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**PENTECOSTALISM: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF AFRICAN AND AFRICAN
AMERICAN CHURCHES IN SPRINGFIELD**

A Master's Thesis

Presented to

The Graduate College of
Missouri State University

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts, Religious Studies

By

Emmanuel Kumah

July 2021

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PENTECOSTALISM: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF AFRICAN AND AFRICAN AMERICAN CHURCHES IN SPRINGFIELD

Religious Studies

Missouri State University, July 2021

Master of Arts

Emmanuel Kumah

ABSTRACT

This thesis is a comparative ethnography of two forms of black Pentecostalism, an African American congregation and an African immigrant congregation. The goal of this project is to show the similarities and differences between these Pentecostal groups. By observing members and interviewing them about worship practices, glossolalic utterances, and gender, the project reveals that although these two groups historically have a common root, there are both real parallels and differences between them because they developed independently from each other. This fieldwork at the African American Deliverance Temple Ministries and the African immigrant Redeemed Christian Church of God revealed that women do not only constitute the majority but also occupy pastoral and many other sensitive leadership positions. The study found that women used their positions to resist male domination. Church mothers in both churches serve as advisors. However, the black church requires these church mothers to live sanctified lives, while in the African immigrant church, they are elevated to this position due to their age. A closer observation of their worship reveals that ecstatic worship in the African American church involves the use of flags, shouting, and moaning, while shouting and moaning are considered a distraction in the African immigrant church unless there is a call and response during preaching. The ethnography reveals that the understanding and effectiveness of glossolalia differs between these groups and among members of the same church. Ultimately, glossolalia characterizes African immigrant worship while the African American church does not pay attention to it.

KEYWORDS: Pentecostalism, sanctification, tongues speaking, glossolalia, spirituality, women, ethnography, religious marketplace, Holy Spirit

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In the interest of academic freedom and the principle of free speech, approval of this thesis indicates the format is acceptable and meets the academic criteria for the discipline as determined by the faculty that constitute the thesis committee. The content and views expressed in this thesis are those of the student-scholar and are not endorsed by Missouri State University, its Graduate College, or its employees.

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CHAPTER ONE, INTRODUCTION

The Pentecostal plant of Ghana, the author insists, is not an imported tree, but a homegrown body. The blossoming Ghanaian Pentecostal tree is fed by the soil, water, and air of indigenous African beliefs and their encounter with modernity, colonialism, Western Christianity and civilization, and globalization.

— K. Asamoah-Gyadu¹

Profuse research on the history of Pentecostalism traces the origins of the movement from North America to its spread in the Global South and Asia. The common assumption that Pentecostalism originated in the United States focuses on the role of language in cultural diffusion. As sociologist Peter Berger notes, “people do not use language innocently” without the “cultural freight of cognitive, normative, and even emotional connotations.”² David Martin concludes that “to attend a Pentecostal or evangelical church in Latin America or virtually anywhere else is to encounter an enhanced understanding of English and increased contact with the Anglo-American world.”³

Some scholars trace the origins of Pentecostalism to the experience of Pentecost in the Upper Room as recorded in the Bible (Acts 2:1-4), while David Martin also describes Pentecostalism as an extension of American Methodism and Evangelical Awakenings (revivals),

¹ Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu, *Contemporary Pentecostal Christianity: Interpretations from an African Context* (Oxford, UK: Regnum Books International, 2013), xvii.

² Peter L. Berger, a sociologist and Protestant theologian, argues that the “Hellenistic phase of Anglo-American civilization” does not mean imperialism but a persuasive way through which United States culture is being imposed on others. See Peter L. Berger and Samuel P. Huntington, *Many Globalizations: Cultural Diversity in the Contemporary World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 3. Berger further suggest that “today, the English language, in its American rather than British form, is the *koine* of the emerging global culture. Regardless of the future of American imperial power, no rival is on the horizon. The millions of people all over the world who increasingly use English as their lingua franca do so mainly for practical reasons.” Ibid., 3.

³ David Martin, “The Global Expansion of Radical Primitive Christianity,” *Princeton Seminary Bulletin* 26, no.1 (2005), 114.

with the British as predecessors to Africa.⁴ Sociologists and anthropologists face ethnic and cultural clashes in tracing the historiography of the movement to the white Charles Fox Parham and black William Seymour.⁵ Some scholars argue that Charles Parham and his Bethel Bible School in Topeka, Kansas had the initial experience of Holy Spirit baptism but identify black William Seymour as a follower of the movement.⁶ On the other hand, Estrela Alexander dismisses Parham as the founder of the movement because Parham's reputation was "tainted, however, by the unfortunate racial insensitivities he exhibited on encountering interracial climate of the Azusa Street Revival and his alleged moral failings."⁷

Apart from the racial contention among Western scholars, African scholars have also disputed the origins of the movement because the speaking of different tongues, which many scholars have used to define Pentecostalism, pre-existed in African societies before Christianity

⁴ Many blacks left white dominated Methodist and Baptist churches during the nineteenth century to found the independent black churches like the Church of God in Christ. See David Martin, *Pentecostalism: The World Their Parish* (Malden, Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishers Inc., 2002), 7.

⁵ I use the term "black (s)" to represent African Americans because the two groups for this study (African Americans and African immigrants) are all regarded as black by skin color.

⁶ Estrela Y. Alexander, *Black Fire: One Hundred Years of African American Pentecostalism* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2011), 8; C. Eric Lincoln and Lawrence H. Mamiya, *The Black Church in the African American Experience* (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1990), 79.

⁷ Some black sociologists argue that the Holy Spirit baptism that Charles Fox Parham and his Bethel Bible School members experienced was a manifestation of the message William Seymour preached in the church he presided over at Azusa Street. Before the 1900 tongue speaking in Topeka, Kansas, in 1896, people also spoke in different tongues at the Shearer Schoolhouse Revival, Cherokee County, North Carolina. See Alexander, *Black Fire*, 16-17. Little was reported by the media on the April 18, 1906 Azusa Street Revival because it involved lower class black religious people who mattered little to society. See "Weird Babel of Tongues," *Los Angeles Daily Times*, April 18, 1906, accessed March 21, 2020, <https://www.newspapers.com/clip/9928151/azusa-street-weird-babel-tongues/>.

started in Africa.⁸ Ogbu Kalu dismissed the popular notion that African Pentecostalism originated from Azusa Street and it is “an extension of the American electronic church.”⁹ Quoting Asamoah-Gyadu, M’fundisi-Holloway also suggested that African Pentecostals are not “clones, consumers, and imitators of western innovations.”¹⁰ Several African Independent/Initiated Churches (AICs) like the Aladura, Tsegale, and Nackabah shared similar religious and theological tendencies with contemporary Pentecostal spirituality.¹¹ These spirit-filled churches emphasized holiness and the working of the spirit to provide remedies to members in a spirit-filled community because, as Joseph Mbiti suggested, “the African is notoriously religious.”¹² Mbiti extensively suggested that “there is no formal distinction between the sacred and the secular, between the religious and non-religious, and between the spiritual and the material areas of life.”¹³ This point was made expansively by Lamin Sanneh in his observation that in Africa, “religion falls like a shaft of light across the entire spectrum of life

⁸ This thesis supplements previous scholarship that tongue speaking has declined among (African American) Pentecostals. Also, the thesis concludes that among members of the same church, some participants stated that glossolalia should be emphasized while others said it does not give a true reflection of a Pentecostal.

⁹ African Pentecostalism was birthed from African response to the Christian missionaries (Ethiopianism) and African traditional spirituality. See Ogbu Kalu, *African Pentecostalism: An Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008). viii.

¹⁰ Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu, “Renewal within African Christianity. A Study of Some Current Historical and Theological Development within Independent Indigenous Pentecostalism in Ghana” (PhD diss., The University of Birmingham, 2000), 25, quoted in Naar M’fundisi-Holloway, “When Pentecostalism Meets African Indigenous Religions: Conflict, Compromise, or Incorporation?” in *Pentecostalism and Politics in Africa* edited Adeshina Afolayan, Olajumoke Yacob-Haliso, and Toyin Falola (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 88.

¹¹ AICs were a merger of African indigenous culture and European culture. AICs adopted the wearing of robes from European missionaries, Bible, Western church architecture, hymns, sermons and a preservation of African understanding of a spirit world. Contemporary Pentecostals criticized AICs because their style of dressing, deliverance process and theology did not fit nicely with Western Pentecostal theology and dressing.

¹² Joseph S. Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy* (London: Heinemann, 1969), 1.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 2.

and that African communities live, move, and have their being in religion.”¹⁴ When referring to “Africa” in this thesis, the sub-Sahara is intended.

African pneumatological (spirit impartation, dance, and incantational) and prophetic revelations were close to Pentecostals’ tongue-speaking, deliverance, healing, and how they reacted when the Holy Spirit imparted them.¹⁵ Spirit possession and trance among AICs and traditional African priests, despite their close similarity to Holy Spirit impartation among African Pentecostals, were described as “demonic.” It could be argued that the existence of African pneumatology among AICs is an indication that the (Holy) spirit descended on numerous people at different locations that sparked the beginning of the movement but were not written about until the global spread of the movement from North America. I use a racial or ethnic and cultural description because, from the foregoing argument among scholars, one makes a fallacy of generalization when one says that a movement, highly influenced by culture, is the same

¹⁴ Lamin Sanneh, “New and Old in Africa’s Religious Heritage: Islam, Christianity and the African Encounter,” in *Exploring New Religious Movements: Essays in Honor of Harold Turner*, eds., Andrew F. Walls and Wilbert R. Shenk (Elkhart, Indiana: Mission Focus, 1990), 64, quoted in Asamoah-Gyadu, “Spirits and Spirits in African Religious Traditions,” in, *Interdisciplinary and Religio-Cultural Discourses on a Spirit-Filled World*, eds., Veli-Matti Karkkainen, Kristeen Kim, and Amos Yong (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 42.

¹⁵ According to Asamoah-Gyadu, “Many divinities, like their worshippers, can be deeply affected by music and dance. Indeed, the most common situation in which some of the gods manifest themselves is the situation in which music set aside for them is performed. Among Ga communities of Accra, it is the nature of the dance form that tells the informed observer which deity is at work in a medium. Deities descend to the people through their human mediums and participate in music and dance. Thus, in public *akom* is conjuration in a state of trance, which includes unique dances in response to unique musical dictates of deities.” Ibid., 47. Joseph Egyanka Appiah was excommunicated from the Methodist Church, Ghana, for receiving the Holy Spirit and some spiritual practices that contradicted its doctrines. Appiah founded the Musama Disco Christo Church, a Ghanaian spiritual church in 1922. He spoke in tongues, danced, prophesied, used wands, and a pool of water believed to have some powers to heal, deter evil spirits, and cast out demons. See Amy Cox, “The Historical Exodus of the Musama Disco Christo Church,” *African Diaspora ISPs*, 38 (2002): 10-11, accessed August 29, 2020, https://digitalcollections.sit.edu/african_diaspora_isp/38.

worldwide. For instance, Pentecostalism will not be the same in Sweden and France. Thus, the reconstruction of the historiography of the movement needs to be traced worldwide and not only to the black William Seymour and the Azusa Street Revival or the white Charles Fox Parham and his Bethel Bible School in Topeka, Kansas.

Many sub-Saharan Africans believe that the world is both sacred and spiritual. They associate cause and effect with every societal occurrence. Paul Gifford suggests that the “enchanted religious” imagination of the African relates to the association of bad occurrence with spirits.¹⁶ African Pentecostalism started as a means of providing an alternative solution to these enchanted religious imaginations. There existed in African societies a “dual allegiance” phenomenon, whereby mainline Christians attended church on Sundays and consulted mediums and fortune-tellers the other days of the week.¹⁷ Pentecostals started explaining, predicting, and controlling both physical and spiritual events to combat evil forces threatening the destiny and the achievement of worldly success of members. For instance, Assemblies of God churches in

¹⁶ Ghanaian, Congolese, and Nigerian Pentecostal churches broke away from the missionary churches and African Initiated Churches to start their own churches. These churches were an amalgamation of Western Pentecostalism and African indigenous religion. Many left missionary churches because they could not provide them enough spiritual covering while they also condemned African Initiated Churches as demonic. Nimi Wariboko describes Nigerian Pentecostals to be concurrently “inside and outside African traditional religions.” See Nimi Wariboko, *Nigerian Pentecostalism* (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2014), 5. In general, some Pentecostals accept the African religious worldview and culture. Many people in the indigenous African society associate death, illness, misery, poverty, famine, and misfortune to the handiworks of spirits and witchcraft. Most African Pentecostal fliers provided prayers to conquer witchcraft, sorcery and divination, poverty, alcohol and drug addiction, marital problems, animal and blood covenants, cults, occults, and other religious rituals that did not conform to the Bible. See Paul Gifford, *Christianity, Development and Modernity in Africa* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 1; Allan Heaton Anderson, *Spirit- Filled World: Religious Dis/Continuity in African Pentecostalism* (London, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 6.

¹⁷ Paul Gifford, *Christianity, Politics, and Public Life in Kenya* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), 87.

Nigeria and Ghana started as a “healing ministry and Holy Spirit baptism.”¹⁸

Although many clothed themselves in suits, some African Pentecostals believe that the movement was an awakening against Euro-Christianity and Western culture. Pastor Mensa Otabil, the founder of International Central Gospel Church (ICGC), in his monograph, *Beyond the Rivers of Ethiopia*, states:

One of the things the Lord led me to do was liberate my people from mental slavery through the preaching of the Gospel, and to lift up the image of the black man so as to be a channel of blessing to the nations of the world. Mensa is my Christian name. John is the Greek version of a Hebrew name and some names you think are Christian are English, French, German or Portuguese. We are not obliged to take their names because whatever name I bear is Christian.¹⁹

African Pentecostals advocate for a society devoid of Western dependence but give equal opportunities to Africans both home and away because the outpouring of the Holy Spirit included people of the black race.²⁰ Kalu argues that the unfettered influence and success of African Pentecostalism can be ascribed to the efforts the movement played in its earliest beginning to liberating African societies from dictators and oppressors.²¹

Many pastors in Africa rent theaters, stadia, and parks for revivals and crusades. Prophecies, faith or prosperity gospel, and motivational messages are delivered to members during these services. Many televangelists also use various radio, television,

¹⁸ Darrin J. Rodgers, “This Week in AG History—March 29, 1989,” *Assemblies of God.org*, March 26, 2020, accessed April 3, 2020, <https://news.ag.org/en/Features/This-Week-in-AG-History-March-29-1959>.

¹⁹ Mensa Otabil, *Beyond the Rivers of Ethiopia: A Biblical Revelation of God’s Purpose for the Black Race* (Bakersfield, California: Pneuma Life Publishing, 1993), 29-30.

²⁰ Members of the International Central Gospel Church (ICGC) believe that Africans were also present during the day of Pentecost and heard the apostles in their African languages.

²¹ This was possible because the movement was started among elites, professionals, and educated Africans. See Kalu, *African Pentecostalism*, 104.

social media, and community information centers to proselytize while others travel to villages to preach the gospel. David Martin has argued that African Pentecostalism is “linked positively to modernity in terms of the ‘domains,’ which include ‘gender, secular law, transnationalism, voluntarism, pluralism, the nuclear family, peaceability, personal release and personal work discipline, consumption, modern communication,’ and ‘social geographical mobility.’”²² I dismiss Martin’s emphasis on Pentecostal positivity towards modernity because African Pentecostalism has taken advantage of both modern science and also reacted against modern scientific thoughts and epistemology.²³ I argue that African Pentecostalism was a way Africans responded to the missionary structures and appropriated the message using spirituality from African indigenous religion.

Black Pentecostalism started as slaves rekindled their African spirituality in Christianity as a hybrid religion of African religious worldview and experience from enslavement. This religion later became a “slave religion.” Slaves used their African religious worldview as their source of liberation. Black interpretation of biblical texts and their personal religious experiences predated the groups we now call Pentecostals. Estrela Alexander states:

The disparate culture that informed traditional African spirituality ensured that no one cohesive system of belief characterized the religion of all of Africa. Nonetheless, several threads throughout African religious cosmos and found

²² Gifford, *Christianity, Politics, and Public Life in Kenya*, 112.

²³ Some African Pentecostal churches are still consult divine power and spiritual anointing to solve problems rather than modern science. When an African Pentecostal is sick, the first thing is to pray or go to the church to offer prayer because they believe that God has the power to heal the sick. In cases where the cause of the ailment is even identified by medical doctors, they believe God works in miraculous ways, so they have more faith in “prayer that moves God” than in pharmaceutical drugs. This anti-modern scientific epistemology and technology has contributed to the underdevelopment of many African countries. See Samuel Zalanga, *African Pentecostalism and Modernity*, 343; Jane E. Soothill, *Gender, Social Change and Spiritual Power: Charismatic Christianity in Ghana* (Boston, MA: Koninklijke Brill NV, 2007), 44.

themselves in slave worship and black religious life. These elements came through the Middle Passage embedded, in some shape, in slaves' psyche to such a degree that decades of unimaginably inhumane treatment could not completely wipe them out ... successfully. Each of these elements—universal belief in a supreme being; a pervasive sense of the reality of the spirit world; blurring lines between the sacred and the profane; practical use of religion in all of life; surrender of excessive individualism for community solidarity; reverence for ancestors and their symbolic communal presence; greater involvement of women in ritual and community leadership; and creative use of rhythm, singing and dance in life and worship—has had implications for African American spirituality.²⁴

Historian Albert Raboteau argues these beliefs were “shaped and modified in stories by a new environment, elements of African folklore, music, language, and religion were transplanted in the New World by the African diaspora. African styles of worship, forms of ritual, systems of belief, and fundamental perspectives have remained vital on this side of the Atlantic, not because they were preserved in a ‘pure’ orthodoxy but because they were transformed.”²⁵ Slaves did not divorce from the African religious worldview despite the inhumane treatment from whites but relied on God for liberation. Estrela Alexander suggests that the experience of slavery helped blacks develop independent churches that respected African Americans and gave them opportunities to build a religion with their insufficient resources.²⁶ Black worship consisted of the singing of songs, dancing, moaning, and shouting in prayers.²⁷ These were ways they communicated messages of resilience and hope to each other. Blacks' reliance on Christianity,

²⁴ Alexander, *Black Fire*, 31.

²⁵ Albert J. Raboteau, *Slave Religion: The “Invisible Institution” in the Antebellum South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), 4- 5.

²⁶ Black Pentecostalism started among the poor people. They lived a secluded life but later gained a reputation among the rich as the movement gained popularity. The acceptance by other people helped change the theology, music, spirituality, and leadership style. See Alexander, *Black Fire*, 16.

²⁷ Dancing and shouting have been part of black religion since antebellum times. See Raboteau, *Slave Religion*, 216.

especially Pentecostalism, reflected their belief that the movement provided spirituality and human redemption during their long yearning for deliverance from the scars of slavery.

African immigrants and black Pentecostalism are often characterized by a sense of communal spirituality, singing, praying, dancing, and shouting. Ecstasies and miracles shape their understanding of the Holy Spirit impartation. They conceive of the universe as a spirit-filled world. Black Pentecostalism was the importation of African spirituality. James Tinney argues that black Pentecostalism has its roots in African worship styles (theology, prayer, songs, and dance).²⁸

The subsequent paragraphs introduce the churches in this thesis and the reasons for this comparative study. I studied the Redeemed Christian Church of God (an African immigrant Pentecostal church) and Deliverance Temple Ministries (a black Pentecostal church) because their common root is traceable to African spirituality. Their understanding of religious experience and ecstasy are similar but different. Also, they both trace the beginning of their Pentecostalism to a kind of liberation theology. African Pentecostals believe that the struggle for independence in the 1950s created the opportunity for Africans to re-educate themselves against the myth of cursed blackness and dependency on a Western understanding of Christianity. Some black Pentecostals, on the other hand, interpret the civil rights movement in the 1960s as a step to ending slavery and empowering blacks to think of themselves as equal to whites.

A comparative study makes sense because both Deliverance Temple Ministries (DTM) and Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG) have their roots in Pentecostal revivalism, though different in expression, and have covertly used ethnicity and race to thrive in the religious

²⁸ James S. Tinney, "Black Pentecostalism," *Spirit* vol. 3, no. 2 (1979): 27.

marketplace.²⁹ Many DTM members expressed the vitality of the Holy Spirit in shouting and moaning, while to most RCCG vibrancy means manifestation of the Spirit through prayer.³⁰ These common features can be traced ethnically to African spirituality. Although Charles Harrison Mason, the founder of the largest black Pentecostal Church in America, the Church of God in Christ (COGIC), and Charles Price Jones urged blacks to accept their African heritage, the differences in religious expression distinguished black Pentecostalism from African Pentecostalism and Pentecostalism practiced by other races and ethnicities (Hispanics, whites, and Asians).³¹ Mason and Jones suggested blacks accept their Africanisms because African ideas and customs shaped COGIC.³² African communal living, music, dance, and liberation theology were present during the Azusa Street revival but have disappeared and waned among contemporary black Pentecostal churches. Religious experiences among black Pentecostals may

²⁹ Both churches appeal mostly to members of their own ethnic and racial group. DTM appeals mostly to blacks while RCCG focuses mostly on African immigrants in Springfield. A clearer description is in the subsequent chapter.

³⁰ DTM and RCCG members do not call these religious expressions shouting or moaning. Scholars have coined these terms to describe these acts.

³¹ After graduating from Arkansas Baptist Bible College in Little Rock, Arkansas in October 1888, Charles Price Jones was ordained at Mt. Zion Baptist Church in the same city. In 1895, Jones pastored Mt. Helm Baptist Church in Jackson, Mississippi where he started teaching on the holiness and sanctification doctrines after his famous publication on 1 Corinthians 12 in 1896 entitled *The Work of the Holy Spirit in the Churches* and eventually his excommunication as a Baptist preacher in 1899. He later joined Mason in preaching holiness to black Baptists which caused the black Baptists numbers to decline. He also held the faith of the healing revival as a COGIC leader in the mid-South, correcting the histories which placed the COGIC within the Methodist Holiness movement. See Bishop Ithiel C. Clemons, *Bishop C.H. Mason and the Roots of the Church of God in Christ* (Lanham, Maryland: Pneuma Life Publishing, Inc., 2012), iv, 17-30; Jones later left COGIC and split with Mason over doctrinal issues. Many founding members of COGIC including Mason accepted the Pentecostal message while Jones resisted but for holiness. See Bill J. Leonard and Jill Y. Crainshaw, *Encyclopedia of Religious Controversies in the United States*, 2nd ed. (Santa Barbara, California: ABC-CLIO, Llc., 2013), 366.

³² See Alexander, *Black Fire*, 49; Clemons, *Bishop C.H. Mason and the Roots of the Church of God in Christ*, 6; Lincoln and Mamiya, *The Black Church in the African American Experience*, 2.

have started out as purely African or had close resemblance with African Pentecostalism but the lack of documentation and changes in generations have brought some differences among black Pentecostals and African Pentecostals. Finally, time and again women have played both spiritual and maternal roles in Pentecostalism despite male domination. The subsequent paragraphs of this chapter give a brief description of the organization of the thesis.

This thesis is composed of five chapters and a conclusion. These chapters apply key theories about Pentecostalism to these two congregations and they do so in a comparative way. Evangelism, architecture, organizational style, and preaching have contributed to the growth of churches. Many church shoppers have also bought into and joined churches due to ethnic or race fluidity. The religious market is cluttered with many sellers and shoppers. Individuals classify themselves as Pentecostals depending on their religious experiences. Women constitute the majority and play many roles in DTM and RCCG. The thesis considers how DTM and RCCG are organized directly or indirectly ethnically to compete in the religious marketplace.

The current chapter provides an overview of the origin of Pentecostalism, arguing that Pentecostalism is traceable to the culture, ethnic, and racial group the historian or sociologist is studying. This conclusion was reached because among Americans (blacks and whites), there is an unending racial argument over the founder of the movement. On the other hand, sub-Saharan Africans also accept that the name (Pentecostalism) is American but dismiss the movement's American origins. They argue that the assumed scholarly characteristics of the movement existed in African indigenous religion and African initiated/independent churches before the missionaries planted churches in the continent. I say "assumed scholarly characteristics" because chapter five reports that the description of glossolalia as a key characteristic of Pentecostalism

has waned among American Pentecostals. Also, members of the same church have divergent views on the use of glossolalia as a Pentecostal's identity.

Chapter Two is a theoretical review of the existing literature on how Pentecostalism follows the logic of the religious marketplace. It reviews literature by David Martin, Peter Berger, Rodney Stark, and Roger Finke on the marketplace theory of religion. This chapter connects the spread of Pentecostalism to the marketplace theory. The chapter argues that the success of black or African immigrant Pentecostals is due to their direct or indirect focus on creating a religious marketplace that attracts their own. It suggests that ethnicity and race have contributed to the success of minority Pentecostal churches. Pentecostalism creates both a capitalist and a socialist economy because it fine-tunes traditions and supplies the needs of consumers (members) in a modernized society. This chapter also points out that most research on African Pentecostalism has focused on the charismatic leader without studying the church as an organization that operates only in response to the demands of its consumers (members).

Chapter Three focuses on the methodologies the researcher used in this dissertation. The researcher's acceptance as an insider helped him to relate well with participants. Also, having received the gift of the Holy Spirit baptism helped the researcher differentiate between tongue-speaking and moaning or shouting. On the other hand, the researcher was limited to much information because of his partial status as an outsider.

Chapter Four focuses on structural inequalities in Pentecostal churches. This chapter builds on lawyer and black feminist scholar Kimberlie William's 1989 "intersectional theory."³³

³³ Kimberlie Williams Crenshaw, "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics," *University of Chicago Legal Forum*, vol. 1989, no. 1: 140: 139–68. <https://chicagounbound.uchicago.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?referer=&httpsredir=1&article=1052&context=uclf>.

The chapter explores how black and African immigrant Pentecostals integrate and accept women as their leaders. The chapter discusses the challenges black and African Pentecostal women leaders face among people of their race.

Chapter Five focuses on the use of glossolalia as a key feature of Pentecostal churches and how glossolalia and pneumatology have waned in most Pentecostal churches in the West. This chapter relates Margaret Poloma's "doctrinal routinization" to DTM and spiritual vibrancy in the RCCG. Further, the chapter looks at how the religious worldviews of these two churches interpret and engage with society. The next chapters address the differences in religious expressions and roles of women at DTM and RCCG.

CHAPTER TWO, PENTECOSTALISM AND THE RELIGIOUS MARKETPLACE

Economic markets tell us about the production and distribution of material goods. But humankind's spiritual needs, as manifested through the ages by the practices of magic and religion, are as pressing and durable as its material needs.... Religion in its myriad forms has been a binding force of human populations and a contributing factor to human survival.

– Robert Ekelund Jr., Robert Hebert, and Robert D. Tollison³⁴

Before concentrating on Deliverance Temple Ministries (DTM) and Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG), it is important to place this thesis within its academic context, namely, a larger corpus of literature on the marketplace theory of religion, religious experience, and women in Pentecostal studies. The previous chapter discussed the race and ethnicity debate among historians, sociologists, and anthropologists of religion in tracing the origin of Pentecostalism, the understanding and use of African spirituality, and the uniqueness of Pentecostalism practiced by a specific race or ethnic group. It expounded on the arguments by black Pentecostal sociologist Estrela Alexander, who traced the beginning of the movement to black holiness groups and the 1906 Azusa Street Revival. Providing another explanation in his history book, *The Rise to Respectability*, historian Calvin White Jr. argued that sanctification and strict standards of behavior by black Pentecostals shaped the American historical narrative and offered blacks some racial uplift.³⁵ In addition, Ogbu Kalu, Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu, and the New Zealander Paul Gifford also traced the origin of Pentecostalism to spiritual practices in African Independent/Initiated Churches before the American movement was exported to

³⁴ Robert B. Ekelund Jr., Robert F. Hebert, and Robert D. Tollison, *The Marketplace of Christianity* (Cambridge, MA: Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2006), vii.

³⁵ Calvin White Jr., *The Rise to Respectability: Race, Religion, and the Church of God in Christ* (Fayetteville, Arkansas: The University of Arkansas Press, 2012), ix.

Africa.³⁶ The sociologist Peter Berger has invited us to broaden our description of Pentecostalism because there have been many foreign infiltrations into the movement. Also, Margaret Poloma's ethnographic study concluded that glossolalia is either missing or declining among American evangelical Pentecostals (for example, in the Assemblies of God).³⁷

Moving beyond the original root and how to describe Pentecostalism, this chapter articulates a theoretical framework for accounting for the success of DTM and RCCG in a city with churches at every street corner and a very small minority population.³⁸ This chapter supplements and critiques the marketplace theory of religion and describes how ethnic marketing has shaped the growth and worship styles of the two minority congregations explored in this thesis. This chapter focuses on how smaller Pentecostal churches have employed what I term "ethnic or racial affinity" to survive and remain competitive in the pluralistic religious market. The choice to examine how racial and ethnic affinity shapes the growth of churches founded by people of a minority group springs from a conviction that certain cultural dynamics lead to rejection while racial or ethnic acceptance attracts or draws people to a group.

