“MISSIONARY TONGUES:"
THE ORIGINS AND INTERSECTIONS OF PENTECOSTALISM
IN WEST AFRICA AND NORTH AMERICA

BY

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THESIS
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ABSTRACT

Although Pentecostals may claim common origins in the first-century Church, the modern origins of Pentecostalism in West Africa and North America were established independently. These modern origins developed without direct contact with each other, but were heavily influenced by temporal and spatial interactions between local beliefs and other Christian traditions. Those Christian traditions cultivated understandings of common Pentecostal beliefs in unique contexts framed by distinct geographical and cultural interactions. West African and North American Pentecostals evangelized effectively, carrying their interpretation of Christianity to people on both continents.

Outsiders often mark Pentecostalism by observable practices rooted in Pentecostal theology and cosmology. Pentecostals themselves acknowledge these markers, but use them not only to identify denominational belief, but to self-identify based on modes of physical and spiritual baptism experiences. Aspects such as glossolalia, healing, evangelism, and the role of the supernatural in the natural world were translated in different contexts in West Africa and North America, but were pragmatically applied in a way that is undeniably Pentecostal.

North American missionaries from Azuza Street are often credited with spreading Pentecostal revival throughout the earth; however two facts discredit that theory. Firstly, foreign missionary contact was an important part of the origin of Pentecostalism in West Africa, but very few of those missionaries were associated directly with the Azuza Street phenomenon. Secondly, it is evident that Pentecostalism spread most effectively in West Africa, not through direct foreign missionary contact, but through vernacular translation carried out by Africans.
INTRODUCTION

AFRICA is no longer a dark continent; its veil of mystery has been swept away, and its mountain ranges and river systems and continental plateaus are the study and wonder of the world. Instead of the crude tribal organisms which during thousands of years have failed to subdue the continent or develop civilization, the great nations of Europe have parcelled out its 12,500,000 square miles of territory, and with wonderful rapidity governments are being established, railroads built, great lines of commerce projected mineral and agricultural wealth developed, and the Christian church and schools are being established in the chief centers, with plans to extend the reign of Christ into the vast regions beyond. This new Africa is in the thought and upon the lips of the world as is no other continent. The past year has been one of marked progress in our missionary work in Africa.

-Methodist Episcopal Church Missionary Report, 1898

On the cusp of the twentieth century, this “new Africa” was a “strangely fertile” land awaiting the proselytizing efforts of Christian missionaries (Hastings 447). Although North Africa and East Africa were active participants in early Christianity, it was not until the sixteenth century that Christianity established a definitive foothold in West Africa (Isichei, History of Christianity 1). The increased spread of Christianity in Africa in the twentieth century is largely credited by modern scholars to Africans. Foreign missionaries are viewed as “agents of change” who introduced a doctrine of prosperity, largely identified with the might of colonial power (Isichei, Religious Traditions of Africa 152). The role of these agents of change must be examined to understand the nature of Pentecostalism in Africa and its role in the modern global Pentecostal movement. North Americans certainly played a role in the expansion of Pentecostalism from a localized phenomenon into a global context, but Pentecostalisms in West Africa and in North America are belief systems with distinct origins and identifiable adaptations rooted in other Christian traditions.

Understanding the Pentecostal experience in Africa and North America is a fundamental necessity in understanding global Christianity. An unfortunate byproduct of the well-documented European and North American missionary culture is that African religiosity is often viewed as an
offshoot of religious colonialism rather than a self-sufficient and original set of beliefs. Scholars have written about Pentecostalism in an African context as though it was the “saga of nineteenth century missionaries” (Kalu African Pentecostalism viii). This theory assumes that foreign missionaries were active agents of change and Africans were passive, merely vessels to be filled.

This myth continues in both academia and public knowledge. A cursory scan of websites like Wikipedia and the British Broadcasting Corporation demonstrates that sources consulted by the non-academic community continue to perpetuate a wide-spread belief that Christianity, specifically Azuza-centric Pentecostalism, emanated from the West. This myth is described by the BBC article titled “Pentecostalism,” dated July 2, 2009:

Pentecostalism began among the poor and disadvantaged in North America. This tradition of being both of the poor and for the poor has given the movement particular appeal among the poor in South America and Africa, where its growth is partly rooted in continuing anger at widespread poverty and inequality.

This description is corroborated by the Wikipedia entry titled “Pentecostalism,” dated May 9th, 2016:

The three-year-long Azusa Street Revival, founded and led by William J. Seymour in Los Angeles, California, resulted in the spread of Pentecostalism throughout the United States and the rest of the world as visitors carried the Pentecostal experience back to their home churches or felt called to the mission field.

Pentecostal organizations have also contributed to the Azuza Street myth. In an email dated March 10, 2015, a representative Global Missions division of the United Pentecostal Church International referred to Daniel Scott as “the best authority on Global Missions history.” This recommendation came in response to my earlier request for information about Pentecostal missions. Scott sent me a copy of his book, The Evolving World of Foreign Missions, in which he described Azuza Street as being the “flashpoint” that “ignited” the world.
Shortly after the momentous prayer meeting at Bethel Bible College, revival fires engulfed the entire state of Kansas. The conflagration spread eastward to Missouri and southward to Texas, then, in 1906, it set Los Angeles on fire in a revival known as the Azusa Street Revival. This outstanding meeting became the flash point that attracted the attention of the world at the turn of the century and ignited powerful spiritual explosions that ultimately spread around the globe (Scott 11).

Pentecostal historians are not the only contributors to the Azusa Street myth. Dale T. Irwin, Professor of World Christianity at New York Theological Seminary and the founding editor of The Journal of Pentecostal Studies, admitted that the “pristine mythology” that Azusa Street is the defining factor for Pentecostal histories “must tumble (Irvin Pentecostal Historiography and Global Christianity 44).” However, that declaration was weakened by the words that immediately preceded it:

*I, too believe there is much to be gained by studying the Azusa Street Revival in order to understand Pentecostal identity. I do not dispute the fact that one can trace some form of historical lines of apostolic succession from virtually every Pentecostal and Charismatic church or community in the world back to Azusa Street (Irvin Pentecostal Historiography and Global Christianity 44).*

This idea of West-centric missionary work is not new. It reflects the long-held attitudes of North American missionaries who understood missiology as a Western construct. Within this construct, “world” missions were synonymous with “foreign” or “non-Western” missions (Hanciles “The Future of Missiology as a Discipline” 122). Conceptualizing of Christianity as Western not only diminishes the Christian identity of Africans, but also minimizes the role of Africa in Christendom.

The belief that African Christianity is a Western creation is not a only a Western belief. The idea that Christianity extended from “mother denominations in Europe and North America” is widespread amongst Africans as well (Hanciles “Africa is Our Fatherland” 207). More accurately, the overall success of missionary churches was not predicated on missionary effort, but rather on the attitude of the converts toward the missionaries. Once that support was no
longer in place, there was no further definitive tie to the missionaries (Mackay 156). It is at this tipping point we can begin to see the boundaries that differentiate the foreign from the indigenous religious movements.

Pentecostalism in Africa presents the opportunity to explore and to attempt a meaningful construction of an origin narrative that accurately depicts the roots of indigenous belief. Such a narrative should include any and all outside contributions, but should not assume a direct genealogy from foreign missionary efforts. From the beginning of Protestant contact with West Africa, Africans have recognized, appropriated, and adapted aspects of Protestant religion to create a unique experiential and doctrinal theology. That the contributions of African Christians are marginalized “reflects the extent to which Western initiatives and agency are privileged in discourses of globalization and the history of Christianity” (Hanciles “Africa is Our Fatherland 209). Although American Pentecostals launched an effort to take “the whole Gospel to the whole world,” the field had already been tilled and the seeds already sown by missionaries from other denominations. African Pentecostalism may bear a titular and charismatic similarity to American Pentecostalism, but missionary work by Methodists and Baptists ultimately may have been the greater agents of change. There is no straight line that can be drawn from American Pentecostalism to the origin of African Pentecostalism; however, it is equally as naïve to attribute African Pentecostalism to indigenous sources alone. Pentecostalism, in all of its facets, should be recognized as a dynamic religious movement that has become a transformative global force (Stewart 3).

In order to narrow the scope of this project, I narrowed the research to a geographical focus on West Africa and connected areas. The Senegambia region, Ghana, Nigeria, and Sierra Leone are obvious inclusions, but perhaps not quite as obvious is the inclusion of the Kongo in a
West African focus. The Kongo Kingdom is not generally considered part of “West” Africa as constructed in modern scholarship, but the cultural geography of the Kongo Kingdom transcended physical geography. The functional importance of the Kongo River to West Africa, the proximity to the Atlantic Ocean, and Portuguese influence all caused me to include it in my definition of West Africa. Admittedly, political boundaries are artificial constructs, and Pentecostalism is a burgeoning force in both East and South Africa in addition to West Africa. Including those regions in this study would have resulted in a scope far too broad to be addressed adequately.

It is necessary to study how Pentecostalism originated in order to understand the plurality of modern Pentecostalism (Anderson 39). More specifically, the roots of African and North American Pentecostalism can be understood as having dual origin narratives. Although there is no documented and unbroken connection between modern Pentecostalism and the first-century Christian Church, Pentecostals derive their name and heritage from apostolic origins. Pentecostals claim these primal origins in the early Church, but they also identify with modern restorationist origins. To reflect those claimed histories, I have separated the origins to the extent it is possible into “Apostolic Origins” and “Modern Origins.” In this way, I hope to more fully explain the understanding of dual origin narratives in Pentecostalism. I have anchored the discussion of claimed apostolic origins of Pentecostalism within the Acts narrative as understood by Pentecostals. This is not meant to be an acknowledgement of validity or tacit agreement. This paper is not meant to be discussion of the historiography of first-century Pentecostal origins. It is a disservice to summarily dismiss Pentecostal identity as non-historical when Pentecostals identify Acts Two as their historical roots. Perhaps the apostolic roots of Pentecostalism can be better understood as mythic origins that have shaped Pentecostal identity.
Ultimately, this project is designed to be a historiography of the intersections of beliefs that resulted in twentieth-century Pentecostalism in both North America and West Africa. Ogbu Kalu suggested that for the sake of clarity, Pentecostal identity, or what he referred to as “Pentecostal character” should be separated from Pentecostal genealogy (Kalu *African Pentecostalism* 12). On this point I disagree with Dr. Kalu. Pentecostals base their self-identity in a mythologized understanding of the early Christian church which is based on various interpretations of Acts Chapter Two. For Pentecostals, identity and genealogy are inseparable. Continuing in that vein, one must also understand the Pentecostal view of genealogy to contextualize the religious intersections that led to Pentecostalisms in Africa and North America.

For the modern origins of Pentecostalism in West Africa, it is necessary to explore early European colonial contact and the resulting foreign Christian missionary efforts that pre-dated Pentecostalism. From the sixteenth century forward, colonial powers created networks that were utilized by Africans to spread African Christianity, eventually including Pentecostalism. Likewise, in the North American context it is necessary to understand the Christian traditions out of which Pentecostalism sprang, because these networks were used by Americans to spread Pentecostalism. To this end, the roots of North American proto-Pentecostalism are narrowed from the late nineteenth century to the early twentieth century. It is during this time period that proto-Pentecostalism was coalescing into Pentecostalism in both West Africa and North America.

I recognize there is not a distinct and unified “African Pentecostalism” any more than there is a distinct and unified “American Pentecostalism.” Although those terms are used most often by scholars to differentiate between “Pentecostalisms,” I have chosen to specify “Pentecostalism in West Africa” and “Pentecostalism in the United States/North America”
whenever possible. When those descriptors have become too unwieldy, I have reverted to the 
generally accepted terms. It is my hope that this lexical clarification will designate geography 
without implying a generalized identity.

By undertaking this project, I hope to accomplish several goals. Firstly, to guide the 
reader to an understanding of both North American and African Pentecostal self-identity. To 
accomplish that, I will explain how both mythic and modern origins have contributed to that 
identity. Secondly, to demonstrate that the roots of Pentecostalism were planted, not by Azuza 
Street missionaries, but by other Christian traditions well before the twentieth century. Thirdly, 
to explore the intersections between Pentecostals in North America and West Africa post-Azuza 
Street. By exploring those intersections, I will highlight the role of African missionaries in 
spreading Pentecostalism in West Africa.
LITERATURE REVIEW

Pentecostalism is primarily based in self-identification. As Walter Hollenweger admitted, “about all one can say is that a Pentecostal is a Christian who calls himself Pentecostal” (Hollenweger “Pentecostalism’s Global Language”). The charismatic markers and evangelistic tendencies that often mark Pentecostals are detailed in the New Testament Book of the Acts of the Apostles, making this resource the text most fundamental to Pentecostals. While disagreements about personal appearance, the role of glossolalia, and interpretation of scriptures define Pentecostal denominations, Pentecostal unity is defined by a belief in the Acts Two narrative. This connection was highlighted in the inaugural issue of The Apostolic Faith, the official newsletter of the Azuza Street movement in 1906. The Azuza Street movement is marked by North American Pentecostals as the modern origin of Pentecostalism and is viewed as a modern reenactment of the Act Two narrative. Although apostolic origins can be downplayed by African Pentecostals, the Book of Acts was instrumental in shaping North American proto-Pentecostal movements that intersected with existing traditions in West Africa. A notable example is the Sword of the Spirit, published by the Apostolic Faith Mission of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. This literature was widely disseminated in Ghana and Nigeria and was used by African missionaries to start Pentecostal churches in the early twentieth century.

