

Global and Local Pentecostal Histories: Reframing Pentecostal Historiography in Africa

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Abstract

Arguably, Pentecostalism's multifaceted and global nature continues to be marred by historiographical contentions and contestations. Diverse historiographical perspectives continue to shape the understanding of contemporary Pentecostal Christianity globally. Undoubtedly, the chaotic context of the socio-economic crisis in Africa has offered Pentecostal Christianity an opportunity to become a public force worthy of critical studies. Recent historical studies indicate enormous Pentecostal success, especially among the disadvantaged in African societies. Even as a prominent feature on the world's religious stage, Pentecostal history is unsettled, especially in Africa. Histories of Pentecostalism continue to receive a barrage of blame and accusation for historiographical biases. Scholars from the West are to blame for neglecting or completely ignoring the vital and often more significant work from Asia, Africa, the Caribbean, and Latino regarding the history, growth, and expansion of Pentecostal Christianity. This article raises the question of whether African Pentecostalism and its global significance locate within the accounts of global Pentecostal historiographies. It broadly explores issues in the international Pentecostal historiography, arguing that African Pentecostalism is a complex phenomenon originating from indigenous prophetic figures and their antecedents. Therefore, it challenges the North American Azusa Street revival trajectory; Pentecostalism in Africa sprung up in response to contextual challenges faced by the Africans, which mission Christianity could not adequately address. The historiography of African Pentecostalism is steeped in polygenesis, yet within the global context of Pentecostal history.

Keywords: Pentecostalism; history; histories; global; local; polygenesis



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Pentecostal Global Origin and Contested Historiographies

Today Pentecostalism is a prominent feature on the world's religious stage. The growth and spread of Pentecostalism globally are remarkable. Almost every country has the Pentecostal form of Christianity, while nearly every denomination is influenced or impacted by Pentecostalism. Pentecostal adherents were in the range of 63 million in the 1970s. However, half a century later, in 2018, the number had drastically increased by estimates of 683 million members, significantly contributing to a quarter of the global Christian population (Johnson et al. 2018). Since its beginnings in the late 18th century, Pentecostalism has, in recent decades, spread in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. Anderson observes that Pentecostalism cannot be distilled into a single definition because of its various doctrines and organisation (Anderson et al. 2010, 13–29). This view is supported by Marshall, who, in her book *Political Spiritualities: The Pentecostal Revolution in Nigeria*, sees Pentecostalism as a revolution and a “strategic program” (Marshall 2009, 128). The Pentecostal movement is both evangelistic, missional, and demonstrative in its orientation (Karp 1978; Van Dijk 1998). Historically, Pentecostalism has emerged as a significant social-cultural force, especially in its Pentecostalisation endeavours. As such, it is worth exploring its history and the puzzle of its global bearing.

Pentecostalism has been defined, classified, and discussed in diverse ways: historiographically (Hollenweger 1997; Wagner 1999); sociologically (Coleman 2000; Martin 2002); and theologically (Cartledge 2010). Anderson prefers Wittgenstein's idea of defining Pentecostalism as diverse movements spread globally but having “family resemblance” (Wittgenstein 2001). Therefore, Pentecostalism generally refers “to churches with a family resemblance that emphasise the working of the Holy Spirit” (Anderson et al. 2010,15). Anderson further divides Pentecostalism historically into four significant groups. First are the “classical” Pentecostals, whose origin traces to the beginning of the 20th century; the second group are the independent Pentecostal churches mainly in Africa but with the same beginning epoch as classical Pentecostals; third are the “charismatics” found in mainline churches but with their beginnings from the 1960s; and fourth are the “neo charismatics” that began in the mid-1970s and are the key promoters of “prosperity” gospel (Anderson et al. 2010, 1).

Pentecostalism is a gift in studying the history of Christianity, as it continually reformulates the self-understanding of world Christianity (Irvin 2005, 50). As a unique religious phenomenon, Pentecostalism has stirred much scholarly interest because it presents a Christian message that triggers numerical growth amidst the challenges of modernisation and globalisation. Though scholars of religion had predicted the stifling of religion due to secularisation and modernisation, Pentecostalism, however, presented a surprise. Wacker (2001, 10) offers reasons explaining the continual surge of Pentecostalism. The author includes its ability to offer material and social substitutional comfort and esteem as compensation for what its adherents could otherwise not have gotten. Pentecostalism promotes functional creativity in providing resources to deal

with hardship, and Pentecostal leadership motivates mobilisation and creativity, inspiring believers to higher purposes.

