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# **The Growth of Pentecostalism and the Reshaping of Baptist Faith in Nigeria Since the 1980s**

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# Introduction



- **The paper discusses the spread of Pentecostalism in Nigeria from the 1970s, its influence on Baptist liturgy and beliefs, including the diversity brought into the Baptist faith, and the responses of Nigerian Baptists to this new religious change.**
- **The paper discusses the processes of this Pentecostalization**
  - **its influence on Baptist liturgy and identity**
  - **the diversity brought into the Baptist faith**
  - **the responses of Nigerian Baptists to this new religious change.**

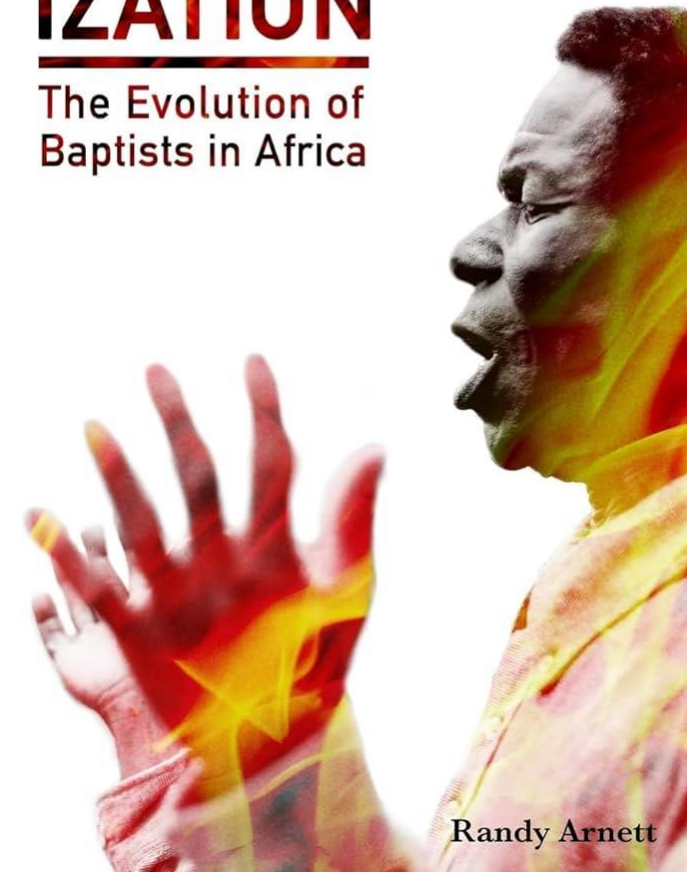


# Pentecostalization Overview

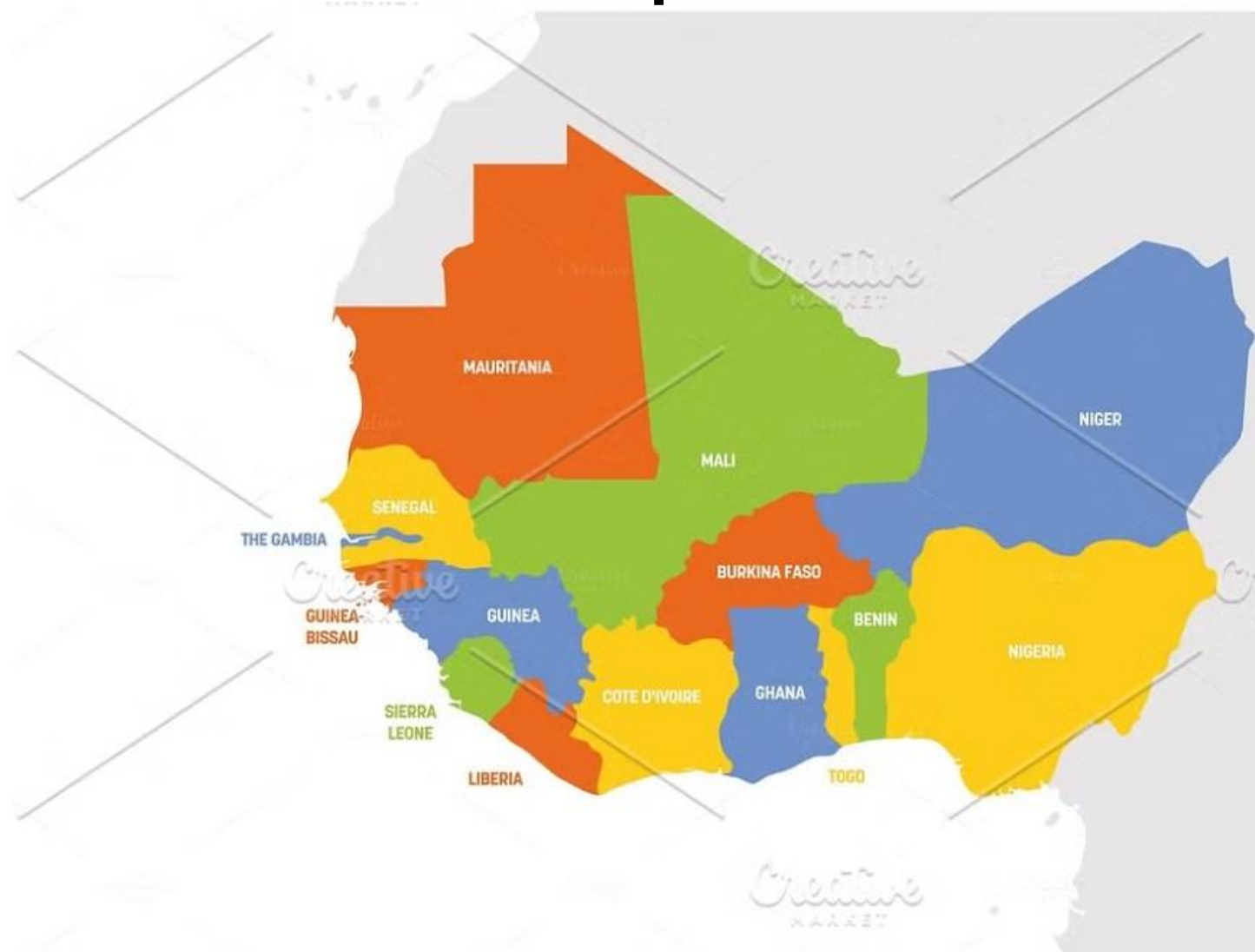
- ***Pentecostalization*** refers to the process by which a church or denomination **selectively** assimilates and incorporates Pentecostal beliefs and practices into its liturgy and ethos (Randy Arnett, 2012).
- Initially, the term was used in his doctoral study while examining the elemental changes that took place in the liturgy of Baptist churches in Togo, Benin Republic, Burkina Faso and Cote d'Ivoire (all in West Africa).
- He noted that Baptist churches reflected certain features previously associated with Pentecostals.

