if there are divisions between the better and worse off, and between the more or less powerful, both in terms of rewards within the wider society and within the religious organisation. Schism may occur if the relatively deprived members feel the potential advantages from breaking away outweigh the costs. Persons who lead such breakaways are usually those likely to achieve positions of authority more rewarding than those enjoyed in the parent organisation.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> Quoted in M. L. Daneel, *Missiology. Guide 2 (The Independent Churches in Africa)*, Pretoria: UNISA, 1982, 64. See also Barrett, *Schism*, 59, 108-9. Bosch identifies the Luo of Kenya as an example of a group with decentralised traditional structures where AICs have proliferated. The Anang of south-eastern Nigeria are another example. See David W. Smith, 'A Survey of New Religious Movements Among the Anang of Nigeria', *Neue Zeitschrift für Missionswissenschaft*, 42.4, 1986, 264-65.

<sup>74</sup> See chapter two, section 1.2.1 for a discussion of Igbo traditional political structures. This tendency to fragment is also evident in the proliferation of small business/trade enterprises in Igboland.

<sup>75</sup> Stark and Bainbridge, 'Churches, Sects and Cults', 117-33; Stark and Bainbridge, *Future of Religion*. For a critique of Stark and Bainbridge's proposal, see Hamilton, *Sociology*, 200-202.

Stark and Bainbridge's thesis is influenced by relative deprivation theory, originally formulated by Glock to explain the origins of new movements, both religious and secular. Glock suggests that relative deprivation can lead to social conflict and ultimately to the formation of a new social or religious group. But deprivation is not a sufficient condition for the rise of new movements. Additional conditions include a shared sense of deprivation, an absence of 'alternative institutional arrangements for its resolution,' and the emergence of 'a leadership for building a movement out of the existing deprivation.'<sup>76</sup>

While relative deprivation was not a necessary or sufficient pre-condition for Igbo revivalists to break away from mainline churches, it did provide a motive for secession. By the 1960s, Igbo society was stratified in terms of age, material wealth, and education, partly because of the colonial project,<sup>77</sup> and this was reflected in the mainline churches, which were socially differentiated. For the poor and uneducated, access to mainline church leadership positions was limited. The civil war was a levelling influence as many Igbos lost their possessions and were temporarily unable to continue their education, but this did not significantly affect their social status.

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<sup>76</sup> C. Y. Glock, 'The Role of Deprivation in the Origin and Evolution of Religious Groups', in Robert Lee and Martin E. Marty (eds.), *Religion and Social Conflict*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1964, 27, 29. Anderson has applied deprivation theory to North American Pentecostal origins. He argues that because of its origins in a deprived social milieu, socio-economic deprivation provides the reasons for its emergence. But only those with a religious predisposition and suffering personal stress, brought about by rapid urban industrialisation, were attracted to the movement. Anderson, *Vision of the Disinherited*, 133-36, 97, 4. For a critique of the relative deprivation thesis, see Wilson, *Sociological Perspective*, 117; Wilson, *Sectarianism*, 195-96. For a critique of Anderson's hypothesis, see Hollenweger, *Pentecostalism*, 358-59. Hollenweger argues that the emergence of the charismatic renewal in upper middle-class Western society has undermined deprivation theories of Pentecostal origins. See also Cerillo, 'Origins', 46-7.

<sup>77</sup> See Isichei, *Igbo People*, 185-99.

In contrast to their counterparts in Western Nigeria,<sup>78</sup> most early Igbo NPC pioneers had only primary or secondary level education by the early 1970s and were from relatively poor family backgrounds.<sup>79</sup> Hence, they were closer in terms of social and educational status to some of the early AIC leaders than they were to their contemporaries in the west.<sup>80</sup> I spoke to 31 former revivalists who joined NPC churches during the 1970s. Of these, only four (13 %) received education above secondary level prior to joining, and at least six (19 %) went no further than primary level. Of 17 informants who actually founded NPCs during the 1970s, five (29%) had primary level only, nine (53%) secondary, and three (18%) tertiary. I also spoke to 24 former revivalists who chose to remain in the mainline churches during the 1970s.<sup>81</sup> Of these, 22 (88%) had either completed or entered a tertiary level institution by 1975 (15 (60%) went to university and seven (28%) to a theological seminary). Some had their university education interrupted by the war but resumed after peace was restored. The evidence is inconclusive, but it does suggest that NPC pioneers were more likely to be drawn from the ranks of those with limited educational and employment prospects, who considered themselves marginalised within their local church communities.<sup>82</sup> Invariably, NPC pioneers were young men on the fringes, who felt excluded from positions of church leadership.

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<sup>78</sup> According to Ojo, 'Deeper Christian Life Ministry', 142-43, founders and leaders of CMs in Western Nigeria had higher education and an elite status within society, reflecting their background in the university campuses.

<sup>79</sup> OI, Udobata Onunwa, 25.1.01, Birmingham.

<sup>80</sup> Early *Aladura* leaders and members included literate clerks, traders, and members of the elite, but most were without higher education. Isichei, *Christianity in Africa*, 279; Peel, *Aladura*, 87, 313-14; Ojo, 'Deeper Christian Life Ministry', 142. Others were poor and illiterate. It was the 1930 Revival, led by a steamroller driver Joseph Babalola, which transformed it into a large-scale movement that appealed to a broad sweep of the population, including many illiterate farmers. Peel, 'Aladura Movement', 52.

<sup>81</sup> I do not include those revivalists who left for the UK during the early 1970s and remained there.

Rapid social change was another factor behind independency. I have noted the destabilising effects of the civil war. As Ojo states, it 'shook all the foundations in society on which the assurance of the past was based.'<sup>83</sup> Rapid urbanisation, linked to the oil boom, was also a factor. Ojo has noted this in his research into the origins of Western Nigerian CMs.<sup>84</sup> Urbanisation was also a factor behind the growth of the more successful Igbo prayer houses.<sup>85</sup> During the early 1970s, Igbo CMs were predominantly an urban phenomenon, and the transition to denominational status took place in urban contexts, though branches were subsequently opened in rural constituencies. Between 1970 and 1972, there was a massive invasion of Igbo towns by people displaced due to the political upheavals of the war.<sup>86</sup> These urban settings, characterised by instability and fragmented communities, provided fertile ground for Pentecostal infiltration, in contrast to rural areas, which were dominated by mainline churches. In the village, an individual was expected to attend the family church, but in the town, there was more room for manoeuvre, greater freedom to choose, and fewer social restrictions.<sup>87</sup> Urban migration encouraged trans-denominational mobility by loosening ties with extended kin and exposing young people to new ideas and religious options. It also precipitated crises of identity and feelings of insecurity and isolation. NPCs sought to address their messages to contemporary problems and tried to compensate for the depersonalisation of urban life. Above all, they provided new communities to replace the traditional social ties of the extended family.

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<sup>82</sup> OI, Obed Onuzo, 25.1.01, Birmingham.

<sup>83</sup> Ojo, 'Deeper Christian Life Ministry', 142.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, 142.

<sup>85</sup> According to Nwanunobi, 'Sects', 117, prayer houses were initially an urban phenomenon and despite their spread to rural areas 'continue to be influenced by problems associated with urbanization, such as social dislocation.

<sup>86</sup> Ofoegbu, 'Urbanisation', 592

<sup>87</sup> OI, Obed Onuzo and Ken Okeke; Ofoegbu, 'Urbanisation', 591.

### 2.1.2 The Susceptibility to Bureaucratisation

Gradually, like most sect-like communities that emerge from revivalist activity,<sup>88</sup> Igbo CMs all underwent a process of institutionalisation to cater for community demands. The transition to denominational status was linked to conversionist zeal and had a social dimension due to the intake of large numbers of under socialised recruits requiring after-care. Gradually a pastorate emerged, which rapidly acquired professional status. The pressure to institutionalise increased as the youth matured and families began to join. As Ojo notes, the transition to denominational status was a response to the social needs of members.<sup>89</sup> Felix Obiorah, founder of Master's Vessel Church, explained how this transition occurred for them.

At that point [our aim was] to win souls wherever we can find them - in marketplaces, in hospitals, homes, and anywhere else - and to set up Bible study and that kind of thing. And that was what we were doing. Initially, it was all young people, but when families started joining and the need became obvious that we had to care for their own needs and things like that. And then we opted to have a place of fellowship . . . That was when we got this place. We bought a piece of land and then started building . . . We bought the land in seventy-three, and built it up around seventy-nine or so.<sup>90</sup>

The pressure to institutionalise was also linked to the need to survive in an increasingly competitive religious marketplace. If we recall, the 1970s was a period of unprecedented religious pluralisation as new groups arose in the wake of the civil war and people were able to choose from a growing array of religious options. If the new

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<sup>88</sup> Wilson, *Sociological Perspective*, 98.

<sup>89</sup> Ojo, 'Deeper Christian Life Ministry', 152.

fellowships were to survive, they needed to provide a structure that would cater for the needs of their members.<sup>91</sup>

## **2.2 Local Religious Demands and Global Legacies**

I now turn to a discussion of religious factors behind independency. In the case of Igbo-initiated NPCs, local aspirations and global legacies created a favourable environment for secession.

### **2.2.1 Power to Enhance Life and Engage in Mission**

In chapter two, I noted elements of reaction to mission church spirituality behind early Igbo independency. But the primary motivation was to respond to the gospel and engage in mission activity in ways appropriate to local culture. Perhaps the most significant factor behind the genesis of NPCs was the search for power to enhance life and engage in mission.

If we recall, *ezi-ndu* (Igbo: the good life) embraces physical health, material prosperity, communal satisfaction, and individual success. Barrett suggests that the ‘common root cause’ for independency was reaction against the failure of European missions to understand African society by distinguishing good elements from bad and recognising parallels between local culture and biblical faith.<sup>92</sup> Barrett’s theory has been criticised for failing to explain the ongoing growth of AICs and take account of the fact that not

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<sup>90</sup> OI, Felix Obiorah, 6.10.01, Umuahia.

<sup>91</sup> Hackett, *Religion in Calabar*, 333-34, has noted this in relation to new religious movements in Calabar, southeastern Nigeria.

<sup>92</sup> Barrett, *Schism*, 154-57.

all AICs were founded by mission church members.<sup>93</sup> While I do not subscribe to Barrett's thesis as a general theory of African independency, it does have bearing on our discussion of early Igbo NPCs,<sup>94</sup> which were all founded by former mission church members. The search for power to enhance life added impetus to the drive towards independency. The failure of mission church spirituality to fulfil local aspirations, due to the influence of Enlightenment values, created a crisis of identity and precipitated a 'quest for belonging,'<sup>95</sup> a search for alternatives that aroused opposition from mission church leaders and contributed to the process of secession.<sup>96</sup>

But early NPCs were primarily 'mission churches' rather than 'protest groups,' movements of conversion rather than secession. As noted, Igbo CMs arose in a context of heightened evangelistic fervour, and this created tensions within mainline churches due in part to the reluctance of leaders to relinquish control and provide space for young people to participate in ministry. Eventually these tensions reached the point of rupture, and protagonists felt they had no alternative but to secede. Hence, the appropriation of Pentecostal spirituality in response to mission church shortcomings, and the urge to engage in mission activity, were the two main factors that aroused opposition and hastened the transition to denominational status. I return to this later.

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<sup>93</sup> For example, Daneel, *Quest for Belonging*, 99; Hastings, *History of African Christianity*, 69; Anderson, *African Reformation*, 29.

<sup>94</sup> Walls, *Missionary Movement*, 92-3, notes the similarity between the AICs and NPCs churches in this respect. Both proclaim the 'divine power of deliverance from disease and demonic affliction,' and share 'a quest for the demonstrable presence of the Holy Spirit and a direct address to the problems and frustrations of modern African urban life.'

<sup>95</sup> Barrett, *Schism*, 170-71, has noted that secessions occur most frequently from the larger mission communities because once a mission becomes large it tends to 'become institutionalised and impersonal, and so the desire arises for smaller groups in which *philadelphia* is possible.'

### 2.2.2 The Legacy of Protestant Denominationalism

The fissiparous nature of the Protestant tradition and the multiplication of Protestant missions and denominations were also factors behind independency in Africa.<sup>97</sup> As Daneel notes, it not only led to schism but also planted the idea in African minds that multiplicity of denominations was the norm.<sup>98</sup> If we recall, missionary rivalry was a feature of early Christian expansion in Igboland, and despite comity agreements, groups competed with one another for members.<sup>99</sup> By the 1960s, the dominant Protestant denominations were Anglican, Methodist, and Presbyterian, but other Protestant missions included the Baptists, Qua Iboe Church, ECWA/SIM, Assemblies of God Mission, and Apostolic Church. Due to different qualifications for membership and leadership, and different disciplinary regulations, it was easy to switch membership from one denomination to another.

The propensity to schism among Protestant evangelicals is partly due to their high regard for the authority of the Bible.<sup>100</sup> Secession from Roman Catholic churches has been less frequent due to their concept of the holy, apostolic Church, and relative failure to circulate vernacular scriptures.<sup>101</sup> This appears to be born out in our context.

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<sup>96</sup> Kalu, *Embattled Gods*, 279, suggests that dissatisfaction with mission church spirituality was a major factor behind the genesis of early Igbo NPCs.

<sup>97</sup> For Hastings, a Catholic writer, Protestant denominationalism seems to have been one of the most significant factors behind independency. Hastings, *Church in Africa*, 527, 532-33; Adrian Hastings, *Mission and Ministry*, London: Sheed & Ward, 1971, 208-209; Hastings, *History of African Christianity*, 70. See also Anderson, *African Reformation*, 29-31; Daneel, *Missiology*, 60-1; Barrett, *Schism*, 101.

<sup>98</sup> Daneel, *Missiology*, 61.

<sup>99</sup> See chapter two, section 2.2.1.

<sup>100</sup> See Nwodika, 'Churches in the Seventies' (Appendix 4.7.1, paragraph 10): 'You know, Roman Catholic Church, they did a great work for their people, they took away Bible from them and that's why they can keep their members. . . But Pentecostals and evangelicals, we gave the Bible to all our members, so all of them are Bible students. . . And the splits started.'

<sup>101</sup> Barrett, *Schism*, 138, notes that in most cases of independency, the Bible has played a leading role. See also Anderson, *African Reformation*, 30; Hastings, *Church in Africa*, 528; Daneel, *Missiology*, 65-6; Nwodika, 'Churches in the Seventies' (Appendix 4.7.1, paragraph 10).

Despite Igboland's large Catholic community,<sup>102</sup> 18 (86 %) out of 21 Igbo NPC founders interviewed were former members of Protestant mission churches, while only three (14 %) were former Roman Catholics. Out of 30 informants who joined an NPC between 1972 and 1975, 25 (83 %) were former Protestant church members, three (10 %) former Catholics, and two (7 %) from unknown church backgrounds. But further research is required to arrive at a more accurate estimate of the proportion of Protestants and Catholics among early NPC membership.

### 3. Precipitating Factors

These underlying conditions were often insufficient to cause schism. Turner refers to precipitating factors 'which, in a situation that is ripe for such development, push things over the edge.'<sup>103</sup> These presuppose the presence of other more foundational enabling factors.

#### 3.1 Charismatic Leaders Emerging from the Margins

The emergence of charismatic leaders with a new message was an important precipitating factor behind the formation of early Igbo NPCs.<sup>104</sup> As Stark and Bainbridge rightly observe, 'the rank and file do not produce social movements; they merely support them,' and movements 'need leaders - persons with the capacity to focus discontent and direct organized actions.'<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>102</sup> Omenka, *School*, 282, describes Eastern Nigeria as the most important 'Catholic stronghold' in West Africa. In 1982, the Igbo cities of Owerri, Onitsha, and Enugu had by far the largest number of Catholics of all Nigerian cities. Makozi and Ojo (eds.), *History of the Catholic Church*, 102-103.

<sup>103</sup> Turner, *Religious Innovation*, 11. Barrett, *Schism*, 218, refers to these precipitating factors as 'flashpoints.'

<sup>104</sup> Both Turner and Barrett identify the emergence of charismatic individuals as an important precipitating factor. Turner, *Religious Innovation*, 11; Barrett, *Schism*, 218.

<sup>105</sup> Stark and Bainbridge, *Future of Religion*, 104.

Despite its reductionist nature, Wallace's theory of revitalisation movements is a helpful model for understanding the role played by charismatic individuals. Wallace defines a religious revitalisation movement 'as a deliberate, organized, conscious effort by members of a society to construct a more satisfying culture.'<sup>106</sup> He believes that culture contains internal mechanisms that enable it to renew itself when there is a crisis. The process of revitalisation occurs when an individual, a charismatic leader, has a vision or conversion experience in which the old way is changed to suit the new situation. This new revelation is then communicated to disciples, who in turn communicate it to the wider culture, resulting in a movement to transform society and the creation of a new community.<sup>107</sup>

If we recall, the Civil War Revival was dominated initially by 'revitalised' charismatic individuals with a new vision, which they communicated to others, resulting in the creation of new 'revitalised' Christian communities. Often these compelling figures possessed charismatic qualities such as an ability to preach and perform miracles, which validated their message in the eyes of their followers. Barker, following Wilson,<sup>108</sup> notes that it is at times of rapid change or unrest (economic, political, social, or military

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<sup>106</sup> Anthony F. C. Wallace, 'Revitalization Movements', *American Anthropologist*, 58, 1956, 265.

<sup>107</sup> Wallace, 'Revitalization Movements', 269-72. The historian William McLoughlin has adapted Wallace's theory of cultural change in his examination of North American religious revivals. He maintains that these movements are necessary if a culture is to survive the traumas of social change. McLoughlin, *Revivals*, 8, 10. For an attempt by a missiologist to apply Wallace's theory to a more recent Christian religious movement, see Hans Kasdorf, *Christian Conversion in Context*, Scottdale, Pennsylvania: Herald Press, 1980, 123-42. See also Fernandez, 'African Religious Movements', 208-209, who suggests that Wallace's theory should be applied to African religious movements.

<sup>108</sup> Bryan R. Wilson, *The Noble Savages: The Primitive Origins of Charisma*, Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press, 1975, cited in Eileen Barker, 'Charismatization: The Social Production of "an Ethos Propitious to the Mobilisation of Sentiments"', in Barker, Beckford, and Dobbelaere (eds.), *Secularization*, 198.

upheavals) that the charismatic leader is most likely to be heard.<sup>109</sup> The NPC movement arose at an unprecedented time of social upheaval in Igbo history and coincided with the emergence of a new generation of young leaders with charismatic qualities.

During the 1970s, there were many charismatic individuals, who gained significant followings, but none more so than Edozie Mba, General Superintendent of *Riches of Christ*.<sup>110</sup> In contrast to most Igbo NPC pioneers, Mba was born into an elite family and was brought up an Anglican in Lagos. In February 1972, he was introduced to Pentecostal spirituality through contact with Assemblies of God and Foursquare Gospel Church in Lagos, and was encouraged to enter full-time ministry by the late Benson Idahosa.<sup>111</sup> According to Stark and Bainbridge ‘sect leaders usually have previous leadership experience . . . in the parent body.’<sup>112</sup> As noted, most NPC pioneers were marginalised within their church communities but found leadership opportunities within SU. When Mba returned to the east, he became a SU evangelist, based in Enugu. Instead of returning to the Anglican fold, he attended Assemblies of God and attained a position of leadership. When he moved to Onitsha in December 1972 to participate in a SU citywide crusade, he encountered *Hour of Freedom*. Mba was a young man of outstanding qualities, and part of his appeal rested on his apparent ability to impart the power of the Spirit and perform healing. A spectacular healing in Onitsha significantly increased his popularity and by 1973, he was confirmed as the main leader of the

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<sup>109</sup> Barker, ‘Charismatization’, 198.

<sup>110</sup> This brief biography of Edozie Mba is based on the following sources: Anyaegbu, ‘Sabbatharianism’, 181-89; Kalu, *Embattled Gods*, 277; Ndubuisi, ‘Evangelical Pentecostalism in Southern Igboland’, 61; OI, John Ugah, 7.6.00, Enugu; PC, Benjamin Ikedinobi, 29.4.00, Onitsha.

<sup>111</sup> For Idahosa and his influence on the movement, see section 3.4 of this chapter. See also chapter five, section 1.

revival. One informant summed up Mba's impact: 'In fact, when he came he just took over the leadership because you don't doubt the charisma.'<sup>113</sup>

Healing was an important factor in the growth of several Igbo CMs and those who possessed healing gifts rapidly gained large followings, especially in the wake of the civil war, when access to Western medicine was restricted. A ministry might receive a considerable boost because of a healing. Emmanuel Okorie, founder of Living Word Ministries (LWM), is a case in point.<sup>114</sup> I met him in his office at LWM's large church complex, overlooking the city of Aba.<sup>115</sup> Okorie was brought up in the village of Ossah, near Umuahia, the son of a poor Methodist preacher and youngest of nine children. He was converted during the war through Roberts and SU Umuahia, and in 1970 attended secondary school in Aba.<sup>116</sup> In 1971, Okorie was introduced to the Qua Iboe Church senior pastor in Aba, Reverend Ahunanya. Because of his youth and lack of theological training, Ahunanya was reluctant to allow Okorie to minister in his churches, even though he was a SU leader. During a visit to Ahunanya's home, Okorie prayed for his son, who suffered from poliomyelitis. Ahunanya was so impressed by his son's improvement that he allowed Okorie to hold evangelistic 'crusades' within the QIC congregations of Aba district.<sup>117</sup> An interesting sequel concerns Okorie's subsequent ministry in America, which was also launched following a healing miracle.

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<sup>112</sup> Stark and Bainbridge, *Future of Religion*, 105.

<sup>113</sup> Benjamin Ikedinobi, group discussion, 29.4.00, Enugu.

<sup>114</sup> This biography of Okorie is based on an oral interview (OI, Emmanuel Okorie, 17.1.02, Aba) and an article in LWM's magazine (Nze, 'Emma Okorie', *The Forum. A Publication of Christian Men's Forum of Living Word Ministries*, 5-7).

<sup>115</sup> See Plate 5.5.

<sup>116</sup> Okorie attended Wilcox Memorial Secondary School, founded by Qua Iboe Mission and named after one of its early missionaries.

When he first arrived in 1979, he lodged with a Nigerian friend in the home of an American Pentecostal, whose daughter was ill. According to Okorie, when he prayed for her she was instantly healed. Her father told his pastor, who publicised what happened, and consequently Okorie suddenly found himself in demand within the American Pentecostal community.

Igbo traditional culture has a strong tradition of religious practitioners with apparent healing abilities. For example, the *dibia afa* (Igbo: healer/diviner) is believed to possess healing powers, derived from *Agwu*, the deity of medicine.<sup>118</sup> Hence, the potential for Igbo neo-Pentecostal ‘healers’ to attract large followings and precipitate new movements.

### 3.2 Opposition from the Centre

Opposition from mainline church authorities was a significant factor behind the formation of early Igbo NPCs. In fact, from an insider point of view this was the main reason for secession. This is in line with Barrett’s assertion that separatism within Africa often occurs when charismatic leaders and their followers find themselves on the receiving end of persecution by mission church authorities.<sup>119</sup>

The early 1970s was a period of intense persecution for Igbo revivalists and many felt so alienated from their church communities that they left to form new ones. In some

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<sup>117</sup> Okorie also claimed other notable healings through his ministry in Nigeria during the 1970s, including two resuscitations. OI, Emmanuel Okorie, 17.1.02, Aba; Nze, ‘Emma Okorie’, *The Forum. A Publication of Christian Men’s Forum of Living Word Ministries*, 6.

<sup>118</sup> Ikenga-Metuh, *African Religions in Western Conceptual Schemes*, 33-5. Okorochoa, *Religious Conversion*, 201, describes the *dibia* as a ‘mediator of power.’

<sup>119</sup> Barrett, *Schism*, 219.

cases, they were literally driven out, and branded as fanatics or even heretics.<sup>120</sup> Some of my informants chose to remain in the mainline churches and opposed the formation of NPCs, but invariably were away at university during the persecution years, or had left temporarily to study overseas, or had transferred to a denomination more sympathetic to the revival. Out of 24 former revivalists who chose not to secede, 12 were away at university or theological college, two were overseas, seven switched from Anglican to AG or ECWA (temporarily or permanently),<sup>121</sup> one was a Presbyterian pastor, and two moved away to work.

To minimise the possibility of bias, I interviewed representatives from both camps, though I was unable to talk to any former mainline church leaders who had opposed the revival. Cyril Okorochoa's testimony is significant because he has maintained a relatively unsympathetic stance towards the NPC movement, despite his charismatic leanings. Okorochoa was brought up in the Anglican Church and was a leader of SU Umuahia during the war. In 1970, he left Igboland to embark on an evangelistic tour of Western Nigeria with Mike Oye, and in 1972 travelled to Britain for further studies. Okorochoa has remained with the Anglican Church and when we met was Director for Mission and Evangelism of the Anglican Communion, based in London. He is now the Anglican Bishop of Owerri. He told me that during the early 1970s, most Anglican priests opposed the revival, and as a result, many young people were expelled or left voluntarily, initially finding refuge in AG and other Pentecostal churches.<sup>122</sup>

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<sup>120</sup> For example, see Nwodika, 'Churches in the Seventies' (Appendix 4.7.1, paragraph 2); Nebo, 'Protagonists and Critics' (Appendix 4.7.2, paragraphs 3 & 5).

In North-Western Igboland, most revivalists were Anglicans, the dominant church in the area. NPC pioneer Augustine Nwodika claimed that persecution from Anglican authorities was the main impetus behind the formation of new churches in Onitsha.<sup>123</sup> The situation was similar in Southern Igboland, where Anglicans and Methodists predominated. In Umuahia, the SU township group sometimes held their evangelistic guest services in St. Stephen's Anglican Church. On one occasion, the pastor told Obiorah, the SU President, to send a group of SU members out of the meeting because they had been caught 'prophesying' in their local church. When he refused, they were forced to continue the service elsewhere.<sup>124</sup> Persecution by mainline church authorities was certainly a factor behind Obiorah's decision to start Master's Vessel Church, as it was for other Umuahia based NPCs, such as Canaan Gospel Centre (CGC).<sup>125</sup> Following their expulsion first from the Methodist church and then from the local Anglican church, members of CGC started to attend Assemblies of God. When they were asked to leave AG over their refusal to become members, they began meeting in the primary school. Finally, they were beaten by sticks and driven out of the school by members of the local community. They then started meeting in a private home and eventually became an independent church.<sup>126</sup> In the north and Middle Belt, Igbo NPC pioneers also encountered opposition from mainline churches. For example, when

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<sup>121</sup> Those informants who switched to ECWA were based in Enugu at the time, where the ECWA pastor, Mike Bonomi, was sympathetic to the revival.

<sup>122</sup> OI, Cyril Okorochoa, 23.8.98, Woking.

<sup>123</sup> OI, Augustine Nwodika and Benjamin Ikedinobi; Nwodika, 'Churches in the Seventies' (Appendix 4.7.1, paragraph 2).

<sup>124</sup> OI, Felix Obiorah, 6.10.01, Umuahia.

<sup>125</sup> For example, in a letter written in June 1971 Ume Kalu, a SU leader in Amaekpu-Ohafia (near Umuahia), states that SU groups in his area were banned from meeting in the local Presbyterian church. Ume Kalu, Letter to Roberts, 18 June 1971.

<sup>126</sup> OI, Samson Onyeoziri, 11.1.02, Umuahia. See also Elizabeth Onukwue, Letter to Roberts, 23 May 1971.

Thompson Nwosu started holding evangelistic campaigns some COCIN and ECWA pastors warned their members not to attend, and branded him a false prophet.<sup>127</sup>

Why was there this spate of persecutions? Revivalists put it down to the response of church authorities to their message and behaviour. Church leaders criticised them for their aggressive evangelistic style,<sup>128</sup> their promotion of Holy Spirit baptism,<sup>129</sup> their exercise of the charismatic gifts of tongues and prophecy,<sup>130</sup> their interdenominational stance, and their emphasis upon personal holiness.<sup>131</sup> An excerpt from a letter written by Okorochoa in 1972 suggests that there was more involved than mere intransigence on the part of church authorities: ‘There have been a number of clashes with the churches. In some cases due to spurious and misguided zeal on the part of the youngsters and in others due to the corruption of the church dignitaries.’<sup>132</sup> Revivalists sometimes (rather unwisely) charged their priests with immorality and corruption, which further antagonised them.<sup>133</sup>

Spirit baptism and the charismatic gifts of tongues and prophecy in particular had dangerous potential and sometimes resulted in irregular behaviour. Lovelace states that

<sup>127</sup> PC, Thompson Nwosu, 18.5.02, Jos. Okoye of All Christians Fellowship Mission also encountered opposition from non-Pentecostal churches. Okoroafor, *William Okoye*, 89.

<sup>128</sup> Uchenna Emezue, Letter to Roberts, 24 May 1971.

<sup>129</sup> See Ume Kalu, Letter to Roberts, 24 August 1972, where the author refers to SU groups clashing with denominations over the issue of Holy Spirit baptism.

<sup>130</sup> OI, Felix Obiorah, 6.10.01, Umuahia. Apparently SU Enugu was eventually denied access to St. Andrew’s Presbyterian Church because the pastor found some members speaking in tongues. This was after former revivalist and Presbyterian pastor James Ukaegbu had been transferred. Ogbu Kalu, ‘Round Table Discussion’, RSC, Enugu, April 28 2000.

<sup>131</sup> Elizabeth Onukwue, Letter to Roberts, 23 May 1971; OI, Uchenna Emezue, 11.10.01, Umuahia; OI, Augustine Nwodika, 8.5.00, Enugu; OI, Cyril Okorochoa, 23.8.98, Woking.

<sup>132</sup> Cyril Okorochoa, Letter to Roberts, 20 December 1972.

<sup>133</sup> OI, Cyril Okorochoa, 23.8.98, Woking. Some of those who chose to secede later admitted that their behaviour was sometimes unwise and insubordinate. See Augustine Nwodika, ‘Churches in the

the charismatic renewal is ‘programmed to divide the church unless the old Pentecostal theology is broadened and modified.’<sup>134</sup> If we recall, Spirit baptism was an early feature of the revival, but when it became a formal doctrine due in part to the influence of AG, it began to cause divisions within mission churches and SU fellowship groups.<sup>135</sup> Note the following excerpt from a letter written in 1972:

The S.U. groups in the East are doing well, but clashes with denominations, leading to their closing down in the churches, are now many . . . The trouble is not with S.U. itself but with some of the Christians in her who are influenced by spiritualists and Pentecostals and insist on Water Baptism by Immersion, Holy Spirit Baptism, and other externals more than Christ . . . We do not preach S.U. but Christ, but since S.U. is heterogeneous in denominational composition she cannot work smoothly amongst all denominations if extreme controversial doctrines are insisted on in preaching. The only way is to work together on common grounds.<sup>136</sup>

The promotion of tongues as initial evidence was especially problematic.<sup>137</sup> Some went further by insisting that without tongues a person was not a fully ‘born-again’

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Seventies’ (Appendix 4.7.1, paragraph 3); Nebo, ‘Protagonists and Critics’ (Appendix 4.7.2, paragraph 10).

<sup>134</sup> Lovelace, *Spiritual Life*, 262.

<sup>135</sup> Chinedu Nebo and John Onuora, group discussion, RSC, 29.4.00, Enugu; OI, Ifenyinma Orajekwe, Ken Okeke. Okeke told me that of all the charismatic gifts tongues was the most divisive during the revival.

<sup>136</sup> Ume Kalu, Letter to Roberts, 24 August 1972. See also Daniel Onwukwe, Scripture Union (Nigeria) Prayer Letter, October 1970: ‘Firstly, we are facing problems caused by the Tongues Movement. In some quarters the S.U. image has been much damaged by the excesses of immature Christians who substituted a physical experience for the Person of the Spirit, and the gifts for the Giver. We have tried to create the right spiritual balance through circulars and injunctions, but the problem remains, especially in the Eastern States, recently out of the throes of the civil war.’ Both Kalu and Onwukwe chose not to secede and join one of the NPCs. In the 1980s, Onwukwe himself testified to a personal experience of Spirit baptism. OI, Dan Onwukwe, 15.1.02, Owerri.

<sup>137</sup> Chinedu Nebo, group discussion, RSC, 29.4.00, Enugu. Nebo claimed a Pentecostal experience during the early 1970s and attended AG for several years. However, he told me that at the time he did not insist on tongues as initial evidence.

Christian.<sup>138</sup> Prophecy, though less common, was also potentially divisive. Usually this was due to the cessationist stance of church leaders, though there were instances of excessive and irregular behaviour on the part of revivalists. For instance, in 1973 Pentecostal SU travelling secretary Muyiwa Olamijulo reported that some Igbo SU members were ‘constituting a menace’ by holding meetings at irregular times, and in the case of one school group by ‘prophesying at night to some of the members of staff.’<sup>139</sup> Other SU groups were using the gift of prophecy to help members find potential spouses, prompting one former revivalist to write, ‘In short S.U. became the avenue where men and women came together to chose their husbands and wives, through revelation in vision.’<sup>140</sup> Sometimes, prophecy was used to expose alleged sin in people’s lives.<sup>141</sup>

Thus, it was the revivalists’ strong Pentecostal emphasis and aggressive evangelistic style, linked to a call to repentance, which aroused opposition from mainline church leaders and hastened the moment of rupture.

However, not all mainline church leaders opposed the revival. Among those who were sympathetic was the Anglican Bishop L. M. Uzodike in Onitsha.<sup>142</sup> In Owerri, the intervention of Bishop Nwankiti prevented some of the Anglican priests from closing

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<sup>138</sup> OI, Ken Okeke, 17.12.98, London; John Onuora, ‘Round Table Discussion. Materialism in the Body of Christ in the 1970s’, RSC, 29.4.00, Enugu. Note the following comments from a former revivalist: ‘after the war the evil one came with all manner of false doctrine, trying to bring division among us. Men came up with the spirit of sectionalism, teaching men that people without the gift of tongues are not Christians.’ Chuma G. Obijiofor, Letter to Roberts, 24 August 1972.

<sup>139</sup> Muyiwa Olamijulo, Scripture Union Eastern Newsletter, No. 6, January 1973.

<sup>140</sup> Chuma G. Obijiofor, Letter to Roberts, 24 August 1972. See also John Onuora, ‘Round Table Discussion. Materialism in the Body of Christ in the 1970s’, RSC, 29.4.00, Enugu.

<sup>141</sup> OI, Frances Lawjua Bolton, 23.5.99, London; OI, Leo Anorue, 18.9.01, Bukuru.

<sup>142</sup> In Raphael Okafor’s diary there is a passing reference to a meeting between the Bishop and *Hour of Freedom* leaders: ‘Three of us, Arthur, Stephen and I, as well as Mrs D. Erinne, met Bishop L. M. Uzodike and we had a very good discussion for about one hour and later he prayed for us.’ Raphael Okafor, Diary, 17 May 1971, quoted in Bolton, *Glory*, 160.

down SU groups meeting in their churches.<sup>143</sup> And in Aba, the Methodist Superintendent also supported SU, in contrast to some of his colleagues.<sup>144</sup>

The case of Enugu is interesting. Former revivalist Chinedu Nebo recalled the severe opposition they received from Anglican leaders. On one occasion, the priest in charge of a large Anglican church asked all those who claimed to be ‘saved’ and ‘born-again’ to stand up, and then ordered them out of his church. Many never returned.<sup>145</sup> What was significant in the case of Enugu was that during the early 1970s two mission church pastors were active patrons of SU. Mike Bonomi of ECWA/SIM and James Ukaegbu of the Presbyterian Church both welcomed the revival and allowed SU members to meet in their premises.<sup>146</sup> This had important consequences. As far as I know, the only NPC to open a branch in Enugu during the 1970s was the Onitsha based *Riches of Christ*. Nonetheless, many revivalists in Enugu eventually left the mainline churches due to the latter’s anti-Pentecostal stance and like Nebo joined AG, which had a strong base in the city.<sup>147</sup>

The tendency for revivalists to find a safe haven within AG and other mission related Pentecostal churches was a pattern that recurred throughout Igboland.<sup>148</sup> But AG’s relationship to the revival was ambiguous and went through several stages. As a denomination, it was familiar with the concept of revival and had known periods of

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<sup>143</sup> OI, Rosebud Eluwah, 13.10.01, Aba.

<sup>144</sup> OI, John Ugah, 7.6.00, Enugu.

<sup>145</sup> Nebo, ‘Protagonists and Critics’ (Appendix 4.7.2, paragraph 5).

<sup>146</sup> For Ukaegbu, see chapter three, section 6.2, footnote 344.

<sup>147</sup> OI, Chinedu Nebo, 4.5.00, Enugu. Nebo left the Anglican Church after the war and attended AG for three years. In 1975, he travelled to North America for further studies, where he remained until 1981. He has since become an ordained Anglican priest, based in Enugu. For a photograph of Nebo, see Plate 3.4. One informant told me that another reason why SU Enugu did not splinter into NPCs in the 1970s was because it was not exposed to external influences, such as the British missionary S. G. Elton, in the same way as SU Onitsha. PC, John Onuora, 7.1.02, Enugu. See section 3.4 below.

revivalist activity during its history.<sup>149</sup> It also shared similar values with civil war revivalists, such as an emphasis on experiential religion, spontaneity, otherworldliness, and Biblicism.<sup>150</sup> Furthermore, it was actively engaged in aggressive evangelism prior to the civil war.<sup>151</sup> However, AG expected revival to occur within its own ranks and was initially sceptical when faced with an apparent outpouring of the Spirit upon mainline churches, which it regarded as ‘spiritually dead.’<sup>152</sup> Like classical Pentecostals confronted with the charismatic renewal elsewhere,<sup>153</sup> this had the potential to precipitate an identity crisis within AG ranks.

Gradually, AG became more receptive and benefited from its contact with the revival. AG leaders preached at SU evangelistic events and used SU as a platform for their ministries.<sup>154</sup> It also received an influx of SU members rejected by mainline churches, as well as many new converts, resulting in significant church growth.<sup>155</sup> Among those who attended AG during the early 1970s were a number of key Igbo SU leaders.<sup>156</sup> The

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<sup>148</sup> OI, Raphael Okafor, 8.5.00, Enugu.

<sup>149</sup> See Agbo, ‘Revival and Revivalism’; Ebuade *et al.*, *Assemblies of God in Nigeria*; Alioha, *Grain of Mustard Seed*.

<sup>150</sup> Russell P. Spittler, ‘Implicit Values in Pentecostal Missions’, *Missiology: An International Review*, 16.4, October 1988, 412-19

<sup>151</sup> OI, Charles Osueke, 19.1.01, Enugu. Osueke was an AG evangelist during the revival and is the present General Superintendent of AG (Nigeria). However, former revivalist Raphael Okafor told me that prior to the revival AG did not engage in open-air evangelism. OI, Raphael Okafor, 8.5.00, Enugu.

<sup>152</sup> OI, Uchenna Emezue, 11.10.01, Umuahia.

<sup>153</sup> For example, Assemblies of God North America. See Macchia, ‘God Present in a Confused Situation’, 34-5.

<sup>154</sup> For instance, Matthew Ezeigbo, AG’s Northern Igboland Superintendent, was the guest speaker at SU Onitsha on 23 May 1971. Raphael Okafor, Diary, 23 May 1971, quoted in Bolton, *Glory*, 121. Pastor Iruloh, who succeeded Ezeigbo as Northern Igboland Superintendent, supported *Hour of Freedom*, attending their crusades and sharing the platform on occasions. PC, Stephen Okafor, 19.3.01; Nwodika, ‘Churches in the Seventies’ (Appendix 4.7.1, paragraph 5). Charles Osueke also used SU as a platform for his evangelistic ministry during the early 1970s. OI, Charles Osueke, 19.1.01, Enugu.

<sup>155</sup> OI, Felix Obiorah, 6.10.01, Umuahia. For AG Nigeria attendance growth during the period 1970-71, see chapter three, section 1.3, footnote 34.

<sup>156</sup> These included Tony Ewelike, Amauche Obijeofor (early leaders of Enugu SU township group), Amaechi Nwachukwu (founder of Amazing Love Assembly), Chinedu Nebo, Don Odunze (President of Family Circle Ministries), Sam Mbata (first President of Full Gospel Business Men’s Fellowship

revival also stimulated a fresh outburst of charismatic and evangelistic activity within AG's institutionalised and gerontocratic structures.<sup>157</sup> The example set by revivalists stimulated AG into action, and today its leaders in Igboland look back to the early 1970s as a time of significant revival within their denomination.<sup>158</sup>

Although AG provided a safe haven for revivalists faced with persecution from mainline churches, its contribution was hampered by its strong denominational stance, which conflicted with SU and alienated it from emerging CMs. It sought to take over the revival and contain it within its own denominational structures, insisting that SU revivalists attending AG churches should become members. Eventually, the relationship became so strained that AG tried to prevent its members from participating in SU activities for fear of losing them.<sup>159</sup>

In their turn, revivalists felt restricted and believed the freedom and unity the revival had instilled would be lost if they complied with these demands.<sup>160</sup> They wished to escape the control of AG authorities (both black African and white missionary),<sup>161</sup> and

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International in Nigeria), and Uma Ukpai, a leading Pentecostal evangelist. OI, Don Odunze, 22.10.01, Enugu.

<sup>157</sup> This tendency for Pentecostal churches to become bureaucratic and gerontocratic, thus stimulating fresh initiatives (which in turn bring renewal), has been noted by Maxwell in his study of Zimbabwean Pentecostalism, and Poloma in her study of the North American Assemblies of God. Maxwell, 'Witches, Prophets and Avenging Spirits', 334; Margaret Poloma, 'Charisma and Institution: The Assemblies of God', *Christian Century*, 107/29, 17.10.1990, 932-34.

<sup>158</sup> Agbo, 'Revival and Revivalism', 79. Agbo interviewed AG leaders Charles Osueke and Matthew Ezeigbo (present and past AG General Superintendents), who both looked back on this period as a time of unprecedented revival within AG.

<sup>159</sup> OI, Udobata Onunwa and Mike Oye. Eventually AG severed its links with SU and the ECUs, and established the Christ's Ambassadors Student Organisation (CASOR) for students in university and secondary schools.

<sup>160</sup> OI, Chinedu Nebo, 4.5.00, Enugu.

<sup>161</sup> Though by this time AG Nigeria had become autonomous, the parent body in America still exercised considerable influence through missionaries active on the field. During the period 1967-75 there were approximately 20 North American AG missionaries working in Igboland, out of 45 in the whole of Nigeria. See Cimino, *Profiles of the Assemblies of God Missionaries in Nigeria*.

avoid the constraints attached to belonging to a large and established denomination. AG was reluctant to recognise the ministries of those who had not passed through its system, and made little room for freelance evangelists.<sup>162</sup> It required aspiring ministers to undergo extensive training in one of its Bible colleges and afterwards to start from the bottom.<sup>163</sup>

### 3.3 The Removal of Restraining Influences

An important development in the transition to denominational status occurred with the removal of various restraining influences, individuals who possessed strong ecumenical inclinations and encouraged revivalists to remain in their churches despite persecution. The first was SU travelling secretary Bill Roberts, who departed the scene in late 1969. Roberts was intent on implementing SU's 'responsible church policy' and strongly opposed the exodus from mission churches, encouraging SU members instead to remain as forces for renewal.<sup>164</sup> According to one informant, Roberts tried to prevent SU mission church members from attending Pentecostal denominations.<sup>165</sup>

Soon after Roberts' departure, some of the more mature Nigerian SU leaders left the region or departed for university, leaving the field open for younger, more radical ones

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<sup>162</sup> Agbo, 'Revival and Revivalism', 103, 113-14.

<sup>163</sup> OI, David Amaechi, 9.10.01, Azuiyi-Oloko.

<sup>164</sup> For Roberts's ecumenical stance, see Bill Roberts, Circular Letter to S.U. Area Representatives in Biafra, 20 November 1969: 'We would never encourage anybody to change his denomination after experiencing blessing through an S.U. Group. I believe that when God brings revival to this land He will use fully surrendered Christians from every denomination as he has done throughout the history of the Church. . . Hence we must be working in every denomination even if we think at the moment that our particular Church is lacking spiritual life. That is all the more reason why you should go into it wholeheartedly in order to bring back some life to that Church. We know from history that a dead Church today may be very much alive in 10 years time if you are prepared to face up to your responsibilities within your Churches rather than running away from them.'

<sup>165</sup> OI, Emmanuel Okorie, 17.1.02, Aba. See also Bill Roberts, Circular Letter to S.U. Area Representatives in Biafra, 20 November 1969: 'Recently I was very much disturbed to find 6 S.U. members (4 Anglicans, 2 Methodists) working in [a] relief store and all attending an Assemblies of God Church which happened to be the nearest Church to the Store.'

to take over. Towards the end of 1970, the influential Pentecostal SU travelling secretary Mike Oye returned to his home in the west. Like Roberts, Oye was a strong advocate of SU's interdenominational policy and encouraged those intent on leaving their churches to join one of the many existing ones rather than start new ones.<sup>166</sup>

Among senior SU leaders to depart for university were John Onuora, Chris Onuoha, Augustus Mbanaso, and Emmanuel Ekpunobi, all of whom have remained within the Anglican Church.<sup>167</sup> Perhaps the crucial factor was the departure in 1972 of Stephen and Raphael Okafor for further studies in the UK. As the founder of *Hour of Freedom* Stephen Okafor had always adopted a strong ecumenical stance and resisted the call to form new churches. When they left, Paul Nweke took over the leadership of *Hour of Freedom* in Onitsha, and he was more receptive to the idea of planting churches.

The ecumenical sentiments of these early revivalists are echoed by Hollenweger, who laments the way the global charismatic movement has not lived up to its early promise, and reminds his readers of the ecumenical beginnings of the Pentecostal and charismatic movements, and the ecumenical leanings of some of its leading figures.<sup>168</sup>

### 3.4 Voices from Outside

Global forces also influenced the emergent Igbo NPC movement. The British missionary S. G. Elton, mentioned in chapter two, initially introduced the church-

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<sup>166</sup> OI, Mike Oye, 6.5.00, Enugu.

<sup>167</sup> If we recall from chapter three, Onuora and Onuoha had taken over as SU travelling secretaries in the east after Roberts's departure. Ekpunobi and Mbanaso were senior SU leaders in Onitsha and Umuahia respectively.

<sup>168</sup> Hollenweger, *Pentecostalism*, 334-66 (see especially pp. 362-66).

planting concept in the east.<sup>169</sup> After his resignation from the Apostolic Church, Elton had teamed up with American evangelists like T. L. Osborn and Gordon Lindsay in advocating this as a means of spreading the Pentecostal faith in Africa. Osborn and Lindsay were independent Pentecostal ministers, though both had previous connections with AG North America and were influenced by its indigenous church principles.<sup>170</sup>

Elton had close links with Stephen Okafor and *Hour of Freedom*, but his initial attempts at persuading them to gather their converts into new churches were unsuccessful.<sup>171</sup> Okafor believed that the east, with its strong attachment to mission churches, would resist the idea. The situation changed following Stephen and Raphael Okafor's departure in 1972 and Paul Nweke's succession to the leadership of *Hour of Freedom* in Onitsha. Nweke was more receptive because he believed that God had called him to preach *and* plant churches. In 1972, he visited Elton at Ilesha and was immediately taken under his wing. Through Elton, Nweke and Nwodika met the late Benson

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<sup>169</sup> See chapter two, section 2.4.2. Elton's background in the Apostolic Church influenced his church planting strategy.

<sup>170</sup> Osborn had had consultations with various Pentecostal missions, including AG, prior to initiating a scheme for mass crusades in 1953 that would be sustained by local evangelists recruited and supported by his Association for Native Evangelism. Initially, AG approved of Osborn's scheme but later criticised him for undermining its policy of creating self-supporting/self-financing indigenous churches, because he paid his workers more than local AG pastors. Lindsay had previously been an AG pastor. He followed a similar strategy to Osborn and developed his own Native Church Crusade in 1961, which supplied resources for Third-World church building programmes. See Wilson, *Strategy of the Spirit*; G. B. McGee, 'Missions, Overseas (North American)', in Burgess, Alexander, and McGee, *Dictionary*, 624; D. D. Bundy, 'Lindsay, Gordon (1907-73) and Freda Theresa (1916- )', in Burgess, Alexander, and McGee, *Dictionary*, 539-41; Blumhofer, *American Pentecostalism*, 75.

<sup>171</sup> OI, Stephen Okafor and Paul Nwachukwu. Stephen Okafor visited Elton in Ilesha on a number of occasions, and Elton supported the ministry of *Hour of Freedom* financially. Elton also supported Tony Okeke, founder of Save the Lost Programme, and encouraged him to attend Idahosa's Bible College. However, according to Okeke, Elton did not encourage him to plant churches but to help existing churches win converts. OI, Tony Okeke, 20.10.01, Enugu .

Idahosa and attended his New Covenant Bible School in Benin City, which further strengthened their resolve to plant churches.<sup>172</sup>

Accounts differ as to what happened next. Here again we encounter the tendency for participants to present themselves as central figures and marginalise others. According to Nwodika, on their return to Onitsha in February 1973, they called Mba and Eze (then Vice-President of SU Onitsha) and shared their vision for starting a new church. Mba and Eze initially resisted the idea because they wanted to concentrate on evangelism, but eventually consented, and together they founded *Riches of Christ*.<sup>173</sup> Another version assigns a more central role to Mba.<sup>174</sup>

Like early Pentecostals in North America,<sup>175</sup> Igbo NPC pioneers found submission to church authorities difficult, insisting that God had abandoned organised religion. After starting *Riches of Christ*, they began to call others to ‘come out’ from mainline churches, which they regarded symbolically as ‘Babylon’ and consequently under

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<sup>172</sup> OI, Paul Nwachukwu, 12.5.00, Onitsha. Idahosa’s emphasis on church-planting was partly a consequence of his contact with Gordon Lindsay. Idahosa was introduced to Lindsay by Elton, and in 1971 spent a few months studying in Lindsay’s Christ for the Nations Institute in America. On his return, he started the New Covenant Bible College, which later changed its name to All Nations for Christ Bible College.

<sup>173</sup> OI, Augustine Nwodika, 8.5.00, Enugu.

<sup>174</sup> Anyaegbu, ‘Sabbatharianism’, 183-86. According to this account (based on a personal interview), Mba visited Onitsha in December 1972 to participate in a citywide crusade organised by SU, after completing his training at Emesim’s Bible College. Following the crusade, he stayed on to conduct teaching sessions and formed a close friendship with Eze. In January 1973, Mba was invited by a SU group to speak on Holy Spirit baptism, but fell out with the leader Eliezer Okoye and apparently never associated with SU again. Meanwhile, he continued to conduct teaching sessions at Eze’s house and in February 1973 opened a ministry called Riches of Christ Evangelistic Association. Soon they were joined by Nweke and Nwodika, and in 1975, after establishing branches all over Igboland, changed their name to Riches of Christ Mission.

<sup>175</sup> See Edith L. Blumhofer, ‘Restoration as Revival: Early American Pentecostalism’, in Blumhofer and Balmer (eds.), *Revivals*, 147-48.

God's judgement.<sup>176</sup> Though the new churches started as flexible organisations loosely held together by charismatic leadership, they gradually underwent a process of institutionalisation to denominational status.

## **Conclusion**

These then were the main factors behind the formation of NPCs out of the original CMs associated with the revival. Local and external forces facilitated the transition process. The combination of social differentiation, urban migration, decentralised political structures, and Protestantism's propensity to schism, created a favourable environment for local initiative and secession. The pressure to institutionalise was also linked to the need to survive in a competitive religious marketplace and provide a structure to cater for local demands. In nearly every case, the actual moment of rupture was precipitated by a combination of factors. The most important from an insider point of view was opposition from mission church authorities to the revivalists' promotion of Holy Spirit baptism, practice of charismatic gifts, and aggressive evangelistic style, with its call to repentance and new birth. Hence, the formation of NPCs was closely linked to the revival's missionary impulses. In some cases, voices from outside Igboland acted as catalysts but these never overrode local concerns. After their decision to adopt independent status, the newly formed churches rapidly attracted large followings. In the next chapter, I examine why this was so.

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<sup>176</sup> OI, Augustine Nwodika, 8.5.00, Enugu. Several former revivalists told me that the Bible text 2 Cor 6:17 was popular among NPC pioneers: "Therefore, come out from their midst and be separate," says the Lord.' OI, Raphael Okafor, Chinedu Nebo.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **DEVELOPMENTS WITHIN IGBO-INITIATED NEO-PENTECOSTALISM (1972-2002)**

#### **Introduction**

The previous chapter explored the birth of the NPC movement from the womb of the Civil War Revival. The new churches expanded rapidly and soon spread beyond the borders of Igboland. This chapter examines the historical, sociological, theological, and missiological factors behind NPC expansion. It also explores the way the movement's vision and values have evolved since the early 1970s in response to global flows and local demands.

Like the revival itself, neo-Pentecostal expansion depended upon a balance between supply and demand. As noted in chapter one, explanations of contemporary African Pentecostal expansion are usually situated within the broad framework of modernisation or globalisation, and the more local socio-political and economic changes associated with decolonisation. In Nigeria, these processes created new religious demands, which facilitated neo-Pentecostal growth. However, this chapter will argue that the movement's missionary impulses, generated by the revival, were primarily responsible for NPC expansion during its formative period.

Part of the movement's appeal rested on its ability to supply a repertoire of images, symbols, rituals, and narratives for identity construction. Igbo neo-Pentecostals

construct their identities through social interaction, ritual action, and the creation of local theologies in a variety of contexts. These include fellowship meetings, group Bible teaching and preaching, communal prayer and worship sessions, and mission activities. This chapter includes an analysis of these elements of neo-Pentecostal spirituality and reflects on their contribution to the movement's popularity.

Research focussed on churches in urban contexts and we must take account of this when assessing the data.<sup>1</sup> Yet urban areas provide the most fertile ground for Pentecostal penetration. Even though many have established branches in rural areas, they started life in the townships and cities, and it is here they have grown most rapidly. As Ojo has noted, African neo-Pentecostal groups are especially popular in areas of rapid social change. They are also more likely to find the necessary economic resources for running their organisations in urban areas.<sup>2</sup>

## **1. Negotiating the Local and the Global**

The NPC movement was essentially an indigenous initiative, responding to local concerns, but was also part of the global charismatic movement and as such was influenced by external forces. Hexham and Poewe describe charismatic Christianity as a 'global culture,' because as a religious tradition it has travelled the world, maintaining its 'metacultural' dimension but taking on local colour.<sup>3</sup> A key question is how local populations resist, reshape, or adopt the influx of images, symbols, and narratives associated with global Pentecostalism. To understand the popularity of Igbo-founded

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<sup>1</sup> See chapter one, section 3.2, for details of NPCs visited during research.