Due to Pentecostalism's multifaceted and global nature, Pentecostal studies continue to be marred by historiographical contentions and contestations; and this is critical because historiographical perspectives shape the contemporary understanding of Pentecostalism. The origin and definition of Pentecostalism depend on one's historical perspective. Though there is a frequent call to objectivity regarding writing history, this often becomes an uphill task because historians have interpretations lensed with emotions and convictions. The historian's background and religious perspective interfere with facts and objectivity. Multiple source checking and the historian's awareness of his/her methodology and biases help checks and balances. Robeck (2002, 28), in "Origins of Modern Pentecostalism: Some Historiographical Issues," identifies four fundamental approaches marking American Pentecostal historiography. First is the "providential approach," where it understands that God supernaturally directs and governs history; this was common among the early writers. Second is the "generic approach," which places Pentecostalism within other historical movements of the 19th century. In this case, Pentecostalism is perceived as a continuous flow of revivalist religion in religious and social development connected with multiple strands of Keswick, the Wesleyan holiness movement, and evangelical reform. Third is the "multicultural approach." Though underdeveloped, it seeks to bring on board the concerns of minority groups, especially Hispanics and African Americans. Finally, we have the "functional approach" rooted in sociology, anthropology, economics, and political science; it seeks to know why and how the movement appeals to those who join it. These views fit Pentecostalism to their adherents' place in the broader social and economic structure. This functional view is relevant in understanding the explosive growth of Pentecostalism globally, especially among the unfortunate and poor in society, triggering scholarly debates on its positive contributions in empowering people experiencing poverty. Its strength lies in avoiding the simplistic, deterministic and reductionist view of Pentecostalism.

The global growth and expansion of Pentecostalism almost always raise the question of whether Pentecostalism can be located within the histories of traditional Protestant churches. Histories of Pentecostalism continue to receive a barrage of blame and accusation for "a bias interpreting history from a predominantly White American perspective, neglecting (if not completely ignoring) the vital and often more significant work of Asian, African, African American, Caribbean and Latino" (Anderson 2005, 176; Cerillo and Wacker 2002, 382–403). To some scholars, Pentecostals ought to be identified historically "as radical evangelicals and sectarians whose histories are of marginal significance" (Irvin 2005, 35). However, Van Dusen (1958) argues that though Pentecostalism is rooted in historic Protestantism, it should not be dismissed as insignificant concerning classical Protestantism. Van Dusen predicts Pentecostalism would be "a principal permanent variant of Christianity," emerging as the third major force in Christendom after Catholicism and historical Protestantism (Van Dusen 1958,

106). Nevertheless, early Pentecostal writers generally viewed Pentecostalism as a movement deeply disjointed with what had happened in Christian history (Cerillo 1999, 229). In analysing four approaches to history: providential, historical roots, multicultural, and functional, Cerillo sees them as "... a way toward a more comprehensive and historically satisfying synthesis of the story of the emergence of the American Pentecostal tradition" (Cerillo 1999 29–52).

Early Pentecostal history traced the history of Pentecostalism in the context of the 19th-century revival movements in America, particularly the Wesleyan holiness movements (Kendrick 1961; Nichol 1966; Synan 1971). Scholars such as Wacker (2001) situate Pentecostal history in the context of radical evangelicalism. Wacker's *Heaven Below: Early Pentecostals and American Culture* offers an in-depth history of the religious practices of Pentecostalism in America from 1900 to 1925. According to Wacker, the dawn of the nineteenth century saw "... hundreds, then thousands, then tens of thousands of Baptists and Methodists along with a smaller number of Quakers, Mennonites, and Presbyterians" leaving their denominations to join the Pentecostal movement in America (Wacker 2001, 1). He classified these groups as radical evangelicals because of their insistence on the "four-fold" gospel as the only true gospel; it comprised personal salvation, baptism of the Holy Spirit, divine healing, and expectation of the return of Jesus soon. Each "four-fold" aspect of the gospel had distinct historical roots. Salvation in Christ alone, one of the core evangelical quadrilateral (Bebbington 1989), returns to the Great Awakening of the mid-eighteenth century. Baptism of the Holy Spirit theologically links John Wesley's doctrine of sanctification as a mark of the true Christian life. This view of Christian life was like Keswick's "higher life" teaching in England, which was the power that equipped the believer. Divine healing was "popularised by Simpson, founder of the Christian and Missionary Alliance" (Wacker 2001, 3). The expectation of the return of Jesus was soon espoused by the theological language of dispensational premillennialists, who expected a personal return of Christ by way of the rapture of saints, years of tribulation, the second coming of Jesus, millennial rule, and final judgement, best articulated by the Plymouth Brethren in Britain.