If Pentecostalism is defined by self-identification, and that self-identification is tied to a particular interpretation of the Book of Acts, then it is imperative to understand the Pentecostal interpretation of Acts in order to understand the self-identification claimed by Pentecostals. This creates a context that will help insiders and outsiders alike. Insiders will recognize an authentic representation of Pentecostal identity and outsiders will gain a fundamental understanding of a Pentecostal identity that is closely tied to origins and missions, as detailed in Acts Two.
When I began the process of gathering sources for this project, the need for both African and Western sources was obvious. Not quite as obvious was how those I would assign those designations. Ultimately, the logic in including sources from both categories proved to be problematic. More than just designating geography, assigning labels such as “African” and “Western” also indicts authors as writing from a perspective framed by a particular academic and cultural bias. As predicted by Michael West and William Martin in the 1990’s, the future of African studies was “unlikely to be one of a multitude of equal voices and perspectives” (Out of One, Many Africas 27). This inequality is manifested in two ways. Firstly, it can be seen in the dearth of scholarship about Africa being produced and disseminated in and from Africa. As cited by Amina Mama, only 0.5 percent of the world’s research publications are produced in Africa (Mama 300). Secondly, it can be seen in reactive forms of Afrocentrism which undermine “Africanity” by competing with Western scholarship for equality (Skinner 62-63).

Further complicating the designation of sources as African or Western is the role of diaspora in defining an African scholar. The earliest source cited in this project is the writings of a Ghanaian slave, Jacobus E.J. Capitein. After receiving his education in Holland, Capitein returned to Ghana as a missionary (Capitein 30-31). Cited more than thirty times in this project is Ogbu Kalu, who was born in Nigeria, but completed much of his scholarship while living and teaching in the United States. Cited nearly twenty times in this project is Jehu J. Hanciles, who was born in Sierra Leone, but has taught and written about Africa while living in the United States. Jacob Olupona is an authority on African religions and is cited nearly ten times in this project. Dr. Olupona was born in Nigeria, but currently writes and teaches at Harvard University. Consider also Elizabeth Isichei, author of The Religious Traditions of Africa: A History and A History of Christianity in Africa and cited nearly twenty times in this project. Isichei was born in
New Zealand to Nigerian parents, but later lived and taught in Nigeria for many years. The scope of diaspora does not only indicate a radiating outward of Africans from Africa, but legacy of diaspora can also include a return to Africa by displaced Africans. It may also be helpful to think of African sources as inclusive of perspectives from both “Africans of the soil” and “Africans of the blood” (Mazrui 70). However, some scholars have questioned whether links to Africa can become tenuous over distance and time, perhaps indicating that sources written by Africans can become less “African” (Tadesse 148-149).

The main thrust of this project is not simply to prove separate origins for Pentecostalism in Africa and North America. That project would have been less interesting than attempting to understand how these separate origins shaped interactions between “Pentecostalisms” on both continents. More succinctly, without an understanding of separate origins, there is no understanding of interactions. If history is, as John Edward Phillips intones, a “conversation the present holds with the past,” then the present must recognize that written colonial sources often shout down the African past (33). Monopolizing the historical conversation can take different forms. Capitein was influenced by his interactions with colonialism, both at home and abroad. Western missionaries and their organizations were aware of their fiduciary responsibilities to donors, as well as proper “brand management.” Modern African scholars are affected by their own diasporic experiences and funding concerns. All of these sources cannot be disregarded because of context, but should be understood as exemplifying the intersections that have shaped self-identity within global Pentecostalism. By keeping this in mind, I hope to avoid two pitfalls: using African sources to frame a tale centered on Western figures and using Western sources to impose a history on Africa.
CHAPTER ONE: PENTECOSTALISM

The terms “Pentecostalism in Africa” and “Pentecostalism in the United States/North America” are problematic. The geographical designations are easily sorted out, but a definition of the term “Pentecostal” is not so easy to capture. It is common knowledge that global Pentecostalism is growing as ever increasing numbers of people self-identify as Pentecostal. What is not so readily evident is how to measure that phenomenon responsibly. The importance of a religious movement cannot be measured by statistical analysis alone; however, numbers can be helpful in demonstrating the changing geographical loci and fluid demographics of global Pentecostalism. That stated, statistics are also difficult to gather and process in a scientific way, especially when self-identification of belief is the measured “constant.” Further problematizing a description of Pentecostalism is the differentiation between and within denominations. Surveying Pentecostalism presents foundational questions. The first question is naturally “How should Pentecostals be counted?” The response to that question provokes a second, more basic question, “How does one first define Pentecostalism?”

Citing Walter Hollenweger and Allan Anderson, Todd Johnson agrees that the term “family resemblance” should be used to characterize the diverse movements that self-identify as Pentecostal (Johnson “Counting Pentecostals Worldwide” 266). While helpful as a starting point, the analogy of family does not quite encapsulate the full essence of Pentecostalism. Pentecostals themselves define Pentecostalism by defining what Pentecostalism IS, in conjunction with what Pentecostalism is NOT. That identification is based on how Pentecostals view themselves contrasted with how they view other self-identified Pentecostals. Hollenweger goes even further to articulate Pentecostalism by dividing the markers of self-identification into two categories. Firstly, he includes as Pentecostal all those groups who have “professed at least two religious
crisis experiences” (Hollenweger *The Pentecostals* xix). Those “crises” are physical baptism and spiritual baptism, the latter not necessarily associated with speaking in tongues (Hollenweger *The Pentecostals* xix). Secondly, he notes that Pentecostal groups use the present-day “belief and practice predominating in their own group” to describe “marginal or mainstream groups” (Hollenweger *The Pentecostals* xix-xx).

Outsiders may base their definition of Pentecostalism on visible signs generally associated with Pentecostalism, but that does not always accurately reflect how Pentecostals see themselves. Recognizable markers such as glossolalia, a fundamental belief in the primacy of the New Testament, specific modes of dress, emphasis on the experiential rather than the doctrinal, healing, and pervasive belief in the reality of a spiritual world may present to outsiders the appearance of a unified belief system. These aspects mask an internal range of diversity that matters greatly to people within Pentecostalism. These subtle differences are reflected in the many splinter groups that self-identify as Pentecostal, but may not be viewed as fully Pentecostal by other Pentecostal groups. These differences can be articulated in terms of theology or social psychology, but predominantly are understood by Pentecostals as differences that exist in the present and may or may not reflect the original doctrine or practice in their own group (Hollenweger *The Pentecostals* xix).

Within North American Pentecostalism, labels such as Charismatic and Apostolic can be applied, but should not be assumed to be synonymous. Additionally, Assemblies of God and Holiness churches can be defined as Pentecostal in nature since they claim similar renewalist origins rooted in the early twentieth century and actively seek charismatic gifts (Wacker 6-7; McClung, Jr. 5). The Pew Research Center defines as “classical” those Pentecostal groups who trace their lineage from Azuza Street as well as more recent denominations such as the Universal
Church of the Kingdom of God in Brazil (“Spirit and Power” 1-2). The Pew Research Center also differentiates between Pentecostal and Charismatic groups, recognizing that although Pentecostals and Charismatics claim a similar religious experience, Charismatics often belong to other Christian denominations (“Spirit and Power” 1-2). North American Pentecostals’ self-identification as renewalist is contextual by nature; hence it can shift quickly. As a result, groups associated with North American Pentecostalism have traditionally been “casual about labels” (Wacker 7). With the experience and vocabulary of “Holy Spirit baptism” permeating other denominational groups such as Catholicism and Presbyterianism, the line between American Pentecostals and non-Pentecostals is increasingly blurred (Hollenweger *The Pentecostals* 15).

African Pentecostals also claim diverse terminology and complex self-identification. Born Again, Aladura, Zionist, Apostolic, Baptist, Balokole, Legion of Christ’s Witnesses, and Assemblies of God can all be identified as part of the African Pentecostal experience. Recognizing self-identification rather than group identification is especially important as many African Pentecostals attend Anglican, Catholic, and Assemblies of God churches (Isischei *Religious Traditions of Africa* 216). Pentecostal identity has also shifted temporally and geographically. For this reason, “attention to periodization and context are crucial in constructing Pentecostal identity” (Kalu *African Pentecostalism* 8).

The recognition of the trends that demonstrate the metamorphosis of global Christianity is more valuable than numbers alone. Over the course of the preceding century, the percentage of Christians who are from Europe or North America has dropped from more than eighty percent to less than forty percent (Johnson “Global Pentecostal Demographics” 319). Pentecostalism has been the largest contributor to the emphasis on Christianity in the Global South (Stewart 3). Within that geographical shift, the number of Christian denominations increased from
approximately five thousand in 1910 to approximately forty-one thousand by the end of the twentieth century (Johnson “Global Pentecostal Demographics” 319).

Tackling the thorny question of counting Pentecostals, the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life conducted surveys in ten countries in 2006. In addition to gathering and articulating numerical data, this study delineated categories of belief understood as distinctly Pentecostal. Stated differently, not only did this survey count Pentecostals and place them geographically, it also tried to apply a general definition of Pentecostalism. For the purpose of that survey, both Pentecostals and Charismatics were placed in the category of “renewalist” (“Spirit and Power” 2). The ten countries surveyed were chosen because they were identified as having sizeable renewalist populations (“Spirit and Power” 1). Of the ten countries chosen, three were African countries from three distinct geographical regions: Nigeria (West), Kenya (East), and South Africa. Of the remaining seven countries, four were located in the Western Hemisphere, with the United States being the only country in the group not in Latin America (Brazil, Chile, Guatemala). The remaining countries represented South and East Asia (India, the Philippines, South Korea). Of the surveyed renewalist populations, Pentecostals outnumbered Charismatics in only Kenya and Nigeria. In all other countries, the renewalist movement can be characterized as Charismatic rather than Pentecostal by a 2:1 margin (“Spirit and Power” 2). The survey also found that Pentecostals are more highly concentrated in Latin America and Africa than in the United States or Asia (“Spirit and Power” 2). Another finding of note concerns one of the most visible markers associated with Pentecostalism. In six out of the ten countries, more than forty percent of Pentecostals claimed never to “speak or pray in tongues” (“Spirit and Power” 3).

The findings of the Pew Forum survey are corroborated by more recent numbers. The information in the tables below reflect similar trends when comparing total world population
numbers and those of total African population numbers in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. These statistics do not only measure; rather, they illustrate the changing nature of intersections between Christianities, specifically Pentecostalism. Perhaps the most productive way to view the numbers is to consider them in four ways: 1.) Christianity on a global scale, 2.) Christianity within Africa, 3.) as compared to the “Christian” continents of Europe and North America combined, and 4.) the overall number of Pentecostals globally (Sanneh “The Last Great Frontier” 67-68).