<sup>2</sup> Ojo, 'African Charismatics', 4.

<sup>3</sup> Hexham and Poewe, *Global Cultures*, 41.

NPCs we must pay attention to the local and global forces that have influenced their shape.

NPCs have responded to changing socio-economic and political contexts by adapting their message and their practices to cater for community needs. The concept of contextualisation is a key to understanding the movement's rapid growth, as Ojo has noted.<sup>4</sup> This process was facilitated by Pentecostalism's inherent flexibility and its ability to take on local colour, due in part to its emphasis on the 'freedom of the Spirit.'<sup>5</sup> Cox suggests that part of Pentecostalism's appeal lies in its ability to combine with elements within the receptor culture.<sup>6</sup> Igbo-founded NPCs generated an evolving and flexible 'actual life' theology, which helped participants refashion their identities and respond to changing contexts. This chapter will include an analysis of different theological genres that have emerged since the movement's inception, and their relationship to socio-political and economic developments.

One way they have responded to local concerns is by pursuing global connections. Hackett refers to this process as religious 'internationalism,' and suggests that in Nigeria it is generally indigenous groups who seek out these connections in their pursuit of moral, religious, and sometimes financial support.<sup>7</sup> Because of its strong global links, some scholars interpret African neo-Pentecostalism as a product of globalisation

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<sup>4</sup> Ojo, 'Contextual', 175.

<sup>5</sup> Anderson, 'Global Pentecostalism', 217.

<sup>6</sup> Cox, *Fire from Heaven*, 259.

<sup>7</sup> Rosalind I. J. Hackett, 'New Religious Movements and Religious Self-Determination', paper for submission to Toyin Falola and J. K. Olupona (eds.), 'Religion and Society in Nigeria. Historical and Sociological Perspectives', 1986, 19 (Harold Turner Collection).

and refer to its predominantly American origins.<sup>8</sup> For example, Brouwer *et al.* deny that it is a ‘genuinely African construct arising from African experience and meeting African needs,’ but derives primarily from the United States.<sup>9</sup> Underlying this is the assumption that globalisation is Westernisation (or more specifically Americanisation) and is driven by imperialistic and hegemonic ambitions. However, the Westernisation/globalisation view assumes that it is one particular societal model (modern Western culture) that is being globalised, and ignores the multi-directional flow of people, images, and goods. In the Nigerian context, cultural flows were bi-directional, with Igbo neo-Pentecostals influencing their Western partners through transnational interactions.<sup>10</sup>

Ottenberg has drawn attention to Igbo receptivity to Westernisation.<sup>11</sup> While global flows from the West through media and migration influenced the shape of Igbo neo-Pentecostalism, participants made use of global resources and images to suit their own agendas and satisfy community demands. As Hexham and Poewe note, American charismatic networks do not force themselves on the rest of the world; rather ‘networks that rise spontaneously in various other countries actively seek contact with America

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<sup>8</sup> See chapter one, section 1.2 and footnote 50.

<sup>9</sup> Brouwer, Gifford, and Rose, *American Gospel*, 178, 151. See also Gifford, ‘Developments’, 516-20. Hackett also notes the predominantly American origins of the current Pentecostal revival in Africa, but allows more room for local agency in selecting from the repertoire of imported religious commodities, and exporting African products. Rosalind I. J. Hackett, ‘The Gospel of Prosperity in West Africa’, in R. H. Roberts (ed.), *Religion and the Transformation of Capitalism: Comparative Approaches*, London: Routledge, 1995, 211; Hackett, *Religion in Calabar*, 197. More recently, Gifford himself has stated that external links are ‘compatible with considerable creativity on the part of African Christians’ (*African Christianity*, 321).

<sup>10</sup> Hexham and Poewe have noted this with regard to religious organisations in general (*Global Cultures*, 45). Perhaps the outstanding example among Igbo neo-Pentecostals is Emmanuel Okorie of Living Word Ministries (see chapter four, section 3.1). As part of its ‘ministry,’ LWM has planted four churches in the United States. ‘Emma Okorie Speaks to The Forum - Excerpts’, *The Forum. A Publication of Christian Men’s Forum of Living Word Ministries*, 17. See Plate 9.2.

<sup>11</sup> Ottenberg, ‘Ibo Receptivity’, 130.

because they regard Americans as generous.’<sup>12</sup> Moreover, African Christians have long harboured aspirations to belong to something bigger,<sup>13</sup> and have found the West’s technological superiority and material abundance particularly enchanting. There were obvious benefits to be gained from American linkages and Igbo neo-Pentecostals eagerly seized the opportunities presented to them. American Pentecostal organisations supplied Igbo neo-Pentecostals with economic assistance, Christian literature, and opportunities for theological training and ministry.<sup>14</sup> American connections were also useful for prestige and for bolstering the legitimacy of their leaders.<sup>15</sup>

Several NPCs have received significant financial support from America, including Okorie’s Living Word Ministries (LWM),<sup>16</sup> Okoye’s All Christians’ Fellowship Mission (ACFM), and Ezeokeke’s *Salvation for All*.<sup>17</sup> Ezeokeke, for example, is the Nigerian representative of Kingsway Fellowship International, an American Pentecostal organisation, and makes annual visits to America to raise money and engage in ministry. Ezeokeke’s most recent project is a 4,000 seater ‘Cathedral’ in Onitsha, partially funded by gifts from overseas.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Hexham and Poewe, *Global Cultures*, 45.

<sup>13</sup> Maxwell, ‘African Imagination’, 11.

<sup>14</sup> For example, Bolton, *Glory*, 99, on the Civil War Revival: ‘Contact was also made with groups and organisations outside Nigeria and the ministries of T. L. Osborn, Gordon Lindsay, and others, as well as their books, were very helpful and supportive.’

<sup>15</sup> Kalu, *Power*, 113-14; Marshall, ‘Pentecostalism in Southern Nigeria’, 18.

<sup>16</sup> Though LWM has perhaps the strongest links with the US of all the Igbo-founded NPCs I visited, Okorie himself states that 95% of their finances come from Nigeria. See ‘Emma Okorie Speaks to The Forum’, *The Forum. A Publication of Christian Men’s Forum of Living Word Ministries*, 17.

<sup>17</sup> On the other hand, some of those I interviewed denied receiving financial benefits from overseas, despite their links with America and/or Britain. These included *Grace of God* and Christian Pentecostal Mission. Among those who said they had no formal overseas links were Amazing Love Assembly (Enugu), Master’s Vessel Church (Umuahia), and Overcomers Christian Mission (Owerri).

If we recall from chapter four, Igbo NPCs did not have American origins but did benefit from American ‘cultural radiation.’<sup>19</sup> Because of the civil war, most missionaries had left the region or had been unable to return. Consequently, direct foreign influence was initially restricted to Christian literature,<sup>20</sup> and input from the British Pentecostal missionary S. G. Elton, based in Western Nigeria. As noted, Elton had linked up with American Pentecostals T. L. Osborn and Gordon Lindsay following his resignation from the British Apostolic Church, and helped to distribute their literature and promote their church-planting strategies. Osborn’s writings were particularly influential. In 1971, Elton also introduced the late Benson Idahosa to Lindsay, and this proved decisive in exposing Igbo revivalists to the particular brand of Pentecostalism emanating from America.<sup>21</sup> Idahosa trained at Lindsay’s Christ for the Nations Institute in Texas, and on his return started his own Bible College, with teachers from the US, India, England, and Nigeria,<sup>22</sup> which attracted some of the leading Igbo neo-Pentecostal pioneers. Idahosa also persuaded Edozie Mba, co-founder of *Riches*, to enter full-time Christian ministry, and was an early mentor to William Okoye, founder of ACFM and a neo-Pentecostal pioneer in Nigeria’s Middle Belt.<sup>23</sup>

While most African Pentecostal movements are ‘locally instituted,’ some of their leaders ‘were formed by (and still maintain affiliations with) leading American

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<sup>18</sup> Bishop Dr Benson C. Ezeokeke, ‘Testimony and Praise Bulletin’, 2000. Kingsway Fellowship International is based in Des Moines, Iowa. For a photograph of Ezeokeke standing in Faith Cathedral, see Plate 4.1.

<sup>19</sup> This is a phrase used by David Martin. See Martin, *Pentecostalism*, 133.

<sup>20</sup> Even the flow of overseas Christian literature was restricted due to the war.

<sup>21</sup> Kalu, *Embattled Gods*, 278, refers to Idahosa as representing the American Pentecostal influence in the Igbo neo-Pentecostal movement.

<sup>22</sup> Coleman, *Globalisation*, 35.

<sup>23</sup> Okoroafor, *William Okoye*, 125. Okoye’s wife attended Idahosa’s All Nations for Christ Bible Institute, and Idahosa was the invited speaker at ACFM’s first annual convention.

evangelists . . .<sup>24</sup> In the mid-1970s, several leading American evangelists visited Eastern Nigeria and forged links with Igbo neo-Pentecostal pioneers, inviting them to train in their Bible colleges. The most influential were Morris Cerullo and T. L. Osborn. Cerullo visited Western Nigeria in 1973, holding crusades in some of the major cities. One of those who attended was Thompson Nwosu, who shortly afterwards was posted to Jos as an evangelist, where he founded Redeemed People's Mission (RPM).<sup>25</sup> Cerullo's team also organised ministry training schools in Igboland, which attracted many local Pentecostal leaders. In 1975, T. L. Osborn held a series of crusades in Eastern Nigeria, attended by Igbo revivalists, including Augustine Nwodika, co-founder of *Riches of Christ*, and William Okoye and Wilson Ezeofor, before they embarked on their evangelistic ministry in the Middle Belt.<sup>26</sup>

In the late 1970s, Igbo neo-Pentecostal leaders began to travel to America, either for ministry engagements or for Bible training.<sup>27</sup> Out of 19 NPC founders interviewed, 15 had travelled to the US during the late 1970s or early 1980s.<sup>28</sup> Of these, 11 attended some form of American Bible training institution (eight attended Pentecostal institutions), and nine have maintained links with US Pentecostal ministries or

<sup>24</sup> Hackett, 'Charismatic/Pentecostal', 263.

<sup>25</sup> OI, Thompson Nwosu, 31.8.01, Jos. Ojo, 'Campus Christianity', 57, also mentions Cerullo's 1973 visit to Western Nigeria.

<sup>26</sup> OI, Augustine Nwodika, 8.5.00, Enugu; Okoroafor, *William Okoye*, 70. This took place in Enugu, and according to Okoroafor attracted 'many enthusiastic Gospel ministers.' Another informant told me that Osborn came to Enugu in 1973. OI, Alexander Ekewuba, 16.1.02, Owerri.

<sup>27</sup> OI, Augustine Nwodika, 8.5.00, Enugu (see Appendix 4.7.8).

<sup>28</sup> These included Elias Chukwu (Pentecostal Life Bible Church), Alexander Ekewuba (Overcomers Christian Mission), Uchenna Emezue (Canaan Gospel Centre), Wilson Ezeofor (BFM), Benson Ezeokeke (*Salvation for All*), Benjamin Ikedinobi (Overcomer's Bible Church), Amaechi Nwachukwu (Amazing Love Assembly), Paul Nwachukwu (*Riches*), Augustine Nwodika (Throne of Grace Church), Godwin Nwosu (Bethel Gospel Mission), Felix Obiorah (Master's Vessel Church), Tony Okeke (*Save the Lost*), Emmanuel Okorie (LWM), Eliezer Okoye (Gospel Mission), William Okoye, (ACFM), Samson Onwubiko (Calvary Evangelistic Mission), Samson Onyeoziri (Canaan Gospel Centre), F. C. Uwa (Living Faith Church), Wilson Uzumegbunam (All Believers Fellowship Group).

churches.<sup>29</sup> Cerullo's School of Ministries attracted several NPC pioneers, partly because it offered scholarships to African students.<sup>30</sup> Okoye attended in 1981 and later acknowledged the influence of Cerullo's teaching on his ministry. Apparently, Cerullo was fond of saying, 'Because God cares we care,' and Okoye adopted this motto for his church. It also influenced the choice of slogan, which appears on all their church signboards: 'A Christ-Centred, Spirit-filled, Caring Church.'<sup>31</sup> Okoye has maintained links with America and travels there annually to participate in an international Pentecostal leadership conference and engage in ministry. In 1985, several American Pentecostal missionaries helped to set up the World Outreach Bible Institute in Suleja, which has become the main ACFM training centre.<sup>32</sup>

Two informants had links with Kenneth Hagin's organisation.<sup>33</sup> One was Emmanuel Okorie (LWM), who credits Hagin as the inspiration behind his Living Word Training

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<sup>29</sup> For example, Ezeokeke travels regularly to America on 'missionary trips.' During a five-week visit in 1999, he had ministry engagements in eight American Pentecostal churches and three fellowship meetings. See Ezeokeke, 'Testimony and Praise Bulletin'. Wilson Ezeofor (BFM) also travels to America and has links with American Pentecostal churches through his attendance at the International Convention of Faith Churches and Ministries. OI, Wilson Ezeofor, 25.9.01, Jos. When I visited BFM in August 2001, they had recently hosted a team of Americans who held an evangelistic campaign in their church called the 'Dominion Conference'.

<sup>30</sup> Igbo NPC pioneers who attended Cerullo's School of Ministries in the US included Edward Ezenwafor (Our Generation Gospel Ministries) in the early 1970s; Godwin Nwosu (Bethel Gospel Mission), Benjamin Ikedinobi (Overcomer's Bible Church), Thompson Nwosu (RPM) in 1979; Benson Ezeokeke (*Salvation for All*), Chima Amadi (Holiness Evangelical Church), Samson Onwubiko (Calvary Evangelistic Mission) in 1980; William Okoye (ACFM), Benjamin Ogbuozobe (National Evangelical Mission), Mike Okonkwo (TREM) in 1981. Information based on oral interviews, and Okoroafor, *William Okoye*, 130-31.

<sup>31</sup> Okoroafor, *William Okoye*, 131; All Christians Fellowship Mission, 'Lesson 4. Understanding the Vision and Purpose of your Church', *Membership Bible Studies*, 2001 Edition, Abuja: Christian Education Department, 19.

<sup>32</sup> Okoroafor, *William Okoye*, 131, 134.

<sup>33</sup> Wilson Ezeofor (BFM) visited a Kenneth Hagin camp meeting in the US in 1983. OI, Wilson Ezeofor, 25.9.01, Jos. Emmanuel Okorie (LWM) attended Hagin's Rhema Bible Training Centre during the early 1980s. Nze, 'Emma Okorie', *The Forum. A Publication of Christian Mens's Forum of Living Word Ministries*, 7. Hagin is widely regarded as the pioneer of the North American 'Word of Faith' movement and a leading promoter of prosperity teaching. He participated in the 1950s Healing Movement in America and was a member of Lindsay's Voice of Healing network before establishing an independent

Centre in Aba, which later became Living Word Ministries. Okorie travelled to the US in 1980 and briefly attended Oral Roberts University before transferring to Hagin's Rhema Bible Training Centre in Tulsa. While in America, Okorie also received training at Living Word Ministries Bible School in Mount Joy, Pennsylvania, and preached in American Pentecostal churches. In 1983, while listening to Hagin's preaching, Okorie apparently heard an audible voice directing him to return to Nigeria and 'teach faith to his people.' He returned to Aba in 1985, where he set up his Living Word Training Centre.<sup>34</sup> He now has a home in Baltimore, and divides his time between the US and Nigeria.<sup>35</sup> Okorie describes LWM as a 'Nigerian outfit with USA based Churches and friends.'<sup>36</sup>

Several neo-Pentecostal leaders make regular visits to Britain,<sup>37</sup> and some have actually attended British educational institutions.<sup>38</sup> Of all the churches I visited, the one with strongest links to Britain is RPM in Jos. Since 1990, Thompson Nwosu has spent up to

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ministry in 1963. He founded Rhema Bible Training Center in 1974. See Simon Coleman, 'The Faith Movement: a Global Religious Culture?', *Culture and Religion*, 3.1, 2002, 7.

<sup>34</sup> Nze, 'Emma Okorie', *The Forum. A Publication of Christian Men's Forum of Living Word Ministries*, 7; Peter Ofor, '25 Years of Visionary Marriage (Living the Faith Life)', *The Forum. A Publication of Christian Men's Forum of Living Word Ministries*, 14; Living Word Ministries Inc., *Annual Journal*, Aba: Prime Ideas Ltd, 2001, 3-4. This was Okorie's second visit to the U.S. Among the early teachers at the Living Word Training Centre were three American missionaries, Bruce Webster, Calvin Greiner, and Susanne Rocket, who all attended Bible College in America with Chinyere Okorie, Okorie's wife.

<sup>35</sup> OI, Emmanuel Okorie, 17.1.02, Aba.

<sup>36</sup> 'Bro. Emma Okorie speaks to The Forum', *The Forum. A Publication of Christian Men's Forum of Living Word Ministries*, 17.

<sup>37</sup> These include Paul Nwachukwu (*Grace of God*), Benjamin Ikedinobi (Overcomer's Bible Church), Victor Onuigbo (Victory Christian Mission), Wilson Ezeofor (BFM), and Thompson Nwosu (RPM). Ezeofor regularly visits the UK and has close connections with Hugh Osgood, founder of Cornerstone Christian Centre (a large Essex-based church), which has helped them acquire equipment for their television ministry and finance for their school. OI, Wilson Ezeofor, 25.9.01, Jos. Onuigbo of Victory Christian Mission also has links with Cornerstone Christian Centre. 'The Victory Christian Mission Enugu. Victory Christian Mission celebrates her 30<sup>th</sup> Convention', *Christian Update, A Publication of the Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria (PFN) Enugu North*, 2001, 5.

<sup>38</sup> These include Amaechi Nwachukwu (Amazing Love Assembly), Eliezer Okoye (Travelling Gospel Team), and David Adeboye (RPM).

six weeks each year in the UK, preaching in different churches and raising financial support.<sup>39</sup>

In chapter one, I referred to the consequences of globalisation for identity construction. Igbo neo-Pentecostalism gradually acquired a global character and consciousness through participation in transnational exchanges of ministry, and exposure to Western Pentecostal literature and electronic media. However, global pressure has not resulted in a homogenous neo-Pentecostal culture such that differences between the centre and peripheries have disappeared. Rather, global flows have produced new kinds of particularism and heterogeneity, and have reinforced local identities. They have influenced Igbo neo-Pentecostal theology, rituals, methodologies, and interactions through a process of ‘glocalisation,’ blending disparate cultural forms with their own tradition, resulting in ‘hybrid’ forms of spirituality and religious identity. Igbo NPCs have provided access to an ‘imagined community’ with global dimensions and missionary ambitions. This has contributed towards their appeal, particularly among upwardly mobile adults and young people in urban contexts eager to share in modernity’s ‘goods’ and find their footing in the modern world.

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<sup>39</sup> OI, Thompson Nwosu, 31.8.01, Jos. RPM has close connections with a British-founded charismatic organisation called Supplyline, which provides assistance to churches from developing countries. Supplyline was started by the late Arthur Wallis, a pioneer of the British charismatic movement. It has helped to raise the profile of the church in Britain and has contributed towards some of their building projects. While I was in Jos, RPM had a visit from an Englishman called Peter Game, who works for another charismatic ministry called Connections, founded by Philip Mohabir. Connections helps

## 2. Word and Worship

One way we see the interaction between the global and the local is in the content and style of Igbo neo-Pentecostal preaching and teaching ministries, and the format of their worship meetings. Bible teaching and communal worship rituals are important sources for constructing and reinforcing neo-Pentecostal collective identities.

### 2.1 Preaching and Teaching

Neo-Pentecostal Christianity is a religion of the Word,<sup>40</sup> and several scholars have noted this in relation to Africa.<sup>41</sup> A major attraction of Igbo-initiated NPCs is their emphasis on Bible teaching/preaching. In the Jos survey, this was the most common reason given for why members preferred their churches, alongside the lively worship styles. Out of 167 respondents, 88 % said that the high standard of Bible teaching attracted them, while 78.4 % liked the sermons preached.<sup>42</sup>

This stress on the Bible is understandable given the background of their founders in SU and the Civil War Revival. As noted in chapter three, and as Ojo has observed of similar movements in Western Nigeria,<sup>43</sup> most Igbo-founded NPCs started out as non-denominational Bible study groups, a model inherited from SU in Britain, and the focus on the Bible continued when they attained denominational status. This emphasis is also reflected in the names they have adopted, such as the Bible Faith Mission, Overcomer's

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churches around the world with financial aid, leadership training, and church planting. They have also raised money for Thompson's ministry. PC, Peter Game, 11.11.01, Bukuru.

<sup>40</sup> Coleman, *Globalisation*, 117.

<sup>41</sup> See for example, Hackett, 'Charismatic/Pentecostal', 262; Ojo, 'Church', 29; Anderson, *Zion and Pentecost*, 128-29.

<sup>42</sup> See Table 1.4.1 (Appendix 1.4). Larbi and Anderson also found that Bible teaching/preaching was a major attraction for members of Pentecostal churches in Ghana and South Africa respectively. Larbi, *Pentecostalism*, 316, 332; Anderson, *Zion and Pentecost*, 128-29.

Bible Church, Bible Pentecostal Life Church, Bread of Life Mission, and Living Word Ministries. Several denominations have an open Bible as part of their church logo.<sup>44</sup> The Bible was both a symbolic identity marker and a source for neo-Pentecostal identity construction.

During the 1970s, church members met frequently to study the Bible together or listen to messages delivered by their leaders. This became an important means of socialisation and identity construction. *Riches of Christ*, for example, held meetings every day of the week. As well as Sunday worship, they organised Bible teaching sessions on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday evenings, while other days were set aside for prayer and evangelism.<sup>45</sup>

This predilection for holding meetings has continued since the 1970s, though perhaps not with the same intensity. As well as Sunday worship meetings, all the churches I visited had an Adult Sunday School and a regular weekday Bible study, which members were urged to attend.<sup>46</sup> Larger churches produce written Sunday school manuals, laced with Bible references. Their content suggests the influence of a global Pentecostal culture. For instance, ACFM's 2001 manual contains teaching on the 'new life in Christ,' 'assurance of salvation,' 'Holy Spirit baptism,' and 'soul-winning.'<sup>47</sup> *Grace of God's* 2001 manual has chapters entitled 'Restoration,' 'Faith changes destinies,' 'Jesus

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<sup>43</sup> Ojo, 'Charismatic Movement in Nigeria', 115.

<sup>44</sup> For example, RPM in Jos has an open Bible and a dove, presumably symbolising the Word and the Spirit, and then the Bible text: 'equipping the saints for service.' Holiness Evangelical Church in Owerri also has an open Bible on its church logo.

<sup>45</sup> OI, John Ugah, 7.6.00, Enugu.

<sup>46</sup> See Plates 6.1 & 6.3.

<sup>47</sup> All Christians Fellowship Mission, *New Life Sunday School*, Abuja: Christian Education Department, All Christians Fellowship Mission, 2001.

the healer,' and '33 Divine healing facts by T. L. Osborn.'<sup>48</sup> Churches also have weekday meetings for healing and deliverance, which invariably begin with a message from the Bible. Nine denominations I visited have their own Bible schools, offering courses for both lay people and those called to full-time ministry.<sup>49</sup> At least two started during the 1970s: the Rock Bible College (*Grace of God*), and the New Anointing Bible College (National Evangelical Mission). Bible school culture was further evidence of global influences.

A belief in the authority of the Bible is one of the implicit values of global Pentecostalism,<sup>50</sup> and African Christians love to quote from it to support their beliefs.<sup>51</sup> In meetings I attended the sermon was always a significant part of the programme, often lasting for over one hour and including numerous quotes from the Bible, frequently punctuated by such phrases as, 'The Bible says. . . ' or 'the word of God says. . . .' Members were encouraged to bring their Bibles and often arrived with pen and paper to take notes. All but one of the meetings took place in urban areas, and here the sermons were in English, sometimes with interpretation into Igbo. There is apparently a high level of literacy in these churches and most members can understand English. In my survey, out of 105 respondents from RPM, 51.4 % had been educated up to primary or secondary level and 43.8 % had tertiary level education (usually university).<sup>52</sup> All the meetings I attended at Amazing Love Assembly were conducted in English without any

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<sup>48</sup> Grace of God Mission Inc., *Sunday School Manual*, n.publ, February-July 2001.

<sup>49</sup> These are *Grace of God* (Rock Bible College), National Evangelical Mission (New Anointing Bible College), Redeemed People's Mission (Redeemed People's Theological College, 1994), All Christians Fellowship Mission (World Outreach Bible Institute, 1985), Christian Pentecostal Mission (Pentecostal International Bible Seminary), *Salvation for All* (Faith Bible College), Victory Christian Mission (Victory Bible College, 1981), Amazing Love Assembly (Agape Bible College, 1993).

<sup>50</sup> Spittler, 'Pentecostal Mission', 418.

<sup>51</sup> Gifford, *African Christianity*, 42.

interpretation, though many songs were in Igbo. *Grace of God* meetings were also in English, but usually interpreted into Igbo. This is in contrast to some of the older AICs in urban areas. I attended two meetings in Christ Holy Church, founded during the 1940s. One meeting was in English with Igbo interpretation, but many songs were in Igbo. The other meeting was in Igbo, though summarised in English for my benefit.<sup>53</sup> I suspect that rural NPC meetings are generally conducted in the vernacular. Unfortunately, I only attended one, Christian Pentecostal Mission (CPM) in Mbubo, near Umuahia. There were approximately 100 people present and the worship was in the vernacular, but the pastor preached in English, though this again was probably for my benefit.<sup>54</sup>

## 2.2 The Popularity of Preaching and Teaching

Igbo neo-Pentecostals have adapted the content and style of their preaching to cater for consumer demands. Preaching in Igbo NPCs is often dramatic and colourful, more a performance than a lecture and intended to entertain as well as inform. The preacher (usually a man) uses the platform as his stage, lacing his message with anecdotes and sometimes acting it out to drive his point home. Coleman refers to the ‘dramatisation’ of the text in sermon delivery, where the preacher is the ‘living embodiment of the inspired Word . . . making rhetorical points through skilful oratory and dramatic body language.’<sup>55</sup> Sermons I witnessed were often entertaining, eliciting responses of approval and even laughter from the audience. The standard of sermons varied in

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<sup>52</sup> See Table 1.4.8, Appendix 1.4.

<sup>53</sup> I attended a Sunday morning meeting at CHC, Bukuru on 9 December 2001, and a mid-week evening meeting at CHC, Katako, Jos on 19 December 2001. The CHC pastor in Jos told me that in contrast to the RPM congregation nearby, many members of CHC have little education. PC, Prince David, 19.12.01, Jos.

<sup>54</sup> I attended this meeting on Sunday 7 October 2001.

quality. Those in larger churches were generally well prepared and delivered extemporaneously with considerable skill. Others were repetitious, and lacked coherence and content. Some preaching styles have been influenced by American Pentecostal evangelists, observed at evangelistic campaigns in the 1970s,<sup>56</sup> during later visits to America, or on television and video.

Neo-Pentecostal preaching is also practical, and it is here that its main appeal lies. Johns states that Pentecostal hermeneutics is 'praxis-oriented.'<sup>57</sup> Those I spoke to said they expected preaching and teaching to be relevant to their lives, both in terms of problem solving and equipping for life and ministry.<sup>58</sup> This is in keeping with the pragmatic nature of Igbo indigenous spirituality.<sup>59</sup> Generally, the sermon is the focus of the service. This was the case with Amazing Love Assembly in Enugu, founded in 1986 by Amaechi Nwachukwu.<sup>60</sup> One ALA member told me he was attracted by the in-depth Bible teaching, which was practical and helped him live the Christian life.<sup>61</sup> Another was impressed by the way the pastor was able to apply the Bible to everyday life.<sup>62</sup> Apart from listening to Nwachukwu's sermons in church, members are encouraged to listen to his weekly 'Livingspring' radio programme and read his Bible studies in the Livingspring magazine. NPC pastors fulfil a similar function to

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<sup>55</sup> Coleman, *Globalisation*, 125.

<sup>56</sup> For example, Nwosu of RPM told me that early in his career he modelled his methods on Morris Cerullo's, observed during an evangelistic event in 1973. OI, Thompson Nwosu, 31.8.01, Jos.

<sup>57</sup> Johns, *Pentecostal Formation*, 86.

<sup>58</sup> Anderson found the same in his examination of South African Pentecostals (*Zion and Pentecost*, 131).

<sup>59</sup> Okorochoa, 'Religious Conversion in Africa', 168-69.

<sup>60</sup> For example, *Rules and Regulations of Amazing Love Ministries*, Enugu: Timex Enterprises, n.d., 11: 'The most significance part of our church service is the sermon.' For a brief profile of Amaechi Nwachukwu, see chapter four, footnote 1. For a photograph, see Plate 3.4.

<sup>61</sup> OI, Anselm Ekwebelem, 25.5.00, Enugu.

<sup>62</sup> OI, Tshally Jeff-Onyegbule, 9.5.00, Enugu.

traditional religious leaders<sup>63</sup> or the prophet-healers in the older AICs. ALA members refer to their pastor as the ‘man of God,’ and allude to his remarkable preaching and teaching gift, his ‘exemplary life,’ and his ability to perform healing.<sup>64</sup> His sermons are invariably interpreted as messages from God.<sup>65</sup>

For neo-Pentecostals, the Word itself, not just the messenger, has life-changing potential because of the ministry of the Spirit. By exposing themselves to the Word’s influence, mediated by the Spirit-anointed pastor, neo-Pentecostals construct new identities for themselves. For instance, ACFM state, ‘God’s word has intrinsic power - that is, it carries its power within itself. This is because it is the voice of God. . . It therefore carries the power of God and fulfils the purpose of God.’<sup>66</sup> Land refers to the fusion of Spirit and Word in Pentecostal spirituality.<sup>67</sup> This is symbolised in some Igbo NPC logos by an open Bible set alongside the figure of a dove.<sup>68</sup> Chuks Ogoalaji, General Superintendent of Bread of Life Mission, told me that preaching is important because ‘it is the Word that heals, saves, delivers, and prospers the people.’<sup>69</sup> Coleman refers to this as the ‘internalisation’ of the text, where the words are believed not only

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<sup>63</sup> Larbi, *Pentecostalism*, 318, takes a similar view of NPC leaders in Ghana.

<sup>64</sup> See for example, the following testimony by Nweke Anyigor: ‘. . . since I came back to God and joined a living church, my eyes have been opened to the true essence of life, which is life in Jesus Christ through the incisive teachings and exemplary life of my Pastor, Rev. Amaechi Nwachukwu’ (‘God of a 2<sup>nd</sup> Chance’, *LivingSpring*, 1998, 19).

<sup>65</sup> For example, referring to the pastor’s radio programme, one grateful listener stated, ‘We were thoroughly ministered to for it is a message from God meant for mature Christians.’ Egwu Eni Ogbonna, ‘Letter to LivingSpring Broadcast’, *LivingSpring*, 1998, 10.

<sup>66</sup> All Christians Fellowship Mission, ‘Lesson 8: Fellowship with God 1: The Word of God’, *New Life Sunday School*, 32.

<sup>67</sup> Steven J. Land, *Pentecostal Spirituality. A Passion for the Kingdom*, Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993, 100.

<sup>68</sup> Examples of churches with this logo include Christian Pentecostal Mission, Redeemed People’s Mission, and Holiness Evangelical Church.

<sup>69</sup> OI, Chuks Ogoalaji, 23.5.00, Enugu.

‘to describe experience, but also to constitute it and cause it to occur.’<sup>70</sup> Igbo neo-Pentecostals talk about feeding on God’s Word in order to grow.<sup>71</sup> For example, Ezekiel of Christian Pentecostal Mission states, ‘Christian growth is by knowledge. . . The way a mother feeds her child is the same way God feeds us with the knowledge of His word through His divine power.’<sup>72</sup> Coleman describes ‘eating’ as a ‘powerful image because it points to a notion of internalising truth directly, bypassing the distorting effects of both social context and intellect.’<sup>73</sup>

Neo-Pentecostal Bible colleges also have a practical ethos, aimed at equipping students for Christian life and ministry, and reinforcing their identity as a new community distinct from the ‘world.’<sup>74</sup> The World Outreach Bible Institute (ACFM), for example, seeks to ‘train and equip a new breed of men and women of God after the Apostolic order,’<sup>75</sup> while the Living Word Training Centre (LWM) claims that through a ‘balanced bible-based curriculum, students are guided to apply God’s word to their personal lives and ministry.’<sup>76</sup> Onuigbo’s Victory International Bible College (Victory Christian Mission) has the rather grandiose vision of ‘raising up militant soldiers of the Lord for the End-Time battle.’<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> Coleman, *Globalisation*, 118, 129.

<sup>71</sup> For example, a grateful reader of Nwachukwu’s teaching in *LivingSpring* journal writes: ‘Each time I read LSJ, it serves as a delicious meal unto my soul.’ Mrs Nwaka Idah, ‘Talkback’, *LivingSpring*, 1998, 9.

<sup>72</sup> Rev Dr O. Ezekiel, ‘Growth’, *Echoes of Joy. A Publication of C. P. M. Int’l, Aba*, April 2001, 11.

<sup>73</sup> Coleman, *Globalisation*, 128.

<sup>74</sup> At least two of the churches, ACFM and LWM, base their Bible college vision on Ephesians 4:11 (NASV): ‘And he gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ.’ Living Word Ministries Inc., *Annual Journal*, 5; Leaflet introducing the World Outreach Bible Institute, All Christians Fellowship Mission, Abuja.

<sup>75</sup> Leaflet introducing the World Outreach Bible Institute, All Christians Fellowship Mission, Abuja.

<sup>76</sup> Living Word Ministries Inc., *Annual Journal*, 5.

<sup>77</sup> Victory Christian Mission, *Victory International Bible College Enugu. Hand Information Booklet*, Enugu: Brilliant Press, n.d, 3.

An examination of college curricula reveals the extent of Western evangelical and Pentecostal influences. For instance, RPM's Theological College (REPETHEC) offers courses in Theology, Bible Introduction, Hermeneutics, Homiletics, Apologetics, Missions, Nigerian Church History, Ethics, Counselling skills, Leadership Principles, Marriage and Family, Greek and Hebrew. Others college curricula contain courses that are more overtly Pentecostal. As well as conventional subjects, such as systematic theology and Bible exposition, Victory International Bible College offers courses on 'Spiritual Warfare,' 'Faith Power,' the 'Theology of Health,' and 'Church Planting.'<sup>78</sup>

Initially, these colleges offered short courses to train pastors for the rapidly growing NPCs. An exception was Living Word Training Centre (LWM), which from its inception was non-denominational and attracted people from all walks of life and a variety of churches in Aba. During the 1990s, most have responded to consumer demands by raising the profile of their training institutes, providing flexible programmes to cater for laity and full-time ministers, and employing better qualified teaching staff. REPETHEC, for example, hold their lectures during weekday evenings and offer a one-month 'Summer School.'<sup>79</sup> Most students passing through Agape Bible College (ALA) are lay members, and consequently ALA holds lectures in the evenings. Both colleges have well-qualified teachers in terms of practical experience and

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<sup>78</sup> *Victory International Bible College Enugu. Hand Information Booklet.* In Onitsha, I saw a leaflet advertising a Bible school attached to a local neo-Pentecostal ministry called 'Voice of Miracles', which offered courses on 'Apostolic evangelism,' 'Deliverance and Demonology,' 'Breaking curses and evil covenants,' and 'Giving and Prosperity.' This was a six-week Bible school course called 'The School of Wonders and Deliverances.' Other subjects included: Pneumatology, Soteriology, Bibliology, Prayer/Fasting/Spiritual Warfare, Homiletics, Gifts & Ministries, Miracles - Signs & Wonders, Christian Counselling, and Financial Management. According to the brochure, Voices of Miracles Ministry has strong links with North America.

academic excellence.<sup>80</sup> Some neo-Pentecostal institutions also see themselves as vanguards against the infiltration of unbalanced teaching into the Pentecostal community. For instance, REPETHEC is concerned that church members are being exposed to ‘junk’ Christian literature and preachers on the electronic media, while ‘sound biblical interpretation and principles have been put aside and replaced with whatever the “man of God” feels the Spirit is leading him to do.’ Consequently, ‘ignorance has prevailed in the church today and false doctrines are gaining firm roots.’ It was out of this concern that RPM opened its college in 1994, which it claims ‘caters for the needs of the church of both Pentecostal and evangelical persuasion.’<sup>81</sup>

### 2.3 Innovative Worship Styles

While the sermon is one focus of Igbo NPC meetings, equal time is given to ‘praise and worship.’ Igbo NPCs are worshipping communities,<sup>82</sup> and communal worship was another means of building collective identities.<sup>83</sup> As Johns states, through participation in the rituals of Pentecostal worship, believers are ‘incorporated, enculturated and apprenticed.’ Rituals, such as singing and testifying, serve to ‘re-enact, to model and to

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<sup>79</sup> Brochure introducing the Redeemed People’s Theological College, Jos. See Plate 7.3.

<sup>80</sup> For instance, Nwachukwu, who does most of the teaching at Agape Bible College (ALA), has a Master’s Degree from Wheaton College, USA. Visiting lecturers at Agape Bible College have included Ogbu Kalu, until recently a Professor in the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, and Yusuf Turaki, a former Professor of Theology and Social Ethics at ECWA Theological Seminary, Jos and research fellow at Yale Divinity School. David Adegboye, Principal of REPETHEC, has a Master’s Degree from ECWA Theological Seminary, Jos. According to REPETHEC’s brochure, the college ‘is endowed with a team of committed, Spirit-filled lecturers who combine academic excellence with proven ministry experience.’

<sup>81</sup> Brochure introducing the Redeemed People’s Theological College, Jos. In 2000, REPETHEC graduated 43 students from 18 denominations, mainly Pentecostal, but including evangelical mission churches, such as ECWA, Anglican, Presbyterian, COCIN, and Methodist. OI, David Adegboye, 6.9.01, Jos.

<sup>82</sup> For instance, see Redeemed People’s Mission, ‘Lesson 4: Universal Responsibilities’, *Redeemed Adult Sunday School Lessons*, Jos: Redeemed People’s Mission Inc., 2001, 9: ‘The church of God on earth is expected to be a worshipping community.’

<sup>83</sup> Hackett, ‘Charismatic/Pentecostal’, 263.

proclaim the meaning of the Christian life.’<sup>84</sup> As in other contexts,<sup>85</sup> Igbo neo-Pentecostal worship, with its lively unstructured style and emphasis on ‘freedom in the Spirit,’ was especially appealing compared to the more traditional, rationalistic worship of the mainline churches, and assisted the movement’s assimilation into Igbo religious culture. In the Jos survey, out of 167 respondents, 88 % said they were attracted to their church by the quality of the worship.<sup>86</sup>

The importance of worship in church life is evident in some of the names adopted by individual congregations, such as Praise Temple (ALA, Enugu),<sup>87</sup> Joy Cathedral (CPM, Aba),<sup>88</sup> Chapel of Praise (Gospel Crusaders Mission, Aba), and Harmonious Worship Church (LWM, Aba).<sup>89</sup> It is also reflected in the time devoted to congregational singing and choir items in their meetings. For participants, it is clearly an exhilarating and joyous experience. Larger urban-based churches follow a similar pattern during their services. The most impressive I observed was Grace Cathedral (*Grace of God*), one of the largest Pentecostal churches in Enugu. On Sundays, it holds two morning meetings to accommodate the congregation of around 2000. The service I attended lasted several hours and consisted of two main parts: music and the sermon. The entire congregation participated in the ‘praise and worship,’ led by a young male soloist and a 4-piece band, all highly accomplished musicians. The choruses, sung repetitively in English or Igbo, were accompanied by clapping and bodily movement. The

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<sup>84</sup> Johns, *Pentecostal Formation*, 129-30, 124.

<sup>85</sup> Anderson, ‘Global Pentecostalism’, 223; Gifford, *African Christianity*, 169.

<sup>86</sup> See Table 1.4.1, Appendix 1.4.

<sup>87</sup> See Plate 6.4.

<sup>88</sup> Other CPM branches with this theme in their names include Praise And Word Base Centre (CPM, Owode-Yewa) and Garden of Praise and Progress (CPM, Suleja).

<sup>89</sup> Other LWM branches with this theme in their names include Living Praise Christian Center and House of Praise Church.

congregational singing was interspersed with offerings, testimonies, and prayers, which were usually spontaneous and simultaneous, allowing for greater participation. The sermon, preached by the pastor in English, was interpreted into Igbo and lasted about an hour.<sup>90</sup>

The second largest worship meeting I attended was at RPM's headquarters church in Jos, which has an average attendance of around 1000. It followed a similar format but in addition to the worship band had a large and professional choir called the Redemption Mass Choir.<sup>91</sup> Nwosu, their founder, has a regular television programme called 'The Divine Encounter,' and this particular meeting was recorded for Nigerian Television (NTA).<sup>92</sup> The singing was exuberant and interspersed with spontaneous prayers and testimonies. The sermon, preached in English with no interpretation, was followed by an appeal for salvation and healing, and ended with a prolonged series of offerings.<sup>93</sup>

#### **2.4 The Popularity of Neo-Pentecostal Worship**

The format of neo-Pentecostal worship services and the shape of their music bear the marks of Western influence. Audiotapes, CDs, and videotapes with American and British Pentecostal worships songs are widely available in Nigeria, and Nigerian television regularly relays meetings conducted by American televangelists. Songs of Western origin are often modified to suit the Igbo context or translated into the vernacular. Igbo neo-Pentecostals are enchanted by the 'modern' and where possible

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<sup>90</sup> I attended this meeting on 6 January 2002.

<sup>91</sup> See Plate 7.1.

<sup>92</sup> See Plate 8.3 for flyer advertising Nwosu's NTA programme.

use electronic musical instruments in their worship, but in ways that reinforce local styles and rhythms. This blending of the global and local, the ‘modern’ and ‘traditional,’ produces hybrid forms of religiosity that appeal to consumer demands.

In Igbo traditional religion, worship is communal and individual, spontaneous and experiential.<sup>94</sup> Neo-Pentecostal worship is clearly very appealing in this context, where a sense of divine immediacy is taken for granted.<sup>95</sup> However, Igbo traditionalists engage in worship as a means of manipulating the deities to their advantage.<sup>96</sup> Here neo-Pentecostal piety claims to depart from the traditional model. For example, RPM states, ‘Very often, some gather together in worship with a view of what they will get out of it rather than what they can give to God. Until our attitudes are changed, we may not offer unto God satisfactory praise and worship.’<sup>97</sup> As I observed neo-Pentecostals at worship, often singing for extended periods, clapping their hands, dancing, and sometimes breaking out into emotional outbursts of prayer, their obvious enjoyment of the whole experience impressed me.

The appeal of Pentecostal worship lies in its emphasis on direct experience of the divine, and its inclusive nature, which encourages active participation of every member.<sup>98</sup> As Anderson notes, it allows ordinary people to be ‘lifted out of their

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<sup>93</sup> I attended this meeting on 26 August 2001.

<sup>94</sup> Agu, *Secularization in Igboland*, 400.

<sup>95</sup> Ikenga-Metuh, *African Religion*, 122.

<sup>96</sup> Okorochoa, *Religious Conversion*, 206.

<sup>97</sup> Redeemed People’s Mission, ‘Lesson 3. Worship - The Life-Line of the Church’, *Redeemed Adult Sunday School Lessons*, Jos: Redeemed People’s Mission Inc., 1999, 8.

<sup>98</sup> Grant L. McClung Jr. (ed.), *Azusa Street and Beyond: Pentecostal Missions and Church Growth in the Twentieth Century*, South Plainfield, New Jersey: Logos, 1986, 73; Hollenweger, *Pentecostalism*, 270.

mundane daily experiences into a new realm of ecstasy.’<sup>99</sup> In the Igbo context, collective oral prayer, with worshippers praying at once, is a common feature, and was apparently introduced via the Civil War Revival by members of Assemblies of God.<sup>100</sup> It was a novel liturgical approach for those revivalists with mainline church backgrounds but it resonated with elements of Igbo traditional religious culture. One informant told me that when Igbos gather at traditional shrines, they simultaneously and audibly call upon God to meet their needs.<sup>101</sup> It was also a common practice in prayer houses before the civil war but became more popular during the 1970s, partly as a response to the crisis. Neo-Pentecostal prayer is a form of cathartic expression. Nowhere is this more evident than when they begin to speak or sing in tongues. Cox calls this the recovery of primal speech, when ‘cognitive grids and perceptual barriers . . . are temporarily suspended’ and people give vent to their deepest feelings.<sup>102</sup>

However, there is also a pragmatic element to Igbo neo-Pentecostal worship, which adds to its appeal. According to Okorochoa, in their traditional religion Igbo allegiance to the gods is never absolute but depends upon reciprocity - they expect goodwill in return.<sup>103</sup> Though neo-Pentecostals claim to worship God for his own sake, they also expect to receive practical benefits, and several sections of their meeting provide opportunity for this to occur. During an interlude, someone may deliver a ‘prophecy’ or a ‘word of knowledge’ for the benefit of the whole congregation or an individual. This was less common than expected, especially when compared to its prevalence within the prayer houses. I suspect this was partly a reaction against such groups, often demonised

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<sup>99</sup> Anderson, ‘Global Pentecostalism’, 223.

<sup>100</sup> PC, Meshak Ilobi, 28.4.00, Enugu; OI, Chris Alagbu, 3.5.00, Enugu; PC, E. Eze, 8.11.01, Bukuru.

<sup>101</sup> PC, E. Eze, 8.11.01, Bukuru.

in neo-Pentecostal rhetoric, but it was also a consequence of their high regard for the Bible.<sup>104</sup> I heard only two prophecies, both delivered by women within branches of RPM, though informants assured me that prophecy was quite common, especially during prayer meetings and night vigils. The most moving occurred during the first church meeting I attended after the Jos religious riots in September 2001, when many lost their lives and property, including some members of RPM. The church premises were near one of the focal points of the fighting and some members had to flee their homes to take refuge there. The message, delivered in the first person, related to the crisis and contained words of assurance that God was with them.<sup>105</sup> Anderson notes that among Western Pentecostals, prophecy is normally restricted to ‘forth telling’ rather than ‘foretelling,’ but in Africa, both aspects are found.<sup>106</sup> During the same meeting, the pastor told us about several Christian leaders who had received ‘revelations’ earlier in the year that something disastrous was about to happen in Jos.<sup>107</sup>

At the end of every meeting I attended opportunity was given to respond to the sermon and receive prayer. Invariably this included prayers for salvation, healing, deliverance, and sometimes prosperity. Here the focus was on the pastor or visiting preacher, who is believed to possess an ability to impart the Spirit’s power. During one RPM meeting, the pastor preached on prosperity. There followed a prolonged period of prayer for

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<sup>102</sup> Cox, *Fire From Heaven*, 82, 86.

<sup>103</sup> Okorochoa, *Religious Conversion*, 206.

<sup>104</sup> OI, Frances Lawjua Bolton, 23.5.99, London. Bolton suggested four reasons why prophecy was not an emphasis: i) revivalists were reacting to the overemphasis on visions in prayer houses; ii) they were not concerned about knowing the future; iii) their emphasis was on the sufficiency of the Bible; iv) their focus was on Jesus as the only mediator, so they saw no need for prophets.

<sup>105</sup> Observed during Sunday morning worship meeting, RPM, Bukuru, 16 September 2001.

<sup>106</sup> Anderson, *Zion and Pentecost*, 280. See also Hollenweger, *Pentecostals*, 345.

<sup>107</sup> See also Rev. Bright Ndu, ‘I saw the Jos Crisis before it happened’, *Salvation*, 16 December 2001, 3, who refers to a dream he had five days before the crisis, which he relayed to other pastors in Jos. Igbo

three categories of people: those who found it difficult to save, those with uncompleted projects, and those who found it difficult to tithe. There was also an appeal for salvation and opportunity to receive healing prayer.<sup>108</sup> I attended nine meetings at Amazing Love Assembly (Enugu), and each concluded with an opportunity for people to respond to the sermon or receive prayer, though this was not always in the form of an ‘altar call’ for people to come to the front. During two ALA meetings the pastor had ‘words of knowledge’ for members of the congregation, who were then encouraged to receive prayer for healing.

### **3. Alternative Communities**

Listening to the Word and participating in worship became important means for neo-Pentecostals to reinforce collective identities and mark off their difference from the ‘world.’ In this section, I reflect upon the communal dimension of NPC spirituality.

#### **3.1 Church as Family**

The church as a community should see herself as an ‘extended family’ of God whose bond (the blood of Jesus) is stronger than our earthly family ties.<sup>109</sup>

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neo-Pentecostal Ndu was Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria (PFN) Chairman of Plateau State in 2001, and pastor of Footprints of Jesus Mission. His church premises were burnt down during the crisis.

<sup>108</sup> ‘God’s Provision and Prosperity’, sermon preached by Thompson Nwosu, RPM, Katakò, Jos, 26.8.01.

<sup>109</sup> Redeemed People’s Mission, ‘Lesson 1: Know the Church’, *Redeemed Adult Sunday School Lessons*, 1999, 1.

In chapter four, I suggested that one reason for the emergence of NPCs was a reaction against mission church failure to fulfil Igbo communal aspirations. This was also a factor in their continuing appeal, especially in urban contexts. Like AICs in general,<sup>110</sup> Igbo NPCs functioned as alternative extended families in a society fractured by social mobility and dislocation.

As noted, the civil war crisis and urban migration created fragmented communities and weakened the role of the extended family. Hackett points out that sustained periods of economic hardship have contributed towards the popularity of Nigerian Pentecostal churches, not least because of the organisational skills they impart and social networks they offer.<sup>111</sup> During the 1970s, government policies helped to marginalise the Igbo people within the Nigerian economy, and prevented them from benefiting fully from the prosperity of the oil boom years, as I noted in chapter two.<sup>112</sup> NPCs provided access to a supportive network of relationships, independent of existing family structures.

These churches have fulfilled a similar function since the 1970s, when relative prosperity gave way to rapid economic decline following the drop in international oil prices in 1981 and the implementation of SAP in 1986.<sup>113</sup> Marshall suggests that in Nigeria the Pentecostal worldview ‘has articulated and reconstructed disintegrating social and economic relationships,’ such as collapsing patron-client networks, failing

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<sup>110</sup> See for example, Cox, *Fire from Heaven*, 259; Hastings, *History of African Christianity*, 269; Jules-Rosette, ‘Tradition and Continuity’, 151.

<sup>111</sup> Hackett, ‘Charismatic/Pentecostal’, 260.

<sup>112</sup> See chapter two, section 1.2.3.

<sup>113</sup> See chapter two, section 1.2.3. See also Marshall, ‘Pentecostalism in Southern Nigeria’, 20.

state welfare provision, and the weakening of the role of the extended family.<sup>114</sup> In this setting, where the old resources of community have become unreliable, other modes of identification and community formation emerge. As in other African post-colonial contexts,<sup>115</sup> Igbo NPCs provide an alternative source of social security, with members supporting one another in moments of financial distress. For instance, among the stated practical benefits of ACFM membership is financial support in times of trouble and assistance with finding employment and accommodation.<sup>116</sup> Some NPCs have set up self-help activities, such as schools and medical services, to cater for the needs of their members.<sup>117</sup> I examine these initiatives in chapter six.

Often Igbo NPCs have home fellowship groups, which provide the context for pastoral care and practical support, and reinforce collective identities. Ojo relates the success of these groups in Nigeria to the way they replicate traditional African family worship.<sup>118</sup> In the case of RPM, home fellowship groups were set up in the 1980s, each with around 15 people.<sup>119</sup> Christian Pentecostal Mission (CPM) has ‘Family Fellowship groups,’ which aim to integrate members into the local church, encourage love and unity, maintain spiritual growth, and give people a ‘sense of belonging.’<sup>120</sup> These are not a recent initiative. For instance, those in the main CPM branch in Aba started soon after

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<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*, 23. See also Kalu, *Power*, 128.

<sup>115</sup> See Haynes, *Religion and Politics*, 174; Philip Jenkins, *The Next Christendom. The Coming of Global Christianity*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002, 73.

<sup>116</sup> All Christians Fellowship Mission, ‘Lesson 3: Importance of Local Church Membership & Benefits’, *Membership Bible Studies*, 13-14.

<sup>117</sup> Marshall, ‘Power in the Name of Jesus’, 224-25, refers to this in her study of contemporary Pentecostalism in Western Nigeria. See also Haynes, *Religion and Politics*, 174.

<sup>118</sup> Ojo, ‘Charismatic Movement in Nigeria’, 117.

<sup>119</sup> In 1988, RPM, Jos, had 32 home fellowship groups. ‘Annual Progress Report’, Redeemed People’s Mission, 4 December 1988.

<sup>120</sup> ‘Family Fellowship in some Lagos State Branches’, *The Pentecostal Family. A Special Publication of Christian Pentecostal Mission Int’l on Family Fellowship Affairs*, August 1999, 35.

the inauguration of the church in 1983.<sup>121</sup> LWM has adopted a different approach. Instead of dividing the church into smaller units, they limit the size of their congregations. When they exceed 250, they divide, thus enabling the pastor to maintain a close relationship with his people. They have also adopted the novel idea of having several churches meeting at different times in the same building, each with their own pastor.<sup>122</sup>

In the Jos survey, 76.6 % of respondents stated that one reason they preferred their church was because of the love between members.<sup>123</sup> Several churches have actually adopted names that reflect this community ethos. For example, Okoye changed the name of Freedom in Christ Church to All Christians Fellowship Mission out of a concern for unity. If we recall, he also adopted the motto 'Because God cares we care', and ACFM church signboards contain the slogan 'A Christ-Centred, Spirit-filled, Caring Church.'<sup>124</sup> Another example is Nwachukwu's Amazing Love Assembly (ALA). I stayed with Nwachukwu for two months in his large residence, known as the 'manse', and was able to observe the church community at first hand.<sup>125</sup> Their motto, sung at every worship meeting and often quoted in their literature, is 'The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases.'<sup>126</sup> ALA was born out of a concern for those who, for one reason or another, have failed and drifted away from the church. According to

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<sup>121</sup> 'The Victorious Family Fellowship', *Echoes of Joy. A Publication of C.P.M. Int'l (The City of Joy)*, 31. In Lagos, CPM Family Fellowship groups started in 1984. 'Divine Restoration', *The Pentecostal Family. A Special Publication of Christian Pentecostal Mission Int'l on Family Fellowship Affairs*, 7.

<sup>122</sup> OI, Okebugwu Ubani-Ukoma, 16.10.01, Umuahia.