In Wacker's perspective, Pentecostalism's movement globally can be credited to some extent to radical evangelical tradition and its capacity to integrate diverse cultures: "... from their radical evangelical forebears Pentecostals inherited and amplified a variety of techniques for sustaining this kind of global consciousness" (Wacker 2001, 264–65). Again, Wacker points to Pentecostalism's ability to adapt pragmatically to people's needs innovatively and with effective responsiveness as one of its reasons for being global. The American Pentecostal movement was "First in its primitivist certitude, and second and perhaps more important in its pragmatic effectiveness" (Wacker 2001, 267). Since Wacker's fundamental interest has been religious movements in America in the 19th century, his valuation cannot provide an adequate view of modern Pentecostalism. However, his work offers why Pentecostalism has historically attracted many followers—first, Pentecostalism's ability to offer a substitute for material comfort

and social esteem to its adherents who could not have otherwise gotten them. Second, its creativity to deal with adversity, and third, leadership that motivated the mobilisation of the masses (Wacker 2001, 10).

Azusa Street, Parham, and Seymour Reconsidered

Scholars have generally pointed to Charles Parham's revival on 1 January 1901 in Topeka, Kansas, and the Azusa Street revival in April 1906 led by William Seymour in Los Angeles as the historical starting points of Pentecostalism (Anderson 2004; Burgess and Van der Maas 2002). In attempting to respond to a quarter-century question on who should get credit for being the founding "father" of modern Pentecostalism, Irvin (2005) explores two schools of thought with the profound, lasting implications of Pentecostalism's social and ideological roots. The first school of thought gives primacy to Charles Fox Parham. Irvin locates Parham in European-American racial and cultural identity. He attributes him as the first to formulate the distinct Pentecostal doctrine of speaking in tongues as the biblical evidence of the Holy Spirit's baptism. According to this school of thought, a modern Pentecostal movement emerged from Parham's Bible School in Topeka, Kansas 1901. Speaking in tongues as biblical evidence and its practice from 1901 under Parham's teaching positioned Parham as the "father" of modern Pentecostalism. This position has support from various scholars (Blumhofer 1993; Goff 1988; Kendrick 1961; Wacker 2001). The other school of thought refutes the idea that Parham is worth the credit of being the "father" of modern Pentecostalism. Instead, they credit William J. Seymour, whom Irvin identifies as an African American Holiness preacher. He went to Los Angeles from Texas in 1906 and was the key leader of the Azusa Street revival. According to Irvin, Seymour had been in Parham's Bible class in Texas before leaving for California after an invite by a small Black Holiness congregation to be their pastor.

Existing research recognises the critical role played by both Parham and Seymour in establishing the global Pentecostal movement. In distinguishing Parham and Seymour in the context of race and culture, Irvin points out that Parham is accused of racism by the supporters of Seymour, indicating an incident where Seymour was forced to sit outside the door of Parham's classroom. Joel Creech asserts that "Parham not only believed in racial segregation but repeatedly made racist comments in his sermons and writings; in fact, Parham insisted that his student, William Seymour, sit outside the classroom door during lectures" (Creech 1996, 412). Seymour became unquestionably the lead figure of the Azusa Street revival. The modern Pentecostal revival went global from Azusa Street, not Parham's Bible College. The revival went far and wide, using *Apostolic Faith's* print media avenue and Seymour's publication. Seymour was eclipsed from national Pentecostal leadership after 1913, and by 2015, Azusa Street's mission continued mainly as a Black Pentecostal church under Seymour after most of the White members left. As per Irvin's (2005, 41) position, "Nevertheless, it is from Azusa Street that modern Pentecostal movements (as opposed to the modern Pentecostal doctrine of speaking in tongues) first emerged as a global phenomenon"; which explains why