Despite the usefulness and descriptive accuracy of the religious marketplace approach, the theory is incomplete when applied to Pentecostal minority denominations without the inclusion of racial or ethnic affinity. Roger Finke and Rodney Stark's most influential book, *The*

³⁶ African Initiated Churches members did not call their style of worship Pentecostalism. Sociologists later found out that their healing, deliverance, and pneumatology were like Western Pentecostalism.

³⁷ Margaret Poloma, "Charisma and Structure in the Assemblies of God: Revisiting O'Dea's Five Dilemmas," in *Church, Identity, and Change: Theology and Denominational Structures in Unsettled Times*, ed. David A. Roozen and James R. Nieman (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2005), 61.

³⁸ I use "minorities" in this thesis in reference to non-denominational churches that claim to be all race accepting and inclusive but have a style of worship and programs that represent minority groups in the city. Their style of worship mostly attracts minority people by ethnicity or race.

Churching of America, only paid a little attention to black Methodist and Baptist churches. They argued that black churches grew in numbers because “the black Methodists could serve as class leaders, exhorters, and even itinerants, and the black Baptists gave public testimonies of faith, served as deacons, and the most gifted was invited to preach. These leaders not only provided leadership for other black members during worship and prayer meetings in the church, they also provided leadership and support for members outside the church.”³⁹ Their approach to studying the success of the black church in the religious marketplace did not include ethnic influence. Also, many sociologists of religion who have studied and applied this theory to congregations and religious institutions either studied larger denominations or a collection of denominations but not small churches.⁴⁰

The Marketplace Theory of Religion

The pioneer of the contemporary economics of religion was the Scottish political economist and moral philosopher Adam Smith. He wrote extensively about the economic effects of religion in his 1776 book, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth Nations*. It is important to consider religion as a commodity because it remains at the heart of people. Martin Luther’s 95 theses to the Wittenberg Church in 1517 challenged the religious monopoly of the Catholic church and practically emphasized some product differentiation (de-monopolization),

³⁹ Roger Finke and Rodney Stark, *The Churching of America, 1776- 2005: Winners and Losers in Our Religious Economy* (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 2005), 103.

⁴⁰ Some works have been done on Church of God in Christ (COGIC), but scholars have not paid attention to smaller Pentecostal churches and their success or failure in the competitive religious market.

which was also a groundbreaker for the commercialization of religion.⁴¹ These 95 theses started a movement that gave rise to many religious groups within Christendom. In the United States, the First Amendment barred the establishment of state religion and augmented the commercialization of religion among denominations in America. Historian Harry Stout argues that even before the First Amendment, eighteenth-century “religious leaders, in order to make religion popular, understood that they had to compete in a morally neutral and voluntaristic marketplace environment alongside all the goods and services of this world.”⁴² This momentous de-monopolization of religion brought commercialization and popular culture into religion. Religious suppliers extended supplies to reach the consuming taste of the masses.

Two centuries after Adam Smith’s discovery and usage of the religious marketplace idea, historians and sociologists of religion have coined several words and phrases to represent the economic imagery of religion and the new paradigm shift in American religion, especially when analyzing Christianity. Historian Nathan Hatch developed a paradigm shift of the church competition in popular culture. Hatch coined the term “democratization of religion,” bringing it into the study of American religion.⁴³ Tracing the historical success of eighteenth-century churches like the Christian movement, the Methodists, the Baptists, and black churches, Hatch argues that by weakening the class structure, these churches offered the “common people, especially the poor compelling visions of individual self-respect and collective self-

⁴¹ Printing press and pamphlets were used during this revolution to sensitize people against Catholic monopoly. By the printing and circulating of propaganda for the Lutheran cause, they engaged in popular culture.

⁴² Robert Laurence Moore, *Selling God: American Religion in the Marketplace of Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 7.

⁴³ Nathan Orr Hatch, *The Democratization of American Christianity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 9.

confidence.”⁴⁴ After the American Revolution, religious entrepreneurs worked to capture attention in a fierce competitive religious marketplace by organizing the church after the priorities of the ordinary people rather than the priorities of the elite.⁴⁵ Hatch posits:

By redefining leadership itself, these movements reconstructed the foundations of religion in keeping with the values and priorities of ordinary people. Second, these movements empowered ordinary people by taking their deepest spiritual impulses at face value rather than subjecting them to the scrutiny of orthodox doctrine and frowns of respectable clergymen.⁴⁶

In the eighteenth-century movements Hatch discusses, some preachers had little or no education but used messages with a popular appeal to gain the attention of members or consumers. They crafted their messages to appeal to the sentiments and spirits of their audience. New churches competed and muted the appeal of orthodox churches with their democratic message that resonated with hope and gave biblical authority to ordinary people or consumers to interpret the Bible.⁴⁷

The American historian, R. Laurence Moore used the concepts “commercial culture” and “marketplace culture” to describe the relationship between religious institutions and their adherents in the nineteenth century, bringing commercial and popular culture into proximity in the church.⁴⁸ The historian T. H. Breen described religion as a “consumer revolution market”

⁴⁴ Ibid., 4.

⁴⁵ These were uneducated and “unbranded individualists who chose to storm heaven by the back door.” Ibid., 13.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 10.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 67-69.

⁴⁸ Moore, *Selling God*, 3-5.

because it is driven by producer and consumer or buyer and seller.⁴⁹ The historian Jon Butler used the “national spiritual market” to describe how the Bethel Association of Baptists used letters to settle laity and clerical problems and geographical changes in annual meetings for distant churches not to feel isolated and rejected.⁵⁰

Finke and Stark argued that when churches meet consumer expectations, their membership increases, while churches that do not shape their theology to meet change and market demands shrink.⁵¹ In his monograph, *Urban Religion and the Second Great Awakening: Church and Society in Early National Baltimore*, the historian Terry Bilhartz argued that “in a pluralistic/free choice, economic exchange is influenced by the supply of goods or services being offered and the marketing skills of competing vendors.”⁵² Some homilists and adherents have debunked the commodification of religion as sacrilegious. The difficulty and uncertainty identifying the type of packaging and marketing of religious products does not make religion different from the beer market.⁵³ Consumers and sellers use churches, and offline and online services to meet supply and demand. In *The Sacred Canopy*, sociologist Peter Berger maintained:

⁴⁹ T. H. Breen, *The Marketplace of Revolution: How Consumer Politics Have Shaped American Independence* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2004), 175, quoted in Harry S. Stout, *The Divine Dramatist: George Whitefield and the Rise of Modern Evangelicalism* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1991), xvii.

⁵⁰ Jon Butler, *Awash in A Sea Faith: Christianizing the American People* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1990), 275-276.

⁵¹ “As the Congregational clergy began to substitute lectures on theology for heartfelt sermons of conviction, their flocks began to shrink.” See Finke and Stark, *The Churching of America*, 49.

⁵² Terry D. Bilhartz, *Urban Religion and the Second Great Awakening: Church and Society in Early National Baltimore* (Cranbury, New Jersey: Associated University Presses, Inc., 1986), 139.

⁵³ Torkel Breke, *Faithonomics: Religion and the Free Market* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 27.

The key characteristic of all pluralistic situations, whatever the details of their historical background, is that religious ex-monopolies can no longer take for granted the allegiance of their client populations. Allegiance is voluntary and thus, by definition, less than certain. As a result, the religious tradition, which previously could be authoritatively imposed, now has *marketed*. It must be “sold” to a clientele that is no longer constrained to “buy.” The pluralistic situation is, above all, a *market situation*. In it, the religious institutions become marketing agencies and the religious traditions become consumer commodities. And at any rate a good deal of religious activity in this situation comes to be dominated by the logic of market economics.⁵⁴

Embracing Berger’s market situation, Stark and Finke suggested that a competitive religious market is very important because a monopoly creates laziness.⁵⁵ Thus, for churches to remain competitive and thrive in a religious market, they must compete as companies.

In this thesis, I employ “Pentecostal economics” to describe Pentecostalism’s modification and commercialization of religious commodities to satisfy consumers (members and attenders), because congregations compete for members in a commercial marketplace.⁵⁶ By Pentecostal economics, I mean a relationship between church organization, spiritual, physical, and cultural demands of members. As Finke and Stark argue, “humans want their religion to be sufficiently potent, vivid, and compelling so that it can offer them rewards of great magnitude. People seek a religion that is capable of miracles and that imparts order and sanity to the human condition.”⁵⁷ There is a paradigm shift from Berger’s market situation that concentrated only on the demand side to the inclusion of both demand and supply.⁵⁸ Pentecostal economics is

⁵⁴ Peter Berger, *The Sacred Canopy: Elements of A Sociological Theory of Religion* (New York: Anchor Books Edition, 1967), 138.

⁵⁵ Finke and Stark, *The Churching of America*, 11.

⁵⁶ Pentecostal economics exist in a society where Pentecostal churches provide physical, mental, and spiritual needs for members (consumers) in a competitive religious market where there are other religious groups.

⁵⁷ Finke and Stark, *The Churching of America*, 282.

⁵⁸ Stephen R. Warner, “Work in Progress Toward a New Paradigm for the Sociological Study of Religion in the United States,” *American Journal of Sociology* 98, no. 5 (1993): 1053, accessed September 1, 2020, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2781583>.

forcefully seen when it is added to the rational choice theory of religion. Furseth and Repstad state:

Rational choice theory argues that individuals turn to religion because they see that it gives them some sort of benefits or rewards. They will join the religious groups and movements that will give them the most rewards. As a consequence, religious movements that have a definite profile and offer a greater amount of rewards will achieve more support than religious movements with a more diffuse profile and fewer rewards.⁵⁹

I propose the term “Pentecostal economics” in studying the religious market because contemporary Pentecostal churches diversify their culture to meet the demands of consumers while consumers also join religious groups due to the benefits they promise. In a pluralistic religious economy, consumers prefer to choose among numerous products that meet their tastes, rather than settling on a single product. There is communal and collective focus among black and African Pentecostals—the success of an individual is the wellbeing of the group. This communal and collective spirituality may set the movement apart from the white evangelical revivalism that Finke and Stark talked about. African Pentecostals, like nineteenth century American church entrepreneurs, have focused on both the spiritual and physical to remain competitive in a pluralistic religious market. In many African countries, especially Ghana and Nigeria, Pentecostal churches have transformed public space into sacred galleries—displaying posters on billboards, utility poles, clothes, handbills, and bridges.⁶⁰ Ukah argues that many African Pentecostal pastors believe good advertisement is a successful way to proselytize.⁶¹

⁵⁹ Inger Furseth and Pal Repstad, *An Introduction to the Sociology of Religion: Classical and Contemporary Perspectives* (Burlington, Vermont: Ashgate Publishing Company), 117.

⁶⁰ Instead of the gospel speaking for itself, they use all kinds for advertisements to attract their members.

⁶¹ Asonzeh F. K. Ukah “Roadside Pentecostalism: Religious Advertising in Nigeria and the Marketing of Charisma,” *Critical Interventions* (2008): 125, accessed August 30, 20202, DOI: 10.1080/19301944.2008.10781334.

Advertisement is a tool churches use to persuade people to buy their products. Hence, “Pentecostal entrepreneurs use poster to contest and create visibility, shape and influence people’s attitudes to religious producers, break down resistance to social acceptance of the new religiosity, shape expectation, and create needs, desires as well as spiritual threats.”⁶²

Application of the Marketplace Theory of Religion

Pentecostal and Charismatic churches are growing in numbers in Africa and Latin America despite the intense competition with other Christian groups in the religious market. This growth has been attributed to the movement’s ability to provide physical and spiritual benefits to consumers. Berger argued aptly that competition in the religious market would secularize religion, but the important role of religion in the lives of people challenges secularization and reduces it to an ideology rather than a theory.⁶³

Some sociologists have predicted that the increase in religious options produces religious apathy and dissatisfaction. Instead, the global spread and participation in Pentecostalism indicates that competition helps churches grow. Unlike Pentecostal churches that are modernizing their polity to stay competitive in the religious market, Finke and Stark have argued that mainline churches have not been very competitive in the last four decades because of their lack of attention to membership decline, inadequate strategies to replace old members with the younger generation, and their lack of attention to the tension between religion and the larger

⁶² Asonzeh Ukah, “Seeing Is More Than Believing: Posters and Proselytization in Nigeria,” in *Proselytization Revisited: Rights Talk, Free Markets and Culture Wars*, ed. R. I. J. Hackett (London: Equinox, 2006), 191 quoted in Ogbu Kalu, *African Pentecostalism: An Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 111.

⁶³ Peter Beyer, “Religious Vitality in Canada: The Complementarity of Religious Market and Secularization Perspectives,” *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, vol. 36, no. 2 (June 1997): 272, accessed March 6, 2020.

culture.⁶⁴ In *Between Babel and Pentecost*, Andre Corten and Ruth Marshall-Fratani attributed the growth of Pentecostal churches in the competitive religious market to the reduction of window shopping, diverse organizational structures, and restricted doctrines that offer an alternative to the promises of globalisation.⁶⁵

Andre Droogers argued that Pentecostals culturally construct their theology to influence the attitudes of people.⁶⁶ Drooger argued that religious groups compete in a context of globalisation and this sometimes looks like “glocalization”—assimilating to the culture of their local consumers. Some Latin Americans accepted North American evangelical Protestantism as a religious culture worthy of emulation. Protestantism empowered some evangelical Hispanics against authoritarian governments, emphasized individual autonomy, and promoted resistance to militarism. Protestantism also de-monopolized Catholicism in Latin America because it served as

⁶⁴ Finke and Stark, *The Churching of America*, 275.

⁶⁵ “Globalisation opens up new worlds as processes of migration and mass mediation accompany new forms of wealth and accumulation, opening wide vistas of possible lives, inciting desire and fantasy, but also anxiety, frustration, downward mobility and insecurity. With the crisis in the old mechanisms of identification, as nation-states seem to be losing their monopoly over moral resources of community formation, new forms of transnational ‘fix’ emerge from this flux, escaping or defying control. In the developing world, the failed promises of the nation-state concerning modernisation have resulted in the de-legitimation of their ‘mega-rhetoric of development’ and have opened the field to the work of the imagination of everyday individuals fuelled by images, ideas and resources from elsewhere, to re-script their lives, both individually and collectively, finding ways to appropriate and inscribe themselves within global modernity.” See Andre Corten and Ruth Marshall-Fratani, *Between Babel and Pentecost: Transnational Pentecostalism in Africa and Latin America* (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2001), 3.

⁶⁶ Churches multiplied their members when they contextualized their ideas in ways that fit the cultural requirements of their members. The modernization of polity does not mean pastors and their members remain misfits in their culture and society, but they develop religion simultaneously to compete in their communal culture while utilizing the new opportunities to expand their membership and remain competitive. See Andre Droogers, “Globalisation and Pentecostal Success,” in *Between Babel and Pentecost: Transnational Pentecostalism in Africa and Latin America*, ed. Andre Corten and Ruth Marshall-Fratani (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2001), 43, 52-53.

a religious alternative for consumers.⁶⁷ Harvey Cox also associates the cultural breakthrough of Pentecostalism globally to “primal spirituality.”⁶⁸ Pentecostal churches despite strong cultural competition with globalization had flourished because of their ability to fine-tune the “unprocessed nucleus of the unending psyche struggles of consumers.”⁶⁹ Frank Macchia has called Pentecostalism’s ability to fine-tune the unprocessed culture to meet modernity, a “submodern” approach.⁷⁰ The submodern approach includes ways churches create a viewpoint and creative dialogue that establishes a common balance for both the historical (old-fashioned) and the modernist.⁷¹ For instance, the Church of Pentecost, Ghana, has recently changed the prohibition against Rastafarians (men with dreadlocks), trousers for female members, and the wearing of headgear by women in order to retain its youth membership and attract other members globally.⁷² Contrary to the argument that the competitive market fosters church growth through doctrinal adaptations (as posited by Berger), churches also use the modern approach to

⁶⁷ David Martin, *Tongues of Fire: The Explosion of Protestantism in Latin America* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishers, 1990), 11-13.

⁶⁸ Harvey Cox, *Fire From Heaven: The Rise of Pentecostal Spirituality and the Reshaping of Religion in the Twenty-first Century* (Reading, Massachusetts: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1995), 81.

⁶⁹ Pentecostalism is flourishing in Africa, Latin America, and Korea because it meets physical and spiritual needs. See Cox, *Fire From Heaven*, 82; Droogers, *Globalisation and Pentecostal Success*, 56.

⁷⁰ Frank D. Macchia, “The Struggle for Global Witness: Shifting Paradigms in Pentecostal Theology” in *The Globalization of Pentecostalism: A Religion Made to Travel* ed. Murray W. Dempster, Byron D. Klaus, and Douglas Petersen (Carlisle, UK: Regnum Books International, 1999), 12.

⁷¹ For instance, in Ghana many Pentecostal churches sing both urban (mostly English) and traditional (mostly Fante or Twi) music to meet the needs of the older and younger generation. Some churches also organize English and Fante or Twi services to create a balance for their groups.

⁷² Rastafarian is a term Ghanaians use to describe anyone with dreadlocks. See “Modern Ghana, Pentecost Church relaxes ‘Trousers’ and ‘Head covering’ rules for females,” *Modern Ghana.com* February 15, 2010, accessed February 29, 2020, modernghana.com/news/263951/pentecost-church-relaxes-trousers-and-head-cove.html.

balance tradition and modernity as demanded by the older and younger generations or conservatives and liberals. For instance, the United Methodist Church is on the verge of splitting due to disagreement on the ordination of same-sex clergy and officiation of same-sex marriages. For the church to stay competitive in the religious market, some members are advocating for doctrinal modernization on same-sex clergy ordination and officiating in same-sex marriages.⁷³

The Influence of Race and Ethnicity on the Religious Marketplace

There are relatively few studies on race and ethnicity in the field of congregational studies on African American and African immigrant churches.⁷⁴ Some of the few scholars of religion and ethnicity have looked for diversity among smaller congregations in America because a closer look at a congregation founded and pastored by a racial minority revealed little diversity among the membership.⁷⁵

This section of the chapter explores how race and ethnicity influence church selection. Ethnicity and race have influenced the religious marketplace for many blacks and some immigrants because black churches have remained central to the institutional life of African American communities and because of the refusal of blacks to worship and play active roles in predominantly white churches.

⁷³ Sam Hodges, "Diverse Leaders' Group Offers Separation Plan," *United Methodist.org* January 3, 2020, accessed February 29, 2020, <https://www.umnews.org/en/news/diverse-leaders-group-offers-separation-plan>.

⁷⁴ Kevin D. Dougherty, "How Monochromatic Is Church Membership? Racial-Ethnic Diversity in Religious Community," *Sociology of Religion* 64, no. 1 (2003): 66, accessed September 6, 2020, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3712269>.

⁷⁵ "Multiracial congregation may be used to describe a church comprising a variety of racial/ethnic combinations." See Samuel L. Perry, "Racial Diversity, Religion, and Morality: Examining the Moral Views of Multiracial Church Attendees" *Review of Religious Research* 55, no. 2 (June 2013): 356, accessed January 21, 2021, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/43186213>.

Patterns of slavery and white racism (including religious justification for slavery) have made many African Americans skeptical of white churches.⁷⁶ Segregation in worship started during slavery when slaves worshiped in plantations and has continued until this day. Richard Allen founded the African Methodist Episcopal Church after he was separated from whites and kept from sitting in the same seats. He founded the A.M.E. Church with an organizational polity and theology that carried the spirit of the original African spirituality.⁷⁷ Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. is celebrated for his classic statement: “We must face the sad fact that at the eleven o’clock hour on Sunday morning when we stand to sing, we stand in the most segregated hour in America.”⁷⁸ The advocacy in the 1960s for an integrated church has changed but ethnicity indirectly influences the competitive religious market. Lincoln and Mamiya argued that the inconsistencies in the presentation of sermons dehumanized blacks and humanized whites in integrated churches.⁷⁹ Additionally, the American psychologist Jean S. Phinney states:

The view of ethnic identity as the link between ethnicity and psychological outcomes is based on the assumption that ethnicity is a meaningful psychological variable to the extent that it has salience and centrality for the individuals involved. For most Americans of European background, ethnicity is not a salient or important part of their identity, and they can choose what role, if any, it will have for them.... In contrast, ethnicity is salient

⁷⁶ White Americans believed God had a reason for creating people black and the existence of slavery. They believed that being Christian meant being white and free while blackness meant unfree and un-Christian. See Paul Harvey, “‘A Servant of Servants Shall He Be’: The Construction of Race in American Religious Mythologies,” in *Religion and Creation of Race and Ethnicity: An Introduction* (New York: New York, 2003), 15-18.

⁷⁷ Chad Seales, “Churches Should Surprise Nobody. Here is What to do About It,” *UTexas.edu*, May 17, 2018, accessed April 7, 2020, <https://news.utexas.edu/2018/05/17/what-to-do-about-blacks-leaving-white-churches/>.

⁷⁸ Scott Williams, *Church Diversity: Sunday The Most Segregated Day of the Week* (Green Forest, Arkansas: New Leaf Press, 2011), 22.

⁷⁹ C. Eric Lincoln and Lawrence H. Mamiya, *Black Church in The African American Experience* (Durham: North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1990), 47.

in cases where one's group membership is evident, as in the case of ethnic groups of color.⁸⁰

Most whites do not think about race or ethnic problems because they are not affected by them. The lack of black experience and black solidarity among many white people prevents black people from shopping for white-dominated churches. Minority groups join churches of their race because they can easily affiliate with these gatherings.

A second factor influencing church membership among minority groups is race or ethnic acceptability. Race and ethnicity are inseparable from politics in America, from the times of slavery to the civil rights era and even today. Although there is no established state religion in America, the strong relationship between religion and politics in America has influenced many African Americans to join black churches. Many times, preachers and religious groups talk about social issues that remind people of their past and present circumstances. The National Congregations Study found that church segregation and ethnic or racial malleability have prevented the quest for racial reconciliation in American churches from coming to fruition.⁸¹ Lincoln and Mamiya found that blacks most preferred African American churches because they felt comfortable discussing religious and social issues.⁸² Blacks feel more empowered discussing the impact of slavery and the issues about the black community among themselves, rather than

⁸⁰ Mary C. Waters, *Ethnic Options: Choosing Identities in America* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1990), 103, quoted in Jean S. Phinney, "When We Talk about American Ethnic Groups, What Do We Mean?" *American Psychologist* 51, 9 (August 1996): 922, accessed February 21, 2020, <https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.51.9.918>.

⁸¹ More than two-thirds of blacks have either divorced white evangelical churches or attend other black churches alongside. Racial and ethnic malleability in this study means most blacks feel more accepted and confident in churches with an African American majority than churches with a white majority.

⁸² Lincoln and Mamiya, *Black Church in The African American Experience*, 116.

being in churches where members are white and preachers fail to interpret slavery and policing issues using Marxism.⁸³

Previous studies show a strong connection between religious attendance and race.

Sociologist of religion Nancy Ammerman quotes the pastor of a church that serves minorities saying:

Everybody comes [to the church] mainly because of the language barrier first—secondly, because they do not know the Anglo system, or English system, the way the city is run. So a pastor will need some information; if he doesn't have it he will tend to call the Gospel Center and say, "Do you know anybody who can help me with this?"⁸⁴

Ammerman argues that race and ethnicity remain major barriers to church selection in the United States.⁸⁵ Ammerman extended her findings that Hispanic immigrants join Hispanic churches or communities which provide support to them. Thus, it can be inferred from Ammerman's

⁸³ Black congregants in white churches complain about the colorblindness and the silence of the church towards racial injustice especially the shooting of blacks in America, as well as Mr. Trump's comments about Mexican immigrants, his open hostility to N.F.L. players protesting police brutality and his earlier "birther" crusade against President Obama, claiming falsely he was not a United States citizen. See Campbell Robertson, "A Quiet Exodus: Why Black Worshipers Are Leaving White Evangelical Churches," *The New York Times*, March 9, 2018, accessed April 7, 2020, <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/03/09/us/Blacks-evangelical-churches.html>.

⁸⁴ Nancy Tatom Ammerman, *Congregation and Community* (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1997), 313.

⁸⁵ During the interview with Pastor Tessy, she stated that a Caucasian family stopped coming to the church because "her husband said they should stop coming to the church.... The children said it was too intense and that the church service was too intense for them. And, and she said something also that sometimes they feel like foreigners in their own land." Compare this with Ammerman, *Congregation and Community*, 321.

observation that many immigrants join immigrant churches because they want to keep their language and culture.⁸⁶

Sociologists and anthropologists speak of the transcultural and transnational influence of religion in the cultural and environmental adaptation and interaction of people. The African continent has always been on the move. It started when westerners went to Africa through the wanton transportation of Africans against their will to the west and continues with their current voluntary migration to the west. Cross-cultural transplantation has brought many immigrants to their host nation, but many prefer a church that has what Klaus Hock calls “Africancity.”⁸⁷ Many African immigrant religious shoppers prefer attending African churches that, despite the flexibility and adaptation to the host nation’s culture, have an African identity. Churches with African roots mostly consider the cultural demands of their members. In his fieldwork on Christianity in Urhoboland in Nigeria, Joseph Enowusa concluded that churches mostly emphasize the wearing of African attire, the singing of African songs, and the use of African language because people find it difficult to understand songs in different languages.⁸⁸ Also, African attire, songs, and language are more suitable to their environment and experiences. It is

⁸⁶ For instance, during my fieldwork, I observed that most of the songs the RCCG choir sings are either Igbo or Yoruba songs with translations projected for other non-Igbo and non-Yoruba speaking Africans. Also, Pastor Tessy in the interview for this thesis basically said that the RCCG aims at providing a home away from home for African Christians because African Christianity is different from Christianity in America.

⁸⁷ Africancity is any retrospective identity emphasizing African roots. It usually includes political, religious, and cultural perspectives of Africans. See Klaus Hock, “Religion on the Move: Transnational Perspectives. Discourses on Diaspora Religion between Category Formation and the Quest for Religious Identity,” in *Christianity in Africa and the Diaspora: The Appropriation of a Scattered Heritage* (New York: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2008), 243.

⁸⁸ Joseph Enowusa, “*Kirimomo: A Hermeneutical Approach in Gospel Proclamation among the Urhobo of the Niger Delta*,” in *Study of Religion in Southern Africa*, ed. Johannes A. Smit and Pratap P. Kumar (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill NV, 2006), 210.

presumed that language is essential in the “power-in-participation” in the spirit among African Pentecostals. The competitiveness of a church in a religious marketplace is based on the influence the church has over the ethnic or racial groups in the area. Their success is based on socioeconomic status, race, and ethnicity. Immigrant churches diversify their music and use language to serve all their members. African immigrants in America are classified in one category, but within them, their tribes and clans affect the choice of religious affiliation. Additionally, in a competitive religious market, the functional significance of ethnicity and kinship is to mobilize religious resources by religious groups to attract culturally sensitive members.⁸⁹ I do not posit that we can use ethnicity or race to determine one’s religious identity. However, the fluidity and malleability of racial or ethnic identity affect how the potentials of the individual are enhanced in a socio-religious context, even among people of the same race or ethnicity.

In conclusion, this chapter reviewed scholarly literature on the contemporary application of the marketplace theory. After a thorough review of this literature, the chapter suggested scholarship on the religious marketplace must not focus on only the supply side but also the demand side of the curve. The chapter articulated this view because scholarship on the religious marketplace has placed much emphasis on organizational structure, preaching, and outreach programs with little attention to the reaction of members and their lived experiences.

The spread of Pentecostalism across the globe is attributed to the competitiveness of the movement with other Christian groups. Berger argued that in a religiously pluralistic society, where there is competition among religious groups and between non-religious groups, the

⁸⁹ Timothy L. Smith, “Religion and Ethnicity in America,” *American Historical Review*, vol. 83, no. 5 (Dec., 1978): 1159, accessed February 21, 2020.

allegiance of their clients is not taken for granted.⁹⁰ The marketplace theory helps to understand religious pluralism from a macro-sociological perspective. The crafting and branding of a religious product attracts members in a market. This theory is frequently adopted by Pentecostal churches where proximity, ethnicity or race, and the class of members and prospective members determine worship styles and messages preached. This theory is based on the presumption that consumers (members) base their decisions on rational cost-benefit analysis rather than irrational factors. Members join churches that offer them value for their money or supply them with experience that is intense and meaningful. The competitiveness of a church in a religious marketplace is not determined by polity and organizational structures.

I do not wholly affirm or debunk either Berger or Stark and Finke's arguments on the impact of the religious marketplace on religion because the marketplace has helped churches to revitalize and secularize simultaneously. Pentecostals employ both the demand and supply in church organization. Church entrepreneurs use Pentecostal economics—"communal spirituality" and a sense of belonging (the success of a member is a collective effort of the group). Thus, they provide for both the spiritual and physical needs of their members. They employ what Frank Macchia calls a submodern approach to fine-tune historical ritual practices, doctrines, dogma, sermon, liturgy, and sometimes architecture to meet the expectations of adherents.⁹¹

This chapter also found that the literature on the marketplace theory has not focused much on the influence of race or ethnicity on religious shopping and church attendance. It emphasized that racial or ethnic malleability influences the church organization among minority

⁹⁰ Berger, *The Sacred Canopy: Elements of A Sociological Theory of Religion*, 138.