<sup>123</sup> See Table 1.4.1, Appendix 1.4.

<sup>124</sup> Okoroafor, *William Okoye*, 131; All Christians Fellowship Mission, 'Lesson 4. Understanding the Vision and Purpose of your Church', *Membership Bible Studies*, 19. Other NPCs have similar slogans. For instance, National Evangelical Mission ('The People That Love') and *Salvation for All* ('Jesus Cares and We Care').

<sup>125</sup> For a photograph of ALA's church building in Enugu, see Plate 5.3.

Nwachukwu, God is the ‘God of the second chance,’ and his church welcomes those who feel alienated from the Christian community. Once they become members they are held to account by their brothers and sisters, and exposed to a rigorous programme of Bible teaching, prayer, and discipleship. Many aspects of ALA church life impressed me, not least the commitment of members to one another and the hospitality they showed me during my stay. At any one time, there may be up to ten young people living in the manse, and because there are church meetings everyday,<sup>127</sup> there is a higher level of interaction between members than tends to be the case with the mission churches. Those I spoke to at ALA said it was the practical demonstration of love that attracted them to the church.

### 3.2 Ecclesiastical Structures

Neo-Pentecostal church government reflects Igbo patriarchal and gerontocratic extended family structures.<sup>128</sup> In chapter three, I noted the way the revival challenged traditional gender boundaries by promoting an egalitarian fellowship and providing space for women to participate in ministry and leadership. During its ‘charismatic moment’,<sup>129</sup> it did much to enhance the role of women. However, as institutional forces set in and CMs acquired denominational status, male-dominated ecclesiastical structures

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<sup>126</sup> Based on the Bible text, Lam 3:22.

<sup>127</sup> ALA’s weekly programme:

Sundays	9:00 a.m. Adult Sunday School; 10:00 a.m. Worship Service; 5:00 p.m. Evening Worship
Mondays	5:00 p.m. Prayer Power Connection
Tuesdays	4:00 p.m. Solid Foundation Classes; 5 p.m. Outreach
Wednesdays	5:00 p.m. Bible Study; 7:00 p.m. Agape Bible College
Thursday	5:00 p.m. Follow-up Classes; 5:00 p.m. Agape Bible College
Fridays	5:30 p.m. Sunday School Preparation/Agape Bible College; 10:30 p.m. Night Vigil
Saturdays	10:30 a.m. Prison outreach; 12:00 a.m. Junior Fellowship; 4:30 p.m. Choir Practice.

<sup>128</sup> For Igbo traditional political structures, see chapter two, section 1.2.1.

<sup>129</sup> Poloma, *Charisma, Institutionalization and Social Change*, 245, uses this phrase to describe the early charismatic impulses of Christian religious movements.

were re-introduced.<sup>130</sup> Even though women figured prominently in SU leadership structures, this was not replicated in the new churches, which were all founded and led by men.

Since the 1970s, this trend has continued. In the denominations I visited, pastors were almost exclusively male, and women usually confined to lower levels of church administration. CPM headquarters church in Lagos is a case in point. Out of 29 zonal leaders between 1984 and 1986, 12 (41.4 %) were women.<sup>131</sup> But today there are few women in pastoral leadership within CPM, apart from wives of senior pastors.<sup>132</sup> LWM is another example. Its core leadership team has 12 members, of which three are women, yet none of its branches has female pastors.<sup>133</sup> It is similar outside Igboland.<sup>134</sup> Jos District of RPM, for example, consists of 16 churches and all their pastors are male. It also has a District Council with 31 lay leaders, but only five are women.<sup>135</sup> While

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<sup>130</sup> Scholars have noted this tendency within global Pentecostalism generally. See for example, Cox, *Fire From Heaven*, 125; Poloma, 'Charisma, Institutionalization and Social Change', 246-48.

<sup>131</sup> 'CPM Int'l Headquarters Long Serving Unit Leaders (1984, '85 & '86)', *The Pentecostal Family. A Special Publication of Christian Pentecostal Mission Int'l on Family Fellowship Affairs*, 36.

<sup>132</sup> For instance, Mrs O. Ezekiel, wife of the General Overseer, is the National/International Co-ordinator of CPM, and Evangelist Mrs J. Ezeh, wife of the Imo State Co-ordinator, is Assistant Head Pastor of Imo State CPM. Out of 35 CPM church pastors in Imo State, approximately two are women. 'CPM Branches in Imo State', *Echoes of Joy. A Publication of C.P.M. Int'l (The City of Joy)*, 35. In their membership manual, CPM also allow for the possibility of female elders. See Christian Pentecostal Mission International, 'The Church, Authority and Membership', *Membership Manual*, Lagos: Jesus Foundation Class, Christian Pentecostal Mission International, 1999, 72. Bible Faith Mission (Jos) also has one female pastor, Esther Ezeofor, wife of the General Overseer.

<sup>133</sup> See Living Word Ministries Inc., *Annual Journal*. The three women were Chinyere Okorie, wife of the founder, who heads up the Living Word Training Centre; Esther Jude-Ehiemere, Director of 'We Care Ministry'; and Stella Uwaezuoke, Director of the Unique Women Fellowship. See Plate 9.1. LWM's Amazing Grace Church in Baltimore, USA, has one female elder, Brenda Simpson. See Plate 9.2.

<sup>134</sup> As far as I know, RPM, ACFM, and NEM have no female pastors.

<sup>135</sup> Redeemed People's Mission Jos District Almanac, 2001 Edition. See Plate 9.3. RPM Bauchi District has six churches and all the pastors are male. Its District Council has 12 lay leaders but only two are women. Redeemed People's Mission Bauchi District Almanac, 2001 Edition.

this preference for male leadership reflects prevailing cultural norms, the stated intention of Igbo neo-Pentecostals is to be biblical rather than African.<sup>136</sup>

Neo-Pentecostal ecclesiology is also strongly authoritarian and hierarchical. In Igbo neo-Pentecostal parlance, the General Overseer or the senior pastor is often addressed as ‘Daddy’ or ‘the man of God,’ and is seldom questioned or criticised. In chapter three, I referred to the revival’s liberating impulse, which equipped young people with tools to challenge gerontocratic authority and take on leadership roles. However, as the young founders became elders themselves, they reintroduced authoritarian structures. This is reflected in a propensity to take titles for themselves, such as ‘Rev. Dr.,’ ‘Bishop,’ or ‘Archbishop.’<sup>137</sup> Yet at the level of ordinary congregational life, a democratic culture still exists.<sup>138</sup> Women and young people are allowed considerable space to participate, even if denied access to senior administrative positions. They may lead worship,<sup>139</sup> testify, prophesy,<sup>140</sup> pray, and sometimes preach during meetings.<sup>141</sup>

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<sup>136</sup> See for example, Redeemed People’s Mission, ‘Lesson 6: Be Above Reproach’, *Redeemed Adult Sunday School Lessons*, 2001, 15-18; Redeemed People’s Mission, ‘Lesson 11: Responding to the Elders of the Church’, *Redeemed Adult Sunday School Lessons*, 2001, 31-34. This lesson, based on 1 Tim 5: 17-25, takes for granted that church elders are male.

<sup>137</sup> Almost all founders of Igbo-founded NPCs I visited had the title ‘Rev Dr,’ three had the title ‘Bishop’ (Benson Ezeokeke, Wilson Uzumegbunam, Alexander Ekewuba), and one ‘Archbishop’ (Victor Onuigbo). See Plates 9.4 & 9.5. This is ironic when one considers the abhorrence of titles and ostentatiousness during the early phase of the movement. As far as I know only one Igbo NPC founder from the 1970s, Felix Obiorah (MVC), has obtained a doctoral degree through studying at an accredited university. See Chukwuka’s reflections on this trend: ‘Not too long we started taking titles of Doctors “Dr.” Unordained, untrained business dropouts who sneaked in from the back-door soon took to themselves titles of “Rev. Drs.” Clever youths from the higher institutions were busy frightening the old-ones with their youthful zeal challenging for cross-cultural missions. In the mean time, the “elderly” ones in defensive mood to the challenge of these youths, and the “business-preachers,” sought out a kind of defence-mechanism by accepting some “old-fashioned” titles which they scorned at before. Titles like “Bishops, Archbishops, Rev. Drs.”’ Chukwuka, *Beyond the Night*, 46-7.

<sup>138</sup> Scholars have noted this of African Pentecostalism in general. See for example, Martin, *Pentecostalism*, 152; David Maxwell, ‘Review Article. In Defence of African Creativity’, *Journal of Religion in Africa*, 30, 2000, 175.

<sup>139</sup> NPC worship meetings I attended were usually led by young men or women. An exception was Overcomer’s Bible Church, Onitsha, which was led by the General Overseer’s wife. See Plate 7.2.

<sup>140</sup> Both the prophecies I heard during fieldwork were delivered by women.

They may also take leading roles as evangelists<sup>142</sup> and counsellors, as well as teach in the Bible schools.<sup>143</sup>

### 3.3 The Nuclear Family

The nuclear family is an area in which neo-Pentecostalism's potential for social transformation and cohesion is evident, and this has proved highly attractive for women in particular. Several scholars have noted the ambiguity of Nigerian Pentecostalism in this respect.<sup>144</sup> According to Marshall, it holds out 'distinct, if somewhat contradictory opportunities' for women. On the one hand, it advocates the submission of women to men. However, its stress on fidelity, respect, and shared family responsibilities means that women's position in the home is improved for the better.<sup>145</sup>

CPM, for example, promotes family values through its Family Fellowship groups and annual Family Week celebration, and believes that the nuclear family holds the key to the transformation of society.<sup>146</sup> Some NPCs have separate fellowship groups for men and women, which encourage responsible family behaviour. LWM has its Christian

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<sup>141</sup> I heard two sermons delivered by women, both in Amazing Love Assembly (Enugu) during its Women's Fellowship week.

<sup>142</sup> For instance, Evangelist Ann Okafor, who worked with Victor Onuigbo's Victory Christian Mission in Enugu as an evangelist before leaving to form her own church, Redeemed Pentecostal Mission, in the mid-1990s. See 'Testimony. Evangelist Ann Okafor', *Prophecy. The Messiah is Coming*, 1996, 13.

<sup>143</sup> For instance, Chinyere Okorie and Nnenna Ikpa (both women) are Rector and Dean respectively of Living Word Training Centre, Aba.

<sup>144</sup> Marshall, 'Pentecostalism in Southern Nigeria', 21-2; Marshall, 'Power in the Name of Jesus', 231-33; Martin, *Pentecostalism*, 140; Hackett, 'Charismatic/Pentecostal', 261.

<sup>145</sup> Marshall, 'Pentecostalism in Southern Nigeria', 21. See Irene John, 'Charismatics and Community', in John Parratt (ed.), *A Reader in African Christian Theology*, London: SPCK, 1997, 135, who refers to the beneficial effects of this emphasis among 'charismatic' women in the Sierra Leonian context.

<sup>146</sup> Rev Dr O. Ezekiel, 'We are Seeking Family Values', *Pentecostal Family. A Special Publication of Christian Pentecostal Mission Int'l on Family Fellowship Affairs*, 7: 'What we are seeking is family values, where children will honour their parents and perform their normal duties in the home; the father takes up his normal responsibilities in the home, likewise the mother. . . Before we can think of Divine Restoration in the church or in our nation, we must first make sure that individual members of the families that make up both the church and the nation have been divinely restored.'

Men's Forum and Unique Women Fellowship.<sup>147</sup> Testimonies in its magazine show the effect these groups have had upon women's experience. One tells of how her husband used to be a 'bully' and a 'bore,' but has now become a caring and romantic spouse through attending the Christian Men's Forum. Another says that when her husband started attending the group he began to involve her in his business. Most stress that the change occurred after their husbands took their place as 'spiritual' heads of the home. For example, one woman writes, 'I was far ahead of him in Christianity but like a man that he is, he has learnt fast . . . and has taken over the spiritual leadership of the family. We are all happy following him as one family in the Lord!'<sup>148</sup>

Igbo neo-Pentecostal approaches to sexuality and marriage also reinforce collective identities and hold out benefits for youth and women in particular.<sup>149</sup> In urban contexts, where traditional ways of arranging marriages are breaking down, churches fulfil important roles. Various church groups provide a setting for meeting prospective spouses, and marriage preparation is offered as a practical benefit of church membership.<sup>150</sup> As in other African contexts,<sup>151</sup> Igbo neo-Pentecostals promote

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<sup>147</sup> For stated results of LWM's Unique Women Fellowship, see Living Word Ministries Inc., *Annual Journal*, 6: 'Homes are daily being healed and women are becoming more effective in ministry and children upbringing. Women leaders of the stature of Ruth and Deborah have been raised here.'

<sup>148</sup> "'Unique' Testimonies', *The Forum. A Publication of Christian Men's Forum of Living Word Ministries*, 33.

<sup>149</sup> For Nigerian neo-Pentecostal approaches to marriage and sexuality, see Matthews A. Ojo, 'Sexuality, Marriage and Piety among Charismatics in Nigeria', in J. L. Cox, *Rites of Passage in Contemporary Africa*, Cardiff Academic Press, 1998, 180-97. Ojo notes that concern for marriage and sexuality among Nigerian neo-Pentecostals developed in the late 1970s. Before that time, most were young and single, keen to engage in evangelistic activities rather than pursue marriage, which they regarded as 'worldly.' Ojo, 'Sexuality', 185.

<sup>150</sup> See for example, All Christians Fellowship Mission, 'Lesson 3. Importance of Local Church Membership and Benefits', *Membership Bible Studies*, 13; Living World Ministries Inc., *Annual Journal*, 7, 55. LWM has its 'Unique Singles' group for 'single sisters,' where 'they are groomed as leaders and also prepared for their future roles as wives and mothers.' LWM also has a youth group called 'Living Youth Aflame.'

<sup>151</sup> See for example, Maxwell, *Christians and Chiefs*, 199.

monogamy, fidelity, and control of sexuality,<sup>152</sup> with equal stress placed upon the responsibility of husbands to love their wives, and the submission of wives to their husbands. For Igbo neo-Pentecostals, male leadership in the home does not mean domination but self-sacrifice.<sup>153</sup>

The Family Circle is an Igbo initiated ministry founded by former revivalist Don Odunze, which promotes Christian family values.<sup>154</sup> Odunze advocates three ‘divine principles’ for successful marriages: monogamy, permanence (no divorce), and a determination to succeed.<sup>155</sup> In African culture, a barren woman is often abandoned. However, Odunze teaches that women ‘should be secure in their matrimonial homes, with or without children.’<sup>156</sup> He acknowledges the importance of extended family structures, but believes that the nuclear family should take precedence.<sup>157</sup>

### 3.4 Constructing Boundaries and Maintaining Difference

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<sup>152</sup> See for example, All Christians Fellowship Mission, ‘Lesson 5. Our Statement of Faith’, *Membership Bible Studies*, 29-30, which promotes monogamy, and forbids pre-marital sexual relationships, divorce, and re-marriage of divorcees.

<sup>153</sup> Don Odunze, *Counsellors Handbook on Pre-Marital Counselling, Successful Marriage Techniques, the Marriage Killers*, Enugu: Family Circle Publications, 1983, 122; Don Odunze and Marvin Gilbert, *Successful Family Living (An African View)*, Enugu: Donze Family Circle Publications, 1998, 68, 71-2, 151; Jane Reuben, ‘Secrets of a Happy Home’, *Echoes of Joy. A Publication of C.P.M. Int’l (The City of Joy)*, 25.

<sup>154</sup> OI, Don Odunze, 22.10.01, Enugu. Odunze is an Assemblies of God pastor, but his ministry is financially independent and is popular among Igbo neo-Pentecostals. He is a member of SU and worked with Bill Roberts for a while before the civil war. Odunze organised his first marriage seminar in 1978 and has written many books on family relationships. He has appeared regularly on television and held seminars in most major cities in Nigeria.

<sup>155</sup> Odunze, *Counsellors Handbook*, 112. In their membership manual, CPM also forbids polygamy and divorce. Christian Pentecostal Mission International, *Membership Manual*, 2.

<sup>156</sup> Odunze and Gilbert, *Successful Family Living*, 170.

<sup>157</sup> Odunze, *Counsellors Handbook*, 122. Odunze and Gilbert point out that pressures from the extended family can sometimes cause marriages to fail, usually a result of strife between the couple and their in-laws. Odunze and Gilbert, *Family Living*, 60-1.

Igbo neo-Pentecostals express their collective identities by constructing symbolic boundaries to mark out their difference from the ‘world,’<sup>158</sup> and their distance from Satan and other malign spirits. In Igbo NPC discourse, new birth, water baptism, Holy Communion, and Spirit baptism are key identity markers that separate those who belong from outsiders, and each has ethical and spiritual conditions and consequences. For example, ACFM states, ‘In baptism you take a public stand with God and righteousness. Baptism is a challenge to the powers of darkness for you have been delivered from their kingdom and now translated to the kingdom of God and as such taking a stand against the devil, his demons, sin and the world.’<sup>159</sup> And their stated list of conditions for Spirit baptism includes new birth, and complete deliverance from involvement in demonic practices and/or ‘occult’ groups.<sup>160</sup>

Ongoing obedience to biblical principles reinforces neo-Pentecostal difference. Igbo neo-Pentecostal texts insist on holiness for theological reasons. As RPM states, ‘Walking with God demands holiness.’<sup>161</sup> Neo-Pentecostals are also motivated by a belief that experience of God’s presence, power, and blessings is conditional on

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<sup>158</sup> For example, Redeemed People’s Mission, ‘Lesson 21. The Cost of Being Different’, *Redeemed Adult Sunday School*, Jos: Redeemed People’s Mission Inc., 1998, 61, which aims ‘to show that the christian is called to be different from the world in attitude and lifestyle.’ See also Redeemed People’s Mission, ‘Lesson 9. The Church and Discipline’, *Redeemed Adult Sunday School*, 1999, 26: ‘Our lifestyles as Christians ought to be different from that of pagans.’

<sup>159</sup> All Christians Fellowship Mission, ‘Lesson 4. Our Symbol of Salvation 1: Water Baptism’, *New Life Sunday School*, 16.

<sup>160</sup> All Christians Fellowship Mission, ‘Lesson 7. The Holy Spirit Baptism’, *New Life Sunday School*, 27-8. ACFM lists examples of ‘occultic’ groups and ‘demonic’ practices: ‘juju,’ Talisman, Yoga meditation, Guru Maharaji, Grail message, Eckanka, Rosicrucian Order (Amorc), ‘White garment churches,’ marine spirit, witchcraft, and *Ogbanje* spirit.

<sup>161</sup> Redeemed People’s Mission, ‘Lesson 13. Enoch: Unbroken Fellowship with God’, *Redeemed Adult Sunday School Lessons*, 1998, 39. This statement is followed by a list of biblical references to support it. See also Christian Pentecostal Mission International, *Membership Manual*, 33: ‘God has called us to a life of purity.’

personal piety.<sup>162</sup> ‘God promises His presence to the obedient . . . if we are not seeking to conform our lives to His word, we are in danger of losing His living presence in our midst.’<sup>163</sup> Linked to this is a belief that purity is a prerequisite for revival.<sup>164</sup> As well as positive values, such as humility, honesty, purity, and love,<sup>165</sup> Igbo neo-Pentecostals promote holiness taboos, such as abstinence from smoking and alcohol consumption.<sup>166</sup> Some NPCs also teach restitution.<sup>167</sup> Finally, neo-Pentecostal identity is maintained through church discipline.<sup>168</sup>

Church names and buildings also function as neo-Pentecostal identity markers. Csordas refers to the use of ‘sacred names’ by churches to express and reinforce collective religious identity.<sup>169</sup> For Igbo neo-Pentecostals, they are a means of publicly expressing core values, and are usually displayed on large signboards along adjacent streets.<sup>170</sup> Some church names explicitly express their identity as separated communities, such as Holiness Evangelical Church, Redeemed People’s Mission, and

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<sup>162</sup> For example, OI, Leo Anorue, 18.9.00, Bukuru (Appendix 4.2, paragraph 3).

<sup>163</sup> Grace of God Mission Inc., ‘Chapter One. The Presence of God’, *Adult Sunday School Manual*, 2. See also Redeemed People’s Mission, ‘Lesson 3. Worship - The Life-line of the Church’, *Redeemed Adult Sunday School Lessons*, 1999, 11: ‘Those who have fellowship with God experience God’s grace and blessings and live a life of holiness in His presence.’

<sup>164</sup> William Okoye, *Clash of the Champions. Battle for the Soul of Nigeria*, Abuja: Integrity Royal Publications, 2000, 31.

<sup>165</sup> See for example, Christian Pentecostal Mission International, *Membership Manual*, 20-1, 27-33.

<sup>166</sup> All Christians Fellowship Mission, ‘Lesson 5. Our Statement of Faith’, *Membership Bible Studies*, 28.

<sup>167</sup> ACFM defines restitution as follows: ‘Restitution includes restoring where you have defrauded, stolen or slandered, paying back debts, and making confession.’ All Christians Fellowship Mission, ‘Lesson 5. Our Statement of Faith’, *Membership Bible Studies*, 25. See also Christian Pentecostal Mission International, *Membership Manual*, 2, where CPM includes restitution among its 16 tenets of faith.

<sup>168</sup> All Christians Fellowship Mission, ‘Lesson 7. Church Discipline’, *Membership Bible Studies*, 35; Christian Pentecostal Mission International, ‘The Church, Authority and Membership’, *Membership Manual*, 72-3..

<sup>169</sup> Thoman J. Csordas, ‘Genre, Motive and Metaphor: Conditions for Creativity in Ritual Language’, *Cultural Anthropology*, 2.4, November 1987, 459-60.

<sup>170</sup> See Plate 6.

Master's Vessel Church.<sup>171</sup> Church buildings, as symbolic 'holy places,' are also crucial for establishing neo-Pentecostal presence and difference, and attracting potential customers. As well as the main worship centre, church premises sometimes include offices and school buildings, especially in urban areas. In Igboland, the most impressive is the recently completed His Glory Cathedral, the Onitsha headquarters of *Grace of God*.<sup>172</sup>

### 3.5 Declining Moral Standards and the Reduction of Difference

Former revivalists refer to a decline in Christian morality since the 1970s, and a consequent reduction in difference between church and 'world,' and a failure to influence the moral fibre of society despite the proliferation of NPCs. For example, ACFM founder Okoye recently stated, 'We have enough Christians in this country that can turn this nation around but why is it that we are not making the required impact? I presume it is because of the kind of Christians that we have. The more Christians we have, it appears the more the society gets rotten.'<sup>173</sup>

As we have seen, holiness and 'retreat from the world' were early features of the revival. However, in popular parlance a fall in moral standards contributed to the revival's decline.<sup>174</sup> The contrast between the lax standards of today and the high standards of the 1970s was a common theme in revivalist narratives. According to some informants, immorality, corruption, materialism, and rivalry have infected the

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<sup>171</sup> As noted in chapter four, Master's Vessel Church based its name on the Bible text 2 Tim 2:21: 'Therefore, if a man cleanses himself from these things, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified, useful to the Master, prepared for every good work' (NASB).

<sup>172</sup> See Plate 5.2 for a photograph of Grace Cathedral, taken in 1999 while it was still under construction.

The German evangelist Reinhard Bonnke was invited to be the main speaker at its dedication service.

<sup>173</sup> Okoye, *Clash of the Champions*, 26-8.

movement since the 1970s, affecting both leaders and members.<sup>175</sup> One former revivalist refers to neo-Pentecostal leaders engaging in court litigations, mismanagement of church funds, and adultery.<sup>176</sup>

As with other African revivals,<sup>177</sup> there was also a tendency to focus on outward behaviour, and to equate holiness with modest dress codes and abstention from smoking or alcoholic beverages.<sup>178</sup> For example, some neo-Pentecostals insisted that women wear head coverings and remove jewellery during worship.<sup>179</sup> This reflects a general tendency within revival movements, the degeneration of spiritual experience and its hardening into a new formalism.<sup>180</sup>

Some place the blame for these trends on the pastors for diluting their radical message. For instance, Okoye writes, ‘But because right now the content of most our messages lack substance, the more we multiply followers, the more sin abounds.’<sup>181</sup> Another says, ‘We seem to have lost our message, lost our bearing, lost our focus, and even lost our identity. We have compromised where we have not been found to compromise

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<sup>174</sup> Three out of 15 informants identified this as a contributory factor behind the revival’s decline.

<sup>175</sup> See for example, Chukwuka, *Beyond the Night*, 41-2: ‘We took off in faith, and are ending up in disarray; we started in the spirit, and are ending up in the flesh. Now we are perfecting worldliness with impunity. Disregard to ethical standards and rule of work. Flagrant abuse of office resulting in gross mismanagement of church fund, with gross immorality abounding in the lives of many. It was at this point we began hearing of many abandoning their wives and heading for strange women in both secret and open sins. We lowered the high standard of holiness and righteousness, which we once upheld.’ See also Ekwo, ‘Bible Studies during the 1970s’; Okoye, *Clash of the Champions*, 27; OI, Augustine Nwodika and E. Odiaka. During research I came across several accounts of Igbo NPC leaders accused of sexual immorality as far back as the mid-1970s. See for example, sections 6.2 and 6.3 of this chapter.

<sup>176</sup> Chukwuka, *Beyond the Night*, 40-8.

<sup>177</sup> For example, the East African Revival. See Gehman, ‘East African Revival’, 53.

<sup>178</sup> OI, Nnenna Chukwuma, 26.5.00, Enugu.

<sup>179</sup> OI, Ifenyinma Orajekwe and William Okoye; Okoroafor, *William Okoye*, 118-19.

<sup>180</sup> Davies, *History and Theology of Revivals*, 242. See also Poloma, ‘Charisma, Institutionalization, and Revival’, 269, who refers to the danger in religious revivals of rigid adherence to laws that kill the spirit.

<sup>181</sup> William Okoye, *God’s Purpose For Nations. Satan’s Deceit Exposed*, Abuja: Integrity Royal Publications, 2001, 22.

before . . . Would to God that the good old days will come back. Then we will still tell the people the truth as it used to be.’<sup>182</sup>

Institutional forces contributed towards the relaxation of ethical demands. From a sect-like movement in tension with its social environment, it gradually compromised and absorbed elements from prevailing culture.<sup>183</sup> Bruce notes that as a sect evolves it can lose its radical edge and become a ‘comfortable denomination on easy terms with the world around it.’<sup>184</sup> Among the consequences of denominationalism, according to Wilson, are a loosening of rigour and a loss of a sense of dissent and protest.<sup>185</sup> Early Igbo CMs fitted the profile of Wilson’s world-denying sects.<sup>186</sup> As we have seen, their uncompromising ethical stance attracted persecution from family, friends, and society in general. However, as they adopted denominational status they began to accommodate and move towards a state of low tension with their social environment. This was apparent in the way some NPCs modified their message to include an emphasis on prosperity and success, an issue I deal with below, and the pursuit of status and respectability, associated with the recent tendency for leaders to take titles for themselves.<sup>187</sup>

The movement’s moderation of its radical ethical stance was also associated with a gradual postponement of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Advent in neo-Pentecostal preaching and discourse. If

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<sup>182</sup> Chukwuka, *Beyond the Night*, 40.

<sup>183</sup> For more on the analysis of religious sects in terms of their relationship with the ‘world’, see Bruce, *Secularization in the West*, 22; Stark and Bainbridge, ‘Churches, Sects, and Cults’, 123-24; Roy Wallis, *The Elementary Forms of the New Religious Life*, London: Routledge, 1984; Wilson, *Sociological Perspective*.

<sup>184</sup> Bruce, *Secularization in the West*, 22

<sup>185</sup> Wilson, *Sectarianism*, 109.

<sup>186</sup> See chapter four, footnote 12.

we recall, the expectation of Christ's imminent return was a major incentive for revivalists to maintain a puritan lifestyle.<sup>188</sup> However, as time went on and Christ did not appear, they gradually settled down to life in the world and abandoned their millennial outlook. They began to marry, adopt relatively prosperous lifestyles, and consequently adapted their message.

During the 1990s, however, there has been a renewed emphasis on holiness, partly due to the influence of intercessory prayer ministries concerned about the condition of the church and the state of the nation.<sup>189</sup> I return to this in chapter six.

#### **4. Faith, Health, and Prosperity**

In revivalist discourse, the relaxation of moral standards is sometimes linked to a growing emphasis on healing, deliverance, and prosperity. As noted, prayer for healing, deliverance, and prosperity is a feature of Igbo neo-Pentecostal liturgy, but it has also been an important means of recruitment.<sup>190</sup> Here I examine this in more depth, paying close attention to why these motifs have proved so popular.

##### **4.1 A Holistic Understanding of Salvation**

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<sup>187</sup> See section 3.2 above.

<sup>188</sup> See chapter three, section 5.1.2.

<sup>189</sup> See Kalu, *Power*, 116.

<sup>190</sup> The importance of healing and protection from misfortune for NPC recruitment has been noted in other African contexts. See for example, Marshall, 'Power in the Name of Jesus', 219; Anderson, *Zion and Pentecost*, 311.

Igbo neo-Pentecostals, like those from other African contexts,<sup>191</sup> have developed a model of faith healing, based on a holistic understanding of salvation, and bearing a close affinity to traditional piety with its emphasis on *ezi-ndu* (Igbo: good life),<sup>192</sup> which includes physical ailments, but also demonic oppression, unemployment, business failure, poverty, and family relationships.<sup>193</sup> More recently, they have applied healing to socio-political structures. As such, they have responded to local consumer demands. Nwosu of RPM told me why he preached a ‘holistic’ gospel:

Christ has come to bring healing to our spirits, healing to our minds, healing to our circumstances; even healing to our bodies . . . The God who saved you is also able to deliver you from that demonic operation. Some of our people come from all kinds of things, ancestral worship, demon worship, and all that. So from time to time, though they belong to church, those things react, and they go home to make sacrifices. . . So except we convince them that we have a God who is more powerful than the spirits, they will continue to mix up Christianity with all this voodoo stuff. So I would say that my main message is that the gospel of Christ is a holistic one. It should affect every area of human life.<sup>194</sup>

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<sup>191</sup> See Ojo, ‘African Charismatics’, 5, who identifies four areas of application of healing by African neo-Pentecostals: physical healing; healing from demonic attacks (deliverance); healing from failures in life (termed ‘success and prosperity’); and healing of socioeconomic/political problems. See also Ojo, ‘Church’, 29-30; Ojo, ‘Charismatic Movements in Africa’, 102-109; Corten and Marshall-Fratani, ‘Introduction’, 5-6.

<sup>192</sup> Christopher I. Ejizu, ‘Healing as Wholeness: The Igbo Experience’, *Africana Marbigensia*, 10.1, 1987, 9. For the link between healing and *ezi-ndu* in Igbo neo-Pentecostal discourse, see Emeka Chigozie Adolf, *Deliverance of African Christians, Vol. 1*, Aba: Christ the Rock Community, 2001, 216 (Appendix 4.8.5, paragraph 6). Adolf is the Bishop of Christ the Rock Community in Aba.

<sup>193</sup> For an example of this holistic understanding of salvation, see Geoffrey Ekenna, ‘Why Pastors Live Well’, *Newswatch*, 3 December 2001, 23-4 (Appendix 4.7.7). This is an interview with Igbo neo-Pentecostal and President of the Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria, Bishop Mike Okonkwo. See also Plate 11.4.

<sup>194</sup> OI, Thompson Nwosu, 31.8.01, Enugu

This is reflected in RPM's aims and objectives, which include the following clause: 'to pray for healing, deliverance, prosperity, miracles and pointing individuals to the saving power of Christ.'<sup>195</sup> On a brochure introducing Bible Faith Mission are the words: 'Whatever your need, come to Jesus - salvation, healing, deliverance, happy marriage, business success, knowledge of the Bible, God's abundant blessing, etc. The Church where Jesus is Lord and miracles happen.' And Overcomer's Bible Church in Onitsha offers freedom from 'tomorrow's uncertainty,' oppression from unknown powers, witchcraft, and barrenness.<sup>196</sup>

Neo-Pentecostal predilection for healing and deliverance does not preclude the promotion of healthy lifestyles,<sup>197</sup> or the use of Western medicine. This is illustrated in an extract from ACFM's Statement of Faith: 'Both human experience and Bible alike reveal the need for medical science as a means of alleviating human suffering and divine healing is not to be misconstrued as being opposed to medical science.'<sup>198</sup> Several churches I visited have opened clinics and hospitals for the benefit of their members and the wider community. I return to this in chapter six.

## 4.2 Provenance and Popularity of Healing and Deliverance

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<sup>195</sup> Leaflet introducing Redeemed People's Mission, Jos.

<sup>196</sup> Overcomer's Bible Church, Leaflet advertising the 'God in Action Crusade,' Onitsha, 13-16 April 2000. See Plate 8.1.

<sup>197</sup> Several Igbo NPC magazines I came across contain articles on health and personal lifestyles. See for example, Adanma Ojimadu, 'You and Your Health', *Echoes of Joy. A Publication of C.P.M. Int'l (The City of Joy)*, 21-3; Dr. Tony Ayeke, 'Think Health', *The Forum. A Publication of Christian Men's Forum of Living Word Ministries*, 31.

<sup>198</sup> All Christians Fellowship Mission, 'Lesson 5. Our Statement of Faith', *Membership Bible Studies*, 26. See also Redeemed People's Mission, 'Lesson 11. Divine Health and Healing', *Redeemed Adult Sunday School Lessons*, 1998, 34: 'He [God] may choose to heal us through the application of medicine, surgery or by His divine touch. He may even choose not to remove the "thorn" in our flesh. . . .' Apparently, during the early 1970s, some revivalists insisted that healing should take place by faith alone without

Healing was a feature of the Civil War Revival and is a continuing factor in Igbo neo-Pentecostal church growth. The 1974 visit of T. L. Osborn to Eastern Nigeria resulted in a greater emphasis on healing.<sup>199</sup> As well as healing from physical ailments, deliverance practices also contributed to the movement's appeal.<sup>200</sup> This is again reflected in some of their congregational names, such as Deliverance Temple (Holiness Evangelical Church, Owerri), Dominion Cathedral (CPM, Aba), Liberation Centre (CPM, Aba), Household Deliverance Church (LWM, Aba),<sup>201</sup> and Victory Christian Cathedral (Victory Christian Mission, Enugu).

Kalu suggests that deliverance was not a major emphasis during the 1970s, when the focus was on 'born-again' experience and prosperity, but it began to gain prominence during the 1980s.<sup>202</sup> My research has shown that deliverance did take place during the early 1970s, usually in the context of evangelistic outreach, but was not stressed in the way that new birth, Spirit baptism, and divine healing were.<sup>203</sup> Yet today deliverance practices have become a major feature of Igbo NPCs. All the churches I visited have some context where people can receive deliverance prayer. For instance, *Grace of God*

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medicine. Emeka Enwezor, 'The Role of Scripture Union in Secondary Schools', RSC, 28.4.00, Enugu; OI, Ken Okeke, 17.12.98, London.

<sup>199</sup> Augustine Nwodika, 'Round Table Discussion', RSC, 29.4.00, Enugu.

<sup>200</sup> A number of scholars have noted this in relation to contemporary African Pentecostalism. See for example, Gifford, *African Christianity*, 97-104; Gifford, 'African Pentecostal Theology', 62, 65-74; Marshall, 'Pentecostalism in Southern Africa', 22; Ojo, 'Church', 29; Ogbu U. Kalu, 'The Practice of Victorious Life: Pentecostal Political Theology and Practice in Nigeria, 1970-1996', *Mission: Journal of Mission Studies*, 5.2, 1998, 238-39; Kalu, *Power*, 118-24; Meyer, *Translating the Devil*, 216.

<sup>201</sup> In LWM's Annual Journal, Household Deliverance Church introduces itself in this way: 'As the name implies, the church remains a Household Deliverance centre. Demon possessed people have come to the fellowships and received release. Some who belonged to secret cults believe enough to denounce their past and relinquish cultic materials to the church for destruction. The barren become happy and fulfilled mothers.' Living Word Ministries Inc., *Annual Journal*, 42.

<sup>202</sup> Kalu, 'The Practice of Victorious Life', 238-39.

<sup>203</sup> See chapter three, section 6.3.

in Enugu has a ‘Deliverance Service,’ Master’s Vessel Church in Umuahia has a ‘Deliverance Hour,’ and ACFM in Bukuru has an ‘Hour of Solution’ meeting.<sup>204</sup>

We see a progression within Igbo neo-Pentecostalism regarding demonic infestation. As noted, initially deliverance took place largely in evangelistic settings and even then was not prominent. However, in the mid-1970s some neo-Pentecostals became preoccupied with ‘mami-wata’ spirits and witchcraft.<sup>205</sup> More recently, this has been elaborated in popular Nigerian Pentecostal literature.<sup>206</sup> One example from this genre is an account written by Kalu Abosi, describing his deliverance from a ‘mami-wata’ cult in 1989 during a crusade organised by former Igbo revivalist and popular Pentecostal evangelist Uma Ukpai. In it, Abosi relates his initiation into the secret cult, his introduction to the ‘Queen of the River,’ his conference with Satan, and his eventual deliverance, all recurring themes in other literature of this genre.<sup>207</sup> During the 1980s, deliverance rituals became institutionalised and incorporated into evangelistic crusades and church meetings.<sup>208</sup> No longer restricted to non-Christians, deliverance was offered to church members,<sup>209</sup> and extended to include economic circumstances and family

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<sup>204</sup> See Plates 6.1 & 6.3.

<sup>205</sup> According to one informant, this emphasis began within *Riches of Christ* during the late 1970s, and if you were female, you were liable to be branded a witch or a member of a ‘mami-wata’ cult. OI, Frances Lawjua Bolton, 23.1.00 and 23.5.99, Loughton.

<sup>206</sup> Marshall, ‘Power in the Name of Jesus’, 227, also refers to the popularity of this genre of Nigerian Pentecostal literature. Especially popular is Emmanuel Eni, *Delivered from the Powers of Darkness*, Ibadan: Scripture Union, 1987. For a précis of Eni’s testimony, see Gifford, *African Christianity*, 101. During research, I came across other books on demons and deliverance. These included Kalu Abosi, ‘*Born Twice*’. *From Demonism to Christianity*, Benin City: Joint Heirs Publications, n.d.; Iyke Nathan Uzorma, *Exposing the Rulers of Darkness*, Benin City, n. publ., 1994; Victoria Eto, *Exposition on Water Spirits*, Warri: Shalom Christian Mission, 1988; Adolf, *Deliverance of African Christians*; A. O. Akoria, *Ministering Deliverance*, Ibadan: God-Will-Do-It Publications, 1992.

<sup>207</sup> Abosi, *Demonism to Christianity*. The crusade took place in the town of Abiriba, Imo State.

<sup>208</sup> Gifford, ‘African Pentecostal Theology’, 68, has noted the same concerning Ghanaian Pentecostalism

<sup>209</sup> A more recent trend is for Christians to practice self-deliverance. This methodology was evident in a series of booklets written by an Igbo pastor that I came across in a Nigerian Christian bookshop. See Mike Ofoegbu, *Dangerous Prayers*, Lagos: Holy Ghost Anointed Books Ministries, 1997.

relationships. More recently, it has been extended still further to include geographical localities, people groups, and the socio-political structures.<sup>210</sup>

Of those churches to emerge from the Civil War Revival, Christian Pentecostal Mission has gained a particular reputation for emphasising deliverance.<sup>211</sup> It has a weekly ‘Deliverance Hour,’ and a ‘Faith Clinic’ where it claims that ‘sinners are made saints, the sick are healed, broken hearts are mended, the oppressed are freed, the demon possessed are delivered, the barren become fruitful, evil covenants are broken and hanging blessings are prayed down.’<sup>212</sup> Part of CPM’s three-fold vision is to bring deliverance back to the Church,<sup>213</sup> and Ezekiel, the founder, has been described as the man ‘who popularized the destruction of demons’ in Nigeria.<sup>214</sup> A flyer advertising a CPM crusade says, ‘This is the time of restoration, deliverance for the oppressed, healing for the sick and salvation of your soul.’<sup>215</sup> In fact, Ezekiel believes that every Christian has the ability to cast out demons.<sup>216</sup> Onuigbo’s Victory Christian Mission has a similar holistic understanding of healing and deliverance. During their annual

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<sup>210</sup> Walker has noted a similar progression within Western charismatic theology and practice. See Andrew Walker, ‘The Devil You Think You Know: Demonology and the Charismatic Movement’, in Tom Smail, Andrew Walker and Nigel Wright, *Charismatic Renewal. The Search for a Theology*, London: SPCK, 1993, 92, 100.

<sup>211</sup> I interviewed two CPM pastors, and both alluded to the church’s emphasis on deliverance, which originated with the founder. Another who apparently has a strong deliverance ministry is S. O. Ibeneme of *Grace of God*, a SU convert during the revival. Kalu, *Embattled Gods*, 282; ‘Supplement on Grace of God Mission’, *Prophecy. The Messiah is Coming*, 1996, 17.

<sup>212</sup> *Echoes of Joy. A Publication of C.P.M. Int’l (The City of Joy)*, 50.

<sup>213</sup> *Echoes of Joy. A Publication of C.P.M. Int’l (The City of Joy)*, 2. CPM’s full vision is: i) bringing deliverance back to the Church; ii) creating awareness of Christ’s second coming; and (iii) preparing sons and daughters of God for glory.

<sup>214</sup> ‘Supplement on Grace of God Mission’, *Prophecy. The Messiah is Coming*, 1996, 15.

<sup>215</sup> This advertisement was published in *Revelations. International Newspaper for the End-Time*, 2000, 6. The crusade was to take place in April 2000.

<sup>216</sup> Rev. O. Ezekiel, ‘Tips on Deliverance’, *Prophecy. The Messiah is Coming*, 1996, 25.

‘International Convention’ in Enugu, they claim to minister salvation, deliverance from poverty, unemployment, business failures, and marital separation.<sup>217</sup>

I asked a number of NPC pastors about their experience of the deliverance ministry. Problems associated with evil spirits, and targeted during deliverance sessions, include bad dreams, barrenness, physical problems (such as arthritis and paralysis), psychiatric problems, and bad habits. Neo-Pentecostals often link these ailments to prior involvement in witchcraft, ‘mami-wata’ cults, and secret societies, or to curses inherited from ancestral covenants.<sup>218</sup>

Several neo-Pentecostal informants stressed the need for caution when engaging in deliverance prayer, and claimed to pray ‘according to the Scriptures’ in order to avoid an overemphasis on demons.<sup>219</sup> A member of ALA told me that his church used to emphasise deliverance, but now consider the solution to most problems resides in a proper understanding of Bible.<sup>220</sup> Some neo-Pentecostals are also keen to distance themselves from the more extreme forms of deliverance discourse mentioned above.

The appeal of Igbo neo-Pentecostal healing and deliverance approaches has partly been a response to the socio-economic climate, and the inadequacy and high cost of the

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<sup>217</sup> ‘Victory Christian Mission Enugu’, *Christian Update*, 5.

<sup>218</sup> See for example, Rev. Amaechi Nwachukwu, ‘Understanding the Covenants and Breaking Strongholds’, *Living Spring*, May/June 1997, 11. This article is based on a message given at an Amazing Love Assembly Retreat.

<sup>219</sup> OI, Francis Amaechi, Kenneth Eboh, Pius G. Ogbuegbe. Okorie of LWM alludes to the danger of overemphasising demonology in a recent article on contemporary Igbo Pentecostal trends. Emmanuel Okorie, ‘My Adventures with Holy Ghost Men’, *Nuggets. The Apostolic People*, 23 December 2001, 2.

<sup>220</sup> OI, Uche Onuoha, 5.5.00, Enugu.

health services, as Ojo notes of African CMs in general.<sup>221</sup> However, their popularity also stems from their close affinity to both biblical and African cosmologies,<sup>222</sup> their emphasis on the spiritual forces behind events in the material world, and their quest for power to enhance life. For Kalu, this willingness to take the African maps of the universe seriously is the main reason for their appeal.<sup>223</sup> Igbo neo-Pentecostals accept the ontological reality of possessing spirits, while at the same time demonising them. As Marshall notes, rather than sidelining problems associated with malign forces as mainline churches appear to do, they ‘confront them directly, and make the vanquishing of witches, evil spirits, and other “agents of Satan” one of the central elements of church practice.’<sup>224</sup> In Igbo traditional religious practice, prayer is spontaneous and pragmatic, and according to Agu, ‘health, procreation, inter-personal relationships, economic problems and needs of individuals and families, welfare of the entire community and current social issues are all concrete themes of prayer.’<sup>225</sup> Thus, neo-Pentecostal approaches to healing and deliverance prayer fitted well with traditional aspirations. However, their intention is to be biblical, rather than African. They claim to base their methodology on the Bible,<sup>226</sup> and reject the healing practices of some of the older AICs, which they deem unchristian and tainted by traditional culture.<sup>227</sup>

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<sup>221</sup> Ojo, ‘African Charismatics’, 143; Ojo, ‘Deeper Christian Life Ministry’, 152; Ojo, ‘Charismatic Movements in Africa’, 104.

<sup>222</sup> Several scholars have noted this in relation to African Pentecostals. See Paul Gifford, ‘African Christianity Today’, in Paul Varo Martinson (ed.), *Mission at the Dawn of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. A Vision for the Church*, Minneapolis, Minnesota: Kirk House Publishers, 1999, 66; Cox, *Fire from Heaven*, 247; Anderson, ‘Global Pentecostalism’, 217; Kalu, ‘Third Response’, 10; Ojo, ‘Church’, 29.

<sup>223</sup> Kalu, ‘Preserving a Worldview’, 130; Kalu, *Embattled Gods*, 283.

<sup>224</sup> Marshall, ‘Pentecostalism in Southern Nigeria’, 22.

<sup>225</sup> Agu, *Secularization in Igboland*, 400.

<sup>226</sup> Teaching on ‘divine healing’ in NPC literature is usually replete with biblical references. See for example, Redeemed People’s Mission, ‘Lesson 11. Divine Health and Healing’, *Redeemed Adult Sunday School Lessons*, 1998, 31-5.

<sup>227</sup> See for example, All Christians Fellowship Mission, ‘Our Statement of Faith’, *Membership Bible Studies*, 26: ‘The mission while holding that divine healing is the power of the Lord Jesus Christ to heal the sick and afflicted in answer to believing prayer, believes in as well as encourages its practice in all her

Global forces through transnational ministry exchanges and media have also influenced Igbo neo-Pentecostal healing methodologies. I have mentioned the visits of American Pentecostal evangelists during the 1970s. American Pentecostal literature also proved influential.<sup>228</sup> Global flows are partly responsible for two recent developments that have extended the practice of healing and deliverance to include economic circumstances, people groups, and socio-political structures. The first relates to the ‘faith gospel,’ which I deal with in more detail in the next section. Here I mention Gifford’s assertion that the rise of deliverance theology may be a response to the failure of faith teaching.<sup>229</sup> During the 1980s, some Igbo NPC preachers presented the faith gospel as the answer to financial hardship caused by economic decline. When faith failed to deliver the ‘goods,’ deliverance from the curse of poverty was offered as an alternative remedy.<sup>230</sup> For example, one former revivalist writes, ‘Today’s gospel of prosperity tells us that poverty is a curse, and the poor need to have a demon of poverty cast out of them.’<sup>231</sup>

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services, condemns healing for a fee, the use of holy water, candles, pictorial, or any other aid apart from the anointing oil as provided in James 5:14-16.’ From observation, healing prayer in Igbo NPCs was sometimes accompanied by the ‘laying on of hands’ and/or anointing with oil. I never witnessed the use of ‘holy water,’ a common practice in prayer houses. For more on Igbo prayer house healing practices see Kalu, *Embattled Gods*, 293-98.

<sup>228</sup> I have mentioned the 2001 Adult Sunday School Manual of *Grace of God*, which includes a chapter entitled ‘33 Divine Healing Facts by T. L. Osborn.’ See Grace of God Mission Inc., ‘Chapter Thirteen. Divine Healing Facts’, *Sunday School Manual*, 50-4. Osborn’s Faith Digest magazine was available in Igboland as early as the late 1960s. Simon Uguoke, written testimony, 1969. Western authors whose books on the healing and demonology are available in Nigeria include Derek Prince, Rebecca Brown, Gordon Lindsay, Kenneth Hagin, Frank and Ida Hammond, and Peter Wagner. Gifford, *African Christianity*, 102, found a similar trend within Ghana.

<sup>229</sup> Gifford, ‘African Pentecostal Theology’, 73.

<sup>230</sup> OI, Chinedu Nebo and Peter Ozodo.

<sup>231</sup> Osisioma, *Ancient Pathway*, 53.

A second development has been an increasing emphasis on intercessory prayer and spiritual warfare. Among other strategies, this has involved ‘liberating the land’ from pollution caused by demonic strongholds, ancestral covenants, and idolatry.<sup>232</sup> Several informants told me that during the revival protagonists used to engage in spiritual warfare prayer prior to conducting evangelistic outreaches, but this did not involve speculating on the workings of the demonic world or devising elaborate typographies.<sup>233</sup> During the 1990s, this practice has become more sophisticated and prominent, an important mission strategy and a form of political engagement,<sup>234</sup> partly a result of global flows through Christian literature from North America.<sup>235</sup> I came across it when I met Joseph Umeh, a member of RPM and co-ordinator of Jos Intercessors Forum. Each week Umeh meets with a group of ‘intercessors’ to pray for Jos and obtain ‘revelation’ regarding any ‘strongholds’ that may be controlling the city.<sup>236</sup> In chapter six, I examine this approach in more detail.

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<sup>232</sup> For a summary, see Kalu, ‘Third Response’, 13-14.

<sup>233</sup> OI, John Onuora, Chinedu Nebo, Peter Ozodo. Ozodo told me that S. G. Elton taught some of them this strategy during the 1970s. See also Bolton, *Glory*, 161: ‘Just before a crusade we would spend time in praying. At some point we would bind the spirits of obstruction, contrary spirits, spirits of confusion, spirits of blindness and deafness, to the gospel, that is. We were never involved in the details of their names or operations or their hierarchies in the kingdom of Satan.’

<sup>234</sup> One of the leading proponents is Emeka Nwankpa, co-ordinator of Intercessors for Africa in 1994 and the National Prayer House (Eastern zone). Nwankpa is an Igbo but studied at the University of Ife, Western Nigeria, during the early 1970s. One of his mentors was S. G. Elton, who ordained him into Christian ministry in 1981. Nwankpa helped to establish Intercessors for Nigeria and Intercessors for Africa, and has since travelled the world as a teacher on such subjects as spiritual warfare prayer and Christian political responsibility. See Ifere, *Story of NIFES*, 62; Kalu, ‘Pentecostal Political Theology’, 251; ‘Emeka Nwankpa: Intercessors for Africa’, retrieved 05.01.04 from the Worldwide Web: [http://cbn.org/700club/features/emeka\\_nwankpa.asp](http://cbn.org/700club/features/emeka_nwankpa.asp). For a summary of his teaching, see Emeka Nwankpa, *Redeeming the Land. Interceding for the Nations*, Achimota, Ghana: Africa Christian Press, 1994.

<sup>235</sup> Popularly known as ‘strategic-level spiritual warfare’, this approach draws heavily on the writings of American authors like C. Peter Wagner and George Otis Jr., whose books are widely available in Nigerian Christian bookshops. For example, in a recent book, former Igbo revivalist Mosy Madugba, a leading proponent of spiritual warfare prayer, includes a summary of Wagner’s teaching from *Breaking Strongholds in your City*, Tonbridge Wells: Monarch Publications, 1993. See Mosy U. Madugba, *Africa’s Time of Recovery*, Port Harcourt: Spiritual Life Publications, 2000, 86-94.

<sup>236</sup> OI, Joseph Umeh, 19.12.01, Jos. Umeh told me that he had recently read George Otis, Jr., *Informed Intercession. Transforming Your Community Through Spiritual Mapping and Strategic Prayer*, Ventura, California: Renew Books, 1999, and had watched a video on community transformation. See also Leaflet

### 4.3 Provenance and Popularity of Prosperity Teaching

Prosperity teaching, which links faith with the expectation of material wealth and success, has become an important element of African neo-Pentecostal identity and has contributed to the movement's appeal, particularly among young people concerned with development and progress. Some scholars have referred to the shift that has occurred within African Pentecostalism since the 1970s from an emphasis on retreat from 'the world' to a gospel of prosperity and success.<sup>237</sup> In the Nigerian setting, Marshall makes a distinction between 'holiness' churches, which promote a retreat from the world, and 'pentecostal' churches, which embrace a doctrine of prosperity.<sup>238</sup> My research suggests that from the late-1970s, some Igbo NPCs modified their message to include an emphasis on prosperity.<sup>239</sup>

Contemporary debate centres on its provenance and its merit.<sup>240</sup> Some have emphasised its foreign origins and form in Africa.<sup>241</sup> I agree with those who stress the role of indigenous agents in transforming prosperity teaching for local consumption.<sup>242</sup>

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advertising 'Wake-Up the Mighty Men', a three-day 'Prayer Workshop' organised by Redeemed People's Intercessors, 16-18 August, 2001: 'The secret of making things happen in your life, family and ministry, also how to dislodge territorial forces around you will be exposed.' See Plate 11.5.

<sup>237</sup> Corten and Marshall-Fratani, 'Introduction', 5; Matthews A. Ojo, 'Healing in Sub-Saharan Africa', in Glazier (ed.), *Encyclopedia*, 143; Ukah, 'Advertising God', 210.

<sup>238</sup> Marshall, 'Power in the Name of Jesus', 216-17.

<sup>239</sup> Several revivalist narratives refer to this paradigm shift towards a gospel of prosperity. See for example, Nebo, 'Protagonists and Critics' (Appendix 4.7.2, paragraph 1); OI, Chinedu Nebo, 4.5.00, Enugu (Appendix 4.8.2, paragraph 3); Osisioma, *Ancient Pathway*, xii; Chukwuka, *Beyond the Night*, 43-5; OI, Augustine Nwodika, 8.5.00, Enugu (Appendix 4.7.8).

<sup>240</sup> Hackett, 'Prosperity', 208.

<sup>241</sup> For example, Gifford, 'Prosperity', 382. More recently, Gifford has adopted a more nuanced stance that is consumer- as well as producer-oriented. He argues that while it is essentially articulated in standardised American form due to global flows, the faith gospel in Africa builds on traditional preoccupations with material realities and is compatible with considerable local creativity. Gifford, 'African Pentecostal Theology', 62-74. For a critique, see Coleman, 'Faith Movement', 9-11.

<sup>242</sup> For example, Coleman, *Globalisation*, 31; Stephen Hunt, "'Winning Ways": Globalisation and the Impact of the Health and Wealth Gospel', *Journal of Contemporary Religion*, 15.3, 2000, 332-47.