## PENTECOSTAL IZATION

The Evolution of  
Baptists in Africa



## Map of West Africa showing countries mentioned in this presentation



# Observations from Research on Baptist Identity and Pentecostalism



- **Core Baptist distinctives such as believers' baptism, local church autonomy, congregational polity, and inerrancy of the Scriptures have remained intact.**
- **However, Pentecostal elements were incorporated largely into the liturgy, creating space for new experience that is very exuberant.**

## **Pentecostalization: The Evolution of Baptists in Africa**

Over the past four decades, a new form of Pentecostalism has irrevocably changed the religious landscape of global Christianity. This changed landscape is particularly evident in Africa, considered by many as the new center of Christianity. In Africa, most mainline denominations created space for Neo-Pentecostalism and continued with their historic mission. Most, but not all. Relying on dozens of in-depth interviews with church leaders and members, Randy Arnett explains that many African Baptists pentecostalized. They adopted Neo-Pentecostalism for their faith and practice. In this carefully researched work, he unravels the context, nature, and reasons for pentecostalization. Arnett applauds the strengths, and challenges the flaws of the movement. He concludes with suggested strategies for church leaders, evangelists, and missionaries who work in a Neo-Pentecostal environment.

**Randy Arnett** (Ph.D., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary) is a theological education strategist and professor. With over three decades of ministry in West Africa, Arnett has experienced firsthand the Neo-Pentecostal movement. He and his wife have presented training workshops on the movement throughout the continent.



Cover design by William Haun

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# Background: Nigerian Baptist Convention - Largest Baptist Denomination in Africa (1)



- **The NBC is the largest Baptist denomination in Africa, with over 10,104 churches and 11 million members as at the end of 2021.**
- **It was formed from the mission work of the Southern Baptist Convention, USA; a conservative evangelical denomination that is very strong in missions.**
- **The evangelical denominational identity of the Nigerian Baptist Convention was shaped and modelled after the Southern Baptist Convention until the 1990s.**
- **The Baptist identity has been challenged and reaffirmed through debates and controversies at annual meetings of the Convention.**

## **Distinctive Features of the Nigerian Baptists**

- **Emphasise conservative biblical teachings,**
- **strong in evangelism and missions,**
- **local church autonomy is practised,**
- **belief in the priesthood of all believers, believers' baptism,**
- **inerrancy of the Scriptures,**
- **practice congregation polity.**
- **Pastoral leadership is dominated by an educated middle class trained in Nigeria and abroad.**

# Background: Nigerian Baptist Convention - Largest Baptist Denomination in Africa (2)



- **In the 1980s, Nigerian Baptists witnessed the upsurge of Pentecostal beliefs and practices in various ways.**
- **Pentecostal Influences included:**
  - **worship with loud singing and dancing,**
  - **the use of anointing oil,**
  - **the widespread use of imprecatory prayers, and**
  - **prioritizing choruses over Christian hymns..**
  - **holding healing and deliverance services,**
  - **inviting Pentecostal pastors to lead services, and**
  - **adopting of all-night prayers, etc.**