⁹¹ Macchia, "The Struggle for Global Witness: Shifting Paradigms in Pentecostal Theology," 12.

groups.⁹² Although there has been a major improvement towards racial reconciliation, especially in the church, the past still haunts the future. Slavery, church segregation, and recent attitudes about policing have created a dissonance among some black and white Christians. Sometimes white pastors' sermons focused on slavery and Black Lives Matter unintentionally hurt blacks more than they heal. The ethnic or racial identity of the founder of a church influences prospective consumers when they are window shopping for congregations because they want to feel more accepted and connected to people of their race or ethnicity. Churches that play along with market demands grow because they meet consumer needs. The quest for keeping the culture of the ethnic group also prevents many immigrants from joining churches founded by people of different races.

⁹² Churches are revitalized because they are organized to stay active, competitive and attract consumers. Churches modify their liturgy, change instruments, and sing music that attracts their targeted consumers. Churches take doctrinal digression on sociopolitical issues like abortion, LGBTQ, racial discrimination, same-sex marriage which sometimes divides and secularizes the *ekklēsia*. Members argue for and against the acceptance or non-inclusion of people for the church to stay competitive.

CHAPTER THREE, METHODOLOGY

This study involved two Pentecostal churches mostly attended by minority groups. Deliverance Temple Ministries (DTM) is a predominantly African American non-denominational church while the Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG) is mostly made up of African immigrants. Although these churches are smaller in population, they are growing at a faster rate compared to other minority Pentecostal churches. Also, these churches were worth studying because DTM indirectly organizes programs and builds a theology that empowers and attracts the black community while RCCG started as a home church for the growing African immigrant community in Springfield. Their style of worship and religious expression is almost the same, but their understanding of vitality differs. I studied these two churches because their religious expression differs but has a common root.⁹³

This research was primarily ethnographic because the qualitative method is ideal for studies concerned with meaning. Fieldwork and interviews help the researcher to observe the participants in their natural environment.⁹⁴ A researcher does this through participant observation. I was trained by Missouri State University's Protection of Human Subjects Institutional Review Board and received a CITI certificate.⁹⁵ Except for the prayer Conference Line, which DTM holds on Tuesdays and Thursdays and RCCG holds on Fridays, the author

⁹³ The heart they share is their root, i.e., African spirituality and Pentecostal revivalism).

⁹⁴ Participants or members I interviewed during the data collection knew why I participated in their programs.

⁹⁵ See Appendix A. The use of interviews as well as any other research involving human subjects for this project was approved by the Missouri State University Protection of Human Subjects Institutional Review Board (project #2020-372 [approved 11/19/19]; project #2020-372[approved 12/15/19]). All interviewees signed a consent form stating their permission for their interviews to be used for this project.

personally observed all the rituals and other events described in Chapters 4 and 5 of this study.⁹⁶

I also participated in all Sunday services including DTM's Mobile Food Pantry and Bible Studies. Apart from the observations and interviews, I reviewed their constitutions, church manuals, handbooks, brochures, bulletins, prospectuses, information on church websites, and YouTube videos.⁹⁷

From December 2019 to April 2020, over a four-month period, I observed and participated in over eighty events, including Sunday morning services, Wednesday night services, last Friday Holy Ghost Night services, Bible Study, youth ministry services, men's services, women's services, indoor events, and outdoor events. My church observations were recorded in about forty pages of computer-typed notes. Because I was not a member of these churches, I tried to be very neutral in my judgments. I made notes on body movements, language usage, voice intonation, facial expressions, and material dressing. I also recorded some of the services that focused on pneumatology and sermons to differentiate between the various ways participants use their gifts of tongues-speaking.

In addition to these observations, in-depth interview sessions were conducted with founders, pastors, assistant pastors, church mothers, and lay members of DTM and RCCG. Fourteen people were interviewed; six were males and eight were females. The interviews spanned from thirty minutes to an hour and thirty minutes depending on the role the participants

⁹⁶ Both DTM and RCCG hold online prayers. People (members and non-members) call in to a designated number and pray. I heard people speak in tongues on the prayer Conference Line but I did not know their identity because I did not have a tête-à-tête with them. This was an exception because I could not observe the attitudes of these participants. Some DTM participants stated during my interviews that they have heard some members who do not speak in tongues during regular Sunday service speak in tongues on the prayer Conference Line.

⁹⁷ RCCG Springfield, https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCu3BZ2WXgFpAtSHssj3Ykrw?sub_confirmation=1; Deliverance Temple Ministries, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pj9SGvIJFeA>.

played in each of these churches.⁹⁸ The interviews consisted of open and closed-ended questions intended to encourage the interviewee to talk about what was important to him or her (as opposed to me). The author did not purposely select participants, but church leaders coordinated and identified selected participants based on the specific aspect of church activities, roles, and years of membership. I then scheduled appointments with the participants. These interviews were conducted at the church, homes, on the phone, and offices of the participants. The patterns of interview sessions were both structured and unstructured; the sessions began with a history of the interviewee's membership and involvement with the church. From this departure point, further leads were followed as they appeared during the discussion. Although the topic for this thesis was conceived in advance, the interviews helped shape the project, contributing content and themes to the thesis, not vice versa. Seven of the interviewees were with the pastoral staff of the two congregations. Out of a pastoral staff of seven, two were founders of the churches in the area and five were assistant pastors. Two of the interviewees were administrators and the other five were with laypeople.

I followed the advice of management professor Marta B. Calas that organizational research “must move away from ‘charismatic leadership’ and its fixation on ‘the leader,’ to an emphasis on the *social situation* of which the leader is only a part” and focus on the uniqueness of the organization which will help “generate an opportunity to observe the uniqueness of organizational situations/structures emerging from charismatic conditions, which might perform under organizing principles quite *different from those based on bureaucratic models*.”⁹⁹ Thus, I

⁹⁸ See Appendix B for interview questions.

⁹⁹ Marta B. Calas, “Deconstructing Charismatic Leadership: Re-reading Weber From the Darker Side,” in *Post Modern Management Theory*, ed. by Marta B. Calas and Linda Smircich (New York: Routledge Publication, 2018), 355.

studied these churches as organizations because studying the charismatic leader and the church as an organization helps us understand the appearance of control they have over the group. I interviewed two pastors: Bishop David Knox is the founder of DTM while Pastor Dr. Theresa Odun-Ayo is the branch founder of the RCCG, Covenant House, Springfield. Three of the assistant female pastors were members of DTM and one male was an assistant pastor from DTM. There was no female assistant pastor at RCCG, so I only interviewed one of their male assistant pastors. I did not choose which individuals to interview. Instead, the church administrators chose these respondents for me based on their active participation in church programs, willingness, and availability. Some of these pastors were married with children or divorced but had children. The lay interviewees were individuals in the following situations: married with children, single with children, and single without children. DTM participants included people who have attended the church from its inception in 1972. RCCG participants also included members who have attended the church since its formation in 2012. The interviewees comprised both old and new members, as well as members who actively participated in church activities.¹⁰⁰ Most participants have attended the church somewhere between two and six years. In all, the ages of the interviewees ranged from 25 to 70 years.

Reasons for Ethnography

Defining ethnography, anthropologist of religion John A. Saliba writes:

¹⁰⁰ My use of the word “member” throughout this work simply refers to anyone who has openly declared his/her readiness to joining the RCCG or DTM and consistently attends RCCG or DTM. Unlike megachurches that do not keep records of their members due to the large numbers, these two churches have less than two hundred members and mostly contact members who do not attend church programs regularly via text messages and mail letters.

The ethnography approach looks at culture as a cognitive organization of material phenomena and a way of knowing and ordering reality. The task of the researcher is to unearth and understand the logical organizing principles underlying human behavior. This he does by eliciting from his informants the questions they formulate about the world around them as well as the answers they give to them.¹⁰¹

Ethnography is useful in congregational studies or the study of culture because ethnographers are more critical of the notion of objectivity, neutrality, and accuracy in the analyses of values, beliefs, and ideals than other researchers who use quantitative methods and statistics.

In a study of the Trobriand people in New Guinea, Malinowski aptly illustrates that the researcher/ethnographer is struck by many intense and suspenseful sociological features when entering a field that is different from the home environment.¹⁰² Sociologists expanded “anomie” and coined the term “cultural shock” to include the negative experiences of the stranger.¹⁰³ The ethnographer overcomes this “cultural shock” or “anomie” by living with the people and formulating generalized abstract statements with the direct help of a native informant (participant). Malinowski adds that “a better knowledge of and acquaintance with the means of linguistic expression makes the language itself much more significant to one who not only knows how it is used but uses it himself.”¹⁰⁴

¹⁰¹ John A. Saliba, “The New Ethnography and the Study of Religion,” *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 13, no. 2 (June, 1974): 145, accessed January 18, 2020, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/1384376.pdf>.

¹⁰² Bronislaw Malinowski, *Argonauts of the Western Pacific: An Account of Native Enterprise and Adventure in the Archipelagoes of Melanesian New Guinea* (London: Routledge, 1978), 40.

¹⁰³ Dennison Nash, “The Ethnologist as Stranger: An Essay in the Sociology of Knowledge,” *Southwestern Journal of Anthropology* 19, no. 2 (Summer, 1963): 152-153, accessed January 18, 2020, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/3629165.pdf?refreqid=excelsior%3A4a8f38ea19289a95de2b4ec202a26cf.149-167>.

¹⁰⁴ Malinowski, *Argonauts of the Western Pacific*, 356.

Graham Harvey also states that fieldwork is useful in religious studies because it helps us understand what religious people do and say, and how they value their religious activities and helps the ethnographer to critically examine previous work.¹⁰⁵ The personal interpretations of the fieldworker can be avoided when the ethnographer remains open, shows “empathy,” and brackets his or her personal beliefs but questions ever-changing practices, experiences, representations, and knowledge. Douglas Ezzy states:

The focus of a hermeneutically and phenomenologically orientated ethnographic methodology is the way people tell their stories, rather than the accuracy or otherwise of the account. Neither the realities of spiritual experience nor the integral role of social and cultural processes that shape interpretation is ignored. Rather, the focus is on the relationship between experience and interpretation, between symbolically constructed realities and their consequences.¹⁰⁶

A methodological stance underlies Ezzy’s argument for ethnographic research. Thus, the ethnographer can make religious explanations by studying experiences as sociological data.

Although the ethnographer disguises himself or herself and observes the religious experiences of the people, there are limitations to the ethnographer’s participation in the field. James Spickard and Shawn Landres argue that “mere presence does not ensure insight,” while James Clifford also states the ethnographer’s knowledge is “inherently partial.”¹⁰⁷ My insight

¹⁰⁵ Graham Harvey, “Field Research: Participants Observation,” in *The Routledge Handbook of Research Methods in The Study of Religion*, eds. Michael Stausberg and Steven Engler (New York: Taylor & Francis Group, 2011), 218.

¹⁰⁶ Douglas Ezzy, “Religious Ethnography: Practicing the Witch’s Craft,” in *Researching Paganisms*, eds. Jenny Blain, Douglas Ezzy, and Graham Harvey (Lanham, California: Alta Mira Press, 2004), 124.

¹⁰⁷ See James V. Spickard and J. Shawn Landres, “Introduction: Whither Ethnography? Transforming the Social-Scientific Study of Religion,” in *Personal Knowledge and Beyond: Reshaping the Ethnography of Religion*, eds. James V. Spickard, J. Shawn Landres, and Meredith B. McGuire (New York: New York University, 2002), 4. James Clifford, “Introduction: Partial Truths,” in *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*, ed. James Clifford and George E. Marcus (Berkeley, CA: University of California, 1986), 7.

and interest in my research were sometimes affected when some participants realized I was an ethnographer, not a member. It was very frustrating to understand their religious experiences or lived religion because some lay members negotiated or deflected the questions with their responses. Some of the assistant pastors assumed that shouting and moaning in black Pentecostalism is a Holy Spirit manifestation. Hence, any such expression must be taken as an encounter with God. Some lay members frequently answered by dodging the question and with humble claims that “I am not a good example,” or “I cannot tell you because you still worship with us.” Some only opened up when I resisted their reluctance by assuring them of the confidentiality of their responses, although the *modus operandi* was read to them before the interview started. As an ethnographer, I did not help them understand their religious experiences but rather focused on how these participants organize and use the religious experiences that define and make them distinct from Pentecostals and other ethnic groups. Because I was accepted by some of the interviewees as an insider, I avoided the imposition of my religious experiences in the churches I studied. Instead, I focused on knowing and understanding their religious experiences.

My Relationship with DTM and RCCG

I am not a complete outsider to the two religious groups I studied, although I am not a member of either of the groups.¹⁰⁸ I do not state this to clear the doubt of the reader or disclose the church’s doctrines and practices. Rather, it will help my readers understand, appreciate, and interpret the subsequent chapters since my personal experience and ethnicity affected my

¹⁰⁸ Outsider in this context means someone who has not openly declared his membership and affirmation to the churches in this project.

interpretation. John Wesley's Methodism and an African understanding of the physical and supernatural world have influenced my religious experience. I was saved, baptized, and confirmed in the Methodist Church in my early teen years. Because glossolalia has been accepted in the Methodist Church, Ghana, I received Holy Spirit baptism in my late teen years with evidence of speaking in tongues. I consider myself an African Christian because living in the West (America) and studying these two churches, I have realized that there is so much more vibrancy and spiritual attribution in African Pentecostal churches than in black Pentecostal churches.

Despite my Methodist and Pentecostal background, I was an outsider for the five months I attended these churches while working on this project. Neither my identity as an African immigrant Christian who should have joined the RCCG for a host culture assimilation nor my blackness to a black Pentecostal church (DTM) affected my position as an ethnographer.¹⁰⁹ I contend that religious experience can be studied from an outsider's perspective because the outsider may see things that the insider ignores. My experience as a Ghanaian makes me an insider and a good fit to study an African immigrant Pentecostal church. Also, my black skin color draws me closer to blacks (African Americans) for the fieldwork because people are more open to talking about their religious experiences to an insider. I was not privy to a lot of information when the members realized that I was an outsider because I did not sign up to be a member of either of the churches. Although the churches for this study emphasize more of what Max Weber called routinized charisma, the thesis focused on the church as an organization in

¹⁰⁹ Pastor Tessa reached out to me countless times before this project to join the church. She organizes a dinner, meet and greet for new international students and uses that as an opportunity to proselytize them to join the church. She even stated during her interview that the church is basically created to serve the sub-Saharan African immigrant community in their host nation.

which the founder and pastor was still a part of the congregation. To avoid leadership fixation, the survey studied these churches as organizations rather than studying the charismatic pastor and founder. Like sociologist Margaret Poloma, the leading Pentecostal scholar on the Assemblies of God, I hope to be a “sympathetic (although hopefully not naïve) storyteller.”¹¹⁰ The main body of this thesis compares two churches (RCCG and DTM). The next sections of this chapter give the historical account of RCCG and DTM.

The Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG)

Reverend Josiah Olufemi Akindayomi was born on July 5, 1909, into the family of Eleyinmi and Olakuo-Akindolie. Before his conversion to Christianity, Josiah was called Olufemi Akindolie until his baptism when Christian missionaries gave him the name “Josiah.” He was not initiated into the worship of the *Ogun* Deity, the *Orisha*, because the Yorubas (just like the Akans of Ghana) believe that no one shows the child where God is.¹¹¹ Rather, children grow to accept that God is in the skies and start worshipping him. They believe that the child grows to associate God’s inhabitation with the skies. Akindayomi’s love for healing was in-born. Though there are no records of his apprenticeship, he was very popular because he was very

¹¹⁰ Margaret Poloma, *The Assemblies of God at the Crossroads: Charisma and Institutional Dilemmas* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1989), xx.

¹¹¹ *Orisha* means god of Iron and War. See J. D. Y. Peel, *Religious Encounter and the Making of the Yoruba* (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2000), 107-109.

successful and professional at healing, so much so that he achieved the title *babalowo*.¹¹²

Reverend Josiah Olufemi Akindayomi converted to Christianity from *Ogun* worship because of his quest of seeking formal education and deeper spirituality.¹¹³ He was baptized into the Church Missionary Society (CMS) in 1927.¹¹⁴ He joined the Eternal Sacred Order of Cherubim and Seraphim movement, an *Aladura* movement in 1931, where he rose to the rank of an apostle after a loss in a spiritual power struggle with an *Aladura* prophetess.¹¹⁵ Tijani's account in Ukah's *The Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG), Nigeria: Local Identities and Global Processes in African Pentecostalism* states:

Josiah's encounter with an elderly C & S prophetess who came to mediate in a dispute involving Josiah and one of his debtors. Josiah felt aggrieved at the old woman's

¹¹² *Ogun* worship is a Traditional African worship by the people of Yoruba in Nigeria. *Babalawo*, or *onise-ogun*, is a highly mobile and cosmopolitan figure whose art, knowledge, expertise, and influence make a trans-local personality. Before an individual becomes a healer or medicine-man (*babalawo*) in the Yoruba tradition, he is required to receive several months or years of apprenticeship to be a professional. The Yoruba people give this title to an individual when he manifests wisdom or knowledge about secrets or mysteries. See J. D. Y. Peel, "The Pastor and the 'Babalawo': The Interaction of Religions in Nineteenth-Century Yorubaland," *Journal of the International African Institute* 60, no. 3 (1990): 342, accessed December 29, 2019 via JSTOR.

¹¹³ In an interview, Josiah's wife, Esther Akindayomi said, "Josiah left the Church Missionaries Society because of its sunbaked spirituality and over reliance on formal worship. When Josiah joined the Eternal Sacred Order of Cherubim and Seraphim, he said, 'I was truly happy that at last I had found the right place to worship my God.'" See *Redemption Light Magazine* 6, no. 1 (Feb. 2001): 6-9; Moses A. Adekola, *The Redeemed Christian Church of God: A Study of an Indigenous Pentecostal Church in Nigeria* (Ile-Ife, Nigeria: Obafemi Awolowo University, 1989), 56; Asonzeh Franklin-Kennedy Ukah, *The Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG), Nigeria: Local Identities and Global Processes in African Pentecostalism* (Bayreuth, Germany: Bayreuth University, 2003), 45-47.

¹¹⁴ Rufus Ade, "RCCG: Brief History," YouTube.com, July 9, 2007, accessed January 4, 2020, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oA4Xha-WSHc>.

¹¹⁵ Akindayomi was proselytized into the Eternal Sacred Order of Cherubim and Seraphim, an early *Aladura* prayer movement in West Africa after the First World War which provided spiritual support to distressed people through prayers, miracles and healing, use of indigenous symbols (oil and objects), and liturgy. See Ogbu Kalu, *African Pentecostalism: An Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 24; Ukah, *The Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG), Nigeria*, 1.

unsolicited arbitration and threatened her with a “mystical” poisonous snake. Josiah consequently put a hex on this elderly woman: through some powerful charms and invocations, he sent this poisonous snake to kill the prophetess in her home. But after some days and there was no news of the death of the prophetess, Josiah felt both disappointed and awed. Consequently, he went to the woman to enquire about what powers she had employed in overcoming his mystically powerful poisonous snake. This encounter convinced him of the power of C & S prophets and prophetesses. Thereafter, he decided to join the Cherubim & Seraphim mission under the leadership of the said prophetess in Ondo Town.¹¹⁶

It can be seen from Tijani’s account that despite converting to Christianity, Josiah Akindayomi still held his belief in *Ogun* worship and personal deities. I use the word “dual-religiosity” to expound on the different religious systems among many Africans especially Sub-Saharan Africans. Many Christians and Muslims, despite professing their faith in either Christianity or Islam, believe and worship personal or titular deities. They participate in family and communal ceremonies that involve venerating lesser deities and their ancestors. Fasting, healing, prayers, visions, and trances that are very pivotal in the RCCG were Cherubim and Seraphim practices that Akindayomi adopted into his church.¹¹⁷

After his call into fulltime ministry, Rev. Akindayomi renounced all his wealth including his room in his father’s house, and preached the good news several miles away from Ondo to

¹¹⁶ As Ukah, *The Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG), Nigeria*, 46; Israel O. Olofinjana, *20 Pentecostal Pioneers in Nigeria: Their Lives, Their Legacies* (Bloomington, Indiana: Xlibris, 2011), 74.

¹¹⁷ Rotimi Omotoye, “Nigerian Church Founder of a Pentecostal Church: Pastor Josiah Olufemi Akindayomi of the Redeemed Christian Church of God,” Hestories.info, June 19, 2011, accessed January 5, 2020, <https://hestories.info/nigerian-church-founder.html>.

many communities in Nigeria.¹¹⁸ He labored tirelessly to attain the religious and prophetic status that was recognized by all and sundry. Josiah soon established his independent identity as a prophet speaking the mind of God, seeing visions, healing people from all sorts of diseases, and delivering the oppressed from demonic attacks. These prophetic and apostolic achievements renewed his status and acceptance as a peripheral *babalawo* and elevated him to the central prophetic status of a *woli*. Rev. Akindayomi disagreed with the very church that gave him prominence on liturgy, biblical interpretation, spiritual growth, and supported his effort to revive his reputation and elevate his *babalawo* to central *woli* (prophet) and apostolic status. There are two accounts about Rev. Akindayomi's ex-communication from the Eternal Sacred Order of Cherubim and Seraphim (C & S), Omotoye's "sheep stealing" explanation, and Ukah's "gravesite visitation" account.¹¹⁹ Although these accounts are not dated, there is a likelihood that

¹¹⁸ Josiah Akindayomi did not buy all the things Esther Akindayomi's family required of him for their wedding because he was not a man of means. Esther was from a very wealthy family. Despite praying for barren women to conceive, Akindayomi did not have children four years into their marriage. It was a case of "physician heal thyself." There are two contradictory accounts about Josiah's migration from Ondo to Ile-Ife. One account says Josiah left Ondo because he had an Abrahamic covenant with God. Just as in Abraham's covenant with God in Genesis 12, Josiah was also instructed by God to leave Ondo for where he had commanded, Ile-Ife. RCCG members attribute the global spread of the church to Pa Akindayomi's obedience to God. On the one hand, another account posits that Josiah left Ondo in search of prophetic niche because he had no honor in his birthplace. Redeemed Christian Church of God @ 50 Magazine, 9 as cited in Ukah, *The Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG), Nigeria*, 49-54.

¹¹⁹ The Cherubim and Seraphim leaders accused Akindayomi of anti-church activities including "sheep stealing" (organizing programs outside the church with the motive of winning the love and trust of the people and exhibiting spiritual giftings that no leader had). Another account posits that Rev. Akindayomi left C & S because instead of praying to God and reading the Bible, leaders of the church visited the gravesite of Prophet Moses Orimolade Tunolase, the founder of the Cherubim and Seraphim church at Ojokoro cemetery to pray and call on him to settle the disagreement within the church. Akindayomi described this practice as incompatible with Christianity. In addition to the gravesite disagreement was Akindayomi's motive of developing the Ogo Oluwa group into a church. This group was also excommunicated from the C & S for doctrinal reasons. See Oyotome, *Nigerian Church Founder of a Pentecostal Church*, 8. Ukah, *The Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG), Nigeria*, 58.

Josiah's criticism of the syncretistic practices by the leaders of the C & S led to his final ex-communication from the C & S.

The RCCG was established in 1952 in Lagos, Nigeria by Reverend Josiah Olufemi Akindayomi from an encounter he had with God in a dream. Like many Pentecostal and Charismatic churches that start in classrooms, canteens, parks, and storefronts, the RCCG started as a house fellowship with around twelve members who followed Rev. Akindayomi when he left the Cherubim and Seraphim Church. The total number of people that joined Rev. Akindayomi to start the RCCG is questionable because accounts of its origins give different numbers. Omotoye states that twelve people followed Rev. Akindayomi when he parted ways with the Cherubim and Seraphim church. Even though it is believed that the selection of the twelve was symbolic of Akindayomi's prophethood and resemblance to Jesus, Omotoye argues that the number twelve could have been intentional or coincidence because Akindayomi never attributed the twelve to Jesus and his disciples.¹²⁰ Pastor Kolawole Babatunde's paper, "Genesis: Origin of the Redeemed Christian Church of God," gave an account of the RCCG as an independent Pentecostal church with no association with the Cherubim and Seraphim. This account describes the origin of the church starting with Rev. Akindayomi, his wife Esther, three members who already knew the power Akindayomi possessed, and nine other members who joined the fellowship.¹²¹ The fellowship was called *Egbe Ogo Oluwa* (the Glory God Fellowship Society) on Willoughby Street, Ebute-Metta in Lagos, Nigeria. Even though the church condemned many

¹²⁰ I think there was some "religious coloration" on the use of "twelve." "Twelve" was adopted by RCCG leaders and laity to connect the beginning of the church to Jesus' call of the twelve core disciples; See Omotoye, *Nigerian Church Founder of a Pentecostal Church*, 6.

¹²¹ Kolawole Babatunde, "Genesis: Origin of the Redeemed Christian Church of God," in *The Trees Clap Their Hands: A Photo Book on the Redemption Camp at the Redeemed Christian Church of God*, edited by Olusegun Bankole (Lagos, Nigeria: El-Shalom Publishers, 1999), 20.

public spaces like hotels, stadia, cinemas, school halls, and nightclubs as inhabitants for sinners, it has compromised its decision because most of its branches, especially in Europe and North America, meet at abandoned nightclubs, stores, and hotel conference rooms.¹²² RCCG and other neo-Pentecostal churches have also adopted lighting systems and decorations in nightclubs and hotels to entice their members and host multiple programs in stadia and other public places. The name of the church changed from its initial *Egbe Ogo Oluwa* to Church of Glory of God, *IjoIrapada* (Redeemed Church) in 1952 and Redeemed Apostolic Church (RAC) in 1954.

Rev. Akindayomi's use of oil, the ritual of healing, prophecies, ministry, and charisma were a carryover from the Cherubim and Seraphim, especially from Pastor Orimolade, who mentored him when he joined the C & S. It affiliated locally with churches like the Apostolic Church in Nigeria, the Four-Square Gospel Church, the Assemblies of God, and the Faith Tabernacle Church (FTC). The RCCG's use and printing of books, pamphlets, and tracts were adopted from the Faith Tabernacle Church when the church was affiliated with it, while the RCCG adopted the Assemblies of God Sunday School books to reconstruct its new identity from the Aladura root. To be recognized internationally and distinguish itself from African Initiated and Independent Churches, including the Aladura, Churches of the Spirit, and Zionists, Rev. Akindayomi affiliated the RCCG with the Apostolic Faith Mission of South Africa (AFM). A classical Pentecostal church, the AFM was founded in 1908 by two North American Pentecostal missionaries, John G. Lake and Thomas Hezmalhalch.¹²³

¹²² Olufunke Adeboye, "Pentecostal Challenges in Africa and Latin America: A Comparative Focus on Nigeria and Brazil," *Afrika Zamani*, no. 11 & 12 (2003-2004): 148, accessed January 3, 2020. <https://www.codesria.org/spip.php?article679&lang=en>.

¹²³ Allan Anderson, *An Introduction to Pentecostalism: Global Charismatic Christianity* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 106; Ukah, *The Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG), Nigeria*, 69.

Western influence on African Christianity was also manifested in the dressing of the African Pentecostal clergy. Judith A. Byfield's paper, "Unwrapping' Nationalism: Dress, Gender, and Nationalist Discourse in Colonial Lagos," argues that the public display of European dress identified religious affiliation to western culture.¹²⁴ The addition of indigenous African practices like belief in witchcraft, divination, ancestral rituals, items symbolizing protection and power, and the wearing of distinctive white or red robes uniforms differentiated the AIC's from Western or classical Pentecostal churches. Rev. Akindayomi's new religious identification propelled him to dress in a Western-style suit because he wanted to disassociate himself from *Aladura* white robes.

The motto of the Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG) is "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, today, and forever." It is derived from Hebrews 13:8.¹²⁵ The church grew from a house fellowship to thirty-nine branches in the southwest of Nigeria. Members of the RCCG believe that the global spread of the church is attributable to the "covenant" Rev. Akindayomi had with God, which has been developed by Dr. Enoch Adeboye.¹²⁶

¹²⁴ Judith A. Byfield, "'Unwrapping' Nationalism: Dress, Gender, and Nationalist Discourse in Colonial Lagos," *African Humanities, Occasional Publication*, no. 30 (Boston University African Center, 2000) 3.

¹²⁵ Redeemed Christian Church of God, Who We Are, Rccg.org, accessed December 30, 2019, <http://rccg.org/who-we-are/mission-and-vision/>.

¹²⁶ Although Rev. Akindayomi could neither read nor write, the spirit of God imparted him to document the covenant which concerned the spread of the church to all nations on earth. This covenant included God's conditional promise to meet the needs of the members if they faithfully obeyed the Words of God. See Redeemed Christian Church of God, Who We Are, Rccg.org, accessed December 30, 2019, <http://rccg.org/who-we-are/mission-and-vision/>.