In the case of Igbo appropriation, existing religious preoccupations, local socio-economic context, and global forces all came into play. To use an agricultural metaphor, there needed to be a fertile soil, a favourable climate, and access to a ready supply of seed.

Igbo primal religious culture provided a receptive soil for prosperity teaching. Hackett notes that in West Africa, ‘the preconditions for a gospel of prosperity to develop’ were already there in traditional, pre-colonial societies, ‘where it was common for people to associate the deities with prosperity.’<sup>243</sup> If we recall, the main goal of salvation in Igbo traditional religion is for viable life (*ezi-ndu*), which includes material prosperity.<sup>244</sup> Hence, prosperity is regarded as a blessing from God and poverty a curse.<sup>245</sup> Due to their receptivity to change, contemporary Igbo define prosperity in terms of modern symbols, such as cars and houses, rather than the accumulation of wives or yams.<sup>246</sup> Related to this is the Igbo emphasis on achievement, progress, and prestige, where status and moral standing in the community are associated with symbols of success acquired through religious power, and the redistribution of wealth for the benefit of others.<sup>247</sup>

However, the Igbo notion of *Chi* has the potential to dampen Igbo ambitions for success by encouraging a fatalistic approach to life.<sup>248</sup> The Igbo, like some other African

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<sup>243</sup> Hackett, ‘Prosperity’, 208. See also Daneel, *Quest for Belonging*, 46; Peel, ‘Africanist’, 98.

<sup>244</sup> See chapter two, section 2.1. For examples of Igbo traditional religious prayers that contain petitions for prosperity, see Okorocho, *Religious Conversion*, 70.

<sup>245</sup> Uzodinma, *Igbo Philosophy*, 145.

<sup>246</sup> Okorocho, *Religious Conversion*, 118. See also Ekenna, ‘Why Pastors Live Well’, *Newswatch*, 3 December 2001, 24 (Appendix 4.7.7).

<sup>247</sup> Uchendu, *Igbo*, 16, 92; Okorocho, *Religious Conversion*, 192-93, 196. See chapter two, section 2.1.

<sup>248</sup> Ikenga-Metuh, *African Religion*, 43.

societies,<sup>249</sup> have a predestination theology, which holds that a person's fate is virtually predetermined.<sup>250</sup> Although this does not preclude personal responsibility,<sup>251</sup> *Chineke* is believed to direct the destiny of individuals through *Chi*, a personal guardian spirit.<sup>252</sup> Prosperity teaching returns agency to the individual by urging those struggling with failure and apathy to change their destinies through prayer and faith. This is evident in this excerpt from sermon preached by a CPM pastor: 'A person's destiny can change through his invitation and earnest prayer to God. God did not create any man to remain stagnant, the person's past record of failure and poor background notwithstanding.'<sup>253</sup> Thus, there are close affinities, as well discontinuities, between traditional religious aspirations and prosperity teaching, with its emphasis on material acquisition through faith, and this facilitated its assimilation into Igbo culture.

Two other conditions were required for prosperity teaching to take root in Igbo soil: a suitable socio-economic climate and access to a ready supply of seed, in this case the message itself. Ojo states that in Nigeria prosperity and success as religious ideas were 'indigenously developed as a response to the socio-economic changes of the 1980s.'<sup>254</sup> But global flows through media and migration were crucial.<sup>255</sup> According to

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<sup>249</sup> The Yoruba refer to this notion as *Ori*, and the Akan of Ghana as *Nkrabea*.

<sup>250</sup> C. I. Ejizu, 'Continuity and Discontinuity in Igbo Traditional Religion', in Ikenga-Metuh (ed.), *Gods in Retreat*, 141. See also Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*, London/Ibadan: Heinemann, 1985 (orig. publ. 1958), 13: 'Unoka was an ill-fated man. He had a bad *chi* or personal god, and evil fortune followed him to the grave, or rather to his death. . .'

<sup>251</sup> For example, the Igbo phrase *onye kwe chi ya ekwe* (Igbo: a person's *chi* consents to whatever the person by sheer personal determination affirms).

<sup>252</sup> Ikenga-Metuh, *African Religion*, 43.

<sup>253</sup> Godwin Ugweje, 'You can Change your Destiny', excerpt from a message preached at CPM, Apapa branch, quoted in *Pentecostal Weekly. A Publication of Christian Pentecostal Mission Int'l*, May 14-20 2000, 6. See also Grace of God Mission Inc., 'Chapter Six. Faith to Change Destinies', *Sunday School Manual*, 20-4, which exhorts its members not to accept defeat, but to change their destinies through exercising faith in prayer.

<sup>254</sup> Ojo, 'Charismatic Movements in Africa', 106.

<sup>255</sup> Hackett, 'Prosperity', 205-206.

informants, prosperity teaching began to lay hold of the Igbo religious landscape in the late 1970s or early 1980s.<sup>256</sup> Though the decade began with severe financial hardship for the Igbos, it ended with a period of relative economic prosperity, due largely to the export of oil and Igbo ingenuity.<sup>257</sup> If we recall, during the late 1970s Igbo neo-Pentecostal leaders began to travel to the US at the invitation of their American counterparts, where they imbibed the emphasis on prosperity propagated by their sponsors. When they carried this back to Nigeria, they found it fitted well with the mood of the times and was eagerly embraced by Igbo Christians.<sup>258</sup> At the same time, American Pentecostal literature was becoming more readily available.<sup>259</sup> For many ordinary neo-Pentecostals, prosperity teaching promised an end to poverty and hardship, but others (primarily religious leaders and wealthy businessmen) used it to justify their increasingly lavish lifestyles during a period of economic opportunity. As Marshall asserts, ‘The gospel of prosperity offers a doctrine of morally-controlled materialism, in which personal wealth and success is interpreted as the evidence of God’s blessing on those who lead a “true life in Christ”.’<sup>260</sup> One former revivalist put it like this:

And again the general effect of the economy in the country affected Christians. We discovered that there was a kind of materialism that was brought about by the economic

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<sup>256</sup> OI, Augustine Nwodika, Frances Lawjua Bolton, Augustus Mbanaso, Chinedu Nebo; Meschak Ilobi, personal reminiscence, May 2000.

<sup>257</sup> Adebayo O. Olukoshi, ‘General Introduction: From Crisis to Adjustment in Nigeria’, in Olukoshi (ed.), *Structural Adjustment*, 1; Douglas Rimmer, ‘Elements of the Political Economy’, in Keith Panter-Brick (ed.), *Soldiers and Oil. The Political Transformation of Nigeria*, London: Frank Cass, 1978, 141-65.

<sup>258</sup> OI, Augustine Nwodika, 8.5.00, Enugu (Appendix 4.7.8); OI, Chinedu Nebo, 4.5.00, Enugu; OI, Felix Obiorah, 6.10.01, Umuahia; OI, Ken Okeke, 17.12.98, London.

<sup>259</sup> As noted, Gordon Lindsay’s books were circulating in Nigeria during the 1970s. During research, I came across one of Lindsay’s books in a Nigerian bookshop, a reprint entitled *God’s Master Key To Prosperity* (Benin City: Maranatha Publications, 1997, orig. publ. by Christ For The Nations Inc., U.S.A).

<sup>260</sup> Marshall-Fratani, ‘Global and Local’, 282-83.

and political situation in the country, with the result that everybody tried to grab as much as possible. And Christians became victims of this thing too.<sup>261</sup>

The economic boom came to an end in the early 1980s, to be replaced by a period of economic crisis, exacerbated by the failure of the ‘mega-rhetoric’ of development, the introduction of SAP in 1986, and increasing exposure to global modernity, where money is the central sign.<sup>262</sup> In a consumer culture, the desire for wealth and success becomes an essential element in the demand for religion.<sup>263</sup> Corten and Marshall-Fratani note that while globalisation opens up new avenues for material accumulation, it also incites frustration, as most people’s participation in the global marketplace is reduced to ‘window shopping.’<sup>264</sup> Prosperity teaching offered the possibility of opting into the global order and appropriating the ‘goods’ of modernity. Some Igbo neo-Pentecostals continued to use it to justify their excessive accumulation and maintain their status in a hostile economic environment,<sup>265</sup> but the majority were more concerned with developing strategies of survival and security. The prosperity gospel promised a solution to the growing problem of financial hardship. It also addressed the African Christian identity crisis by seeking to engender self-confidence and legitimise the pursuit of success. In this sense, it has continued to be a factor in Igbo neo-Pentecostal spirituality despite changing socio-economic conditions.

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<sup>261</sup> Unidentified panel member, ‘Round Table Discussion. Materialism in the Body of Christ in the Seventies’, RSC, 29.4.00, Enugu.

<sup>262</sup> Corten and Marshall-Fratani, ‘Introduction’, 8.

<sup>263</sup> Waters, *Globalization*, 283.

<sup>264</sup> Corten and Marshall-Fratani, ‘Introduction’, 3-4.

<sup>265</sup> See for example, Chukwuka, *Beyond the Night*, 45: ‘In the bid to meet up with the challenging economic threat that abounds everywhere staring at every Nigerian, we have dolled out a thousand and one methods of milking the people.’ See also OI, Augustine Nwodika, 8.5.00, Enugu (Appendix 4.7.8).

Prosperity teaching was not a major emphasis within NPCs I visited, though it was undoubtedly present in some of their sermons and literature, and contributed to their popularity. Invariably, exponents buttress their arguments with biblical references. For example, *Grace of God* state that ‘it is God’s will that his people prosper spiritually, physically and financially,’ and support this by citing 3 John 2.<sup>266</sup> Prayer for prosperity is included among the aims of Redeemed People’s Mission.<sup>267</sup> As noted, one of the RPM sermons I listened to was entitled ‘God’s provision and prosperity,’ based on the life of Joseph. However, RPM encourages members to use their money to support Christian mission, assist the poor, and care for their extended families.<sup>268</sup> It also warns against covetousness, extravagance, acquiring wealth through illegitimate means, and attempts to ‘commercialise’ religion.<sup>269</sup> CPM’s membership manual contains a Bible study on success and material prosperity, which outlines principles for receiving ‘blessings from God,’ and includes this statement: ‘Many have misconstrued prosperity to be that measure of superfluous abundance of material possessions. . . Prosperity is not only that superfluous abundance of wealth but being able to meet one’s needs

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<sup>266</sup> Grace of God Mission Inc., ‘Chapter 2. Restoration’, *Sunday School Manual*, 7. 3 John 2: ‘Beloved, I pray that in all respects you may prosper and be in good health, just as your soul prospers’ (NASB).

<sup>267</sup> Brochure introducing Redeemed People’s Mission.

<sup>268</sup> Redeemed People’s Mission, ‘Lesson 16. Stewardship of God’s Blessing’, *Redeemed Adult Sunday School Lessons*, 2001, 48. See also Redeemed People’s Mission, ‘Lesson 9. God Delights in our Prosperity’, *Redeemed Adult Sunday School Lessons*, 1998, 26-7: ‘God’s primary aim is that financial prosperity should serve as a source of blessing to others and the church . . . It is therefore evident that God’s faithfulness in giving His children financial prosperity is not primarily for the benefit of the beneficiary.’

<sup>269</sup> See Redeemed People’s Mission, ‘Lesson 14. Godliness versus Love of Money’, *Redeemed Adult Sunday School Lessons*, 2001, 41. See also Redeemed People’s Mission, ‘Lesson 13. Evaluating the False Teachers’, *Redeemed Adult Sunday School Lessons*, 2001, 39: ‘the proliferation of churches in Nigeria is not so much because of the concern to reach people for God, but the underlying reason in many instances is to make money.’ According to RPM, wrong ways of gaining financial prosperity include the use of false weights, ‘419’ activities, portraying God as a money-doubler, getting rich without working for it, gambling, drug trafficking, and joining secret cults. Redeemed People’s Mission, ‘Lesson 9. God delights in our Prosperity’, *Redeemed Adult Sunday School Lessons*, 1998, 26. ‘419’ is the term used in Nigeria to denote a form of fraud addressed in that particular section of the Nigerian penal code.

through the grace of God without covetousness.’<sup>270</sup> Perhaps the leading exponent of the ‘prosperity gospel’ among Igbo neo-Pentecostal leaders is Bishop Mike Okonkwo, General Overseer of The Redeemed Evangelical Mission (TREM) and President of the Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria in 2001.<sup>271</sup> In a recent article, he stated, ‘When somebody is saved from poverty to prosperity, it is salvation. If preachers truly preach the full gospel, the people must prosper. . . . There is too much poverty in Nigeria. We need the prosperity message in Nigeria and indeed Africa.’<sup>272</sup> Having said this, most NPC leaders I interviewed expressed a commitment to a moderate form of prosperity teaching, but were critical of its overemphasis. While some still attached importance to modern symbols of affluence, such as Mercedes Benz cars, satellite televisions, and large houses, others were reluctant to engage in public displays of wealth. As in other African contexts,<sup>273</sup> Igbo neo-Pentecostal prosperity teaching also encourages hard work, self-discipline, and financial responsibility, all of which are economically advantageous. For example, Chukwuka of Revival Time Ministries states that ‘prosperity is not materialism, nor materialism prosperity . . . . While prosperity

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<sup>270</sup> Christian Pentecostal Mission, ‘The Secret of Blessing (Source of Material Blessing)’, *Membership Manual*, 81-87. The popular Nigerian magazine *NewsWatch* lists CPM among several large Nigerian Pentecostal denominations at the ‘forefront of prosperity messages.’ Others listed include David Oyedopo’s Winner’s Chapel, Enoch Adeboye’s Redeemed Christian Church of God, Mike Okonkwo’s TREM, Ayo Oritsejafor’s Word of Life Bible Mission, Chris Okotie’s Household of God, and Chris Oyakhilome’s Christ Embassy. Geoffrey Ekenna, ‘Who Do They Serve? Has the Church in Nigeria become a Lucrative Business Venture?’, *NewsWatch*, 3 December 2001, 27.

<sup>271</sup> The Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria (PFN) describes itself as ‘the coming together of Holy Spirit filled Christian Churches and Organizations who believe and practice the FULL GOSPEL MESSAGE (ACTS 2), in an independent and autonomous Christian Fellowship. . . .’ Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria Incorporated (P. F. N.), *Constitution*, n.d., 1-2. For more on PFN, see section 6.4 of this chapter, and section 2.2, chapter six. For Bishop Mike Okonkwo, see Plate 11.4.

<sup>272</sup> Bishop Mike Okonkwo, ‘I Won’t Apologise for Prosperity Gospel’, *LifeWay. The Spirit-Filled Christian Life*, Oct-Nov 2001, 54. However, *NewsWatch* states that Okonkwo has recently made an about-turn. In a meeting, he apparently warned Pentecostal pastors against an overemphasis on miracles and prosperity to the neglect of holiness and salvation. Ekenna, ‘Who Do They Serve?’, *NewsWatch*, 3 December 2001, 29. For Okonkwo’s holistic understanding of salvation, see Appendix 4.7.7.

<sup>273</sup> See for example, David Maxwell, ‘“Delivered from the Spirit of Poverty?”: Pentecostalism, Prosperity and Modernity in Zimbabwe’, *Journal of Religion in Africa*, 28.3, 1998, 353; Martin, *Pentecostalism*, 147, 151.

encourages arduousness, thriving [*sic*], satisfaction that leads to success in one's vocation, materialism leads to the end without means or ways.'<sup>274</sup> And in an article entitled 'Steps to Success,' CPM leader Francis Nwogu identifies hard work as an important key to successful living.<sup>275</sup> Understood in this sense, prosperity teaching is a motivation to economic mobility through work as well as faith. It encourages good stewardship of material resources as well as dependence on providential provision.<sup>276</sup>

#### 4.4 Problems with Deliverance and Prosperity Theologies

It is beyond the scope of this study to engage in a detailed critique of deliverance and prosperity theologies.<sup>277</sup> Instead, I focus on the effect of these motifs upon the Civil War Revival and its Pentecostal progeny. Recently, criticisms have emerged from within the movement itself. According to some former revivalists (including a number of neo-Pentecostals), an overemphasis on deliverance and prosperity contributed to the decline of the revival and limited its long-term impact. Out of 15 respondents, three (20 %) identified an overemphasis on deliverance practices, and eight (53 %) a stress on prosperity teaching, as significant factors behind the revival's declension. Oral and written accounts suggest that the modification of the revival's original vision to include

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<sup>274</sup> Chukwuka, *Beyond the Night*, 45.

<sup>275</sup> 'Divine Business Commission: "Steps to Success"', *The Pentecostal Weekly. A Publication of Christian Pentecostal Mission Int'l*, 19-25 March 2000, 8, 4.

<sup>276</sup> See Redeemed People's Mission, 'Lesson 21. Parable of the Talents', *Redeemed Adult Sunday School Lessons*, 1999, 56: "[God] willingly gives His material and spiritual gifts to all who trust in Jesus. . . His expectation is that these should be used wisely."

<sup>277</sup> For detailed analyses of prosperity theology, see D. R. McConnell, *The Promise of Health and Wealth*, London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1990; B. Barron, *The Health and Wealth Gospel*, Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1987; A. Brandon, *Health & Wealth*, Eastbourne: Kingsway, 1987; William DeArteaga, *Quenching the Spirit*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edn., Orlando: Creation House, 1996. For a particularly nuanced critique, see Andrew Perriman (ed.), *Faith, Health and Prosperity. A Report on 'Word of Faith' and 'Positive Confession' Theologies by ACUTE (the Evangelical Alliance Commission on Unity and Truth among Evangelicals)*, Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 2003. For an analysis of its influence in Africa, see Brouwer, Gifford, and Rose, *American Gospel*.

an emphasis on deliverance and prosperity had theological, missiological, and ethical consequences.

First, the revival gradually lost its strong Christological and eschatological focus, as members became increasingly preoccupied with demons and this-worldly concerns.<sup>278</sup> LWM founder Okorie laments the loss of ‘true worship of our living God’ associated with an overemphasis on demons,<sup>279</sup> and CPM leader O. C. Emmanuel refers to the way neo-Pentecostals have ‘lost the vision of heaven to vision of money,’ by shifting their focus from God to ‘earthly things.’<sup>280</sup> While some Western commentators regard this preoccupation with material gain and this-worldly concerns as a symptom of secularisation,<sup>281</sup> the association of demonic agency with adverse circumstances and prosperity with providential intervention equally suggests a determination to defend the life of faith against secularising forces.<sup>282</sup>

A second related consequence was a reduction in evangelistic fervour, a key component of revivalist spirituality.<sup>283</sup> One former revivalist stated, ‘Instead of preaching the gospel and delivering people from sin and wickedness . . . people were more interested in saying, “Well, if you are a poor man, you have a demon of poverty; if you are sick, a

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<sup>278</sup> OI, Frances Lawjua Bolton, 23.1.00; OI, Chinedu Nebo, 4.5.00, Enugu; Bolton, *Glory*, 161; Chukwuka, *Beyond the Night*, 45; Rev. O. C. Emmanuel, ‘What Leads to Loss of Glory’, *Pentecostal Family. A special Publication of Christian Pentecostal Mission Int’l on Family Fellowship Affairs*, 9-10; Osisioma, *Ancient Pathway*, xii.. See also Gifford, ‘African Pentecostal Theology’, 73, who notes that during the 1990s deliverance thinking in Ghana caused widespread alarm ‘mostly on the grounds that Satan had become far more central to Christianity than Christ.’

<sup>279</sup> Okorie, ‘Holy Ghost Men’, *Nuggets. The Apostolic People*, 23 December 2001, 2.

<sup>280</sup> Emmanuel, ‘What Leads to Loss of Glory’, *Pentecostal Family. A special Publication of Christian Pentecostal Mission Int’l on Family Fellowship Affairs*, 9-10.

<sup>281</sup> For example, Marvin Harris, *America Now*, New York: Simon & Schuster, 1981, cited in Hunt, ‘Health and Wealth Gospel’, 332.

<sup>282</sup> See for example, Perriman (ed.), *Faith, Health and Prosperity*, 213.

<sup>283</sup> For example, Chukwuka, *Beyond the Night*, 47.

demon of sickness”. Every ailment on earth got a demon.’<sup>284</sup> And O. C. Emmanuel makes the connection between prosperity teaching and loss of evangelistic passion: ‘Regrettably, today, what some men of God preach is how their hearers could live prosperous lives here on earth. . . . The Bible says we should go into all the world and preach the gospel. But regrettably, the fire of evangelism is no more burning in us.’<sup>285</sup>

An overemphasis on deliverance and prosperity also had ethical consequences. Reflecting on contemporary trends, Okorie states, ‘Just like people hold crusades mainly on healing, many have held crusades only on demons. . . . Where is soul salvation, where is repentance? Where is new birth and new creation in Christ?’<sup>286</sup> In chapter three, I referred to the revival’s stress on Christian responsibility to exercise self-control, resist temptation, and maintain a life free from ‘sin,’ through repentance and faith in Christ.<sup>287</sup> In recent years, there has been a spate of popular Nigerian Pentecostal literature on demonology and deliverance methodology. Some books provide long lists of demons purported to cause a variety of ethical lapses. One Igbo neo-Pentecostal author, for example, refers to demons of anger, unforgiveness, hatred, jealousy, lying, stealing, covetousness, and lust.<sup>288</sup> Another encourages Christians to pray against spirits of pride, adultery, drunkenness, and laziness.<sup>289</sup> An overemphasis on demonic agency can encourage irresponsibility with respect to individual and

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<sup>284</sup> OI, Chinedu Nebo, 4.5.00, Enugu. See also Okorie, ‘Holy Ghost Men’, *Nuggets. The Apostolic People*, 23 December 2001, 2.

<sup>285</sup> Emmanuel, ‘What Leads to Loss of Glory’, *Pentecostal Family. A Special Publication of Christian Pentecostal Mission Int’l on Family Fellowship Affairs*, 9-10.

<sup>286</sup> Okorie, ‘Holy Ghost Men’, *Nuggets. The Apostolic People*, 23 December 2001, 2.

<sup>287</sup> Bolton, *Glory*, 162.

<sup>288</sup> Adolf, *Deliverance of African Christians*, 166-69.

<sup>289</sup> Ofoegbu, *Dangerous Prayers*, 24.

corporate sin, especially where there is no corresponding stress on the operations of the flesh and the world.<sup>290</sup>

As noted earlier, prosperity teaching also contributed to a dilution of the movement's anti-materialistic holiness ethic and a decline in moral standards.<sup>291</sup> If we recall, joining the 'born-again' community during the early 1970s was costly in terms of existing social relationships and economic prospects. By the 1980s, however, becoming a NPC pastor was more likely to be associated with economic and social mobility.<sup>292</sup> Prosperity theology tends to ignore New Testament teaching on the redemptive qualities of suffering and the merits of poverty. Reflecting on this, one former revivalist states, 'Paul's gospel was first and foremost, the gospel of Jesus Christ . . . it is also a gospel of suffering, pains and tears; its symbol is the cross. . . God blesses and prospers; but there is no gospel of prosperity.'<sup>293</sup>

Critics from within have accused prosperity teachers of 'commercialising' the gospel and turning Christian ministry into a business enterprise for personal gain.<sup>294</sup> Some have certainly used the power structures in their churches to accumulate wealth, reflecting the 'big man' syndrome within Nigerian political culture. Others make a

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<sup>290</sup> Lovelace, *Spiritual Life*, 144.

<sup>291</sup> See section 3.5 of this chapter.

<sup>292</sup> See for instance, Chukwuka, *Beyond the Night*, 46: 'If a man's business is no longer flourishing, the next thought or suggestion will be to enter into the pastorate or become not just a pastor but a president and founder.'

<sup>293</sup> Osisioma, *Ancient Pathway*, 56-7. See also Nebo, 'Protagonists and Critics' (Appendix 4.7.2, paragraphs 1 & 2).

<sup>294</sup> See for example, 'Interview with Rev William Okoye', *Prophecy. The Messiah is Coming*, 8: 'The lukewarmness one experiences today in our churches is caused by the commercialization of the Gospel.' See also Chukwuka, *Beyond the Night*, 43.

distinction between biblical prosperity and materialism.<sup>295</sup> Most NPC leaders I encountered claim to promote a form of prosperity based on biblical principles, but reject the accumulation of wealth through immoral means. For example, Okoye of ACFM states:

God wants to see us prosper and be in good health, but only according to his will. It must be through righteousness and truth. Not through 419 or any dubious means of achieving prosperity . . . . If this type of prosperity preaching ministers were commissioned and opportuned to establish at Abuja, they would turn out multi millionaires within a short period and would wreck the church also.<sup>296</sup>

For some former revivalists, prosperity teaching is dangerous because it encourages materialistic lifestyles, covetousness, greed, and even immorality.<sup>297</sup> In certain sections of the NPC community, prosperity gradually replaced holiness and evangelistic success as the yardstick for measuring spirituality. The success of a person's ministry was gauged by the size of his church building, the quality of his car(s), the size of his bank account, and the cut of his clothes.<sup>298</sup>

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<sup>295</sup> For example, Osisioma, *Ancient Pathway*, 59, 62, states that the approach to prosperity promoted by many neo-Pentecostals is 'materialistic' and does not 'represent the whole truth of Scriptures.' See also Chukwuka, *Beyond the Night*, 45 (quoted in section 4.3 above).

<sup>296</sup> 'Interview with Rev William Okoye', *Prophecy. The Messiah is Coming*, 9. Okoye is one of the few Igbo NPC leaders to have gained a reputation for austerity. Despite pressure from his members, he resisted for many years acquiring a Mercedes Benz car, a popular Pentecostal status symbol in Nigeria. Okoroafor, *William Okoye*, 151. See Plate 7.6, which shows a Mercedes Benz car owned by an Igbo NPC pastor in Onitsha, and acquired in the 1980s.

<sup>297</sup> See for example, Osisioma, *Ancient Pathway*, 62, who accuses prosperity teachers of turning 'faithful Christians' into greedy ones. See also OI, Chinedu Nebo, 4.5.00, Enugu; 'Interview with Rev William Okoye', *Prophecy. The Messiah is Coming*, 8; Chukwuka, *Beyond the Night*, 45; Emmanuel, 'What Leads to Loss of Glory', *Pentecostal Family. A Special Publication of Christian Pentecostal Mission Int'l on Family Fellowship Affairs*, 9-10.

Sometimes blame for the introduction of prosperity theology is laid firmly at the door of the devil and the prosperity preachers themselves. For instance, Chukwuka writes, ‘He (satan) went in, and came out with a subtle plan against the ministers and this pentecostal new-move. He coined the phrase “Health and Wealth Gospel”. The popular “prosperity preaching”.’ However, it was the preachers themselves, according to Chukwuka, who were responsible for ‘milking the people . . . on the pretext of religion.’<sup>299</sup>

## 5. Missionary Communities

Perhaps the most important factor behind Igbo neo-Pentecostal expansion, especially during the 1970s, was its missionary impulse. I have noted this in relation to the revival itself, and as a factor behind the genesis of the NPC movement. In this section, I examine the missionary dynamic of the neo-Pentecostal community.

### 5.1 The Gift of the Spirit

Igbo neo-Pentecostal mission strategy was specifically linked to the experience of Spirit baptism, the hallmark of Pentecostal identity. Several scholars have noted the importance of this experience for global Pentecostal expansion.<sup>300</sup> When interviewed,

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<sup>298</sup> Osisioma, *Ancient Pathway*, 49-50; ‘Interview with Rev. William Okoye’, *Prophecy. The Messiah is Coming*, 8; OI, Chinedu Nebo, 4.5.00, Enugu (Appendix 4.8.2, paragraph 3).

<sup>299</sup> Chukwuka, *Beyond the Night*, 45. Chinedu Nebo expresses similar sentiments when he refers to the prosperity gospel as a seed planted by the ‘enemy.’ OI, Chinedu Nebo, 4.5.00, Enugu (Appendix 4.8.2, paragraph 3). See also Emmanuel, ‘What Leads to Loss of Glory’, *The Pentecostal Family. A Special Publication of Christian Pentecostal Mission Int’l on Family Fellowship Affairs*, 9: ‘I am also to blame as a preacher because somehow, some of my colleagues have deviated from preaching the gospel of salvation to gospel of prosperity.’

<sup>300</sup> See for example Gary B. McGee, ‘Pentecostal and Charismatic Missions’, in James M. Phillips and Robert T. Coote (eds.), *Toward the 21<sup>st</sup> Century in Christian Mission*, Grand Rapids, Mich.: William Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1993, 46; Paul Pomerville, *Introduction to Missions: an Independent-Study Textbook*, Iring, TX: ICI University Press, 1987, 100; McClung Jr., *Azusa Street*, 49, 100.

Igbo neo-Pentecostals from the 1970s consistently referred to Spirit baptism as a pivotal event in their Christian experience, and one that propelled them into intense mission activity, often in the face of stiff opposition. Usually this added a new dimension to their ministry and an expectation that supernatural ‘sign and wonders’ would accompany the preaching of the gospel. I interviewed 14 Igbo neo-Pentecostals who said they had an experience of Spirit baptism during the 1970s. Of these, 11 (79%) said it had a significant impact upon their ministries, giving them increased power and courage to bear witness to the gospel, or enabling them to perform healings and exorcisms. When asked how they knew they had received the Spirit, all said that it was when they began to speak in tongues.

Spirit baptism has continued to occupy an important position in neo-Pentecostal discourse and experience since the 1970s. For example, Grace Cathedral (*Grace of God*, Enugu) has a weekly meeting for people to receive prayer for ‘Holy Ghost Baptism.’<sup>301</sup> I interviewed 15 people who have joined an NPC since the 1970s, and all claimed to have received the gift of tongues. In the Jos survey, out of 167 respondents, 72.4 % said they spoke in tongues.

There is, however, some disagreement concerning the doctrine of Spirit baptism. Most teach that it is an experience subsequent to conversion for missionary empowerment. For example, ACFM states, ‘The Baptism of the Holy Ghost is the endowment of power from on high upon the clean, sanctified believer. . . . When we receive the gift of the Holy Ghost it is accompanied with the initial sign as the disciples had on the day of

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<sup>301</sup> Observed on Grace Cathedral’s signboard. See Plate 6.1.

Pentecost i.e. speaking with tongues as the Spirit gives utterance.’<sup>302</sup> ACFM also outlines some consequences of Spirit baptism, which along with ‘tongues’ include ‘divine power,’ ‘boldness in testimony and service,’ ‘spiritual insight into the word of God,’ and ‘tremendous prayer ability.’<sup>303</sup> Amazing Love Assembly, on the other hand, teach that Spirit baptism occurs at conversion. They do not discourage speaking in tongues, but deny that it is the only evidence of receiving the Spirit.<sup>304</sup> Nevertheless, I interviewed eight ALA members, including the senior pastor, and all but one said they spoke in tongues.<sup>305</sup>

If we recall, Spirit baptism was a contentious issue during the revival and contributed to the emergence of NPCs. It was the promotion of tongues as initial evidence, which first created problems.<sup>306</sup> Contemporary practice includes teaching people to speak in tongues and simultaneous praying in tongues without interpretation during meetings. An overemphasis on post-conversion experiences of the Spirit can lead to spiritual pride. It can also lead to feelings of inferiority in those who have had no such crisis experience or who do not possess the gift of tongues.<sup>307</sup>

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<sup>302</sup> All Christians Fellowship Mission, ‘Lesson 5. Our Statement of Faith’, *Membership Bible Studies*, 26.

<sup>303</sup> All Christians Fellowship Mission, ‘Lesson 7. The Holy Spirit Baptism’, *New Life Sunday School*, 28.

<sup>304</sup> ‘Concluding Thoughts on Baptism with the Holy Spirit’, *Living Spring*, May/June, 1997, 8; OI, Amaechi Nwachukwu, 6.6.00, Enugu. Holiness Evangelical Church (Owerri) also teaches that the gift of tongues is not the only evidence of Spirit baptism. OI, Kenneth Eboh, 16.11.02, Owerri.

<sup>305</sup> These were Amaechi Nwachukwu, Chris Alagbu, Kenechukwu Nwanisobi, Tshally Jeff-Onyegbule, Hyginus Anigbo, Anselm Ekwebelem, and Uche Onuoha.

<sup>306</sup> See chapter four, section 3.2.

<sup>307</sup> Lovelace, *Spiritual Life*, 132-33. See also ‘The Man God Uses’, *The Christian Compass*, Scripture Union (Nig.) Enugu Region, 2001, 12: ‘Today, the emphasis is on the gifts of the spirit. Everybody wants to manifest the gifts, as if they are a sign of maturity. Today, if you speak in tongues, even if it is demons you have arrived. Everybody wants to show how he can prophesy or exhibit the gift of secret knowledge or revelation. These are not bad on their own, but they are supposed to come after the discipline of the fruits. They are gifts given by God, not earned and so should not be turned to proofs of spirituality.’

Spontaneity is one of the implicit values in Pentecostal missions. Spittler notes the prevalence of spontaneous ‘Spirit-born’ ventures in Pentecostal history.<sup>308</sup> Sometimes Igbo NPC pioneers claimed to receive specific directions from the Spirit before embarking on mission initiatives. One example was ACFM founder William Okoye, who left *Riches of Christ* to form an independent evangelistic team after receiving ‘strong impressions’ from the Spirit to preach and plant churches in the north.<sup>309</sup> Later, Okoye set up his headquarters in Abuja, the Federal Capital of Nigeria, a move prompted by a dream received during an extended period of fasting and prayer. Okoye was among the pioneers of Pentecostalism in Abuja and now has one of the largest churches in the city.<sup>310</sup> This dream appears in several ACFM publications, and represents an important landmark in the church’s history. Dreams can be an important means of legitimising the message of charismatic religious leaders,<sup>311</sup> and were a common feature of older AICs.<sup>312</sup> However, I found little evidence that they were a regular part of the activity of Igbo NPCs. Okoye’s dream was probably an exception among neo-Pentecostal pioneers, but its prominence within ACFM publications suggests that it was often retold and circulated among members as a means of legitimising his ministry in Abuja.

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<sup>308</sup> Spittler, ‘Pentecostal Missions’, 415.

<sup>309</sup> Okoroafor, *William Okoye*, 68-70.

<sup>310</sup> *Ibid.*, 123-27.

<sup>311</sup> See for example, Wallace, ‘Revitalisation Movements’; Sundkler, *Bantu Prophets*; Peel, *Aladura*; Curley, ‘Dreams’, 20-37.

<sup>312</sup> Curley, ‘Dreams’, 21-2.

Some NPC leaders promote a ‘latter rain’ theology as motivation for mission.<sup>313</sup> Its roots within the movement can be traced to the early 1970s, and the influence of the British Pentecostal S. G. Elton.<sup>314</sup> In Igbo neo-Pentecostal texts, references are made to the ‘former and latter rains,’ ‘the last Days,’ ‘restoration,’ the ‘Great Move of The Holy Spirit,’ the ‘glorious church,’ and the ‘millennial rule of Christ.’ For instance, CPM states, ‘The purpose of this restoration is to empower His people for the end-time world wide aggressive evangelism. The Lord is about to send both the former and latter rains upon the earth for an overwhelming harvest of souls into his kingdom.’<sup>315</sup> Associated with this is a belief that there will be a transfer of wealth to the church to assist the evangelisation process.<sup>316</sup>

## 5.2 Lay Ministry

Evangelistic fervour was a significant factor in early Igbo NPC expansion. If we recall, most started as CMs, led by individuals with strong evangelistic gifts. More important, though, was the effect of the Pentecostal impulse upon the laity. Lay ministry has been an important factor in global Pentecostal growth since its inception, largely due to the

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<sup>313</sup> Several NPC leaders referred to this during interviews, including Paul Nwachukwu (*Grace of God*), and Benson Ezeokeke (*Salvation for All*). It was also present in NPC literature. See for example, Grace of God Mission Inc., ‘Chapter 2. Restoration’, *Sunday School Manual*, 5-8; Okoye, *Clash of the Champions*, 25; Christian Pentecostal Mission, ‘Introduction’, *Sunday School Adult Bible Class Manual*, 5. See also Plate 4.1.

<sup>314</sup> OI, Paul Nwachukwu, 12.5.00, Onitsha. Nwachukwu recalled that during their first meeting in the early 1970s, Elton referred to the Civil War Revival as the latter rain of God’s Spirit. Elton also promoted this teaching in his Christian pamphlet *Herald of His Coming*, distributed in Nigeria. Influences from the North American ‘Latter Rain movement’ are also evident, and in particular the teaching of Thomas Wyatt. Former revivalists refer to his radio broadcasts and literature. OI, Chris Alagbu and Stephen Okafor; Paul Nwachukwu, ‘Introduction’, Grace of God Mission Inc., *Sunday School Manual*, i. As noted, Elton himself had links with the Latter Rain movement. See chapter two, section 2.4.2.

<sup>315</sup> Christian Pentecostal Mission, ‘Introduction’, *Sunday School Adult Bible Class Manual*, 5.

<sup>316</sup> See Grace of God Mission Inc., ‘Chapter 2. Restoration’, *Sunday School Manual*, 5: ‘God is doing a great work of restoration in these last Days. As the Church is marching towards the 2<sup>nd</sup> coming of Christ and the millennial rule of Christ, God’s miracles, favour and divine intervention, sickness which has been long will suddenly disappear as the Holy Spirit restores and repairs His temple. There will be a transfer of wealth and knowledge to God’s people, people will be ready to use their wealth to propagate the

levelling influence of Spirit baptism.<sup>317</sup> During the 1970s, Igbo NPCs encouraged every member to be a witness, based on their experience of Spirit baptism, rather than education, training, or worldly rank. In *Riches of Christ*, for example, church meetings provided the forum for equipping members for effective witness, and before long, some were offering themselves for full-time ministry. What was important was evidence of new birth, Spirit baptism, and a clear conviction of a divine call. However, from its inception, *Riches* had its own Bible school, and prospective candidates were usually required to attend a four-month ‘crash programme’ before being sent out to preach and plant churches.<sup>318</sup> This stands in stark contrast to the often prolonged training required by mainline churches and mission-related Pentecostal churches.

The attention given to mission and evangelism within contemporary NPCs is evident in their mission statements and membership manuals, which encourage all members to participate in evangelistic activity. For example, ACFM describes itself as a ‘missionary church,’ and its four-fold vision includes a commitment to ‘Mission, Evangelism and church planting.’ Its mission statement contains the following clause: ‘This ministry has a very strong sense of mission and believes that it is only as the church fulfils its missionary obligation that it justifies its existence. Evangelism is our

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gospel as God restores His glory. In these latter days, the Church will be transformed from weak and powerless people to a glorious Church. Eph. 5:27.’

<sup>317</sup> Anderson, ‘Global Pentecostalism’, 222; McGee, ‘Pentecostal and Charismatic Missions’, 46. See also Byron D. Klaus and Loren O. Triplett, ‘National Leadership in Pentecostal Mission’, in Murray A. Dempster, Byron D. Klaus, and Douglas Petersen (eds.), *Called & Empowered. Global Mission in Pentecostal Perspective*, Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publishers, 1999, 226, who refer to the ‘general minimizing of the clergy/laity barrier’ due to the belief that ‘Pentecostal baptism’ equips every believer for Christian witness.

<sup>318</sup> OI, John Ugah, 7.6.00, Enugu.

supreme task.’<sup>319</sup> The church is a member of the Nigerian Evangelical Missions Association (NEMA),<sup>320</sup> and has its own mission department, seeking to work among unreached people groups.<sup>321</sup> RPM’s mission statement includes the phrase: ‘to uphold, teach, practice and preach the gospel of Christ in Nigeria and all over the world.’<sup>322</sup> For CPM, evangelism is ‘the primary task given to the Church in expanding the Kingdom of God,’<sup>323</sup> and for ALA, its ‘number one priority.’<sup>324</sup> In the Jos survey, out of 167 respondents, 65.3 % said they were attracted by their church’s commitment to evangelism,<sup>325</sup> and 29.9 % said they belonged to their church’s evangelism team.

Some neo-Pentecostals (including former revivalists) refer to a decline in evangelistic passion since the 1970s.<sup>326</sup> I have already noted the effects of an overemphasis on deliverance and prosperity on evangelistic fervour. It was also a consequence of ageing and the routinisation of charisma associated with the revival’s decline. In the early 1970s, many young revivalists had no jobs and no opportunity to pursue further

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<sup>319</sup> All Christians Fellowship Mission, ‘Lesson 6. Our Church Family Values’, *Membership Bible Studies*, 33; All Christians Fellowship Mission, ‘Lesson 4. Understanding the Vision and Purpose of your Church’, *Membership Bible Studies*, 20-1.

<sup>320</sup> NEMA was established in Jos in 1982 by six Nigerian indigenous missionary societies (EMS/ECWA, Calvary Ministries, His Grace Evangelical Movement, Christian Missionary Foundation, Christ Ambassador Evangelical Team, and Community Missions Board of COCIN) to encourage and coordinate missionary activity within Nigeria and beyond. See Elisabeth Vingberg, *Nigerians engaged in Mission Work Today*, Jos: Grace Foundations Media Services, 2001, 51-2.

<sup>321</sup> OI, William Okoye, 28.10.01, Abuja.

<sup>322</sup> Brochure introducing Redeemed People’s Mission.

<sup>323</sup> Christian Pentecostal Mission, ‘Christian Commitment’, *Membership Manual*, 78.

<sup>324</sup> Amazing Love Ministries, *Rules and Regulations*, 25.

<sup>325</sup> See Table 1.4.1, Appendix 1.4.

<sup>326</sup> See for example, Ezekiel, ‘We are Seeking Family Values’, *The Pentecostal Family. A Special Publication of Christian Pentecostal Mission Int’l on Family Fellowship Affairs*, 8; ‘The Dwindling Passion for Souls’, *Echoes of Joy. A Publication of C.P.M. Int’l (The City of Joy)*, 14. See also Chidi Arinze Okafor, ‘Fading Priority’, *Echoes of Joy. A Publication of C.P.M. Int’l (The City of Joy)*, 14: ‘How many actually are heeding to God’s priority in our practices, in our preachings and in our prayers? . . . In the 70s and even 80s it was not so. Priority was saving the souls of men.’

education.<sup>327</sup> Driven by their youthful energy, and the revival's intense charismatic impulses and millennial outlook, they seized the opportunity to preach the gospel on a full-time basis.<sup>328</sup> However, as they settled down to the responsibilities of marriage, employment, or furthering their education,<sup>329</sup> they no longer found they had the time or energy to engage in aggressive evangelism. Today's neo-Pentecostals have different preoccupations. Few admit to being unemployed, and most claim to be engaged in some form of occupation or study programme. Evangelism, while not abandoned, is no longer a priority. In the Jos survey, out of 105 respondents in Redeemed People's Mission, 75.3 % claimed to have a job, while 12.4 % said they were either students or 'applicants.'<sup>330</sup>

### **5.3 Mission Strategies**

During the 1970s, some NPCs employed an aggressive strategy of crusade evangelism and church planting,<sup>331</sup> though this enthusiasm for expansion was not shared by all, and consequently they have not all experienced the same growth in terms of new congregations. Initially, those that pursued a church-planting strategy targeted urban areas, holding extended evangelistic campaigns, planting churches from their converts, and then using these as a platform for penetrating rural areas and financing further crusades.

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<sup>327</sup> Lack of opportunity to pursue further education was due to a variety of reasons, including inability to pay fees and poor administration due to post-war conditions. However, due to their strong adventist beliefs some revivalists believed that secular education was wrong. See Nwodika, 'Churches in the Seventies' (Appendix 4.7.1, paragraph 6).

<sup>328</sup> Nwodika, 'Churches in the Seventies' (Appendix 4.7.1, paragraph 3-6).

<sup>329</sup> See for example, Ume Kalu, Letter to Roberts, 24 August 1972: 'University students always feel so busy that evangelism and Christian service suffers in favour of studying our books.'

<sup>330</sup> See Table 1.4.9, Appendix 1.4.

<sup>331</sup> McClung Jr., 'Pentecostal/Charismatic Perspectives', 15, has identified church planting as an important element of global Pentecostal missiology. Among the more successful Igbo NPCs during the

Outside Igboland, Igbo neo-Pentecostal pioneers claimed to target areas where there was no strong evangelical or Pentecostal presence, and to mobilise local Christians to evangelise their own communities. For example, in 1975 NEM planted the first Pentecostal church in the Northern city of Maiduguri, but chose to bypass the Middle Belt city of Jos where there was already a Pentecostal presence.<sup>332</sup> ACFM also avoided areas where there were existing Pentecostal churches, claiming that its early policy was not to ‘steal’ members from other Protestant groups.<sup>333</sup> NPC pioneers distinguished between ‘living churches’ and those they felt were not actively engaged in evangelism or preaching a ‘full gospel.’ This is how Wilson Ezeofor explained his rationale for starting BFM in Jos:

My main vision at that time was to plant living churches. . . What I mean by that is to plant churches that will be vibrant, where the true gospel, where the gospel will be preached without compromise, making sure that people are born-again, filled with the Holy Spirit, and healed if they need healing. . . A church that preaches the full gospel. That was my main vision, to plant churches like that all over Plateau, all over Nigeria.<sup>334</sup>

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1970s in terms of church growth were *Riches of Christ*, *Grace of God*, CPM, ACFM, RPM, *Save the Lost*, and NEM.

<sup>332</sup> OI, Bitrus K. Pathel, 18.11.00, Bukuru.

<sup>333</sup> Okoroafor, *William Okoye*, 85-93. According to Okoroafor, ACFM was the first ‘full Pentecostal’ church in Lokoja, Zaki-Biam, Kabba, and Abuja, and the second in Jos, after Assemblies of God.

<sup>334</sup> OI, Wilson Ezeofor, 25.9.01, Jos. When Ezeofor opened his church in 1979, there were already several mission churches in Jos, including Anglican, COCIN, and ECWA.

Church planting has intensified since the 1970s and most NPCs now pursue this strategy.<sup>335</sup> For example, *Grace of God* plans to establish churches in all the states of Nigeria.<sup>336</sup> NEM has also continued its policy of planting churches in the North and Middle Belt. Either it enters new territory through invitation or because it believes a locality has been insufficiently evangelised. Sometimes a new venture is initiated by a vision. NEM pastor Bitrus Pathel told me that he once received a vision of a mountain with over-ripe millet and no one to harvest it. He was also given the name of a village he had not heard of before, and on enquiry discovered it was located on a mountain. NEM has since planted a church there.<sup>337</sup>

Local evangelistic strategies identified by respondents, include personal witnessing, church-based evangelistic events, open-air ‘crusades,’ hospital and prison visitation, and the use of media technologies. CPM in Aba, for example, has an ‘Evangelical Group’ that engages in a variety of evangelistic activities.<sup>338</sup> It has also launched a new initiative called ‘Operation 7000 souls’ (to encourage members to become ‘soul-winners’) and has created a Hotel Outreach Department. During his tenure as PFN Chairman (Abia State), CPM pastor John Ezeh coordinated the 2001 visit of the German evangelist Reinhard Bonnke to Aba.<sup>339</sup> Amazing Love Assembly (Enugu) lists

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<sup>335</sup> For example, Amazing Love Assembly (Enugu) began to plant new branches in 2000, having existed for 13 years as one single congregation. They now have at least three new branches, in Abakaliki, Awka, and Okigwe.

<sup>336</sup> OI, Joseph Onuchukwu, 23.5.00, Enugu. By 1996, *Grace of God* had established churches in all the Nigerian states apart from Lagos, Oyo, Ogun, and Kwara. ‘Supplement on Grace of God Mission’, *Prophecy. The Messiah is Coming*, 14.

<sup>337</sup> OI, Bitrus K. Pathel, 18.11.01, Bukuru.

<sup>338</sup> The ‘Evangelical Group’ of CPM, Aba, includes the following sections: Jesus Harvesters, Hospital Ministration, Exploiters Squad, Visitation Team, and Bus and Morning Cry. *Echoes of Joy. A Publication of C.P.M. Int’l (The City of Joy)*, 31.

<sup>339</sup> Sophie Nnadozie, ‘The Genesis of the City of Joy. An Interview with the Host Pastor, Rev. John U. Ezeh’, *Echoes of Joy. A Publication of C.P.M. Int’l (The City of Joy)*, 8-9. NPCs target hotels partly because prostitutes use them to ply their trade.

among its methods: evangelism in cities, personal evangelism, mass evangelism, literature evangelism, TV evangelism, radio evangelism, and crusades.<sup>340</sup> In 2000, ALA embarked on a new venture, sending ‘missionaries’ to evangelise and plant churches in surrounding towns.<sup>341</sup>

NPCs have increasingly employed Western techniques and technologies to propagate the gospel. I have mentioned their preference for crusade evangelism and church planting. Media evangelism has also been a feature from the movement’s inception. Initially this was limited to print media, and in particular the use of tracts as evangelistic tools. More recently, like other African neo-Pentecostals,<sup>342</sup> they have employed electronic media to spread their message.<sup>343</sup> Igbo neo-Pentecostals were using radio and television as far back as the early 1980s,<sup>344</sup> but in recent years, this has become more widespread.<sup>345</sup> Leaders from at least six NPCs I visited have appeared on Nigerian television,<sup>346</sup> and several others have their own radio programmes. It is usually the larger denominations that have TV programmes, and invariably the founder

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<sup>340</sup> Amazing Love Ministries, *Rules and Regulations*, 25.

<sup>341</sup> This venture started while I was staying with the Senior Pastor.

<sup>342</sup> Matthews A., Ojo, ‘Media Evangelism’, in Glazier (ed.), *Encyclopedia*, 180-83; Hackett, ‘Charismatic/Pentecostal’, 258, 263; Marshall-Fratani, ‘Global and Local’, 283.

<sup>343</sup> During my field research in Nigeria, I myself appeared on television twice and radio once, in the company of Igbo neo-Pentecostals.

<sup>344</sup> For example, Nwachukwu of *Grace of God* and Okeke of *Save the Lost* had TV outreaches in the early 1980s. Nwachukwu’s programme was originally called ‘Hour of Freedom,’ but is now called ‘Back to the Bible.’ OI, Paul Nwachukwu, 12.5.00, Onitsha. Okeke started his TV outreach in 1984, and his programme went out on eight different stations including Kaduna. OI, Tony Okeke, 20.10.01, Enugu. Okoye of ACFM had his first radio programme in 1980, and became known as the ‘Radio Pastor.’ Okoroafor, *William Okoye*, 143-44.

<sup>345</sup> For example, CPM in Aba has a TV programme called ‘Moment of Joy.’ Nnadozie, ‘Genesis of the City of Joy’, *Echoes of Joy. A Publication of C.P.M. Int’l (The City of Joy)*, 8. As noted earlier, RPM (Jos) has a TV outreach called ‘Divine Encounter’, which is usually a recording of their Sunday worship meeting (see Plate 8.3), and ALA (Enugu) has a weekly radio programme called ‘Livingspring.’ The ‘Livingspring’ programmes I listened to consisted of a mixture of Bible teaching and evangelistic preaching.

or senior pastor delivers the message. The use of audio and videotapes has also become a popular strategy, giving rise to the ‘cassettisation’ of modern religious culture. Together these techniques have increased the movement’s visibility, raised the profiles of its leaders, and allowed neo-Pentecostal messages to be spread over wide geographical areas and heterogeneous populations.

Another factor behind Igbo neo-Pentecostal expansion has been its commitment to power-oriented evangelism. As McGee has noted, Pentecostals expect ‘signs and wonders’ to accompany gospel preaching.<sup>347</sup> I have referred to the importance of healing for Igbo neo-Pentecostal growth and only touch on it here. Preaching a ‘full gospel’ was an indispensable part of NPC methodology, and power-oriented evangelism was a significant factor in attracting crowds to evangelistic campaigns and recruiting new members.<sup>348</sup> When, for example, ACFM founder William Okoye conducted his inaugural crusade in the Middle Belt town of Gboko in 1975, it drew large crowds, partly because posters and loudspeakers advertising the event promised not only forgiveness for sinners but healing and deliverance for the sick and oppressed. When reports began to circulate of significant healings on the first night, many more turned up.<sup>349</sup> Igbo neo-Pentecostal accounts of past glories are replete with examples of healing miracles and conversions. When Nwosu of RPM held his 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration as a ‘minister of the gospel,’ he referred to the many notable conversions

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<sup>346</sup> These include Wilson Ezeofor of BFM (Jos), John Ezeh of CPM (Aba), Paul Nwachukwu of *Grace of God* (Onitsha), Thompson Nwosu of RPM (Jos), William Okoye of ACFM (Abuja), and Tony Okeke of *Save the Lost* (Enugu). For Nwosu’s TV programme, see Plate 8.3.

<sup>347</sup> Gary B. McGee, ‘Pentecostals and their Various Strategies for Global Mission: An Historical Assessment’, in Dempster, Klaus, and Petersen (eds.), *Called & Empowered*, 215.

<sup>348</sup> For a flyer advertising an Igbo NPC ‘crusade’, see Plate 8.1.

<sup>349</sup> Okoroafor, *William Okoye*, 77-81; Nduul *et al.*, ‘Rev. Okoye, Reaping the Reward of Faithfulness’, *The Compassion. A Quarterly News Magazine of All Christians Fellowship Mission*, 1992, 5.

and miracles that apparently accompanied his early ministry, as evidence that God was with him.<sup>350</sup> Such accounts serve to legitimise NPC ministries in the eyes of their followers, but obviously need to be treated with caution. Some neo-Pentecostals refer to a decline in power-oriented evangelism in recent years. For instance, RPM state, ‘Today, much of the signs and wonders are only found on signboards of churches and on posters, handbills and advertisement of church programmes. What has gone wrong?’<sup>351</sup>

In Igbo neo-Pentecostal mission initiatives outside Igboland, commitment to indigenous principles has met with limited success, especially when compared to the mission churches and Assemblies of God.<sup>352</sup> Initially, NPCs appealed to the poorer and less-educated strata of society. They have a mix of ethnic groups among their membership, including settlers and indigenes, though Igbos remain in the majority. Most church leaders are from the south, though there are a number of indigenes in leadership positions.<sup>353</sup> Indigenous membership is strongest in rural congregations and those

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<sup>350</sup> Rev N. C. Thompson, ‘Account of Rev N. C. Thompson’s Stewardship, presented at his 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary as a Minister of the Gospel’, Jos, 4 November, 2001. This event was attended by Chief Joshua Dariye, Executive Governor of Plateau state. See Plate 10.1.

<sup>351</sup> Redeemed People’s Mission, ‘Lesson 5. Called to Witness’, *Redeemed Adult Sunday School Lessons*, 1999, 16.