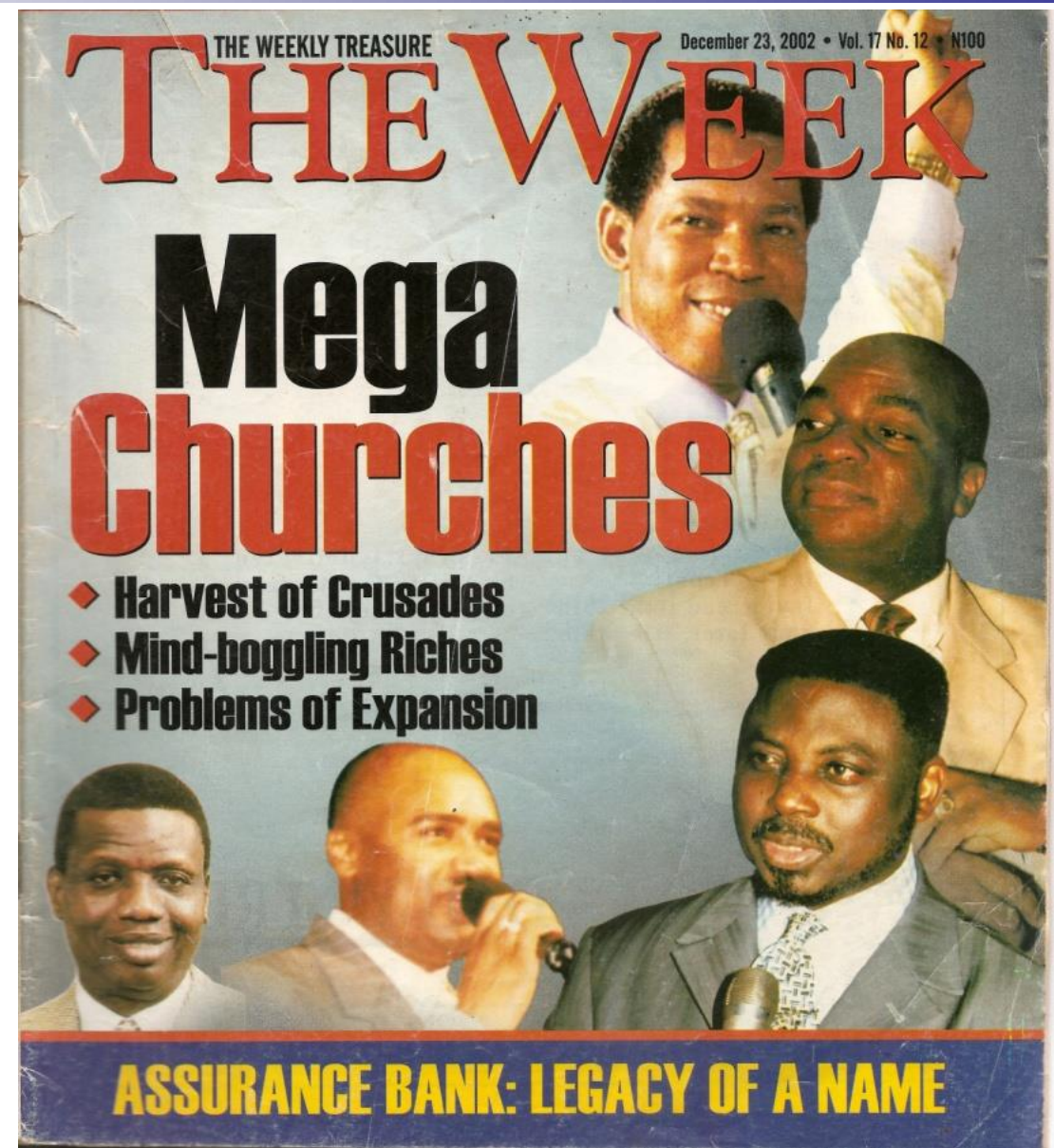


# Background: Strands of Pentecostal Churches in Nigeria



- **Pentecostal churches originated in the 1930s from classical Pentecostal denominations from the Western world.**
- **Indigenous Pentecostal churches emerged in Nigeria in the 1940s and 1950s from visionary and healing activities of prophet-healers.**
- **Charismatic churches were the progenies of the Charismatic Renewal in Nigeria's higher learning institutions in the 1970s and 1980s.**
- **All three types of Pentecostalism subscribe to the same doctrinal emphases and practices, though with varying depth and styles.**

# Media Reportage of Pentecostal & Charismatic Churches



# The main entrance to the 100,000-seat auditorium of Dunamis Glory Dome, Abuja, Nigeria, a prominent Charismatic church



# Background



Another Charismatic Church, the Citadel Global Church, Lagos, Nigeria, new auditorium opened in 2023