**Table 1. Christianity on a global scale.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>WORLD POPULATION</th>
<th>MUSLIMS</th>
<th>CHRISTIANS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>1.6 billion</td>
<td>200 million</td>
<td>558 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>3.7 billion</td>
<td>557 million</td>
<td>1.2 billion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>7.1 billion</td>
<td>1.6 billion</td>
<td>2.4 billion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although Christianity remained by far the largest claimed religion, it can be argued that on a global scale, Christianity progressively lost ground to Islam in the twentieth century. For the time period 1900-2013, the number of Muslims increased eightfold globally. The ratio of Christians to Muslims worldwide shrank from a ratio of 2.79:1 in 1900, to 2.15:1 in 1970, and to 1.5:1 in 2013. However, Christianity still maintained a wide margin, as the number of Christians increased by the year 2013 to 4.3 times the number of Christians in 1900.
Table 2. Christianity in Africa.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>AFRICAN POPULATION</th>
<th>AFRICAN MUSLIMS</th>
<th>AFRICAN CHRISTIANS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>107.8 million</td>
<td>34.5 million</td>
<td>9.9 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>520.4 million</td>
<td>215.8 million</td>
<td>236.3 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>784.5 million</td>
<td>317.4 million</td>
<td>360.2 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2025 (est.)</td>
<td>1.3 billion</td>
<td>519.3 million</td>
<td>633.8 million</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Within Africa, the opposite trend has been true. In 1900, the ratio of Christians to Muslims was 1:3.48. By 1985, the overall number of African Christians had surpassed the number of African Muslims, yielding a ratio of 1.09:1. If the projections given by Sanneh hold true, by 2025, African Christians will outnumber African Muslims by a ratio of 1.22:1. It is important to note that the statistics indicate that after 409 years of Christian missionary work (1491-1900), less than ten percent of the overall African population identified as Christian. In the eighty-five years between 1900 and 1985, that percentage exploded to 45.4% of the total African population. In the fifteen years between 1985 and 2000, the percentage increased to nearly fifty percent of the population (49.9%). The importance of these numbers may indicate the nature of missionary work in Africa. In the more than four centuries of Western Christian missionary work, little inroads were made amongst the African people. As explained in greater detail later in this project, the numbers of African Christians began to increase as Africans gained greater agency in the missionizing process. It is notable that the greatest statistical growth occurred after revivals led by African prophetic figures and mid-twentieth century African independence movements.
Table 3. Western Christianity compared to global Christianity.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>COMBINED CHRISTIAN POPULATION OF EUROPE AND NORTH AMERICA</th>
<th>PERCENTAGE OF WORLD CHRISTIAN POPULATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>427.9 million</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>789.9 million</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A further illustration of this trend can be seen when the Christian population of Europe and North America are factored in. Although the overall number of European and North American Christians increased 1.84 times over the period 1900-2013, the growth did not keep pace with overall global population growth that increased 4.4 times over the same years. Additionally, there was a pronounced shift away from Europe and North America as centers of Christianity, as Christians on those continents comprised only 33% of the total number of global Christians by 2013. This represents a substantial decrease from the 77% share attributed to Europe and North America in 1900.

Table 4. Global Pentecostalism.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>TOTAL PENTECOSTAL POPULATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>981,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>62 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>628 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2025 (est.)</td>
<td>828 million</td>
</tr>
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Lamin Sanneh put the number of Pentecostals in 1900 at 981,000, but according to Todd Johnson, that number may have been over one million (Sanneh “The Last Great Frontier” 68; Johnson 266). It should be noted that this number predates the Azuza Street Revival of 1906. If the trends since 1900 hold true, Pentecostal population will be the most widespread form of Christianity, impacting mainstream Christianity and secular politics (Sanneh “The Last Great Frontier” 68). Taken together, the growth of global Pentecostalism and the statistical weight of Christianity’s shift to the global South indicate that not only does Pentecostalism play an ever increasing role in Christianity, but that African Pentecostalism will continue to grow in influence. A similar phenomenon can be observed in the Catholic Church, which also reflects the overall shift of Christianity to the global South, giving Catholics from the South increasing clout in global Catholicism. As examples of that power shift, the world’s largest Catholic seminary is located in Nigeria, and within the United States, one out of every six diocesan priests and one in three seminarians are foreign-born (Rice “Mission from Africa”).

Statistics can mark the shifting demographics and geographies of global Pentecostalism, but do not fully describe the experience. The recognition of a geographical shift to the global South, the increasing diversity of Christianity, and the growth of Pentecostalism are key to understanding the importance of African and North American Pentecostalism. As noted earlier, one could surmise that Pentecostalism’s shift to the Global South represents a dissemination of Pentecostalism that began in, and emanates from, the West. Jehu J. Hanciles describes this phenomenon as the “World Series” approach in which many Western scholars project the American experience on a global scale and reduce non-Western developments to “pale replicas” or “residues” (Hanciles Beyond Christendom 132). In order to dispel this approach, the disparate origins of Pentecostalism in Africa and North America must be articulated by scholars.
Necessary to the construction of an origin narrative is a nuanced understanding of how Pentecostalism is understood in both African and North American contexts. Without that perspective, it is impossible to define the role of missions in the spread of Pentecostalism. The importance of African historical origins in African Pentecostalism and the importance of pre-American historical origins in American Pentecostalism indicate not only each tradition’s origin, but also how each tradition views its individual role in global Pentecostalism. Scholars of African Christianity, including Pentecostalism, tend to emphasize more recent history, perhaps to more clearly differentiate from Western Pentecostalism or to emphasize African agency (Kalu *African Pentecostalism* vii, 48, 51). This should not indicate that African Pentecostalism does not claim apostolic origins and that African Pentecostalism cannot be traced back to the early Christian Church. In American Pentecostalism, the determination to link to the primal has often resulted in a lack of interest in more recent history, perhaps as an attempt to bolster claims of original apostolic doctrine (Maxwell 314). Although widely celebrated by American Pentecostals, the modern Azuza Street origin narrative derives its importance as a continuation of the apostolic experience.

Any discussion of intersections between Pentecostalisms would be incomplete without a study of missiology. Although terms like “globalization” and “acculturation” can delineate specific statistical or sociological aspects, the term “missiology” indicates a core component of both West African and North American Pentecostalism. In the Acts Two narrative, the importance of charismatic signs and phenomena are emphasized a only within a context of evangelism. The individual and collective “Pentecostal experience” is detailed in only the first four verses of Acts Chapter Two. Verses five through forty-seven of the same chapter are dedicated to the description of how that experience was translated into missionary efforts, ending
with “And the Lord added daily to the church, those who were being saved” (Act 2:47 NKJV).

Stated differently, globalization and acculturation in a first century Pentecostal context were characterized as the effects of “upper room” missionary efforts. Most recently, those missionary efforts were not always proprietarily Pentecostal. Christian missionary networks that pre-dated modern Pentecostalism were used effectively to spread religious beliefs and practices that would later be categorized as Pentecostal, lending to the myth that the growth of global Pentecostalism was tied to the Azuza Street revival of 1906.
CHAPTER TWO: PENTECOSTALISM IN NORTH AMERICA

**Apostolic Origins**

*When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance* (Acts 2:1-4 NKJV).

The title “Pentecostal” is derived from the Christian belief that the Holy Spirit came to expectant disciples of Christ on the day of Pentecost while they were gathered in an “upper room,” as recounted in the Book of Acts in the New Testament. The Feast of Pentecost, or *Shavuot*, is a Jewish holiday that coincides with the harvest. During *Shavuot*, Jews travelled to Jerusalem to bring their “first fruits,” generally a sheaf of grain, to the Temple (Brodd 381-382). American Pentecostals identify the “upper room experience” as the pivotal moment in which the Pentecostal experience was born and acknowledge as the first converts to “Pentecostalism” practicing Jews, present in Jerusalem to celebrate the Feast of Pentecost (Acts 2:5,36,41 NKJV). Within Christianity, Pentecost is not only celebrated by American Pentecostals; Orthodox, Catholic, and other Protestant Christians also celebrate Pentecost as an influential moment in Christianity.

In the same time period and close to the epicenter of the North American Pentecostal movement, the June 2, 1907 edition of the *San Francisco Call* dedicated a full page to the non-Pentecostal celebration of Pentecost in Sausalito, California. Within the text of the story, Pentecost was explained as commemorating a Holy Ghost experience in which the apostles were “imbued with added courage” (4). Although described in a Catholic context, this Pentecost celebration in Sausalito would have been recognizable to any contemporaneous American Pentecostal as a celebration of Holy Ghost “baptism.” The same article explains not only the
apostolic origins of Pentecost, but also described the modern origins of the celebration for Portuguese Catholics. Much like American Pentecostals, these Portuguese-American Catholics saw their relationship with Pentecost as having origin stories that occurred nearly sixteen centuries apart. What made early American Pentecostals unique, and differentiated “Pentecostals” from “people who celebrated Pentecost” was the overarching desire to connect directly and personally with the experience of the disciples and apostles of the early Christian church. In this way, Pentecostals saw themselves as more than celebrators of a past event; rather, they became participants in Pentecost.

Figure 1.
The first-century intersection of Judaism and early Christianity became a defining theme of the views of American proto-Pentecostals in the nineteenth century. According to the Book of Acts, the phenomenon that announced the upper room experience to the city of Jerusalem was the spectacle of glossolalia (Acts 2:6-11 NKJV). American Pentecostals tend to focus on the gift of tongues more so than do Pentecostals outside the United States (Hollenweger “Pentecostalism’s Global Language”). Glossolalia may provide for American Pentecostals the visible evidence that links their ecstatic experience with that of the characters and church described in the Book of Acts. Although prized for its functional and mythic roles, the charismatic “gift of tongues” represents an “extraordinary phenomenon” that stands out in a “middle class society” (Hollenweger “Pentecostalism’s Global Language”). It may be that glossolalia is not necessarily valued by American Pentecostals more than it is in other countries, but rather more attention is drawn to the act because there is not a well-known and pre-existent cultural context to explain the phenomenon.

From that perspective, it is not the act of speaking in tongues that is appreciated by American Pentecostals, but the implication of that gift: communion with the supernatural. This experiential dimension would correspond with the shared American Pentecostal belief that the “seemingly supernatural” is part of the natural world (Poloma 155). The practice of glossolalia reenacts the spectacle of Acts Chapter Two for both the participant and the observer, making glossolalia both an identifying mark of believers and a missionary tool to reach unbelievers. It bears stating, however, that whether glossolalia is emphasized because of functional, mythic, or emotional reasons, it should not be assumed that all American Pentecostals speak in tongues.

Other than a belief in charismatic gifts, American Pentecostals and the apostolic church share a common omission, that of a “formal, written confession of faith (Hollenweger
The desire to directly connect with the divine without structured creeds was a hallmark of the very early Christian Church. Early Christians were primarily connected by stories of Jesus, rituals, and simplistic statements of faith (Hollenweger “Pentecostalism’s Global Language”). In Acts Chapter Two, the Apostle Peter invoked the words of the Hebrew prophet Joel in proclaiming, “whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved” (Acts 2:21 NKJV). This democratization of access to the divine is reflected in the American Pentecostal view that creeds are “humanly fabricated” and therefore fallible (Wacker 11).
Modern Origins

Beloved, if you do not know the language that you speak, do not puzzle yourself about it, for the Lord did not promise us He would tell us what language we were speaking, but He promised the interpretation of what we speak. -William J. Seymour, 1907

Pentecostalism has a varied lineage that includes African-based slave religion and nineteenth-century Holiness movements among its influences (Anderson “Origins” 162). As Walter Hollenweger explained in the preface to The Pentecostals, “The origins of the Pentecostal movement go back to a revival amongst the negroes of North America at the beginning of the present century” (xvii). An African American minister named William J. Seymour, carried this “Apostolic” faith with an emphasis on healing and glossolalia to Los Angeles in 1906 (Hollenweger The Pentecostals 22; Wacker 6). It was there, in a former African Methodist Episcopal church building located at 312 Azuza Street, that the American Pentecostal movement began to take shape.

Although American Pentecostalism is largely identified with the Azuza Street Mission and Los Angeles of the early twentieth century, it first began to coalesce in the late nineteenth century. The site was a small Bible college in Topeka, Kansas run by Charles Fox Parham and attended by William J. Seymour. Parham, a former Methodist, believed he had received healing from rheumatic fever and subsequently started his own healing ministry (Anderson “Charles Fox Parham” 166). In September of 1906, the inaugural issue of The Apostolic Faith was published. In the first column of the first issue, the nascent Pentecostal movement began by codifying its own origin. The headline trumpeted that “Pentecost Has Come” and tied the Los Angeles revival to the Book of Acts. However, before the end of the first column, “Bro. Seymour”, and his teacher “Bro. Parham” were designated as the modern patriarchs of the “Old-Time Pentecost” (The Apostolic Faith Vol. 1, No.1).
Parham was heavily influenced by the teachings of Frank Sandford, a former Baptist minister, who founded the Holy Ghost and Us Bible School in Maine in 1895 (Anderson “Charles Fox Parham” 167). Parham attended the Holy Ghost and Us Bible School, where he was taught that speaking in “missionary tongues” was a sign of Christ’s return (Anderson “Charles Fox Parham” 167). Parham was baptized by Benjamin Irwin, who founded the interracial Fire Baptized Holiness Association, in Iowa, also in 1895 (Williams 169). Both Sandford and Irwin emphasized holiness standards and adherence to Judaic law (Williams 169, 173). Sanford specifically believed in the imminence of the premillennial return of Christ, the existence of spiritual warfare involving both the supernatural and natural worlds, and the Anglo-Saxon inheritance of Israel’s spiritual and genealogical legacy (Anderson “Charles Fox Parnham” 167). It was this latter view that marked proto-Pentecostalism, and would later influence Pentecostalism through the teaching of Parham.