Rev. Dr. Enoch Adeboye and the Global Spread of the RCCG

Rev. Akindayomi did not officially appoint Dr. Enoch Adejare Adeboye, a professor of Mathematics at the University of Lagos, as his successor before his death on November 2, 1980.¹²⁷ Although there are no written accounts about this succession plan, oral accounts assume that Rev. Dr. Adeboye had to consolidate his acceptance as the General Overseer (GO) of the RCCG by including the pastors and other leaders who were tussling and criticizing his appointment as the GO because he was a young, part-time pastor, new in the church, and had little or no knowledge about church leadership and politics. Baba Adeboye was baptized by immersion in 1973 at the RCCG.¹²⁸ His intellectual prowess, enthusiasm, and devotion to the church led to his ordination as a deacon and appointment as the translator for Rev. Akindayomi. Rev. Adeboye was ordained a pastor on September 14, 1975 and given a church branch in 1979. Even though the charismatic leadership of Josiah drew members to the church, many people joined the church due to ecstatic experiences, prophecy, and the healing of Josiah, which were adaptations from Josiah's *Aladura* background. These characteristics were continued by Rev. Enoch Adeboye. This confirms Fuller Seminary historian Cecil Robeck's argument that Pentecostalism has demonstrated a host of "indigenous entries" including "Oneness Pentecostalism," "World Faith Pentecostalism," "Feminist Pentecostalism," and even "Gay

¹²⁷ Pastor J. I. Olukowajo states that an hour before his death, Rev. Akindayomi had written the Rev. Dr. Adeboye's name in the Bible and warned that the wrath of the Lord shall come against anyone who was against his choice of the successor. Another account states that a spirit of discernment led Rev. Akindayomi to identify Rev. Dr. E. A. Adeboye as his successor the day he stepped foot in the church and the day of his (Rev. Adeboye's) ordination as a pastor. See J. I. Olukowajo, "Do Not Forget the Days of Small Beginnings," in *The Trees Clap Their Hands: A Photo Book on the Redemption Camp at the Redeemed Christian Church of God*, ed. Olusegun Bankole (Lagos: El-Shalom Publishers, 1999), 146.

¹²⁸ *Baba* means papa or father.

Pentecostalism.”¹²⁹ The importation of African spirituality from African initiated churches like *Aladura*, whose members founded Pentecostal churches around the continent after receiving Holy Spirit baptism, also denotes how the movement embraced other foreign ideas.

The global spread of RCCG is attributable to Adeboye’s leadership. Expressions of this leadership include healing, prophecy, and preaching in English. Adeboye’s leadership attracted people from all walks of life including businessmen and the educated class. He ordained many university graduates as pastors. His intellectual acumen led to a doctrinal and administrative transformation of the church. These doctrinal and cultural shifts were manifested in the emphasis Adeboye put on programs like the Holy Ghost Service (prayer services held the last Friday night of every month, which is an integral practice of the church globally), increased use of anointing oil, and clothes. Adeboye’s charismatic routinization in the RCCG is also seen in his association of the RCCG with the economy and politics of Nigeria and the global world. His charisma is also seen in other branches due to the adoption of programs like twenty-one days fasting, and the adoption of the theme of the year without questioning.¹³⁰ Adeboye, like Akindayomi, has created a divine authority among his members. This divine authority makes many members accept in

¹²⁹ Cecil Robeck M. Jr., “Toward our Healing Our Divisions: Reflecting on Pentecostal Diversity and Common Witness,” The 28th Annual Meeting of The Society for Pentecostal Studies, March 11-13, 1999.

¹³⁰ The yearly theme is a chosen scripture pastors preach about instructively throughout the year. In most cases, weekly and monthly preaching are carefully selected and crafted to align with the yearly theme. Pentecostals believe that this the yearly theme is not selected by the pastor but by the direction of the Holy Spirit. Pastor Adeboye said the theme for 2020 is “The Year of Joy.” He crafted his December 31, 2019 sermon around this theme. He titled the sermon “The Battle is Not Yours,” while the monthly Holy Ghost service for 2020 is titled “Let There Be Light.” See RCCG Pastor E. A. Adeboye Sermon 2019-2020 Crossover Service: The Battle is Not Yours, December 31, 2019, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AJNqjV6vVwQ>; RCCG Grace Assembly Dubai TV, Pastor E. A. Adeboye Sermon @ RCCG January 2020 Holy Ghost Service, January 3, 2020, accessed July 1, 2020, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=58v2Q7r74PQ>. Pastor Tessy said the Springfield branch will follow the theme chosen by Papa Adeboye with some changes to selected scripture to preach on.

totality every word and direction Rev. Dr. Adeboye gives to the church. Max Weber calls this divine authority the “routinization of charisma.” Weber argues that leaders use divine will to ascertain their authority.¹³¹ In Weber’s words:

Charisma literally means “gift of grace.” Charisma characterizes self-appointed leaders followed by those who are in distress and who need to follow the leader because they believe him to be extraordinarily qualified.¹³²

Gerth and Mills argued that charismatic routinization includes charisma legitimatization after the demise of a leader for his or her successors. They argued that routinized charisma can be legitimized for successors to ride on the goodwill of their predecessors. On the one hand, leaders who are rejected upon succession can legitimize their leadership through other charismatic power.¹³³ Gerth and Mills suggest that leadership legitimization may bring about internal resistance of the “objectified charisma” after the demise of the predecessor (charisma).¹³⁴

Although Adeboye was heckled, he consolidated his power and walked his way into the hearts of his contenders with his extraordinary leadership skills.¹³⁵ He maintained but modified the routinized administration structure created by their charismatic founder, Akindayomi.¹³⁶ After

¹³¹ H. H. Gerth and C. Wright Mill, *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1958), 251.

¹³² *Ibid.*, 52.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, 258-263.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, 262.

¹³⁵ Adeboye was not accepted as an objectified successor because he was a new member. Some challenged his legitimacy because they believed his power was not guaranteed by Rev. Akindayomi and his administrative style differed from his forerunner. See Gerth and Mills, *From Max Weber*, 262-3.

¹³⁶ Stark and Bainbridge also expounded on the sociological importance of charisma in church formation and administration to include any special and unusual qualities or skills of a founder that attracts and convince people to accept the truth in their message and follow them. See Rodney Stark and William Sims Bainbridge, *The Future of Religion: Secularization, Revival, and Cult Formation* (Los Angeles, California: University of California Press, 1985), 356-357.

the acceptance of Adeboye as the successor of RCCG, he built many branches all over the world. African immigrant members started branches in North America.

Redeemed Christian Church of God, Springfield

The Redeemed Christian Church of God in Springfield is part of the Redeemed Christian Church of God, North America. The church is headed by Pastor Dr. Theresa Odun-Ayo, who is the parish pastor for the Covenant House, RCCG in Springfield, Missouri.¹³⁷ The church is under the Indiana zone. The church started on April 20, 2012, at the Abbey Apartment Homes on 1530 East Erie Street, Springfield, Missouri but the state required registration was completed in August of the same year.¹³⁸

Pastor Dr. Tessy has a doctoral degree in Electrical Engineering from Missouri University of Science and Technology in Rolla and is an adjunct faculty member at Missouri State University. The pastor cum professor is receiving a theological education at the Assemblies of God Theological Seminary at the Evangel University campus. The Assemblies of God church in Rolla donated an amount of \$5,000 to Pastor Dr. Tessy as seed money to start the church.¹³⁹

¹³⁷ Dr. Tessy chose RCCG because “its vision is to have a church within 10 minutes of walk ... RCCG is much more progressive, particularly being a woman in church planting and allowing women to be in the pulpit, planting and preaching.... When a zonal pastor or parish pastor identifies somebody who they can use to plant a church... there is, I think, some kind allocation money, which we didn’t get when we started. There’s some kind of support that the RCCG gives to that new church for them to start the church plant. We did not get it in my own case. We just started out.”

¹³⁸ Rccg, Springfield, “The Redeemed Christian Church of God (Covenant House),” [Rccgspringfield.org](https://rccgspringfield.org/), last modified November 27, 2019, accessed January 21, 2020, <https://rccgspringfield.org/>.

¹³⁹ Steven Pokin, “A church in Springfield for Congolese refugees,” *News-leader.com*, February 4, 2017, accessed January 20, 2020, <https://www.newsleader.com/story/news/local/ozarks/2017/02/05/church-springfield-congolese-refugees/97354722/>.

Pastor Tessy was a member of First Assembly of God, Rolla, so she pulled ten members from the Assemblies of God church to help start the RCCG. Another ten people from the Springfield area joined the church. Although these people worshipped with Pastor Tessy, they did not consider themselves members of the RCCG because it was just a fellowship. The first members of the church were Pastor Tessy and her son.

RCCG Springfield started as a Saturday morning church and Sunday evening prayer meeting at the theater in the Abbey Apartments. As Pastor Tessy was getting ready for work, God asked her, “You are going about your own business, what about mine?” She asked God what he would have her do? And he said, “Go on a forty-day prayer and fasting,” Tessy recalls, adding, “I think at that point God was just trying to get my attention to be able to speak to me as to what he wanted me to do. So it was during the process of that prayer and fasting that the Lord started to lead me to things that I needed to purchase. Now this was coming out of pocket.... I think I went to Springfield Music and I saw this nice sound system some people were trying to sell it for cheap.... I was just lying down praying in my room . . . and the Lord said, ‘Go talk to management about using the movie theater.’ And so I’m like, ‘No, they wouldn’t let a Christian organization, this is a secular place.’ And the Lord says, ‘Just obey,’ and I went and they allowed me. In fact, there was no argument. She’s like, ‘Oh yeah, all you need to do is pay \$25 every time you use it.’ So we started from there. And then . . . as a professor I have interaction with students here. So even up ‘til now you will see a whole lot of students still come to the church.... I just invited, the people I knew at that time were the students that I interacted with on the Missouri State campus.... So what we usually do is, because I play the keyboard, so I would do the worship and just about everything, preach the sermon, and then make sure that there is a small meal for everybody to partake in at the end of every service. So basically, we started,

maybe two people, three people, six, and it just kept increasing until, when we did our first-year anniversary, there were about, maybe thirty-two people... and the room only holds about thirty, so at that point we knew that we had to move from there. Plus, with more and more people coming . . . the management was starting to ask us to kind of tone these things down a little bit, so we started to look for a place to move to.... After a year of meeting in the Abbey, we moved to Kearney.’” On 1410 East Kearney Street, the church rented one storefront with thirty-two members, but extended their rent to three stores when membership escalated from thirty-two to seventy.

RCCG reached out to African immigrants through college international student orientation, an African store, and word of mouth invitations. As Pastor Tessy explained, “Because I am a professor here, I’m always on the lookout for who are the new students that are coming.... I was once an international student. I know how it feels to be here and not having anything to do. So I see that as one of my outreach.... I would feel bad to be sitting here in this office and there is somebody from Africa that has no clue where to go, what to do, or who to connect with. And so what I usually do, I go to the orientation. It’s two pronged: One, I want to make sure that these students feel welcome and, two, if they need a place of worship, here we are.” Impact Fellowship also contributed to the spike in the numbers.¹⁴⁰ One woman joined because she read about a Nigerian speaking at a commencement program at Ozark Technical College. She wanted a Nigerian church to worship at. Some other members joined after reading about our outreach to the Congolese refugee community in Springfield in the newspaper. RCCG has provided help and made the host city (Springfield) a safe haven for many immigrants. Pastor

¹⁴⁰ Impact Fellowship is an outreach program held every Thursday at 5:30 pm at the Plaster Student Union at M. S. U., campus.

Tessy added that not all the members of the church were members of the RCGG or Pentecostals before crossing the Atlantic. People joined because they wanted to be part of something familiar to them.¹⁴¹ The church started as host church for African immigrants in Springfield. Recalling this time, Pastor Tessy said, “I realized that there were people, students from Africa who come to Springfield and they fall out of faith because they are not connecting. There are people who are very strong in their faith from where they come from in Nigeria or wherever in Africa, and when they get here they cannot fully integrate into the American church There are people who said, ‘I would love to be part of the choir. I am told to go and bring an audition tape. I don’t know how to do that,’” adding, “When you want to join a choir in Africa, you just sing a song and they say join.... When I saw that need, I’m like ‘Okay, Lord what do you want me to do?’ So this is where the calling comes from. I see a need and it’s almost like God placed me in the midst of that need to fill that need.”¹⁴²

The church has relocated from the 1410 East Kearney to 1349 W. Meadowmere Street on November 1, 2020. Although members did not move until they had completed their building project, the move was necessary as the owners of the property did not want them to extend their lease. Pastor Tessy said, “Anytime we relocated, it affected their finances and their attendance

¹⁴¹ By familiarity, she meant culture. Most Africans choose cultural malleability over denominational differences when they come to America. Differences in vitality prevent some African Pentecostals and charismatics from joining American churches, so the church’s main objective is to provide support to Africans. During my interview Pastor Tessy seemed to say that denominational boundaries blur after Nigerians and some Africans cross the Atlantic, so that Anglicans, Methodists, and others might feel comfortable worshipping together. This thesis has already discussed the influence of ethnic or racial malleability on church growth in the previous chapter. Nancy Tatom Ammerman in her study of Hispanic immigrant churches also found that most immigrant join immigrant churches because they want to keep their culture and language. See Nancy Tatom Ammerman, *Congregation and Community* (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1997), 321.

¹⁴² Interview with Pastor Dr. Tessy January 24, 2020.

because it takes time for members to adjust to the change. The training of pastors is in levels. A prospective pastor is first appointed as a deacon or deaconess. If he/she fulfills all the requirements, he/she is promoted to the assistant pastor position before the ordination as a full pastor. A parish pastor is a full pastor. He is then promoted to the zonal pastor, to district, and then regional level. The prospective pastor initially enrolls for a one-year School of Discipleship training at the parish level. The Redeemer Leaders Institute (RLI) organizes this training for prospective pastors, leaders, and other classes for ordained pastors. The subsequent section of this chapter gives a historical narrative of Deliverance Temple Ministries (DTM).

Deliverance Temple Ministries (DTM)

Deliverance Temple Ministries (DTM) is among the most popular black congregations in Springfield. The founder of DTM, Bishop David Knox Jr., was born on April 30, 1934, in Newport, Arkansas, to David and Alberta Knox. Young David bore the names of his father. His parents were both farmers and religious.¹⁴³ The Knox family moved to Springfield from Malvern, Arkansas in 1936 in search of jobs and a better life. They lived at 1921 North Washington Avenue, right on the corner of Washington and Garfield. They were very staunch members of Timmons Temple, Church of God in Christ. David got saved in 1949 at the age of fifteen.¹⁴⁴ Knox received his sanctification and baptism of the Holy Spirit and started his

¹⁴³ Mr. and Mrs. Knox stopped farming when they moved from Arkansas to Springfield. Mr. Knox worked for the Assemblies of God press.

¹⁴⁴ Speaking of his life before getting saved, David said “[I] have been in church all my life but never made a real commitment.... You had to go down front and you would pray. And if you was emotional enough, they say, well this is fine. You finally made it over. But I was getting discouraged because I wasn’t very emotional. But it helped me and I learned better later on. And I forgive all my people that kicked me out so long, but it was good for me.” See Broc Barton, “Interview with Pastor David Knox Final Cut,” April 22, 2014, accessed February 29, 2020, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZO2th1bHxZI>.

ministry at the age of seventeen in Timmons Temple.

As an adult, Knox was very hardworking because he came from a working-class family.¹⁴⁵ While in high school, he served as a mail boy for the Assemblies of God Church while his father worked in their press. He also worked at Nash Automobile. He met his wife, Mrs. Bobbie Knox, at a COGIC program in Kansas City in 1952 while he was a junior in high school. David Knox was delegated by Timmons Temple to the church meeting. At the meeting, he saw Bobbie and they became friends. Bobbie was raised in a very strong Christian home. Her pastor was a COGIC bishop in Kansas City. She was very prayerful and spiritual. David and Bobbie became friends and visited each other until David finally relocated to Kansas City. After graduating from Lincoln High School in 1952, Knox moved to Kansas City, Missouri in 1953 or 1954. Lincoln was the only black school in Springfield, but the school system was integrated in 1953. He moved to Kansas City because, as other blacks discovered, Kansas City was culturally diverse and had more job opportunities for minorities than Springfield.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁵ “One of the things that really kind of stayed with me and impressed me a great deal was the fact that we would go, leave our house, we were about three blocks, three or four blocks from Commercial Street, and we would go up to Chase Street, that was one block down from Commercial, and we would walk along the tracks, and we would find buggies that had been abandoned, and we would take the wheels and the axel off of the buggy, the baby buggy, and we would take it back home, and we would start a project on it. We didn’t have a lot of money so I couldn’t buy a wagon, so we made us a car. We would take the axels and the two wheels of the buggy and put them in the front, put a two by four on that, and make a cross, and then we would have a seat or another board on the back, and we steer with our feet. And of course, being boys, we just, we had a lot of imagination, we would go all over the country in our imaginary automobile.... We would go to the park, Silver Springs Park, and this is where people in the black community would go. There were other parks that were closer to us, like the park, Grant Beach, and there was another park on the north side, but we were not allowed to go to those parks so we’d go to Silver Springs, and we would talk to our friends, and just enjoy ourselves.” See Missouri State University Libraries, “Rt. 66: Bishop David Knox Jr., Oct. 3, 2015,” YouTube.com, January 11, 2016, accessed March 27, 2020, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t0a9B2Fa-PY&t=1369s>.

¹⁴⁶ “The problem with Springfield was with minority people, you had a problem finding ample opportunities for jobs.” See Barton, “Interview with Pastor David Knox Final Cut.”

COGIC Exit and the Birth of Deliverance Temple Ministries

Knox started preaching as a young adult and had earlier sought admission into Central Bible College which was owned and managed by the Assemblies of God Church, but he was denied admission on racial grounds.¹⁴⁷ Knox after relocating to Kansas City started his pastoral apprenticeship under a COGIC pastor his mother knew in Kansas. Knox was ordained a COGIC pastor in Kansas and pastored St. Paul Church of God in Christ for seven years. He was a district pastor—Knox worked with other COGIC churches in Kansas City for about fifteen years before he broke away to start his own church. During my interview for this thesis, Knox states:

It just didn't seem spiritual. The ministries, they were kind of everybody for themselves and whatever. And the Lord just spoke to me You know I couldn't, I saw the problems that were coming up and I just couldn't go along with it because my faith was deeper than that. So, I just decided that best thing for me to do is not stay there and try to change the system but just to ease out without any animosity or problem and go on my own.... When I came back to Springfield ... the Lord led me to come out of that and go independent.... I saw lots of discrepancies that didn't measure up to Bible standards. So, I just tried to meet my obligation and to obey God and just to become an independent ministry.... So, I just eased out and started on my own.

Bishop David Knox Jr. has acquired a diploma in theology and ministry from the Moody Bible Institute at Chicago, Illinois. The program was entirely long distance, but he had to go to Chicago intermittently for some face-to-face classes. During my interview with him for this thesis, Bishop Knox stated:

¹⁴⁷ Knox was not accepted into Central Bible College (later merged with Evangel University) to get a degree in pastoral ministry because he was black. Both the C. B. C. and Evangel University were affiliated with the Assemblies of God. "One of the brothers that was teaching at C. B. C said, 'David, why don't you go out to C. B. C. and come out there and further your education out there.' And I said, fine that sounds good. He said, okay I will take care of it. I will check it out and get back with you.... Then he came back about two weeks later and said, 'Dave I am very sorry but the school does not admit African American students at this time.' I said, okay. I was disappointed except I've never made an issue out of it because that's just the way it is." See Barton, "Interview with Pastor David Knox Final Cut."

The teaching I received when I was in Kansas City.... The Lord sent me to this particular teacher I mean he wasn't into the doctrine alone as the church that I was in here at the Church of God in Christ. But he was very studious and well-read and had a good education.... And that was my breakthrough spiritually.

David Knox, while receiving his apprenticeship training, decided not to write the ordination exams because he was called by God and did not need the approval of men to shepherd God's flock. After getting his minister's license, Bishop David Knox was persuaded by his mentor to write the COGIC ordination exam and be ordained as a pastor. He explained in an interview for this fieldwork how he had the title as a "Bishop."¹⁴⁸ He stated:

When I came to Springfield, I was already an ordained minister. And the Lord spoke to me and said, "I want you to become my bishop." I wasn't looking for a promotion or anything, but it was a divine calling from the Lord. My first reaction was, I want to think about that. Of course, generally you are ordained bishop from your organization. I wasn't in an organization and I wasn't interested in getting in one.... Because I wasn't interested in being a bishop. Title has never bothered But I knew by now that God knew what he was doing more than I do. So, I submitted to it. I went through the process of getting the information from off of the online and started.... My pastor in Kansas City, I had him to come down and do the sermon. I had another bishop from the Springfield area here.... I do it special occasions for the Lord's supper.... That's part of the platform for bishops that are performing different, like weddings, I wear my robe.... This is the protocol for bishops to wear robes at these special times.

Knox's self-titling is not so unusual and can be seen in the careers of figures like Bishop Juanita Bynum. Juanita Bynum was born into the Church of God in Christ. She is currently a televangelist and a gospel musician. In her monograph, *Passionate and Pious*, Religious Studies professor Monique Moultrie reports about Bynum's life and her self-titling in pastoral work. Moultrie states:

¹⁴⁸ In the COGIC church, the title of a Bishop is conferred on a pastor who oversees a Jurisdiction. A Jurisdiction comprises a group of churches in a demarcated area.

Bynum's self-titling reflects her conscious efforts to tell people what to think about her as she journeys from Prophetess to Doctor to Ambassador, and most recently Bishop Bynum. While it is not atypical for a woman from the Church of God in Christ to be without ordination and titles provided by ecclesial hierarchy, Bynum's ministry has been successful without this sanctioning because of her ability to name herself and have the name certified by others. Her honorary doctorate in theology comes from an equally noncredentialed male pastor; in fact, none of her credentialing is from traditional sources. This reflects a growing trend in televangelism of enhancing titles to secure prominence and establish authority.¹⁴⁹

Bishop Knox likely chose the title as a "Bishop" to stamp his authority over his congregation and the Springfield community as an independent pastor and a church leader.

He worked for urban renewal doing house repair and started K & H Construction which later became very instrumental in the architectural work for the first development of DTM. Knox moved back to Springfield in 1973 with his wife and three children. David Knox also worked at Carol Jones Treatment Center (Preferred Family Health) at 2401 West Catalpa Street. He was a chaplain and a counselor for women recovering from addiction. He had the job at Carol Jones through a recommendation from a recovering addict church member. He was promoted to the board and he used his church to assist women (blacks and whites). Knox stated in an interview, "The white addicts were very happy to hear and see me (black) counsel them. They shared confidential information with me. My church was very supportive because we provided a church community for these women who were recovering from drug and alcohol addiction." While David Knox worked at Carol Jones, he also worked as a chaplain for his prison missions. He was the first black person in Springfield to serve as a voluntary prison chaplain. Knox was very helpful to the black men in prison because there was a strong identity between him and black

¹⁴⁹ Monique Moultrie, *Passionate and Pious: Religious Media and Black Women's Sexuality* (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2017), 31.

prisoners. This ethnic malleability and fluidity brought some misunderstanding between him and state-hired white chaplains, which eventually led to the suspension of his prison missions. Some of these ex-convicts became members of DTM. He did this voluntary work for about twenty years.

DTM was started by David Knox Jr. and his mother, Mrs. Alberta Knox, in 1974. Knox wrote tracts and articles for his mother to share on the bus. Deliverance Temple became a place of deliverance for the afflicted, spiritually and physically needy, abused, and addicts. The anointing began to manifest itself in the church, especially to barren women, addicts, and felons. In an interview, Pastor Carroll Clarke said, “My girlfriend invited me. And so they were going to pray for me in this prayer service. They were going to pray for my baby because I had trouble with having my children.... They had me in a chair and they were praying for me. And all of a sudden, I heard the Lord say, ‘This is where I want you.’” In her life testimony, Crystal Jomah (a pseudonym) said, “I joined DTM in its formative years while I was receiving treatment at Carol Jones. I had relocated from Los Angeles to Springfield because I did not want to keep using it. Bishop used the Bible to coach me, prayed for, and with me and supported me physically. I am over thirty years sober and happy for what God has done in my life.” These and other testimonies members gave about Bishop Knox indicate that he was very successful at what he did, as many people who came to him had their needs met. The name (Deliverance Temple Ministries) was not just chosen by the founder but a directive by the Holy Spirit. Bishop Knox states:

I had become a man of prayer and I consulted the Lord.... I admired Paul. He was a great man but when I came to Springfield, there was such a drought here, that the Lord directed me to the deliverance ministry and so that’s the name he gave me.... That was the goal for our church to help people, bring them out of their situations and deliver them spiritually and mentally. And that’s what we have been doing for a long time.

The vision of Bishop Knox's ministry is delivering people from all kinds of afflictions. During the interview for this work. Bishop Knox further added:

We started to do these at the time and people began to come and the Lord blessed us. And we just began to grow. People will come.... There were people that had problems and they were desperate for answers and for a better condition and, of course, being Deliverance Temple, that's what we were called. And a lot of them when they got what they came for, they left. Some left town, some left for other parts of the city. But that's the way we started and we continued to grow and grow.

As a minority revivalist preacher, Bishop Knox faced some covert racism in his life and ministry when his church started gaining popularity.¹⁵⁰ These challenges influenced his standard of membership especially for women who wanted to join DTM. Bishop Knox states:

There was some opposition. The church was growing. Everybody that, people that came to me from other churches, I always send them back to get permission from their pastors to come go with me. Whatever, they didn't want to do that.... And I had a few that did do this.... I got the pastors, the brothers, the women's husbands together and I talked to them. And I asked them about their permission for their wives to be a part of Deliverance Temple and they all agreed. And I said now if for some reason you decide that this won't work anymore, let me know.... And I haven't had one of the brothers come back and tell me anything. Once in a while, one of the brothers will come back and join his wife at Deliverance Temple.... I didn't want to send anybody away that they said, "The Lord was sending them to me." So I had to ask the Lord for discretion as to how to deal with that situation.

¹⁵⁰ By opposition, Bishop Knox meant racial opposition. For instance, in his interview with Broc Barton and Samuel Knox, Bishop Knox gave examples of this covert racial opposition— "I got a phone call about 10:30 one night and my wife answered the phone and the gentleman says, 'Does David Knox live here?' and she said yes. He said, 'Well tell him that you'd better get out of town because we're killing all the Black folk....' In the construction of the new building, before we got the doors and things put on, somebody had come in at night and vandalized the inside. They had made a cross, upside down cross and a lot of different kind of symbols on the sheetrock." See Barton, "Interview with Pastor David Knox Final Cut." As Knox recalled, "I got a call from some of the neighbors there telling us that they didn't want us in that area over there, and it seemed to be a little hostile when they found out that we bought the church. But it worked out." See Missouri State University Libraries, "Rt. 66: Bishop David Knox Jr., March 26, 2015," YouTube.com, May 19, 2015, accessed March 27, 2020, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zxB6HY6LqYU>.

The growth of DTM reflects a wider appeal of Holiness and Pentecostal churches to African Americans. Church of God in Christ historian Calvin White Jr. states:

Reasons varied as to why blacks joined the Holiness (Pentecostal) movement. Many became a part of the association because of what they believed to be a surge in denominationalism, while others sought membership because of the charismatic nature of the movement that reminded them of emotional liturgy blacks developed while still enslaved. Black churchgoers simply preferred, if not insisted on, a spiritual experience that rational liturgy simply could not provide.¹⁵¹

As White suggests, Mason used “brush-harbor gatherings, prophetic prophecy, and emotional charismatic preaching that he used to grow COGIC in its early years.”¹⁵² Like Mason, Knox knowingly or unknowingly provided spiritual fulfillment for spiritually needy blacks and whites and his charisma doubled his numbers and attracted many to join his church.

Like many Pentecostal churches, DTM also went through a lot of hustle and tussle. They rented a storefront at 834 East Division Street. Bishop Knox had to patch the roof himself after the company he contracted to roof the building made off with their money. He was able to do this because of the versatility and experience he garnered from working with his own construction company. Although DTM was struggling to roof the building, the location of the church attracted college students from Evangel and doubled their membership in the black community. They had a dual place of worship. They had their evening services at the storefront and Sunday morning services on the fourth floor at the Vandivort Center. For the love of the product, the shoppers (members) still followed Bishop Knox. They had their services at the storefront for twenty years until they finally purchased a building at 2101 East Chestnut

¹⁵¹ Calvin White Jr., *The Rise to Respectability: Race, Religion, and the Church of God in Christ* (Fayetteville, Arkansas: The University of Arkansas Press, 2012), 18.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, 18.

Expressway. Although Knox had parted ways with COGIC because of organizational and doctrinal differences, he still holds that he and the DTM are historically related to COGIC.¹⁵³ At first sight, one will identify many similarities to COGIC—worship style, moaning and shouting, and pastoral robes—but this is one influence among many, because COGIC does not have official power over DTM.

DTM had its first service at 2101 East Chestnut in 1995. Although Bishop Knox said he did not face any racial prejudice, there were a few times he felt his life was under threat because of his ministry. In February of 2002, the building was razed by fire after the seventh year, which sent the church into a recession.¹⁵⁴ They held their services in the gym that was attached to the sanctuary until a prophecy came from God. Bishop Knox received a revelation from God to “build the building.” The fire that razed the building was another blessing in disguise because God revealed himself to Bishop Knox to build. In one morning prayer, the Lord said, “You’ve been here for seven years and I don’t want you to try and remodel the old building that’s burned. We want you to build. You’ve been here for seven years, seven is a number of completion and eight is a number of new beginnings.” Although he taught the church was not financially stable

¹⁵³ Like Mason, Knox also holds that blacks accept their Africanism because it has shaped the black culture, history, and the church. See Clemons, *Bishop C. H. Mason and the Roots of the Church of God in Christ* (Lanham, Maryland: Pneuma Life Publishing, Inc., 2012), 6.