# Doctrinal Emphases of Pentecostal and Charismatic churches in Nigeria



- **baptism of the Holy Spirit**
- **speaking in tongues**
- **demonstration of power in the form of healing and deliverance services**
- **Personal testimonies in worship services to authenticate Pentecostal spirituality**
- **Overall, the experience of the Holy Spirit and its manifestations was more important than formal doctrine or theological debates.**

# A bill board advert of a Charismatic Church in Nigeria

ABIOK CALL 01-482304 438212 11

**FRIDAY DECEMBER 25, 2009**

**@ CORNERSTONE CITY**  
 Km 22, Ibadan - Lagos Express Rd., Opp. Ajanla Farm.

**7:00PM PROMPT**





**ZOE NIGHT OF WONDERS**

**MUSIC**

**WITH BISHOP FRANCIS WALE OKE**

**JESUS IS LORD!**

*Come for your unending Jubilee!*

PASTOR E. A. ADEBOYE    PASTOR A. ORITSEJAFOR    DR. RON KENOLY    PROPHET S. K. ABIARA

Dr. Panam Percy Paul    Pastor Kunle Ajayi  
 Dr. Bola Are    Pastor Moji Alawiye

# A Selection of Handbills from some Charismatic Churches Depicting their Doctrinal Emphases



*Announcing the greatest event of the year*

## LONDON MIRACLE CRUSADE

SIX DAYS OF

- SALVATION FOR SEEKING SOULS
- COMFORT FOR HURTING HEARTS
- REUNION OF BROKEN HOMES AND
- SPECIAL MIRACLES FOR YOU

WILLIAM KUMUYI  
*(International Evangelist and Pastor of the Largest Single Congregation in Africa)*

VENUE:  
**WESTMINSTER CHAPEL,**  
BUCKINGHAM GATE, LONDON SW1

**25-30 AUG., '86 7 P.M. DAILY**

ADMISSION FREE  
P.T.O.

*EX-DRUG ADDICT TURNED A SAINT*

*EVEN THE BLIND SAW*

*A 23 YR. CANCER DROPPED OFF*

*THE DUMB ALSO SPOKE*

*THE IMPOTENT BECAME WHOLE*

*MENTAL PROBLEM MIRACULOUSLY HEALED*

*PUB MAN FOUND CHRIST AT LAST*

## CHRIST LIFE CHURCH

THE INTERNATIONAL CHARISMATIC BIBLE CHURCH

*Presents*

# LAGOS MIRACLE EXPLOSION

**Rev'd (Dr.) Francis Wale Oke**

**WED. 1ST - SUN. 5TH MAY, 1996.**

VENUE: 72/74, AJAYI ROAD, BABA '2' BUS-STOP, OFF YAYA ABATAN ROAD, OGBA, IKEJA.

TIME: MORNING: 9.00AM; EVENING: 6.00PM

*Special Features*

- \*TOTAL BREAKTHROUGH IN SPIRITUAL LIFE, MARRIAGE, FINANCE, BUSINESS, HEALTH.
- \*SPECIAL PRAYER FOR THE BARREN
- \*PRAYER FOR OTHER SPECIFIC AREAS OF YOUR PERSONAL NEEDS.

**COME WITH GREAT EXPECTATION, YOU WILL NEVER BE THE SAME AGAIN!**

THE SWORD OF THE SPIRIT MINISTRIES

# SIGNS & WONDERS NIGHT

*With*

**Rev'd (Dr.) Francis Wale Oke**

**@ THE LIBERTY STADIUM**  
Main Bowl

**Date: Friday November 15, 2002**

**Time: 5:00p.m. Ministers Impartation**  
**9:00p.m. Vigil**

**COME FOR A Lifetime Encounter!**  
*You will never remain the same again*

THE SWORD OF THE SPIRIT MINISTRIES

## **Pentecostals and Charismatics also emphasize**

- prosperity,**
- personal empowerment,**

## **Both for social mobility.**

- The quest for spiritual power was needed to authenticate Pentecostal Christianity**
- Religious leaders who could perform miracles, healing, and deliverance are very popular in Nigeria and often attract large clientele and media attention.**



# A Selection of Handbills from some Charismatic Churches Depicting their Doctrinal Emphases



**MOUNTAIN OF FIRE & MIRACLES MINISTRIES**  
Invites you to  
**PROSPERITY NIGHT**  
Ministering:  
**Dr. Daniel K. OLUKOYA**  
(General Overseer, MFM Ministries Worldwide)

**COME FASTING!**  
BRING ALONG AN IMPLEMENT OF YOUR WORK AND TRADE

Arrest Acidic Poverty,  
Speak Woe to Financial Failure,  
Receive Power to Prosper  
Possess Career Breakthroughs