The idea of the Christian Church as a “spiritual Israel” has both literal and mystical applications. The basis of this theory is that Israel rejected Christ, so God turned to the Church. In the future, when God’s redemptive purpose has been fulfilled through the Church, God will “resume his relations with Israel” (Ladd 206). These relations were to include the restoration of a physical state in Palestine, ruled by the Davidic Messiah (Ladd 207). According to this view, the
Millennium would be an exact restoration of Old Testament promises (Ladd 207). Sandford taught that Anglo-Saxons were descended from the “lost” tribes of Israel (Anderson “Charles Fox Parham” 167, Williams 170). Anglo-Saxon nations, such as Britain and the United States, should then fulfill their roles as physical and spiritual heirs by furthering the Christian cause through imperialism and subsequent missionary work (Williams 173). This view, broadly known as “British-Israelism,” was adopted by Parham in both doctrine and dress. While wearing “Palestinian robes,” Parham reiterated Sandford’s teaching that missionary tongues were key to fulfilling God’s mandate of missionizing non Anglo-Saxon nations (Anderson “Charles Fox Parham” 167; Williams 173). Echoes of Judeo-centrism in the later Pentecostal movement were not only the product of Parham’s teachings, but were also part of the teachings of an African American preacher named Charles Harrison Mason. Mason taught a restorationist message with one important difference, however. Mason was influenced by Black Israelite Holiness movements which taught that African Americans, not Anglo-Saxons, were the lost tribes of Israel and the heirs to God’s blessing (Williams 170). Mason’s organization, the Church of God in Christ, later became the largest American Pentecostal denomination (Williams 170).

This close association between blacks and whites in the early American Pentecostal church did not go unnoticed by outsiders, specifically the secular media. The scorn directed at Pentecostals reflected not only that Pentecostal theological beliefs and practices were outside those of “typical” Christian denominations, but also that social interaction between the races was not looked upon kindly. One newspaper, New York American, indicated in its December 3, 1906 edition, that Pentecostals were a “strange movement” and outside recognized norms, both in religious experience and race relations.
Faith Gives Quaint Sect New Languages to Convert Africa. Votaries of Odd Religion Nightly see “Miracles” in West Side Room. Led by Negro Elder. The leaders of this strange movement are for the most part Negroes (Hollenweger The Pentecostals 23).

For American Pentecostals, this distrust was mutual, having stated several months earlier that “secular papers” were essentially instrument of the devil:

The secular papers have been stirred and published reports against the movement, but it has only resulted in drawing hungry souls who understand that the devil would not fight a thing unless God was in it. So they have come and found it was indeed the power of God (The Apostolic Faith Vol I, No. 1)

At least part of the media skepticism was rooted in the healing power claimed by proto-Pentecostals such as John Alexander Dowie and Frank Sandford. Claims of fraud accompanied these claims, giving the American public the impression that Pentecostals preyed upon children and the weaker members of society. Beginning in 1894, Dowie established “healing homes”, sometimes referred to as “faith homes,” where he promised healing without medical doctors (Mohr 58-59). When asked if he had personally healed people, Dowie replied,

Yes, in thousands of cases. I myself laid hands upon many hundreds of thousands of persons and I have seen the Lord’s power manifested in the healing of great numbers, many of whom are living witnesses in many countries, who have testified publically before thousands, and who are prepared to testify at any time (Dowie 387)

Dowie’s followers extolled the superiority of Dowie’s healing ministry to the medical science of the day in the Leaves of Healing newsletter (Darms 378):

Figure 3.
In addition to his healing ministry, Dowie published a periodical entitled *Leaves of Healing* which he proclaimed as equal to the gospels in the New Testament canon. According to Dowie, Acts and Revelation were the fifth and sixth gospels, and *Leaves of Healing* constituted the seventh gospel (Mohr 59). Eventually, Dowie was arrested more than one hundred times for running this series of unlicensed “faith homes” (Wacker *Heaven Below* 189).

Although his Holy Ghost and Us compound was headquartered in Durham, Maine, Frank Sandford’s reputation as a confidence man reached other areas of the country. *Blue-Grass Blade*, a newspaper from Lexington, Kentucky printed a scathing editorial against Sandford on November 22, 1908. In the editorial, author Manley A. Brigham identified Sandford’s business model as “relying on the Lord for the good things in life, instead of working for them (7).” Brigham branded Sandford as a confidence man, but indicted those who enabled Sandford as the real problem. Brigham described those who supported Sandford as “fool men and women” and characterized them as “not any different than other religious communities, save that the intelligence among them is not so high (7).” Brigham described how “outsiders” informed him that whenever Sandford was attacked by other Christians, support, in the form of “thousands of dollars” from around the nation, poured in (7). Although convicted of manslaughter after refusing to allow a child to receive medical care, Frank Sandford was later freed (Wacker *Heaven Below* 189). Brigham did not mention the word “Pentecostal” within his editorial; however Sandford’s patriarchal status in Pentecostalism was well established.

From these accounts, it becomes clear that there was not a single and united Pentecostalism in North America during the early twentieth century. However, early American Pentecostals can be generally described as “evangelical Christians who adhered to a biblical orthodoxy, and who tended to be conservative on moral issues (Poloma 155, 157).” Early
Pentecostals could also identify a genealogical connection to Dowie, Sandford, and Parham. Although Azuza Street is commonly marked as the “central origin myth” and is a historical rallying point for American Pentecostal denominations, it was perhaps more of a reflection of pre-existing “theological tendencies and social dynamics” in American society (Creech 405-407). William Seymour’s home ministry became a three-year prayer meeting that American Pentecostals mark as the origin of the worldwide Pentecostal movement (Hollenweger The Pentecostals 22). However, it would be more correct to say that interactions between pre-existing Christian denominations spawned charismatic proto-Pentecostal movements, resulting in separate Pentecostal origins in North America and West Africa. In this way, Dowie and Sandford’s ministries influenced not only Pentecostalism in North America, but West Africa as well.
Missiology

Then they were all amazed and marveled, saying to one another, “Look, are not all these who speak Galileans? And how is it that we hear, each in our own language in which we were born? Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya adjoining Cyrene, visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabs—we hear them speaking in our own tongues the wonderful works of God.” (Acts 2: 7-8, 10-11 NKJV)

The young twentieth century introduced a new player on the mission field: the fledgling North American Pentecostal movement. Fresh from the revival fires of Azuza Street, Pentecostals parlayed their zeal into evangelistic efforts, both foreign and domestic. As a part of the renewal narrative intrinsic to their beliefs, American Pentecostals believed the Azuza Street Revival rekindled the apostolic upper room experience; it was this particular belief that fueled a new missionary movement, one single-mindedly bent on revival.

By the end of 1906, there were nine Pentecostal churches in Los Angeles (Hollenweger 23). By the end of the first decade of the twentieth century, the revival had spread to most parts of the United States, Canada, and northern Mexico (Wacker 6). Bolstering missionary fervor was the early church charismatic sign of “missionary tongues.” With their newfound linguistic abilities, new converts quickly disseminated Pentecostal doctrine throughout the world by January of 1907 (The Apostolic Faith Vol I, No. 5). This “Azuza-centric” model of Pentecostal is often cited as the direct origin story of “classical” Pentecostalism in Africa (Anderson 28). This particular origin myth outlines the Pentecostal story with an emphasis on the language and experience of the Anglo world, creating the illusion of “American outposts” when viewed globally (Kalu Christian Missions in Africa 397).

Influence from other Christian denominations was recognizable and embraced in early American Pentecostalism. Many converts not only attested to having previous religious experiences, but readily acknowledged the role of those experiences, ultimately describing them
as lacking the fullness of Pentecostalism. In these testimonies, a clear understanding what was and was not Pentecostal seems clear to the converts. Being “Christian” was incomplete; only Pentecostalism offered the full gospel. This need for delineation was not only important to Pentecostals, as contemporaneous Holiness movements also emphasized the importance of an identity separate from fellow Christians (Case 130). In a particularly well-articulated example, a convert by the name of E.G. Murrah related his Pentecostal conversion experience in 1907 as the third “epoch” in his life (The Bridegroom’s Messenger Vol. I, No. 1 pg. 3). Murrah described his earlier conversion as his “new birth” and his later Pentecostal salvation as “sanctification.” In his testimony, he viewed Pentecostal sanctification as more complete than his new birth in both purification and emotional experience:

*The difference in my sanctification and the new birth is, the experience of the latter was not uniform and I had internal conflicts with my proclivity to do wrong. The entire sanctified experience is uniform and free from the bent, or inclination to sin, and while the emotional is often lacking in the full salvation experience, the peace that passeth all understanding abides, and ever and anon a shower of joy floods the soul that is sweeter than honey and the honeycomb. men! hallelujah (sic) (The Bridegroom’s Messenger Vol. I, No. 1 pg. 3)!*

This explanation did not only describe the experience of domestic converts, but also that of foreign missionaries who identified with Azuza Street revivalist ideals but were previously deployed by other religious groups. These missionaries were the “strongest agents” in the fledgling Pentecostal movement (Kalu *African Pentecostalism* 48). In the case of Samuel and Ardella Meade, longtime missionaries to Angola, Azuza Street provided the “closer walk with God” they sought (The Apostolic Faith Vol. 1 No.3 pg 3). In the years preceding Azuza Street, the Meades built a thriving missionary complex in Malange (Angola), which included two residences, a trading post, and more than one hundred acres. The Meades had even purchased land and made plans to erect a church some six miles away in Quessua (Annual Report of the Methodist Episcopal Church Missionary Society 1897 39-40). Despite this success, the Meades
cited divine instruction as the impetus to attend the Azuza Street Revival during their furlough in the United States. In their testimonies dated November 1906, the Meades claimed that glossolalia was a result of “receiving their Pentecost.” Ardella was “shown” that her gift of tongues was in the form of an unnamed “African dialect” and Samuel theorized that such a gift might enable them to perform missionary work in a more meaningful way (The Apostolic Faith Vol. 1 No.3 pg 3).

Another established missionary who later affiliated with the Pentecostal church was Pearl Graham. Initially, Graham visited Liberia with her family on a “pleasure trip,” but she and her family quickly transitioned to a missionary mindset (Scott 20, 83). Graham, later “Mother” Pearl Holmes, did not become Pentecostal until almost two decades after Azuza Street, but cited the influence of Acts 2:38 in her conversion experience and the effect of her Pentecostal missionary work in a piece for the Pentecostal Herald in April, 1950:

In 1924 my mother, sister and myself received the Baptism of the Holy Ghost as we obeyed Acts 2:38. What joy we had as we retold the story to those we had been teaching and saw those that were ready receive the Baptism of the Holy Spirit, speaking in other tongues. God blessed wonderfully and souls were added daily to the Church.

After I had been in Africa for eighteen years, the Lord sent Brother Holmes and family there in the year 1914. At that time I was working with a Baptist mission. Brother Holmes and I were married in 1916. In 1924 we went into the interior with only $4.00 in cash but we trusted in God. We were young and strong then and with the help of a few natives we cut down trees, cleared the land, built a native house and moved in, establishing the Zoradee Pentecostal Mission. Our only income was when God would permit Brother Holmes to kill a deer or wild hog and then sell it to obtain a few dollars. But God saved souls . . . hundreds have been filled with the Holy Ghost at Zoradee Mission. Our suffering in those days cannot be described but we prayed daily to be more and more like Jesus. In answer to prayer He had taken us away from home and placed us among hardened sinners where we seemingly stood alone. Sometimes we were hungry and tired but did not Jesus also suffer thusly (Scott 83)?

From its inception, the modern Pentecostal movement emphasized evangelism. New converts joined veteran missionaries like the Meades and the Holmeses in spreading the “full Gospel.” Mass media was one of the few unifying forces in early American Pentecostalism,
generally in the form of periodicals. Periodicals begat missionary funding as readers became familiar with the same characters in the familiar missionary trope. Missionaries were portrayed as having a divine calling, beset on all sides by forces of evil and heathen ways and supported only by faith, donations, and “missionary tongues” (Anderson 26). One of the most influential of these periodicals was *The Apostolic Faith*, an official organ of the Azuza Street Mission. The importance of mass media to the Azuza Street movement was demonstrated when *The Apostolic Faith*, under the leadership of Florence Louise Crawford, moved from Los Angeles to Portland, Oregon. The loss of the periodical and the membership mailing list proved to be a significant reason for the decline of direct Azuza Street influence (Stewart 47).

The early Pentecostal founder Charles Parham believed that speaking in tongues took the form of an earthly language previously unknown to the recipient of Pentecostal salvation (Wacker 45). This gift provided the impetus for many early converts to immediately leave for foreign lands to proselytize. Glossolalia was viewed not just as evidence of the infilling of the Holy Spirit, but also had practical missionary applications. Early issues of *The Apostolic Faith* are rife with testimonials citing the miracle of missionary tongues. By 1916, despite the lack of a central organizing body, Pentecostal missionaries had reached forty-two nations outside of Europe and North America (Anderson 25). Even faith healer John Alexander Dowie claimed his ministry was “being exercised in many parts of America, Europe, Australia, and elsewhere (Dowie 387).”