¹⁵⁴ “A young man came and set a little shed that was beside the church on fire, looking for something to steal to pawn because he was kind of a drug addict and couldn’t find anything, and just set the building on fire, and it just came to the building, our church building, because it was close, and most of our, I think about 75 or 80 percent of our church was burn damaged by smoke and fire.” See Missouri State University Libraries, “Rt. 66: Bishop David Knox Jr., March 26, 2015.”

enough to undertake a \$1.5 million project, many churches especially white churches in Springfield donated to the DTM building project.¹⁵⁵

DTM is indirectly committed to preserving the history of blacks in Springfield and African American History in general. It has for the past twenty years hosted Black History Month and Black History Summer Academy programs. The COGIC dedication to African spirituality and African heritage is also absorbed indirectly in the church's service and programs. It organizes a program annually for the women to clad themselves in African clothes.¹⁵⁶ The community witnessed the political influence of Bishop Knox and DTM among African Americans when three white pastors invited him to a racial reconciliation walk between whites and blacks around Park Central Square, the place where three blacks were lynched on Easter weekend in 1906.¹⁵⁷ DTM has also supported Springfield and the black community through its monthly Mobile Food Pantry which feeds at least a hundred households monthly. The household grocery distribution is slated for the third Wednesday of every month.

Deliverance Temple Organizational Structure

DTM's organizational structure presents a pattern of charismatic routinization. The church started with Bishop Knox's leadership but as the church grew, especially when it outgrew its building on Commercial Street, Bishop Knox created a formal bureaucracy by appointing

¹⁵⁵ James River Assembly donated \$136,000 and the Assemblies of God also donated \$10,000s.

¹⁵⁶ DTM women believe the Women's Day program reconnects them to women in Africa because wearing African clothes makes them identify themselves as Africans.

¹⁵⁷ Jenny Fillmer, "1906 Lynchings grew from tensions, racism—Thriving black community died," *Springfield News-Leader*, April 14, 2006, accessed October 8, 2020, <https://www.news-leader.com/story/news/local/ozarks/2006/04/14/1906-lynchings-grew-from-tensions-racism-thriving-black-community-died/77385626/>.

some leaders to help manage the church. According to Weber, “the charismatic authority of leaders derives from the personal devotion of their followers, which is typically inspired by the extraordinary ability of the leaders to perform miracles or heroic acts.”¹⁵⁸ The Board of Trustees, Council of Elders, ministers, and pastors are all appointed and trained by the founder, Bishop Knox, and he makes the final decisions.¹⁵⁹ During the interview for this thesis Bishop Knox listed some of the requirements of a prospective pastor and deacon at his church. Bishop Knox states:

The greatest thing is going through the experience that Paul taught Timothy, Titus, and all the young men that we read about in the scripture. They have to graduate. They have to mature to that point that they can lead pastors, pastors or people who they serve, and they exercise authority over people that you may be a youth pastor working with children, young people or whatever it is; you are an adult pastor like we have several pastors there at Deliverance Temple. These are people who have experienced, people who have, I have examined, and I know their potentials. And we ordain them or license them first. Then after they graduate as and when they graduate, when they learn some things through experience and others, and I feel that they are qualified, then I ordain them for service. But they have to follow the directions of the scripture and qualify.... We have a Board of Elders that would examine people and for their qualifications, but I would be the last person to talk with them or recommend them to them. And I will have the last say as to whether or not they qualify to be a pastor.

The pastoral training starts once a person grows spiritually and mentally and is followed by appointments. This appointment starts by leading the church in the recitation of the Church Declaration and eventually to preaching. Bishop Knox is old and physically weak and he has not openly appointed a successor. During the interview for this thesis, Bishop Knox stated:

¹⁵⁸ Brad Christerson and Richard W. Flory, *The Rise of Network Christianity: How Independent Leaders Are Changing the Religious Landscape* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), 43.

¹⁵⁹ A copy of the DTM Manual is attached as Appendix C: Deliverance Temple Ministries Manual.

No, I don't have a plan. I leave that basically to the Lord to decide. If he decides and here—just like when Moses authorized Joshua to take over his leadership, he knew. God said “You are gonna die, and I want you to take Joshua and put your, lay your hands on him and pray over oil.” But he did that and he established Joshua and told the people, “This is the brother that is gonna be takin’ over from me.” I haven’t come to that point yet. The Lord hasn’t designated anybody. I see people. I’ve got my own idea as to what I’d like to see happen but that’s not set in stone because I haven’t heard from the Lord that this is what he wants me to do.... I want God to be the final person to choose for me. He’ll let me know when to retire. He hasn’t said anything. I don’t think my work is finished there so I am still moving forward.... I’d like to know so I can release somebody else to take my place but again, it’s an act of God.... I’m looking over the congregation. I can designate somebody, but I want to be sure that that’s God and not me because people can fool you.

I inquired of some church members about their choice of a successor since the Bishop has no succession plan. Some members predicted Mr. Samuel Knox, the son of the Bishop and the administrator of the church. On the other side, some members rejected Samuel Knox because he lacks preaching acumen but endorsed his administrative prowess. These groups suggested Pastor Mark Dixon as the best replacement of Bishop Knox. I foresee in-fighting among the assistant pastors and members if Bishop Knox does not appoint a successor before meeting his maker.¹⁶⁰

Purpose of the Study

The hybridity of the religious heritage of African and American culture among both American born blacks and African immigrants serves as the justification for this comparison. I am studying two churches that directly or indirectly focus on the gospel of hope for the people of their race. Moreover, as I have already stated, African spirituality and a liberation gospel are prevalent among these groups. RCCG provides spiritual and physical solutions for immigrants in

¹⁶⁰ This in-fighting led to the rejection of Pastor Adeboye after the death of Pa Akindayomi by a section of leaders and RCCG members.

their host nation while DTM indirectly provides liberation and hope to blacks in Springfield. Unlike blacks who came from Africa to be slaves in America, African immigrants move back and forth between countries due to worldwide globalization, education, and the quest for greener pastures. In his essay, “Transnationalism, Religion, and the African Diaspora in Canada: An Examination of Ghanaians and Ghanaian Churches,” Wisdom J. Tettey uses the concept of “translocational positionality” to describe how religious institutions serve as a conduit for the assimilation of immigrants in their current location. According to Anthony Richmond, Tettey aptly illustrates that “ethnic churches” help African immigrants to bridge subjectivism and cultural determinism.¹⁶¹ The church helps African immigrants to overcome the myth of inferiority and helps them to adopt the culture of their host country. Rosenthal and Bogner describe “translocational positionality” as the strategy of negotiating the “national location and dislocation in relation to social positioning and constructions of difference at the intersections of ethnicity, gender, class, nation, and racialization.”¹⁶²

My interest in global Pentecostalism, African and black studies influenced my choice to study the Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG) and Deliverance Temple Ministries (DTM) in Springfield for this thesis. Besides my interest, I chose these churches because they are

¹⁶¹ Immigrant churches help migrants “overcome the tendency toward ‘victimology of transnational migrants, empowering them, linking the past with the present.’” See Anthony Richmond, “Globalization: Implications for Immigrants and Refugees,” *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 25, no.5 (2002): 713, quoted in Wisdom J. Tettey, “Transnationalism, Religion, and the African Diaspora in Canada: An Examination of Ghanaians and Ghanaian Churches,” in *African Immigrant Religions in America*, ed. Jacob K. Olupona and Regina Gemignani (New York: New York University Press, 2007), 234-235.

¹⁶² Blacks have created a culture that differs from whites but helps African immigrants to relate to them in some extent. This culture helps both blacks and United States citizens of African descent (children of African immigrants) to overcome victimology. See Gabriele Rosenthal and Artur Bogner, *Ethnicity, Belonging and Biography: Ethnographical and Biographical Perspectives* (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Transaction Publishers, 2009), 251; Tettey, “Transnationalism, Religion, and the African Diaspora in Canada,” 230.

neo-Pentecostal, and have similar socioeconomic settings, in addition to “communal spirituality” and “transnational localization.”¹⁶³ They have a similar style of training prospective pastors believed to have been called by the Holy Spirit. They believe that pastoral work is by calling and not a profession. Also, women form the majority and are at the center of the stories of these churches. I am studying the synthesis and antithesis of gender in black and African Pentecostalism because scholars have not given much attention to non-denominational Pentecostal women and their identity. Many of the studies on the religious experience of black and African Pentecostal women were also written from the lenses of institutions that foster male dominance. Also, I chose these churches because of the similarity and differences in the expression of their religious experience.

In this sense, it is fascinating to analyze two Pentecostal groups (blacks and African immigrants) who are historically related, because the slave system did not destroy the slaves’ African culture and this “translocational positionality” also exists among African immigrants in an area that is not culturally diverse. Despite leaving Africa over four hundred years ago, Africanisms like “communal spirituality” continue to define Afro-American understating in the United States. “Communal spirituality” is the cardinal point for understanding the African community. According to John S. Mbiti, the individual can only say, “I am because we are; and since we are, therefore I am.”¹⁶⁴ Communal spirituality is the formation of self through

¹⁶³ RCCG and DTM are autonomous and have departed from cultural adaptation but actively engage with modern technologies, such as mass media and broadcast system. These churches are neo-Pentecostal because they have borrowed from white-led charismatic movement in addition to the spirituality that is prevalent among African and Black Pentecostals. See Jeyoul Choi, “Empowerment of Pentecostalism: A Comparative Study of South Korean and Brazilian Neo-Pentecostal Churches within a Postcolonial Context,” master’s thesis, Missouri State University, 2015, 23; Estrela Y. Alexander, *Black Fire: One Hundred Years of African American Pentecostalism* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2011), 25.

¹⁶⁴ Joseph S. Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy* (London: Heinemann, 1969), 106.

communal being or relationality.¹⁶⁵ The communal bond in African American and African Pentecostal churches leads me to affirm John Pobee's assertion that, "African Americans are different Africans from the continent of Africa."¹⁶⁶ The linkage between blacks and Africans makes them unique from other races. The Civil Rights movement that emerged from African American communities was supported by black Pentecostals. African Pentecostals commit to protecting the rights of all the people in the image of God. It is not by accident that the Civil Rights movement developed out of the African American churches.

The description and understanding of vibrancy and vitality among black and African Pentecostals have changed with time. What is and is not religious experience among African Pentecostals is influenced by their environment. Beyond the diversity, enough fundamental similarity exists to allow a general comparison of African American and African (diaspora) Pentecostals. The following questions get at this more general comparison. How do black Pentecostals and African (immigrant) Pentecostals understand Holy Spirit baptism? What importance do they place on tongues speaking? How do they do their anointing and deliverance services? How do members of DTM and RCCG understand vibrancy? How does "shouting, moaning or dancing" distinguish them? What role do women play in these churches? How does the use and understanding of "church mother" (mama) differ among these churches?¹⁶⁷

To conclude, this chapter has established the methodological framework for the remainder of the thesis. Considering the racial and historical similarities between these

¹⁶⁵ Michael Battle, *The Black Church in America: African American Spirituality* (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell, 2006), xv.

¹⁶⁶ John S. Pobee, "Afro-Anglicanism: Quo Vadimus?" *Anglican Theological Review* 77, no. 4 (September, 1995): 502, accessed November 11, 2019, <http://140.234.252.185/c/articles/9512141884/afro-anglicanism-quo-vadimus>.

¹⁶⁷ An older woman in the RCCG is called "mama."

congregations, I used ethnography because it helped me fit in and conduct my research with respect for the congregations. I tried to find out what congregants think and say about women in leadership and how they express their personal religious experiences. Through a close examination of Max Weber's "routinization of charisma," I have shed light on the presence of Adeboye's charisma in RCCG, Springfield despite his absence. Also, the chapter focused on how some members of DTM expect a charisma impartation on the prospective leader before the founder is called by his maker.

Considering the circumstances that birthed these congregations, this chapter found that DTM was founded to provide spiritual liberation and preserve African American history and culture. Moreover, RCCG started as home church for African immigrants who could not fit into white and black dominated churches. The church's primary focus is supporting international African students of Missouri State University and other colleges in the Greene County area.

CHAPTER FOUR, TAKE WOMEN OUT AND THE CHURCH IS EMPTY

If the man may preach because the Savior died for him, why not the woman seeing he died for her also. Is he not a whole Savior, instead of a half one, as those who hold it wrong for a woman to preach, would seem to make it appear.

– Jarena Lee, 1849¹⁶⁸

If it was not for women, you will not have had a church.

– Cheryl T. Gilkes.¹⁶⁹

The work began among the colored people. God baptized several sanctified wash women with the Holy Ghost, who have been much used of Him.

–William J. Seymour.¹⁷⁰

This chapter provides a survey of the role played by women in Deliverance Temple Ministries (DTM) and Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG) in Springfield. It begins with the assertion that patriarchal perspectives have fostered a negative understanding of Pentecostal women in leadership in black and African churches. One other interesting factor is the relationship between men, women pastors, and female laity. In some Pentecostal churches, most male pastors and laity do not accept and recognize women pastors while some women do not accept their fellow women leaders because of the cultural understanding of women in society. Despite this infighting, women have played many leading roles in the founding of these

¹⁶⁸ Jarena Lee, *Religious Experience and Journal of Mrs. Jarena Lee: Giving an Account of Her Call to Preach the Gospel* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: published by the author, 1849), 11.

¹⁶⁹ Cheryl Townsend Gikes, *If It Wasn't for the Women: Black Women's Experience and Womanist Culture in Church and Community* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis, 2001), 1.

¹⁷⁰ Ian MacRobert, *The Black Roots and White Racism of Early Pentecostalism in the USA* (London: The Macmillan Press, 1988), 48.

churches.¹⁷¹ Although not stated explicitly in the church manuals, a mere visit to these churches (DTM and RCCG) shows the prominence and importance of these women (pastors) from the organization to preaching to administration. Despite the mostly male-dominated structure and affirmation of biblically assumed sexism, women constitute the majority of members in many, if not all, black and African Pentecostal churches in the world, so the movement has been described as a “women’s religion.”¹⁷² Scholarly work on the complexities of black and African women have always focused on political resistance with minimal attention to the role of religion. I tease out the role and participation of women in Pentecostal churches (DTM and RCCG) from religious and cultural perspectives because, despite the restricted freedom, Pentecostal women have been part of the leadership of the movement since its inception in almost all parts of the world. Also, Judith Weisenfeld asserts, Pentecostal women “loom large as a substantial and yet

¹⁷¹ The women’s role cannot be avoided if one wants to understand the aspects of black and African immigrants religious and lived experiences in America because of women’s importance, faithfulness, and indispensability in the church. Black and African women are very important in the black and African community because women are arguably, morally superior to men. See Esther Mombo, “The Ordination of Women in Africa: An Historical Perspective,” in *Women and Ordination in the Christian Churches: International Perspectives*, ed. Ian Jones, Janet Wootton, and Christy Thorpe (New York: T&T Clark, 2008), 124.

¹⁷² Women have dominated American Protestantism since the eighteenth century. Scholars have suggested that despite sexism and discrimination in American churches, women outnumber men because the church serves as a space for women to have an encounter with Jesus, share their stories with other women, attain freedom, and get empowerment. See Estrela Alexander and Amos Yong, *Philip’s Daughters: Women in Pentecostal-Charismatic Leadership* (Eugene, Oregon: Pickwick Publications, 2009), 2; Daphne Wiggins, *Righteous Content: Black Women’s Perspectives of Church and Faith* (New York: New York University Press, 2005), 1; Anthea D. Butler, *Women in the Church of God in Christ: Making a Sanctified World* (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 1. Both DTM and RCCG had a population of 70 per cent women and 30 per cent men in all church services and events I attended or observed while writing this thesis. DTM and RCCG had a female population of about 75 per cent. DTM had five female assistant pastors and two male pastors (one an assistant pastor and one the head pastor cum founder), while RCCG had one female pastor and two male assistant pastors. In both churches, women served as stewards, soloists, ushers, nurses, church mothers, Sunday school teachers, stewardesses, missionaries, and prayer warriors. RCCG had women deacons but there was no woman deacon at DTM.

largely undiscovered terrain in the study of religion in America.”¹⁷³ Thus, there is a need to help uncover and unearth how Pentecostal women have constructed their identities.

African Independent or Initiated Churches and Pentecostal churches in Africa started with a theology that recognized the vital role of women and served as the birthplace for women to dismiss male domination in mainstream churches. Historically, there is a limitation undermining, excluding, and discriminating against black and African women, keeping them from rising to the pinnacle of leadership in the church and the society. The Akans of Ghana have an adage that “*Se obaa to itur a, otwer banyin ne dan mu.*” This is translated in English as “when the woman buys a gun, it is kept by the man.” There is a cultural belief among the Akans that women cannot lead the society or do anything without the direction of the man. The society is traditionally structured giving male leadership an advantage over women. The sociocultural structure of the African and black societies and churches barred women from becoming leaders.¹⁷⁴ Women in many African societies are considered as surrogates to male domination and supervision. The subservience and belief in male domination among black Pentecostals started in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Leslie Gill argues that Pentecostal theology reinforces the inferiority of women and “relegates women to the bottom of a divinely ordained hierarchy that bestows power and authority on God and men and situates women's primary responsibilities in the home, where they are expected to care for fathers, husbands, and

¹⁷³ Judith Casselberry, *The Labor of Faith: Gender and Power in Black Apostolic Pentecostalism* (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2017), 3-4.

¹⁷⁴ There were instances in the traditional African community where women served as colleagues or leaders over men. Some communities installed women chiefs and appointed women chief priest. As Butler notes, “Many African men believed that women’s flesh was not called for the pulpit. Many women subscribed to this myth and opposed their preaching sisters with much or even more tenacity as men. Cultural accommodations, biblical literalism and concerns about racial uplift all combined to keep women preachers at bay.” See Butler, *Women in the Church of God in Christ*, 32-33.

children.”¹⁷⁵ Although many Pentecostal women might have not read the works of Kimberlie W. Crenshaw and Gerald Sider on equality, they have openly adopted Crenshaw’s notion of “intersectionality” or what Sider has called “counter-hegemony” to resist the prevailing religious and cultural patriarchy that exists in black and African communities.¹⁷⁶ Butler aptly suggests that black Pentecostal women overcome classism, racism, and sexism using their “beliefs about holiness and sanctified living which forms the moral and political core of how they engaged the world, from their personal appearances to their activism” in the church and on sociopolitical issues.¹⁷⁷ According to Butler, “For African American Holiness and Pentecostal women, this attentiveness to their spiritual lives brought about changes that would benefit themselves, their families, and their communities. Their belief in sanctification affected their negotiation of

¹⁷⁵ Lesley Gill, “‘Like a Veil to Cover Them’: Women and the Pentecostal Movement in La Paz,” *American Ethnologist* 17, no. 4 (1990): 709, accessed August 30, 2020. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/645709>.

¹⁷⁶ Intersectionality denotes the various ways black women resist male domination. See Crenshaw, *Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex*, 168. Counter-hegemonic cultural forms are resistance and struggle strategies employed by women based on their individual experiences to create an oppositional force against domination. These strategies include distancing and evasion, denial, oppositional claims, demands or values. See Gerald M. Sider, “The Ties that Bind: Culture and Agriculture, Property and Propriety in the Newfoundland Village Fishery,” *Social History* 5, no. 1 (1980): 25-27, accessed April 16, 2020, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/03071028008567469>. For instance, women may demand accountability from male leaders in church and demand the inclusion of females as preachers and core leaders. Jarena Lee demanded the inclusion of women preachers in the African Methodist Episcopal Church. She argued that Jesus was crucified for both males and females. See Lee, *Religious Experience and Journal of Mrs. Jarena Lee*, 12. Lizzie Robinson encouraged COGIC women to adopt a “metalanguage” to navigate interpretations in a conundrum that opposed women’s exclusion as preachers racially, religiously, and culturally. See Butler, *Women in the Church of God in Christ*, 35-38.

¹⁷⁷ Anthea Butler, “Unrespectable Saints: Women of the Church of God in Christ,” in *The Religious History of America: Reimagining the Past*, ed. Catherine A. Brekus (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: The University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 162.

motherhood, marriage, racial issues, and gender roles, providing the foundation for the construction of new identities that were not solely based upon race but also on religion.”¹⁷⁸

The Church: A Niche for Black and African Women’s Resistance to Patriarchy

Notwithstanding the patriarchal structure, some Pentecostal churches have offered some leadership positions and some freedom to women in what Butler has called “ought to be and do.”¹⁷⁹ Contemporary Pentecostal women work as missionaries; they have created standards of beauty; they are resisting more recent forms of sexism, racism, and other stated norms of African and African American culture that expected women to be surrogates to men. The growth of many Pentecostal churches was partly because of the freedom women have had to pastor churches, lead various organizations in the church, preach, and teach the gospel, as well as the power of church mothers.¹⁸⁰ Folklorist Elaine Lawless argues that the centrality of women in Pentecostal churches, especially during services, is manifested with their encounter with the Holy Spirit, tongues-speaking, prophecy interpretation, and long testimonies which sometimes prevent the pastor from delivering the sermon and eventually prolong the service.¹⁸¹

The women I interviewed for this work have been part of DTM and RCCG for between two and thirty-five years. Three women participants from DTM and another from RCCG have

¹⁷⁸ Ibid., 163.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., 164.

¹⁸⁰ Fidelis Nkomazana, “The Role of Women, Theology, and Ecumenical Organizations in the Rise of Pentecostal Churches in Botswana,” in *Pentecostalism and Politics in Africa*, ed. Adeshina Afolayan, Olajumoke Yacob-Haliso, and Toyin Falola (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 197.

¹⁸¹ Elaine J. Lawless, “Not so Different After All: Pentecostal Women in the Pulpit,” in *Women’s Leadership in Marginal Religions: Explorations Outside the Mainstream*, ed. Catherine Wessinger (Urbana, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 1993), 41-42.

remained in the church because of the charisma and teachings of their pastors. Gwen Marshall a member and an assistant pastor of DTM, states:

Let's just roughly say 71. I became affiliated with Bishop Knox. And so, I was perhaps there. I really can't tell you exactly how many years I was there in those formative years. I want to say maybe six years.... Then I left and accepted my calling into the ministry and became a minister.... I don't think my membership ever waned as he was my overseer even though I wasn't in his church. So, if we look at it like that from 71 to now.... As him as my overseer, because I would keep going to back to him, but I wasn't, I wasn't actively there every Sunday because I was pastoring a little bit myself as interim and assistant pastor. Even though I wasn't there, I kept going back to him. I was pastoring a little bit myself as an interim assistant pastor. So, let's say thirty something years I've been affiliated with Deliverance Temple Ministries. So, even though I wasn't in the building, he was still, but I was licensed through the Baptist Association as licensed and ordained but Bishop Knox was where I started. He was my overseer and you can kind of record it in that fashion.

Felicia Shell Tucker also said:

This church has been good for me because I get a lot of people ask why do you drive hour and fifteen minutes?.... I live near Fort Leonard Wood and people ask and a lot of churches around there. I'm not going to say a lot but quite a few. They have an agenda because soldiers in the military, if they are in the church, you give them a title. They're gonna run with it. They're gonna pay their tithes. They're gonna do whatever you tell them to do. And there was a lot of people taking advantage of that. So, God brought me here. My book was able to be birthed here. It took me ten years to write it, but it was able to be actually birthed.... And again, I've seen miracles here. I've been healed and delivered as of some things myself and I know that the Spirit of God resides in the leader and resides in here.

Women who participated in this study attributed their pastoral and preaching prowess to gifts of the Holy Spirit, and the guidance of the men around them. Felicia Tucker, an assistant pastor at DTM narrated her life story before joining DTM and what God is using her to do for the church. She states:

Starting off, my mom, mother and father was in the military and they met and she dropped out of school and married him, and they had me. And they went to Germany

shortly afterwards and then things kind of went haywire with them. And they came back to the States and divorced or they separated. And that's when some of the hell on earth started.... And when my mother told me I couldn't see him anymore; me and my sister couldn't see him anymore.... I was about four or five from what I remember. And I remember them arguing a few times and running out of the house.... And then shortly afterwards, they, I didn't see them anymore. We were at different relatives. I was at one of my aunt's house—my dad's sister. And my sister was at another aunt, our cousin's house. And we didn't really see anybody else.... She picked me up and went and got my younger sister and we moved into a trailer. And that's where some of the abuse, the stepfather at the time who she wasn't married to. He started, he used to beat us really badly and at the time my mom was pregnant.... I went to several schools. I went to over ten different schools before I got to the fifth grade and some of them, I went to twice.... School was my escape from the current reality—which was them smoking, drinking.... The home life was weighing on me and then in school, I really got to where I really didn't care too much, I didn't love it as much because I was fighting all the time. Always trying to get somebody to accept me and be my friend. And I just didn't understand the racism because I hadn't really experienced it like that on that level until I got to middle school.... As soon as I started womanhood, she, she became I don't know, I won't say protective, but it's she was angry that it happened. And she will say little things all the time. And never really taught me how to take care of myself. I learned by reading books and everything, and then, then entered the man that they were selling drugs for and he took interest in me.... He took interest in me.... He bought me everything that I had always dreamed of.... We always got hand-me-down or the cheapest stuff. And I always hated just hated never getting anything to be accepted in. He was sixteen years older than me. And he started out really really nice.... And I ended up staying with him. And it was like I was living with him and they didn't, no one knew where he lived except for me. Yes, he raped me.... Threatened to pimp me because he said he'd pimped other girls.... He always encouraged me to do well in school when he was taking me to school. And he always used to say, "He didn't want me to be dumb".... And I never went to the church because I was just, against religion—people that had come to me tried to get me to give my life to the Lord. They were just religious hypocrites in my mind. They were just, I saw them they could quote the scriptures and I saw them do the rituals, but I didn't see any power and I didn't want to be part of it. I really didn't.... I took up on her offer because she fulfilled an immediate need. So many people, they want to talk about the Lord and Jesus but the person is standing there hungry.... And my daughters needed a place to stay. And she's, and when she said that, I went to church and I got saved that next Sunday.¹⁸²

Felicia shared some observations about Bishop Knox. She said:

¹⁸² Christian Television, *YouTube post*, August 1, 2016, accessed July 10, 2020, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QyyqPLTueao&feature=youtu.be>.

He is truly a man of God. He is the most-humble man and he's helped smooth out some of my rough edges because I am more like I got the spirit of Joshua. Let's go in and take it. Let's get it. He is kind of calm me down little bit. So, I love him.

Most of the women who participated in the study were unmarried. Most were also abused. Some were also divorced or widowed while others have never been married. Their stories included their disbelief, doubts about their calling, how God is using them after joining these respective churches, and their reception of the Holy Spirit. While others denied their callings, some were also anticipating the gift of the Holy Ghost to preach. The lack of a rule requiring seminary training at DTM has helped a lot of women become pastors. I counted seven women pastors and two male pastors at DTM. The church believes in a Spirit-empowered ministry more than the ecclesiastical system. Many of these pastors buttressed their calling with a quotation from the book of Joel in the Hebrew Bible:

And afterward, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days.¹⁸³

Despite Pentecostalism offering women some freedom to hold many sensitive positions in the church, women are confronted with many sexist issues. Pastor Dr. Tessy, the pastor of RCCG Springfield is also the only female RCCG pastor in North America. Although she is revered by many church members as a pastor and a professor, she is also confronted with traditional African sexism. Some male members arrived in North America with their patriarchal understanding of women and their roles in the home and the church. She stated that although many accept her for the success she has achieved academically, some people have subtly and

¹⁸³ Joel 2: 28-29, NIV.

passively “questioned that authority. And for those that it worked for they’ve, they’ve stayed behind; those that it didn’t, they left.” Some people think she is a threat to them because she seems unapproachable. Pastor Tessy states:

Somebody has said to me that, I should maybe the way I dress, somebody who was the opposite sex, I should have done it, I couldn’t have that kind of authority over the person.... If it was a man that was leading this church... this church probably would, would grow better than it is doing now.... And I said, hey, there’s a lot of space for a man to plant a church... in fact they can plant it right next door if they want to because hey, what are struggling for, if you are a man and you feel like a man can do a better job, there’s so many people who need to hear the gospel of Jesus Christ. Start yours, start a church right. If I’m a woman and I feel like I’ve been called to preach, and nobody is hiring me as a pastor, you don’t need someone to hire you, stand on the street corner and start to do what the Lord has called you to do.

DTM and RCCG women, directly and indirectly, use their religious experiences to resist the double jeopardy that confronts black and African women because the church is both a social and religious institution.¹⁸⁴

Black sociologist and Pan-Africanist W. E. B. Du Bois and French sociologist Emile Durkheim both underplayed the religious experience of women and the topic of gender in their studies of religion and society. Durkheim suggested that “all men of the tribe, on the one hand, and, on the other, all the women form what amounts to two distinct and even antagonistic societies” no matter the talents and skills they possessed.¹⁸⁵ Despite this competition, men and women are joined together by a common mystical totem. Durkheim’s observation is applicable in a black or African church where both “sexual corporations” seek the face of a “dual-gendered”

¹⁸⁴ Traditionally, many black and African men assume the woman’s place is the home while other white women have described the passivity and sobriety of black women as supportive of male domination and suppression.