Date: **FRIDAY 8th November, 2002**

Venue: **MFM Prayer City**  
Kilometer 12, Lagos/Ibadan Expressway

Time: **7pm - 5am**

*Jesus is Lord*

**WIND & FIRE**  
**2002**  
annual conference on the Holy Spirit  
22nd - 25th Dec., 2002

Venue: **REDEMPTION MINISTRIES**  
Surge Plaza, Eastern Bypass  
Shomolu, Lagos

Unforgettable Christmas Experience

Accommodation: All meals, Accommodation, Air Fare, and 100% Free Travel & Comporting Days

Feeding: All personal cost only

Registration: Free

Special Edition  
**Christian Women MIRROR**  
THE MAGAZINE FOR BUILDING GODLY WOMEN  
OCTOBER 2009

**Hope**  
For your MARRIAGE

# A Selection of Handbills from some Charismatic Churches Depicting their Doctrinal Emphases

**ERADICATION OF WITCHRAFT**

Venue:- National Stadium Surulere  
Date:- 12th April - 18th April 2004  
Time:- 5.Pm

Are you oppressed,  
In bondage  
Afflicted  
Attacked  
Are you a witch or not too sure?  
Come for Cleansing

Evang. (Mrs.) Helen Ukpabio

Tackling Demons

**OBAFEMI AWOLOWO UNIVERSITY  
CHRISTIAN MOBILIZATION COMMITTEE**

*invites you to a*

**Special Divine Encounter**

Theme: **TOTAL RESTORATION**

*with* **PASTOR E. A. ADEBOYE**  
(The General Overseer, R.C.C.G.)

**Date:** Thursday 28th January 2010  
**Time:** 4:30pm  
**Venue:** Sports Centre Main Bowl,  
Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife.

**Special Morning Devotion**




- Friday 29th, January, 2010
- Amphi Theatre, OAU, Ile-Ife.
- 6:00am

# An Advert of a Charismatic Church on the Website of a Nigerian University

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📄 canvas.oauife.edu.ng/advert/index.html

Tagged: **Upon Mount Zion**

 <b>FRIDAY 18TH JAN., 2019</b>	 <b>OAU CONFERENCE CENTRE, MAIN HALL</b>	 <b>10.00 PM PROMPT</b>
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*Featuring:*

- TEACHING
- PROPHETIC UTTERANCES
- HEALING
- TRUE WORSHIP
- SALVATION
- and many more.



*Ministering:*  
**Pastor Wole Adedeji**

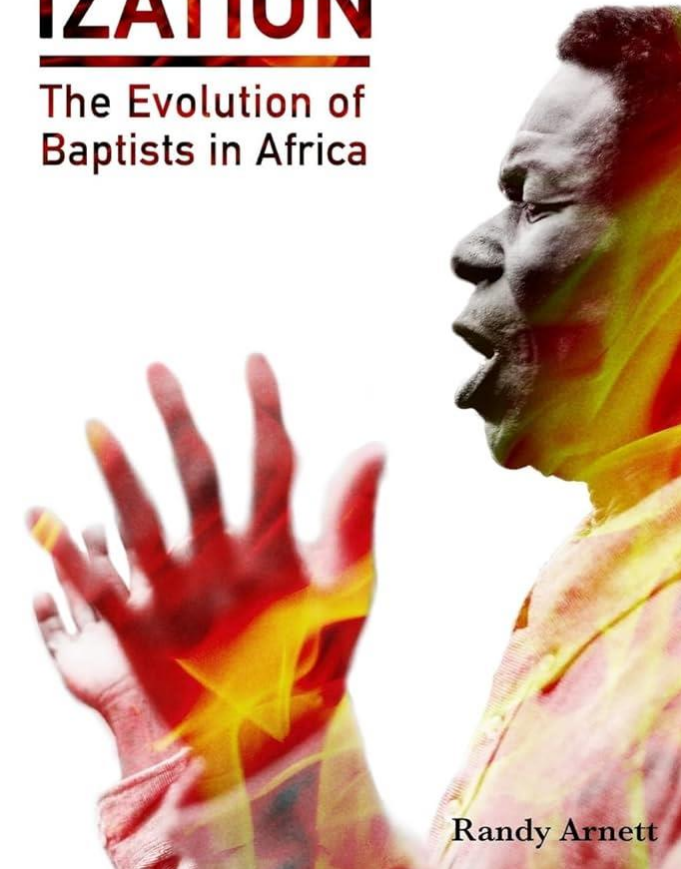
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[www.dcachurch.org](http://www.dcachurch.org)