<sup>352</sup> As noted in chapter two (section 2.4.2), AG has a strong indigenous church policy, though this has not always been successful, especially in urban areas. In Jos city, for example, most members of AG congregations are southerners. But outside Jos, and especially in rural areas, indigenes predominate. The Jos District Superintendent Pastor, Chung Pam Chu, is from the local Berom ethnic group. OI, Chung Pam Chu, 26.9.01, Bukuru.

<sup>353</sup> For example, by 1998 RPM consisted of six districts (Jos, Yola, Bauchi, Gembu, Jalingo, Eastern), presided over by six District Superintendents (three Igbos, one from Delta State (in the south), and two northerners - those in Gembu and Jalingo districts). See Redeemed People’s Mission, Annual Progress Report, 6 December 1992. ACFM tries to use indigenous leaders but this is not always possible. In Benue State, for example, 90 % of pastors are from the local Tiv ethnic group. OI, William Okoye, 28.10.01, Abuja. The Jos District Pastor of ACFM is from Kaduna State in the North. OI, Stephen Nyam, 22.11.01, Jos. I also interviewed one NEM pastor from Adamawa State in the Middle Belt. OI, Bitrus K. Pathel, 18.11.01, Bukuru.

urban areas where mission churches are weak.<sup>354</sup> In Jos, for example, where mission churches are particularly strong, RPM, ACFM, and BFM congregations are dominated by Igbos and attract few indigenes. Out of 105 respondents from three RPM congregations in Jos District, 58.1 % were Igbos, 22.9 % belonged to other southern ethnic groups (mainly Yoruba), 2.9 % were indigenes from Plateau State,<sup>355</sup> and 14.3 % were from other Northern or Middle Belt ethnic groups. Out of 22 respondents from the Jos District headquarters ACFM, 40.9 % were Igbos, and only 4.5 % were indigenes.<sup>356</sup> BFM's headquarters church has a slightly higher proportion of indigenes. Out of 40 respondents, 42.5 % were Igbos and 12.5 % were indigenes.<sup>357</sup> It was difficult to determine numbers of indigenes joining these churches, but overall they have remained low in proportion to congregational sizes.

Igbo NPCs have made little impression on Muslim populations, especially in recent years as inter-religious tensions have escalated.<sup>358</sup> For example, Nwosu of RPM found it easier to reach Muslims with the gospel early in his ministry because they were less antagonistic compared to today.<sup>359</sup> Over the years, some Muslims have come to RPM for prayer, but few have become members.<sup>360</sup> RPM's limited success has partly been because they lack an effective rehabilitation programme. Those Muslims who convert

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<sup>354</sup> For example, in RPM branches outside Plateau State and in rural congregations, most members are indigenes. OI, Thompson Nwosu, 31.8.01, Jos.

<sup>355</sup> There are many ethnic groups found on the Jos Plateau, but by far the largest are the Berom. For more on the ethnic mix on Jos Plateau, see Umar Habila Dadem Danfulani, 'Religious Conflict on the Jos Plateau: The Interplay between Christianity and Traditional Religion During the Early Missionary Period', *Swedish Missiological Themes*, 89.1, 2001, 8.

<sup>356</sup> However, the pastor of ACFM (Jos) told me that his congregation has a mix of ethnic groups, including Esan (Edo State), Isoko (Delta), Efik/Ibibio (Akwa Ibom), Yoruba, Ngas, and Berom (Plateau). OI, Stephen Nyam, 22.11.01, Jos.

<sup>357</sup> See Table 1.4.2, Appendix 1.4.

<sup>358</sup> All the leaders I spoke to in NEM, RPM, and ACFM said that their churches in the north and Middle Belt had made very little impression on Muslim communities.

<sup>359</sup> PC, Thompson Nwosu, 12.12.01, Jos.

to Christianity do so at risk to their lives and usually have to leave their communities.<sup>361</sup> In my survey, out of 167 respondents there were four (2.4 %) former Muslims. Only one was converted through their present church and none were local indigenes or Hausa-Fulanis. When asked whether there were any converted Muslims in their churches, most respondents said they knew of less than three.<sup>362</sup> Due to recent developments, there is a lack of confidence in inter-religious dialogue as a viable strategy for peace and reconciliation. Neo-Pentecostals generally consider Muslims their enemies and consequently tend to adopt an aggressive style of evangelism to reach them.<sup>363</sup>

A recent trend is for some churches to pursue a ‘global vision,’ reflected in a penchant for inserting the word ‘international’ into their names, and including an image of the globe on their logos.<sup>364</sup> The driving force behind this is the global mission to which they believe God has called them, as Asamoah-Gyadu has noted of their Ghanaian counterparts,<sup>365</sup> and their belief that God has blessed them with resources to evangelise the African continent.<sup>366</sup> For example, Nwachukwu of *Grace of God* states, ‘Africa is

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<sup>360</sup> OI, David Adegboye, 6.9.01, Jos.

<sup>361</sup> For example, ACFM’s Jos District pastor told me his congregation has one Fulani Muslim convert who had to leave his home and is now attending their Bible school. Through his witness, two others were converted, but one was apparently killed by his community. OI, Stephen Nyam, 22.11.01, Jos.

<sup>362</sup> See Tables 1.4.4 & 1.4.5, Appendix 1.4.

<sup>363</sup> Marshall, ‘Power in the Name of Jesus’, 217; Falola, *Violence in Nigeria*, 48.

<sup>364</sup> Examples include Grace of God Mission International, Christian Pentecostal Mission International, and Salvation for All Mission International. The headquarters of *Grace of God* in Onitsha is called Grace Cathedral - World Outreach Centre (see Plate 6.2), and *Salvation for All*’s headquarters is called Faith Cathedral, International Outreach Church. CPM has an International Bible Seminary, and Okeke, General Overseer of *Save the Lost*, calls his ministry Tony Okeke World Outreach. The church logos of *Salvation for All* and ACFM have a globe with Africa at the centre (see Plate 6.5).

<sup>365</sup> Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu, ‘Pentecostalism in Africa and the Changing Face of Christian Mission: Pentecostal/Charismatic Renewal Movements in Ghana’, *Mission Studies*, 19.2-38, 2002, 30-1.

<sup>366</sup> OI, Paul Nwachukwu, 12.5.00, Onitsha.

the hope of the world, and Nigeria is the Jerusalem of Africa.<sup>367</sup> ACFM is another church with a global vision. It has its 'International Headquarters' in Abuja and has apparently established contact with over 200 'evangelism-orientated' churches and ministries in approximately 100 nations.<sup>368</sup> ACFM's church logo, displayed in their literature and on their signboards, contains the symbol of a globe surrounded by the Bible text: 'Go therefore and make disciples of all nations.'<sup>369</sup> Several denominations have established branches abroad. For example, LWM has branches in North America, and has recently opened one in London. *Grace of God* has branches in Cameroon and the Cote d'Ivoire.<sup>370</sup> CPM has branches in Greece and London, as well as Ghana, Cameroon, and Cotonou, and its vision is to open branches in every African nation.<sup>371</sup>

#### 5.4 Church Growth Patterns

Church growth is difficult to measure. Statistics are prone to exaggeration, and congregational sizes vary considerably from under 50 to several thousand.<sup>372</sup> Furthermore, many members join through transfer from other denominations rather than conversion. For example, in the Jos survey, out of 167 respondents only 32.9 % joined their church through conversion, while 58.1 % transferred from another denomination.<sup>373</sup> In addition, some churches have started as schisms from existing ones. I return to this in the next section. Having said this, growth rates, at least in their

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<sup>367</sup> Quoted in 'Supplement on Grace of God Mission', *Prophecy. The Messiah is Coming*, 19.

<sup>368</sup> Okoroafor, *William Okoye*, 181.

<sup>369</sup> Matt 28:19. See Plates 7.5 & 6.5.

<sup>370</sup> OI, Paul Nwachukwu, 12.5.00, Onitsha. In 2000, *Grace of God* had five churches in Cameroon, and one in Cote'd'Ivoire. OI, Joseph Onuchukwu, 23.5.00, Enugu. In 2002, Nwachukwu visited London and held meetings at a church called Tower of Refuge, started by a former member of *Grace of God*. Most members of Tower of Refuge are Nigerians. OI, Frances Bolton, 4.10.02, Loughton.

<sup>371</sup> OI, Emeka Ibekwe, 16.10.01, Umuahia.

initial stages, have been impressive, both in terms of congregational sizes and in terms of new branches. For instance, CPM started with about 16 members in 1977, and by 2001 had established 240 branches across Nigeria. Some of its urban congregations number several thousand.<sup>374</sup> *Grace of God*, started in 1978, now claims to have approximately 1,100 branches and over 500,000 adherents.<sup>375</sup> A more recent example is LWM in Aba, which began in 1987 and by 2001, had planted 75 new congregations.<sup>376</sup> LWM congregations grow to around 250 before they divide into two.

The majority of churches have experienced most of their growth within Igboland or southern Nigeria, but in the case of NEM, ACFM, and RPM, they have flourished predominantly in the Middle Belt and Northern Nigeria. NEM, which began in 1975, is the largest with approximately 200 branches, and several of its urban congregations have over one thousand members.<sup>377</sup> ACFM had eight branches by 1979. This had

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<sup>372</sup> For example, *Grace of God's* congregation in Dadin Kowa, Jos District, had about 10 people when I attended, and its main congregation in Enugu had approximately 2,000. ACFM's Bukuru branch had less than 10 people when I attended, while its Jos District headquarters had approximately 200.

<sup>373</sup> See Table 1.4.3, Appendix 1.4.

<sup>374</sup> Statistics based on 'Divine Restoration', *Pentecostal Family. A Special Publication of Christian Pentecostal Mission Int'l on Family Fellowship Affairs*, 7; Christian Pentecostal Mission, 'Branches and their Addresses', *Adult Sunday School Manual*, 59-65. CPM branches in 2001 were distributed as follows: Lagos State (34 branches); Ogun/Ondo/Oyo States (12); Edo/Delta States (40); Anambra/Enugu/Abia/Imo/Ebonyi States (87); Rivers State (26); Akwa Ibom/Cross River States (8); Kwara (2); Northern States (28); Ghana (1). One informant told me that CPM headquarters congregation had a membership of around 12,000 in 2001. OI, Emeka Ibekwe, 16.10.01, Umuahia.

<sup>375</sup> OI, Joseph Onuchukwu, 23.5.00, Enugu. According to *Grace of God* church records, membership was approximately 500,000 in 1996. Quoted in 'Supplement on Grace of God Mission', *Prophecy. The Messiah is Coming*, 14.

<sup>376</sup> Living Word Ministries Inc., *Annual Journal*, 9. Most are in the city of Aba, but in 2001, LWM also had branches in Umuahia, Onitsha, Owerri, Port Harcourt, and three in America.

<sup>377</sup> OI, Francis Ben Amaechi, 15.5.00, Onitsha. According to Brierley (ed.), *World Churches Handbook*, 632, NEM had approximately 115 branches in 1995, with 11,900 attending meetings. The first church planted by NEM in the northern city of Maiduguri had approximately 1,500 members in 1986. OI, Bitrus K. Pathel, 18.11.01, Bukuru. Pathel was the pastor of the Maiduguri NEM church from 1985 to 1986. According to another informant, NEM's branch at Zaki-Biam had an average attendance of over 1,000 in 1992. OI, Pius G. Obuegbe, 29.8.01, Bukuru. Obuegbe was a member of NEM, Zaki-Biam, from 1989 to 1992.

grown to 40 by 1996, and approximately 80 by 2001.<sup>378</sup> Apart from some branches in the Abuja area, most congregations are not large. For example, ACFM's Jos district headquarters church, planted in 1976, by 2001 had between 200 and 250 members. RPM established at least five branches by 1979, and during the 1980s planted churches in nine different states.<sup>379</sup> By 2001, it had established 79 branches. RPM headquarters church in Jos, which opened in 1977 with approximately 100 members, initially grew quickly, and by 1987 had an average attendance of over one thousand. However, since then attendance has fluctuated and by 2000, it had dropped to 800.<sup>380</sup>

## 6. Fragmented Communities

However, not all new churches were a result of mission initiatives. One reason for the proliferation of NPCs has been the movement's fissiparous nature, as Cox has noted of global Pentecostalism.<sup>381</sup> Wilson suggests that schisms are more common in eras of religious expansion.<sup>382</sup> Schismatic tendencies soon overtook the fledgling movement. At least 24 Igbo-founded NPCs started during the 1970s, and seven were the result of schism.<sup>383</sup> Ironically, some neo-Pentecostals trace this trend to the so-called 'New

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<sup>378</sup> Okoroafor, *William Okoye*, 153; OI, Mike C. Okoye, 2.9.01, Jos. According to Okoye, ACFM's assistant General Overseer, ACFM has seven districts: Abuja (approximately 50 branches), Gboko (approximately 20 branches), Jos (5), Lokoja (2), Kaduna (1), Eastern (at least 3).

<sup>379</sup> These included Plateau, Adamawa, Taraba, Borno, Tigawa, Bauchi, Kaduna, Nassarawa, and Rivers states.

<sup>380</sup> Thompson, 'Account of Rev N. C. Thompson's Stewardship', 6-8; Redeemed People's Mission Annual Progress Reports, 1986 to 2000. The fall in attendance of the Jos congregation was partly a result of several schisms RPM has experienced over the years, but it has also planted out at least two other congregations in Jos from among its membership.

<sup>381</sup> Cox, *Fire From Heaven*, 77.

<sup>382</sup> John Wilson, 'The Sociology of Schism', in Michael Hill (ed.), *A Sociological Yearbook of Religion in Britain*, London: SCM Press Ltd, 1971, 3.

<sup>383</sup> See Appendix 2.2. Churches that started during the 1970s because of schism include Redeeming Time Pilgrims Mission (Owerri), *Jesus the Way* (Onitsha), Gospel Crusaders Mission (Aba), Fullness of Christ Mission (Udi), All Believers Fellowship Group (Aba), Holy Ghost Ministry (Awka), and Bible Faith Mission (Jos).

Move,' intended as an ecumenical initiative.<sup>384</sup> It was after this that new groups began to multiply at an alarming rate. NPC proliferation has continued since the 1970s, and many new denominations were also secessions from existing ones. Most of those I visited have experienced several breakaways during their relatively brief histories. For example, at least six new churches have started as secessions from *Grace of God*,<sup>385</sup> at least two from CPM,<sup>386</sup> three from RPM,<sup>387</sup> and at least three from Holiness Evangelical Church.<sup>388</sup>

Church proliferation has reached epidemic proportions in recent years.<sup>389</sup> For example, by 2001 there were over 47 neo-Pentecostal denominations in Anambra State, most founded by Igbos and many with branches in the major city of Onitsha.<sup>390</sup> In Enugu, there were more than 35 neo-Pentecostal denominations or ministries by the year 2000, many started during the 1990s.<sup>391</sup> The same trend is present in the Middle Belt. For instance, in the small town of Bukuru, Plateau State, there were branches from at least

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<sup>384</sup> See for example, Chukwuka, *Beyond the Night*, 39: 'Since after the "New-Move" we became a fragmented regiment.' Chukwuka refers to the years 1977 to 1979 as the 'Dark Ages' of the movement when leaders became increasingly authoritarian and accountable to no one (*Beyond the Night*, 33-9).

<sup>385</sup> Schisms from *Grace of God* include Holy Ghost Ministry, Awka (1979); Christ for All Mission, Onitsha (1980); Royal Pentecostal Mission, Onitsha (1988); Our Generation Gospel Ministries, Onitsha (1990); Overcomer's Bible Church, Onitsha (1991); and Throne of Grace Church, Enugu (1999).

<sup>386</sup> Schisms from CPM include Living Faith Church, Onitsha (1985), and Peculiar People, Aba (1988).

<sup>387</sup> Schisms from RPM include one in 1984 (name unknown); Winners Celebration Chapel, Jos (1991); and Living Spring Assembly, Jos (1999).

<sup>388</sup> Schisms from Holiness Evangelical Church include Redeeming Time Pilgrims Mission, Owerri (1973); Living Water, Owerri; and Church of God Worldwide, Owerri, started by former acting General Overseer B. C. Erimujor.

<sup>389</sup> For instance, Turaki and Galadima have noted with alarm the proliferation of Pentecostal churches in urban centres across Nigeria. Bulus Galadima and Yusufu Turaki, 'Christianity in Nigeria. Part II', *Africa Journal of Evangelical Theology*, 20.2, 2001, 199.

<sup>390</sup> Information based on personal observation, and Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria (PFN) membership, quoted in F. Ude, 'The Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria in Anambra', M.A. thesis, Evangelical Theological Seminary, Jos, 2000, 95-7 (Appendix 2.3).

<sup>391</sup> Information based on PFN membership and personal observation (Appendix 2.4). A recent issue of Nigeria's *Newswatch* magazine notes that along a one and a half kilometre stretch of Agbani Road, Enugu, there are about 30 churches in different buildings. Some of the buildings have several churches

38 neo-Pentecostal denominations, many started by members of ethnic groups from southern Nigeria.<sup>392</sup>

Some factors that contributed towards the fragmentation of NPCs are different from those that caused them to break away from mission churches in the first place. For instance, reaction to the mission churches or the quest for a more satisfying expression of Christianity were no longer decisive issues. However, other factors came into play. In this section, I draw upon Wilson's model of religious schism to explore the reasons behind the movement's fragmentation.<sup>393</sup>

### 6.1 Structural Conduciveness

Wilson suggests that certain organisational structures are more susceptible to easy fragmentation. Schism is more likely to occur where a movement falls at either end of the continuum between highly centralised organisation and decentralisation.<sup>394</sup> As they attained denominational status, NPCs adopted increasingly authoritarian ecclesiastical structures, which conflicted with traditional Igbo democratic culture.<sup>395</sup> One reason given for the schism within *Riches of Christ* was Mba's autocratic leadership style and reluctance to delegate responsibility to fellow leaders.<sup>396</sup> A more recent example occurred within RPM, when Deputy General Superintendent, Kenneth Eze, left to form

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on different floors. See Ekenna, 'Who Do They Serve?', *Newswatch*, 3 December 2001, 23-4. See also Plate 6.6, which shows Bread of Life Mission's national headquarters, along Agbani Road.

<sup>392</sup> Information based on PFN membership and personal observation (Appendix 2.5).

<sup>393</sup> Wilson, 'Schism.' Wilson bases his theory on Neil Smelser's *Theory of Collective Behaviour* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1962), a model derived from the analysis of social movements. Smelser identified several determinants in his attempts at explaining outbreaks of collective behaviour: structural conduciveness, structural strain, mobilising agent, precipitating factor, and social control.

<sup>394</sup> Wilson, 'Schism', 10-11.

<sup>395</sup> See section 3.2 of this chapter, and section 1.2.1, chapter two.

<sup>396</sup> Anyaegbu, 'Pentecostal/Evangelical', 57 (based on a personal interview with Paul Nweke).

Living Spring Assembly in 1999. A few years prior to his departure, Eze had transferred to the headquarters church to work directly under Nwosu, the General Superintendent. This coincided with Nwosu taking more control of the organisation, a move that strained the relationship and eventually led to schism.<sup>397</sup>

## 6.2 Structural Strain

The concept of structural strain is the ‘keystone’ of Wilson’s model of analysis. The major source of structural strain is the disjuncture that may occur in a religious group between norms and values. For Wilson, a schismatic group ‘is a movement which has its origins in a dispute over norms and allegations that the main group has departed from those implicated in the values of the original movement.’<sup>398</sup>

There was considerable ideological conformity among early leaders and members of Igbo-founded NPCs. They were committed to Pentecostal spirituality, radical holiness, and aggressive evangelism. However, actual practice sometimes deviated from stated values. The behaviour of Edozie Mba is a case in point. A further reason given for the early schism within *Riches* was Mba’s alleged immoral conduct, which was at variance with the church’s strong ethical values.<sup>399</sup> Another example was Okeke’s Save the Lost Mission. Okeke’s original calling was as an evangelist, but when *Save the Lost* began to plant new churches, he found himself distracted by administrative duties. Okeke felt they had departed from their original vision and eventually left to resume his

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<sup>397</sup> OI, Thompson Nwosu, 31.8.01, Jos.

<sup>398</sup> Wilson, ‘Schism’, 5.

<sup>399</sup> Anyaegbu, ‘Pentecostal/Evangelical’, 57; OI, Paul Nwachukwu, 12.5.00, Onitsha.

evangelistic activities on an independent basis.<sup>400</sup> Something similar occurred when Okoye and Ezeofor broke away from *Riches* to embark on their evangelistic venture outside Igboland, a move initially opposed by the leaders, but which was compatible with the original missionary objectives of the church.<sup>401</sup> These examples support Barratt's assertion that motives behind further schism within African independency rest on a conviction that the separatist body has betrayed its original vision.<sup>402</sup>

Wilson refers to the blockage of mobility among the laity and their exclusion from positions of power as another source of structural strain.<sup>403</sup> Some of the leadership tussles that were symptomatic of Igbo NPCs had their origins in status frustration. For example, the schisms within *Grace of God* occurred largely because some pastors, who relinquished their leadership roles to join the merger in 1976, felt excluded from positions of power in the new organisation. This was also a reason behind the rift between Ezeofor and Okoye of Freedom in Christ Church (later, ACFM). Ezeofor started Bible Faith Mission in 1979 because he felt frustrated with his subordinate position.<sup>404</sup>

Another source of structural strain stemmed from the individualistic orientation and pneumatic emphasis of neo-Pentecostal spirituality. Several scholars have noted this

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<sup>400</sup> OI, Tony Okeke, 20.10.01, Enugu. Okeke later resumed his leadership of *Save the Lost*.

<sup>401</sup> Okoroafor, *William Okoye*, 68-9.

<sup>402</sup> Barrett, *Schism*, 197.

<sup>403</sup> Wilson, 'Schism', 7, 9. See also Paul Chambers, "'On or Off the Bus': Identity, Belonging and Schism. A Case Study of a Neo-Pentecostal House Church", in Hunt, Hamilton, and Walter (eds.), *Charismatic Christianity*, 148, who found that the denial of 'aspirations for improved status' among young men within a British neo-Pentecostal church 'set in motion significant strains' and directly led to schism.

<sup>404</sup> Okoroafor, *William Okoye*, 114-21.

with respect to the Nigerian context.<sup>405</sup> In the case of Igbo NPCs, a stress on personal charisma and spiritual revelation encouraged individual autonomy and competing claims to authority, which facilitated the fragmentation of the movement.<sup>406</sup>

### 6.3 Precipitating factors

Structural conduciveness and conditions of strain may exist without necessarily leading to schism. For schism to occur there needs to be a precipitating factor to provide a stimulus for direct action, and a mobilising agent to organise the dissident group.<sup>407</sup> In almost every case of schism I came across it has been pastors within existing churches who have acted as ‘mobilising agents’ for secession. Factors that precipitated schism included personality clashes, sexual and financial misdemeanours, doctrinal disagreements, and new visions.<sup>408</sup> One example is Christ Love Mission, founded in 1986 by Mose Akwuobi after he quarrelled with Peter Maduako, his senior pastor in Central Christian Fellowship Mission (CCFM).<sup>409</sup> Several churches started after founders came under discipline in their former churches for immoral behaviour. Fullness of Christ Mission, another secession from CCFM, started after its founder was disciplined in 1975 for alleged immorality.<sup>410</sup> A more recent example occurred in 1999 when a senior pastor of *Grace of God* also came under discipline and left to form his own ministry.<sup>411</sup> Doctrinal disagreement was not a common cause of schism, but did occasionally occur. The most infamous case concerns Edozie Mba again. In 1988, he

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<sup>405</sup> For example, Hackett, ‘Charismatic/Pentecostal’, 267; Kalu, ‘Third Response’, 8.

<sup>406</sup> Nwodika, ‘Churches in the Seventies’ (Appendix 4.7.1, paragraphs 2, 3 & 11); John Onuora, ‘Round Table Discussion’, RSC, 29.4.00, Enugu.

<sup>407</sup> Wilson, *Schism*, 14-15.

<sup>408</sup> See Kalu, *Embattled Gods*, 279-80. Larbi notes similar precipitating factors behind Pentecostal fragmentation in Ghana. Larbi, *Eddies of Ghanaian Christianity*, 327.

<sup>409</sup> Anyaegbu, ‘Pentecostal/Evangelical’, 84.

<sup>410</sup> *Ibid.*, 80.

introduced sabbatarian doctrines into *Riches*, prompting the resignation of most of his pastors, who broke away to form Bread of Life Mission.<sup>412</sup> Finally, some seceded on the pretext of receiving new visions for ministry and mission.<sup>413</sup> I have already mentioned the case of William Okoye. A less commendable example involved Lawrence Odunze, a leading pastor with *Grace of God*, who in 1988 claimed to receive a ‘vision’ to open his own ministry, and promptly ‘hijacked’ the Awka branch of the church, renaming it Royal Pentecostal Mission.<sup>414</sup>

#### 6.4 Consequences of Schism

A recent article in a Nigerian Pentecostal magazine entitled ‘The Break-Away Syndrome in Pentecostal Churches’ reflects a growing concern among Nigerian Pentecostals.<sup>415</sup> Scholars have noted the detrimental effects of schism on the spirituality and social impact of religious movements.<sup>416</sup> As Newbigin observes, when schism occurs ‘something essential to the true being of the Church is lost.’<sup>417</sup> The consensus is that the ecumenical impulses of revivals invariably give way to sectarian

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<sup>411</sup> I have withheld the name of the pastor due to the sensitivity of the issue.

<sup>412</sup> Mba’s form of sabbatarianism was Israelite, rather than Hebraist. He did not advocate the offering of sacrifices but taught that congregational worship should take place on Saturday, rather than Sunday. He also introduced polygamy. In the late 1990s, Mba sought to return to mainstream Pentecostalism and established contact with Bishop Mike Okonkwo of TREM in Lagos. Benjamin Ikedinobi, group discussion, RSC, 29.4.00, Enugu. For a photograph of Bread of Life Mission’s headquarters in Enugu, see Plate 6.6.

<sup>413</sup> Kalu, ‘Third Response’, 8.

<sup>414</sup> Anyaegbu, ‘Pentecostal/Evangelical’, 87-8.

<sup>415</sup> Bishop Dr Joseph Ojo, ‘The Break-Away Syndrome In Pentecostal Churches: Causes, Effects and Remedies’, *Shalom Leadership*, 2001, 6. See also Ekenna, ‘Why Pastors Live Well’, *Newswatch*, 22. Of course, division and schism is not limited to the NPC movement; it is also a problem within Protestant mission churches. See Emmanuel Ekpunobi, *We Are Closer Than We Think. An Analysis of Contemporary Issues in Ecumenism*, Enugu: Rabboni Publisher International, 2001, who addresses this issue. As noted in chapter three, Ekpunobi is an Anglican priest and former Igbo revivalist.

<sup>416</sup> These include church historians, missiologists, and sociologists. See for example, Lovelace, *Spiritual Life*, 289, 305; Hollenweger, *Pentecostalism*, 334, 366; Leslie Newbigin, *The Household of God: Lectures on the Nature of the Church*, London: SCM, 1957, 39; Bruce, *Secularization in the West*, 22, 24.

<sup>417</sup> Newbigin, *Household of God*, 108.

tendencies, which though presented in terms of church growth actually result in a loss of momentum and a decline in social influence.<sup>418</sup>

Some former Igbo revivalists are also concerned about the divisive nature of contemporary neo-Pentecostalism and look back with nostalgia to the early 1970s, when there was genuine unity among the ‘brethren.’ For instance, Osisioma writes, ‘This generation has missed the way to the heart of God and true Christianity. We fast and pray that the power of God may rest upon our lives and ministry; but hardly anyone prays and fasts to develop the capacity to love the brethren more.’<sup>419</sup> Another told me that during the revival there was ‘unanimity of action, agreement, and expression of love among the brethren, which you don’t very much see now, perhaps because of the growth and diversification in the ministry today.’<sup>420</sup> The fissiparous nature of Igbo neo-Pentecostalism was one reason given for the revival’s decline. Out of 15 former revivalists asked why the revival ended, seven (47%) identified disunity and schismatic tendencies as major contributory factors.<sup>421</sup>

Revival narratives identify a number of consequences of fragmentation and disharmony. Firstly, disunity hinders cooperation in mission and results in the duplication of efforts

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<sup>418</sup> Lovelace, *Spiritual Life*, 289, 305; Hollenweger, *Pentecostalism*, 334, 366; Newbiggin, *Household of God*, 108.

<sup>419</sup> Osisioma, *Ancient Pathway*, 127.

<sup>420</sup> OI, John Ugah, 7.6.00, Enugu.

<sup>421</sup> See also Nwodika, ‘Churches in the Seventies’ (Appendix 4.7.1, paragraph 11). NPC pioneer William Okoye makes the link between revival and Christian unity: ‘As we are beginning to experience a major sweeping revival that God is releasing upon our Nation we must realise that one of the principal keys to the explosion of the revival is the unity of the church of Jesus Christ.’ All Christians Fellowship Mission, ‘2001 National Convention. Message from the General Overseer.’

to propagate the gospel.<sup>422</sup> Secondly, it compromises the church's message and threatens its credibility and integrity within society. Chukwuka writes, 'Group after group, ministry after ministry, then the co-ordination, the oneness, the love was gone! Then salt lost its taste.'<sup>423</sup> In 1997, a group of Nigerian Christians (including some former Igbo revivalists) wrote the Nigeria Covenant to express their conviction that Christian ethics must permeate every sphere of Nigerian society. In this, they state their belief in a united Christian community as the 'conscience of the nation' and reject sectarianism because it weakens the 'testimony and purpose of the Church.'<sup>424</sup> Finally, disunity reduces effectiveness in the political arena.<sup>425</sup> This was the main impetus behind the formation of the Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria, which claims to be the 'mouthpiece for the Pentecostal Movement in Nigeria.'<sup>426</sup> I return to this in chapter six.

In chapter one, I referred to secularisation thesis and the challenge posed to it by rational choice theorists.<sup>427</sup> Secularisation theorists, like Bruce, argue that the sectarianism hastens secularisation by weakening the dominant religious tradition and driving religion out of the public domain.<sup>428</sup> Against this, rational choice theorists

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<sup>422</sup> Chukwuka, *Beyond the Night*, 50. See also All Christians Fellowship Mission, 'Lesson 6. Our Church Family Values', *Membership Bible Studies*, 33: 'We promote respect for the universal body of Christ thereby eliminating the competitive spirit among ministers of the gospel and churches and unnecessary duplication of efforts.' Included among the objectives of the Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria is the statement: 'To co-operate with other Christian Organizations established for the purpose of Evangelism, Missions and related functions and objectives.' Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria, *Constitution*, 2.

<sup>423</sup> Chukwuka, *Beyond the Night*, 39.

<sup>424</sup> Congress on Christian Ethics in Nigeria, *Nigeria Covenant*, Jos: CAPRO Media, 1997, 16. The Nigeria Covenant was produced by the Congress of Christian Ethics (COCEN), established in 1994. See Plate 10.2. Among the early leaders of COCEN were James Ukaegbu, Peter Ozodo, William Okoye, and Mike Oye, all former civil war revivalists. Ukaegbu was Chairman of COCEN National Executive Committee in 1997, and Mike Oye was Vice Chairman. Congress of Christian Ethics in Nigeria, *Nigeria Covenant*, 23; OI, Peter Ozodo and Stephen Nyam.

<sup>425</sup> OI, William Okoye, 28.10.01, Abuja.

<sup>426</sup> Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria, *Constitution*, 3. One of the themes of PFN's 1991 annual conference was 'Strength in Unity.' See Marshall, 'Pentecostalism in Southern Nigeria', 26.

<sup>427</sup> See chapter one, section 2.2.

<sup>428</sup> For example, Bruce, *Secularization in the West*, 22, 24.

argue that competitive pluralism increases religious vitality.<sup>429</sup> While the fragmentation of Igbo neo-Pentecostalism has arguably increased levels of participation in its networks by expanding the religious marketplace, the foregoing critique suggests that it has reduced its ability to act as an agent of social transformation.

## **Conclusion**

In this chapter, I have examined contributory factors behind the expansion of Igbo-founded NPCs. The inherent flexibility of neo-Pentecostal spirituality has enabled them to adapt their message and methodology to suit local contexts and cater for consumer demands. Their emphasis on the Bible, innovative worship styles, community ethos, and proclamation of a holistic gospel have appealed to those faced with disintegrating social and economic relationships, and accustomed to a universe alive with spiritual forces. Each of these elements contributed to the construction of Igbo neo-Pentecostal identity. By establishing links with Western Pentecostal organisations, they are providing opportunity for people to opt into the global order and find their footing in the modern world. Hence, local and global forces have influenced the shape of neo-Pentecostal spirituality. Perhaps the most significant factor behind neo-Pentecostal church growth, particularly in its formative period, has been its orientation towards mission, which betrays its origins within the Civil War Revival. However, not all new churches were a result of mission initiatives. From the mid-1970s, the movement gradually lost its ecumenical vision, resulting in fragmentation and schism. And in its haste to respond to local consumer demands and share in what modernity has to offer, it modified its message to include an emphasis on prosperity and deliverance, and relaxed

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<sup>429</sup> See for example, Rodney Stark, and Roger Finke, *Acts of Faith: Explaining the Human Side of*

its radical stance on ethical issues. This has had implications for its ability to act as an agent of socio-political transformation. To this we now turn.

## CHAPTER SIX

### REDEEMING THE LAND: REVIVALISTS, PENTECOSTALS, AND PUBLIC ZEAL (1967-2002)

#### Introduction

Historical and theological developments within the Igbo neo-Pentecostal movement had socio-political implications. In this chapter, I analyse the movement's record of engagement in the public arena. Scholars have noted the social implications of popular Christian movements and their potential for social reform.<sup>1</sup> Dempster, following Moberg,<sup>2</sup> identifies two forms of Christian social service: social welfare and social action. Social welfare involves caring in practical ways for the victims of injustice. Social action, on the other hand, seeks to change basic conditions in society that cause human need through politics.<sup>3</sup> While the movement's political role will form the focus, I will also examine its record of social and humanitarian engagement.

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<sup>1</sup> For example, Lovelace, *Spiritual Life*, 358; David Bebbington, 'The Decline and Resurgence of Evangelical Social Concern 1918-1980', in John Wolfe (ed.), *Evangelical Faith and Public Zeal. Evangelicals and Society in Britain 1780-1980*, London: SPCK, 1995, 175; Petersen, *Not by Might nor by Power*, 115; Johns, *Pentecostal Formation*, 78; Murray A. Dempster, 'Evangelism, Social Concern and the Kingdom of God', in Dempster, Klaus, and Petersen (eds.), *Called & Empowered*, 22.

<sup>2</sup> David O. Moberg, *Inasmuch: Christian Social Responsibility in the Twentieth Century*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965, 81-2, cited in Dempster, 'Evangelism, Social Concern and the Kingdom of God', 33.

<sup>3</sup> Dempster, 'Evangelism, Social Concern and the Kingdom of God', 33-6.

The public role of African religious movements has been a subject of recent debate.<sup>4</sup> Scholars are divided as to the political significance of African revivalist and neo-Pentecostal movements. Some have noted their allegedly conservative political stance, or the reluctance of participants to engage in the political process.<sup>5</sup> Others refer to the latent elements of political resistance and protest, expressed in muted discourses, symbolic practices of prayer and deliverance,<sup>6</sup> the desacralisation of gerontocratic power,<sup>7</sup> and the creation of ‘autonomous spaces’ to contest existing power monopolies.<sup>8</sup>

Marshall, following Copans,<sup>9</sup> warns of falling into the traps of ‘political reductionism’ or ‘symbolic expansionism’ in political analysis of religious movements. On the one hand is a tendency to concentrate on the ‘narrow sphere of elite politics’ and focus on leaders’ public statements, while paying scant attention to popular forms of Christian belief and practice. Consequently, the political is stripped of its symbolic and expressive aspects. On the other hand, local studies of popular Christianity, ‘while drawing attention to other idioms of protest and political action,’ and helping us to see how political consciousness is constructed, are prone to expand the realm of the

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<sup>4</sup> See for example, Gifford, *African Christianity*; Rijk Van Dijk, ‘Pentecostalism, Gerontocratic Rule and Democratization in Malawi: the Changing Position of the Young in Political Culture’, in Jeff Haynes (ed.), *Religion, Globalisation and Political Culture in the Third World*, New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1999, 164-88; Freston, *Politics*; Ruth Marshall, ‘“God is not a Democrat”: Pentecostalism and Democratisation in Nigeria’, in Paul Gifford (ed.), *The Christian Churches and the Democratisation of Africa*, Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1995, 239-60; Ojo, ‘Church’; Jeff Haynes, ‘Popular Religion and Politics in Sub-Saharan Africa’, *Third World Quarterly*, 16.1, 1995, 89-108; Ellis and ter Haar, ‘Religion and Politics’, 175-201; Kalu, ‘Third Response’; Jibrin Ibrahim, ‘Religion and Political Turbulence in Nigeria’, *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, 29.1, March 1991, 115-36; Simeon O. Ilesanmi, *Religious Pluralism and the Nigerian State*, Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 1997.

<sup>5</sup> For example, Gifford, *African Christianity*, 111, 333; Martin, *Pentecostalism*, 133.

<sup>6</sup> Ojo, ‘Contextual’, 186-89; Kalu, ‘Pentecostal Political Theology’, 248-50.

<sup>7</sup> Van Dijk, ‘Democratization in Malawi’, 164-88.

<sup>8</sup> Marshall-Fratani, ‘Power in the Name of Jesus’, 21; De Gruchy, *Democracy*, 172.

<sup>9</sup> Jean Copans, *La Longue Marche de la Modernité Africaine: Savoirs, Intellectuels, Démocratie*, Paris: Karthala, 1990, 294-95, cited in Marshall, ‘Pentecostalism and Democratisation’, 239-44.

political so that it becomes too broad.<sup>10</sup> Following Marshall, I focus on points of interaction between the religious and political domains - be they institutional, symbolic or expressive - through an analysis of neo-Pentecostal discourse and praxis. Data is drawn from official church documents (including letters, membership manuals, Bible studies, and constitutions), leaders' statements (oral and written), and popular literature. But I have also observed neo-Pentecostals in action as they engage with their socio-political context in a variety of ways.

The study of the beliefs (or theology) of religious movements is crucial. This has often been lacking in social science studies of African religious politics.<sup>11</sup> As Gifford rightly observes, religion offers a 'reading of the world, of history, of society, of time, of space, of power, of authority, of justice and of ultimate truth' that are all issues for socio-political analysis.<sup>12</sup> Theology acts as an ideological construct that has socio-political implications and side effects. In this chapter, I trace the development of the movement's socio-political theology and praxis from the revival to the new millennium.

## **1. The Civil War and its Aftermath (1967-79)**

### **1.1 Scripture Union and the Politics of Biafra (1967-70)**

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<sup>10</sup> Marshall, 'Pentecostalism and Democratisation', 240-41.

<sup>11</sup> See for example, Haynes, *Religion and Politics*, 233, who regards religious leaders' theological beliefs as irrelevant to a study of African politics and religion.

<sup>12</sup> Gifford, *African Christianity*, 26.

During the First Republic (1960-66), mission churches, like many of their counterparts elsewhere in Africa,<sup>13</sup> adopted a quietist rather than prophetic stance, and were unable to develop a theology that included social concern and political action.<sup>14</sup> While some Christians tried to prevent hostilities by writing to military governors,<sup>15</sup> when war broke out Christian leaders on both sides tended to support their respective governments, causing a rift within the Christian Council of Nigeria (CCN).<sup>16</sup> In Western Nigeria, few Christian leaders were critical of the Federal cause, partly because Gowon was known to be a highly respected Christian.<sup>17</sup> There was also little mention of the conflict in Christian print media.<sup>18</sup> Leading Nigerian churchmen denied it was a religious war and objected to the involvement of Western Christian agencies in the Biafran relief effort.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> See Hastings, *History of African Christianity*, 155; De Gruchy, *Democracy*, 173-74. De Gruchy notes that critical and prophetic witness in Africa was usually ecumenical, rather than denominational, in character. For example, the All Africa Conference of Churches (formed in 1964) adopted a prophetic critical stance on issues of nation-building and social justice, but according to De Gruchy 'often failed to overcome the tenacious grass-roots allegiance to denominational and ethnic identities.' De Gruchy, *Democracy*, 174-75.

<sup>14</sup> Ojo, 'Church', 26; M. A. Ojo, 'End-Time Army: The Charismatic Movements in Modern Nigeria', unpublished manuscript, n.d., 83.

<sup>15</sup> A. E. Ekoko and L. O. Amadi, 'Religion and Stability in Nigeria', in Atanda, Ashiwaju and Abubakar, *Nigeria Since Independence*, 118. In May 1967, the Roman Catholic Bishop G. Okoye of Port Harcourt summoned a meeting of Christian leaders to discuss what they could do to avert war. Subsequently, they wrote a joint letter to military leaders, expressing their belief that Nigeria should remain one nation. This included the following statement: 'We sincerely and earnestly urge you to refrain from any action which depends upon the use of force to resolve the problems of the country.' See 'Church Leaders meet in Benin. Letter to Military Governors', *Nigerian Christian*, May 1967, 4. Signatories included Catholic and Protestant church leaders from Eastern and Western Nigeria.

<sup>16</sup> Ojo, 'Church', 26; M. Y. Nabofa, 'Christianity in Nigeria: Its Role in Nation-Building', in Atanda, Ashiwaju and Abubakar, *Nigeria Since Independence*, 105; OI, Emmanuel Oladipo, 18.11.99, Bletchley. CCN was established in 1948 as an initiative to unite Protestant denominations in Nigeria.

<sup>17</sup> OI, Emmanuel Oladipo, 18.11.99, Bletchley. Oladipo, a Yoruba, was a leader of the Fellowship of Christians Students (FCS) and based in Western Nigeria during the war. He fully supported the Federal cause, the unity of one Nigeria, and like others branded the Biafran leader Ojukwu a 'rebel.' He was unaware of any Nigerian Christian leaders expressing their disapproval of government actions.

<sup>18</sup> For example, the *Nigerian Christian*, published in Western Nigeria, made little mention of the political situation. An exception was an article by the Consultation of Christian Laity in Ibadan in the April 1967 issue, which expressed deep regret for the pogroms in the North and the failure of the Church to unite, and called for national repentance.

<sup>19</sup> Pat Williams and Toyin Falola, *Religious Impact on the Nation State*, Aldershot: Avebury, 1995, 293, mention visits by leading Nigerian Anglican and Roman Catholic churchmen to Western church leaders, appealing to them not to support Biafra.

Igbo Christian leaders were equally supportive of the Biafran cause, especially during the early stages, and there were few voices of dissent.<sup>20</sup> Most Biafrans saw it as a war of survival and a conflict between Christian 'Biafra' and Islamic Nigeria. This was reinforced by Ojukwu's public speeches,<sup>21</sup> and Biafran propaganda.<sup>22</sup> Later, the rhetoric of 'revolution' entered into Biafran discourse, epitomised by the Ahiara Declaration of June 1969, which envisioned a 'new society' rooted in Christian ethics.<sup>23</sup> The popular press identified Biafra with biblical Israel and presented Ojukwu as a Moses figure, while it demonised Gowon and Harold Wilson, the British prime minister.<sup>24</sup> Sometimes Christian sermons also identified Biafra with biblical Israel and Nigeria with the Philistines.<sup>25</sup>

Most revivalists also supported the concept of Biafra, particularly during the early stages of the war following the pogroms in the North and the declaration of independence.<sup>26</sup> From their point of view, an independent state was the only viable option and they were ready to fight for its survival after the Federation's declaration of

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<sup>20</sup> OI, Frances Lawjua Bolton, 4.10.02, Loughton. Anglican Bishop of Owerri Benjamin Nwankiti was initially anti-Nigeria and pro-Biafra, though later was at the forefront of attempts to broker peace. OI, Mrs J. Kelsey, 3.10.02, Emsworth. Another prominent churchman, Presbyterian Dr Frances Akanu Ibiem, was made Special Adviser to Ojukwu, and represented Biafra in the international arena. Kalu, *Embattled Gods*, 271; OI, Frances Lawjua Bolton, 4.10.02, Loughton. An exception was Bolton's father John Egwu, a Presbyterian and member of the NCNC, one of the three main political parties during the First Republic. Egwu believed that Biafra would not win a war and so should have found an alternative solution to secession.

<sup>21</sup> For example, in a lecture to theological students in 1968, Ojukwu stated, 'Biafra is a Christian country, we believe in the ability of the Almighty God to come to the aid of the oppressed and give us victory as he gave victory to young David over Goliath.' Quoted in Walls, 'Religion and the Press', 208.

<sup>22</sup> Osaghae, *Crippled Giant*, 66; Akpan, *Secession*, 122. Biafran propagandists presented the war as 'genocide' and as a northern Islamic 'jihad.'

<sup>23</sup> 'The Ahiara Declaration', quoted in Akpan, *Secession*, 203-20. Themes included social justice, egalitarianism, communal ownership of property, political and judicial reform, and patriotism.

<sup>24</sup> Walls, 'Religion and the Press', 210-11.

<sup>25</sup> Fuller, *Aftermath*, 53; Roberts, *Life and Death*, 28-9. Roberts also expressed regret that this was the line taken by some university theologians.

<sup>26</sup> OI, Ken Okeke, 17.12.98, London. Okeke told me that at the onset of the war most adult Igbos contributed to the war effort in one way or the other. He himself was involved in propaganda.

war. None of my informants said they were opposed to the decision to secede, and significant numbers took active roles in support of the Biafran cause. I interviewed 47 former revivalists, who told me about their war experiences. Of these, 12 (26 %) fought in the Biafran armed forces, eight (17%) held non-combative positions, such as army intelligence, arms production and propaganda, 12 (26 %) were involved in relief work, seven (15 %) were involved in Christian ministry (as chaplains, pastors, or evangelists), and eight (17 %) had no active role. Not all were 'born-again' Christians or SU members at the time, though most were mission church members. Among those informants involved in the revival during its civil war phase, most were active in relief work and/or pastoral work. Out of 30, 11 (37 %) were relief workers, seven (23 %) were engaged as pastors or evangelists, six (20 %) held non-combative positions in the armed forces, while three (10 %) actually fought in the army. Of the 17 who only became involved in the revival after the war, one (6 %) was involved in relief work, two (12 %) held non-combative roles within the armed forces, and nine (53 %) fought in the army. According to Roberts, many SU members joined the Biafran army, sometimes deliberately to bring Christ to their fellow soldiers.<sup>27</sup>

For most of the war, Igbo SU leaders believed that an independent Biafra was God's will and an answer to their socio-political problems, though they favoured a peaceful resolution.<sup>28</sup> Most were unconvinced by the identification of Biafra with God's people Israel, realising that there were Christians on both sides and that Igbos themselves were

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<sup>27</sup> 'SU Man in Biafra is Fit and Well', *Church of England Newspaper and the Record*, 22 August 1969, 1.

<sup>28</sup> Scripture Union of Biafra, Letter to Scripture Union London, 8 July 1968 (Appendix 4.8.1); Matthias Eluwah, Letter to Roberts, 26 February 1970.

not without blame.<sup>29</sup> Initially they prayed for victory, but towards the end of the war, they prayed for peace and for God's will to be done.<sup>30</sup> When defeat finally came in January 1970, most accepted it as God's will and were grateful to have survived.<sup>31</sup>

Despite their relative marginalisation in the politics of Biafra, Igbo revivalists were not politically acquiescent. In 1968, SU Umuahia wrote a letter to London headquarters expressing concern over their quietist approach and appealing to them to protest against the British government's policy of arms sales to Nigeria.<sup>32</sup> This text contains the seeds of a political theology, based on a dualistic worldview and a belief in invisible forces controlling material events. The authors, all young people on the margins of the mainline churches, were convinced that the fate of Biafra rested on the outcome of a spiritual battle between good and evil. Satan may try to frustrate God's plans, but will not succeed if Christians exercise faith and engage in spiritual warfare. 'The devil is strong but God is stronger and we shall win if we trust Him fully and use effectively all the armour he has given us.' While they believed in God's sovereign will, they were not fatalists. They reminded their readers that Christians, as God's agents, could influence earthly affairs through prayer *and* political activism. Prayer alone is insufficient. Christians have a responsibility to speak out against injustice and if necessary confront state governments. They should also supply relief materials to

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<sup>29</sup> Roberts, *Death and Life*, 29; Daphne Beauchamp, 'First-hand News from Biafra', *Life of Faith*, 10 January 1970.

<sup>30</sup> OI, Cyril Okorochoa, 8.2.99, Woking.

<sup>31</sup> This was based on a belief in God's ultimate control over material circumstances. For example, Rosebud Okorochoa, Letter to Roberts, 12 May 1970: 'We thank Him that at the right time He put forth His Almighty hand to still the tempests of war, hatred and hostility. Our part is to accept with joy and thanksgiving whatever He gives. . . The Lord proved His divine power in the way He protected His own during the last days.' See also Matthias Eluwah, Letter to Roberts, 26 February 1970: 'I had prayed and believed that Biafra would be the answer to our political and social problems, but now the Lord says No. I am always prepared to accept His will as He knows better and sees further. . .'

<sup>32</sup> The British government's support for Nigeria by supplying arms was critical to the outcome of the war as Federal Nigeria did not produce weapons of its own. Herbert Ekwe-Ekwe, *The Biafra War. Nigeria and the Aftermath*, Lewiston/New York; Edwin Mellen Press, 1990, 98.

relieve the ‘suffering masses,’ and Christian literature to stem the flow of ‘unsaved souls’ perishing without Christ.<sup>33</sup>

## 1.2 Revivalists, Neo-Pentecostals, and Post-War Politics (1970-79)

During the 1970s, mainline churches maintained their silence during the Gowon regime, despite an escalation in corrupt practices.<sup>34</sup> Generally, Nigerian neo-Pentecostals also adopted a quietist approach and were suspicious of political involvement.<sup>35</sup> I found little evidence that Igbo revivalists or neo-Pentecostals actively pursued positions of political power during the 1970s or sought to influence government through direct action. Rather, there was a tendency to eschew any political activity beyond prayer and evangelism. This negative attitude is apparent in the following extract from a letter written by a former revivalist in 1973: ‘I’m writing to you from the University of Nigeria Nsukka. I was admitted here to do a 3 year programme on Political Science. Don’t think I’m going into Politics! . . . I’d never be a professional politician.’<sup>36</sup> Nigerian neo-Pentecostals believed that a combination of prayer and evangelism was sufficient to transform economic, social, and political landscapes.<sup>37</sup>

Why did Igbo revivalists and neo-Pentecostals refrain from direct political activity during the 1970s? One reason was relief that the war was over, and gratitude to Gowon

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<sup>33</sup> Scripture Union of Biafra, Letter to Scripture Union London, 8 July 1968 (Appendix 4.8.1). See also Roberts, *Life and Death*, 28.

<sup>34</sup> Ojo, ‘Church’, 26.

<sup>35</sup> Ojo, ‘End-Time Army’, 176.

<sup>36</sup> Uchenne Emezue, Letter to Roberts, 28 September 1973.

<sup>37</sup> Ojo, ‘Charismatic Movement in Nigeria’, 116.

for preventing genocide and for his prosecution of the ‘three Rs.’<sup>38</sup> Another reason was their roots in the evangelical spirituality of SU, which emphasised evangelism rather than socio-political critique,<sup>39</sup> and the influence of Keswick, which focused on the personal rather than systemic and structural effects of sin.<sup>40</sup> Gifford refers to Africa’s revival Christianity as ‘private, personalized and otherworldly.’ As such, it does not engage in social analysis nor challenge oppressive systems.<sup>41</sup> One informant stated, ‘Christians would look at that kind of thing and all they were interested in really was bringing the politicians to Christ. But that a Christian could actually themselves go into this, no, that didn’t occur to them.’<sup>42</sup>

Strong adventist beliefs and retreatist attitudes also discouraged political activism. Revivalists and neo-Pentecostal pioneers were preoccupied with winning souls and preparing the faithful before Christ’s imminent return, and had little interest in socio-political critique. A stress on retreat from the ‘world’ led many to consider participation in politics ‘unchristian’ and to shun political ambitions. Politics was regarded as ‘worldly’ and evil, tainted by its association with traditional religion and

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<sup>38</sup> As noted in chapter two, section 1.2.3, the ‘three Rs’ was an acronym for Reconciliation, Rehabilitation, and Reconstruction. One informant told me that while many were aware of government corruption, she never heard anyone criticise Gowon himself until after he left office in 1976. OI, Mrs J. Kelsey, 3.10.02, Emsworth.

<sup>39</sup> According to Williams and Falola, *Religious Impact*, 164, SU Nigeria urges its members to support the government.

<sup>40</sup> Bebbington, ‘Decline and Resurgence’, 78-9. Bowen makes a similar point in his critique of the East African Revival’s legacy in Ruanda in the light of the 1994 catastrophe. Roger Bowen, ‘Rwanda - Missionary Reflections on a Catastrophe’, J. C. Jones Lecture 1995, *Anvil*, 13.1, 1996, 35. See also Paul Gifford, ‘Pentecostalism in Museveni’s Uganda’, in André Corten et André Mary (eds.), *Imaginaires Politiques et Pentecôtismes*, Paris: Karthala, 2000, 106.

<sup>41</sup> Gifford, ‘Prosperity’, 380-81.

<sup>42</sup> OI, Frances Lawjua Bolton, 4.10.02, Loughton.

‘occult’ forces, and linked to corruption and violence.<sup>43</sup> This was reinforced by memories of the First republic and events leading up to the civil war.

However, the primary reason for this quietist approach was their marginalised position in society. Like their counterparts in Latin America and other African contexts,<sup>44</sup> most were young, poor, and outsiders in the political process. If we recall, the revival was primarily a movement of the urban poor and the youth, rather than the elite or the middle class. Even if inclined to engage in critical dialogue, they would probably not have been in a position to do so.

Despite a lack of overt political activity, there was evidence of political resistance and covert protest, expressed through the creation of ‘free space,’ a denunciation of gerontocratic power, oral and written discourse, and intercessory prayer. Marshall refers to the way Nigerian Pentecostalism, with its central theme of rebirth, creates ‘autonomous spaces’ of practice which ‘defy the oppressive logic of current power monopolies,’ and formulates strategies for the exercise of new power relations and opportunities for survival.<sup>45</sup> By setting up symbolic boundaries with an amoral world, early Igbo neo-Pentecostals developed counter-cultural lifestyles and acquired a set of democratic values, based on participation and competition, which awaited release into

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<sup>43</sup> One informant told me that during the 1970s Christians believed that many politicians acquired power through ‘native doctors.’ OI, Frances Lawjua Bolton, 4.10.02, Loughton. See also Okoye, *Clash of the Champions*, 20: ‘I want to tell you that every government, any time in history, has a power base and most often these powers are gotten from the occult.’ For the association of politics in Africa with witchcraft and ‘occult’ powers, see Marshall-Fratani, ‘Global and Local’, 304; Van Dijk, ‘Young Puritan Preachers’, 168, 173.