The pervasiveness of these early accounts helped to fuel a mythology in which Azuza Street missionaries carried the Pentecostal message to heathen lands, sparking a global Pentecostal movement. Certainly these missionaries were not without some influence, however it does appear that their effect was initially over-emphasized by sensationalist periodicals then
assimilated in popular Pentecostal lore. In reality, these Azuza Street missionaries were full of zeal, but their lack of discernable language skill and paucity of funding undermined their effectiveness, sapping their enthusiasm. The ardent belief in missionary tongues and the expediency with which missionaries left for foreign lands ultimately doomed most of the evangelistic efforts. The result, as described by the founder of the Christian and Missionary Alliance, was that these missionaries were “compelled to return to their homes, disappointed, perplexed, and heart-broken” (McGee 34). As the initial localized fervor around Los Angeles died down, the Pentecostal message began to disperse and the direct influence of Azuza Street quickly waned (McClung, Jr. 4).

Even when funding and resources were available, early Pentecostal mission trips were notoriously unsuccessful. In 1911, scandal erupted when Frank Sandford was accused of killing a total of six of his “Holy Ghosters” in an ill-fated mission trip (The Sunday Gate City Vol. 113 No. 137). The missionary voyage got as far as the “African coast” before his followers died of “starvation and scurvy” (The Sunday Gate City Vol. 113 No. 137). When a second Sandford ship went down at the same time, Sandford did not initially seek help for his crew, because "God ordered me to continue to Greenland to convert the heathen, and I had to go” (The Sunday Gate City Vol. 113 No. 137). This explanation was given by Sandford as part of a three-hour statement during his trial, in which he recounted to the jury that "God commanded me to visit far-off shores and show the benighted inhabitants the light" (The Sunday Gate City Vol. 113 No. 137). Sandford went so far as to claim he never did anything unless “God personally told me to” (The Sunday Gate City Vol. 113 No. 137).
In what was called the “most remarkable criminal case in the history of Maine,” Sandford was found guilty after a ten-minute jury deliberation (The Sunday Gate City Vol. 113 No. 137).

Figure 4.

Indirectly, Azuza Street still wielded some influence. Florence Louise Crawford, the individual responsible for spiriting away The Apostolic Faith to Portland, was an associate of William Seymour and a noted faith healer (Stewart 47; Kalu Christian Missions in Africa 78). She founded her own organization, Apostolic Faith, Light of Hope, and sent missionaries to Liberia. On the mission field, converts quickly added the term abosso, or “mother” to both differentiate themselves from the American church and to honor the image of a “household of faith.” The Abosso Apostolic Faith Church eventually became linked with the Aladura movement and prophetic movements (Kalu Christian Missions in Africa 78).

North American Pentecostal converts were not the first to speak in tongues, nor did they have proprietary ownership. Revivals in Wales, Korea, and India all preceded, if only briefly, the Azuza Street Revival (Kalu African Pentecostalism 20). As Azuza Street missionaries reached
foreign lands, they sometimes discovered much to their surprise, that the “latter rain” had preceded their arrival. The Garrs, a missionary couple to India, were cited in the initial issue of *The Apostolic Faith* as receiving missionary tongues in “the Indian language” at Azuza Street (Vol. 1 No. 1 pg. 4). In the following issue of *The Apostolic Faith*, the Garrs are characterized as carriers of the Azuza Street experience to India, via Danville, Virginia (Vol. 1 No. 2 pg. 3). When the Garrs eventually arrived in India, they reported that “the revival had already broken out among the natives and some were speaking in tongues” (Kalu *African Pentecostalism* 20).

In addition to spreading the gospel of faith healing within the United States, John Alexander Dowie’s ministry also spawned the Faith Tabernacle Congregation in Philadelphia in 1897 (Mohr “Out of Zion” 65). Faith Tabernacle was founded by Jacob Thomas Wilhide who had been a leader in Zion’s Watchmen, a group who patrolled Dowie’s church property in Chicago (Mohr “Out of Zion” 61). Although independent, Faith Tabernacle closely resembled Dowie’s organization as it established its own “healing home” and a periodical similar to Dowie’s *Leaves of Healing*, called *Sword of the Spirit*. By 1903, *Sword of the Spirit* encouraged its readers to become “home missionaries” and Faith Tabernacle had established a missionary department (Mohr “Out of Zion” 68). The missionary department of Faith Tabernacle did not send missionaries to foreign lands, but sent literature in their stead (Mohr “Out of Zion” 69). *Sword of the Spirit* recorded its first West African testimony in Ghana in 1906 (Mohr “Faith Tabernacle Congregation” 198). By 1917, the classical Pentecostal movement in Ghana was established, due to the efforts of Faith Tabernacle of Philadelphia and the influence of *Sword of the Spirit* (Christ Apostolic Church International). That same year also marked the first reference to a Faith Tabernacle congregation in Nigeria (Mohr “Faith Tabernacle Congregation” 198).
Faith Tabernacle leaders and followers would later establish the first four Pentecostal denominations in Nigeria, but only one of those denominations would have a connection to Azuza Street. It is accurate to say that the Faith Tabernacle Congregation of Philadelphia created the foundation for Pentecostalism in Ghana and in Nigeria largely through the spread of their periodical *Sword of the Spirit*. However, without the intervention of American missionaries associated with Faith Tabernacle, Pentecostalism would not have been able to flourish. By the late 1920’s, missionaries had to be present for African Pentecostals to avoid religious persecution by the colonial Nigerian government (Mohr “Faith Tabernacle Congregation” 210).

Pentecostalism did not originate in North America, nor did North American Pentecostals own Pentecostalism and the associated signs. For example, the glossolalia phenomenon had already been documented in Britain (1820’s), amongst American Mormons (1820’s and 1890’s) and among Spiritualists at the beginning of the twentieth century (Wacker 51). In the late nineteenth century in North America, glossolalia was witnessed, not just in Pentecostal services, but also in Anglican, Lutheran, and Reformed churches (Hollenweger 4-6). While the tongues phenomenon is not the only marker of Pentecostalism, it does serve as an example of charismatic signs that indicate a shared experience. American Pentecostals viewed *charismata* as new phenomena, separate from the Protestant establishment, largely because many older Protestant movements believed these outward signs had ceased to exist (Kalu *Christian Missions in Africa* 401). While the efficient delivery of new North American doctrine marked by charismatic signs as imagined by the Azuza Street missionaries was not to be fully realized, a charismatic movement was indeed taking shape in Africa in the early twentieth century. The African roots of Pentecostalism however, were established almost nineteen centuries prior to the Los Angeles revival.
CHAPTER THREE: PENTECOSTALISM IN WEST AFRICA

Apostolic Origins

Then they were all amazed and marveled, saying to one another, “Look, are not all these who speak Galileans? And how is it that we hear, each in our own language in which we were born? Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya adjoining Cyrene, visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabs—we hear them speaking in our own tongues the wonderful works of God” (Acts 2: 7-8, 10-11 NKJV).

Now an angel of the Lord spoke to Philip, saying, “Arise and go toward the south along the road which goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza.” This is desert. So he arose and went. And behold, a man of Ethiopia, a eunuch of great authority under Candace the queen of the Ethiopians, who had charge of all her treasury, and had come to Jerusalem to worship, (Acts 8:26-27 NKJV).

Tous ces témoins oculaires affirment formellement que les Egyptiens étaient des Nègres (Diop 27).

Christianity was not introduced to Africa by western missionaries; Africa was integrated into the Christian narrative almost at the very beginning, and its role was reaffirmed at important points in Church history. The first mention of Africa in the Synoptic Gospels appears in the biblical narrative of Christ. In Matthew 2:13-19, the child Jesus was taken to Egypt for safekeeping from Herod’s persecution (NKJV). Altogether, “Egypt” is mentioned more than forty times in the New Testament (Adamo 5). Just as North American Pentecostals do, African Pentecostals believe in the primacy of the New Testament. Just as North American Pentecostals do, African Pentecostals seek to see themselves reflected in mythological origins of the Christian Church. For Pentecostals on both continents, self-identity and agency begin with “authentication” from the New Testament. As stated by Aylward Shorter, “When Jesus was persecuted by the European Herod, God sent him into Africa; by this we know that Africans have naturally a true spirit of Christianity” (Towards a Theology of Inculturation 193-194).
This effort to “Africanize” Christianity is most likely a response to centuries of Western “de-Africanization.” One example is the identification of Egypt as part of Mediterranean civilizations. An important part of the Egypt-Mediterranean linkage has been the assumption that Hellenistic and Latin influence on Alexandria resulted in a culture rooted in “classicism” and devoid of “African-ness”. The importance of African influence on the New Testament can be seen not only in specific textual references to places and people, but also in the places and people which influenced the doctrine and selected canon of the early Christian church. In Africa and Africans in the New Testament, David Adamo cites as key to Christianity the influences of contributions from Augustine of Hippo, Clement and Didymus of Alexandria, Athanasius and Origen of Egypt, as well as Tertullian and Cyprian of Carthage (15-18). This is not earthshattering; most, if not all scholars would agree that these were important figures in the formation of Christianity, but they are recognized as products of Greco-Roman culture and not as African. Christianity is often characterized as a mélange of the gospel, Greco-Roman culture, and Western philosophy without recognition of African culture and world-view (Ikpen 299).

However, it is important to present a balanced view of the African influence on Christianity. Although Christianity has largely downplayed the role of Africa, it would be equally dissonant to minimize the effect of Mediterranean empires on Africa. North Africa was indelibly influenced by the Greeks, who moved into the area termed “Egypt” in the seventh century BCE (Isichei History of Christianity 13). Egypt was then absorbed by the Roman Empire in 30 BCE (Isichei History of Christianity 13).

African contributions to Pentecostalism are not just a part of the Acts narrative; these contributions are intertwined with the claimed birth of the Pentecostal church and its resulting missiology. In the all-important description of the Pentecostal experience in the Book of Acts,
visitors from Egypt witnessed the Apostle Peter’s message and his mandate to spread that message (2:10 NKJV). In Acts 8:27-39, a eunuch, described as having authority over the treasury of “Candace, queen of the Ethiopians,” made a statement of Christian faith and was baptized (NKJV). In both of these examples there are indications that not only was Judaism being practiced in Africa, but that there were direct ties between Jerusalem and Africa.

Acts 2:5 describes “devout Jews from every nation under heaven” as “dwelling” in Jerusalem, presumably to celebrate Shavuot (NKJV). It is in that context that visitors from Egypt were also mentioned in Acts 2:10 (NKJV). In the example of the eunuch who was converted by Phillip in Acts 8, the portrayal of African Judaism and Christian conversion is further developed, as the eunuch had been in Jerusalem, was travelling “south”, and was reading from the writings of the prophet Isaiah. The eunuch admitted to Phillip that he could not fully understand Isaiah without guidance (Acts 8:31 NKJV). Phillip provided guidance by subsuming the Judaic text into a Christian interpretation of Isaiah (Acts 8:35 NKJV). The eunuch then professed his faith in Jesus and was baptized accordingly (Acts 8:37-38 NKJV).

In order to understand the conversion of the Ethiopian eunuch and how it is emblematic of Western perceptions of African Christianity, it is necessary to examine the main descriptors used to personalize the African convert in Acts Eight his status as a “eunuch,” his relationship to “Candace,” and the geographical and cultural meanings of “Ethiopia,” The understanding of the word “eunuch” was varied in the world of antiquity, but in this case most likely refers to both his status as a minister or treasurer, as well as his lack of masculinity (Kartzow and Moxnes 196). “Candace” was a familiar character in contemporaneous Roman literature, often used as a foil for the Roman military (Kartzow and Moxnes 196). It is also worth noting that both eunuchs and
“Candace” were portrayed by Romans as having “irregular gender identity” (Kartzow and Moxnes 196).

In the first century CE, “Ethiopia” was a term that conjured a vague understanding of an exotic land that existed farther away from the centers of Mediterranean antiquity than even Egypt. Geographically, “Ethiopia” was often identified with the Nubian capital of Meroë, but in common parlance, it connoted an unknown “otherness” (Kartzow and Moxnes 191-192). Greeks such as Herodotus and Homer used “Ethiopia” to refer to “all dark-skinned people” and their land (Adamo 27). In Nations Nègres et Culture, Cheikh Anta Diop also included Egyptians as black, citing Greek historians: “All those eyewitnesses formally affirm that the Egyptians were Negroes” (27). This common understanding did not survive Western Christian translations, however. When the King James Bible was translated, the Hebrew word for “black” was translated as “Ethiopia” (Adamo 27). A specific example of this mistranslation is Genesis 2:13, where כוש appears as “Ethiopia” and not “Kush.”

This choice of terminology was continued in modern translations such as the American Standard Version and Revised Standard Version (Adamo 27). These choices in translation reflect the views of Africa as “other” in Mediterranean antiquity and de-Africanizes the role of Africans in the early Church. The Christian need to missionize the exotic Other and to reframe African beliefs in a Christian worldview continued to mark Western-African religious interactions in the modern era.
Modern Origins

The overarching conceptual scheme indicates that African Pentecostalism emerged from African indigenous religious and cultural responses to the gospel message (Kalu African Pentecostalism 291).