Seymour is regarded as the “father” of the modern Pentecostal movement. Seymour is the “father” of Pentecostalism not because of Pentecostal doctrine, but rather because it was under him that the Azusa Street revival became a global movement. Seymour’s wing of Pentecostalism is located more in slave religion, a Black Holiness Church. Through the Azusa Street revival, therefore, the “African American church exhibited a global consciousness reaching beyond Pan Africanism” (Irvin 2005, 42). Tinney (1981) and Lovet (1973) similarly hold Irvin’s position and that of MacRobert (1988). In applying a genealogical approach to history, Irvin argues that Azusa Street was primarily a Black church phenomenon that does not reduce the Pentecostal movement to its African American origin. In Irvin’s view, the genealogical approach aims to “empower the hidden, the opaque, in the quest for freedom” (Irvin 2005, 43). The Azusa Street phenomenon, for Irvin, was “... hoped to bring an end to racism in the church, was committed to the ministry of all people, was ecumenical as well as evangelical.” He further opines that “... in addition to all of this, however, is that one of the pristine mythologies that tumble is the one that makes Azusa Street—or any other local event in Pentecostal history—the determining factor for Pentecostal histories elsewhere in the world” (Irvin 2005, 44). Though various historiographical approaches have been applied in the study of Pentecostal studies, it remains a significant fact that early Pentecostalism is grounded in a multifaceted history. In 1906 the City of Los Angeles was global and interracial. That is why there was a fast global spread of Azusa Street revival events; it was, to some extent, a global meeting point of sorts facilitated by effective communication and transportation. The *Apostolic Faith* publication was a great instrument that catapulted Pentecostalism globally.

Charles Fox Parham and William J. Seymour played complementary roles in the Pentecostal movement’s start and its consequent shaping (Wacker 2001). As Irvin (2005, 45) notes, “Azusa Street was a local history with global designs,” implying that the local experience was globalised in different locations worldwide, often with no reference to Azusa Street. Irvin affirms multiple origins of Pentecostalism, but with it emerging as a modern movement from the Azusa Street revival. Azusa Street was, therefore, a platform for global transmission since the City of Los Angeles provided a global cultural connection. Parham’s or Seymour’s experiences are not critical in understanding contemporary Pentecostalism because, as noted by Wilson (1999, 106), “Pentecostalism presently is not what Charles Fox Parham or any of his successors has pronounced it to be, but rather what contemporary Brazilians, Koreans and Africans demonstrate it is.” Global localisation of the Pentecostal phenomenon refuting monogenic origin is fronted by scholars globally (Kalu 1998, 2000; Macchia 1993). Anderson (2005, 180) mentions other centres that emerged independently of the Azusa Street revival: Queen Street Mission in Toronto by Ellen and James Hebden in 1906; Stone Church in Chicago by William Piper in 1907; and Glad Tiding Tabernacle in New York City by Marie and Robert Brown in 1907. Pentecostalism challenges Christendom’s historical narrative by disrupting global designs through the endless recreation of its history and being a localising movement proficient in executing globalising designs (Irvin 2005, 50). The choice between Parham and Seymour as the

founder of Pentecostalism depends on how one defines or describes the essence of Pentecostalism (Hollenweger 1997). Just like Irvin (2005), Hollenweger's choice of Seymour as the founder of Pentecostalism is not based on historical sequence but on a theological view. Seymour's theological exposition became the platform for the global spread of Pentecostalism (Anderson 2005, 180).

A few months after the Azusa Street revival, Pentecostal missionary global outreach began zealously. Most believed they could now preach worldwide because the Holy Spirit's baptism had granted them foreign languages for spreading the gospel. Anderson (2005) lists the following as the first Pentecostal missionaries after the revival:

- Alfred and Lilian Garr (the first White pastor baptised by Spirit in Azusa) went to India in 1907.
- Lucy Farrow (African American) went to Liberia in 1907.
- John G. Lake (a Canadian) travelled to South Africa in 1908, where he established Apostolic Faith Mission, a classical Pentecostal denomination.

The years 1910 and 1911 saw a group leaving for the Bahamas and British East Africa, respectively (Anderson 2005, 181). By 1910, Pentecostalism had spread its influence to Argentina and Brazil, where the largest Assemblies of God denomination was founded.