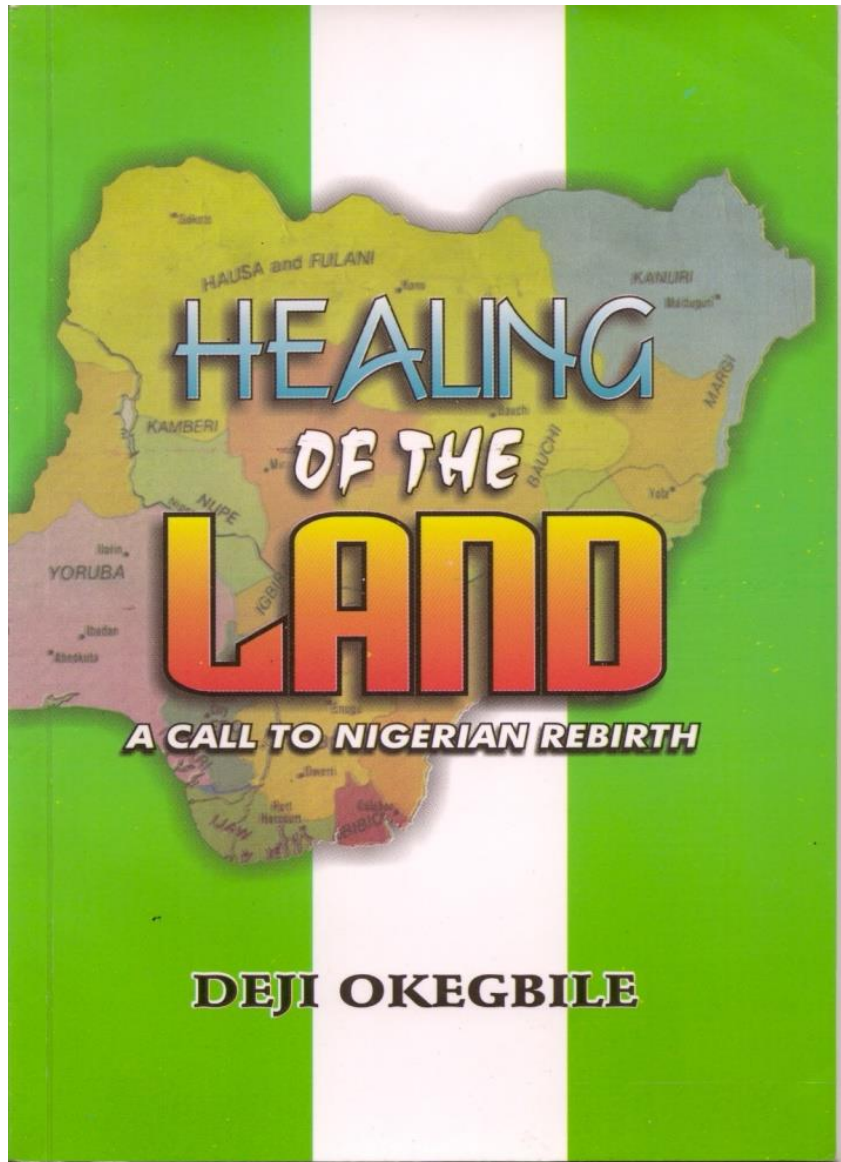
# Pentecostal Spirituality Overview: Randy Arnett (2012)

- Places "Spirit things" in everyday people's hands.
- Privileges the Bible with a hermeneutic based on contemporary charismatic experience.
- Desacralises institutional church and clergy.
- Emphasizes salvation as a transformative experience.
- Values and encourages daily Spirit-centered experience.
- Centers on a strong pastoral leader with direct access to God.
- Promotes participatory, vigorous, and triumphant religious style.
- Powerful to confront life's challenges.

## PENTECOSTAL IZATION

The Evolution of  
Baptists in Africa





# PRAY FOR NIGERIA

**ROOT OUT**  
 ABOMINATIONS.  
 EVILS.  
 WICKEDNESS  
 FOUNDATIONS.  
 BABYLON.  
 AMALEKITES.  
 CORRUPTION.

**PULL DOWN**  
 STRONGHOLDS.  
 POWERS.  
 PILLARS.  
 HIGH PLACES.  
 THE WICKED  
 GATES.  
 ANTICHRISTS.

**DESTROY**  
 ALLIANCES.  
 COVENANTS.  
 CULTS.  
 ASSOCIATIONS.  
 IDEOLOGIES.  
 CULTURE.  
 REBELLION.  
 POVERTY.  
 OPPRESSION.

MON  
LEADERS  
GOVERNORS  
MINISTERS

TUE  
ECONOMY  
BUDGETS  
AGRICULTURE  
ARMED FORCES  
CUSTOMS.