Any conversation about modern Pentecostalism should begin with Portuguese Catholics in colonial West Africa. Christianity and the European slave trade were introduced together to West Africa by Portuguese merchants and missionaries in the late fifteenth century. Portuguese Catholics held many ideas in common with indigenous African religions. These beliefs included a remote and benevolent Supreme Being, multiple spiritual beings, and reverence for relics and ritual objects (Isichei Religious Traditions of Africa 134). These fifteenth century missionary and trade exchanges are perhaps better understood as the “second phase of African Christianity,” taking into account that Christianity was present in Africa from the times of the early Church (Olupona 94). Economic factors are usually credited for instigating European contact with Africa, but Christianity enabled colonialism to further permeate African culture politically and socially. This infiltration was not solely the work of foreign missionaries, as they were most effective when aided by indigenous missionaries and political structures that imposed European influence on African social structure and the education of African youths.

The waters of the Gambia River provided inland access for Portuguese ships in West Africa, beginning in 1455 (Oliver and Atmore 65). Although Islamic influence was strong in the Senegambia region, communities of “black Portuguese” practiced Christianity and viewed it as “symbols of distinct identity” (Isichei History of Christianity 57). Conversions were not a one-sided affair in Senegambia. Some Europeans were converted to African religions, espousing belief in supernatural powers over European firearms (Isichei, History of Christianity 57-58).
The Portuguese then made contact with pre-existing trade networks, bartering for gold and slaves with merchants from Timbuktu and Kukya (Oliver and Atmore 65). Along the coast, the promise of gold in return for slaves brought the Portuguese to the country of the Akan, later referred to as the “Gold Coast” (Oliver and Atmore 65). Later, the Dutch, British, and the Danes traded guns for gold, which aided the Akan in territorial expansion and provided greater numbers of slaves (Oliver and Atmore 77). In 1483, Portuguese navigator Diogo Cão made initial European contact with the coast of the Kongo (Isichei History of Christianity 45, Oliver and Atmore 168). Returning to the Kongo two years later, Cão travelled inland. Cão did not return from his second voyage without company; a group of “Kongo emissaries” returned with him. These emissaries were baptized as Christians and trained in a monastery “for initiation into Western ways” (Oliver and Atmore 168-169).

In 1491, the Kongo representatives returned to the Kongo with Portuguese priests, workmen, soldiers, and domesticated animals (Oliver and Atmore 169, Shorter 145). The Portuguese masons, with the help of one thousand Kongolese workers, constructed a church, while the soldiers used firearms to defend the territorial interests of the Kongo Kingdom, taking many captives (Oliver and Atmore 169). Many of the Portuguese then returned home with ivory and slaves, but the priests and craftsmen remained in the Kongo.

The Christianity brought to the Kongo was a pre-Reformational view of Christianity; Church practices had not yet been standardized by the Council of Trent (1545-1563) when the Kongo was missionized (Shorter 146). As a result, missionaries did not require an acceptance of Western Christianity and no definitive distinction between Kongolese cosmology and Catholic doctrine existed (Shorter 146). Fetishes and polygyny were prohibited, but if indigenous beliefs did not directly contravene Christian teaching, then those beliefs were characterized as
“compatible with the Church’s teaching (Shorter 146). At that point, Portuguese priests viewed themselves as invited guests and conducted themselves as such, referring to themselves as *nganga*, or “diviner-doctor” (Shorter 146; Thorton *The Kingdom of the Kongo* 62-63). Kongoles
*nganga* were believed to have the ability to imbue charms, referred to as *nkisi*, with power (Thorton *The Kingdom of the Kongo* 62). As *nganga*, Catholic priests were understood to have infused power into their own missionary instruments. For this reason, the Kongoles referred to the Christian Bible as *mukanda nkisi* and the church buildings as *nzo a nkisi* (Thorton *The Kingdom of the Kongo* 62). The goal of the missionaries was not to eradicate local beliefs, but to instead substitute Kongoles *nganga* and *nkisi* with Christian *nganga* and *nkisi* (Thorton *The Kingdom of the Kongo* 64).

The spread of Christianity amongst the Kongoles generally followed aristocratic channels (Oliver and Atmore 171). The Kongo king Nzinga a Nkuwu and five of his chiefs were baptized on May 3, 1491 (Oliver and Atmore 169; Thorton “The Kingdom of the Kongo and the Counter Reformation” 41). Although Nzinga a Nkuwu did not continue to profess Christianity, his son Nzinga Mbemba, later named Alfonso, committed to both Christianity and the Portuguese (Oliver and Atmore 169). Nzinga Mbemba, the “Apostle of Kongo”, was characterized by Rui d’Aguiar, a Portuguese chaplain, as well-versed in church history (Thorton, “The Kingdom of the Kongo and the Counter Reformation” 43). Nzinga Mbemba also sent members of the Kongo elite to study in Europe. One of these was his son, Henrique (Thorton, “The Kingdom of the Kongo and the Counter Reformation” 43). Henrique eventually returned to Kongo and served as a “vicar-bishop” until 1531 (Thorton, “The Kingdom of the Kongo and the Counter Reformation” 43).
As explained previously, Christianity as practiced by the Kongolese was strongly influenced by indigenous beliefs. Many converts to Christianity continued to practice traditional religion alongside Christianity (Olupona 95). Little is known about the specific beliefs of Alfonso, his advisors, and his relatives. Similarly, there is little known about indigenous Kongo religious beliefs (Thornton, “The Kingdom of the Kongo and the Counter Reformation” 44). It may be inferred however, that Alfonso and his advisors “did create a religious synthesis of great originality” (Thornton, “The Kingdom of the Kongo and the Counter Reformation” 44). The Portuguese may have helped to construct physical churches, but Portugal held little to no power over the Kongolese and their religious beliefs. As a demonstration of Kongolese autonomy, the Kongolese repelled an armed Portuguese invasion in 1622, maintaining its independence (Thornton, “The Kingdom of the Kongo and the Counter Reformation” 41). After the introduction of Christianity, it was Kongolese leaders, not the Portuguese, who developed the Christian church in Kongo. Although the reign of Nzinga Mbemba marked the “zenith” of Portuguese influence in the Kongo, his conversion would have effects that reached far beyond his kingdom (Oliver and Atmore 169). Thousands of Kongolese Christians were scattered by the Atlantic slave trade, bringing their own “brand of faith” with them (Thornton, “The Kingdom of the Kongo and the Counter Reformation” 41).

While trade between Portugal and Africa had commenced immediately, it was not until 1533 that a center for the training of missionary priests was founded in the Cape Verde Islands (Kalu Christian Missions in Africa 174). The Jesuits failed to support site-based agency, only recording one ordained Wolof by the year 1600 (Kalu Christian Missions in Africa 174). Protestant Christian groups followed a similar blueprint. By the late eighteenth century, African Protestant Christianity certainly existed, but mainly as a diasporic phenomenon. In Africa,
Dutch, English, and Danish Protestants used chaplains to educate and to conduct religious services for the mixed families of the white settlers and their common-law wives (Hastings 177). Predominately white, these chaplains were firmly entrenched in the institution of slavery. Thomas Thompson, who in 1752 was the first Anglican missionary to Africa, later published a book entitled *The African Trade for Negro Slaves Shown to be Consistent with the Principles of Humanity and with the Laws of Revealed Religion* (Hastings 178). Although the slave trade often used Christianity as a “moral cloak,” some Christian groups used eradication of the slave trade as impetus for missionary work.

The first African to be ordained to Protestant ministry was Jacobus Capitein, born in Ghana in 1717, taken to Holland as a boy, and eventually educated at the University of Leiden (Hastings 178; Parker 7). Capitein not only accepted African slavery, but became a champion of slavery in the face of rising abolitionist influence. After his studies in Holland were completed, he returned as a chaplain to the fort in Elmina, Ghana. Capitein attempted to re-assimilate into Fante society after living as a European for fifteen years, going so far as attempting to marry an African woman. This notion was rejected by the governing board in Holland and he was forced instead to marry a Dutch woman, sent to him by his religious superiors (Parker 14). He eventually translated several religious works into Fante, but his translations raised the ire of the Classis of Amsterdam, the governing body of the Dutch Reformed Church (Hastings 178; Parker 11). Capitein died in 1747, heavily in debt and with a “dampened zeal” for religion (Hastings 178; Parker 16-17).

Capitein is most famous for his master’s thesis, composed while at the University of Leiden: *Dissertatio Politico-Theologica de servitute, Libertati Christianae Non Contraria* or, “Is
slavery opposed to Christian freedom or not?” Capitein argued that Christian faith and slavery were compatible and that slavery was morally legitimate (Parker 3).

Nevertheless I have often come to the realization that some Christians fear that through evangelic freedom slavery will disappear entirely from those colonies which Christians own, to the great detriment of the overseers of those colonies. Indeed there were once, and still are, people in the Christian world, and especially in the Netherlands, who, led astray by some unknown spirit, have determined that evangelic freedom cannot coexist with servitude of the body. As I shall demonstrate, my own present situation demands that I prove that such an opinion stems from either ignorance about the nature of evangelic doctrine, or from superstitious anxiety stemming from the customs of the early Christians, or finally from the institutions and morals of these regions (Capitein 93).

Capitein appropriated European Christian beliefs and adapted them to fit a theology which he interpreted in light of his life experience. His theology called for a strict separation between physical and spiritual freedom. In Capitein’s view, spiritual freedom as defined by the New Testament was not a freedom from Western slavery, but instead the freedom from Mosaic law offered by Western Christianity (Capitein 105). He contended that Protestantism was a “superior religion” and that he felt it was incumbent upon him to spread this religion to his homeland (Capitein 85).

Another Fante with a leadership role was Thomas Thompson’s successor, Phillip Quaque. Quagne was ordained in London in 1765 and appointed “Missionary, School Master, and Catechist to the Negroes on the Gold Coast.” Although he had little success personally as a missionary, members of his congregation later invited the Wesleyan Missionary Society to the Gold Coast (Hastings 178). This early example of indigenous invitation to foreign missionaries would later be replicated by other groups in the twentieth century, most notably between missions in Ghana and Nigeria and the Faith Tabernacle Congregation of Philadelphia.

African agency took a different turn in the late eighteenth century when British abolitionist Granville Sharp advocated that poor blacks living in London should return to Africa
Although his initial effort was a debacle (it was even left out of a posthumous biography of Sharp published in 1813), it did eventually lead to the successful founding of Freetown, Sierra Leone (Hastings 180-181; *Belfast Monthly Magazine* Vol. 11, No. 62; Kalu *Christian Missions in Africa* 178). Abolition would prove to be the “engine” that powered the new enterprise of the nineteenth century (Kalu *Christian Missions in Africa* 463).

Religion in Freetown did not depend on new missionaries. North American founding settlers of Freetown, familiar with the “Great Awakening” brand of Christianity, soon established their own churches. Settlers counted themselves foremost as Christian, but often self-identifying as Methodists or Baptists (Isichei *Religious Traditions of Africa* 140). Infused with charismatic signs, this Neo-Wesleyan movement produced powerful indigenous preachers (Kalu *Christian Missions in Africa* 178). The ensuing Wesleyan revival movement in Freetown was distrustful of outside missionaries, but eventually ceded control to the parent church in England (Porter 6-7).

Sierra Leone was not the only destination for previous slaves. White American slave owners, fearing a freed black population, followed the lead of British abolitionists and encouraged former slaves to emigrate (Isichei, *History of Christianity* 165). The first wave of settlers, many of them former slaves or descendants, arrived in Liberia in 1822. Under twelve thousand people in total would immigrate to Liberia from the United States by 1866 (Isichei, *History of Christianity* 165). Settlers’ aloofness created a dynamic in which they viewed the indigenous inhabitants as “Other” (Isichei, *History of Christianity* 165). Black Americans viewed Christianity, the English language, and western mode of dress as “essential dimensions of their identity” (Isichei, *History of Christianity* 155).
Freetown was characterized as a training ground, but “acclimation” better describes the experience for foreign missionaries, who worried that West Africa was a “white man’s grave” (Mouser 388). Protestant missionaries struggled not just with the climate and geography, but also with competition and rivalry against other Christian denominations in close proximity. Because they were not obligated to a centralized power structure such as the one that governed Catholic missionaries, Protestants did not adhere to territorial allocations (Isichei Religious Traditions of Africa 147). In addition to the disharmony between Christian denominations, abolitionist tendencies caused poor relationships with local slavers. These difficulties eventually caused the Christian Missionary Society to fold their mission of spreading Christianity into a larger British imperial effort to “civilize” Sierra Leone in 1816-1817 (Mouser 393). The systemic lack of cooperation amongst missionaries of differing faiths belied the optimistic tone in the following Christian Missionary Society Sermon for Africa, dated 1814:

*Among the different communions of Christians union of spirit should surely prevail, as to this grand and common subject; but union of operation, in general, cannot. Perhaps indeed by the very contention and rivalry of love, under Christian principles, may produce, on the whole, results the most rapid and complete* (254-255).