The “Myth” of Pentecostal Azusa Street Origin

Joe Creech terms as “myth” of Pentecostal origin the claim that the emergence of the global Pentecostal movement is attributed to the Azusa Street revival from 1906 to 1909 (Creech 1996, 406). This myth, Creech claims, has coloured the understanding of theologians, historians, and social scientists regarding Pentecostalism's origin. It was locating Pentecostal history to Azusa Street as the only historical point—with glaring limitations, just like taking Pentecostalism as homogenous (Creech 1996, 406). Pentecostalism emanated from several various revivals that did not in any way alter their original “institutional structures, theological tendencies, and social dynamics” (Creech 1996, 406). Azusa's role in advancing Pentecostalism cannot be credited to its institutional, theological, and social developments. Azusa, if anything, was only symbolic as far as the spread of Pentecostalism was concerned. According to Creech, the “mythic” nature of Azusa as the origin of Pentecostalism relates to how it was “perceived to be the location where God initiated an eschatological plan for the restoration of the church” (Creech 1996, 407). Mythically, Azusa gave Pentecostalism both theological and historical impetus akin to the happenings in the book of Acts chapter 2 in the New Testament, where the recording of the Holy Spirit's baptism was accompanied by the speaking of tongues.

The persistence of Azusa, despite Pentecostalism's multiple origins, is due to two reasons, according to Creech (1996, 410). Firstly, American scholars of the history of religion tended to rely on secondary sources, especially regarding Pentecostalism.

Secondly, there was an assumption of social scientists characterising early Pentecostalism with the social-cultural ethos of Azusa.

Pentecostal believers had their own way of interpreting the new movement. A decade after the Azusa Street revival, pioneer Pentecostal adherents attempted to explain Pentecostalism as signalling the restoration of lost original Christianity. Early Pentecostal preachers, in particular, rationalised that restoration of primitive Christianity was necessary because “the apostolic purity of the early church had been utterly lost” (Blumhofer 1989, 13). “Restorationism” was an attempt to return Christianity to its apostolic status in the New Testament context. God’s intervention in history was a constant yearning among the diverse groups that preceded the Pentecostal revival in early 1900, particularly the premillennial dispensational worldview. The roots of “restorationism” were well-established in the holiness movement (Robins 2010). The situating of Pentecostal history in the holiness movement and the 19th-century revivals linked to John Wesley, find strong defence and advocacy among several scholars (Kendrick 1961; Nichol 1966; Synan 1971)

Pentecostalism in Africa

African Pentecostalism is a complex phenomenon (Maxwell 1998; Kalu 2008). After decades of dominance of Western scholars on African Pentecostalism, a surge of literature by diverse scholars has been on the increase in the recent past. Paul Gifford (1988; 1991; 1992; 1993; 1994; 1998; 1999; 2004; 2009) is one of the vital pioneer scholars from the West to research and write on African Pentecostalism extensively. Literature on Pentecostalism in Africa has notably focused on history, politics, and public and civic roles. Since the early 1970s, historical studies of African Pentecostalism have been marked by diversity and complexity, largely dependent on the country’s contexts. Gifford has been the lead figure on African Christianity and its public role. In his analysis, he does not recognise or appreciate the Pentecostal role in enhancing African political reforms. Gifford tends to approve of mainline Christianity not only as a promoter of democracy but also as a significant social provider (Gifford 1998). However, Gifford (1998) is optimistic about Pentecostalism’s role in developing leadership skills through the democratic process of electing leaders and officials. This, to Gifford, tends to empower strong but autonomous communities. The exact contributions of Pentecostalism to social development are largely unknown. In exercising their democratic skills, Pentecostal churches tend to inculcate professional skills in budgeting, planning, and leading business meetings, which ultimately affect the behavioural norms of the group.

Nevertheless, for Gifford, all these tend only to nurture socio-economic skills that do not translate to social empowerment but only skills for running church business and affairs. Gifford is quick to indicate that the Pentecostalism movement is excellent in acquiring skills of the modern market economy (Gifford 1998). This is evident in how Pentecostals do promotions of their churches and services, organise meetings in

strategic urban locations, and efficiently implement decisions and communications utilising modern technological avenues.

Gifford (1998) approaches the study of African Pentecostalism from a comparative perspective. Using Ghana's Pentecostalism, Gifford traces its nature across Africa's socio-political contexts. Though Gifford posits it as a North American import, Adogame (2010) puts out that such a generalisation overlooks African Pentecostalism's historical and cultural complexity. The historical and anthropological perspectives are valuable data in understanding Pentecostal historiography as they emphasise contemporary contextual creativities within structures of African Pentecostal movements. In some sense, the history of Pentecostalism points out aspects of social relevance, where some of its religious functions aim at meeting the needs of the people in areas such as education, health, businesses, and recreation.