WED  
POLICE  
INSTITUTIONS  
CORPORATIONS

THU  
PRISONS  
HOSPITALS  
YOUTHS

FRI  
ALL MEN  
POLITICS  
STATES  
RELIGIONS

SAT  
ESTABLISHMENTS  
THE CHURCH  
MINISTRIES

SUN  
FAMILY  
PERSONAL NEEDS

CURRENT ISSUES

**THROW DOWN**  
 ALTARS OF BAAL.  
 IDOLATRIES.  
 IMAGINATIONS.  
 KINGDOMS.  
 SYNAGOGUES OF  
 SATAN.

**BUILD**  
 NEW NATION.  
 NEW CHURCH.  
 NEW HOMES.

**PLANT**  
 RIGHTEOUSNESS.  
 CHRIST'S RULE.  
 GOSPEL FIRE.  
 PEACE.  
 PROSPERITY.

**DECREE**  
 •PURGING & CLEANSING.  
 •DELIVERANCE & HEALING.  
 •GOD'S GLORY & MAJESTY.  
 •GOD'S INTERVENTION & CONTROL.  
 •GOD'S FAVOUR & MERCY.  
 •GOODNESS & FAITHFULNESS.  
 •PEACE & UNITY.  
 •REVIVAL & RESTORATION.

NIGERIAN INTERCESSORS & WATCHMEN, BOX 616, ILE-IPE, NIGERIA

# A Journey from Higher Institutions to Independent Churches



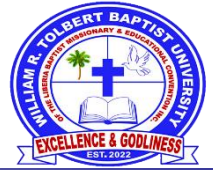
- **Charismatic Renewal began in higher institutions in early 1970.**
- **Charismatic organisations initially operated as inter-denominational or non-denominational groups,**
- **By 1983, some adopted denominational status and erected permanent worship places.**
- **Independent Pentecostal and Charismatic churches proliferated in the 1990s under self-styled bishops, prophets, evangelists and miracle workers.**
- **Major Pentecostal and Charismatic organisations with international spread include Living Faith Church, Redeemed Christian Church of God, Mountain of Fire and Miracles, and Deeper Christian Life Ministry.**

# Rise of Charismatic and Pentecostal Movements in Nigeria



- **Independent Pentecostal and Charismatic churches proliferated in the 1990s under self-styled bishops, prophets, evangelists and miracle workers.**
- **Ogbu Kalu (2009) has referred to these religious leaders as 'the big men of a big God'.**
- **By the late 1980s, college-educated youths shifted their membership from mainline Protestant churches to these new Pentecostal and Charismatic churches with dynamic worship services.**

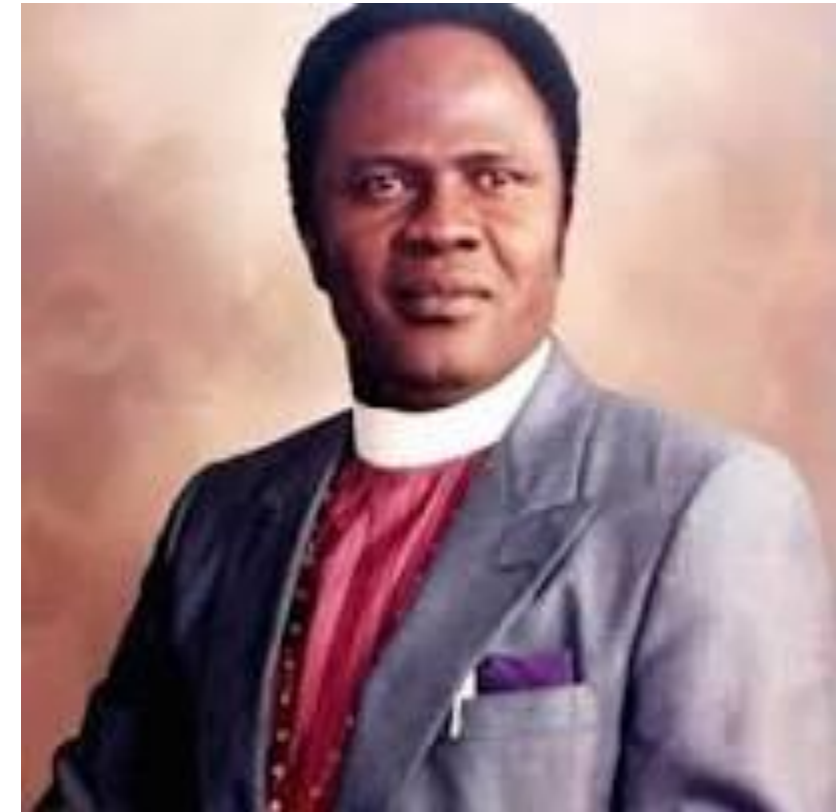
# Photos of Some Prominent Charismatic Pastors in Nigeria and Italy



Bishops Diana Adjartey  
in northern Italy



Bishop David  
Oyedepo in Nigeria



Archbishop Benson  
Idahosa in Nigeria



# Encounters of Nigerian Baptists with Pentecostalism

**Pentecostal beliefs and practices spread into Baptist churches from the mid-1970s through various channels including;**