This unity of vision did not come to fruition as a similar plea was put forth in 1931:

*The conditions which prevail in these vast territories point most clearly to the need of the closest co-operation between the French, British, and American Societies. It would be a most inspiring thing if they could get together and form a Council for French West Africa, and by so doing present a common front to the difficult task that lies ahead. A great deal could be done co-operatively that cannot now be done, and the ideal of a United Church could be set before all workers from the beginning* (Cooksey and McLeish 214).

Unity of purpose was not enough to spread Christianity if the foreign missionaries could not communicate effectively with Africans. Literacy was the tool used by Western Protestant missionaries to translate both written text and the experiential aspects of Christianity into a local vernacular. These attempts at translation were ultimately unsuccessful or had unintended consequences. Western missionaries, who emphasized the authority of Scripture, saw translation
of the Bible as a necessary tool. By the beginning of the American Pentecostal movement in the early twentieth century, the Bible had been translated, in whole or in part, into perhaps three hundred languages (Hanciles *Beyond Christendom* 106). Rather than strengthen the position of the missionary as the bringer of salvation, translated Bibles enabled indigenous people to spread the Word without missionary assistance. Effectively, Africans supplanted foreign missionaries as the main messengers of Christianity. Bishop Samuel Adjai Crowther of Nigeria (c.1806-1891) saw the translated Bible as “companion and comfort” that would stand in the gap “whenever the most zealous and energetic missionary fails to be present” (Hanciles *Beyond Christendom* 106).

*The reader might like to see...that the black race is clearly capable of being educated, but only if this is started correctly* (Aitken 42)

**Figure 5.**

![Image](image)

Although specifically referencing a letter written by an African boy in German language, the application of the preceding quote can be seen in the photo above. Pictures of African youths
in European attire were used to show missionary progress in civilizing the “savage” (Aitken 41). Much like Capitein, other African boys were taken back to European countries to be educated in the European fashion and then displayed to raise funds for missionary work in Africa. Frequently, high-ranking Church officials were tabbed as godparents for the expatriated boys. One example was Mbange Akwa, the first African convert to Catholicism to be baptized in Germany. Akwa was “adopted’ by Emilie Ringseis, a member of the intellectual elite in Munich and a patron of a Catholic mission in Cameroon (Aitken 38). So many people attended the spectacle of Akwa’s baptism that the event had to be moved to a larger church to accommodate the crowd (Aitken 38). Foreign missionaries and patrons knew full well the value of African Christians as ambassadors abroad and at home.

Translation of the European gospel necessitated not only cultural translation, but verbal and written translation as well. Under the control of foreign missionaries, colonial education programs also imposed religious homogeneity and undercut traditional African social structures. In French colonial schools, only boys were initially allowed to enroll. Eventually, girls were enrolled in schools at similar rates to boys, but were taught a curriculum predicated on turning girls into “modern” housewives (Griffiths 365). In German territories, African education was “underpinned” by the belief in a need to “raise” non-Europeans to European levels of culture and morality (Aitken 31). In British territories, government subsidies were given primarily to mission schools, effectively creating a monopoly (Isichei, History of Christianity 270). This trend continued well into the twentieth century. By 1942, nearly ninety-nine percent of all schools in Nigeria were controlled by foreign missions groups (Isichei, History of Christianity 270). It is no wonder that in part of Togo, the schoolhouse was called a “house of battle” (Isichei, History of Christianity 266).
Adjai Crowther, the author of the above note, was himself an example of vernacular translation. A former Yoruba slave, Crowther became the first African Bishop of the Anglican Communion (Hanciles “Africa is Our Fatherland” 215). He dedicated his life to translating the Bible into Yoruba and delivered the first sermon in the Yoruba language in Freetown (Hanciles “Africa is Our Fatherland” 215). According to Crowther’s notes in his personally approved biography, Crowther clearly saw the imperialism of the British Empire as the “instrument” of God, and foreign missionaries as the fulfillment of Matthew 28:19 (Page n.p). This view of Western missionary efforts did not mean that Crowther ceded all responsibility for evangelism. As bishop, Crowther founded the all-African Niger Mission in 1857 (Hanciles “Africa is Our Fatherland” 215). In his personal correspondence, Crowther made very clear his stance on African Christians carrying the Word to Africa. In a letter addressed to the “The United (illegible) Committee of the Native Pastorate, Sierra Leone” and dated November 22, 1882, Crowther concludes that the Niger Mission has been successful (Letters and sermon of Samuel Crowther, 1882). Although he described the mission as primarily native and self-supporting, he was also very aware of the financial support needed by a missionary church. Crowther seems to be describing an indigenous missionary effort financed by foreign capital. Although this was
indeed the model for much of the nineteenth century, by the end of the century, missionizing Africa had become a “predominantly black effort”, supported by independent black missionary agencies (Hanciles “Africa is Our Fatherland” 215).

**Figure 7.**

Translation of experience and doctrine was also key to missionizing Africa. European and American missionaries were faced with the task of translating Christianity from a Western context into an African context. As mentioned earlier, Portuguese Catholics made attempts to integrate Christianity into indigenous beliefs with relatively successful results. However, not all missionaries adopted that approach, choosing instead to impose Western Christianity, forgetting that Western Christianity is itself a product of “extensive interpenetration between the gospel and the primal world of medieval Europe” (Hanciles *Beyond Christendom* 104). One of the most obvious forms of this imposition, explained more fully later in this project, was a prohibition on...
polygyny. In a wonderful explanation, Hanciles likens “cross-cultural transmission of faith” to “repeated acts of incarnation whereby the Word becomes flesh in each successive locality” (Hanciles *Beyond Christendom* 104). Missionary work in West Africa during the early post-slavery era of the mid-nineteenth century was often measured by the implementation of westernized cultural indicators rather than the number of conversions to Christianity. Rather than spread Christianity, these attempts at cultural domination in many cases strengthened ethnic consciousness (Hanciles ‘Africa is Our Fatherland” 211). As will be discussed later, it was the understanding of vernacular translation that enabled African prophetic figures such as William Wade Harris to enjoy evangelistic success of which Western missionaries could only dream.

In his *Sketches of a Missionary’s Travels*, Wesleyan missionary Maxwell MacBair recorded numerous interactions with indigenous people in Senegambia during 1836. He later published these narratives in 1839. His West African narratives were recorded in 1836 and published in 1839. Within his accounts, a picture of a well-intentioned but overwhelmed missionary experience emerges, as MacBriar was reduced to arguing theology with local Muslim leaders, undertaking translation duties, explaining the finer points of monetary trade, and maintaining his own health. To illustrate his daily struggle to balance missionary work with other concerns, Macbriar related a story of an industrious colleague as a caveat rather than as a testimony:

“What a laborious missionary he is!” was the general opinion. “Yes”, I said. “the next accounts will probably be those of his death” (299).

General health issues affected Baptist missionaries in the Kongo as well. During the nineteenth century, there were periods during which missionary mortality equaled or surpassed the rate of arriving missionaries (Stanley 125). This inevitably led to a greater burden on the surviving missionaries, resulting in “slow church-planting” (Stanley 126). Missionary health
made the training of native Africans for leadership opportunities a necessity. The missionary could no longer function as the sole disseminator of religious knowledge; overseeing the operations of a failing mission while evangelizing new territories was simply too much for the overmatched missionaries. Offering a possible solution for missionaries in general, MacBrier theorized that “Missionaries might perhaps be obtained from the coloured population of the West Indies or America, until the natives of Africa be fully trained to take over the work themselves” (300).

Liberated African slaves who lived in Jamaica were enthusiastic to take Christianity to Africa (Stanley 106). The Baptist Missionary Society (BMS) tapped into this resource in 1840-1841, 1842, and in 1843, launching expeditions to take volunteers to West Africa. Of the volunteers on the third trip were forty-two Jamaicans who would serve as teachers and settlers on the island of Fernando Po, off the coast of Cameroon (Stanley 107-108). Although bolstered by the contingent of Jamaican volunteers, missionary work still proceeded slowly. It was not until November, 1849 that the first baptism was performed by this group (Stanley 108).

Missionary societies and abolitionist groups, many sponsored by established churches such as the Wesleyans and Baptists, brought Protestant Christianity to Africa, beginning in the eighteenth century. These missionary efforts were largely unsuccessful because of territorial disputes between denominations, poor missionary health, the small number of missionaries willing to travel to Africa, and an insistence on prohibiting polygamy. In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, African Christianity experienced localized revivals which appropriated aspects of Christianity as a means of maintaining localized religious and political power in face of colonial advancement. These revivals increased in frequency during the first half of the twentieth century and were sometimes spurred by specific doctrinal aspects of the missionary
Missiology

By 1900, Western Christian missionaries found themselves making negligible progress in conversions and had only encountered paltry numbers of the indigenous population (Isichei, *History of Christianity* 155). Perhaps it was this inability to fulfill the evangelistic mandate of Matthew 28:19 that led to the World Missionary Conference of 1910, held in Edinburgh, Scotland. Notably absent from this gathering was the attendance of any African representative (Kalu *Christian Missions in Africa* 465). This conference was the apogee of the nineteenth century missionary movement and attendees planned vigorous expansion and enhanced cooperation amongst Protestant denominations (Isichei *Religious Traditions of Africa* 172). The intentions of the conference were quickly thwarted by the outbreak of the Great War in 1914 and subsequently resources were diverted elsewhere. As missionary resources and facilities were disrupted, African leadership began to emerge and an exploration of theology outside the traditional Christian construct emerged (Kalu *Christian Missions in Africa* 187-188).

Territorial claims awarded by the Treaty of Versailles changed more than the political landscape of Africa. In West Africa, the former German territories of Kameroon and Togoland were claimed and divided by France and Britian. Mandated territories created rivalries between the colonial powers. On a local level, this was experienced in turf disputes between missionary camps, further undermining foreign efforts (Isichei *Religious Traditions of Africa* 265-266). The colonial governments discouraged multiple Christian missions in single communities, further fragmenting rural areas as villages were identified as Methodist, Anglican, or Catholic (Isichei, *History of Christianity* 266). Colonial governments established local African contacts, but this practice of indirect colonial rule did not acknowledge that political conflict and social conflict were intertwined. Colonial governments propped up what they considered to be “traditional”
rulers, based on the belief that African villages were homogenous. Distinction between Christian denominations was important to African Christians and many viewed local leaders as colonial pawns. In this way, Christianity was viewed by Africans as an African institution, even if it was identified with European religious groups.

It was within this postwar political and social environment that the American Pentecostal movement was beginning to coalesce. As recounted earlier, American Pentecostal missionaries quickly dispersed throughout the world. Although well-intentioned, they approached their task with the same imperialist management style that characterized earlier Catholic and Protestant missionaries. Despite missionary efforts to curtail local leadership and monopolize funding, local converts established national churches (Anderson 28). In this intersection of African and Western Christianity, the missionary work so crucial to Pentecostal ethos was carried out in Africa by indigenous African missionaries who interpreted Christianity through indigenous beliefs and pre-Pentecostal missionary contact.

Not all foreign missionary organizations wanted direct control of missions. The process of finding missionary recruits, funding those volunteers, and eventually administrating churches over a vast geographical area was difficult. As noted by the yellow highlighted locations on the map of the Gold Coast circa 1930 (see below), many missions were run solely by African workers (Cooksey, McLeish n.p.). Indirect rule became a necessity with only 8.8 missionaries per one million Africans. Cooksey and McLeish cited 114 foreign missionaries and 175 African workers in the whole of French West Africa in the early 1930’s (213). These numbers bear out the claim by Hanciles that “most Africans were evangelized by Africans (Hanciles “Africa is Our Fatherland” 209).
The BMS meted out authority to local “deacons” in an attempt to divide the labor. These deacons were subservient to the missionaries, who were then in turn controlled by the home committee in Britain (McKay 113-115). The BMS hoped to eventually create an autonomous African church, but its policies indicated a narrow definition of “God’s work” which enforced a distinct hierarchy (McKay 115-116; Stanley 351). As understood by the local churches, God’s work was accomplished using the top-down power structure of the BMS (McKay 116). It was the local dynamic of this hierarchy that would permeate the prophetic movements of both William Wade Harris and Simon Kimbangu.
Prophetic movements based on charismatic and symbolic attributes of Christianity were an early reaction to nineteenth century missionary contact (Kalu *African Pentecostalism* 23). These movements gave way to yet another type of Christianity that sought to appropriate the Christian message while maintaining indigenous spirituality (Kalu *African Pentecostalism* 24). They can also be viewed as a response to “missionary cultic and institutional power” (Kalu *African Pentecostalism* 35). Especially attractive to members of these movements were the ideas of various Holiness groups, which also spawned American Pentecostalism. These movements emphasized adherence to “holiness” rather than acceptance of the primacy of Western culture (Case 127-128). Included on the list of “religious antecedents” of American Protestantism are holiness churches, Wesleyan Methodism, black spirituality, and Roman Catholic “devotional practices” (Kalu *Christian Missions in Africa* 401).