<sup>44</sup> See Edward L. Cleary, ‘Introduction: Pentecostals, Prominence, and Politics’, in Edward L. Cleary and Hannah Stewart-Gambino (eds.), *Power, Politics, and Pentecostals in Latin America*, Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1998, 13; Allan Anderson, ‘Pentecostalism and Politics in South Africa. Public Space and Invisible Forces’, in Corten et Mary (eds.), *Imaginaires Politiques et Pentecôtismes*, 171.

public space. In chapter three, I referred to the way the ‘born-again’ experience enabled young revivalists to challenge gerontocracy at local level. While this was felt primarily among Christians, sometimes it overflowed into the community as ‘born-again’ youth contested the authority of local elders and traditional religious practitioners.<sup>46</sup> Despite the re-emergence of male-dominated authoritarian structures, a democratic culture persisted in many NPCs.

The formation of the Christian Evangelical Social Movement (CESM) in 1977 reflected a growing concern among some Nigerian neo-Pentecostals about the lack of political awareness within their movement. CESM was partly a response to the perceived threat posed by the *Shari’a* issue and the cultural revival associated with FESTAC ‘77.<sup>47</sup> Though it was started in Western Nigeria during a meeting at Ile-Ife, its early leaders included Austin Ukachi and Emeka Nwankpa, both Igbo neo-Pentecostals and former students at the universities of Ibadan and Ile-Ife respectively.<sup>48</sup> According to Ojo, CESM has sought to ‘enlighten charismatics on the possibility of their influence in national life by linking prophecy with politics.’<sup>49</sup> During the late 1970s, through its conferences and Prayer Bulletin it alerted Christians to the ‘dangers’ of socialism, Islam, and cultural revival, provoked prayer for the nation, and encouraged Christians to speak out on political issues.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Marshall, ‘Power in the Name of Jesus’, 215.

<sup>46</sup> See chapter three, section 5.2.2. See also OI, Samson Onwubiko, 10.10.01, Umuahia; Nwodika, ‘Churches in the Seventies’ (Appendix 4.7.1, paragraphs 3 and 4).

<sup>47</sup> Ifere, *Story of NIFES*, 62. FESTAC is the acronym for the Festival of Arts and Culture.

<sup>48</sup> Austin Ukachi was the first President of CESM, and at the time was also President of IVCU, University of Ibadan. He was a member of SU Umuahia during the civil war. For Emeka Nwankpa, see chapter five, section 4.2 & footnote 234. Nwankpa was the Coordinating Secretary of CESM from 1977-81.

<sup>49</sup> Ojo, ‘Church’, 27.

<sup>50</sup> Ifere, *Story of NIFES*, 61-2.

Nwankpa refers to an early example of neo-Pentecostal political engagement during the 1978 student boycott, which threatened to plunge the nation into crisis and hinder the democratic transition programme. This was precipitated by a rise in university feeding costs, which students saw as inconsistent with the policy of affordable tertiary education. The student action received widespread public support and was a precursor of the militant civil society, which evolved in the late 1980s.<sup>51</sup> Nwankpa, who had recently completed his university education, was a member of a students 'intercessory' prayer group. He claims that during one meeting they received divine instruction to inform the state governor of their willingness to return to class. This message was relayed to other Nigerian universities, and according to Nwankpa, their action helped end the crisis.<sup>52</sup>

### **1.3 Social Initiatives (1967-79)**

While marginalisation reduced the movement's political potential, it did not prevent participants from engaging in social welfare activities. Scholars have noted the potential for revivals to initiate projects of social reform.<sup>53</sup> The Civil War Revival generated various forms of social activity, though only two (6 %) out of 33 informants identified this as a prominent feature of the movement (Table 3.2).

By the end of 1967, the situation in Biafra had reached crisis proportions, and the relief operation was one factor that alleviated tensions within the enclave. Kalu states that

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<sup>51</sup> Osaghae, *Crippled Giant*, 94.

<sup>52</sup> Nwankpa, *Redeeming the Land*, 112-16.

<sup>53</sup> For example, Lovelace, *Spiritual Life*, 358; Fiedler, *Faith Missions*, 113.

‘relief became the heart throb of Biafra and the Church a veritable balm in Gilead.’<sup>54</sup> Catholic and Protestant churches both played a leading role, along with various secular aid agencies. All Protestant relief work in Biafra was performed under the auspices of the World Council of Churches (WCC).

In October 1968, SU also became involved when Roberts was appointed Protestant representative of the relief effort in Umuahia Province.<sup>55</sup> This was another example of the way revivalists adapted their mission strategies to meet community demands. In Umuahia Province, there were 92 refugee camps with an average of four hundred people each.<sup>56</sup> Unfortunately, corruption was a problem. It was difficult for those with responsibility for distribution to resist the temptation to steal, especially when their own families were starving.<sup>57</sup> Drivers hijacked lorries carrying supplies, and relief stores became the target of unscrupulous officials. This prompted the WCC to ask Roberts to recruit honest young people to assist with relief distribution by acting as escorts, and by the end of the war there were about 60 SU members employed in different aspects of relief work.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> Kalu, *Embattled Gods*, 271-72.

<sup>55</sup> Bill Roberts, Letter to H.G. Ling (Overseas Secretary of S.U. London), 11 October 1968; S.U. London Council Meeting, 20 November 1968, 3.

<sup>56</sup> Bill Roberts, S.U. Prayer Letter No.15, 7 November and 8 December, 1968; Bill Roberts, Letter to a staff member of S.U. London, 15 July 1969. According to Roberts, by October 1969 there were 82 Feeding Centres for sick children and 60 Refugee Camps (average size 1,200) in Umuahia Province. Bill Roberts, S.U. Prayer Letter No.17, 7 October 1969.

<sup>57</sup> See for example, Ume Kalu, ‘What God has done for me’, written testimony, 1969 (Appendix 4.6.1, paragraph 4).

<sup>58</sup> Bill Roberts, S.U. Prayer Letter No. 15, 7 November and 8 December 1968; Bill Roberts, S.U. Prayer Letter No.18, 29 December 1969; OI, Bill Roberts, 23.7.99, Cullompton. For instance, two SU leaders Matthias Eluwah and Uchenna Emezue worked in a convalescent camp, which looked after approximately 200 wounded soldiers, many of whom were ‘born-again’ during their stay. OI, Uchenna Emezue, 10.10.01, Umuahia; Roberts, *Life and Death*, 88. See Plate 2.4.

Yet when peace was restored, they failed to build upon this outburst of social activity by developing lasting strategies for social reform. Beyond providing support for one another within their local fellowship groups, and later within their new church structures, their understanding of mission did not extend to practical social programmes aimed at improving their respective communities. Their urgent task was to evangelise the world before the imminent return of Christ.<sup>59</sup> Here there are parallels with global Pentecostalism, where intense eschatological expectation, particularly in its early stages, militated against the implementation of social welfare projects.<sup>60</sup>

## **2. The Second Republic, Military Rule, and the Return to Democracy (1979-2002)**

As noted in chapter two, from the late 1970s government corruption and mismanagement, economic recession, and austerity measures were recurring themes within Nigerian political and economic culture. This generated an upsurge in civil disobedience, which in turn led to political repression by increasingly authoritarian regimes. Other themes that dominated the next two decades were the escalation of religious violence between Muslims and Christians, and the contested democratisation programme, culminating in the election of President Olusegan Obasanjo in 1999.

### **2.1 Neo-Pentecostal Responses to Political Corruption and Economic Decline**

We want to say without any shadow of doubt that the President, the State Governors and all the elected civilians who took over the rule of this country from the military are

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<sup>59</sup> Frances Lawjua Bolton, 'Structural Units for a New Nigeria', unpublished paper, 1999; OI, Frances Lawjua Bolton, 4.10.02, Loughton.

God approved and appointed (Romans 13:1-8). . . Some people will say that many of these people came to power through corrupt means. They may have, but did not hundreds of thousands of God fearing people in this country pray and fast, some for a whole week, that God will give us people after His own heart to rule us? If you are a true child of God and you believe that God answers prayers, then God is in this or else you will be saying that God has disappointed you. . . We must also make it crystal clear that no political party, politician or person has the solution to the problems of the country.<sup>61</sup>

Despite the upsurge in civil society resistance during the early 1980s in response to government corruption and austerity measures, Igbo neo-Pentecostals tended to refrain from public political critique or acts of civil disobedience.<sup>62</sup> This did not necessarily mean political acquiescence or conservatism, but a pursuit of change within the limits of law and order, and a strong respect for the ‘powers’ ordained by God. In moments of crisis, they preferred to resort to prayer and trust in providential intervention. This is reflected in the above extract from a message by William Okoye of ACFM. It contains a number of themes that recur in neo-Pentecostal political discourse: a belief in the efficacy of prayer and the rule of God over the affairs of this world; the biblical injunction to submit to governing authorities contained in Romans 13; the association of political office with corruption; and the impotence of politicians to solve Nigeria’s problems.

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<sup>60</sup> Murray W. Dempster, ‘Christian Social Concern in Pentecostal Perspective: Reformulating Pentecostal Eschatology’, *Journal of Pentecostal Theology*, 2, 1993, 59.

<sup>61</sup> Message by William Okoye of ACFM, ‘God is above all - Jesus is Lord of all’, *National Concord*, quoted in Okoroafor, *William Okoye*, 165-66. Okoye’s message was published in the National Concord newspaper shortly after the contested 1979 elections, which ushered in the Second Republic and the corrupt Shagari administration.

<sup>62</sup> OI, Frances Lawjua Bolton, 4.10.02, Loughton.

Igbo neo-Pentecostals were still preoccupied with personal salvation and regarded politics as immoral.<sup>63</sup> They were also influenced by the doctrine of ‘Two Kingdoms,’ inherited from Western missionaries - the belief that religion and politics belong in two distinct spheres.<sup>64</sup> The advent of prosperity teaching compounded the tendency for some to adopt a conservative non-critical stance. Gifford identifies this as one reason why liberation theology and socio-political critique have been uncharacteristic of African Pentecostalism generally.<sup>65</sup> It offers ‘no incentive to economic analysis and socio-political involvement,’ but reassures the prosperous that ‘wealth is their due’ and is unrelated to unjust structures.<sup>66</sup> Prosperity teaching was also associated with immoral and materialistic lifestyles,<sup>67</sup> which further militated against engagement in political critique.

## 2.2 The Resurgence of Religious Politics

Freston refers to Nigeria as ‘globally unique in terms of evangelical politics’ due to the strong presence of resurgent Islam and Christian revivalism.<sup>68</sup> In fact, it was the increasing dominance of Muslims in government during the 1980s, which was largely responsible for the shift in neo-Pentecostal political attitudes. Muslim-Christian tensions as a factor in political mobilisation go back to the colonial era and were an issue during the civil war. The early 1970s ushered in a period of dialogue between the

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<sup>63</sup> OI, Stephen Nyam, 22.11.01, Jos.

<sup>64</sup> Kalu, *Power*, 81; Haynes, *Religion and Politics*, 236.

<sup>65</sup> Gifford, ‘Prosperity’, 380-81.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, 373, 382.

<sup>67</sup> See chapter five, section 4.4.

<sup>68</sup> Freston, *Politics*, 182, 190. Peel notes that by the 1990s, the ratio of Christians to Muslims in Nigeria was about 45:50. J. D. Y. Peel, ‘The Politicisation of Religion in Nigeria: Three Studies’, *Africa*, 66.4, 1996, 608.

two faiths,<sup>69</sup> but this was short-lived as religious politics again reared its head during the Second Republic (1979-1983), accompanied by an escalation of violence between Muslims and Christians.<sup>70</sup>

Scholars have noted the resilience of religion in the politics of Africa, despite the influence of Enlightenment assumptions through colonial administrators and missionaries.<sup>71</sup> In the case of Nigeria, its resurgence owes much to the rise of Christian and Islamic revivalism in the aftermath of the civil war.<sup>72</sup> However, it was also related to the deepening economic crisis, which intensified inter-ethnic and religious tensions as different factions competed for their share of the national cake.<sup>73</sup> The manipulation of religion, exacerbated by the *Shari'a* debate,<sup>74</sup> was an issue during the 1978 elections, where Muslims and Christians were urged to vote along religious lines.<sup>75</sup> Since then, the increasing consciousness of religion as a factor in Nigerian politics has heightened the geo-political problems of the country and deepened the North-South divide.

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<sup>69</sup> Falola, *Violence in Nigeria*, 7, 5; Toyin Falola, 'Christian Radicalism and Nigerian Politics', in Paul A. Beckett and Crawford Young (eds.), *Dilemmas of Democracy in Nigeria*, Rochester, New York: University of Rochester Press, 1997, 167-68.

<sup>70</sup> Falola, *History*, 168; Falola, *Violence in Nigeria*, 5, 7. According to Falola, *History*, 169, in October 1982, Muslim riots directed against Christians in Kano marked 'the beginning of what would become a complicated national problem.'

<sup>71</sup> For example, Haynes, *Religion and Politics*; Kalu, 'Faith and Politics', 1; Ellis and ter Haar, 'Religion and Politics', 195.

<sup>72</sup> Kalu, *Power*, 148. See also Falola, *Violence in Nigeria*, 15, who argues that 'revivalism' was one factor behind the 'politicization of Christianity' in Nigeria.

<sup>73</sup> This point is well argued by Sabo Bako. See Sabo Bako, 'World Economic Recession and the Growth of Religious Intolerance in Nigeria', in Jacob K. Olupona (ed.), *Religion and Peace in Multi-Faith Nigeria*, Obafemi Qwolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria, 1992, 147-75.

<sup>74</sup> Muslims wanted to extend the jurisdiction of *Shari'a* courts by adding *Shari'a* Law to the 1979 Constitution. Kenny, 'Sharia'; Freston, *Politics*, 183; Kalu, *Power*, 19; Ojo, 'Church', 26. The *Shari'a* debate generated public demonstrations on both sides, but the most notable crisis occurred in 1978 in Zaria, when a clash between Muslim and Christian students at Ahmadu Bello University killed six students and was quelled only when the army intervened. Falola, *Violence in Nigeria*, 3. For more on the *Shari'a* issue, see Kenny, 'Sharia', 338-64.

<sup>75</sup> Ibrahim, 'Religion and Political Turbulence in Nigeria', 130; Falola, *Violence in Nigeria*, 2-3.

The challenge of Islam changed the political landscape because all the military rulers were Muslim. As Kalu notes, the disengagement between Christianity and the politics of independence was a significant factor in the political theology of this period, which was increasingly played out in a pluralistic setting.<sup>76</sup> Yet while Christianity was no longer associated with the centre of power, neo-Pentecostals were beginning to discover their political clout. According to Cleary, marginal groups become mainstream political actors when they reach a critical size.<sup>77</sup> Though at this stage neo-Pentecostal political theology was underdeveloped, the presence of large numbers of ‘born-again’ Christians, particularly in the North, acted as a counterbalance to Islamic resurgence.

The shift to a neo-Pentecostal theology of political engagement occurred from the late-1980s.<sup>78</sup> This was precipitated by a number of factors. The failure of the state as an agent of modernisation ‘enlarged the political space for religious actors.’<sup>79</sup> It was Babangida who enabled religion to become a platform to express political issues, and during his regime (1985-1993) religion attained a new level of political prominence.<sup>80</sup> Concern over the moral state of the nation and the alleged incompetence of Nigeria’s political leaders provoked some Igbo neo-Pentecostals to socio-political critique. For instance, in 1985 William Okoye expressed moral outrage at the way Nigeria had been ruled since independence and traced the country’s national problems to ungodliness and

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<sup>76</sup> Kalu, ‘Faith and Politics’, 8.

<sup>77</sup> Cleary, ‘Introduction: Pentecostals, Prominence, and Politics’, 13.

<sup>78</sup> See Haynes, *Religion and Politics*, 218; Ojo, ‘End-Time Army’, 176. Although, Kalu, *Power*, 110, suggests the shift occurred during the 1990s.

<sup>79</sup> Kalu, *Power*, 114.

<sup>80</sup> Osaghae, *Crippled Giant*, 249-50; Falola, *Violence in Nigeria*, 222. According to Falola, *Violence in Nigeria*, 224, religious groups were the only associations tolerated by Babangida’s regime, and religious leaders were the only leaders able to speak freely without risking incarceration.

the failure of the Church to fulfil its responsibility.<sup>81</sup> But the main ‘trigger’ issue, to use Haynes’ term, was the ‘fear of Islamization,’ which galvanised neo-Pentecostal political activity and led to their involvement at national level.<sup>82</sup> This was exacerbated by Babangida’s decision to join the Organisation of Islamic Countries (OIC) in 1986,<sup>83</sup> and the failure of the regime to protect Christians in the North from attacks by Muslims.<sup>84</sup> Christians accused Babangida’s government of favouring northern interests, adopting pro-Islam policies, and interfering in religious matters.<sup>85</sup> They also feared impending Islamisation of the state, a contravention of the 1979 Constitution.<sup>86</sup>

Significantly, the Muslim challenge revived the Protestant ecumenical impulse of the 1960s, but in a different form.<sup>87</sup> The Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), founded in 1976, became the main vehicle for Christian political engagement, and by 1988 had ‘resolved that Christians must be directly involved in politics.’<sup>88</sup> CAN’s more radical

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<sup>81</sup> William Okoye, *The Role of the Church in Nation Building*, 1985, cited in Okoroafor, *William Okoye*, 169. Okoye’s book received a sympathetic review in the May 15<sup>th</sup> edition of the National Concord newspaper.

<sup>82</sup> This has been noted by several scholars. See Haynes, *Religion and Politics*, 206; Ojo, ‘Church’, 26-7; Marshall-Fratani, ‘Global and Local’, 309; Falola, *Violence in Nigeria*, 15; Hussaina J. Abdullah, ‘Religious Revivalism, Human Rights Activism and the Struggle for Women’s Rights in Nigeria’, in Abdullahi A. An-Na’im (ed.), *Cultural Transformation and Human Rights in Africa*, London/New York: Zed Books, 2002, 163.

<sup>83</sup> Christian opposition to the OIC was based on the assumption that it undermined the nation’s secular status, in contravention of the 1979 Constitution, and the fear that it would enlarge Muslim monopoly of public space. Suberu, ‘Religion and Politics’, 406-7; Marshall, ‘Pentecostalism in Southern Nigeria’, 26.

<sup>84</sup> Between 1986 and 1993, major Muslim-Christian clashes occurred in Kafanchan, Kaduna, Katsina, Funtua, Kano, Zaria (1987); Katsina, Bauchi, Kano (1991); and Zangon-Kataf (1992). Pentecostal presence in the North heightened tensions between Christian and Muslim communities, and some of the most aggressive attacks by Muslims were a direct response to Pentecostal activities. Falola, *Violence in Nigeria*, 179-221; Osaghae, *Crippled Giant*, 250; Kalu, *Power*, 150-53.

<sup>85</sup> James Ukaegbu, former Igbo revivalist and moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Nigeria, was among those who spoke out publicly against government interference in religion. At the conference of the National Association on Religious Tolerance (NARETO) in 1988, he denounced official involvement in religious affairs. Suberu, ‘Religion and Politics’, 405-6.

<sup>86</sup> Isaghae, *Crippled Giant*, 250; Falola, *Violence in Nigeria*, 97.

<sup>87</sup> Kalu, ‘Faith and Politics’, 8.

<sup>88</sup> Falola, *Violence in Nigeria*, 224, 62. As early as 1985, CAN was making public statements critical of the military and demanding a return to civil rule. Its 1988 manifesto, *Leadership in Nigeria*, encouraged Christians to vote for the leaders of their choice, to become politically aware, to expose corruption among

stance was a response to Islamic hegemony and oppressive military regimes, and a wish to protect Christian interests in a hostile environment.<sup>89</sup> The Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria (PFN), founded in 1986, soon became an influential voice within CAN.<sup>90</sup> Groups that originally came together to form PFN included Christian Pentecostal Mission, The Redeemed Evangelical Mission (TREM), and Uma Ukpai Evangelistic Association, all founded by former Igbo revivalists.<sup>91</sup> As far as I know, all the NPCs that emerged from the Civil War Revival are currently members of PFN,<sup>92</sup> and some of their leaders have occupied senior positions within both organisations.<sup>93</sup> The fragmentation of the NPC church movement militated against it becoming a political force in Nigeria. PFN has helped it present a united front, promote political awareness among its members, and counter Islamic monopoly of public space.

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political leaders, and not allow their vote to be influenced by bribery, ethnic sentiments, or religious intolerance. CAN, *Leadership in Nigeria*, 73, cited in Falola, *Violence in Nigeria*, 224. CAN consists of five groupings: the Catholic Secretariat of Nigeria (CSN), the Christian Council of Nigeria (CCN), the Organization of African Instituted Churches (OAIC), the Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria (PFN), and TEKAN/ECWA. For discussions of CAN's role in Nigeria's political life, see Falola, *Violence in Nigeria*, 107-14; Falola, 'Christian Radicalism', 265-82.

<sup>89</sup> Kalu, 'Pentecostal Political Theology', 252; Falola, 'Christian Radicalism', 268-69. In 1986, CAN issued the following statement: 'There is no conceivable way by which full membership of OIC can be effective without using it to promote, canvas, or impose Islam on Nigeria.' CAN, *memorandum no. 41*, 1986, cited in Falola, *Violence in Nigeria*, 97.

<sup>90</sup> Marshall, 'Pentecostalism in Southern Nigeria', 23, 25; Kalu, 'Pentecostal Political Theology', 252. Most PFN members are NPCs founded after the civil war. Falola, *Violence in Nigeria*, 108.

<sup>91</sup> These were Mike Okonkwo (TREM), first PFN National Secretary, Obiorah Ezekiel (CPM), and Uma Ukpai. Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria, *Constitution*, 16-7. Two leaders of AG Nigeria, Matthew Ezeigbo and Charles Osueke, both former Igbo revivalists, were also among the founding fathers of PFN.

<sup>92</sup> For Anambra State PFN membership in 2000, see Ude, 'Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria' (Appendix 2.3). All the NPCs I visited were members of PFN.

<sup>93</sup> For example, William Okoye (ACFM) became 'charter chairman' of PFN Abuja Chapter when it was inaugurated in 1990, and an Executive member of CAN (Okoroafor, *William Okoye*, 161-62); K. Chukwuemeka (RPM District Superintendent) was Chairman of Plateau State PFN, and General Secretary of Jos Local Government CAN in 1987 (Redeemed People's Mission, Annual Progress Report, 1987); Paul Nwachukwu (*Grace of God*) was Vice-President of PFN, Anambra State in 2001; John Ezech (CPM) was PFN Chairman, Abia State in 2001 (Nnadozie, 'City of Joy', *Echoes of Joy. A Publication of C.P.M. Int'l (The City of Joy)*, 9). Former revivalist Bishop Cyril Okorochoa was President of Imo State chapter of CAN in 2002.

In 2001, I experienced firsthand a violent clash between Muslims and Christians in Plateau State while teaching at a theological college near Jos. The crisis began four days before the September 11<sup>th</sup> terrorist attacks in North America, but received little international media coverage, despite extensive loss of life and destruction of property.<sup>94</sup> For ten days, we were confined to the college campus, while Christians and Muslims fought each other for territorial and political control of Jos District. The crisis caught people by surprise, because Jos was known as a peaceful city and had never experienced anything like it before.<sup>95</sup> Both mosques and churches were destroyed, and many Muslims and Christians lost their lives.<sup>96</sup> The large Igbo community was one of the targets of Muslim insurgence.<sup>97</sup>

Written and oral texts produced at the time give an insight into Igbo neo-Pentecostal approaches to politics and inter-religious conflict.<sup>98</sup> They contain several recurring themes. Blame for the crisis is levelled either at Muslim ‘fanatics’ for seeking to establish Islamic domination, or the Devil and his demons for disturbing the peace of the state.<sup>99</sup> However, it was generally believed that behind the scenes God was working to discipline and prepare his people for revival. Christians should expect persecution

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<sup>94</sup> However, the Jos religious crisis did receive coverage in the national media. See for example, *TELL*, 14 September 2001 (Plate 10.5).

<sup>95</sup> ‘Peace Gradually Returns to Plateau after Baptism of Fire’, *Salvation*, 16 December 2001, 1.

<sup>96</sup> See Plates 10.3 & 10.4. According to the National newspaper *The Comet* (19 September, 2001, 3), approximately 500 people were killed, but according to local eyewitnesses casualties were far greater.

<sup>97</sup> Igbos settled in Jos and neighbouring Bukuru as migrant labourers and traders from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. See Obiwu, *Igbos of Northern Nigeria*, Lagos: Torch Publishing Company Limited, 1996, 27-9.

<sup>98</sup> Sources included sermons I listened during NPC meetings in the aftermath of the crisis, oral interviews and personal conversations, and interviews published in local Christian newspapers. For the latter, see Appendices 4.8.3 and 4.8.4.

<sup>99</sup> ‘Jos Religious Crisis. Declare Plateau a Christian State. Interview with Reverend Dr. Emmanuel Nwajei’, *Salvation*, 16 December 2001, 13, 19 (Appendix 4.8.4); Rev. N. C. Thompson, ‘Jos Religious Crisis. Many Members of my Church were Killed’, *Salvation*, 16 December 2001, 2 (Appendix 4.8.3); Pastor Chukwuma, ‘Moslems too need Christ’, *Salvation*, 16 December 2001, 2.

and suffering, and rely upon divine protection rather than military intervention.<sup>100</sup> Finally, while it is understandable for Christians to be angry, they should not hate Muslims. Prayer and righteousness are the proper ‘weapons of warfare’ for religious conflict.<sup>101</sup> The consensus among neo-Pentecostals interviewed at the time was that they would not instigate violence against Muslims, unless provoked or as a means of defence.<sup>102</sup> None of my informants said they were actively involved in violent encounters, though some Igbo neo-Pentecostals lost their lives and property.<sup>103</sup> In the aftermath of the crisis, Igbo NPC pastor Emmanuel Nwajei called for Christians to be more politically proactive: ‘I am concerned that Christians are behind in political participation . . . We must rise up to the challenge and get involved in politics to fight those who think they own the monopoly of life.’<sup>104</sup>

However, while Christian political activism in Africa has often produced acts of heroism and sacrifice, there are potentially disturbing possibilities, as Jenkins has noted.<sup>105</sup> He warns of a ‘new Christendom’ based in the global South and characterised by intolerance and conflict, as religious identification takes precedence over allegiance

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<sup>100</sup> These beliefs were expressed in two sermons I listened to in the weeks following the crisis, one preached by Wilson Ezeofor of Bible Faith Mission, Jos (23.9.01), entitled ‘Following Paul’s Example’ and based on the text Phil 3:13-15; the other by Leo Anorue of RPM, Bukuru (16.9.01), entitled ‘God is our Refuge’ and based on the text Ps 46. In their sermons, both pastors compared the present crisis with their experiences during the civil war.

<sup>101</sup> Thompson, ‘Jos Religious Crisis’, *Salvation*, 2 (Appendix 4.8.3). See also Chukwuma, ‘Moslems too need Christ’, *Salvation*, 2: ‘Chukwuma said, “if the Christians will put on love, we would surely overcome, no matter the persecutions and the sufferings” and called on Christians to “love the muslims more.”’

<sup>102</sup> For example, OI, Leo Anorue and Wilson Ezeofor; ‘Interview with Reverend Dr. Emmanuel Nwajei’, *Salvation*, 19.

<sup>103</sup> Thompson, ‘Jos Religious Crisis’, *Salvation*, 2 (Appendix 4.8.3).

<sup>104</sup> ‘Interview with Reverend Dr. Emmanuel Nwajei’, *Salvation*, 13, 19 (Appendix 4.8.4, paragraph 6). Nwajei was Vice-President of PFN for Plateau state.

<sup>105</sup> Jenkins, *Next Christendom*, 152.

to secular nation-states.<sup>106</sup> ‘It is not a vast leap from churches exercising political power to demanding an exclusive right to that power, perhaps within the confines of a theocratic Christian State.’<sup>107</sup> Faced with growing demands by Muslim activists for an Islamic state and adoption of *Shari’a* law, Nigerian churches may be tempted to retaliate by asserting their own religious beliefs through legislation and calling for the creation of ‘Christian’ states.<sup>108</sup> After the Jos religious riots, Nwajei called for precisely this as the solution to Muslim attempts to monopolise public space in Plateau State.<sup>109</sup> Jenkins believes that international politics in the coming decades is likely to revolve around inter-faith conflicts. The potential for conflict becomes more intense when one religious tradition seeks to declare a particular nation is or should be Christian or Muslim. Linked to this is the fact that both Islam and Christianity are missionary religions with aspirations to convert the entire globe, and both have traditions of seeking to impose their views through political actions.<sup>110</sup> The close association between evangelisation and politics presents potential problems for Igbo neo-Pentecostals as they seek to engage with their communities. I return to this later when I examine contemporary neo-Pentecostal political theology.

### 2.3 Neo-Pentecostals and the Road to Democracy

Africa’s ‘second liberation’ began in the late 1980s, as people tried to free themselves from oppressive regimes.<sup>111</sup> The failure of African states to redeem their promises of democratisation and development, and to moralise public space by linking power with

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<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, 12-3.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*, 152.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*, 153.

<sup>109</sup> ‘Interview with Reverend Dr. Emmanuel Nwajei’, *Salvation*, 19 (Appendix 4.8.4, paragraph 5).

<sup>110</sup> Jenkins, *Next Christendom*, 164, 168-69.

virtue, opened the way for alternative forms of authority and legitimacy.<sup>112</sup> Church leaders began to play a more active role in the democratisation process. Conferences were convened to hasten the transition to democracy, often presided over by mainline church leaders.<sup>113</sup> While no such conference was held in Nigeria, nevertheless churches emerged as major organs of civil society.

Gifford has argued that in general it is mainline churches that have challenged Africa's dictators, while NPCs have provided support for pragmatic reasons, to gain government recognition and material rewards.<sup>114</sup> In Nigeria, this was not strictly so. While Igbo political consciousness during the 1980s still remained at the level of discourse rather than direct action, in the early 1990s they became a more significant political force.<sup>115</sup> For example, in January 1993 William Okoye preached a sermon in which he castigated political leaders who deny others their rights, oppress and exploit them, and then use their powers to silence them. The address was broadcast on Nigerian television and radio.<sup>116</sup>

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<sup>111</sup> Paul Gifford, 'Introduction: Democratisation and the Churches', in Paul Gifford (ed.), *Christian Churches*, 1. See also Gifford, *African Christianity*, 33; Kalu, *Power*, 93-102.

<sup>112</sup> Marshall, 'Pentecostalism and Democratisation', 247-48; Terence O. Ranger, 'Conference Summary and Conclusion', in Gifford (ed.), *Christian Churches*, 18.

<sup>113</sup> Gifford, 'Democratisation and the Churches', 1; Jenkins, *Next Christendom*, 149.

<sup>114</sup> Gifford, 'Democratisation and the Churches', 5.

<sup>115</sup> OI, Frances Lawjua Bolton, 4.10.02, Loughton. Since 1996, Bolton has made several visits to Nigeria addressing Christians (including Igbo neo-Pentecostals) on the rule of law in a just society and encouraging them to take seriously their socio-political responsibility. She told me that NPCs became politically active from the mid-1990s. She also sent a paper, entitled 'Structural Units for a New Nigeria', to Christian leaders and politicians in Nigeria, including President Obasanjo and his Chaplain, William Okoye.

<sup>116</sup> Okoroafor, *William Okoye*, 178-79. This message was preached at an inter-denominational church service in Abuja, marking the Nigerian Armed Forces Remembrance Day, and attended by interim Head of Government Chief Ernest Shonekan.

While it is doubtful that neo-Pentecostals significantly influenced the transition process during the Babangida regime,<sup>117</sup> except through prayer,<sup>118</sup> the annulment of the 1993 elections and Abacha's subsequent intervention stimulated them into action. As the church became a major pro-democracy group within civil society, neo-Pentecostals began to play a more active role in the politics of transition.<sup>119</sup> Some made explicit references to Prov 29:2, a text that encourages the 'righteous' to seek political office.<sup>120</sup> For instance, Okoye used it in 1993 to challenge those Christians who believe that politics is a 'dirty business.' 'As long as people who are sincere and who live righteous lives shy away from the political life of the country and allow the wicked people to continue to manipulate our political system . . . there will never be any hope for this Nation.'<sup>121</sup> Kalu suggests that neo-Pentecostals actually 'radicalized' the politics of mainline churches during the 1990s.<sup>122</sup>

Some Igbo neo-Pentecostals have adopted a critical public stance towards Nigeria's ethical and political problems. I have mentioned the Congress of Christian Ethics, established in 1994 during the Abacha regime by Nigerian Christians (including former Igbo revivalists and neo-Pentecostals), alarmed at the 'flood of corruption inundating

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<sup>117</sup> Marshall, 'Pentecostalism in Southern Nigeria', 28. Although, according to Ojo, 'Charismatic Movement in Nigeria', 118, Nigerian evangelicals and neo-Pentecostals jointly fielded candidates for the 1991/1992 presidential election.

<sup>118</sup> For example, Emeka Nwankpa participated in an extended (40 days) period of 'fasting and prayer' on Nigeria's 30<sup>th</sup> independence anniversary in 1990, a time of national crisis, and believed this had a significant impact on the transition process. Nwankpa, *Redeeming the Land*, 107-108.

<sup>119</sup> Alex Gboyege, 'Local Institutions, Civil Society and Democratization in Nigeria, 1986-1993', in Beckett and Young (eds.), *Democracy in Nigeria*, 404; Osaghae, *Crippled Giant*, 300-301; Marshall, 'Pentecostalism and Democratization', 259. In 1998, PFN issued a statement opposing Abacha's intention to become Nigeria's civilian President. See 'A Selection of Public and Private News on Nigeria', *Nigerian News Du Jour*, Friday April 23, 1998. Retrieved 02.10.02 from the World Wide Web: [http://www.cohdn.ca/ndj/Nigerian\\_News\\_Du\\_Jour\\_-\\_Friday\\_April\\_23\\_1998\\_.html](http://www.cohdn.ca/ndj/Nigerian_News_Du_Jour_-_Friday_April_23_1998_.html).

<sup>120</sup> Marshall, 'Pentecostalism in Southern Nigeria', 28. Prov 29:2: 'When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice; but when the wicked beareth rule, the people mourn' (KJV).

<sup>121</sup> William Okoye, *Responsible Christian Living*, 1993, cited in Okoroafor, *William Okoye*, 170-73.

Nigerian society.’<sup>123</sup> Their stated agenda was to ‘work toward a congress that could launch a national agenda for moral turn-around in Nigeria,’ by conscientising Christians concerning their civic responsibility.<sup>124</sup> In 1997, COCEN produced the Nigeria Covenant, and sent copies to Christians and political leaders throughout the nation.<sup>125</sup> The Nigeria Covenant calls upon Christians to respect and obey their leaders, encourages active participation in politics, and recognises the validity of civil disobedience and passive resistance, as long as it does not involve violence or the destruction of property. It also pledges to resist all forms of injustice and corruption in society.<sup>126</sup>

Igbo neo-Pentecostals see the hand of God behind the election of the Christian President Obasanjo in 1999,<sup>127</sup> and it has boosted their confidence to act as an organ of civil society. For example, in February 2000, thousands of Christians in Kaduna took to the streets in protest against the proposed adoption of *Shari’a* law in northern Nigeria.<sup>128</sup> Freston suggests that theology is but one factor among many that influence Christian political action. Other variables, such as ecclesiastical position and international connections, must be taken into account.<sup>129</sup> Some Igbo neo-Pentecostal leaders now head up large organisations with global links, which makes them less susceptible to

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<sup>122</sup> Kalu, ‘Faith and Politics’, 10.

<sup>123</sup> See chapter five, section 4.4.

<sup>124</sup> Congress on Christian Ethics in Nigeria, *Nigeria Covenant*, 3.

<sup>125</sup> The Nigeria Covenant contains statements on the ‘Lordship of Christ,’ the family, property and possessions, leadership, truth and education, justice, public and church property, governments, and the church. For a photograph of its front cover, see Plate 10.2.

<sup>126</sup> *Nigeria Covenant*, 5, 16. Most statements in the Nigeria Covenant are supported by Bible texts.

<sup>127</sup> For example, Okoye, *Clash of the Champions*, ii-iii, refers to Obasanjo’s appointment thus: ‘For many years we have been subjected to outright slavery in our own country by those who believe that Nigeria is their personal property, and now that God in his mercy has intervened and set us free. . . .’

<sup>128</sup> Kaduna has a large Igbo Christian community, and so it is probable that Igbo neo-Pentecostals participated in the public protests.

<sup>129</sup> Freston, *Politics*, 148.

intimidation. And PFN membership has helped to raise their profile in the political arena, especially since PFN has gained a more prominent public role following the return to civilian rule. PFN President Bishop Mike Okonkwo writes in Nigerian newspapers, and the Nigerian press regularly solicits his opinions on national issues.<sup>130</sup> He also has the ear of State governors.<sup>131</sup> As well as calling for government intervention to prevent Muslim attacks on Christians in the North,<sup>132</sup> PFN stated publicly their support for Obasanjo's anti-corruption campaign,<sup>133</sup> and made several public statements in the run-up to the 2003 elections, calling for prospective candidates to refrain from using illegitimate means to gain votes.<sup>134</sup> Recently, in an address to journalists, Paul Nwachukwu, PFN Vice-President (Eastern Zone), called for impeachment proceedings against Obasanjo to be dropped and urged Christians to register their names in the on-going voters' registration exercise.<sup>135</sup> Some Igbo NPC leaders have also attained positions of political influence. I have mentioned Okonkwo and Nwachukwu, General Overseers of TREM and *Grace of God* respectively. Another

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<sup>130</sup> For example, 'Pentecostal Fellowship Urges Federal Government Keep out of Religion', *This Day* (Lagos), 2 July, 2000. Retrieved 11.10.02 from the World Wide Web: <http://allafrica.com/stories/printable/200007030194.html>.

<sup>131</sup> For example, Okonkwo was an important influence behind Abia State Governor Chief Orji Uzor Kalu's decision to support President Obasanjo's re-election campaign. See 'Between Righteousness and Governance', *This Day* (Lagos), September 10, 2001. Retrieved 11.10.02 from the World Wide Web: <http://allafrica.com/stories/printable/200109100529.html>.

<sup>132</sup> 'Church Leader Blames Military For Nigeria Riots', Lagos, Nigeria (Newsroom), October 2, 2002. Retrieved 02.10.02 from the World Wide Web: <http://www.le-sri.com/Nigeria2.html>. This is a report from a press conference held in Lagos, where Okonkwo asked the Nigerian government to appoint a commission to determine who and what caused the riots that followed a demonstration by Christians against the introduction of *Shari'a* law in the state of Kaduna.

<sup>133</sup> 'Nigeria: Pentecostal Christians Join Anti-Corruption War', *All Africa*, February 8, 2001. Retrieved 02.10.02 from the World Wide Web: <http://support.casals.com/aaafashl/busca.asp>. This was a statement to journalists by PFN President Mike Okonkwo.

<sup>134</sup> For example, in April 2002 former Igbo revivalist Uma Ukpai, PFN national Vice-President, warned that God would judge any Nigerian politician who attempted to manipulate the elections. 'PFN on 200 Day Fasting for 2003 Polls', retrieved from the World Wide Web: <http://onlinearchive.org/artical.php?sid=223>. In the August 16, 2002 edition of the Vanguard newspaper, Paul Nwachukwu, PFN Vice-President in Anambra State, encouraged Christians to vote, and warned against election malpractice, as well as the use of money and 'satanic means' to gain votes. Retrieved 02.10.02 from the World Wide Web: <http://allafrica.com/stories/200208160286.html>.

is William Okoye of ACFM, who was appointed Assistant Chaplain to President Obasanjo and a member of the presidential advisory council on youth affairs.<sup>136</sup> Jenkins refers to the danger that African churches who participated in democratic revolutions provide uncritical support for new regimes.<sup>137</sup> Obasanjo has his critics among neo-Pentecostals, but they recognise the problems he faces keeping the country united and understandably fear a return to Islamic domination.

#### **2.4 Social Welfare and Development Projects**

Political activism is not the only avenue for promoting social reform. Dempster suggests that the church can promote social change by initiating social programmes as ‘instruments of human justice.’<sup>138</sup> During the 1980s, despite a decline in adventist beliefs, there was little change in Igbo neo-Pentecostal attitudes to social welfare as an integral part of Christian mission. This was partly due to their status as an emerging movement, preoccupied with issues of consolidation and identity. It was also due to their focus on the ‘faith gospel’ and deliverance theology as the principle remedies for prevailing social ills.

Some churches did start schools during the 1980s, but these were mainly intended to cater for the needs of their members or to evangelise children. They were an attempt to contextualise Christianity in an increasingly secular and technological environment, where educational standards are generally considered to be in decline. Usually, they

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<sup>135</sup> Anayo Okoli, ‘Cleric Urges Reps to Drop Impeachment Move’, *Vanguard* (Lagos), 17 September 2002.

<sup>136</sup> All Christians Fellowship Mission, ‘Lesson 4. Understanding the Vision and Purpose of your Church’, *Membership Bible Studies*, 21.

<sup>137</sup> Jenkins, *Next Christendom*, 154.

<sup>138</sup> Dempster, ‘Social Concern and the Kingdom of God’, 37.

would start with a nursery school, and later open primary and secondary sections. Master's Vessel Church in Umuahia, for example, established a nursery school in 1981, partly as a means of reaching children for Christ. Due to demands from parents, who complained that their children regressed when they proceeded to government school, MVC started a primary school in 1991 and has recently started a secondary school. According to MVC founder Obiorah, 80 % of the children come from other churches in the local community, including Catholics.<sup>139</sup> In the mid-1980s, ACFM also opened a nursery and primary school in Abuja, called the Whole Person Education School (WPE), reflecting its aim to cater for children's holistic needs.<sup>140</sup> The most sophisticated and largest educational institutions I observed belonged to the LWM in Aba. Its vision for setting up Christian schools came from a concern for children and young people 'who were attending secular schools and soaking in all manner of unbiblical doctrines.'<sup>141</sup> The nursery/primary sections of the Living Word Academy were established in 1988, with an initial student body of 236 pupils and a faculty of 13 teachers.<sup>142</sup> The secondary school was set up in 1995.<sup>143</sup> LWM considers its schools to

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<sup>139</sup> OI, Felix Obiorah, 6.10.01, Umuahia. According to Obiorah, they prefer to send their children here rather than to the Roman Catholic school because they feel the quality of education is higher.

<sup>140</sup> Okoroafor, *William Okoye*, 136. WPE's motto is 'Educating the whole man - spirit, soul and body.' Several ACFM branches have similar schools, including the one in Jos where I carried out my research. In this case, the school was located in the church premises.

<sup>141</sup> Living Word Ministries, *Annual Journal*, 47.

<sup>142</sup> *Ibid.*, 47. By 2001, the primary section had four separate campuses in Aba, with approximately 3,000 pupils, and 230 members of staff.

<sup>143</sup> LWM's most recent educational institution is the Living Word Magnet School, a Science School housed in a multi-storey building next to its church headquarters. It is heralded as 'an educational revolution' in Eastern Nigeria, set up to 'prepare the Nigerian child to face the challenges of our time in this technological era.' Curriculum content is aimed at preparing children to 'develop a critical thinking problem solving mind in addition to the presentation of skills needed for surviving the 21<sup>st</sup> Century,' and 'experience social and spiritual growth within a Christian environment.' 'Bro. Emma Okorie Speaks to The Forum', *The Forum. A Publication of Christian Men's Forum of Living Word Ministries*, 18.

be tools for evangelism, as well as for equipping young people to face the challenges of contemporary Nigerian society.<sup>144</sup>

During the 1990s, other NPCs followed suit by opening schools. RPM opened the Redeemed People's Academy in 1991, with 242 pupils in nursery and primary classes. This was followed in 1997 by a secondary school. BFM in Jos started a nursery school in 1995, with 32 pupils. By 2001, this had expanded to include a primary school, with 324 pupils and 11 teachers, and they have plans to start a secondary school.<sup>145</sup> The largest Igbo NPC, *Grace of God*, has also opened schools at nursery, primary and secondary levels.<sup>146</sup>

Some NPCs provide medical facilities for their members and the wider community, though this is a relatively recent development.<sup>147</sup> Again the most extensive medical services I observed belonged to LWM, which has established four hospitals in Aba, with sophisticated equipment, and staffed by church members. They also have an arrangement with a medical centre in America, where they use video conferencing to update Nigerian doctors on current medical practice.<sup>148</sup> According to LWM founder

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<sup>144</sup> 'Bro. Emma Okorie Speaks to The Forum', *The Forum. A Publication of Christian Men's Forum of Living Word Ministries*, 18-9.

<sup>145</sup> The Bible Faith Mission Inc., 'The Bible Faith Christian School Jos - A Citadel of Spiritual and Academic Excellence', *Newsletter*, 2001, 1-3.

<sup>146</sup> Based on personal observation, May 2000.

<sup>147</sup> RPM, for example, has a clinic run by the medical director of ECWA Evangel Hospital, a member of the church. OI, David Adegboye, 6.9.01, Jos. CPM also has a clinic, called Joy Health Counselling Unit and run by medical staff within their own membership. Mrs Adanma N. Ojimadu, 'Vital information about the Joy Health Counselling Unit', *Echoes of Joy. A Publication of C.P.M. Int'l (The City of Joy)*, 23. In 2000, *Grace of God* was in the process of building its own hospital. OI, Paul Nwachukwu, 12.5.00, Onitsha.

<sup>148</sup> 'Bro. Emma Okorie Speaks to The Forum', *The Forum. A Publication of Christian Men's Forum of Living Word Ministries* 19-20.

Okorie, it has gained a reputation for high standards of care and its hospitals are the best in Aba. Members also have freedom to pray for and preach the gospel to in-patients.<sup>149</sup>

Igbo neo-Pentecostals have begun to take seriously their responsibility to combine evangelism with responsible social action, reflecting recent trends within global Pentecostalism.<sup>150</sup> Apart from schools and hospitals, which in some cases are serving the community as well local membership, some NPCs have opened social welfare departments to care for the poor and needy. ACFM, for example, started the ‘Christ Compassion Ministry.’ At present church members visit the sick in hospitals, prison inmates, prostitutes in hotels, and people living on the streets, but ACFM also has plans to build a hospital (Christ Compassion Hospital) and rehabilitation homes for street people.<sup>151</sup> LWM’s social welfare arm is called ‘We-Care Ministry,’ set up in 1989. Initially it concentrated on caring for prisoners, but since then has diversified its ministry to include other sectors of society.<sup>152</sup> *Grace of God* recently started the ‘Dorcas Ministry,’ which aims to provide financial assistance and employment opportunities for the poor.<sup>153</sup> However, I found little evidence that NPCs are actively seeking to address the HIV/AIDS epidemic, which is rapidly becoming the most pressing social problem in Nigeria.<sup>154</sup>

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<sup>149</sup> Okorie told me he learnt to preach to and pray for hospital patients from Bill Roberts during the civil war. Roberts encouraged SU members to visit the hospitals in Umuahia to evangelise and pray for the sick and wounded.

<sup>150</sup> Dempster, ‘Christian Social Concern’, 52.

<sup>151</sup> All Christians Fellowship Mission, ‘Lesson 6. Our Church Family Values’, *Membership Bible Studies*, 32; OI, William Okoye and Stephen Nyam.

<sup>152</sup> Living Word Ministries, *Annual Journal*, 59. See section 3.4 below.

<sup>153</sup> OI, Paul Nwachukwu, 12.5.00, Onitsha. *Grace of God* runs various agricultural projects to help the poor to support themselves, and also has plans for setting up a mobile hospital to provide free treatment in rural areas.

<sup>154</sup> The only group I came across that is explicitly addressing the AIDS issue is Faith Alive Foundation in Jos, run by an Igbo medical doctor Chris Isichei, and established in 1996. I was unable to find out the history of this institution or the church background of its founder.

### 3. Towards a Neo-Pentecostal Theology of Politics and Social Concern

Neo-Pentecostal socio-political theology developed as participants realised the movement's political potential, responded to critical moments in Nigeria's post-colonial history, and interacted with their local communities. Contrary to Gifford's assertion that much of Africa's Christianity (i.e. the Pentecostal sector) dismisses the contemporary socio-political situation as theologically irrelevant,<sup>155</sup> many Igbo neo-Pentecostals are very conscious of it. While they lack a formalised political theology, it is implicit in their discourse and praxis. Like African Christians in general,<sup>156</sup> theirs is an enacted theology that emerges through action as well as reflection. But rather than pursue a path of civil disobedience, contemporary Igbo neo-Pentecostals have developed other strategies of socio-political engagement. However, as Marshall rightly observes, it is important to distinguish between people's perception of Pentecostalism's potential and its actual effectiveness in terms of real 'political' outcomes,<sup>157</sup> though this is difficult to measure. What is important here is the way that neo-Pentecostal socio-political theology helps to create communities who feel capable of changing their world. Christian socio-political engagement can sometimes appear reactive, rather than proactive, and limited to speaking out in crises. As well as analysing NPC socio-political theology, this section will address the question posed by Freston: what do Christian leaders do to educate and empower the laity for ongoing political roles?<sup>158</sup>

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<sup>155</sup> Gifford, *African Christianity*, 333.

<sup>156</sup> Anderson, *Zion and Pentecost*, 239.

<sup>157</sup> Marshall, 'Pentecostalism and Democratisation', 248.

<sup>158</sup> Freston, *Politics*, 152. See also Ian Linden, 'Review Article. Paul Gifford (ed.), *The Christian Churches and the Democratisation of Africa*', *Journal of Religion in Africa*, 26.2, 225.

I have noted the dangerous possibilities associated with the tendency for neo-Pentecostals to link evangelisation with political activity. As I examine Igbo neo-Pentecostal political theology I will reflect upon its potential for promoting good governance, justice, and reconciliation in a nation torn apart by religious and ethnic divisions.

### 3.1 Nigeria's End-Time Destiny

Contemporary Igbo neo-Pentecostal political theology is based on a particular eschatological reading of history that regards Africa (and Nigeria in particular) as inheriting a global 'end-time' leadership role, both spiritually and politically.<sup>159</sup> This is reflected in Madugba's account of Christian history, from its origins in the Middle East, through to the Reformation in Europe, the North American Pentecostal movement, and Africa's current reformation. Madugba believes that it is Africa's turn to take over the baton for the last leg of the relay race.<sup>160</sup> Nigeria's special role is affirmed by Chukwuka: 'Nigeria is a great nation, with a great history, and a great responsibility for African leadership . . . Nigeria is indeed the giant of Africa . . . God has a blessed agenda for us – to take the nations for Him . . . We have the human resources; we have the economic resources and we have the spiritual endowment.'<sup>161</sup> As Marshall-Fratani

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<sup>159</sup> See for example, Chukwuka, *Beyond the Night*, 49-50, 51-62; Mosy U. Madugba, *Africa's Time of Recovery*, Port Harcourt: Spiritual Life Publications, 2000, 12-3; William Okoye, *God's Purpose for Nations. Satan's Deceit Exposed*, Abuja: Integrity Royal Publications, 2001, 21-23; William Okoye, *Nigeria at 40. God's Message to the Nation*, Abuja: Integrity Royal Publications, 2000, 4-5. Chukwuka, Madugba, and Okoye all claim that this special destiny has been revealed to various Christian leaders, both African and non-African.

<sup>160</sup> Madugba, *Africa's Time of Recovery*, 24-37. Madugba is an Igbo neo-Pentecostal pastor, International Director of Spiritual Life Outreach in Port Harcourt, and International Co-ordinator of the Ministers Prayer Network. He is a former travelling secretary of SU Nigeria.

<sup>161</sup> Chukwuka, *Beyond the Night*, 52-55.

correctly observes, this ‘winning Nigeria (Africa, the world) for Jesus means the projection into the national public space of a highly political agenda.’<sup>162</sup>

Okoye of ACFM compares Nigeria with ancient Israel. Despite her destiny as ‘one of the most enviable nations of the world,’ she has squandered her opportunities, and ‘wandered in the wilderness of corruption, waste and poverty’ for forty years, but is poised to enter her ‘own land of greatness and prosperity.’<sup>163</sup> The crucial question is whether Nigeria’s destiny will be thwarted by Satan, the actions of evil people in government,<sup>164</sup> and the failure of the church. Okoye calls upon Nigerians to replace attitudes that hinder progress, such as greed, indiscipline, corruption, and violence, with more positive ones, such as selflessness, contentment, unity, fairness, discipline, peace, and hard work.<sup>165</sup> Kalu notes that Pentecostals ‘affirm the rule of the saints’ as essential for the recovery of the nation.<sup>166</sup> Thus, Okoye exhorts Christians to ‘take advantage of what God is doing to move this nation in the direction that God has ordained Nigeria to go.’<sup>167</sup>

The crucial role of the church in neo-Pentecostal political theology reflects its strong eschatological content,<sup>168</sup> linked to an emphasis on the kingdom of God and the Holy Spirit. For example, RPM states:

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<sup>162</sup> Marshall-Fratani, ‘Global and Local’, 306.

<sup>163</sup> Okoye, *God’s Message to the Nation*, 4.

<sup>164</sup> Madugba, *Africa’s Time of Recovery*, 28.

<sup>165</sup> Okoye, *God’s Message to the Nation*, 5-13.

<sup>166</sup> Kalu, *Power*, 130.

<sup>167</sup> Okoye, *God’s Purpose for Nations*, 21.

<sup>168</sup> Kalu, *Power*, 131.

We can also see the image of the church as God's Kingdom here on earth. God's rule is rejected in the world but Jesus has proclaimed the arrival of that Kingdom in which God will affirm His royal authority and establish His rule among men. God's rule starts in the hearts of those who belong to Him (Col 1:13). The church should submit as a servant to God's rule through the word before she can become the instrument of His rule on earth. Until then, we remain powerless (2 Cor 10:6).<sup>169</sup>

Emeka Nwankpa's political theology has a similar focus: 'In the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit is the Chief Instructor and the Chief Spokesman . . . The kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ must operate in us now . . . we should be sharing in the exercise of His authority over the earth now, over situations, over circumstances and over nations.'<sup>170</sup> And according to Okoye, the power of the Spirit was given to enable the church 'to take the world for Christ and establish the rule of Christ in the nations of the earth.'<sup>171</sup>

Some Igbo neo-Pentecostals promote a form of Christian Zionism, linked to a pre-millennial worldview and influenced by global Pentecostal flows. Associated with this is the idea that God has a special 'end-time' role for Israel and will prosper any nation that supports her.<sup>172</sup> As far back as the early 1980s, Okoye of ACFM was urging Nigeria's political leaders to restore diplomatic relations with Israel as a necessary pre-

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<sup>169</sup> Redeemed People's Mission, 'Lesson 1. Know the Church', *Redeemed Adult Sunday School Lessons*, 1999, 3.