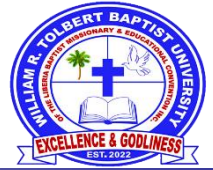
- Television and radio broadcasts sponsored by Pentecostal organisations,**
- Pentecostal literature from the USA freely distributed in Nigeria in the 1970s**
- Camp meetings that were organized in the 1970s and 1980s with offer of free food, accommodation, and transportation,**
- The breakfast meetings of the Full Gospel Businessmen Fellowship International, a Pentecostal organisations in the 1980s and 1990s.**
- Through members of Baptist Student Fellowship in the colleges and universities, who have been influenced by their peers.**

# Pentecostal Manifestations in Nigerian Baptist Churches (1)



- **The Charismatic Renewal peaked in universities in the late 1970s, influencing many students, including members in the Baptist Student Fellowship groups on the campuses.**
- **About 1977, some pastors complained about the leadership of the Baptist Student Fellowship as supportive of the Charismatic Renewal.**
- **Some reports accused Baptist students of exhibiting experiences such as crying while praying, open confession of sinful habits, and speaking in tongues.**
- **Miss Mary Frank Kirkpatrick, a Southern Baptist missionary, was accused of fostering Pentecostalism among students.**

# Pentecostal Manifestations in Nigerian Baptist Churches (3)



- **In February 1990, a paper on Baptist Student Ministries work was presented at the General Workers' Conference as a way of understanding the Pentecostal upsurge among Baptist students in colleges.**
- **By the early 1990s, opposition to BSF increased tremendously, with issues of all-night prayer meetings, deliverance services, casting out of demons, and 'slaying in the Spirit' reported as unBaptistic activities.**

# Pentecostal Manifestations in Nigerian Baptist Churches (4)



- **The leadership of the Student Ministries wrote out some basic Baptist beliefs and practices as a small pamphlet for students.**
- **In 1992, the Executive Committee of Oyo West Baptist Conference issued guidelines regarding ‘Baptist Beliefs and Practices’**
- **The guidelines contained a long list of practices not allowed in Baptist Churches.**

# Some unBaptistic Practices Listed by Oyo West Conference

- a) **Shouting during prayers as if God were deaf.**
- b) **Weeping and rolling on the ground during prayers**
- c) **Hosting of Night vigils, i.e. prayer meetings held in the night from about 10.00 pm till 5.00 am.**
- d) **Praying for the gifts of the Holy Spirit so that one would be able to speak in tongues as it happened on the day of Pentecost to the Apostles.**
- e) **Moving about or jerking or throwing hands about while praying.**
- f) **Shouting 'Halleluyah' and or 'Praise the Lord' during worship services or prayer meetings.**
- g) **Claims of seeing visions or having prophecies.**
- h) **Belief in and the practice of deliverance from what are perceived as satanic agents and demons.**

# A Three-Phase Response to Pentecostal Spirituality

- The Pentecostal upsurge was met with **opposition** from Baptist leaders in the 1970s, 1980s, and early 1990s. There were schisms from Baptist churches in some towns and cities.
- This shifted to **tolerance** in the mid-1990s due to the popularity of Pentecostalism registers in gospel music, prayers, etc.
- **Conflicts and schisms** were observed in some churches
- By 2000, the response to Pentecostal spirituality shifted from antagonism to **acceptance**.

# Acceptance of Pentecostal Spirituality

- **Pentecostal spirituality was gradually accepted and incorporated into worship services in Baptist churches.**
- **Influx of graduates, mostly young adults, into the Nigerian Baptist Theological Seminary for pastoral training from 1993.**
- **Some of the college graduates have participated in the Charismatic Renewal on the campuses**

# Adoption of Pentecostal Spirituality in Baptist Churches

- **Many Baptist churches adopted the contemporary free liturgy characteristic of Pentecostal worship.**
- **Practices such as emotionalism in worship services, noisy prayers, emphasis on healing and deliverance, giving prophecies, and inviting Pentecostal pastors to lead revival or special services became common.**



# Adoption of Pentecostal Spirituality in Baptist Churches



- **Four theologians wrote pamphlets in the late 1980s and 1990s to explain Pentecostal emphasis of the baptism of the Holy Spirit from evangelical perspectives.**
- **Ademola Ishola, with PhD in Missiology from Southwestern BTS, Fort Worth, TX, became General Secretary of NBC, and introduced dynamic changes to worship in the annual meetings of the Convention.**
- **These changes resembled what could be found in Pentecostal churches.**
- **They included singing with dancing, laying of hands for healing, speaking in tongues, etc. practices not previously allowed in Baptist services.**

# Conclusion

- **The Charismatic Renewal has significantly impacted many denominations and the Nigerian Baptist Convention.**
- **Nigerian Baptists in the contestation of infiltration of Pentecostalism focused on methodological issues of their faith rather than theological controversies.**
- **Pentecostal spirituality has contributed to growth in many Baptist churches due to its lively worship and theology that addresses human existential needs.**

# A book on evangelical response to Pentecostalism for Theological Colleges in Africa