¹⁸⁵ Emile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, trans. Karen E. Fields (New York: Free Press, 1995), 167-168.

God but behind the pews exists an unequal relationship. Du Bois has also suggested that the black church consists of the preacher, the music, and the frenzy. Du Bois seems to have supported patriarchy because he only identified the preacher as a “he” without taking into consideration women and their role in the church and communal leadership.¹⁸⁶

Women at DTM and RCCG have turned their weaknesses into opportunities because they are essential in all church decisions. They not only constitute the majority filling the pews, but also pastor their congregations and serve in many auxiliary roles. It is not surprising that women constitute the majority in many leadership positions in DTM because Mrs. Alberta Bryant Knox (Mother Knox) was a catalyst in the spread and acceptance of David Knox’s ministry in the black community and in Springfield. Although Bishop Knox exercises veto power, the Council of Elders and Board of Trustees, which is mostly women, influence his decisions. The church mothers have influenced the church’s doctrines and administration through preaching messages and outreach programs. This observation complements Butler’s suggestion that the “COGIC church mother’s quest for spiritual empowerment by means of ‘the sanctified life’ provided the moral, spiritual, and physical fuel that enabled them to negotiate for and obtain power both within the denomination and outside it.”¹⁸⁷

¹⁸⁶ He (the preacher) is the boss among African Americans on American soil. See Phil Zuckerman, *Du Bois on Religion* (Walnut Creek, California: AltaMira Press, 2000), 48.

¹⁸⁷ “Sanctification in COGIC is both theological and cultural, encompassing beliefs from the nineteenth-century Evangelical and Holiness movements that pushed followers to live a life of holiness, refraining from the sins and pollutions modern life.” See Butler, *Women in the Church of God in Christ*, 2-3.

The Women's Department and Male Voices

The ordination of women has been debated in many black and African churches for decades. In 2019, clergywomen represented 20.7% (85,491) of the estimated 413,000 United States clergy. The Bureau of Labor Statistics reported that out of the total 85,491 black U.S. clergy, black women comprised 22.5% (19,236).¹⁸⁸ Many black and African women are not appointed to clerical positions after their theological training because of male domination and the female acceptance of the subordinate place of women in society. This cultural hindrance exists but RCCG and DTM women have buttressed their call to the pulpit with the Bible. In both RCCG and DTM, the justification for the full-ordination and appointment of women into leadership is Bible-based. Although not directly stated in church manuals, a few women participants cited a Bible verse to support their ordination, appointment, and equality to men. The verse is “There is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.”¹⁸⁹ This verse and the stories of other women like Deborah, Miriam, and Phoebe, who served God diligently in the Hebrew Bible or the early church, serve as role models for women in these churches. Women fill various significant auxiliary positions in these churches—assistant pastors and leaders of small groups, members of the Board of Trustees, and elders. Women have acted as teachers of the youth church, secretaries to the head pastor, ushers, and Bible Studies teachers. The women's wing is the most vibrant in DTM and RCCG.

¹⁸⁸ The two primary research questions were, “What are the experiences of Black clergywomen regarding obstacles in ministry leadership?” and “How do Black clergywomen attribute meaning to their experiences regarding obstacles in ministry leadership?” See U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Labor Force Statistics from the Current Population Survey* (Washington, DC: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2019).

¹⁸⁹ Galatians 3:28, NIV.

The black and African church is faced with sexism and the (im)possibility for women to escape cultural patriarchy, and resistance. Intimate partner abuse is often not addressed. Despite these limitations, some female assistant pastors use the pulpit as an opportunity to empower fellow women because their freedom is meaningless unless there is equity between the sexes. During her preaching, Felicia Shell Tucker described the church as “the place for women to escape abuse while creating equality with men.” In her book, *Black Women, Writing, and Identity*, Carole Boyce Davies suggested that escape for women involved seeking protective spaces and striking at night.¹⁹⁰ Just as the slaves escaped the plantations at night, women in DTM and RCCG use the opportunities available to them in smaller groups and preaching to empower other women to escape sexist relationships. The church serves as an escape place for women in abusive relationships because they identify their worth and empower them to resist oppression.

In her concluding remarks for the Black History Month Trivia at DTM, Pastor Gwen Marshal cited the most referred to story of Harriet Jacobs’s *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, adding that black women have accepted and admitted this abuse and the male subordination of women because of their children. She added that the time has come for black women to escape the boundaries of male domination, bring their children to church, create a community for them, and journey to freedom. Carole Davies dismissed the attribution of escape to mobility alone but extended it to include any attempt that a woman makes to resist confinement.¹⁹¹

In her Christmas message about the birth of Jesus, Pastor Tessa suggested that women must not read childbearing as stagnation and subordination but domination over men. Some

¹⁹⁰ Carole Boyce Davies, *Black Women, Writing, and Identity: Migration of the Subject* (New York: Routledge, 1994), 132-133

¹⁹¹ Black women negotiated escape/freedom in many modalities—time, age, space, education, language, ability, family, and location. See Davies, *Black Women, Writing, and Identity*, 135.

women participants interpreted the woman's ability to get pregnant and deliver and the man's inability as their superiority over men. A participant in RCCG said, "The man's inability to carry a fetus and a woman's ability to understand a baby that cannot even speak shows the uniqueness of a woman over a man. But in my village for instance, Ampenyi women are expected to bear children following their marriage. As a teen, you lose your dignity when you get pregnant but the child that you bring forth—the baby will be accepted in the community and even in the church." Despite motherhood elevating the status of women in many black and African communities and churches, some female participants criticized out of wedlock births. In *Passionate and Pious*, an ethnographic study on black faith-based sexuality Monique Moultrie states:

My teenage friends were brought before the church to "repent" from their sin of getting pregnant. I remember watching their tears flowing as they stood before the entire congregation with parents, two sets of highly regarded church members. As if it were yesterday, I watched as our male chairman of the deacon board made their sins known publicly (neither was visibly pregnant at the time of disclosure) to the audience, who then voted to strip these women of their privileges as members, removing them from the youth choir, for example. I watched in horror and confusion as no one dared speak on their behalf or at least bring the sexually responsible fathers-to-be up with them to share in this public shaming.¹⁹²

This thesis suggests that churches and the society must sometimes avoid their unfair stigmatization of teenagers and women who get pregnant out of wedlock due to limited choices. The argument for not criticizing mothers with restricted choices was made forcefully by Harriet Jacobs. In her autobiography, *Incident of the Slave Girl*, Harriet Jacobs openly criticized the African American communal disregard and ostracization of women who do not keep their purity until marriage. She states:

¹⁹² Monique Moultrie, *Passionate and Pious: Religious Media and Black Women's Sexuality* (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2017), 1-2.

But, O, ye happy women, whose purity has been sheltered from childhood, who have been free to choose the objects of your affection, whose homes are protected by law, do not judge the poor desolate slave girl too severely! If slavery had been abolished, I, also, could have married the man of my choice; I could have had a home shielded by the laws; and I should have been spared the painful task of confessing what I am now about to relate; but all my prospects had been blighted by slavery. I wanted to keep myself pure; and, under the most adverse circumstances, I tried hard to preserve my self-respect; but I was struggling alone in the powerful grasp of the demon Slavery; and the monster proved too strong for me. I felt as if I was forsaken by God and man; as if all my efforts must be frustrated; and I became reckless in my despair.¹⁹³

Some men and women participants suggested that although bearing children outside wedlock is unacceptable in black and African communities, as well as the church, single mothers must be praised regardless for their love for children. Unlike Moultrie's participants, neither DTM nor RCCG suspends women who get pregnant outside wedlock. A member of RCCG stated that in her church in Nigeria, getting pregnant without being married and adultery by both men and women was punishable by suspension for six months or a year and, in extreme cases, demotion of church leaders. These members were also segregated with special seats behind the whole congregation. Some African churches adopt these punitive measures to protect the integrity of the church.

Church Mothers, the Physical and Spiritual Backbone of the Church

The Madonna is engraved in the minds of many Christians as a symbol of motherhood. In the black and African communities, many women have played essential roles in both the community and the church. Some celebrated African and black women include Harriet Tubman,

¹⁹³ Harriet Jacobs, *Incident of the Slave Girl*, ed. by Lydia Maria Francis Child (Dover Publications, 2001), 83-84.

Milly Sawyers, Mary Meachum, Lucy F. Farrow, and Grace Tani Harris.¹⁹⁴ Motherhood is not attributable to only the biological function. Motherhood as used in this chapter depicts the cultural, social, and moral experiences of women transitioning into iconic figures in the black or

¹⁹⁴ Harriet Tubman helped many African American women and families escape slavery from the plantations using the Underground Railroad. Milly Sawyers was born a slave. Milly, her husband Moses, her children (Davy, Ann Mary, and Maria Ann), and two other slaves were mortgaged by her master, David Shipman to his nephew, Stephen Smith. Smith relocated to Kentucky and acquired a farm in Peoria County, Illinois. Milly and her family managed to escape and petition her freedom in a St. Louis Circuit Court because Smith had declared to his neighbors in Illinois that he and his slaves were living in Peoria County permanently. Milly in 1819 and 1833 filed two unsuccessful suits for her freedom in a St. Louis Supreme Court petitioning the apex court to grant her freedom on the grounds that she was free before moving to Missouri and freedom by birth to her two children (Ann Mary and Maria Ann). See Anne Twitty, *Before Dred Scott: Slavery and Legal Culture in the American Confluence, 1787-1857* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 180-209. In 1834, Milly was sold to William Ivey in Springfield, Missouri. Milly instituted her third unsuccessful suit in 1834 in a Greene County Circuit Court. Milly argued that she had lived in Ohio where slavery was outlawed because, “once free, always free.” Finally, in 1835, the court granted Milly her freedom. Springfield founders were upset that a black woman was freely living among whites. On the night of April 1, 1836, they broke into her house, ransacked it, took Sawyers to the street, beat her up with sticks, and left her at the mercy of the street. See Ozarksfirst.com, “News-Leader Special Report: The Milly Sawyers Story,” *Ozarksfirst.com*, March 22, 2018, accessed July 23, 2020, <https://www.ozarksfirst.com/local-news/news-leader-special-report-the-milly-sawyers-story/>. Lucy F. Farrow was a slave born in 1851 in Norfolk, Virginia. She was a black holiness preacher. After receiving the Holy Spirit baptism, she was hired by Parham as a cook for his ministry and later offered her a position as the nanny of his children. Farrow’s hard work and spiritual giftings were recognized especially her laying on of hands. See Wacker, *Heaven Below*, 93-94. Her popularity and acceptance among early Pentecostals were cemented when she laid hands on Edward Lee to receive Holy Spirit baptism. In 1905, Farrow was appointed the first female pastor to oversee the Seymour’s black Holiness church in Houston. Farrow moved to Monrovia, Liberia as one of the first Pentecostal missionaries. Farrow could not speak the Kru language of Liberians, but on two occasions the Spirit of God gave her utterances to preach in Kru. She came back to Houston in 1907 and died in 1911. See Cecil M. Robeck Jr., *The Azusa Street Mission and Revival: The Birth of the Global Pentecostal Movement* (Nashville, Tennessee: Emanate Books), 268-269. There is no accurate date for the birth of Grace Tani Harris, but sociologists have estimated her birth to be between the late 1970s or early 1980s. Grace was born in Krisan, a small fishing community in Nzema—Western Region, Ghana. Grace was originally called Maame Tani before her adoption “Grace” after her conversion by Harris Wade. She was a healer and herbalist. Grace got married to Harris and started the Twelve Apostles (later the Church of the Twelve Apostles) in 1918. She then appointed John Nackabah her associate pastor. The appointment of Nackabah attracted a lot of men to join the church. Madam Grace Harris Tani died in 1958.

African church and the community. Historian Anthea Butler describes “church mother,” or “mother” as “titles given to older women within black churches as a depiction of leadership or eldership.”¹⁹⁵ These women serve as the intermediaries between the ordained and the laity. The case of DTM is no different from the COGIC description in Butler’s book, *Women in the Church of God in Christ*.¹⁹⁶ The church mothers of DTM sat in the front pews. Although not directly stated, a closer look at the seating arrangement of these church mothers seems more hierarchical or structured. The first lady, Mrs. Bobbie Knox, sat at the immediate right hand of Bishop Knox, Pastor Gwen Marshall, and Carroll Clark.¹⁹⁷ The other church mothers who sat in the front pew included the sister of the founder and other female assistant pastors. These women were very vocal and actively supported the core beliefs of the church while engaging in issues of African American life, the promotion and preservation of black and DTM history.

In contrast to DTM, there exists a women’s department in RCCG but not church mothers like Butler defined in black churches. Most elderly women I observed in RCCG were called “mama” but did not form part of the core leaders. Although many of these women were spiritual and highly revered in the African immigrant community, most of these “mamas” were not economically empowered, educated, and civically active. According to John Burdick, Paul Gilroy argues that in the African diaspora, women are the “source of survival, coping, resistance,

¹⁹⁵ Butler, *Women in the Church of God in Christ*, 2.

¹⁹⁶ “COGIC church mothers’ quest for spiritual empowerment by means of ‘the sanctified life’ provided moral, spiritual, and physical fuel that enabled them to negotiate for and obtain power both within the denomination and outside it.” See Ibid, 3.

¹⁹⁷ In African American and African Pentecostal churches, first lady is a title for the founder or senior most pastor’s wife.

and identity.”¹⁹⁸ There is no special seating arrangement for these mothers and or leaders of RCCG. Pastor Tessy usually sat on the front pew with other church leaders (mostly men) sitting beside her, while the church mothers sat among the other members. The dress at RCCG is highly expressive of African culture. Clothes speak the mood of people.¹⁹⁹ RCCG “mamas” usually put on three-piece clothes (kaba, slit, and a hemmed piece wrapped around their waist) and headgear. Mercy Johnson, a fifty-year-old mama, described the intense happiness and accolades showered on her by the mostly white people at her apartment complex when she dresses in fully sewn African clothes. It is fascinating because while this style of dressing was described “un-Christian” by early missionaries to Africa, it is highly praised in the West because it identifies one as African. Mamas serve as advisors to the younger African immigrant generation. They are sometimes called upon to share the stories about their exact African community, tribe, and in some cases, country. They also serve as the board for advising the youth group of the church on marital issues. During a Bible study, a church mother stated that, although she is happy for their acceptance in Springfield, it is expected of the younger men to invite their wives to church for them to learn more about the African culture. RCCG church mothers did not serve a spiritual role but as advisors for young immigrants. They were not required to live sanctified lives but rather

¹⁹⁸ John Burdick, “Voices of God: Blackness and Gender in a Brazilian Black Gospel Music Scene,” in *Spirit on the Move: Black Women and Pentecostalism in Africa and the Diaspora*, ed. Judith Casselberry and Elizabeth A. Pritchard (Durham, North Carolina: Duke university Press, 2019), 34.

¹⁹⁹ White clothing symbolizes victory. It is usually won when a woman delivers a new baby. Newly married couples also wear white. It is worn by students after they graduate from high school and college. Politicians also wear white after they are declared winners in an election. When a new chief, priest, or priestess is sworn in, people usually clad themselves in white clothes. In many Akan societies, white is mostly preferred for the funeral of a deceased that lived seventy years and over. Red clothes depict danger or sadness. It is usually worn in a state of emergency (when a community is at war) and during a funeral for young people. Black is also worn for a funeral. In the Akan society, symbols in clothes also speak. Someone may insult, praise, and or mock you using the clothes they wear.

served as mothers and mentors for young women in the church. They did not have special seating arrangements.

In conclusion, the biographies of many black and African women have played an important role in the reconstruction of the identity of Pentecostal women. One cannot talk about religious and social respectability and the equality of black and African women without mentioning the role some historic women slaves, African queen mothers, AIC church founders, and COGIC women played that has become standard for these women. Women in Deliverance Temple Ministries and Redeemed Christian Church of God play an important role—from shaping polity to nurturing and to preaching. This chapter argues that these churches are empty without women because they outnumber men. The chapter supplements the findings of Kimberlie Crenshaw, Anthea Butler, and Estrela Alexander, demonstrating that black and African Pentecostal women have moved from the bottom to the mainstream of the church using their roles. Butler argues that women “seemed to follow the logical norms of ‘what a woman ought to be and do,’ they deviated enough to make their identities a mixed construction of subversion and conversion.”²⁰⁰ They believe a woman empowered by the Holy Spirit to teach and preach the gospel deserves the same share of the kingdom and is entitled to the same communal respect as a man. In the perspective of these women, an impartation of the Holy Spirit, their sanctification and ordination as preachers elevates their status as women and gives them the same opportunity to pastor churches and influence the administration of their church. In their studies on Pentecostalism and COGIC women, scholars like Anthea Butler have argued that Ida Robinson and the Women’s Department used their sanctified life through the Holy Spirit to break the pastoral monopoly of COGIC men. In principle, RCCG North America has one female

²⁰⁰ Butler, *Unrespectable Saints*, 174.

pastor and DTM about five assistant pastors. Women in both congregations seem to live sanctified lives and are endowed with the giftings of the Holy Spirit. With such premises, it can be asserted to a large extent that the female pastors are equal to men, in the church and in the society as a whole.

In her monograph, *Righteous Discontent: The Women's Movement in the Black Baptist Church, 1880-1920*, the Harvard African American Studies and religion professor Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham argues that the politics of respectability demand that each black woman “assume responsibility for behavioral self-regulation and self-improvement along moral, educational, and economic lines.”²⁰¹ This chapter found that the Women's Department and church mothers in both RCCG and DTM serve as icons and mentors for the women, young children, and younger married couples in their church. In the case of DTM, these women form part of the core leaders of this church (Council of Elders). In the RCCG, church mothers do not form part of core leaders but use their African cultural understanding of communal living and family standards to address problems within the church and among immigrants. Thus, women have constructed respectable and “sanctified identities by melding together various strands of evangelical belief, Victorian propriety, and progressive feminist activism. For these African American women, pursuing sanctification meant that their public and private lives were filled with tensions that required spiritual rigor, astuteness, diplomacy, and a relentless work ethic. By creating new identities based on the Bible, lower- and middle-class African American women gained a status for themselves in a society that ascribed to them only sexual or utilitarian

²⁰¹ Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, *Righteous Discontent: The Women's Movement in the Black Baptist Church, 1880-1920* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994), 196-197.

identities.”²⁰² Echoing the conclusions of Anthea Butler, this chapter reported that many Pentecostal women leave abusive relationships after they receive the Holy Spirit.

²⁰² Butler, *Unrespectable Saints*, 170.

CHAPTER FIVE, CONNECTING THE PAST TO THE PRESENT

The Frenzy of “Shouting,” when the Spirit of the Lord passed by, and, seizing the devotee, made him mad with supernatural joy, was the last essential of Negro religion and the one more devoutly believed in than all the rest. It varied in expression from the silent rapt countenance or the low murmur and moan to the mad abandon of physical fervor, — the stamping, shrieking, and shouting, the rushing to and fro and wild waving of arms, weeping and laughing, the vision and the trance. And so firm hold did it have on the Negro, that many generations firmly believed that without this visible manifestation of the God there could be no true communion with the Invisible.

— W. E. B. Du Bois²⁰³

The reader is invited to direct his mind to a moment of deeply felt religious experience, as little as possible qualified by other forms of consciousness. Whoever cannot do this, whoever knows not such moments in his experience, is requested to read no further; for it is not easy to discuss questions of religious psychology with one who can recollect the emotions of his adolescence, the discomforts of indigestion, or say, social feelings, but cannot recall any intrinsically religious feelings.

— Rudolf Otto²⁰⁴

Sociologists time and again face problems describing and predicting religious experience because of the numerous ways and places people encounter what the German-American theologian Paul Tillich called “Ultimate Reality.”²⁰⁵ William James defined religious experience as “the feelings, acts, and experiences of individual men in their solitude, so far as they apprehend themselves to stand in relation to whatever they may consider the divine.”²⁰⁶ In her essay “Touching the Transcendent: Rethinking Religious Experience in the Sociological Study of Religion,” Courtney Bender implored sociologists to move religious experiences to the center

²⁰³ Phil Zuckerman, *Du Bois on Religion* (Walnut Creek, California: AltaMira Press, 2000), 48.

²⁰⁴ Rudolf Otto, *The Idea of The Holy: An Inquiry into the Non-Rational Factor in the Idea of the Divine and Its Relation to the Rational*, 2nd ed., trans. John W. Harvey (New York: Oxford University Press, 1950), 8.

²⁰⁵ Paul Tillich, *Biblical Religion and the Search for the Ultimate Reality* (Chicago, Illinois: University of Chicago Press, 1955), 6.

²⁰⁶ William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience: A Study of Human Nature* (New York: Penguin, [1903] 1982), 31.

of studying a religious phenomenon rather than merely describing it, because it is the foundation of religious life.²⁰⁷ Donald Miller also dismissed the attention sociologists give to the roots of religious experience by suggesting they study the “fruits” of religious experience because the value of this experience is the credibility and acceptance of a person in a religious community.²⁰⁸ Bender and Miller’s suggestions relate to Assemblies of God scholar Everett A. Wilson’s question: “What makes a Pentecostal?” Wilson suggested historians and sociologists require evidence of participation (“profound spiritual and emotional experiences”).²⁰⁹ Wilson concluded that what differentiates Pentecostal identity from any other Christian identity is not just the confession of one’s identification with the group but the religious worldview (admission of the mystical, the supernatural, mystical, and ineffable). Wilson stated:

Like the proverbial duck, if a person looked like one, walked like one and talked like one—especially if one were supportive of the beliefs and practices that Pentecostals advanced—friends and neighbors could assume that he or she in fact belonged. At least the often-sung refrain “I’m so glad that I can say I’m one of them” apparently gained favor not just to establish identity or to convince believers that they were with the right crowd, but because adherents gave assent to the Pentecostal way of looking at reality,

²⁰⁷ Courtney Bender, “Touching the Transcendent: Rethinking Religious Experience in the Sociological Study of Religion,” in *Everyday Religion: Observing Modern Religious Lives*, ed. Nancy T. Ammerman (Oxford: Oxford University, 2007), 203-204. Bender argues that aside from communal religious experiences, there are instances where people who are not part of a religious community have a religious experience or an experience “out of the ordinary.” Bender gives a good review of the key ideas and people in this debate. The starting point for this discussion always begins with William James’s *The Varieties of Religious Experience: A Study in Human Nature* (1903; repr., New York: Penguin, 1982).

²⁰⁸ Donald E. Miller, *Reinventing American Protestantism: Christianity in the New Millennium* (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1997), 24-25.

²⁰⁹ “The scholar is faced with a dilemma: either suppress the transcendental aspects of Pentecostal origins and tell the story as though Pentecostalism is governed by the same principles observable in any other social movement, or abandon critical explanation and tell it the way many participant observers vow that it actually happened.” See Everett A. Wilson, “They Crossed the Red Sea, Didn’t They?: Critical History and Pentecostal Beginnings,” in *The Globalization of Pentecostalism: A Religion Made to Travel*, ed. Murray W. Dempster, Byron D. Klaus, and Douglas Petersen (Carlisle, UK: Regnum Books International, 1999), 86.

something about which they may have felt deeply even when their convictions were not overtly displayed.²¹⁰

Nancy Ammerman states that a congregation's culture includes "its habits of invoking God's presence—the degree to which it expects encounters with transcendence to happen regularly, through individual efforts or simply through the routine ritual actions sanctioned by the institution."²¹¹

This chapter discusses religious experiences from the Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG) and Deliverance Temple Ministries (DTM). It gives a historical narrative of the acceptance of Christianity by blacks and Africans and how their cultural experiences during slavery, after slavery, in Africa, and among African immigrants create some similarities and differences. Christianity was presented to Africans as an all-accepting and a problem-free religion, but in some cases, it was forced on slaves. Many Africans accepted the faith willingly, but the acceptance of Christianity by blacks in North America has been questioned because it created a feeling of shame and a master-slave relationship.²¹² Despite the demonization of African traditional religion(s) by missionaries, Pentecostals imported the vibrancy and ecstasies from their indigenous religion(s) into their churches.²¹³ Accepting the conclusion by many

²¹⁰ Ibid., 88-89.

²¹¹ Nancy Tatom Ammerman, *Congregation and Community* (New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 2001), 56.

²¹² African Americans created an oral text and extracted and interpreted the Bible using their own lived experiences in the slave community. Harriet Tubman was revered as the "Moses of her people," Martin Luther King, Jr. has been described as the African American Christ, and the biblical character of Hagar has been ascribed to many African American women who turned their slavery to agency. See Allen D. Callahan, "Introduction: Figures of the True," in *African American Religious Life and the Story of Nimrod*, ed. Anthony B. Pinn and Allen Dwight Callahan (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 1-6.

²¹³ In the introductory chapter, I argued that there is dual religious allegiance among Africans. For instance, Rev. Akindayomi was both a Christian and a *babalowo*.

sociologists that a Pentecostal church is identified by ecstatic worship, deliverance, healing, and glossolalia, this chapter considers the similarities and differences between the religious experience of DTM and RCCG members and how these religious experiences come together to define black and African Pentecostalism. The chapter also supplements the conclusions by scholars on the decline in many North American churches of glossolalia and its prevalence in African churches. It also explores how these religious experiences have affected the growth of these churches.

This chapter contributes to the argument in the introductory chapter, that despite blacks being in North America for over four hundred years, there still exist African lived and religious experiences among them. American Anthropologist Melville J. Herskovits argued that these Africanisms have survived in America but are diffused.²¹⁴ These African identities are remembered, fused, transposed, and repossessed in black communities and churches through cultural or ceremonial performances and practices.²¹⁵ Although many of the DTM participants have not visited Africa, they were not proponents of “black anti-Africanism” because they were enthused with the “Women’s Day” which featured the wearing of African attire.²¹⁶ These participants confidently and forcefully asserted that there are some commonalities between them and Africans. Religious Studies scholar Dianne M. Stewart extended Alvin Thompson’s

²¹⁴ Melville J. Herskovits, *The Human Factor in Changing Africa* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1962), 5-6.

²¹⁵ For instance, DTM has a celebration (Women’s Day) where the church especially women wear African attire. They believe this is a way they get connected to their African ancestry.

²¹⁶ Black anti-Africanism is any attitude by a black person (African American) that negates or denigrates anything African. In most cases, black anti-Africans dismiss their African lineage because they have either not been to Africa or none of their families are Africans. DTM women wear African attire to grace the Women’s Day ceremony every year. Bishop Knox and some women participants argued it is one way they get connected to their African heritage.

description of European Afrophobic or anti-blackness to include the “negation or denigration of things African, simply because they are African.”²¹⁷ This chapter focuses on how DTM and RCCG members express their religious experiences during worship services. I look at how these religious experiences, although similar, are expressed in different ways that make each of these congregations unique and distinguish black Pentecostalism and African Pentecostalism.

Holy Spirit Baptism and Interpretation of Tongues

This section analyzes vitality and religious experience in these congregations. In *The Churching of America*, Roger Finke and Rodney Stark reported that because “to the extent that people seek religion—and not all do—the demand is the highest for religions that offer close relations with the supernatural and distinctive demands for membership.”²¹⁸ Also, Donald Miller argued that the “growth and decline of a church is linked to the vitality of religious experience and profound ways congregants encounter the sacred.”²¹⁹ Scholars argue that the popularity of Pentecostalism over all other Christian religious groups is due to its promise of a spirit encounter.²²⁰ I am not concluding that a spirit encounter is the only reason for becoming a Pentecostal because it is very difficult to compile a detailed profile for why people join and switch churches. But this section of the thesis considers personal and lived experiences

²¹⁷ Black anti-Africanness proponents criticize African morals, social, intellectual, and economic inferiority. See Dianne M. Stewart, *Three Eyes for the Journey: African Dimensions of the Jamaican Religious Experience* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 184.

²¹⁸ Roger Finke and Rodney Stark, *Churching of America, 1776-2005: Winners and Losers in Our Religious Economy* (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 2005), 275

²¹⁹ Donald E. Miller, *Reinventing American Protestantism: Christianity in the New Millennium* (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1997), 25.

²²⁰ Pentecostalism outgrew mainline churches due to the promise of personal encounter with God. Ogbu Kalu, *African Pentecostalism: An Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 6.

(understanding of the phrase “Holy Spirit encounter” and the role of the Holy Spirit) among these two Pentecostal groups.