The study of Pentecostalism in Africa has had diverse scholarly interests painting a collage and mosaic rooted in history. Marshal (2009) offers a political understanding of Nigeria's Pentecostalism as ingrained in its teaching and organisational structure, complemented by Ojo's historical examination of the same from the 1970s (Ojo 2012). The roots of Pentecostalism in South Africa, from its beginnings in the late 19th century and its consequent spread and growth to the 1950s, are provided for by Maxwell (1998). Doctrinally, the Pentecostalism movement is examined by Asamoah-Gyadu in Ghana, while Meyer (2003) looks at it thematically in the same context. The influence of Pentecostalism on mainline Christian churches in Nigeria and Ghana is offered by Ihejirika (2006), especially concerning Catholicism and protestant Christianity. The global nature of the Pentecostal movement has been examined by Corten and Marshall-Fratani (2001), while Ukah (2008) elaborates on how Pentecostalism has developed global identities. The Nigerian Pentecostalism movement stimulated the spread of Pentecostalism across West Africa (Ojo, 2012). However, it was uneven due to different colonial and postcolonial experiences, especially in Francophone and Anglophone countries; hence Ojo's observation (2012) that comparatively, Anglophone countries like Ghana and Nigeria "fostered religious creativity as a cultural phenomenon" because of its political decentralisation. On the other hand, the centralisation aspect in Francophone countries saw the emergence of religious uniformity.

Indigenous prophetic figures were the antecedents of the Pentecostal movement in Africa. Challenging the North American Azusa Street revival, Pentecostalism in Africa sprung up in response to contextual challenges that faced Africans, and mission Christianity could not adequately handle it. Unlike the doctrinal and historical genesis of the Azusa Street revival, African Pentecostalism was an attempt to respond fiercely to challenges of sickness, sorcery, witchcraft, and mystical powers entrenched in African traditional religion. Mass acceptance of Pentecostalism in Africa is due to its promise to offer coping skills in times of crisis and hardships (Marshall 2009; Maxwell 1998). As a community linked by a shared network of beliefs and practices, Pentecostal adherents often help one another in numerous ways, including financially and even on

the social plane (Marshall 2009, 225). As social capital, through their doctrines and discipleship programmes, Pentecostal churches tend to confront social vices such as drug abuse, alcoholism, and sexual immorality, empowering their members to lead healthy lives and channel their money to fruitful endeavours. African Pentecostalism can be traced to a variety of pioneers across the continent. William Wade of the Gold Coast, Garrick Sokari Braide of the Niger Delta, and Simon Kimbangu of the Congo are some of the Pentecostal pioneers in Africa (Adeboye 2018, 26). According to Kalu, African Pentecostalism embodies some aspects of the traditional African worldview, especially in executing its spiritual power mandate (Kalu 2002). Several factors give Pentecostalism a competitive advantage over other churches and secular agencies in attracting many African followers. Practical religiosity (Kalu 2008), renewal and empowerment discourse (Lindhardt 2015), and genius ways of addressing spiritualities uniquely rooted in the African worldview (Maxwell 1998) are some of these factors.

Though the Pentecostal phenomenon was essentially a spontaneous global occurrence, it is unfortunate that the voices of Pentecostal heroes from Latin America, Asia, and Africa still need to be fully reflected in the histories of Pentecostalism. The lack of written records from mentioned areas is to blame. However, as rightly pointed out by Anderson (2005, 179):

Revising the twenty-first century's histories must be undertaken, not by emphasizing the missionary "heroes" of the powerful and wealthy nations of the world but by giving a voice to the people living in the world's most marginalized parts. We must listen to the "margins" by allowing the hitherto voiceless and often nameless ones to speak and by recognizing the contribution of those unsung Pentecostal laborers of the past who have been overlooked in histories and hagiographies.

Kalu's *African Pentecostalism: An Introduction* (2008) is a critical resource for understanding African Pentecostalism. Before Kalu, Gifford was an authoritative figure in African Pentecostalism and public space. Although crucial, Asamoah-Gyadu's *African Charismatics* (2004) is limited to Ghana. Kalu's work is an attempt to reconstruct global Pentecostal historiography. Acknowledging the significance of Azusa Street revival in shaping North American Pentecostalism, it rejects the notion that Pentecostalism has a single origin like Azusa. Kalu's attention is given to the "historical dimensions" that preceded the revivals (Kalu 2008, 15). In Kalu's view, African Pentecostalism is rooted and expressed in the African worldview, representing a more significant part of African traditional religion. The dimensions of the African context were "crucial in approaching the patterns of convergences" in the cultural interpretation and practice of Pentecostalism (Kalu 2008, 15). Classical Pentecostalism made headway to Africa, according to Kalu, in the late 19th century to the early 1960s. This was majorly by way of the emergence of African-instituted churches (AICs) triggered by classical Pentecostalism entrance to Africa. Therefore, African Pentecostalism, to Kalu, is an African response to the gospel that matches and fits the African worldview, characterised by its focus on the supernatural. Apart from being

historical, Kalu's work is also an African theological approach in which he unfolds the African Pentecostalism phenomenon within the context of the African worldview.