<sup>170</sup> Emeka Nwankpa, *Translated into the Kingdom of Christ*, Lagos: Touchstone Limited, 1983, 37, 41.

<sup>171</sup> Okoye, *God's Purpose for Nations*, 8.

<sup>172</sup> For more on Christian Zionism as an element within African Pentecostal theology, see Gifford, 'African Pentecostal Theology', 74-5; Gifford, *African Christianity*, 199-201. Gifford argues that Christian Zionism is a product of developments in America's recent history, rather than reflection on the Bible, and leads to uncritical support for Israel's policies. But Okoye of ACFM bases his support for Israel on God's words to Abraham in Gen 12:3 – 'And I will bless those who bless you, and the one who

condition for attracting God's blessings upon the nation,<sup>173</sup> and Madugba currently heads up the Nigerian branch of the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem (IKEJ).<sup>174</sup> One implication of Christian Zionism is opposition to Islam. Consequently, it does little to improve relations between Nigeria's Christian and Muslim communities.

Neo-Pentecostal political discourse, with its language of domination, its call to take the nation(s) for Jesus, and its support for Israel, has potential to exacerbate Christian-Muslim tensions, precipitate violence, and encourage the use of political process to impose beliefs and values, thus coming dangerously close to resembling Jenkins' 'new Christendom.' But this would be a misreading. While Islamists aspire to change society by creating a theocracy, Igbo neo-Pentecostals believe that the rule of the kingdom must transform individuals through the Spirit before it can permeate society.<sup>175</sup> And Okoye of ACFM warns particular groups not to expect special favour from a Christian President. Obasanjo is 'the president of all Nigerians,' Okoye insists, and 'there should be no partiality and tribalism, because we are all one.'<sup>176</sup>

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curses you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed' (NASB). William Okoye, *The Role of the Church in Nation Building*, cited in Okoroafor, *William Okoye*, 163.

<sup>173</sup> Okoye, *Nation Building*, cited in Okoroafor, *William Okoye*, 163. In 1973, Nigeria broke off diplomatic relations with Israel, but restored them in 1991. According to Nwankpa, many Nigerian Christians were praying for this to happen. See 'Emeka Nwankpa: Intercessors for Africa', The 700 Club, retrieved 05.01.04 from the World Wide Web: [http://cbn.org/700/club/features/emeka\\_nwankpa.asp](http://cbn.org/700/club/features/emeka_nwankpa.asp).

<sup>174</sup> IKEJ was established in 1980 by Christian supporters of Israel, after the international community condemned Israel for declaring united Jerusalem the capital of the Jewish state and 13 nations moved their embassies to Tel Aviv. See International Christian Embassy Jerusalem website, retrieved 05.01.04 from the World Wide Web: <http://www.icej.org/about/index.html>. In 1981, I attended a large International Christian gathering in Jerusalem, organised by IKEJ during the Jewish Feast of Tabernacles, and addressed by Israeli Prime Minister Menachim Begin.

<sup>175</sup> Redeemed People's Mission, 'Lesson 1. Know the Church', *Redeemed Adult Sunday School Lessons*, 1999, 3.

<sup>176</sup> Okoye, *God's Purpose for Nations*, 21.

Within Igbo NPC texts there are seeds of a political theology that has potential to promote justice and reconciliation in a pluralistic setting. It would be wrong to expect NPCs to abandon their ambition to spread the gospel, for they see this as crucial for transforming society. If carried out in an aggressive fashion, without sensitivity to local culture and customs, this will inevitably provoke opposition. But Jesus himself encountered resistance from religious leaders of his day, even though he did not seek to usurp their position or impose his beliefs through force. In the remainder of this section I examine three elements of NPC theology and praxis that offer a possible way ahead for the development of a viable Christian approach to politics and social concern in Nigeria.

### **3.2 The Model Citizen and the Prophetic Church**

In their desire to influence society and precipitate revival, some Igbo NPCs aspire to a ‘prophetic’ role by nurturing a Christian counterculture and speaking publicly on political issues through sermons or print and electronic media. Kalu states that only a ‘spiritually-alive prophetic church’ offers hope amidst Africa’s political stagnation.<sup>177</sup> One such example is ACFM, whose four-fold vision includes a commitment to minister to the political leadership through a ‘prophetic ministry.’<sup>178</sup> ACFM encourages its members to act as ‘model citizens,’ by obeying the rule of law, paying taxes, registering to vote, confronting evil, and acting as ‘salt and light.’<sup>179</sup>

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<sup>177</sup> Kalu, *Power*, 102.

<sup>178</sup> All Christians Fellowship Mission, ‘Lesson 4. Understanding the Vision and Purpose of your Church’, *Membership Bible Studies*, 20.

<sup>179</sup> *Ibid.*, 21-2. See also Redeemed People’s Mission, ‘Lesson 4. Universal Responsibilities’, *Redeemed Adult Sunday School Lessons*, 2001, 10: ‘Christians are expected to be good citizens of the society in

Speak out against evil in our land and insist on seeing that the right thing is done no matter what it will cost you . . . Live exemplary lives; live a decent Christian life at all times beginning from your family, to the church and the society at large . . . As salt prevents decay, so also be a crusader against abuses, corruption and all forms of injustice and desist from them yourself, then others will no doubt imitate you.<sup>180</sup>

CPM has also adopted a prophetic stance. ‘Whoever is led by God to advise or warn government officials should do so. God expects a good ministry like ours to be a watchman, the conscience of the society. When they do the right thing, God will fulfil his promise and there will be an outbreak of revival.’<sup>181</sup> CPM also promotes the nuclear family as the foundation of society, and believes that national ills, caused by the actions of evil people, will only be cured by maintaining a high standard of ‘family values,’ rather than through government intervention.<sup>182</sup>

In their hermeneutic, some neo-Pentecostals stress the resonance between African and biblical worldviews, and lay the blame for Africa’s present socio-economic ills on ‘pollution caused by the actions of rulers and the ruled.’<sup>183</sup> They believe that rulers can use witchcraft to secure political office, and both individual and communal problems

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which they live (Jer. 29:7).’ Jer 29:7 - ‘And seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the Lord its behalf; for in its welfare you will have welfare’ (NASB).

<sup>180</sup> All Christians Fellowship Mission, ‘Lesson 4. Understanding the Vision and Purpose of your Church’, *Membership Bible Studies*, 21-2. See also OI, William Okoye, 28.10.01, Abuja; Okoye, *Clash of the Champions*, 29-30. RPM also employs the imagery of salt and light to describe the church’s role in society. As salt, Christians preserve society from decay through the gospel, and as light they are to live exemplary lives. Redeemed People’s Mission, ‘Lesson 15. Joseph: Faithfulness before God and Man’, *Redeemed Adult Sunday School Lessons*, 1998, 44.

<sup>181</sup> O. Peters, ‘The Big Happy Family and Challenges Ahead’, *The Pentecostal Family. A Special Publication of Christian Pentecostal Mission Int’l on Family Fellowship Affairs*, 14.

<sup>182</sup> Ezekiel, ‘We are Seeking Family Values’, *The Pentecostal Family. A Special Publication of Christian Pentecostal Mission Int’l on Family Fellowship Affairs*, 7.

<sup>183</sup> Kalu, ‘Pentecostal Political Theology’, 247. See for example, Nwankpa, *Redeeming the Land; Madugba, Africa’s Time of Recovery*.

can result from ancestral covenants entered into by their forefathers. Nwankpa, for example, has linked neo-Pentecostal political engagement to a theology of the land, drawn from biblical motifs and Pentecostal literature, which resonates with traditional religious beliefs.<sup>184</sup> During periods of socio-political distress, Igbos traditionally look to the land and their relationship with the earth deity, *Ala*. Offences against her are believed to bring dire consequences on individuals, families and communities.<sup>185</sup> Nwankpa refers to ‘sins’ that ‘pollute the land’ and provide access to malign spirits, such as ‘idol worship,’ ritual sacrifice, sexual immorality (including homosexuality), divorce, abortion, drug trafficking, prostitution, assassination gangs, and political insurgents.<sup>186</sup> Rather than oppose evil through violent action, Nwankpa encourages Christians to develop alternative lifestyles: ‘Redeeming the land actually involves changing the tide, going against the usual run of things, doing the will of God even when it appears unpopular, opposing decisions of the world that run counter to God’s will.’<sup>187</sup>

One way that Igbo neo-Pentecostals have sought to influence society is by promoting biblical values through print media. Since Obasanjo’s election as President, Okoye of ACFM has written a series of booklets addressing problems in the church and the nation, which the government has circulated free-of-charge throughout Nigeria.<sup>188</sup> In one, Okoye states that ‘the Church needs to join hands with the government in re-

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<sup>184</sup> Nwankpa, *Redeeming the Land*, 17.

<sup>185</sup> Kalu, ‘Pentecostal Political Theology’, 247.

<sup>186</sup> Nwankpa, *Redeeming the Land*, 76-80, 86-8, 95-7. See also Madugba, *Africa’s Time of Recovery*, 9-10, who refers to human sacrifice still being practiced today in Nigeria for ritual purposes. One of my informants also told me that his local community used to carry out human sacrifices each year to obtain favour from the gods of the land. OI, Samson Onwubiko, 10.10.01, Umuahia.

<sup>187</sup> Nwankpa, *Redeeming the Land*, 17.

orienting the society through Bible based wholistic teachings such as Basic Christian values, Bible foundation of our ethics, the Christian and education, and . . . practicing justice.’<sup>189</sup>

Hence, there is a strong ethical content to Igbo neo-Pentecostal political theology, which has potential for social transformation. Kalu identifies repentance as a key weapon in their armoury.<sup>190</sup> Thus, Nwankpa links land redemption to confession and repentance, and as part of his strategy asks elders and local Christians to confess publicly the sins of their communities.<sup>191</sup> There are affinities here with traditional piety, which associates moral probity with divine favour.<sup>192</sup> Some neo-Pentecostals apply the metaphor of healing to Nigeria’s socio-political ills and hold her citizens responsible for allowing access to evil spirits through corporate sin.<sup>193</sup> Consequently, repentance is promoted as a necessary condition for God to cleanse and heal the land.<sup>194</sup> Some NPCs now encourage their members to influence public life and seek political office if called by God. I have mentioned ACFM in this respect.<sup>195</sup> Amazing Love

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<sup>188</sup> These are *Clash of the Champions*; *God’s Message To The Nation*; and *God’s Purpose For Nations*. See Plate 11.3.

<sup>189</sup> Okoye, *Clash of Champions*, 27-8. Okoye’s support for Obasanjo’s government was based on his conviction that the latter is the first Nigerian President to have taken steps towards addressing Nigeria’s problems from the right perspective. Okoye, *God’s Purpose for Nations*, 13.

<sup>190</sup> Kalu, ‘Faith and Politics’, 10.

<sup>191</sup> Nwankpa, *Redeeming the Land*, 85-6.

<sup>192</sup> See chapter two, section 1.2, and chapter three, sections 3.2.5, 3.2.6, 3.3.2.

<sup>193</sup> Ojo, ‘Healing in Sub-Saharan Africa’, 143; Madugba, *Africa’s Time of Recovery*, 4. Madugba describes the Ministers Prayer Network, which he coordinates, as a ministry of prayer for the healing of the African continent. ‘Here is the Information on “Africa 2001”’, retrieved 05.01.04 on the World Wide Web: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/elijahlist/message/567>. During research, I came across a flyer advertising an intercessors conference in Jos, organised by Igbo neo-Pentecostal Joseph Umeh (a member of RPM), and entitled ‘Heal Our Land.’

<sup>194</sup> Madugba, *Africa’s Time of Recovery*, 10. See also Adolf, *Deliverance of African Christians*, 208-17, who associates pollution of the land through sin with Nigeria’s underdevelopment, and repentance with forgiveness and land healing (Appendix 4.8.5, paragraphs 1-3).

<sup>195</sup> See section 2.3. See also Nduul *et al.*, ‘Rev. Okoye, Reaping the Reward of Faithfulness’, *Compassion. A Quarterly News Magazine of All Christians Fellowship Mission*, 13; Okoye, *Responsible Christian Living*, 1993, cited in Okoroafor, *William Okoye*, 170-73.

Assembly also allows members to participate in politics, as long as they do so ‘with all honesty for the glory of God and for the benefits of God’s society.’<sup>196</sup> However, like ACFM,<sup>197</sup> ALA forbids its employees from participating in ‘partisan politics,’ unless they resign their appointment.<sup>198</sup> Madugba envisions a ‘recovery army, consisting of Christians in influential positions, including lawyers, medical doctors, academics, industrialists, and politicians, who will restore Africa’s fortunes,<sup>199</sup> and Nwankpa has established the SALT Programme, which trains ‘servant leaders’ to apply biblical standards to government and all levels of public life.<sup>200</sup> Old Testament figures, such as Esther, Mordecai, Joseph, and Daniel, are sometimes offered as examples of those who rose to positions of political influence in society.<sup>201</sup> However, during research I met no Igbo neo-Pentecostal who actually occupied a government position.<sup>202</sup>

One problem with ‘joining hands with the government’ to promote biblical values, and encouraging Christians to seek political office, is that it can interfere with the church’s prophetic stance, which depends upon maintaining a certain critical distance from the

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<sup>196</sup> Amazing Love Ministries, *Rules and Regulations*, 24.

<sup>197</sup> ACFM’s church constitution forbids its ministers from becoming politicians, and requires them to resign their position if they wish to do so. According to Okoye, this is because ACFM places higher value on the call of God to pastoral ministry. Nduul *et al.*, ‘Rev. Okoye, Reaping the Reward of Faithfulness’, *Compassion. A Quarterly News Magazine of All Christians Fellowship Mission*, 14. See also Bishop Mike Okonkwo, ‘I Won’t Apologise For Prosperity Gospel’, *LifeWay*, 54: ‘I am not interested in holding political office. I am interested in politics but not in political office. . . I am doing what God called me to do. And it is bigger than the office of the president.’

<sup>198</sup> Amazing Love Ministries, *Rules and Regulations*, 24. BFM in Jos also believes that Christians should if possible be actively involved in government. ‘Dialogue with Rev. Mrs Esther Ezeofor’, *The Bible Faith Mission Inc. Newsletter*, 2000, 5.

<sup>199</sup> Madugba, *Africa’s Time of Recovery*, 65-6.

<sup>200</sup> This programme was started in the late 1990s. The acronym SALT stands for Sundoulos African Leadership Training Program. *Sundoulos* in the Greek language means ‘fellow servants of the same Lord’ (Matt 18:28). See ‘Emeka Nwankpa: Intercessors for Africa’, retrieved 05.01.04 from the World Wide Web: [http://cbn.org/700club/features/emeka\\_nwankpa.asp](http://cbn.org/700club/features/emeka_nwankpa.asp).

<sup>201</sup> See for example, Lessons 20-26, *Redeemed Adult Sunday School Lessons*, 1998, 57-78; Madugba, *Africa’s Time of Recovery*, 65-6; Nwankpa, *Translated into the Kingdom of Christ*, 49-50.

<sup>202</sup> Although one informant told me that an ACFM pastor was recently asked by his community to stand as Local Government Chairman. OI, Stephen Nyam, 22.11.01, Jos.

seats of power. Jenkins warns against churches refusing to acknowledge the flaws of a regime just because it is Christian.<sup>203</sup> As long as the emphasis is on nurturing servant leaders and encouraging religious-based values to permeate Nigerian political culture, rather than establishing Christian domination, then this strategy is compatible with NPC ambitions to act as ‘salt and light.’

### 3.3 Intercession and Spiritual Warfare

Intercessory prayer, sometimes linked to prophecy, is the principle neo-Pentecostal strategy for socio-political engagement. During the 1990s, the emergence of intercessory prayer groups throughout Nigeria reshaped neo-Pentecostal political theology.<sup>204</sup> If we recall, prayer was an important aspect of neo-Pentecostal political engagement as far back as the late 1970s, but during the 1990s this strategy has become more pronounced and has included a strong emphasis on holiness, deliverance, and spiritual warfare.<sup>205</sup> For example, ACFM operates a 24-hour fasting and prayer programme for Obasanjo’s administration and the nation, and in March 2000, CPM held a five-day fasting and prayer programme to ‘address the prevalent religious disturbances in the country.’<sup>206</sup>

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<sup>203</sup> Jenkins, *Next Christendom*, 154.

<sup>204</sup> Kalu, ‘Faith and Politics’, 10; Kalu, ‘Pentecostal Political Theology’, 250-51. Examples include the National Prayer House (Intercessors for Nigeria) associated with Emeka Nwankpa, Steve Otikita, Kola Akinboboye and Uduak Udofia,, and the Ministers Prayer Network, coordinated by Mosy Madugba. Another former Igbo revivalist, Presbyterian James Ukaegbu, is the Chairman of the National Advisory Council for the Ministers Prayer Network.

<sup>205</sup> Kalu, *Power*, 110.

<sup>206</sup> Okoye, *Clash of the Champions*, 22; ‘CPM Prays for the Nation and Welfare of it’s Members’, *The Pentecostal Weekly. A Publication of Christian Pentecostal Mission Int’l*, March 19-25, 2000, 7.

Several scholars have noted the importance of prayer and deliverance practices in African neo-Pentecostal political theology.<sup>207</sup> In Igbo neo-Pentecostal discourse, politics is presented in terms of a spiritual contest between good and evil.<sup>208</sup> God originally gave dominion over the earth to humankind but they relinquished control to Satan and his cohorts through disobedience.<sup>209</sup> Contemporary Nigerian politics operates within a sacralised public space inhabited by numerous spiritual entities, and cultic power is often employed to buttress political clout.<sup>210</sup> At the heart of neo-Pentecostal representation of political power is the idiom of the supernatural.<sup>211</sup> For instance, Okoye states that in contrast to some previous governments, who have employed ‘occult’ forces to gain power, the ‘power base’ of the present Obasanjo administration is ‘spiritual and not demonic.’ He then calls upon Christians to provide a spiritual foundation through prayer, to combat the enemies of the government and the efforts of Islamic fundamentalists.<sup>212</sup> Marshall refers to the political implications of Pentecostal belief in the existence of spiritual forces behind material events. For many Nigerians, identifying the ‘government, the state, or the international economic system as sources of oppression’ can only mean passive acceptance, because any form of confrontation will lead to violence and further oppression. Having access to

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<sup>207</sup> See for example, Kalu, ‘Pentecostal Political Theology’, 229-255; Kalu, *Power*, 129, 110; Marshall, ‘Pentecostalism in Southern Nigeria’, 23; Ojo, ‘Church’, 30; Asamoah-Gyadu, ‘Renewal within African Christianity’, 259-60; C. O. Oshun, ‘Spirits and Healing in a Depressed Economy: The Case of Nigeria’, *Mission Studies*, Vol. 15-1, 29, 1998, 32-52.

<sup>208</sup> For example, Okoye, *Clash of the Champions*, 17: ‘There is a war that is going on in this country right now and it is the battle for the soul of our nation.’

<sup>209</sup> Madugba, *Africa’s Time of Recovery*, 4; Nwankpa, *Redeeming the Land*, 8-9; Nwankpa, *Translated into the Kingdom of Christ*, 4-9; Redeemed People’s Mission, ‘Lesson 10. Identifying the Enemy and Overcoming’, *Redeemed Adult Sunday School Lessons*, 1998, 29; Obiorah Ezekiel, ‘Walking Worthy in Satan’s World’, *Pentecostal Weekly. A Publication of Christian Pentecostal Mission Int’l*, May 14-20 2000, 3.

<sup>210</sup> Kalu, ‘Faith and Politics’, 2.

<sup>211</sup> See for example, Emeka Nwankpa, ‘Territorial Spirits’, talk given at conference on ‘Combatting the Powers of Darkness’, National Theatre, Lagos, April 1993, cited in Marshall, ‘Pentecostalism and Democratisation’, 248-49.

deliverance practices returns ‘agency to the individual,’ even if it may not prevent problems in the future, or solve present ones.<sup>213</sup>

Former Igbo revivalists Nwankpa and Madugba are among those who have popularised neo-Pentecostal intercessory prayer through their conferences and literature.<sup>214</sup> They suggest a number of strategies Christians can employ to ‘redeem the land’ from the hand of Satan, partly gleaned from American Pentecostal literature,<sup>215</sup> and their books contain biblical quotations and anecdotal evidence to support their teaching. There is a strong ethical element reflected in an emphasis on holiness and reconciliation as necessary conditions for effective intercession.<sup>216</sup> They also promote a violent form of spiritual warfare to wrest control over governments from malign spirits, and believe that ordinary Christians can change the destinies of nations through prayer.<sup>217</sup> Note the following excerpt from a prayer spoken at an intercessors conference in Port Harcourt: ‘And Lord, we bring the thrones, the seats of power, the seats of government, the instruments of power in the nations, we bring them and command that they bow before

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<sup>212</sup> Okoye, *Clash of the Champions*, 20-22, 26.

<sup>213</sup> Marshall, ‘Pentecostalism in Southern Nigeria, 22-23.

<sup>214</sup> As co-ordinator of the Ministers Prayer Network, Madugba has organised annual International Ministers and Christian Leaders prayer conferences in Port Harcourt since 1997. Among those who attended in 2000 were former Igbo revivalists Emeka Nwankpa, Austin Ukachi, James Ukaegbu, and Charles Osueke. Other participants included Ray McCaulay (South Africa), Lukusa Albert (Congo), Joe Imakando (Zambia), Pattie Blue (France), Kinkead Richard (USA), and Noel Woodruffe (Trinidad). See Nigeria 2000, ‘Rebirth of the Apostolic & Prophetic Era’, 4<sup>th</sup> International Ministers & Christian Leaders Prayer & Leadership Conference, video, Port Harcourt, 2000. The 2003 conference was said to have attracted up to 18,000 Christians, one of the largest gathering for prayer purposes witnessed in Nigeria. See ‘20,000 Christians for International Prayer Summit’, retrieved 05.01.04 from the World Wide Web: <http://www.thisdayonline.com/archive/2002/12/14/20021214news18.html>.

<sup>215</sup> These include identificational repentance, spiritual mapping, breaking covenants, and prophetic prayer. See for example, Madugba, *Africa’s Time of Recovery*, who draws heavily on teaching by C. Peter Wagner and George Otis Jr., both leading proponents of ‘Strategic-level spiritual warfare.’

<sup>216</sup> See Madugba, *Africa’s Time of Recovery*, 94-116; Nwankpa, *Redeeming the Land*, 27-35.

<sup>217</sup> Mosy Madugba, ‘Welcome Address’, Nigeria 2000, Ministers’ Prayer Network, 4<sup>th</sup> International Ministers & Christian Leaders Prayer and Leadership Conference, Port Harcourt, 2000.

the name of the Lord Jesus.’<sup>218</sup> Nwankpa emphasises the potency of ‘prophetic’ prayer: ‘When you pray prophetically, you are in the place of governmental authority . . . Prophetic praying is very powerful. It can change laws. It can cancel what politicians have said.’<sup>219</sup>

There is also a strong emphasis on prophecy. For instance, Madugba believes Nigeria is entering the joint ‘Apostolic and Prophetic Era,’ a time of restoration of her fortunes.<sup>220</sup> He relates the occasion in 1998 when someone prophesied that God was going to remove two prominent political leaders. Within three weeks General Sani Abacha died suddenly in his sleep, and a month later Chief Abiola, winner of the annulled 1993 Presidential election, died in prison.<sup>221</sup>

There is a danger that attributing socio-political ills to malignant spirits may divert attention from structural causes and corrupt leaders, and discourage a life of activism in politics, as Asamoah-Gyadu has noted of Ghanaian Pentecostalism.<sup>222</sup> But Marshall correctly observes that a belief in the efficacy of prayer and deliverance in relation to politics does not necessarily encourage people to ignore the real root of problems such as economic crisis and government mismanagement, because ‘it is not inconsistent to believe that the government is responsible for social ills, while at the same time laying

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<sup>218</sup> Prayer of Intercession during Nigeria 2000, Ministers’ Prayer Network, 4<sup>th</sup> International Ministers & Christian Leaders Payer and Leadership conference, Port Harcourt, 2000. For a fuller transcript, see Appendix 4.8.6.

<sup>219</sup> Nwankpa, *Redeeming the Land*, 65, 69.

<sup>220</sup> Madugba, *Africa’s Time of Recovery*, 1. While I was in Jos I saw a poster advertising a conference organised by the Pastors/Ministers Prayer Network, associated with Intercessors for Nigeria, with the caption, ‘Anointing of God for release of a powerful prophetic and apostolic fire for the north and the nation.’ Conference speakers included Igbo Pentecostals Uma Ukpai and Emeka Nwankpa, among others. (Observed during visit to All Christians Fellowship Mission, Jos, 23 September 2001).

the blame for daily problems at the door of Satan.’<sup>223</sup> Sometimes a subtle shift can occur in spiritual warfare prayer towards regarding people, rather than Satan, as enemies,<sup>224</sup> and this can lead to an aggressive approach to mission, which reinforces local antagonisms. In Lk 6:27-8, Jesus says, ‘love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you’ (NASB).

### 3.4 A Practical Theology of Compassion

One way that some Igbo neo-Pentecostals have cultivated an attitude of love is to engage in acts of compassion. While prayer and evangelism remain priorities, gradually a praxis-oriented ‘actual life’ theology of social concern and development, based on a holistic understanding of salvation, is emerging among Igbo neo-Pentecostals that extends beyond church boundaries.<sup>225</sup> RPM, for example, states, ‘We are to have compassion on the needy and the less privileged . . . The church should be at the forefront of measures that would alleviate suffering and poverty . . . The church also has a duty towards those who are not believers.’<sup>226</sup> And BFM’s mission statement includes the clause: ‘To help in community development through worthy ventures such as schools.’<sup>227</sup> This theology has evolved through interaction with local contexts, and reflection upon the Bible and Christian tradition.

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<sup>221</sup> Madugba, *Africa’s Time of Recovery*, 16-17. This prophecy occurred during an intercessors prayer meeting in Port Harcourt.

<sup>222</sup> Asamoah-Gyadu, ‘Renewal within African Christianity’, 284.

<sup>223</sup> Marshall, ‘Pentecostalism in Southern Nigeria, 22-3.

<sup>224</sup> For an example, see Adolf, *Deliverance*, 214 (Appendix 4.8.5, paragraph 5).

<sup>225</sup> For example, the Living Word Mission Hospital was born out of a vision to ‘complement the Living Word Ministries in providing for the total man - spirit, soul, and body. The vision is to bring Christ to the sick thereby availing them salvation.’ Living Word Ministries, *Annual Journal*, 51.

The breakdown of the extended family in urban areas, and the lack of a viable State welfare system, has left particular groups vulnerable to poverty and neglect. Thus, for example, LWM's 'We-Care Ministry' was born out of concern for prison inmates and motherless babies, but has extended its vision to include widows, old people without family support, unemployed youth, abandoned mentally ill, the homeless, and the poor in general. It also has a rehabilitation programme for drug addicts and alcoholics, and provides free medical care for the poor.<sup>228</sup> The seeds for ACFM's 'Christ Compassion Ministry' were sown during their founder's early encounter with a woman whose only child was killed through 'diabolical means,' and his subsequent desire to acquire power to 'deal with evil people who were oppressing the poor and the less privileged.'<sup>229</sup> ACFM's social vision is reflected in its motto, 'Because God cares, we care,' and the name given to its new headquarters, the Cathedral of Compassion.<sup>230</sup>

Igbo neo-Pentecostals draw upon biblical and historical models and motifs to shape their social vision and motivate their members. For example, ACFM's membership manual states, 'This mission essentially is an outreach of compassion . . . It is also important to know that Jesus himself was motivated and driven by compassion throughout his earthly ministry (Matt. 9:35-38).'<sup>231</sup> And ACFM founder Okoye bases

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<sup>226</sup> Redeemed People's Mission, 'Lesson 6. The Church and Social Responsibilities', *Redeemed Adult Sunday School Lessons*, 1999, 18-9. See also Redeemed People's Mission, 'Lesson 18. Parable of the Good Samaritan', *Redeemed Adult Sunday School Lessons*, 1999, 50-1.

<sup>227</sup> Brochure introducing the Bible Faith Mission, Jos.

<sup>228</sup> Living Word Ministries, *Annual Journal*, 58-9. 'We-Care Ministry' is referred to as the 'Compassion arm of Living Word Ministries.'

<sup>229</sup> All Christians Fellowship Mission, 'Lesson 4. Understanding the Vision and Purpose of your Church', *Membership Bible Studies*, 20; Nduul *et al.*, 'Rev. Okoye, Reaping the Reward of Faithfulness', *The Compassion. A Quarterly News Magazine of All Christians Fellowship Mission*, 5.

<sup>230</sup> OI, William Okoye and Stephen Nyam.

<sup>231</sup> All Christians Fellowship Mission, 'Lesson 4. Understanding the Vision and Purpose of your Church', *Membership Bible Studies*, 19-20. Matt 9:36 - 'And seeing the multitudes, He felt compassion for them, because they were distressed and downcast like sheep without a shepherd' (NASB).

his social vision on a 'kingdom now' theology: 'when we seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and God blesses us with material things, we use them as tools to advance the kingdom of God here on earth and help other people.'<sup>232</sup> *Grace of God's* 'Dorcas Ministry' was named after the woman in Acts with a reputation for helping the poor,<sup>233</sup> and Nwachukwu, the General Superintendent, was influenced by the example of Western missionaries: 'The white missionaries came, they spent a lot of money . . . built schools, built hospitals, everything. It is our duty now to do the same thing for other [ph] African countries . . . It is our duty to take the gospel to our own people, to build hospitals and schools too.'<sup>234</sup> RPM also uses biblical precedent *and* Christian tradition to promote social action, citing the examples of Jesus, William Wilberforce, and George Muller.<sup>235</sup> According to RPM literature, love should be the main motive - love for Christ, expressed through obedience, and love for the needy - but the expectation of eschatological rewards is also a valid incentive.<sup>236</sup>

## Conclusion

My research suggests that during the civil war, revivalist spirituality contained the seeds of a socio-political theology that included prayer, political activism, and humanitarian concern. But during the 1970s, they failed to build upon this, due to their preoccupation

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<sup>232</sup> Okoye, *God's Purpose for Nations*, 11. Redeemed People's Mission also links the church's social responsibility to a 'kingdom' theology: 'Since our Lord Jesus Christ had compassion on the needy, we have no excuse other than to go and do as He did. This is part of our kingdom privileges (Jn. 9:4).' Redeemed People's Mission, 'Lesson 18. Parable of the Good Samaritan', *Redeemed Adult Sunday School Lessons*, 1999, 51.

<sup>233</sup> OI, Paul Nwachukwu, 12.5.00, Onitsha. See Acts 9:36.

<sup>234</sup> OI, Paul Nwachukwu, 12.5.00, Onitsha.

<sup>235</sup> Redeemed People's Mission, 'Lesson 6. The Church and Social Responsibilities', *Redeemed Adult Sunday School Lessons*, 1999, 17, 19; Redeemed People's Mission, 'Lesson 18. Parable of the Good Samaritan', 1999, 50-1. Other historical precedents referred to by Igbo neo-Pentecostals include the Salvation Army and early CMS and RCM missionaries. OI, Paul Nwachukwu, 12.5.00, Onitsha; Bolton, 'Structural Units for a New Nigeria', 3-4.

with evangelising the lost before the imminent return of Christ, their focus on the personal rather than structural effects of sin, their consciousness of their marginal position in society, and their belief that politics was a dirty business, tainted by association with cultic powers, and linked to corruption and violence. In the 1980s, prosperity teaching, deliverance theology, and the movement's fragmentation further militated against neo-Pentecostal socio-political engagement. All these factors imposed limitations on the movement's effectiveness as an organ of social transformation.

However, given their particular theological beliefs and restricted access to the corridors of power, there is an inner logic to neo-Pentecostal preference for prayer as the principle tool for socio-political engagement. And since the movement's inception, strong currents of latent resistance, expressed through counter cultural lifestyles, the creation of 'autonomous spaces' of practice, and the cultivation of a democratic culture suggest a political consciousness that belies its acquiescent image.

Since the late 1980s, Igbo neo-Pentecostals have developed a socio-political theology of engagement that moves beyond prayer and deliverance, though this was initially precipitated by a concern to protect their own interests in a hostile environment characterised by Islamic hegemony. The formation of PFN has helped them present a united front in the public arena. My research shows that some NPC leaders are seeking to conscientise the laity regarding socio-political responsibility through sermons, Bible studies, conferences, and print media, though the behaviour of members at the grassroots requires further investigation. The danger is that the close link between

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<sup>236</sup> Redeemed People's Mission, 'Lesson 6. The Church and Social Responsibilities', *Redeemed Adult*

evangelisation and political activity may exacerbate Christian-Muslim tensions and end up in what Jenkins has referred to as a 'new Christendom.' But NPC texts encourage church members to influence society through prophetic witness, responsible citizenship, exemplary lifestyles, and intercessory prayer, rather than violent activism or political pressure. Some churches have also expanded their mission strategies to include social welfare programmes that move beyond church boundaries, though these are still in their formative stages. However, it holds out promise for the future as Igbo neo-Pentecostals engage with their communities at local and national levels. As they do so, they might do well to reflect further on their roots in the Civil War Revival.

## CONCLUSION

This thesis set out to tell the story of the Civil War Revival and its Pentecostal progeny from the late 1960s to the beginning of the new millennium. In doing so, it provides the first comprehensive account of the movement in Eastern Nigeria, and clarifies the extent of its intersections and interactions with other sectors of the Nigerian Pentecostal movement, as well as its relationship to global Pentecostalism. While there is a growing literature on contemporary African neo-Pentecostalism, there are few local historical studies of its actual origins. My research provides valuable insights into how people move from African mission into independent churches, and how actual secessions take place.

The research process generated four inter-related questions. The first, to which much of the thesis is devoted, was to understand why the movement grew where and when it did. This called for an examination of local and global influences, and an exploration of religious motivation. The second question focussed on consequences; how the movement has altered existing religious, socio-cultural, and political landscapes. The third was to understand how and why the movement's vision and values evolved since the 1970s, and whether this has imposed limitations on its potential for moral and social transformation. The final question can be posed in the form of a challenge: how can Igbo neo-Pentecostals maintain their distinctive witness in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, and remain a vital force for renewal and transformation in a pluralistic society?

The search for answers to these questions led me first to a consideration of the religious and socio-political background to the revival and its neo-Pentecostal progeny. The combined legacies of colonialism and missionary endeavour created a favourable environment for religious innovation and initiative. Maxwell notes that the success of new forms of African popular Christianity lies in both their continuity and discontinuity with what has gone before.<sup>1</sup> In chapter two, I maintain that Christian conversion has both social and religious causes, but is best understood as a religious encounter, with sociological factors as catalysts. Because Igbo converts appropriate the gospel via existing religious categories, an examination of inherited beliefs was important. Following Okorochoa,<sup>2</sup> I argue that the traditional search for power to enhance life (*ezi-ndu*, Igbo) is the key to determining the shape of Igbo Christian conversion experiences. One reason for the Civil War Revival's success was the impotence of existing Christian options to fulfil local aspirations. During the colonial era, mission Christianity, influenced by Enlightenment thinking, precipitated a crisis of identity and left a legacy of 'two faiths in one mind' that encouraged dual allegiance to church and traditional cult, as local Christians searched for power to solve pressing problems. This identity crisis was exacerbated by the reluctance of mission churches to relinquish control and cultivate indigenous church communities. To some extent, the various local Christian initiatives and innovations that burst upon the scene from 1914 alleviated these dilemmas by mobilising neglected forces and responding more effectively to consumer demands. But as their charismatic impulses subsided, they either lost their radical edge and became vulnerable to bureaucratisation, or developed hybrid forms of spirituality that bore little resemblance to biblical Christianity. By the 1960s, neither the mission

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<sup>1</sup> Maxwell, 'African Imagination', 7.

related Pentecostal churches nor the prayer houses posed a significant threat to the hegemony of mainline mission churches. Nonetheless, they were important because they introduced many revivalists to Pentecostal spirituality and injected a Pentecostal flavour into the fledgling movement.

My thesis confirms previous research, which suggests that periods of socio-political distress can act as catalysts for religious change. I argue that the legacies of colonialism, decolonisation, civil war, and subsequent political instability and economic decline, created a series of crises comparable in their impact to the colonial conquest, and contributed to the appeal of the Civil War Revival and its Pentecostal progeny. The combination of global flows through Western education and missionary endeavours, and rural-urban migration, loosened ties with traditional control structures and increased the level of individual autonomy and choice. Decolonisation was accompanied by rapid social change as Nigeria became a large-scale nation state, but initial optimism gave way to disappointment due to pervasive corruption, political instability, and the growth of regional and ethnic antagonisms, exacerbated by the colonial construction of artificial boundaries. However, it was the catastrophic consequences of the civil war in particular, which facilitated the growth of the revival and the emergence of NPCs. Igbo neo-Pentecostal faith was forged in the furnace of the civil war crisis. My research suggests that it was precisely because they bore the brunt of the suffering that Igbo response to the revival during the 1970s was so dramatic compared to their counterparts in the west.

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<sup>2</sup> Okorochoa, *Religious Conversion*, 206, 278.

But the success of the revival and its neo-Pentecostal progeny rested on a balance between supply and demand. My findings are consistent with those who insist that the supply side of revivals and Pentecostal movements is crucial to their success.<sup>3</sup> The civil war crisis not only created new religious demands, it contributed to the formation of a dynamic missionary fellowship, able to exploit the disorder, dislocation and disruption of Igbo society.

In chapter three, I argue that it was this missionary impulse, forged in the furnace of the civil war and the SU fellowship groups, and shaped by local demands and global flows, which was principally responsible for the revival's success. Membership of this dynamic egalitarian missionary fellowship, with its strong Christological, pneumatological, and eschatological focus, provided a means for Igbos to reconstruct individual and collective identities, shattered by the civil war. These identities were reinforced by the erection of moral and symbolic boundaries (separating insiders from outsiders), participation in communal activities, and the creation of local theologies. Because so much depended upon the activities of itinerant preachers, I explore the issue of religious motivation. The revival generated an 'actual life' theology, which evolved through interaction with local contexts and global flows, and reflection upon the Bible and Christian tradition. This provided the ideological basis for revivalist activity, and awakened a 'passion for the kingdom' that propelled those touched by the 'Spirit' into the margins of society.

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<sup>3</sup> For example, Hempton, *Religion of the People*, 27; Cedric Mayrargue, 'The Expansion of Pentecostalism in Benin: Individual Rationales and Transnational Dynamics', in Corten and Marshall-Fratani, *Babel and Pentecost*, 275; Hackett, 'Charismatic/Pentecostal', 258, 262.

Chapter three also examines the effects of the revival on existing religious and social landscapes, and its relationship to prevailing cultural trends. The revival was both context sensitive and counter cultural, and contained strong currents of accommodation and resistance. The mobilisation of neglected forces and appropriation of Pentecostal spirituality, linked to its missionary impulse, alleviated the dilemma of dual allegiance, and contributed to the cultivation of indigenous mission-oriented communities, intent on responding to consumer demands. Other features of the revival, such as conversions, puritan lifestyles, the erosion of boundaries (based on ethnicity, colour, denominational affiliation and gender), and an emphasis on healing flowed from this missionary impulse.

I argue that the revival presented Igbo society with a moral challenge at a time when existing social controls were breaking down due to modernisation, increasing urban migration, and the civil war crisis. At the heart of its message was the idiom of new birth, linked to a call to radical repentance, rejection of traditional religious practices, and a promise of power for ethical renewal in the light of Christ's imminent return. This captured the imagination of Igbo revivalists and became a potent symbol for identity construction. It also resonated with local aspirations and the quest for power to enhance life, which in traditional discourse was linked to moral probity. The social implications and consequences of the revival were again associated with its missionary impulse. Mutual membership of a dynamic missionary fellowship, intent on evangelising local communities, eroded denominational and ethnic barriers, and challenged gerontocratic, gender, and colour boundaries. These findings concur with

research on other African revivals (for example, the East African Revival),<sup>4</sup> though this thesis places more weight on the movement's missionary orientation as a major catalyst for moral and social transformation.

The revival's relationship to modernity was equivocal. On the one hand, its emphasis on new birth and rupture with the past hastened the breakdown of traditional communal obligations, and encouraged social and economic mobility. However, it also resisted the secularising influences of modernity associated with missionaries and colonialists by resacralising the landscape in Christian terms and condemning the destructive inroads of consumer culture.

In chapters three and four, I attempt to explain the origins of Igbo initiated NPCs out of the womb of the Civil War Revival. This too was closely linked to the revival's missionary impulse and the influence of Scripture Union. Despite its ecumenical and evangelical ideals, SU set in motion certain trends that hastened the fragmentation of the movement, as autonomous CMs emerged from its ranks. By opening up space for young people to assume leadership roles, acquire ministerial skills, and engage in aggressive evangelistic ventures, SU sowed seeds of dissent within gerontocratic and male-dominated structures of society, as members responded to modernity's call to make a clean break from the past. Born-again conversion and Holy Spirit baptism supplied revivalists with tools to challenge gerontocracy, and reposition themselves with respect to existing religious and social relations. But this challenge proceeded from the revival's missionary impulse, rather than a desire to break free from the

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<sup>4</sup> See Stanley, 'East African Revival', 13; Robins, 'East African Revival', 201-21, 195; Ward, 'Balokole',

control of elder males or construct identities modelled on the autonomous secular subject of modernity. While born-again are freed from the constraints of traditional commensality, they are bound to a higher authority and accountable to a new community. No longer content to remain on the margins, their aggressive evangelistic style, linked to a radical holiness ethic and a Pentecostal spirituality, created tensions within SU, and alienated them from elders in church and community. As the SU fellowship became the source of spiritual sustenance for a growing number of young people, links with existing denominations became increasingly fragile, facilitating the emergence of CMs. But these might never have evolved into churches if several other conditions had not been in place. While local social and economic realities, and global religious legacies, provided a favourable environment for secession, opposition from mainline church authorities to revivalists' promotion of Holy Spirit baptism, practice of charismatic gifts, and evangelistic style (with its call to repentance and new birth), hastened the moment of rupture and the transition of CMs to denominational status.

In chapter five, I argue that NPC expansion also depended upon a balance between supply and demand. The inherent flexibility of Pentecostal spirituality enabled NPCs to adapt their message and their methodology to suit local contexts and cater for consumer demands. Their emphasis on the Bible, innovative worship styles, community ethos, and proclamation of a holistic gospel appealed to those faced with disintegrating social and economic relationships, and accustomed to a universe alive with spiritual forces. Each of these elements contributed to the construction of Igbo neo-Pentecostal identity. Perhaps the most significant factor behind NPC church growth, particularly in its

formative period, has been its orientation towards mission, which betrays its origins within the Civil War Revival.

This thesis challenges those scholars like Gifford, who interpret African NPCs primarily as products of globalisation or ‘Americanisation,’<sup>5</sup> and concurs with those who emphasise local agency over global influences.<sup>6</sup> In the Nigerian context, cultural flows were bi-directional, with Igbo neo-Pentecostals influencing their Western partners through transnational interactions. And while global cultural and ideological flows through media and migration affected the shape of Igbo initiated neo-Pentecostalism, participants made use of global resources and images to suit their own agendas and satisfy consumer demands. Global forces stimulated local initiative and heterogeneity. However, from a participant point of view, the urge to engage in mission was not primarily a result of American influence, but a response to local reflection on the Bible, current socio-political contexts, and the promptings of the Spirit.

Chapter five also explores the moral and socio-economic implications of Igbo initiated neo-Pentecostalism. By establishing links with North American and European Pentecostal organisations, NPCs provide access to an ‘imagined community,’ with global dimensions and missionary ambitions, and opportunity to opt into the global order and find a footing in the modern world. More significant is their provision of local support networks and safe havens, especially in urban communities fractured by disintegrating social and economic relationships. By promoting family values, based on

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<sup>5</sup> Gifford, *African Christianity*, 39-44, 314-22; Gifford, ‘Developments’, 516-20; Brouwer, Gifford and Rose, *American Gospel*, 178, 151.

biblical rather than traditional principles, and encouraging marital fidelity, hard work, economic discipline, and shared domestic responsibilities, NPCs hold out benefits for women in particular and foster upward mobility. Thus, my research concurs with those scholars who regard Pentecostalism as an agent of social change.<sup>7</sup>

In their formative years, the construction of moral and symbolic boundaries marked out their difference from the 'world' and protected NPC members from the dangerous inroads of consumer culture, corruption, and immorality. However, as the missionary and charismatic impulses of the revival subsided, these boundaries were eroded, resulting in a reduction in distance from the world and a loss of counter cultural potential. In some quarters, prosperity teaching gained ascendancy, as NPC leaders, responding to pressures from global consumer culture, promoted the Cross as a source for material prosperity, to the neglect of its significance as a symbol of suffering, and its potential for ethical renewal and social transformation. Consequently, prosperity sometimes replaced holiness, Christian service, and evangelistic success as the yardstick for measuring spirituality.

Meanwhile, other boundaries were strengthened. Denominational barriers separating neo-Pentecostals from other church communities became more pronounced, to the detriment of the revival's original ecumenical impulse, and clericalism, linked to male-dominated authoritarian ecclesiastical structures, was re-introduced, resulting in a reduction in democratic potential. This is reflected in a recent tendency for NPC senior

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<sup>6</sup> For example, Marshall-Fratani, 'Power in the Name of Jesus', 21; Hackett, 'Charismatic/Pentecostal', 263; Maxwell, 'Witches, Prophets and Avenging Spirits', 335; Maxwell, 'In Defence of African Creativity', 176; Ojo, 'Charismatic Movements in Africa', 92.

pastors to take titles, such as ‘Rev. Dr.’ or ‘Bishop’, and the exclusion of women from senior administrative positions.

These developments had socio-political implications. In chapter six, I explore the movement’s record of engagement in the public sphere. Early texts suggest that revivalist spirituality during the civil war contained the seeds of a socio-political theology that included prayer, political activism and humanitarian concern. However, during the 1970s, a preoccupation with evangelism, strong adventist beliefs, a focus on the personal, rather than structural effects of sin, a suspicion of political involvement, and participants’ location on the fringes of society, prevented the revival’s socio-political potential from being fully realised. In the 1980s, despite a decline in adventist beliefs, and increasing influence due to numerical expansion and social mobility, the combined effects of prosperity teaching, deliverance theology, and the movement’s fragmentation, further militated against political activism and implementation of social welfare programmes. But by drawing attention to the logic behind the movement’s preference for prayer as a socio-political tool, and the presence of strong currents of latent resistance, this thesis challenges those who regard African neo-Pentecostals as politically acquiescent. Moreover, since the 1980s, some Igbo neo-Pentecostal leaders have developed a socio-political theology, linked to a call to corporate repentance, social critique, and humanitarian engagement, which moves beyond prayer and deliverance.

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<sup>7</sup> For example, Gerlach and Hine, *People*.

The close link between evangelisation and political activity in current NPC discourse and praxis has potential to exacerbate Christian-Muslim tensions and create what Jenkins has referred to as a ‘new Christendom,’<sup>8</sup> especially now that Nigeria has a President with ‘born-again’ credentials. But my research suggests that NPC leaders are encouraging members to influence society through prophetic witness, responsible citizenship, puritan lifestyles, intercessory prayer, and acts of compassion, rather than violent activism or political force, which holds out promise for the future. Whether these values are able to permeate NPC culture at the grassroots remains to be seen. To fulfil their prophetic calling, neo-Pentecostals must maintain their critical distance from government, even if they risk becoming unpopular and marginalised. And in their interactions with Nigeria’s large Muslim population, NPC leaders might do well to develop an alternative discourse (at least in public) that avoids the potentially provocative language of spiritual warfare and Christian domination, though this will not be easy in the current climate.

There has been a recent appeal by scholars, responding to criticisms of contemporary global Pentecostalism, for Pentecostals to look to their origins as a source for theological and spiritual renewal, and recognise its formative years as the heart of the movement, not just its infancy.<sup>9</sup> Given changing contexts, history cannot supply exact models for emulation, but it can provide inspiration for re-visioning. Nigerian neo-Pentecostals would benefit from reflecting on their own roots in the Civil War Revival,

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<sup>8</sup> Jenkins, *Next Christendom*, 12.

<sup>9</sup> For example, Hollenweger, *Pentecostalism*, 397-400; Land, *Pentecostal Spirituality*, 26; Faupel, *Everlasting Gospel*, 309.

and regarding it as a potential resource for renewing the movement's distinctive identity and witness. For this to occur, the movement needs to recover its early missionary passion, which propelled those touched by the Spirit into the margins of society (where they not only preached the gospel but engaged in acts of sacrificial service), and rediscover the radical potential of new birth and Holy Spirit baptism for ethical renewal, ecumenical initiative, and social transformation, which in revivalist discourse flowed from this missionary impulse. My research suggests that this is already happening as neo-Pentecostals engage with their communities at local and national levels.

In historical studies, this thesis contributes to the ongoing story of African Christian initiatives by reflecting on an encounter between a particular brand of Christianity and a local society undergoing severe economic and political distress, and the process of (re)-conversion that transpired. In the field of theology, it adds to the repertoire of local theologies emerging from the African continent and shows how they can provide an ideological basis for engagement with local social realities. In Pentecostals studies, it presents NPCs as evolving churches, standing in relationships of continuity and rupture with earlier Christian expressions, and negotiating modernity, with its associated economic and political pressures, through a process of re-envisioning.

Possible areas for further research include the repercussions of the revival on other Christian communities within both Nigeria and the Diaspora. As noted, many revivalists chose not to join NPCs, and have since attained positions of influence within

Nigerian mainline and mission related Pentecostal church ranks,<sup>10</sup> or have chosen to take up permanent residence in Europe or North America.<sup>11</sup> NPCs have also challenged mainline churches into emulative action. Additional research on neo-Pentecostal political behaviour is also needed, both in terms of grassroots mobilisation and in terms of direct involvement in politics. Finally, more in-depth case studies of individual NPC denominations would help to evaluate the movement's interactions and intersections with Nigeria's changing socio-political, economic, and religious realities.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Examples include Cyril Okorochoa (Anglican Bishop of Owerri), Ken Okeke (Anglican Bishop of the Niger), James Ukaegbu (past Moderator of the Presbyterian Church), Raphael Okafor (former SU General Secretary, and present Archdeacon, Enugu Diocese of the Anglican Church), Augustine Mbanaso (National Chairman of Scripture Union), Emmanuel Ekpunobi (Principal, St. Paul's Anglican College, Awka), Charles Osueke (General Superintendent, Assemblies of God Nigeria), and Mike Oye (former SU travelling secretary, and Methodist minister).

<sup>11</sup> For example, Stephen Okafor, Frances Lawjua Bolton, and Udobata Onunwe, who all live in the UK, and John Nwangwu and Benjamin Onwochei, who live in North America.

<sup>12</sup> For a summary of contemporary socio-political, economic, and religious realities faced by Nigerian Christians, see Galadima and Turaki, 'Christianity in Nigeria', 196-206.

# Appendices

## Appendix 1. Interview Schedules, Survey Questionnaire, and Tables

### 1.1 Interview Schedule for Former Revivalists

(Note: I used this for the majority of my oral history interviews. The questions in italics are 'generative questions' designed to stimulate the informant's main narrative. Other questions acted as guides and memory aids).

#### 1. Biographical Information

*Can you tell me about your life before the war and the revival?*

- Name; age; occupation of parents?
- Where are you from?
- Where did you go to school?
- Did you attend church?
- Have you had any contact with Igbo traditional religion or prayer houses?
- When were you converted to Christianity?
- Where were you stationed during the revival period?

#### 2. Civil War Memories

*Can you tell me what you remember about the civil war and the way it affected your life?*

- What, if any, was your personal involvement in the war?
- How did you interpret it from the standpoint of your Christian faith?
- Can you remember any public pronouncements by church leaders about the war?
- What was the role of Igbo traditional religion during the war? Were you aware of people resorting to the use of magic and witchcraft?
- Did the war situation affect peoples' interest in prayer houses?
- How did the civil war itself contribute towards the events of the revival?

#### 3. Revival Memories

*Can you tell me what you remember about the revival and the way it affected your life?*

##### a) Personal Experiences

*Can you describe your own personal experience of the revival?*

- How did it help to make Christianity more meaningful to you?
- Describe any significant spiritual experiences you had during the revival.
- Did you have any firsthand experience of healing, deliverance, prophecy or tongues?

##### b) History

*Can you tell me what you remember about the history of the revival? I am interested in the way it developed, and the main personalities and groups involved?*

- When and how did the revival begin? Can you describe its development? Who were the key participants that you remember?
- What were the main centres of the revival?
- What were the main church denominations involved?
- What was the role of Scripture Union?
- What was the role of the prayer houses during the revival? What was the attitude of the revivalists to these churches?

- Was it a movement primarily of the educated elite, or did it involve a cross-section of the population? What was the main language of communication?

### **c) Form and Content**

*What were the major features and emphases during the revival?*

- What was the message of the revival? Can you give any examples of sermons/topics preached? How important was the Bible? What were the popular passages referred to in sermons and Bible studies?
- What were the main (evangelistic) strategies adopted during the revival?
- Can you describe what Christian worship and prayer was like during the revival?
- What was your understanding of the devil, witchcraft, and deliverance during the revival?
- What was your understanding of Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, and salvation during the revival?
- What was your understanding of the term 'revival' at the time?
- Was there an emphasis on the second coming of Christ?
- Can you identify any reasons why the revival ended?

### **d) Influences**

*Can you identify the main influences affecting the form of the revival and those who participated?*

## **4. Effects of the Revival**

*Can you suggest ways in which the revival has affected the church and community?*

- How did the revival affect existing mission churches, prayer houses, and Scripture Union?
- Did the revival produce new churches and new church leaders? If so, how?
- How did the revival influence the social and political situation?
- What positive and negative contributions has the revival made to Igbo Christianity?
- How has the revival affected the doctrine and practice of the church in Igboland?
- What can the Igbo church learn from the revival?
- Can you think of any ways in which the Pentecostal churches have changed since the 1970s?

## **1.2 Interview Schedule for NPC Leaders and Members**

### **1. Church Membership**

Name of church?

Do you hold any position in the church? If so, what position?

To what church/es did your parents belong?