Pentecostalism has often been associated with the initial evidence of Holy Spirit baptism through tongue speaking. According to theologian Simon Chan, the “baptism of the Holy Spirit, to which glossolalia points, has always been understood as the coming of God’s Spirit into the believer’s life in a very focused way Tongues are attempts to express the inexpressible and what this means is that the Christian has encountered a ‘theophany’ which ‘include[s] the transformation of language into a channel of the divine self-disclosure’ in which the Holy Spirit ‘encounter[s] us in dramatic and unforeseen ways that change our outlook and broaden our horizon.’”²²¹ Although some scholars have described tongues speaking as the evidence of Holy Spirit baptism, Mark Dixon, an assistant pastor at DTM said the Holy Spirit is the first thing one receives after accepting Christ as their Lord and Savior, because people are baptized into the body of Christ. During the interview for this thesis, Pastor Mark Dixon said:

I am sure that you are familiar with the almost formulaic kind of thinking that says you don’t have the gift of the spirit or have the Holy Ghost many ways it is said unless you have received the baptism of the Holy Spirit... with the evidence of speaking in tongues. And so in Pentecostal traditions, this is kind of a distinction in some, in some Pentecostal circles you, you’re, you’re not really all the way in until this has happened to you. We were never at Deliverance Temple, the kind of church or Bishop was never the kind of person who is like, you are only partially a Christian because you don’t speak in tongues kind of thing. But as I say, he, he obviously was never one to discourage it. He’d grown up with it. He knows there’s a place for it in the church and in the life of a Christian. And the, the fact that you don’t or don’t yet, it doesn’t mean you’re not a Christian.... In Pentecostalism, there’s been this kind of second-class citizenship kind of thing within the kingdom of God. If you speak in tongues, if you have that evidence then you have been “baptized by the Holy Spirit.” We are told by scripture however that we are baptized into the body of Christ by Holy Spirit and that is not necessarily, it depends on what your theology is. I’m not one to consider that that is something that he, God does not separate

²²¹ Simon Chan, “The Language Game of Glossolalia, or Making Sense of the ‘Initial Evidence,’” in *Pentecostalism in Context: Essays in Honor of William W. Menzies*, ed. Wonsuk Ma and Robert P. Jones (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), 84.

himself.... But even with some of the split offs of the Pentecostals in the early 1900s, you have those who have become known as Jesus only, for example, who do not believe in the Trinitarian God. And so right there, you have those distinction, but for those who do, and I am a Trinitarian, firmly—for those who believe father, son, spirit, I don't believe one goes somewhere without the other, that you could have received receive Jesus into your heart as your savior. You can receive what he did on the cross and in the resurrection as valid for you without the work of the Holy Spirit. Not possible. The speaking in tongues is another manifestation but not the only one.... Plenty of tongue talkers for as long as I've been alive, I've known this experience. I know plenty of them who speak in tongues and whose lives are not characterized by evidence of Holy Spirit governance.

Although DTM is a Trinitarian Pentecostal church, Mark and some other DTM members who participated in this study believe tongues speaking is not the only manifestation of an encounter with the Holy Spirit. Members also associate moaning and shouting with Holy Spirit encounters.

On the contrary, most RCCG participants believe tongue speaking is the initial evidence of sanctified life and Holy Spirit baptism. Ecstatic worship (tongue speaking, loud music, and dance) often characterized RCCG service. This belief among African immigrant Pentecostal participants in this study can be an importation from African traditional religion. In his book *Pentecostalism: The Eddies of Ghanaian Christianity*, Emmanuel Kingsley Larbi suggests that to the Akan and other African people, spirit overshadowing is manifested by communicating in a language of the spirit. A sign of salvation, this belief became a Pentecostal doctrine. In his study of the Church of Pentecost, Ghana, Larbi states:

An “initial evidence” of being born again is glossolalia (from two Greek words for tongue and speaking). Believers acquire the power to speak in known or unknown tongues. The Constitution of the Church of Pentecost, one of the largest Pentecostal churches in West Africa, declares that “all believers in Jesus Christ are entitled to receive, and should earnestly seek the Baptism of the Holy Ghost and fire according to the command of our Lord.... This is the normal experience of the early Church. With this experience comes power to preach and bestowment of the gifts of speaking in tongues as

the Spirit of God gives utterance. This is accompanied by a burning desire and supernatural power to witness to others about God's salvation and power."²²²

Although many African Pentecostals believe in speaking of tongues and yearn for the gift to speak in a different tongue, some RCCG participants doubted their initial reception of the Holy Spirit. Adeola Adetula told me about her spiritual journey from Nigeria and the influence Pastor Tessy and the entire congregation have had on her success and spiritual fulfillment. Collecting her thoughts, Adeola removed her high heels and wore a slide because her feet were hurting. Then she said:

I have been a Christian all through my life—let me say my secondary school. That was when I started as a believer, but I was still like—my faith was still shaking. But, when I graduated from my secondary school, I started the journey of believer; started speaking in tongues; joined the sub-group in the church working as exercising more of my faith.... When I graduated, I maybe let's say maybe a year later. And the Holy Spirit, it was not that pastor prayed for me, it came upon me. I prayed and it came upon me.... When it came upon me, there was a pastor that we rented one of our apartments back then in Nigeria, so I went to him that I really want to know if I'm speaking in tongues. But I think I am speaking in tongues for him to be able to confirm it for me.... When we started praying, so he noticed that I was speaking another language, so he said that it was the Holy Spirit.

I studied the accounts of the interviewees, not their experiences, because the Holy Spirit baptismal experiences for people like Adeola took place outside of the church. Among black participants (Mark Dixon) and African immigrant participants (Adeola Adetula), the evidence of Holy Spirit baptism differs. The former think glossolalic utterance is not the initial evidence of Holy Spirit baptism because one can speak in tongues without being saved, while the latter believe that the initial evidence of Holy Spirit baptism is tongues speaking. This section, however, suggests that among Springfield's African and African American Pentecostals

²²² Kalu, *African Pentecostalism*, 8.

(participants of these churches), the understanding and evidence of Holy Spirit baptism differ because in both churches there is no strict doctrinal claim that glossolalia is the only initial physical evidence of Holy Spirit baptism (as classical Pentecostals would assert) or one of the charismatic gifts available to the *ekklesia*.

Although religious experience is central in these churches, the interpretation of tongues is rarely practiced. Pentecostals differentiate the gift of tongues and the interpretation of tongues, as described in Acts 2 and 1 Corinthians 12:10.²²³ Throughout my observations, I witnessed two interpretations of tongues, one from each of these churches. Tongues interpretation may have happened other times when I was not present because I only observed one church every week. No sermon was specifically devoted to Holy Spirit impartation or baptism and neither did any call to the altar include Holy Spirit impartation. However, during one Sunday morning service, a strange thing happened at RCCG, after the singing of worship songs. Before Pastor Tessy climbed the pulpit to preach the sermon, one congregant (a woman) started speaking in tongues, shouting and rolling on the ground. While interpreting the prophetic tongue, she paused for about one minute and started crying very loudly. I was frightened so I moved from my seat to the first seat where the ushers had brought her so I could get a clearer glimpse of the whole encounter. The entire church became so quiet that one could even hear the drop of a pin. The woman's voice had taken center stage and all attention was directed at her. Pastor Tessy knelt, begging the Lord, "please, please, let them live and protect them." She repeated this statement fifteen times. She cried and asked the whole congregation to be on their feet. She told the church that the Holy Spirit had overshadowed the woman and it was a word from God that as we were approaching

²²³ Tongues of prayer are for personal edification while tongues of interpretation are usually for the church and happen spontaneously. Tongues and interpretation occur in almost every service. They usually call the latter "tongue of prophecy."

Christmas, children will die so we should lift a prayer to God to protect the children in the church and children of our family back home in any African country. This incident diverted the entire worship as time was devoted to this spontaneous prayer.

It was very thrilling because in both churches the Holy Spirit empowered a layperson to speak a prophetic tongue and it was interpreted to the entire congregation. Although some of my participants have spoken in tongues, Gwen Marshall was the only person who gave a personal interpretation of her tongues while she preached. In *Heaven Below*, historian Grant Wacker calls Pentecostal worship “planned spontaneity” because it is in two forms, “structural and anti-structural impulses.”²²⁴ Marshall used tongues structurally in her preaching. Asked why she uses tongues intermittently in her preaching, she stated:

When I’m on preaching, because you know there’s great controversy about that.... But I feel that as I speak in tongues, even through my message, the next words out of my mouth is the interpretation of that tongue whether you understand that or not. So, like if I hit a spot where I hear the spirit of the Lord speaking to me, I speak in tongues and then the next words out of my mouth—are going to, it may not be: “That says the Lord,” “The earth is trembling” but it’s gonna be what he gave me. And in many times during that period of time, he’s given me example. He’s given me further insight. And sometimes I feel that insight is beyond anything. It’s surely not in my notes and it’s coming directly from him because it’s nothing that I would have thought even to say. So, in preaching, yes, in tongues, I may speak in tongues in here, anywhere I am as I’m going down the highway.

It can be inferred from the glossolalic experiences that occurred in the matrix of these churches during my observations that tongues primarily consist of incomprehensible speech of a mysterious nature and content, a “quasi-language” that allows God and the believer to communicate. It can be discernible and undiscernible. Discernible tongues-speech events were

²²⁴ Grant Wacker, *Heaven Below: Early Pentecostals and American Culture* (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2003), 99.

those interpreted by Pastor Tessy and Gwen Marshall respectively. These tongues usually take place in corporate prayer. They are specific messages either to an individual or the *ekklesia*. Also, most of my participants said they used undiscernible (tongues of prayer) during private prayers. James K. Smith said, “The Christian ‘prays in tongues’ when she lacks the words to properly express her longings or anguish or desires. The practice is deeply cathartic and represents a kind of spiritual discipline.”²²⁵

Shouting, Moaning, and Clapping

Vitality and vibrancy among members of the DTM are mostly manifested through “shouting” and “moaning.” Wacker further suggests that it is not an exaggeration to describe Pentecostal worship as “deafening” and “chaotic.”²²⁶ Shouting and moaning are described differently by Lincoln and Mamiya. They state:

Some worshipers “got the Spirit” and were propelled into a paroxysm of shouting. While others “fell out” and rolled on the floor in a shaking, trance-like state, possessed by the Holy Ghost. Some people stood up in the pews and waved their hands over their heads, while others clapped their hands in time with the music. Even in the midst of preaching, the worshipers carried on a dialogue with the preacher by shouting approval and agreement with ejaculations like “Amen!” or “Preach it!” or “Tell it like it is!” At other times they encouraged the preacher to work harder to reach that precipitating point of cathartic climax by calling out, “Well?” . . . “Well?” The highlight of the service was to worship and glorify God by achieving the experience of mass catharsis; a purifying explosion of emotions that eclipses the harshness of reality for a season and leaves both the preacher and the congregation drained in a moment of spiritual ecstasy. Failure to achieve this experience often resulted in polite compliments of “good talk” or “good lecture,” and not the ultimate, “You *preached* today!” being offered the preacher. The Black Church was the first theater in the Black community.²²⁷

²²⁵ James K. Smith, *Thinking in Tongues: Pentecostal Contributions to Christian Philosophy* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2010), 86.

²²⁶ Wacker, *Heaven Below*, 100.

²²⁷ C. Eric Lincoln and Lawrence H. Mamiya, *The Black Church in the African American Experience* (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1990), 5-6.

Holy Spirit impartation in a black Pentecostal church is exhibited in “shouting” and “moaning.” Johns suggests that the “Pentecostals’ experiential worldview gives its adherents a predisposition to affirm a transcendent God, transrational knowledge, and to become a Spirit-filled believer.”²²⁸ The members of DTM exhibited these same characteristics. They shouted words like “Well?,” “Preach it, pastor,” “Come on, pastor,” “Amen,” “All right,” “That’s right,” and “This aren’t lies.” Thus, it was not out of place for Lincoln and Mamiya to conclude that rural black churches formed the reservoir for “Black folks” religious experience.²²⁹ Unlike DTM, where members shouted and moaned during preaching, RCCG congregants shouted and moaned while they were singing and praying. In some cases, Pastor Aaron thinks these words were “giving credence, it’s giving confirmation to the fact that that pastor is speaking truth.” According to Baeta, Asamoah-Gyadu describes the evidence of the descent of the Holy Spirit on a worshipper in these words:

The activities and “signs” include rhythmic swaying of the body, usually with stamping, to repetitious music ... hand-clappings, ejaculations, poignant cries and prayers, dancing, leaping, and various motor reactions expressive of intense religious emotion, prophesyings, “speaking with tongues,” falling into trances, relating dreams and visions, and “witnessing,” i.e. recounting publicly one’s own experience of miraculous redemption.²³⁰

²²⁸ According to Johns, “The spectrum of knowledge includes the physical senses, cognitions, affections, emotions, behaviors, and spiritual discernment. Each of these is fused to the others with the affections serving as the integrating centre.” See Johns, *Yielding of the Holy Spirit*, 76. “The use of tongues, as well as uninhibited emotional and physical displays, are best explained by disengagement from the prevailing rationality brought on by a need for existential confirmation.” See Byron D. Klaus and Douglas Petersen, *The Globalization of Pentecostalism: A Religion Made to Travel* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2011), 87.

Put them in quotation marks or you are plagiarizing their words

²²⁹ Lincoln and Mamiya, *The Black Church in the African American Experience*, 111.

²³⁰ Christian G. Baeta, *Prophetism in Ghana: A Study of Some “Spiritual” Churches* (London: SCM Press, 1956), 1, quoted in Asamoah-Gyadu, *Contemporary Pentecostal Christianity: Interpretations from an African Context* (Oxford, UK: Regnum Books International, 2013), 25-26.

Cox in his *Fire from Heaven* states:

Not only is the ultimate mystery indescribable and its ways unsearchable. Not only is the infinite God unapproachable in mere human language. The even deeper insight of ecstatic utterance is that, despite all this, human beings can nonetheless speak to God because God makes such speech possible. Prayer itself is an act of grace. We are unable to pray, but the Spirit “maketh intercession.” Our corrupt and inadequate language is transformed by God’s love into the tongues of angels ... the “excruciating pain” of linguistic atrophy, desiccation, and banality is transfigured, if only momentarily and episodically, into free-flowing praise. No wonder the people one sees and hears “praying in the Spirit” in Pentecostal congregations and elsewhere frequently appear so joyful.²³¹

The religious experience of a person is defined by the individual’s cultural understanding. While members of RCCG explained shouting as an accompaniment of preaching, DTM members suggested shouting and moaning was an ecstatic experience through which one encounters the divine. I agree with Cox and Asamoah-Gyadu that black and African Pentecostal spirit-filled worship includes shouting, moaning, and speaking in tongues.

Pentecostal’s Identity: Shouting or Tongues-Speaking?

Sociologists and historians often perceive tongues speaking as the distinctive mode of identifying a Pentecostal. This generalization cannot be used as a major description of Pentecostalism because the practice is becoming less common. Also, tongues-speaking is waning in many contemporary North American Pentecostal churches while it is prevalent among African and Asian Pentecostals. This section argues that the infrequent speaking in tongues among members of DTM is an indication that sociologists and historians miss the point when they use glossolalia to differentiate Pentecostals from mainline Protestants and other Christian groups. Gwen Marshall, an assistant pastor and an interviewee, stated that although DTM accepts and

²³¹ Cox, *Fire from Heaven*, 96.

believes in tongues-speaking, laying on of hands, signs, and wonders, glossolalia no longer forms the core of their worship because sometimes “we get so caught up in tongues that we forget what the whole message is Pastor Marshall implied that too much emphasis on tongue-speaking can divert attention from the message which saves souls from perishing. About the decline of tongue-speaking at DTM, Pastor Carroll Clark also said:

We still speak in tongues at Deliverance Temple. And there are times of the move of God, as I would put it, that speaking in tongues would just practically take over the service, but we don't do that every week. People speak in tongues but they just don't do it publicly anymore, like they used to it.... Times have changed as far as generations do different things, like even in the public world in the United States, we do things different now, but the outcome we hope is the same or better. But I think just times have changed. And people don't talk about it as much as they used to; because it used to be, we thought speaking in tongues was like if you didn't speaking in tongues you weren't saved. So, we consequently had to hear you speaking in tongues so that we could judge within that you was still on the mainline. Whereas now, speaking in tongues—I hear a lot of people speaking in tongues when we were in prayer together or when we are on our prayer line or something like that but in the church, I don't hear, I never hear them speaking in tongues. Same people, so I don't really know what that is.

Pastor Felicia Shell Tucker also said:

They don't emphasize it, but it is allowed. They don't look down on it.... Probably on a daily basis.... At my home, here, in my car, at work, not loudly for everybody to here but pretty much everywhere the Lord and the spirit will tell me to start speaking because it strengthens me.... Usually, I can discern it.... Prayer is not popular, and I wish it was. Because for prayers it is just me, Bishop, his wife, Minister Cynthia, and Mother Oresha—she had the stroke.... And it is sad because you can come here in the mornings. If I get here early enough to pray with them. We're in here praying, walking around praying or whatever. And I have my flags and just praying out loud and you'll see people coming in to church and getting ready to go Sunday school. And it doesn't start till 9 but they won't even come in here. It's not. And I think some people, I think there is a stigma attached to it. People think you'll get more backlash if you pray or that warfare or maybe they are just lazy. I don't know because I know it works.

The fact that DTM members believe in tongues and rarely use it during services (either Sunday service or Tuesday and Thursday morning prayer line) shows that glossolalia cannot be used to

identify a contemporary Pentecostal. It is very hard to fathom how people use tongues during their private prayers but do not do so during corporate worship.²³² This affirms the findings of Margaret Poloma that glossolalia is either missing or declining among American evangelical Pentecostals (such as the Assemblies of God). The AG, like some American evangelical churches, emphasizes “routinized doctrines.”²³³

Poloma succinctly states: “this emphasis on ‘dynamic filling’ and ‘empowerment’ increasingly has shifted from personal experience and testimony to the profession and expansion of doctrinal decrees.”²³⁴ The euphoria and gestures DTM members attach to the recitation of the church declaration, shouting, clapping, and moaning distinguishes their worship from RCCG.²³⁵ Noting that speaking in tongues was very prevalent at DTM years ago, Gwen Marshall said she would be enthused to see a “generation ... that will full-blown carry this.” Pastor Gwen thinks the decline of tongue-speaking can also be attributed to the fact “we have access to doctors and we have access to medicines. And so, we don’t exercise the gifts. And anything you don’t exercise begins to lay dormant. So, we don’t have that strong need. We don’t feel the strong need. And without the strong need, we’re not going to exercise. I’ll just take you to the doctor. Then, we’ll just go get some aspirin then.” Thus, it can be implied from Pastor Gwen’s call for the revival of glossolalia that Pentecostalism’s worldview is shaped by a complete reliance on God.

²³² Many AG pastors use tongues in their private prayer but refuse to use it during corporate service. See Poloma, *Charisma and Structure in the Assemblies of God*, 19. They may also choose to downplay the gift of speaking in tongues because it may turn people off on a Sunday service.

²³³ Margaret Poloma, *The Assemblies of God at the Crossroads: Charisma and Institutional Dilemmas* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1989), xx.

²³⁴ Poloma, *Charisma and Structure in the Assemblies of God*, 50.

²³⁵ The church declaration is a word of affirmation members of DTM recite at the opening of their service.

The distinctive feature of African, Korean, and Latino Pentecostal churches is their Spirit-inspired worship style. Asamoah-Gyadu argues that pneumatology is a “normal” experience because the totality of the African universe is spiritual.²³⁶ The assertiveness and power of an African Pentecostal church is expressed in tongue speaking. The Church of Pentecost, Ghana views tongues speaking as the initial evidence of Holy Spirit baptism.²³⁷ During my interview with Rashid about the place of glossolalia at RCGG, he said:

I was a Pentecostal in Ghana before coming to the United States and I decided to join this church because it is the only African immigrant church in Springfield. And after my first visit, I realized that this church blends its worship with African Catholics, Orthodox, and Pentecostals. As well as other African Christian groups. It doesn't dwell much on doctrines but the Holy Spirit that is manifested in the speaking of tongues.... I do not think an individual is baptized by the Holy Spirit unless he or she can speak in tongues. Although some of our members speak tongues during our services, I think comparatively, many people would have spoken tongues if we were in Africa.... Because in Africa, we grow with it. If you are a child, you see your parents speaking in tongues and it's, it's, it is kind of a norm there.... So in Ghana, we are taught to yearn for the gift of tongues and sometimes it is like one is not even born again or saved unless he is able to speak in tongues. I recall instances where people even fake tongue speaking because in a prayer meeting, everyone might be speaking in tongues and your inability to speak makes you odd.

The assumption that tongues speaking is the initial evidence of Holy Spirit baptism is prevalent among many African Pentecostals and charismatics. It is also a firm belief among members of the Assemblies of God in America.²³⁸ Thus, both DTM and RCCG affirm common Pentecostal

²³⁶ Asamoah-Gyadu, *Contemporary Pentecostal Christianity*, xv.

²³⁷ Tongues-speaking is important for personal prayer, prophecy, and exorcising evil spirits. See Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu, *Contemporary Pentecostal Christianity*, 50.

²³⁸ Eighty-five percent of the pastors agreed with the statement: “A person who has never spoken in tongues cannot claim to be Spirit baptized.” Despite the growing disagreement among AG members and pastors, this doctrinal statement continues to be a requirement for ordination. See Poloma, *Charisma and Structure in the Assemblies of God*, 18-19.

beliefs held by other Pentecostal groups but they are less emphasized and manifested during DTM service than RCCG.

Worship

This section describes the worship services of these churches. The services described in this section of the thesis contained a mix of worship styles. I looked at the similarities and differences among DTM and RCCG. This comparison supports my larger argument that despite a unifying “spirituality” among African immigrants and blacks, their religious experiences are expressed differently.

Both RCCG and DTM start their services with Bible studies, worship and praise, and close with preaching and benediction. The small difference between RCCG and DTM is that DTM opens its service with the recitation of the church declaration, the laying on of hands, anointing, prayer requests, birthday present presentations, and a benediction, usually led by Pastor Gwen Marshall or any church mother after the preaching. In the case of RCCG, intermittent preaching is exchanged with prayer.

Timed services are usually associated with mega-churches but RCCG usually has a timed service.²³⁹ Unlike RCCG, where there is a strict time limit, DTM does not follow a schedule. None of their programs are timed. A spirit-filled service is characterized by moaning and shouting. Testimonies are indirectly included in their service despite the times that other members gave their testimonies. Almost every person who holds the microphone, except for the choir, either gives a testimony, shouts, moans and preaches for a few minutes before he or she

²³⁹ Sunday morning service Bible studies start at 9:30 a.m. and the main service starts at 10:30 a.m.–2:30 p.m.

starts the task he or she has been assigned. One can derive the congregation's untimed program from the billboard at the forecourt of the building and its website. The billboard has the time of service but no closing time.²⁴⁰ The subsequent paragraphs in this section describe in detail my observations during Sunday service at DTM and RCCG respectively. It gives a vivid account of how the service is organized and how members express themselves and participate in the service.

The Bible studies at DTM are held in one of the conference rooms with breakfast and coffee for congregants to eat and drink. RCCG does not share breakfast but they occasionally organize lunches comprised of various African and American meals for congregants.²⁴¹ In both churches, congregants enter from the main entrance to the patio and then use either the west or east entrance to enter the auditorium. While RCCG opens its service with a prayer, DTM begins its main service with a Bible reading and a recitation of the Church Declaration. In both churches, the choir is invited to sing praise and worship songs. The words for the songs are usually displayed on the screen at RCCG.

At the RCCG congregation, the choir is comprised of only Nigerians. About 95 percent of members are Nigerians. This has made many African immigrants in Springfield call RCCG the Nigerian church. They usually sing Igbo and Yoruba songs and translate them into English. Although English songs are also sung, the style and gestures that accompany these songs are mostly Nigerian. Two members of the church I interviewed said they wish there would be diversity in the songs they sing because they seem more Nigerian. Rashid, a Ghanaian and a member of RCCG, said:

²⁴⁰ Sunday morning services Bible studies (Transformation hour) start at 9:00 a. m. and the main service starts at 10:30 a.m.

²⁴¹ Mac and cheese was always present anytime lunch was shared after the service and many of the members enjoyed it. It is not an error for one to conclude that blacks (African Americans and Africans) love mac and cheese.

I realized that they sing Yoruba and Igbo songs and translate them on the projector. I think it's a good thing but since we are in a church and we have people from different backgrounds and other African countries with their unique local languages, I think it will be best if they could diversify the songs that they sing in church. Since there are also African American students as well as some white people in the church.

Pastor Aaron, a black assistant pastor at RCCG said:

I'm trying to learn the language—an African language. But I think that their rhythm and their beat is something I really, really admire because I was once a DJ and I understand rhythm. And I think the rhythm is something that they bring that's very, very unique.... I say Africans and African Americans they have the same rhythm but there is like an extra beat in that they have.

It is indeed true that popular music is one of the reasons for the popularity and growth of Pentecostalism in Africa. The use of media, especially the composition of songs and dance to replace disco music and dance, is phenomenal in the RCCG. Kalu attributes the popularity of African Pentecostalism in Africa and the diaspora to the “encapsulating strategy—they retain their members by enlarging the charismatic space for the youth and women.”²⁴² Many African ethnographers and ethnomusicologists have argued that drumming and dancing are ways African culture is expressed and continued in the diaspora. Ethnomusicologist George Dor has suggested that the intense indigenous praise, drumming, and dancing among African diaspora religious groups is transported from traditional African religions.²⁴³ The energetic dance and music that characterizes RCCG worship is truly amazing. During one of my visits, the choir sang Christian songs in English, Yoruba, and Igbo during the offertory while congregants formed a line to give

²⁴² Ogbu Kalu, “Holy Praiseco: Negotiating Sacred and Popular Music and Dance in African Pentecostalism.” *Ghana Bulletins of Theology* (N.S.) 3 (December, 2008): 112.

²⁴³ George Worlasi Kwasi Dor, *West African Drumming and Dance in North American Universities: An Ethnomusicological Perspective* (Jackson, Mississippi: The University Press of Mississippi, 2014), 16.

their contributions. The leader of the choir asked members to clap their hands and dance. The songs were mainly traditional Yoruba and Igbo music translated on a projector. The room was filled with bass-heavy and drum kicking music. A variety of lights flashed from the roof and the pulpit. The auditorium looked like a disco while a cameraman took pictures. These pictures were later uploaded on the congregation's Facebook page. Members waved handkerchiefs and pieces of clothing while they were dancing. I was struck by the dance of a woman when the choir sang a song that used Nigerian pidgin English—"Jesus, you don win; *kpata kpata* you go win again" (Jesus, you have won and you will again). The dance was similar to the Agbadza dance by the Ewes of Ghana.²⁴⁴ For lack of better words, the entire congregation launched into an impassioned frenzy.

At DTM, congregants waved flags during praise and worship. These flags were waved harder while members were shouting, jumping, and running. This was the first time I saw people wave flags in church. It sparked my interest because I perceived this act as a "distraction" to worship. After interviewing Felicia Shell Tucker, I concluded that my assumed "distractions" during the service were perceived to be the Holy Spirit moving to and fro from person to person. Felicia Shell Tucker, who introduced the use of flags at DTM, states:

I am the one that actually implemented this. These are all my flags and because I used to be one of those Christians that just sat here and was like praise the Lord. I didn't want to make a scene. And then God told me, "No you praise me as though you were at your favorite secular concert." So, I started because I am a praise dancer. I am in charge of praise dancers. And I started praise dancing with the flags. And then God said, "How come you don't do it when you are in service?" Because I'm like I don't what people will

²⁴⁴ Agbadza is a traditional dance by the people of the Volta Region in Ghana. It was performed during the Hogbetsotso festival. When the missionaries came to Ghana, they condemned all these traditional dances as fetishistic and demonic. The dance currently has found its place in many Pentecostal and Orthodox (Mainline) churches. It is predominantly danced when people sing Christian songs by Jack Alolome. See <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i2PJ5nYyIjw>.

think Lord but now I don't care. I wave flags now; I got everybody else waving them. So yeah, that's something implemented about three years ago and they all have something on it about the Lord.... Everybody wanted one. Everybody and that's why I kept buying more and more because these are like \$35.00 a piece. This is real silk. And I was just buying more and more so everybody can have one.

Printed on the flags were words and phrases like I Am, Yahweh, The Powerful Blood of Jesus, Worship, Holy Spirit, and The Presence of the Lord is Here. DTM is not the only church that uses flags during the service in the Ozarks. In his study of the Dayspring Church, Samuel Gingerich also found that members waved flags during worship.²⁴⁵ Cox argues that clapping, dancing, and the use of other objects by African Americans were worship styles imported from African religion.²⁴⁶

Deliverance, healings, and miracles have contributed immensely to the growth and popularity of Pentecostalism among Africans and African Americans. Pentecostalism scholar Walter Hollenweger has suggested that the Pentecostal faith is rooted in the miracles in the Bible and their manifestation in the contemporary church.²⁴⁷ From my observations of RCCG and DTM services, the defining features were the expressive, experiential, and interventionist nature of their worship. Cox aptly suggests that Pentecostalism “is about the experience of God, not about abstract religious ideas, and it depicts a God who does not remain aloof but reaches down through the power of the Spirit to touch human hearts in the midst of turmoil.”²⁴⁸ The experience of the Holy Spirit offers members healing and deliverance. Healing, miracles, and deliverance

²⁴⁵ Samuel Wayne Gingerich, “Supernatural Pilgrims: A Journey to a New Apostolic Reformation Congregation in the Ozarks,” MSU Graduate Theses, 2019, 3346, 2, accessed July 30, 2020, <https://bearworks.missouristate.edu/theses/3346>.

²⁴⁶ Cox, *Fire From Heaven*, 249.

²⁴⁷ Walter J. Hollenweger, *The Pentecostals: The Charismatic Movement in the Churches* (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Augsburg Publishing House, 1972), 41-42.