The Case of the East African Revival and African Pentecostalism

With its influence being felt today across churches in East Africa, the East African Revival began in the 1930s within African Protestant Christianity. Key factors that led to the emergence of the East African Revival movement were the unsatisfactory spiritual state of the Ugandan Anglican Church and the Ruanda Mission agency of the Church Mission Society (CMS). Originating in Rwanda, it found its footing in Kenya in 1937 through the agency of Ugandan evangelists (Samita 2003). It never became a fully-fledged church or denomination, but remained a within-the-church revival movement. From the western region of Kenya, the revival was primarily within the Anglican church. However, in its spread, it swelled within other mainstream missionary churches, including the Presbyterian and the Methodist churches (Ward and Wild-Wood 2010, 4). They make an interesting observation regarding the movement: "The Revival did not spread significantly to African Independent Churches nor, to the surprise of many observers, did it cause significant breakaways from the mission churches" (Ward and Wild-Wood 2010, 4). It is related to the more significant evangelical revival movements. They point out its classical traits: "A focus on sin and repentance, the cross, the baptism of the Spirit, sanctification and the quest for holiness" (Ward and Wildwood 2010, 5). They further claim that "The East African Revival bears the hallmarks of American revivalism ... and Keswick holiness" (Ward and Wild-Wood 2010, 5). They do not, however, link the East African Revival movement with Pentecostalism. Most scholars believe that the East African Revival Movement (EARM) was a spontaneous and informal clergy-laity-initiated movement. Public confession of sins, emphasis on preaching, evangelism, and moral integrity were the distinguishing traits of the revival movement. Because of its plasticity, the movement cuts across geographic and denominational spatial frontiers.

Kalu (2008) opines that the EARM influenced Pentecostalism in East Africa by setting the stage for the Pentecostalisation of East African Christianity. It initially began by attacking the spiritual laxity of the mainline missionary denominations and created a vibrant ecumenical mission and evangelistic works (Anderson 1977; Kalu 2008). The EARM also shaped key Kenyan Pentecostal leaders, including Joe Kayo, the founder of Deliverance Church (DC), and Arthur Kitonga, founder and leader of the Redeemed Gospel Church (RGC) in Kenya. Its direct influence occurred in the 1950s. The Kenya Christian Students Fellowship (KCSF) and the Christian Unions (CU) are linked to the EARM (Kalu 2008). These two are rooted in Kenya's institutions of higher learning (Parsitau 2007) and shape the student body's Christian worldview, some of whom lead churches (a good example is Dr David Oginde, the immediate Presiding Bishop of CITAM, who was once the CU leader at the University of Nairobi).

The EARM did not cause a revival in the East African religious landscape. Revivals have always been there. Unfortunately, most religious literature on the EARM links it

with English evangelical revival and Western Christian historiography. The EARM has to be understood as an independent movement shaped and directed by Africans, though within the colonial context. The EARM enabled and supplied Pentecostal/charismatic spirituality. It was about experiencing religion, practices, and beliefs that animated the believers. The EARM arose as a response to colonialism, missionaries, and challenges of modernity; it was dissatisfied with Uganda's Anglican Church that, for half a century of its existence, had "Sacrificed its evangelism zeal and quality of its Christian discipleship by compromising with both traditional culture and the material opportunities opened up by modern culture" (Ward and Wild-Wood 2010, 3). Kwame (1996) notes that the "experience of God found in Africa's primal religions" was sufficient to demonstrate neo-Pentecostal spirituality in African Christianity (Kwame 1996,76). According to Anderson (1977), the revival in East Africa was a canopy of pneumatological movements with a message of salvation and holiness, an evangelical message of the time (Anderson 1977, 118–119). Therefore, the EARM was not new or unique; it was part of a more significant holiness movement contextualised in local African communities that transcended denominational and missional boundaries.