What is your local minister's name?

Why do you like being in this church?

Why do you go to your church, rather than another?

### **2. Worship and Prayer**

What do you like best about your church's worship?

What songs/choruses do you sing in your church meetings?

Do you sing in the vernacular or in English or both?

What kinds of prayer are practiced in the church?

What do people pray for?

### **3. Beliefs**

What are the main teachings in your church?

What does your church teach about the person and work of Jesus Christ?

### **4. Understanding of Evil**

Where does misfortune come from?

How can a Christian be set free from trouble?

Have you ever seen someone possessed by demons? Describe this.

Have you seen someone delivered from demons?

### **5. Salvation and Conversion**

Are you saved? What do you understand this to mean?

When did you become a Christian? How?

What is your understanding of *Ezi-ndu* (the good life)?

Why did you become a Christian?

What do you pray for?

### **6. Healing**

When you or someone in your family is sick or in trouble, what do you do?

Have you or your family ever been delivered of a sickness or trouble through prayer? Give examples.

How are people healed in your church?

### **7. The Holy Spirit**

Does the Holy Spirit come upon people during services? How?

Have you received the Holy Spirit? How do you know?

How do you know that someone is under the power of the Spirit, or has received the Spirit?

Do you speak in tongues?

Do you prophesy? Is this gift used publicly in your church?

Do you pray for the sick?

### **8. The Bible, Preaching, and Christian literature**

Is the sermon an important part of the worship service?

Do you have Bible study groups during the week?

Are there particular parts of the Bible that the minister likes to preach from? Which?

What are the most popular topics preached and studied?  
What Christian literature have you read that has particularly influenced you?

**9. Relationship/Attitude to African traditional beliefs/practices**

Have you ever visited a diviner? If yes, why? What happened?  
Have you or a family member been troubled by witches or wizards, or evil spirits?  
What happened? What did you do about it?

**10. Attitude to older AICs/Spiritual Churches/Prayer Houses**

Have you had any contact with prayer houses prior to joining your present church, or since joining?  
What is your attitude towards these churches?

**11. History**

*(a) For those with no direct experience of the civil war or the revival.*

Do you have any knowledge of the origins of your church denomination?

What do you know about the revival that took place in the 1970s?

What do you know about the civil war?

*(b) For those who had direct experience of the civil war and/or the revival.'*

What memories do you have of the civil war?

What were your personal experiences of the revival?

Can you think of ways that the churches have changed since the early 1970s?

**12. Personal details**

Name?

Occupation?

Approximate age?

Male or Female?

Single, married, divorced, widowed?

### 1.3 Jos Survey Questionnaire

Dear Brethren, I am currently at TCNN, Bukuru. I have discussed with your pastor, and he has given me permission to survey his congregation for the purpose of my research. I would be grateful if you would kindly fill in this form for me. Thankyou.

(Please tick where applicable)

1. What is the name of your church? \_\_\_\_\_
2. What is your age bracket? (10-20) \_\_\_ (21-30) \_\_\_ (31-40) \_\_\_ (41-50) \_\_\_  
(51-60) \_\_\_ (61-70) \_\_\_
3. Educational qualifications (Elementary six, Secondary school) \_\_\_ (Higher institution or University) \_\_\_ (none of the above) \_\_\_
4. Occupation (trader) \_\_\_ (civil servant) \_\_\_ (self-employed) \_\_\_ (applicant/student) \_\_\_  
(Other) \_\_\_
5. Sex: (male) \_\_\_ (female) \_\_\_
6. State of origin: \_\_\_\_\_ Tribal group \_\_\_\_\_
7. Marital status: (single) \_\_\_ (married) \_\_\_ (widow(er)) \_\_\_
8. Does your partner attend the church with you? \_\_\_\_\_
9. Do all your children attend the church with you? (all) \_\_\_ (some) \_\_\_ (none) \_\_\_
10. How do you travel to church? (a) on foot \_\_\_ (b) by bicycle \_\_\_ (c) by motor vehicle \_\_\_
11. What was your former religion? (a) traditional religion \_\_\_ (b) Islam \_\_\_  
(c) Christianity \_\_\_ (d) none of the above \_\_\_
12. If Christianity, list the denominations previously attended in the order of your attendance  
\_\_\_\_\_
13. Have you ever attended a prayer house or 'spiritual' church? \_\_\_ If so, which? \_\_\_\_\_
14. Have you been or are you currently a member of Scripture Union or FCS? \_\_\_\_\_
15. Which year were you born-again? \_\_\_\_\_
16. Were you converted through contact with your present church? \_\_\_\_\_
17. Which year did you join your present church? \_\_\_\_\_
18. Do you speak in tongues? \_\_\_\_\_
19. Why did you join your present church? (a) invited by someone \_\_\_ (b) you saw the  
signboard \_\_\_ (c) after their public crusade \_\_\_ (d) my family brought me to the  
church \_\_\_ (e) there are many people from my tribal group \_\_\_ (f) other reasons  
(please specify) \_\_\_\_\_
20. Why do you prefer your present church? (Tick as many as apply)  
(a) they give room for the exercise of spiritual gifts \_\_\_  
(b) I received (i) healing/deliverance \_\_\_ (ii) prosperity \_\_\_  
(c) there is better Bible teaching \_\_\_  
(d) they are more prayerful \_\_\_  
(e) the sermons are more powerful \_\_\_  
(f) members love one another here \_\_\_  
(g) my personal problems are better-solved \_\_\_  
(h) the pastor gives me more attention \_\_\_  
(i) there are many people from my tribal group \_\_\_  
(j) the worship is more lively \_\_\_  
(k) giving to God is more voluntary than in my former church, and better-utilised \_\_\_  
(l) they teach holiness and sanctification more than my former churches \_\_\_  
(m) the meetings are in English \_\_\_  
(n) the church is reaching out to the community with the gospel \_\_\_
21. Were you involved in the 1970s revival? \_\_\_ If yes, please give brief  
details \_\_\_\_\_
22. Have you had any experience of revival in your church or elsewhere since the 1970s? \_\_\_\_\_

If yes, please give details \_\_\_\_\_

23. Are you aware of the origins of your church? \_\_\_\_\_
24. What church activities are you involved in? (tick as many as apply)
- (a) Prayer band \_\_\_\_\_
  - (b) Home Fellowship \_\_\_\_\_
  - (c) Sister's Fellowship/Men's Fellowship/Youth Fellowship \_\_\_\_\_
  - (d) Evangelism Team \_\_\_\_\_
  - (e) Helping the needy \_\_\_\_\_
  - (f) Teaching Sunday School \_\_\_\_\_
  - (g) Children's work \_\_\_\_\_
  - (h) Worship band/choir \_\_\_\_\_
  - (i) Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_
25. In the recent past, what kinds of evangelistic outreach has your church tried? (tick as many as apply): (a) house to house visitation \_\_\_\_\_ (b) evangelistic meetings in the church \_\_\_\_\_ (c) open-air crusades \_\_\_\_\_ (d) radio/television ministry \_\_\_\_\_ (e) hospital visitation \_\_\_\_\_ (f) prison visitation (g) other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_
26. What is the most common way that people are converted in your church?
- (a) personal friendship \_\_\_\_\_ (b) crusade/evangelistic meeting \_\_\_\_\_ (c) visitation \_\_\_\_\_
  - (d) Sunday worship service \_\_\_\_\_ (e) other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_
27. In the recent past, what has your church tried in terms of ministry in your community? (tick as many as apply): (a) day school \_\_\_\_\_ (b) medical work/clinic \_\_\_\_\_ (c) visiting/helping the needy \_\_\_\_\_ (d) political involvement \_\_\_\_\_ (e) other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_
28. What do you do when you or a member of your family is sick? (tick as many as apply)
- (a) consult a medical doctor \_\_\_\_\_ (b) consult a traditional healer/herbalist \_\_\_\_\_ (c) go to a prayer house \_\_\_\_\_ (d) ask your church leaders to pray for you \_\_\_\_\_ (e) get a friend/family member to pray for you \_\_\_\_\_ (f) pray for yourself \_\_\_\_\_
29. Have you yourself been healed or delivered from evil spirits in your church? \_\_\_\_\_ If so, please give details \_\_\_\_\_
30. Do you know people in your church who have been healed or delivered from evil spirits? \_\_\_\_\_
31. Do you know any Muslims who have been converted through your church? \_\_\_\_\_ If so, approximately how many? \_\_\_\_\_
32. Do you know of any local indigenes who have joined your church? \_\_\_\_\_ If so, approximately how many? \_\_\_\_\_
33. What, if anything, would you like to see changed in your church? \_\_\_\_\_
34. Any other comments? \_\_\_\_\_

## 1.4 Jos Survey Tables

RPM = Redeemed People's Mission – 105 respondents

BFM = Bible Faith Mission – 40 respondents

ACFM = All Christians Fellowship Mission -22 respondents

**Table 1.4.1 Why do you prefer your present church to others?**

	<b>RPM</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>BFM</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>ACFM</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Group totals</b>	<b>105</b>		<b>40</b>		<b>22</b>		<b>167</b>	
Spiritual gifts	76	72.3	35	87.5	16	72.7	127	76.0
Healing	34	32.3	25	62.5	9	40.9	68	40.7
Prosperity	24	22.8	21	52.5	11	50.0	56	33.5
Bible teaching	93	88.5	35	87.5	19	86.4	147	88.0
Prayer	69	65.7	31	77.5	15	68.2	115	68.9
Sermons	77	73.3	38	95.0	16	72.7	131	78.4
Love	83	79.0	32	80.0	13	59.0	128	76.6
Problem solving	35	33.3	26	65.0	10	45.5	71	42.5
Pastoral care	47	44.7	28	70.0	11	50.0	86	51.4
Worship	95	90.4	36	90.0	16	72.7	147	88.0
Holiness	70	66.7	29	72.5	16	72.7	115	68.9
Use of money	57	54.2	26	65.0	8	40.0	91	54.5
Mission orientation	70	66.7	28	70.0	11	50.0	109	65.3
Use of English	48	45.7	21	52.5	12	54.5	81	48.5
Ethnic mix	5	4.8	5	12.5	3	13.6	13	7.8
Not stated	1	0.9	0	0	0	0	1	0.6

**Table 1.4.2 What is your ethnic group?**

<b>Church</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Igbo (%)</b>	<b>Other Southern groups (%)</b>	<b>Indigenes (Plateau State) (%)</b>	<b>Other Northern/ Middle Belt groups (%)</b>	<b>Not stated (%)</b>
RPM	105	58.1	22.9	2.9	14.3	1.9
BFM	40	42.5	42.5	12.5	0	5.0
ACFM	22	40.9	40.9	4.5	9.0	4.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>167</b>	<b>52.1</b>	<b>29.9</b>	<b>5.4</b>	<b>10.2</b>	<b>2.5</b>

**Table 1.4.3 Did you join your church through conversion or transfer?**

<b>Church</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Conversion (%)</b>	<b>Transfer (%)</b>	<b>Not stated (%)</b>
RPM	105	31.4	63.8	4.8
BFM	40	45.0	45.0	10.0
ACFM	22	18.2	54.5	27.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>167</b>	<b>32.9</b>	<b>58.1</b>	<b>9.0</b>

**Table 1.4.4** What was your former religion before joining your church?

Church	N	Christian	Muslim	Traditional religionist	Other	Not stated
RPM	105	86.7	1.9	6.7	1.9	2.9
BFM	40	95.0	2.5	2.5	0	0
ACFM	22	91.0	4.5	4.5	0	0
<b>Total</b>	167	89.2	2.4	5.4	1.2	1.8

**Table 1.4.5** Do you know of any Muslims converted in your church?

Church	N	None (%)	1-3 (%)	4-6 (%)	7-10 (%)	> 10 (%)	Number not stated (%)	Not stated (%)
RPM	105	22.4	27.0	3.8	3.8	1.1	8.8	33.1
BFM	40	40.0	27.5	2.5	2.5	0	10.0	17.5
ACFM	22	0	59.1	13.6	0	4.5	4.5	18.2
<b>Total</b>	167	24.0	32.3	5.4	3.6	1.2	9.0	24.6

**Table 1.4.6** Do you know of any local indigenes who have joined your church?

Church	N	None (%)	1-5 (%)	6-10 (%)	< 10 (%)	Unsure of number (%)	Not stated (%)
RPM	105	12.4	21.0	11.0	17.0	13.1	13.7
BFM	40	12.5	15.0	10.0	37.5	10.0	15.0
ACFM	22	4.5	31.8	31.8	9.1	4.5	18.2
<b>Total</b>	167	9.8	22.6	17.6	21.2	9.2	15.6

**Table 1.4.7** What was your church affiliation prior to joining?

Church	N	Protestant mission church (%)	Roman Catholic church (%)	Mission-related Pentecostal church (%)	Prayer house (%)	Other NPC (%)	Not stated (%)
RPM	105	25.8	16.9	9.03	15.8	17.6	14.4
BFM	40	41.2	17.6	2.9	14.7	2.9	20.6
ACFM	18	33.3	33.3	0	0	0	33.3
<b>Total</b>	163	32.6	19.1	6.4	12.8	11.3	17.7

**Table 1.4.8 Redeemed People's Mission - age and education**

	N	Primary 6/ Secondary (%)	Tertiary (%)	None of above (%)	Not stated (%)
<b>Males</b>					
11-20	0	0	0	0	0
21-30	13	46.2	53.8	0	0
31-40	20	50.0	45.0	5.0	0
41-50	20	55.0	45.0	0	0
51-60	5	60.0	20.0	20.0	0
61-70	1	0	100.0	0	0
Total (male)	60	50.0	45.0	3.3	1.7
<b>Females</b>					
11-20	1	100.0	0	0	0
21-30	18	44.4	44.4	5.6	5.6
31-40	17	58.8	41.2	0	0
41-50	7	57.1	42.9	0	0
51-60	2	50.0	50.0	0	0
61-70	0	0	0	0	0
Total (female)	45	53.3	42.2	2.2	2.2
<b>Total (both)</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>51.4</b>	<b>43.8</b>	<b>2.9</b>	<b>1.9</b>

**Table 1.4.9 Redeemed Peoples' Mission - age and occupation**

	N	Trader (%)	Civil servant (%)	Self- employed (%)	Student/ applicant (%)	Other (%)	Not stated (%)
<b>Males</b>							
11-20	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
21-30	13	30.8	7.7	23.1	23.1	7.7	7.7
31-40	20	20.0	10.0	45.0	5.0	15.0	5.0
41-50	20	15.0	30.0	40.0	5.0	10.0	0
51-60	5	40.0	20.0	40.0	0	0	0
61-70	1	0	0	100.0	0	0	0
Total (male)	60	21.7	16.7	38.3	10.0	10.0	3.3
<b>Females</b>							
11-20	1	0	0	0	0	0	100.0
21-30	18	22.2	27.8	5.6	38.9	5.6	5.6
31-40	17	41.2	29.4	17.6	0	5.9	0
41-50	7	14.3	42.9	28.6	0	14.3	0
51-60	2	0	50.0	50.0	0	0	0
61-70	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total (female)	45	26.7	31.1	15.6	15.6	4.4	6.6
<b>Total (both)</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>23.8</b>	<b>22.9</b>	<b>28.6</b>	<b>12.4</b>	<b>7.6</b>	<b>4.7</b>

## **Appendix 2. Pentecostal Church Growth**

### **2.1 Some Pentecostal Churches and Prayer Houses in Igboland (pre-1967)**

(note: year of origin in brackets, where known).

#### **1910-1929**

Christ Army Church (? 1916)

#### **1930-39**

Apostolic Church (1932)

Church of Jesus Christ, later Assemblies of God (1934)

Christ Healing Church (1936)

Christ Apostolic Church Gospel Mission (1937)

True Apostolic Church (1938)

#### **1940-49**

Abosso Apostolic Faith Church (1941)

Cherubim and Seraphim Society (1944)

Christ Holy Church (1947)

St. Joseph's Chosen Church of God (1947)

#### **1950-59**

Christ Apostolic Church (1953)

Christ Apostle Church - *Onu Uzo Ndu* (1953)

True Church of God (1953)

Apostolic Faith Church (1956)

Church of the Lord *Aladura* (1956)

Christ Healing Sabbath Mission (1956)

The Christ Disciple Church (1958)

Holy Chapel of Israel Church

#### **1960-67**

United Church of Christ (1964)

Holy Sabbath Christ the King (1965)

Holy Church of God (1966)

Christian Fellowship Group (1967)

## 2.2 Some NPCs with Links to the Civil War Revival (1972-99)

Year	NPC	Headquarters	Founders	Approximate no. of branches (by 2001 unless stated)
1970	<i>Hour of Deliverance</i>	Otuocha	J. M. J. Emesim	2
1972	Bethel Gospel Mission	Near Umuahia	Godwin Nwosu	1
	Last Days Messengers	Okigwe	Gabriel Nwokoro	100
1973	Calvary Evangelistic Mission	Near Umuahia	Samson Onwubiko	17
	Redeeming Time Pilgrims	Owerri	Alexander Ekewuba	Not known
	Riches of Christ Mission	Onitsha	Edozie Mba, Paul Nweke, Augustine Nwodika, Emeka Eze	Not known
1974	Central Christian Fellowship Mission	Nnewi	Peter Maduako	Not known
	Christ for All Mission (later, merges with <i>Grace of God</i> )	Onitsha	Benson Ezeokeke	Defunct
	Gospel Crusaders Mission	Aba	Unknown	25
	Save the Lost Mission	Nnewi	Tony Okeke, John Okafor, Jonathan Ikegwuonu	50
	Travelling Gospel Team (later, Gospel Mission)	Onitsha	Eliezer Okoye	Not known
1975	Ambassadors for Christ Mission	Okowa	Not known	Not known
	National Evangelical Mission	Onitsha	Rhoda Morah, Dominic Onwuigwe, Benjamin Ogbuezobe	200
1976	Freedom in Christ Church (later, All Christians Fellowship Mission)	Abuja	William Okoye	80
	Fullness of Christ Mission	Udi	Celestine Uba	Not known
	Holiness Evangelistic Mission (later, Church)	Owerri	Alexander Ekewuba, Chima Amadi	180
	Jesus the Way Mission	Enugu	Paul Nweke, Augustine Nwodika	6
	Master's Vessel Group (later, Church)	Umuahia	Felix Obiorah, Joshua Uhiara, Godwin Nwosu	42
1977	Canaan Gospel Centre	Umuahia	Uchenna Emezue, Emmanuel Okorie, Tony Enwelike	2
	Christian Pentecostal Mission	Lagos	Obiorah Ezekiel	240
	Redeemed People's Mission	Jos	Thompson Nwosu	80
1978	All Believers Fellowship Group	Aba	Wilson Uzumegbunam	12
	Grace of God Mission	Onitsha	Mba, Nweke, Ezeokeke	1,100
1979	Bible Faith Mission	Jos	Wilson Ezeofor	6
	Holy Ghost Ministry	Awka	Ephraim Ndife	Not known

1980	Revival Time Ministries	Enugu	Nnaji Chukwuka	Not known
	Salvation for All Mission	Onitsha	Benson Ezeokeke	10
1981	Life Care Ministries	Nnewi	Jonathan Ikegwuonu	1 (1991)
1982	Body of Christ Mission	Awka	G. C. Ndibe	4 (1991)
1984	Foundation Bible Church	Not known	Not known	Not known
1985	Living Faith Church	Onitsha	F. C. Uwa	Not known
	Overcomers Christian Mission	Owerri	Alexander Ekewuba	33
	Reconciliation Gospel Mission	Nnewi	Kenneth Anwatu	Not known
1986	Amazing Love Assembly	Enugu	Amaechi Nwachukwu	4
	Christ Faith Ministries	Abagana	Abraham Ogbokiri	Not known
	Christ Love Mission	Nibo	Mose Akwuobi	Not known
	Living Word Ministries	Aba	Emmanuel Okorie	75
1988	Bread of Life Mission	Enugu	Theophilus Ezuma	40
	Higher Dimensions Ministries	Nkpor	Charles Muonegha	Not known
	Peculiar People	Aba	Not known	Not known
	Pentecostal Life Bible Church	Bukuru	Elias Chukwu	1
	Royal Pentecostal Mission	Awka	Lawrence Odunze	Not known
1990	Our Generation Gospel Ministries	Onitsha	Edward Ezenwafor	Not known
1991	Overcomers Bible Church	Onitsha	Benjamin Ikedinobi	1
	Winners Celebration Chapel	Jos	Not known	Not known
1992	Praise Centre International Church	Owerri	Stafford Nwaogu	Not known
1999	Living Spring Assembly	Jos	Kenneth Eze	Not known
	Throne of Grace Church	Enugu	Augustine Nwodika	Not known

Sources: Anyaegbu, 'Pentecostal/Evangelical', 52-94; oral interviews; and personal observation.

### 2.3 NPCs in Onitsha/Anambra State in 2000

Agape Ministry	Jesus in the Now Ministry
Arrow of God Missions	Jesus Revival Power Ministry
Bible Christian Church Inc.	Last Days Messengers
Bible Conversion Church	Latter Days Evangelical Church
Bible Missionary Church	Living Faith Church
Bread of Life Mission	Living Faith World Outreach
Brethren Missions	Living Word Ministries
Canopy of the Saints Mission	National Evangelical Mission
Central Central Fellowship	National Holy Ghost Ministry
Christian Fellowship	Overcomers Bible Church
Christian Pentecostal Mission	Power in Air Ministry
Deeper Life Bible Church	Reconciliation Ministry
Disciples of Christ Mission	Redeemed Assembly Missions
Flame of Fire Ministry	Resurrection Power Ministry
Forgotten Principles Inc	Riches of Christ
Fullness of Christ	Salvation for All Mission
Gospel Church of Christ	Save the Lost Mission
Gospel Faith Missions	The Redeemed Christ Church of God
Gospel Forum	The Redeemed Evangelical Church
Grace of God Mission	Upper Room
Healing Has Begun Ministry	Victory Christian Mission
His Able Ministry	Voice of God Gospel Ministry
Holy Ghost Power Ministry	Watchman Charismatic Movement
I Am Ministry	

*Source:* Ude, 'Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria'.

## 2.4 NPCs in Enugu in 2000

Amazing Love Assembly  
 Blessed Family Church  
 Bread of Life Mission  
 Calvary Victory Mission  
 Christ Family Church  
 Christian Pentecostal Mission  
 Church of God Mission  
 CNN World Crusade  
 Concern for Souls Ministries International  
 Deeper Life Bible Church  
 Divine Love Redemption Chapel  
 Faithline Gospel Mission  
 Grace of God Mission  
 International Achievers Assembly  
 Landmark Mission Church  
 Life Transformation Ministry  
 Livingstone Gospel Mission  
 Miracle of God Mission  
 Our Generation Gospel Ministries

Power of Resurrection Evangelistic  
 Ministry  
 Practical Christian Life Mission  
 Resurrection Force Ministries  
 Rock Family Church  
 Royal Praise Chapel Mission  
 Save the Lost Mission  
 The Old Path Revival Commission  
 The Redeemed Evangelical Mission  
 (TREM)  
 Throne of Grace Church  
 Triumphant Christian Church  
 Uniformed Ecclesia Church  
 United Pentecostal Church  
 United Pentecostal Church of Nigeria  
 Victory Christian Mission  
 Will of God Church  
 Word of Life Ministries  
 Workers of the Lord Gospel Church

*Sources:* PFN membership and personal observation.

## 2.5 NPCs in Bukuru in 2000

Agape Church  
 All Christians Fellowship Mission  
 Broken Partitions  
 Charismatic Renewal Ministries  
 Christian Teaching Centre  
 Church of God Mission  
 Church on the Rock  
 CRUDAN  
 Deeper Life Bible Church  
 El-Shaddai Covenant Church  
 Faithfulness of Living God  
 Faithway Chapel  
 Family Altar Ministries  
 Global Governing Centre  
 Glorious Church of God  
 Glory Chapel  
 Gospel of Christ Ministries

Grape Vine Church  
 Jesus Faith Bible Church  
 Living Faith Church  
 Living Spring Ministries  
 Living Vine Church  
 Mountain of Fire and Miracles  
 Oasis of Love Church  
 Overcomers Christian Centre  
 Pentecostal Life Bible Church  
 Pillar of Truth Church  
 Praise Chapel of All Nations  
 Redeemed People's Mission  
 Rwang-Pam Church  
 Triumphant Christian Bible Church  
 Word of Life Church

*Sources:* PFN membership and personal observation.

## Appendix 3. Chronologies

### 3.1 The Civil War Revival in the Context of Igbo Christian History (1857-1987)

- 1857 First Anglican CMS missionary base opened at Onitsha, North-Western Igboland.
- 1885 French Holy Ghost Roman Catholic Missionary Society open mission in Onitsha.
- 1888 First Presbyterian station opened in Cross River Igboland.
- 1892 Niger Delta Pastorate formed as separate body from CMS.
- 1905 CMS base established in Owerri, Central Igboland.
- 1906 Beginning of mass movement to Christianity involving CMS and RCM.
- 1910 Primitive Methodists enter Southern Igboland.
- 1916 The Garrick Braide Movement enters Southern Igboland.
- 1920 First faith mission, the Qua Iboe Mission, enters Southern Igboland.
- 1925 Epelle and Odimba join ranks to oversee the work of Faith Tabernacle in Igboland.
- 1932 Apostolic Church enters Southern Igboland (Aba).
- 1934 Church of Jesus Christ (CJC) founded as schism from Faith Tabernacle in Umuahia.  
British Apostolic missionary Elton arrives in Western Nigeria.
- 1935 Student Christian Movement (SCM) introduced into Igboland.
- 1939 CJC establishes formal links with Assemblies of God (AG), North America.
- 1944 Apostolic Faith Church (AFC) started in Lagos.
- 1947 Christ Holy Church and St. Joseph's Chosen Church of God founded.
- 1948 SCM introduced into the University of Ibadan, Western Nigeria.
- 1950 Catholic Church hierarchies set up in British West Africa.
- 1951 Anglican Province of West Africa established.
- 1952 Scripture Union begins work in Nigeria.
- 1953 Christ Apostolic Church enters Igboland  
Visit by Latter Rain group from North America to Nigeria at invitation of Elton.
- 1954 Elton leaves Apostolic Church to become an independent missionary.
- 1955 SU group established at Government College, Umuahia.
- 1956 Sudan Interior Mission (SIM) adopts the name ECWA.  
Free Gospel Mission/Society (FGS) founded in Lagos.  
AFC comes to Igboland (Port Harcourt).
- 1957 SU group established in Enugu.  
SIM appoints field representatives in Aba and Enugu.  
Ufuma Practical Prayer Band founded.
- 1960 Nigeria gains independence.**  
Presbyterian Church Nigeria becomes autonomous body.
- 1961 Ibadan Intersity Christian Union (IVCU) formed.
- 1962 Methodist Church Nigeria becomes autonomous body.
- 1964 Roberts arrives as SU travelling secretary in Eastern Nigeria.  
AG Nigeria becomes autonomous body.  
New Life for All (NLFA) started by SIM missionary Gerry Swank in the north.  
ECWA Eastern District founded.
- 1965 Church Union project (Anglican, Methodist, Presbyterian) collapses.
- 1966 September. Pogroms in the north directed against Igbos.  
Revivalists Ogbansiege, Ukaegbu, and Uzumegbunam return to the east.  
Ukaegbu starts ECWA church in Umuahia.  
November. SU Nigeria becomes autonomous body.  
Oye appointed first Nigerian SU travelling secretary.  
Onuigbo starts Holy Church of God in Enugu.
- 1967 February. Ogbansiege starts Christian Fellowship Group in Aba.

**June. Beginning of Nigerian Civil War.**

July. SU Pilgrims groups started.

September. Fall of Enugu, and capital of East Central State transferred to Umuahia.

SU (Eastern Region) headquarters moves to Umuahia.

October. SU guest services started.

1968 Emesim starts Hour of Deliverance Ministry in Lagos.

1969 April. Fall of Umuahia, and SU headquarters transferred to Mbano.

Okafor, Okafor, and Oruizu start *Hour of Freedom*.

Elton holds crusade at the University of Ibadan.

December. Roberts travels to UK and unable to return.

1970 **January. End of Nigerian Civil War.**

Oye and Olamijulo (SU travelling secretaries) come over to the east.

January. Students receive Spirit baptism at IVCU and form the Tuesday Group.

SU township groups restarted in Aba, Enugu, Onitsha, Owerri, Umuahia.

*Hour of Freedom* establishes a base in Onitsha.

April. Idahosa starts Church of God Mission and soon after meets Elton.

Ekewuba starts Holiness Evangelistic Association in Owerri.

Ezekiel (founder, CPM) joins FGS, Lagos.

August. Emesim returns from the west, and is main speaker at *Hour of Freedom* event.

Emesim starts Bible College for training Pentecostal evangelists for Igboland.

Mbanaso, Onuora, and Eluwah (SU leaders at Umuahia) leave for university.

Ukaegbu becomes pastor of Presbyterian Church, Enugu (1970-74).

Bonomi becomes ECWA pastor, Enugu.

Oye and Okorocho (SU leader, Umuahia) leave Igboland for Western Nigeria.

1971 SU Headquarters for the three Eastern States moves from Umuahia to Enugu.

Onwubiko starts Calvary Evangelical Mission (CEM) as a ministry (near Umuahia).

Idahosa to US to study at Lindsay's Christ for the Nations Institute.

August. Nwosu (founder, Redeemed People's Mission) joins FGS, Lagos.

Mba (co-founder, *Riches*) attends Emesim's Bible College.

Ekpunobi (early leader of SU Onitsha) leaves for university.

November. Obiorah and Uhiara start Master's Vessel Group (MVG) in Umuahia.

Holiness Evangelistic Association started in Owerri by Amadi or Ekewuba.

Famunore (founder Calvary Ministries) to University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

1972 Idahosa starts All Nations for Christ Bible College, Benin City.

Stephen and Raphael Okafor leave for further studies in England.

Nweke assumes leadership of *Hour of Freedom*, Onitsha.

Mba makes contact with leaders of *Hour of Freedom*.

Okeke starts Save the Lost Programme at Nnewi, and later visits Elton.

Godwin Nwosu starts Bethel Gospel Mission, near Umuahia.

1973 Nweke and Nwodika attend Idahosa's All Nations for Christ college.

March. *Riches* started at Onitsha.

Okoye (founder, All Christians Fellowship Mission) joins *Riches*.

CEM becomes a church.

Morris Cerullo holds crusade in Lagos.

Thompson Nwosu transferred to Jos under auspices of FGS.

Kumuyi starts Deeper Christian Life Ministry in Lagos.

1974 Ezeokeke starts *Christ for All*, Onitsha.

Rhoda Morah starts Aguata for Christ (later *National*).

Onuigwe returns to the east and joins Aguata for Christ.

Okeke, John Okafor, and Jonathan Ikegwuonu start *Save the Lost*, Nnewi.

Maduako starts Central Christian Fellowship Mission, Nnewi.

*Riches*, Aguata for Christ, and *Save the Lost* start New Anointing Bible College.

- Obiorah (MVG) to US for studies.  
Gospel Crusaders Mission started in Aba as breakaway from Ogbansiegbe's CFG.  
Famunore to Zaria on National Youth Service.
- 1975 Cerullo holds crusade in Enugu, attended by Okoye and Ezeofor.  
Okoye and Ezeofor leave *Riches* for ministry in Middle Belt/North.  
National Evangelistic Association plant church in Maiduguri.  
Famunore starts CAPRO in Zaria.  
Ezeokeke plants Christ for All Mission branch in Kano.
- 1976 Schism within *Riches* results in formation of *Jesus the Way*.  
MVG becomes a church.  
Holiness Evangelistic Association becomes a church (Holiness Evangelical Church).  
Okoye's ministry changes name to Freedom in Christ Church.  
SIM hands over its institutions and ministries to ECWA.
- 1977 Okeke resigns from *Save the Lost*.  
Ezekiel leaves FGS to form Christian Pentecostal Mission, Lagos.  
Nwosu resigns from FGS and starts Redeemed Peoples Mission, Jos.  
Mba to US.
- 1978 'New Move.' *Jesus the Way* and *Riches* merge, and join other NPCs to form  
*Grace of God*.  
All Believers Fellowship Group started in Aba by Uzumegbunam.  
Ezeofor and Okoye (Freedom in Christ) part company.  
Uhiara of MVG to US, and remains there.
- 1979 *Grace of God* disintegrates.  
Okeke (*Save the Lost*) visits the US.  
Mba to UK and US, before returning to Nigeria.  
Igbo NPC pioneers to US to attend Cerullo's School of Ministry.  
Freedom in Christ renamed All Christians Fellowship Mission.  
Ezeofor starts Bible Faith Mission in Jos.  
Okorie (founder, Living Word Ministries) to US.
- October. Beginning of Nigeria's Second Republic.**
- 1980 Ezeokeke leaves *Grace of God* to form *Salvation for All*.  
Mba (*Riches*) makes first visit to Israel.  
Amadi (HEC) and Onwubiko (CEM) to US to attend Cerullo's School of Ministry.
- 1981 Okoye (ACFM) attends Cerullo's School of Ministry.  
The Redeemed Evangelical Mission (TREM) started by Okonkwo.
- 1982 Kumuyi starts Deeper Life Bible Church, Lagos.  
Okeke resumes leadership of *Save the Lost*.
- 1983 Oyedepo starts Living Faith Church, Ilorin.  
Wale Oke starts Sword of the Spirit Ministries, Ibadan
- Nigeria's Second Republic ends with military coup.**
- 1985 Okorie returns to Nigeria and starts Living Word Ministries, Aba.
- 1986 Okorie starts first church, Aba.  
Amaechi Nwachukwu starts Amazing Love Assembly, Enugu.
- 1987 Bread of Life Mission started as secession from *Riches*.

### 3.2 Political Milestones in Nigeria (1960-2002)

- 1960 1 October. Independence.
- 1963 August. Mid-West region created.  
1 October. Nigeria becomes a Republic.
- 1964 December. Election crisis.
- 1966 15 January. First military coup (Ironsi regime).  
29 July. Second military coup (Gowon regime).  
September/October. Pogroms directed mainly against Igbos in the north.
- 1967 27 May. Creation of 12 states to replace four regions.  
30 May. Ojukwu declares the Republic of Biafra.  
6 July. Start of civil war.  
4 October. Fall of Enugu to Federal forces. Umuahia becomes capital of Biafra.
- 1968 22 February. Fall of Onitsha.  
19 May. Fall of Port Harcourt.  
4 September. Fall of Aba.  
16 September. Fall of Owerri.
- 1969 22 April. Fall of Umuahia.  
25 April. Owerri recaptured by Biafran forces.  
1 June. Ojukwu issues Ahiara Declaration on the principles of the Biafran revolution.
- 1970 10 January. Ojukwu flees Biafra.  
12 January. Effiong announces Biafra's surrender.  
1 October. Gowon announces plan for return to civilian rule in 1976.
- 1974 Gowon postpones return to civilian rule.
- 1975 29 July. Third military coup (Mohammed regime).
- 1976 3 February. Twelve states replaced by 19 states.  
13 February. Fourth military coup (abortive). Mohammed assassinated and Obasanjo takes over.
- 1978 21 September. 1979 Constitution published, and ban on politics lifted.
- 1979 1 October. Shagari as civilian president (Second Republic).
- 1980 Muslim uprising in Kano (Maitatsine riots).
- 1983 August/September. Elections.  
31 December. Fifth military coup (Buhari regime).
- 1985 27 August. Sixth military coup (Babangida regime).
- 1986 January. Return to civilian rule by 1 October announced.  
February. Nigeria joins OIC.  
July. SAP announced.
- 1987 March. Christian-Muslim clashes in northern cities.
- 1989 May. Constitution published. Two-party system adopted.  
7 October. Two parties created: NRC and SDP.
- 1990 22 April. Eighth military coup (abortive).
- 1991 27 August. States increased to thirty.  
12 December. Federal capital moved from Lagos to Abuja.
- 1992 2 January. Presidential election shifted to 5 December 1992.  
November. Date of presidential election postponed to 12 June 1993.
- 1993 2 January. Transitional Council headed by Ernest Shonekan.  
29 March. Presidential candidates announced: Bashir Tofa (NFC), M. K. O. Abiola (SDP).  
12 June. Presidential elections.  
23 June. Presidential election annulled.  
27 August. Babangida steps aside, and Interim National Government named (Shonekan as head of State).

- 17 November. Ninth military coup (Abacha regime).
- 1994 June-July. Abiola proclaims himself president. Imprisoned.
- 1995 March. Coup plot discovered. Obasanjo imprisoned.
- 1 October. Timetable for return to civilian rule on 1 October 1998 announced.
- 10 November. Ken Saro-Wiwa and other Ogoni activists executed.
- 11 November. Nigeria expelled from the Commonwealth.
- 1996 1 October. Six more states created.
- 1998 June. Abacha dies in his sleep. Abubakar takes over and announces intention to return to civil rule.
- 1999 Obasanjo wins elections and installed as President (Third Republic).

*Sources:* Osaghae, *Crippled Giant*, xvii-xx; Kirk-Greene, *Crisis and Conflict in Nigeria*.

## **Appendix 4. Revivalist and NPC Texts**

**[Not available in the digital version of this thesis]**

# SOURCES AND BIBLIOGRAPHY

## 1. PRIMARY SOURCES

### 1.1 Oral Sources

#### 1.1.1 Interviews and Personal Communications

(m=male)

(f=female)

##### **Nigerian Christian Leaders**

- OI, David Adegboye (m), Pastor, Redeemed People's Mission, 6.9.01, Jos  
 PC, Chris Agu (m), Pastor, Living Word Ministries, 14.10.01, Aba  
 OI, Chris Alagbu (m), Pastor, Amazing Love Assembly, 3.5.00, Enugu; PC, 28.4.00, Enugu.  
 OI, Kenneth Amadi (m), Pastor, Assemblies of God Nigeria, 21.11.01, Bukuru  
 OI, Francis Ben Amaechi (m), Pastor, National Evangelical Mission, 15.5.00, Onitsha  
 OI, David Amaechi (m), Pastor, Assemblies of God Nigeria, 9.10.01, Azuiyi-Oloko  
 OI, Leo Anorue (m), Pastor, Redeemed People's Mission, 18.9.01, Bukuru  
 OI, Emeka Aruwa, Cornelius Madugba, & Monday Ozuni (m), Pastors, Qua Iboe Church, 17.10.01, William Wheatley Theological College, Azuiyi-Oloko  
 PC, Austin F. Authur (m), Pastor, Grace of God Mission, 25.11.01, Jos  
 OI, Elias Chukwu (m), Pastor, Pentecostal Life Bible Church, 21.12.01, Bukuru  
 OI, Nnenna Chukwuma (f), Great Commission Movement, 26.5.00, Enugu  
 OI, Chung Pam Chu (m), District Superintendent, Assemblies of God Nigeria, 26.9.01, Jos  
 PC, Evans Daniel (m), Abia State Co-ordinator, Christian Pentecostal Mission, 14.10.01, Aba  
 PC, Prince David (m), Pastor, Christ Holy Church, 30.11.01, Jos; PC, 19.12.01, Jos.  
 OI, Kenneth Eboh (m), General Overseer, Holiness Evangelical Church, 16.11.01, Owerri  
 PC, Joseph Egboh (m), Principal, ECWA Bible College, 12.10.01, Aba  
 OI, Aso Egwu (m), Pastor, Redeemed People's Mission, 12.12.01, Jos  
 OI, Alexander Ekewuba (m), Bishop and General Overseer, Overcomer's Christian Mission, 17.1.02, Owerri  
 PC, Zion Ekpeh (m), Pastor, Grace of God Mission, 9.5.00, Egbengu  
 OI, Emmanuel Ekpunobi (m), Principal, Anglican Training Centre, 24.10.01, Awka  
 PC, Anselm Ekwebelem (m), Pastor, Amazing Love Assembly, 25.5.00, Enugu  
 PC, Comfort Essien (f), Qua Iboe Church, former SU travelling secretary, 18.1.02, Etinan  
 PC, John Ettu (m), Pastor, Christ Ascension Church, 5.1.02, Enugu  
 OI, Eze N. Eze (m), Academic Dean, Theological College of Northern Nigeria, 1.12.01, Bukuru  
 OI, Wilson Ezeofor (m), President, Bible Faith Mission, 25.9.01, Jos  
 OI, Benson Ezeokeke (m), Bishop and President, Salvation For All Mission, 11.5.00, Onitsha  
 OI, Bayo Famunore (m) Founder, Agape Missions, 21.12.01, Jos  
 OI, Emeka Ibekwe (m), District Pastor, Christian Pentecostal Mission, 16.10.01, Umuahia  
 OI, Charles Igwilo (m), Great Commission Movement, 25.5.00, Enugu  
 OI, Martins N. Iheaka (m), Pastor, Gospel Crusaders Mission, 14.10.01, Aba  
 PC, Donatus Ikechukwu (m), Evangelist, Christ Holy Church, 9.12.01, Bukuru  
 OI, Benjamin Ikedinobi (m), General Overseer, Overcomer's Bible Church, 12.5.00, Onitsha; PC, 29.4.00, Enugu  
 OI, Mrs. B. C. Ikedinobi (f), Pastor, Overcomer's Bible Church, 12.5.00, Onitsha  
 PC, Godwin Ikwunze (m), Pastor, St Joseph's Chosen Church of God, 8.10.01, Umuahia  
 PC, S. S. Inyang (m), Principal, Victory Christian College, 19.10.01, Enugu

- OI, D. O. Iwuagwu (m), Apostle and District Overseer, Apostolic Church, Enugu, 23.10.01
- OI, Tshally Jeff-Onyegbule (m), Pastor, Amazing Love Assembly, 9.5.00, Enugu
- PC, John G.N. Makwe (m), Pastor, Truth Revival Mission, 12.12.01, Bukuru
- OI, Augustine Mbamalu (m), District Overseer, Grace of God Mission, 19.11.01, Jos
- OI, B.O. Ndumele (m), Pastor, Divine Abosso Apostolic Faith Church, 11.1.02, Umuahia
- OI, Dr. Chinedu Nebo (m), Anglican priest and Professor, Enugu State University of Technology, 4.5.00, Enugu
- PC, Godwin Nnaji Chukwuka(m), Founder, Revival Time Ministry, 29.4.00, Enugu
- OI, S. C. Nnodim (m), Bishop, Apostolic Faith Church, 6.1.02, Enugu
- OI, Amaechi Nwachukwu (m), Senior Pastor, Amazing Love Assembly, 6.6.00, Enugu
- OI, Paul Nwachukwu (m), General Superintendent, Grace of God Mission, 12.5.00, Onitsha
- PC, Innocent Nwani (m), Pastor, Christ Apostolic Church, Enugu
- PC, Kenechukwu Nwanisobi (m), Pastor, Amazing Love Assembly, 17.10.01, Enugu
- OI, Augustine Nwodika (m), General Superintendent, Throne of Grace Church, 8.5.00, Enugu
- OI, Godwin Nwosu (m), District Overseer, Redeemed People's Mission, 10.10.01, Umuahia; PC, 15.10.01, Umuahia.
- OI, Stephen Nyam (m), District Overseer, All Christians Fellowship Mission, 22.11.01, Jos
- OI, Felix Obiorah (m), General Overseer, Master's Vessel Church, 6.10.01, Umuahia
- OI, Pius Obuegbe (m), Pastor, All Christians Fellowship Mission, 29.8.01, Bukuru
- PC, Emmanuel Odiaka (m), Director of Evangelism, Grace of God Mission, 12.5.00, Onitsha
- OI, Don Odunze (m), Founder, Family Circle Centre, 22.10.01, Enugu
- PC, J. D. C. Ogbansiegbe (m), General Overseer, Christian Fellowship Group, 12.10.01, Aba
- PC, Bartholemew Ogbonna, Pastor, The Redeemed Evangelical Mission, 8.1.02, Enugu
- OI, Rufus Ogbonna (m), Pastor, Qua Iboe Church, 12.4.00, Ochadamu
- OI, Chuks Ogoalaji (m), General Superintendent, Bread of Life Mission, 23.5.00, Enugu
- OI, Raphael Okafor (m), Archdeacon, Anglican Church, 8.5.00 and 7.1.01, Enugu
- OI, Ken Okeke (m), Anglican Bishop of the Niger (Onitsha), 17.12.98, London
- OI, Tony Okeke (m), Founder, Save the Lost Mission, 20.10.01, Enugu
- OI, Emmanuel Okorie (m), President, Living Word Ministries, 17 January 2002, Aba
- OI, Ben Okoroafor (m), Pastor, Assemblies of God Nigeria, 22.10.01, Enugu
- OI, Cyril C. Okorochoa (m), Anglican Bishop of Owerri, 23.8.98 and 8.2.99, Woking; and 15.1.02, Owerri
- OI, Eliezer Okoye (m), Founder, Gospel Mission (Travelling Gospel Team), 13.5.00, Onitsha
- OI, Mike Okoye (m), Assistant General Overseer, All Christians Fellowship Mission, 2.9.01, Jos
- OI, William Okoye (m), General Overseer, All Christians Fellowship Mission, 28.10.01, Abuja
- OI, Emmanuel Oladipo (m), Scripture Union International Secretary, 18.11.99, Bletchley
- OI, Muiyiwa Olamijulo (m), District Overseer, Apostolic Faith Church, 17.1.02, Ikot Enwang
- OI, Joseph Onuchukwu (m), National Secretary, Grace of God Mission, 23.5.00, Enugu; PC, 22.10.01, Enugu
- OI, Victor Onuigbo (m), Archbishop, Victory Christian Mission, 1.5.00, Enugu
- OI, Canon Udobata Onunwa (m), Anglican Church, 11.1.00, 25.1.01, 23.3.04, Birmingham
- PC, Uche Onuoha (m), Evangelist, Amazing Love Assembly, Enugu,
- OI, Samson Onwubiko (m), Senior Pastor, Calvary Evangelistic Mission, 10.10.01, Umuahia
- OI, Samson Onyeoziri (m), Senior Pastor, Canaan Gospel Centre, Umuahia,
- PC, S. O. Orji (m), General Secretary, Christ Ascension Church, 7.1.02, Enugu
- OI, C. O. Osueke (m), General Superintendent, Assemblies of God Nigeria, 19.10.01, Enugu
- OI, Ndubueze Oti (m), Pastor, Assemblies of God Nigeria, 19.10.01, Enugu
- OI, Mike Oye (m), Pastor, Methodist Church, 6.5.00, Enugu
- OI, Peter Ozodo (m), Covenant Keepers, Jos
- OI, Bitrus Pathel (m), Pastor, National Evangelical Mission, 18.11.01, Bukuru
- PC, Okebugwu Ubani (m), Pastor, Living Word Ministries, 16.10.01, Umuahia

OI, Nicholas Udemba (m), District Superintendent, Christ Holy Church, 5.1.02, Enugu  
 OI, John Ugah (m), General Overseer, Jesus the Way Mission, 7.6.00, Enugu  
 OI, Timothy Uhiara (m), Vice-President, Master's Vessel Church, 16.10.01, Umuahia  
 OI, James Ukaegbu (m), Pastor, Presbyterian Church, 10.10.01, Umuahia  
 OI, N. O. Umeh (m), Bishop, Christ Holy Church, 6.12.01, Jos  
 OI, F. C. Uwa (m), Senior Pastor, Living Faith Church, 15.5.00, Onitsha  
 OI, Gideon Uzoma (m), Pastor, Christian Pentecostal Mission, 6.12.01, Jos  
 OI, Wilson Uzumegbunam(m), Bishop, All Believers Fellowship Group, 13.10.01, Aba

### **Nigerian Church Members**

OI, Felix Adejoh (m), National Evangelical Mission, 30.12.01, Ayangba  
 PC, Mrs Leo Anorue (f), Redeemed People's Mission, 18.9.01, Bukuru  
 PC, Dr. Emmanuel Agonmo (m), 29.4.00, Enugu  
 PC, Martins Uche Akujobi (m), Assemblies of God, 17.5.00, Enugu  
 PC, Hygienus Chukwuemema Anigbo (m), Amazing Love Assembly, 2.5.00, Enugu  
 OI, Frances Lawjua Bolton (f), Anglican, 23.5.99 and 4.10.02, Loughton  
 OI, Mathias Eluwah (m), Anglican, 13.10.01, Aba  
 OI, Dr. Rosebud Eluwah (f), Anglican, 13.10.01, Aba  
 OI, Uchenna Emezue (m), 11.10.01, Umuahia  
 OI, Emeka Enwezor (m), Anglican, 24.5.00 and 9.1.02, Enugu  
 OI, Mrs A. Enwezer (f), Anglican, 24.5.00, Enugu  
 OI, Edet Etuk (m), Qua Iboe Church, 18.1.02, Etinan  
 PC, Maxwell Onyemaechi Ibenyenwa (m), ECWA, 17.5.00, Enugu  
 PC, Isaac Ihukwumere (m), Assemblies of God, 12.10.01, Aba  
 OI, Emenike Ikegbune (m), Chief Librarian, University of Nigeria, 2.1.02, Nssuka  
 PC, Meshak Ilobi (m), 28.4.00, Enugu  
 PC, Michael Kalu (m), National Evangelical Mission, 30.12.01, Anyangba  
 OI, Dr. Ume Kalu (m), Presbyterian Church, 17.10.01, Amachara  
 OI, Dr. Augustus Mbaneso (m), Chairman, SU Nigeria, Anglican, 12.1.02, Umuahia  
 PC, Chukwendu Mgbeahaike (m), Gospel Crusaders Mission, 13.10.01, Aba  
 OI, Dr. Ngoka (m), Master's Vessel Church, 16.1.02, Owerri  
 PC, Mrs. C. U. Nwokoro (f), Last Days Messengers, 17.10.01, Okigwe  
 OI, Onyinye Ogbonna (m), ECWA, 6.10.01, Azuiyi-Oloko  
 OI, Dr Stephen Okafor (m), *Hour of Freedom*, 16.12.98, London; PC, 19.1.00, 24.2.00, 31.1.01, and 22.5.02  
 PC, Uche Onuoha (m), Amazing Love Assembly, 5.5.00, Enugu  
 OI, Dr. John Onuora (m), Anglican Church, 30.4.00; PC, 7.1.02, Enugu.  
 PC, Mrs J. Onuora (f), Anglican Church, 23.10.01, Enugu  
 OI, Dr. Obed Onuzo (m), Anglican Church, 25.1.01, Birmingham  
 OI, Dr. Dan Onwukwe (m), Anglican, 15.1.02, Owerri  
 OI, Ifeyinma Orajekwe (f), ECWA, 1.5.00, Enugu  
 PC, Emmanuel Orji (m), Assemblies of God, 10.1.02, Umuahia  
 OI, Joseph Umeh (m), Redeemed People's Mission, 19.12.01, Jos  
 PC, Mrs. N. O. Umeh (f), Christ Holy Church, 6.12.01, Jos

### **Western Missionaries and Christian Leaders**

OI, Mrs. Anne Goodchild (f), Anglican, 19.4.01, Birmingham  
 PC, Peter Game (m), Connections, 11.11.01, Bukuru  
 PC, Mr Haney (m), lecturer, ECWA Bible School, 12.10.01, Aba  
 OI, Mrs. Jenny Kelsey(f), Anglican, 3.10.02, Emsworth  
 OI, W. B. Roberts (m), Anglican, former SU travelling secretary, 23.7.99, Cullompton  
 OI, Jane Sutton (f), former SU travelling secretary, 10.9.99, Newbury

### **1.1.2 Recordings of Events, Reminiscences, Group Discussions, and Talks**

- Emmanuel Agonmo (m), 'The Love of God among the Brethren in the Seventies', Remembering the Seventies Conference (RSC), Audio/Video, 29.4.00, Enugu
- Nnaji Chukwuka (m), 'Obstacles to evangelism in the 1970s', RSC, 29.4.00, Enugu
- Gladys Ekwo (f), 'The Role of Women in the Seventies', RSC, Audio/Video, 29.4.00, Enugu
- Peter Ekwo (m), 'The Role of Bible Study and Print Media during the Seventies', RSC, Audio/Video, 28.4.00, Enugu
- J. M. J. Emesim (m), 'The Message and Strategies of the Seventies', RSC, Audio/Video, Enugu, 29.4.00
- Emeka Enwezor (m), 'The Role of School Christian Groups in the Seventies', RSC, Audio/video, 28.4.00, Enugu
- Group discussion, (Amaechi Nwachukwu, Raphael Okafor, Meschak Ilobi, Emmanuel Agonmo, Ogbo Kalu, Richard Burgess), RSC, Audio, 28.4.00 Enugu
- Group discussion, (Benjamin Ikedinobi, Chinedu Nebo, John Onuora, Nnaji Chukwuka, Meschak Ilobi, Emmanuel Agonmo, Richard Burgess), RSC, Audio, 29.4.00, Enugu
- Meschak Ilobi (m), Personal reminiscence, Audio, May 2000
- Chinedu Nebo (m), 'Protagonists and Critics (Persecution) in the Seventies', RSC, Audio/Video, 29.4.00, Enugu
- Nigeria 2000, 'Rebirth of the Apostolic & Prophetic Era', 4<sup>th</sup> International Ministers & Christian Leaders Prayer & Leadership Conference, Video, 2000, Port Harcourt
- Augustine Nwodika (m), 'The Relationship of the Movement with the Churches in the Seventies', RSC, Audio/Video, 29.4.00, Enugu
- Raphael Okafor (m), 'The Role of Fasting and Personal Evangelism in the Seventies Movement and Civil War Religiosity', RSC, Audio/Video, 28.4.00, Enugu
- 'Round Table Discussion', RSC, Audio/video, 28.4.00, Enugu
- 'Round Table Discussion. Materialism in the Body of Christ in the 1970s', RSC, Audio/video, 29.4.00, Enugu
- Tony Okeke (m), 'External Influences in the Seventies', RSC, Audio/Video, Enugu,
- Victor Onuigbo (m), 'The Metamorphosis of Prayer Houses into Living Churches', RSC, Audio/Video, 28.4.00, Enugu
- Eddi Onugha (m), Personal reminiscence, Audio, May 2000
- John Onuora (m), 'The Radicalization of the Scripture Union during and immediately after the Civil War', RSC, Audio/Video, Enugu, 28.4.00

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M. M. Anyachor, Field Superintendent, Igbo Field of the Apostolic Church of Nigeria,

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G. P. Selby, Letter to author, 14 April 2001

Bible Faith Mission

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'Report: Ufuma Praying Band', 1972 (Harold Turner Collection)

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Redeemed People's Mission

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'Redeemed People's Mission at 25, Goodwill Message from the General Superintendent', 1998

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Leaflet advertising 'Heal Our Land II', Prayer for Jos City, November 22-24, 2001

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