²⁴⁸ Cox, *Fire from Heaven*, 5.

have attracted many people to join Pentecostal churches that have fulfilled their spiritual and physical needs. For instance, Pastor Carroll joined DTM after belonging to the Church of God in Christ and has been a member of DTM for 46 years. Carroll narrated the miraculous encounter that influenced her choice and another series of miracles that she has experienced as a member and a pastor:

When I came to Deliverance Temple, he had been going on for just a year and I came. I was invited to a noon Bible noon prayers service. And I went with a friend of mine. And I don't know the Lord just touched me in that I had no intentions of leaving my church. I had been in my church all my life. The Church of God in Christ—it was called Timmons Temple at that time. Now it's Sanctuary of Praise but it's the same church. I had no plans of leaving, ever leaving there, I have been there since I was, in fact I got saved there. And something touched me. He taught a lesson before he, we, we had the prayer time. And the word just was so dynamic to me.... In my church where I had been raised in the country in Hartville. We had the same pastor as they up here. But I was raised in the country and I don't know. It seemed like they just taught kind of basic things and this is what the Bible says. Like they told us what the Bible said. We didn't have an opportunity of the word. We were not encouraged to read it for ourselves. So, the word just really struck me and so I went home and I was really impressed. I was telling my husband, "I'm really like that church." So they invited me, my girlfriend invited me again to up there.... So then they were praying. I was praying with my baby—I mean my last baby.... because I have had trouble with having my children. So they were praying. They had me in a chair and they were praying for me. And all of a sudden, I heard the Lord say, "This is where I want you".... And so, I went home and prayed about it and I told my mother what the Lord had said to me..... She asked my husband what he thought about it. And he said, "I think she is just excited; she will be alright in a couple of weeks." And they were having revival and he thought I had just got excited about things. And so then, I told the Lord and said, if I am supposed to be there, tell, have the pastor say certain things to say to me.... And so, when I went in there he was teaching again and he just said those exact words that I asked the Lord to say, to have him say to me. And he didn't know me.... But the Lord continued to nurture me that way and then He gave me that scripture because I asked Him for a scripture. Give me some word that I can go by. So He gave me a scripture...Ezekiel 12. And I said, oh my goodness! And the Lord had given me that scripture a year ago but I didn't even have any idea of what He was talking about and the same scripture came up again.... And so I joined Deliverance Temple and that was forty-six years ago. And I have been there ever since.

Pastor Carroll's recovery from a stroke is a great testimony and a story that has been told time and again at DTM. Carroll narrated this story in a sermon entitled "Change Is Coming."²⁴⁹ She said:

I suffered stroke all over my body. I was hospitalized for three months. I could not move, talk nor eat. The only time I saw myself move was when the nurses moved my body. Everyone including my friends and family thought I was going to die. Doctors had no hope in me. My bills were just piling up and my children were fed up because I was going to be in debt forever. The church did not leave me behind. Intercessory prayers were held for me. There were times that my children brought a mobile phone and I joined the prayer line. Bishop Knox continuously visited and prayed with me while I was on the sickbed. I usually heard him talk about Ezekiel and the Valley of Dry Bones. Although it was hard, I trusted God. One day, I was able to move my body by myself and started talking. I then moved in to stay with my daughter for two years. I could not baby myself. My daughter had to baby me every day. I started walking like a baby and here I am today looking beautiful, strong, and healthy.

Carroll's miraculous stories, from her need of a child to healing from stroke, underscore and confirm the assertion that Pentecostalism is characterized by miracles.²⁵⁰ Adding to the miraculous encounters DTM members have experienced, pastor Felicia Shell Tucker said:

I have experienced a lot and I've seen miracles. I've prayed for people and seen them healed.... I have seen miracles. I wrote about them in my book. There was a young lady I prayed for that they were gonna take her heart out of her chest. Like they medevacked to St. Louis and they were gonna take her to and she reached out to me and I prayed for her. And they were literally gonna take heart out of her chest, but I prayed for her; and she went in Thursday.... They couldn't see anything wrong with her. And she walked out of the hospital on Sunday and she came to my office on that Monday and she is still healed today. There is nothing wrong with the heart.

²⁴⁹ *DeliveranceTemple.org*, accessed June 23, 2020, <https://deliverancetemple.org/>.

²⁵⁰ Many people expect healing during their maiden visit to church. See Cox, *Fire from Heaven*, 247; Kalu, *African Pentecostalism*, 96.

I infer from Pastor Carroll and Pastor Tucker's stories that miracles draw new Pentecostal members. In her article on Pentecostalism in Ghana, Birgit Meyer argues that healing and miracles primarily induce people to convert into Pentecostal churches.²⁵¹

The understanding of miracles among modern Pentecostals has changed from happenings beyond natural imagination to everyday life changes. African immigrants seek medical advice and use pharmaceutical medicines for ailments they would have expected healings and miracles for if they were in Africa. In the interview, Rashid stated:

It was not miracle as we are made to believe in Africa because it was not beyond natural expectations. So, a conservative African won't describe that miracle because it did not involve anything supernatural. So, I have sought medical care for minor ailments like headache and stomach upset because America isn't Africa where we connect spirituality that is evil maneuvering to everything. Actually I did pray first but I didn't call a pastor like I would have done if I was in Ghana—so the headache or stomach upset that I had might be because of stress or a meal that I had taken that I may be allergic to so I don't say we should not pray while we are sick but I suggest seeking medical care first because we are in America it's a good decision.

Asked whether she had experienced a miracle recently, Pastor Carroll Clarke stated:

Yeah but it is not like it's a miracle because I was sick. I've had a stroke but beside that it was like eleven years ago. I was very sick and my blood pressure was high. It was consistently high My blood pressure was 200 over 110 or something or something constantly, I mean daily. And I really don't know why I didn't have a stroke. That in itself was a miracle.... I was going back to taking a whole bunch of medicine but still I was getting no better. And then, I asked, I sought the Lord. I took time to seek the Lord concerning that thing because I was just totally depressed and just fearful. And the Lord reminded me that our Sunday school teacher told us, you need to read some books about who God is and who we are in Him.... I have been so much better. And till today I don't have any of those specialist pharmacy doctors. And I'm through it all those doctors. I have my medicine has gone down from probably about twelve pills a day to probably about four.

²⁵¹ Birgit Meyer, "'Make a Complete Break with the Past': Memory and Post-Colonial Modernity in Ghanaian Pentecostalist Discourse," *Journal of Religion in Africa* 28, Fasc. 3 (Aug., 1998): 330, 316-349.

Thus, although many Africans and blacks have sought spiritual solutions to their ailments, the current generation seeks medical care before prayers. African immigrant Pentecostals' expectation and definition of miracles are narrowed to sickness. In sharp contrast to Springfield's RCCG, Africans on African soil connect spirituality and seek meaning to everything that befalls them.

To conclude, this chapter argues that glossolalia cannot be used as the main description of Pentecostalism. The decline and waning of tongues-speaking among black Pentecostals (DTM members) is an indication that the understanding of Holy Spirit impartation has changed from mere tongues-speaking to living a holy and sanctified life. Following my interview with Bishop Knox and some other DTM members, this chapter also concludes that some churches and pastors do not pay attention to the fluency of tongues-speaking among their congregants. It may even be considered a distraction, hence the private use of tongues-speech by Assemblies of God participants in Poloma's fieldwork. During his interview for this thesis, Bishop Knox stated:

Most people I don't think they quite understand it and I have tried several times to bring an understanding in my congregation.... There is a gift of tongues—people can talk in different languages as the need arises according to the working of the Holy Spirit.... There are people who feel like that you have not received the spirit of the Lord or the Holy Spirit until you do speak in tongues but that I don't agree because that's not spiritual. That's heritage. That's something that we've picked up and handed down from generation to generation. That's one of the things that I'm happy that I am independent because I don't have to follow that tradition but there are people that come us and want us to do that. But that's my personal opinion and from what I'm reading in the scripture and researching, the tongues that they were talking at Pentecost, Peter was speaking in one language, the other brothers were speaking to all the other people whoever was there, that they heard him speaking in their own dialect of their own tongues. If I went to Africa and I didn't know Swahili or whatever and when I went, I had an interpreter because I didn't know the language and I couldn't speak the language. And what I spoke, my interpreter will speak and interpret what I was saying.... The Holy Spirit is the one that gives the tongues and the people that are listening, they get, they know what you are saying. Although I may not know the language, the Holy Spirit does, and it's done to edify them not to glorify the person that is doing it. I don't know if it is declined, I, I

think it happens on its own, on different occasions when the need arises.... I don't try to operate them or regulate them unless I feel that the person is going to an extreme.

This chapter also argues that the understanding and relevance of tongues among members of this church depends on the individual. While some longtime DTM members think glossolalia has declined, other older and newer members, including the founder, think the church did not emphasize speaking in tongues during its formative years. They agree that prayer participation has declined. DTM members believe in sanctified lives and obedience to the Bible. They do not use glossolalia alone to define an impartation of the Holy Spirit or an individual's salvation.

Compared to DTM members, RCCG members put more emphasis on speaking in tongues and even yearn for the gift. Some members of RCCG said their prayer lives and tongues speaking have declined because they do not go to church and pray often like they did in their home countries (individual African countries such as Nigeria and Ghana). Some also attributed the decline in their religious lives to the number of hours they work and the things they pray about. Although RCCG members posited that there is a decline in their religious expression, I observed that vitality (tongues speaking and prayers) was high compared to DTM services. Thus, this chapter argues that tongues cannot be viewed as a key identity of Pentecostalism. Although the African immigrant church (RCCG) is emphatically characterized by tongues speaking, it is less practiced among black Pentecostals (DTM). Salient features of black Pentecostalism include moaning and shouting. Further, some sociologists define Pentecostalism solely on glossolalia. This definition could be problematic since some members of the same church pay less attention to tongues speaking. In contrast, others think the practice has declined and one's inability to speak in tongues questions their Pentecostal identity.

CHAPTER SIX, CONCLUSION

The thesis commenced by considering the academic debate among sociologists and historians on the origins of Pentecostalism. Some scholars have traced the root of the movement to North America, specifically to white Charles Fox Parham and black William Seymour. This thesis argues that even if we accept America as the birthplace of Pentecostalism, there is an ongoing racial debate among some sociologists and historians who trace the root to either black Seymour or white Parham. On the other hand, African Pentecostal scholars accept the name of the movement as American but dismiss the entirety of its American origins. Ogbu Kalu and his descendants posit that spirit possession, healing style, miracles, and expression of different tongues characterized African Independent/Initiated Churches and African traditional worship before Pentecostalism started in sub-Saharan Africa. This thesis suggests that the influence of language (English) not only contributed to the spread of the movement but also to the general acceptance of North America as the original home of Pentecostalism. This thesis argues that scholarship must not focus on a specific place (culture or country) as the origin of this movement because societies with spirit-filled religion(s) existed in Africa, Latin America, the Caribbean, and Asia before Christianity (Pentecostalism) arrived in the global south. Thus, the expression of religious experience by Zambian Pentecostals, despite some similarities, will differ from the religious experience of Polish Pentecostals.

Accepting that the African religious worldview metamorphosized into black and African Pentecostalism, this thesis studied two growing minority-led Pentecostal churches (Deliverance Temple Ministry and Redeemed Christian Church of God). DTM has a majority of black members while RCCG has mostly African immigrant congregants. This thesis examined the

influence of race and ethnicity in the religious marketplace, the role of women in Pentecostalism and the understanding of “Holy Spirit encounter” and the use of tongues by Pentecostals.

I have desired to understand better how smaller churches thrive in the pluralistic religious market in America. I began this study with a discussion of the marketplace theory of religion. I looked at how the religious marketplace theory has been applied in congregational studies after Adam Smith propounded it. Most scholars, including Finke and Stark’s discussion of American religion on the frontier, looked at mainline Protestants, evangelicals and Catholics but did not pay attention to the influence of race and ethnicity on church growth. Finke and Stark expanded this theory to include the rewards prospective consumers seek to achieve from their churches. After Finke and Stark’s groundbreaking work on the market model, most scholarship on Pentecostalism and the market model have concentrated on the spiritual supply side and mega-churches without paying attention to smaller churches, race, ethnicity, cultural needs, and advertisements that have also attracted members.

This thesis moves beyond previous approaches to religious markets and proposes that in studying Pentecostal churches, the sociologist must pay attention to race and ethnicity. Sociologists must also pay attention to how contemporary church entrepreneurs organize the church to serve not only the rich, but the poor, and both older and younger generations. Pentecostal church entrepreneurs use advertisements (billboards, social media, television and radio) and blend their music to keep their members and stay competitive in the religious market. The church choir usually sings older and urban gospel songs, while in Africa most church services are divided into English (usually for the younger and educated people) and indigenous languages (for the older and less members).

My observations of RCCG and DTM indicate that race and ethnicity are one of the reasons why people join churches. In *Congregation and Community*, Nancy Ammerman concluded that many Hispanic immigrants joined Hispanic churches to keep their language. My fieldwork revealed that most African immigrants joined RCCG to keep their culture. African immigrants who are not Pentecostals or who did not even attend RCCG in their home countries joined the church because it provided them with a sense of belonging and a community in the Ozarks.

The contributions of women to Pentecostalism should not be underestimated. I found that Pentecostalism offers women some power to fight male domination. DTM and RCCG have elevated the status of black and African women by appointing them deacons, stewards, ushers, and ordaining them as pastors. I counted six female assistant pastors at DTM. All the female assistant pastors at DTM were members of either the executive board or the board of trustees. They participated in the decision-making process and the administration of the church. The concept of sanctification is essential when talking about women in the black or African church.²⁵² Many of these women transitioned from ordinary members to pastors and church mothers. They used their opportunities, especially during preaching, to admonish other women to leave abusive relationships, live sanctified lives, and challenge male superiority. Some have also used their positions to influence the annual church plan and some executive decisions. At DTM the women's department ensured the addition of an annual program (Women's Day) where women wear African clothes. This program has become a very significant part of the church

²⁵² As Anthea Butler writes, "Sanctification in COGIC is both theological and cultural, encompassing beliefs from the nineteenth-century Evangelical and Holiness movements that pushed followers to live a life of holiness, refraining from the sins and pollutions modern life." See Butler, *Women in the Church of God in Christ*, 2-3.

because men also wear African clothes and help the church members reminisce about their African heritage. As Bishop Knox put it in the interview, “We do have a Black History Month and we celebrate it. We have several black month programs on our calendar. And I think this is just something that the leader had in mind and we all are reminded from time to time that we’re Africans. And we like to go back to it—do some things, dress up with African garb.... I have a dashiki.... We have a great respect for our mother country. And so from time to time, we’ll put on some African garb or something that’s like for some of the programs and we’re very proud of it.” Except for Pastor Tessy, RCCG women did not form part of the core leadership of the church nor serve any official spiritual role. Yet they participated in the decision-making process and the administration of the church. RCCG church mothers included younger women who may not fit Butler’s definition of the church mother in the Church of God in Christ. These were revered women who served as advisors for adults, younger couples, and some older women. They are respected in the African immigrant community.

Like several recent works on Pentecostalism, this thesis also argues that tongues speaking cannot be used as the only trait to describe a contemporary Pentecostal because even members of the same congregation can have different understandings of Pentecostal identity. To some extent, this thesis affirms Poloma’s conclusion that glossolalia has declined among (North American) Pentecostals. Some members of DTM, including founder Bishop Knox, stated that tongues-speech has not declined because they have never paid that much attention to glossolalia. Knox believes that glossolalia is just for edification and cannot define one as a Pentecostal. On the other hand, some members like Gwen Marshall suggested that the church should reinforce tongues-speech, prayer, and vitality because it was a core value of the church. Most DTM participants did not speak in tongues during Sunday services. Some spoke in tongues but during

their personal prayers. Others spoke in tongues on the church's prayer conference line. The public repression of tongues-speech during Sunday services may occur because members view glossolalia as a distraction. Moreover, I found that shouting and moaning defined and characterized their religious experiences.

Compared to DTM, tongues-speaking was very prevalent in RCCG services. Participants said the initial evidence of Holy Spirit baptism was glossolalia. RCCG members yearned for the gift of tongues and practiced it anytime they prayed—during the Sunday service, on the prayer line, and during Holy Ghost Hour. During my observations, I heard many congregants speak and talk about tongues. Many Africans believe that Pentecostals yearn for tongues speech because they think tongues speakers are more spiritually fortified than those who cannot speak in tongues. While running, moaning, and shouting were prevalent during preaching at DTM, shouting was more of a “call and response” at RCCG. During the Sunday service, the preacher said, “Praise the Lord” and members responded with “Hallelujah.” At other times, the minister asked members to give a loud shout or a big clap unto the Lord. Moaning and shouting were considered distractions until the preacher said something that needed a shout or a clap from the audience.²⁵³

Although their worship styles are similar, RCCG worship seemed more timed than DTM. The preacher, the choir, and other activity leaders executed their duties within a specific time frame. On the other hand, DTM worship was mostly characterized by untimed testimonies and preaching. Almost every activity leader but for the choir gave a testimony or shared a short Bible text before performing the duty they were called to do.

²⁵³ Both churches do not call the act moaning or shouting but scholars have described it as such.

The above conclusions and thesis as a whole can be summarized with the following statements. First, the racially charged debate between black and white scholars casts doubt on the original founding father of the Pentecostal movement. The thesis adds to previous knowledge that there is so much difficulty in identifying a single founding father of Pentecostalism because spirit possession and speaking of different tongues may have existed in other cultures but were not recorded or written. By studying two churches with very different lineages (Nigerian and Midwestern African American), this thesis shows that Pentecostalism's roots can be found on two continents. Secondly, this project shows how spirit-filled worship can be found in both an African immigrant congregation (RCCG) and a church rooted in the African American experience (DTM). In addition, this thesis shows how the descendants of Parham, Seymour, and the founder of RCCG live out different expressions of Pentecostalism.

The marketplace theory of religion explains the commercialization of churches, arguing that church entrepreneurs organize religious events to meet consumer demands. This thesis argues that the religious marketplace thesis of Finke and Stark does not adequately consider race and ethnicity, pointing to the far-reaching effects of race and ethnicity on church selection. It proposes a "Pentecostal economics" that considers the communal wellbeing of both church entrepreneurs and prospective consumers. Like theologian Frank Macchia, this thesis utilizes a "submodern" approach that blends tradition and modernity, along with class, cultural, racial, and ethnic differences in church organization.²⁵⁴

²⁵⁴ Frank D. Macchia, "The Struggle for Global Witness: Shifting Paradigms in Pentecostal Theology," in *The Globalization of Pentecostalism: A Religion Made to Travel*, ed. Murray W. Dempster, Byron D. Klaus, and Douglas Petersen (Carlisle, UK: Regnum Books International, 1999), 12.

At its core, this thesis has demonstrated the place and role of women in Pentecostalism, showing that without women, the church is not only empty but dysfunctional. Women not only constituted a majority of church members but also served as preachers. While women outnumbered male pastors at DTM, RCCG had only one female pastor. She was the only female pastor of RCCG, North America. In both churches, women used their positions to fight male dominance. Studying RCCG and DTM women, this thesis found that the place of church mothers in each congregation is similar but differ. As in Butler's study of COGIC women, potential church mothers at DTM are expected to live a sanctified life and be of age. Church mothers are not only preachers but also serve on DTM's executive board and the council of elders. Nonetheless, RCCG church mothers mainly serve as advisors to younger people and couples in the immigrant community.

The assumption that glossolalia is a key feature of Pentecostalism does not necessitate that all contemporary churches pay attention to tongues speech. In fact, among DTM members, some believe glossolalia has declined while others think they do not pay attention to it. The thesis suggests that glossolalia cannot be used as the key definition of Pentecostalism because the black church (DTM) does not pay much attention to it. Alluding to the findings, the thesis does not make an absolute conclusion that glossolalia has declined in the black church. Comparing DTM and RCCG, the thesis found that the African immigrant church yearned and emphasized the speaking of tongues. Also, from the findings, glossolalia was more prevalent in the African immigrant church while shouting and moaning characterized the black church. The thesis gave readers enough evidence to support earlier findings by some sociologists and historians that glossolalia cannot be used as a key feature of contemporary Pentecostalism.

While the focus of previous scholarship has often remained on the entire Pentecostal movement or on individual churches, this comparative study (black and African immigrant churches) is important because it is a side-by-side comparison of the role of black and African immigrant women in Pentecostal churches. This fieldwork is also important because it helps us understand the religious experience and religious vitality of two historically related churches in the same community. Further research on Pentecostals must focus on miracles and the use of pharmaceutical medicine, on the succession plan for leaders in smaller churches, and church diversity among smaller churches.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Human Subjects IRB Approval

To: John Schmalzbauer

Religious Studies

RE: Notice of IRB Approval

Study #: IRB-FY2020-372

Study Title: Pentecostalism: A Comparative Study of African and African American Churches in Springfield

Decision: Approved

Approval Date: December 15, 2019

This submission has been approved by the Missouri State University Institutional Review Board (IRB). You are required to obtain IRB approval for any changes to any aspect of this study before they can be implemented. Should any adverse event or unanticipated problem involving risks to subjects or others occur it must be reported immediately to the IRB.

This study was reviewed in accordance with federal regulations governing human subjects research, including those found at 45 CFR 46 (Common Rule), 45 CFR 164 (HIPAA), 21 CFR 50 & 56 (FDA), and 40 CFR 26 (EPA), where applicable.

Researchers Associated with this Project:

PI: John Schmalzbauer

Co-PI: Primary Contact: John Schmalzbauer

Other Investigators:

Appendix B: Questionnaire

1. Membership Biography

How many years have you been a Christian?

How long have you been a member of this church?

Do you participate in all church programs?

How often do you go to church?

2. Spiritual Biography

a. Glossolalia

Does the church emphasize on speaking in tongues?

Do you believe in the Holy Spirit?

Are you spirit-filled (define)? If yes, when did you receive holy spirit baptism?

Did you receive the spirit when you became born again?

Do you pray? How often? (Place, content, posture, silent/ out loud.)

Do you pray in tongues? If yes, how often?

Do you pray in tongues in church or at home?

What does the phrases “encounter with the spirit” mean to you?

Have you ever given an utterance in tongues or an interpretation?

b. Faith

What are your thoughts about faith?

Have you ever heard the voice of God?

Do you consider God to be involved with your everyday life?

c. Miracles

Have you experienced a miracle recently? If yes, what was it about?

How do you define a miracle?

Are things getting better or worse in your life?

d. Relationship with the Pastor

Do you see/talk to your pastor? If yes, what do you usually talk about?

What is your relationship with your pastor?

Do you believe in what the Holy Spirit tells you or do you believe your pastor? Why?

Is there anything else you would like to tell me about your relationship with God or your pastor?

3. Church Services

a. Worship

What does the recitation of the church creed mean to you?

Do you think the church over burdens you with request for money?

What is the most important part of the service in your opinion?

Have you ever gone up for prayer or anointing during worship? If yes what was your anointing or prayer request for?

Do you feel the presence of the Holy Spirit during worship?

How do songs help uplift your faith?

Have you ever been healed or encountered the Holy Spirit during worship/singing?

b. Support

Have you ever filled out the prayer request form? If yes, did you see or hear the request solved after the prayer request?

What do you think about the practice of tithing or offering?

How do you feel when the pastor ties giving to God's blessing?

What do you think about preaching?

Have you ever participated in an altar call?

4. Gender

What role do women play in this church?

Does the church believe in a woman becoming a pastor?

How often does the woman pastor (if any) preach?

How does the church accept the message of the woman preacher?

Are women part of the core leaders in the church?

How does the pastor accept the opinion of church mothers?

5. Head Pastor/Founder

How long have you been a resident minister in this church?

What is your relationship with your members?

What is tongues speaking?

Do you speak in tongues? If yes, where? If not often in church, provide an answer

Does the church emphasize tongues speaking?

Has the spirituality (tongues speaking) increased or declined in your church? Give reason(s).

What type of message(s) do you usually preach to your members?

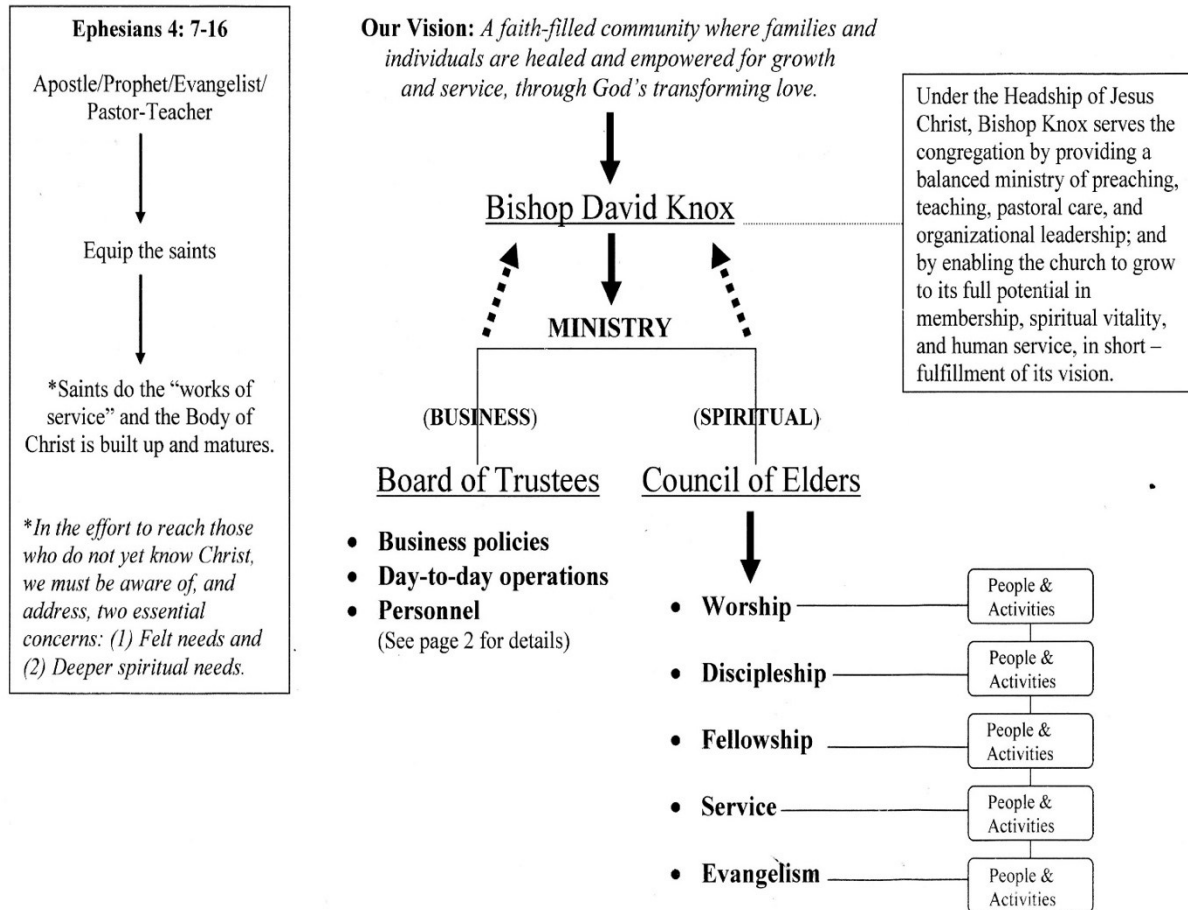
Appendix C: Deliverance Temple Ministries Manual

Deliverance Temple Ministries

Jesus Christ, The Head of the Church (His Body)

Ephesians 4

(This text & others provides a biblical framework for “church”)



BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Business Policies	Day-To-Day Operations	Personnel
<p>The Board of Trustees for Deliverance Temple Ministries is responsible for creating and implementing policy for the business affairs of the church.</p> <p>It designates committees to exercise management of specific business areas of the church (for example, "Finance"). It is also responsible for the hiring and management of paid and certain volunteer staff members, needed to carry out the operations of the church's business.</p>	<p>Daily/weekly operations of the church's business include (but are not limited to) Administration; Finance & Bookkeeping; Security; Transportation; Maintenance (including Grounds); and Housekeeping.</p>	<p>Paid and volunteer personnel include: Senior Pastor; Assistant Pastor; Church Administrator; Financial Officer/Bookkeeper; Minister of Music; Housekeeper; Audio/Visual Techs, and various persons used on an infrequent basis.</p> <p>Contractual services include such items as Lawn Care and Security.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Board of Trustees (Current Members)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Bishop David Knox, Jr. Rev. Bobbie Knox Min. Samuel G. Knox Rev. Mark A. Dixon Deacon Howard Fewell, Jr. Sister Tyra Knox Sister Marti Fewell Pastor Gwen Marshall Bro. Sean Mabins</p>

COUNCIL OF ELDERS

Activity/ Function	People
<p>This Council (on balance with the Board of Trustees) provides oversight for the spiritual ministry areas of the church and creates a means for dialogue, planning, implementation and counsel to pastoral staff as pertains to the functioning of the church's vital areas of Worship; Discipleship; Fellowship; Service; and Evangelism.</p> <p>Like the Board of Trustees, the Council of Elders makes use of committees to oversee and manage certain of its areas of responsibility.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Executive Committee</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Rev. Gwen Marshall – Chair Rev. Mark A. Dixon Minister Samuel G. Knox</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Bishop David Knox, Jr. (<i>Ex officio</i>)</p> <p>Other ministers licensed by Deliverance Temple Ministries comprise the full Council of Elders.</p>