Independent/Indigenous Pentecostalism: The Kenyan Example

Founded by local African leaders in the 1950s and 1960s, independent/indigenous Pentecostals in Kenya are mainly self-governing and self-financing, with little or no link to churches founded by Western missionaries. Key examples of these churches in Kenya include the Redeemed Gospel Churches of Kenya (RGCK), the Deliverance Churches (DC), and the Redeemed Gospel Churches of Kenya (RCCG). Though most of these churches have metamorphosed into neo-Pentecostal orientation, their strength and relevance in those early years lay in their capacity to appropriate Christianity and its message to bear on contextual challenges (Ukah 2007) significantly. Their sprouting, growth, and development were linked mainly to waves of evangelists that visited Kenya in the late 1950s to early 60s (Mwaura 2005). The most prominent Western evangelists included T. L. Osborn, Billy Graham, and Oral Roberts. Many who attended these meetings were students, mainly from universities, who later became leaders in their churches and ministries through the Fellowship of Christian Unions (FOCUS). Beliefs, teachings, and practices from these evangelistic meetings rapidly expanded the movement across Kenya (Kalu 2008, 21). Joe Kayo (founder of Deliverance Church in Kenya), Margaret Wangare (founder and leader of the Church of the Lord in Banana), Arthur Kitonga (Redeemed Gospel Church), and Wilfred Lai (Jesus Celebration Centre), among others, are the direct results of this movement in Kenya. Indigenous Pentecostal churches in Kenya had no specific factor or factors that led to their formation. Healings, miracles, and personal transformation became key identifying elements in these churches and resultant revivals (Kalu 2008, 20).

The flourishing of Pentecostal churches in Kenya and many other African countries have significantly affected the social-political landscape, thrusting its global significance within Pentecostal discourses and historiographies. Many Pentecostal churches have actively embraced elective politics, constitutional making, and the

democratisation process. For example, in the Kenyan context, they campaigned against the constitutional draft in 2005, protesting the existence of *Khadhi Courts* in the new constitution. Some Pentecostal clergy have emerged as leading opinion shapers in Kenyan social-political issues (Parsitau and Mwaura 2010).

Their attempts to promise alternate divinely ordered solutions to contemporary challenges place Pentecostal Christianity among the fastest-growing Christian movements globally (Anderson 2004). It represents 28% of global Christianity (Barrett and Johnson 2002). The non-Western world has the majority of Pentecostal converts, with 11% of Africa's population being Pentecostals. Though Christianity is not a recent phenomenon in Africa, the fast emergence and spread of Pentecostalism as a form of Christianity fit in well with the African worldview; Pentecostalism relates well with African challenges and thus makes it more relevant and meaningful than earlier missionary forms of Christianity.

The Western Pentecostal spread came to Africa through books, periodicals, conferences, and faith schools. These avenues tended to eliminate cultural and geographical barriers witnessed among denominational groups of the time. The periodicals have a vast network locally and internationally, enabling them to spread a common Pentecostal theological worldview, hence establishing more revivals. The spread and establishment of African Pentecostalism rely heavily on social capital that rhymes well with community connectedness in the African worldview.

Conclusion

Pentecostalism remains a prominent feature on the world's religious stage, but its historiography remains shrouded, marked by unclear origins and spread. Locating Pentecostal history to Azusa Street is glaringly limiting since Pentecostalism resulted from diverse revival groups. The prominence and predominance of the Azusa Street revival trajectory have drowned other global voices, promoting a biased view of global Pentecostal history. Recent historical studies and historiographies have unearthed how other voices from Asia, Africa, Latin America, and the Caribbean were neglected, who legitimately front a spontaneous historiographical polygenesis of global Pentecostalism. Even within the United States of America, in the early twentieth century, the origin of Pentecostalism was a multi-sited event, spanning across the country—Kansas, California, Chicago, New York, and other places. It was simultaneous, yet with a diversity of influences that depended on the context. The Western-centred historiographical perspectives ignored not only the African-American origin of Pentecostalism but also the role of women in the movement.

With the clearness that Pentecostalism had no single origin, there is a need to reframe the long-held Pentecostal historiography in Africa. Much restructuring will broadly point the origin of African Pentecostal Christianity to indigenous African traditional worldview and the resultant historical dimensions that yielded its birth. That which was not being provided by missional Christianity to confront African realities (especially

regarding the supernatural world of the spirits and ancestors) paved the way for Pentecostal revival in Africa, albeit in diverse contexts.

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