Holiness movements, both American and African, often eschewed secular Western culture and scientific theory as unnecessary, or even detrimental to salvation. For this reason, indigenous devotees could often achieve leadership positions and exercise localized control. This represented a severe departure from the normalizing social service practiced by earlier Christian missionaries in an attempt to bring Western civilization to native Africans (Case 131-133). For Holiness missionaries, the world population was divided into absolute camps: saved and unsaved. Once in the camp of the saved, characteristics such as ethnicity and social standing were of little importance. Holiness missionaries found an acceptance of the supernatural world among non-Western audiences that was not as prevalent in modern Western society (Case 140).

African prophetic movements laid the foundation for the modern African Pentecostal movement (Kalu *African Pentecostalism* 35). These groups were indigenous in origin and had little to no association with missionary churches, despite exhibiting outward signs that resembled
Pentecostalism (McCain 161). These were necessary responses to white colonialism and subverted missionary patronage (Kalu *African Pentecostalism* 39). The prophetic personalities which helmed these movements were charismatic leaders who emphasized healing and the primacy of the Bible within an indigenous worldview. That worldview was more reflective of Biblical times than of modern Western missionaries. This was reflected in a fundamental interpretation of scripture and a literal view of the innate power of the physical Bible itself (McCain 161; Kalu *African Pentecostalism* 36). In this context they were able to attack traditional religion like Western missionaries, but also use miracles to demonstrate the power of Christianity (Kalu *African Pentecostalism* 35-36).

William Wade Harris is perhaps the most famous of the prophets who managed to interpret western Christianity in an African context (Haliburton xi). His ministry took place initially in Liberia, but later in the Ivory Coast. Historiography concerning his prophethood, ministry, and legacy has been varied and biased, beginning with the earliest accounts and continuing today. The first reports about Harris were negative and were generated in Roman Catholic literature. Later reports from the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society, the *Gold Coast Leader* (a local newspaper), and the French colonial administration were generally positive (Shank 130). In the Methodist version of events, which has become the most widely accepted, Harris was an intelligent, but uneducated African preacher who possessed an Old Testament world view (Shank 136). It is no surprise that the Methodist account of Harris would be positive, as his charisma influenced “tens of thousands” of Africans to embrace Christianity, and leave traditional beliefs behind (Haliburton 2).

Harris taught that Christ vanquished traditional spirits, all fetishes of traditional religions should be burned, and that people should be baptized (Hastings 444). Although accounts differ
concerning the number of baptisms performed personally by Harris, most sources agree that it was in the range of 100,000. Decried by some missionaries, Harris worked from within both religious and colonial power structure. He advocated for British and later, French, rule over Liberia. Once converts were baptized, Harris expected that they would join an established church, making no distinction between Methodist and Roman Catholic. It was only when an established church was not available that his followers began their own congregations, eventually self-identifying as “Harrists” (Hastings 445).

Harris was born a Grebo (Liberia) circa 1850, educated in a Methodist mission, and baptized while in his twenties (Zarwan 434). Although he claimed a Holy Ghost experience at that time, it does not appear that his initial baptism was the moment of his true call to evangelism. Known as “Old Man Union Jack” for his propensity to display a British flag during sermons, Harris has been linked by some sources to the Grebo Rebellion of 1910, perhaps inspiring a failed coup that would have awarded independent Liberian rule to Great Britain (Hastings 443; Zarwan 435). While the reasons he was imprisoned are debatable, what is known is that Harris claimed that a second conversion occurred while he was imprisoned. During this conversion, Harris said the angel Gabriel proclaimed Harris a prophet and told him to abandon Western styles of dress. Most notably he was to discard his American shoes (Hastings 443). After this epiphany, Harris saw himself in the role of the Christian John the Baptist, “making the way straight” or as Elijah preparing the way for Elisha, as recounted in the Judaic tradition. Harris believed he was preparing people for future salvation and encouraged converts to seek out established churches. Harris’ background of missionary education undoubtedly informed his brand of theology. Much like the missionaries, he advocated for monotheism, strict observance
of the Sabbath, abandonment of fetishes, and the remission of sins via baptism (Hastings 444; Zarwin 436).

Harris was readily identifiable by the implements of his trade: his Bible, a cross, his baptism bowl, and a calabash (Haliburton 29; Zarwin 438). Harris used the Bible as a medium by which to heal by placing it on the head of a subject. He filled the bowl with water from the hollow top of the cross, which he was known to smash when it was mistaken as the source of his power (Haliburton 29, 48). The beaded calabash was used to summon fetish spirits so they could be destroyed (Haliburton 48). Harris also claimed the gift of missionary tongues that allowed him to preach in French (Haliburton 121).

One major break with the traditional missionary message was Harris’ endorsement of polygyny. Foreign missionaries straddled the divide between vernacular translation and maintaining colonialist impulses. As one foreign missionary wrote in 1945, “O God, teach me to kill the Western man in me” as others railed against Christians who had “betrayed” Christianity (Isichei, *History of Christianity* 267). Both polygyny and woman-woman marriage was strongly rooted in traditional culture and the abolition of polygamy was the single most important obstacle to missionary success (Zarwin 436). This was a lesson of which Wade must have been well aware. Dispute over Christian rejection of polygyny had hampered earlier missionary efforts from the beginning of European contact. When the Portuguese arrived, initial enthusiasm amongst native Africans for the message of early Catholics missionaries turned to resistance centered around Catholic insistence on monogamous marriage. (Fox 138). The BMS moved to
relax restrictions on polygyny in 1901, eventually leaving the issue for the local churches to sort out (Stanley 130). Polygyny was also a key dissention that resulted in a Yoruba secession from Methodism in 1917 (Isichei 168).

African society was regarded by Europeans as “pre-civilized”, so a patrimonial system was imposed to mimic European culture (Griffiths 354). Early twentieth century ethnographies cited land ownership, polygyny, and woman-to-woman marriage as examples of empowered African women in pre-colonial Africa (Griffiths 365). When Western archetypes of marriage were imposed and matriarchal systems deposed, the status of African women was often a casualty. For example, French colonial administrators refused to recognize the land-owning rights of women under the “pre-civilized” matrilineal African system and stripped African women of their land (Griffiths 363). In the Western Christian view, polygyny demeaned women. It then followed if one could eradicate polygyny, African women would be empowered. Instead, by replacing African polygyny in a matrilineal construct with European monogamy in a patrilineal construct, African women were disenfranchised. Polygyny was perhaps the only aspect of traditional religious belief that Harris did not subsume to missionary doctrine. His stance did not only separate Harris from foreign missionaries on this issue, but more generally Harris’ Christianity was viewed as upholding traditional African social structure. In this way indigenous African Christianity was in opposition to European Christianity.

Another prophet who transcended the committee-missionary-deacon hierarchy was Simon Kimbangu. Kimbangu was a member of the local BMS church in Ngombe. Two years after his baptism in 1915, Kimbangu received a vision. In this vision, a spirit instructed him to “Work my work” and ordained him as a ntumwa, an “emissary/apostle” (McKay 129). “Work my work” indicated to Kinbangu that he should insert himself into the existing BMS church
structure. The BMS decided not to give Kimbangu a leadership role because he could not read (McKay 124). Although “apostle” was not a recognized title in the church structure of the BMS, Kimbangu claimed his apostleship was an office “not yet known to the church” (McKay 132). As he performed miracles of healing and exorcism, Kimbangu eventually supplanted the local missionaries as the conduit that delegated power to church members as seen in the following account concerning the visit of an administrator:

*When he had finished, five chronically sick men were brought in and laid at the prophet's feet. They explained what was the matter with them, and, with a simple word of command from the prophet's mouth, all were healed. The white man, his soldiers and their interpreter and everyone with him were witnesses of these miracles. The white man's interpreter had been skeptical, when they had set out, at the things he heard about Simon Kimbangu, but, having seen the miracles which had happened to these men he came and knelt before the prophet and confessed his sin so that he might receive forgiveness. At once he was forgiven and received grace in the name of Jesus. At that spot, and for about the space of eight hours, the white man said nothing at all, then he left* (McKay 133).

The symbolism and charismatic signs in Kimbanguist beliefs seem to resemble Pentecostal beliefs, however they are quite different. The cross is a prevalent image in most Christian denominations, including Pentecostal. While established missionary churches saw the crucifix as a symbol of the act of sacrifice, Kimbangu and his followers saw it as the ultimate symbol of mediation between the spiritual and physical worlds (McKay 137). In that sense, Kimbangu adopted the role of Christ as mediator. Deacons, imbued with power from Kimbangu, became the sole connections between the people and Kimbangu’s power (McKay 136). Kimbangu also adopted a book of the Davidic Psalms as a literal conduit between the spiritual and physical worlds. Baptism by water is fundamental in the Pentecostal conversion experience. Water, a traditional Kongo medium by which one could connect to the spirit world, was used by Kimbangu to “pour out the power of the Spirit on Christians (McKay 138). Kimbangu and his followers also spoke in tongues on at least one occasion.
Then the prophet and his apostles felt themselves filled by the power of God and they spoke in heavenly tongues. When the white man came to the place where the prophet and his apostles were they cried in loud voices, 'reke reke teke-reke'. It was a heavenly tongue they were speaking, but the white man thought they were mad (Pemberton 218).

One of the themes throughout this study of African and North American Pentecostalism is the appearance of similar beliefs, but presented and experienced differently. One example is the symbolic wearing of robes that represented a belief in revival. This practice was shared by both traditional African religion and Western Christianity, but perceived differently. As its basis, revival indicates a return to original power. For many North American Pentecostals, “original” equated to the apostolic church of the first century or to the Azuza Street revival. For Charles Fox Parham, the wearing of robes signified the restoration of God’s covenant with Israel. William Wade Harris adopted wearing a white robe which hinted both to his reverence for things perceived as Biblical and his call for a renewalist doctrine (Haliburton 57). Simon Kimbangu called his white robes le pagne blanc de joie, or “the robes of joy” and they evoked the mythological “golden age” of the Kongo Kingdom (McKay 138). The charismatic leaders who wore robes should not be confused with the “white garment churches”, or Ndi afe ocha as they are called by the Igbo. Ndi afe ocha usually refer to later Aladura churches which emerged as a reaction to colonialism (Kalu Christian Missions in Africa 71; Kalu African Pentecostalism 69).

Another movement grounded in signs and wonders was that of the Philadelphia–based Faith Tabernacle movement established in Ghana in 1918. Like the ministries of Harris and Kimbangu, the origins of this movement were based in a pre-existing Western church structure, but appropriated and disseminated by Africans. Like Harris and Kimbangu, this movement can also be traced to proto-Pentecostal origins and would eventually be tied to modern African Pentecostalism.
Faith Tabernacle was based on the healing practices of John Alexander Dowie and found a receptive audience in West Africa after the influenza outbreak of 1918-1919. Adam Mohr cites Thomas McCaskie, John Peel, and Ruth Marshall as scholars who have connected the proliferation of witchcraft and healing cults in Ghana with the contemporaneous rise of Pentecostalism in Ghana (Mohr "Capitalism, Chaos, And Christian Healing" 65). The colonial government of the Gold Coast had no effective policy to control the pandemic, employing only forty-three government physicians who were untrained in fighting influenza (Mohr "Capitalism, Chaos, And Christian Healing" 70, Patterson 487, 491). Influenza also struck Philadelphia at this time and the city suffered the highest rate of death attributed to influenza in the Western world (Mohr “Out of Zion” 72, Barry 197-199). In both West Africa and Philadelphia, the outbreak spurred a demand for healing ministries; Faith Tabernacle responded to that need, by establishing “healing houses” in both locations.

Even before the influenza outbreak, Faith Tabernacle had already been active in West Africa, distributing copies of *Sword of the Spirit*. After being introduced to the Sword of the Spirit, Ghanaian Christians wrote to Philadelphia for additional issues, printed sermons, and tracts. These materials were then used to evangelize locally (Mohr "Capitalism, Chaos, And Christian Healing" 67). This network enabled the establishment of African churches with ties to the United States, but led by African evangelists, not foreign missionaries (Mohr "Capitalism, Chaos, And Christian Healing” 66).

If the *Sword of the Spirit* was the kindling, the burgeoning cocoa industry provided the accelerant that eventually caused Pentecostal fires to burn rapidly and brightly. By 1911, Ghana was the world’s largest cocoa producer (Mohr "Capitalism, Chaos, And Christian Healing” 66). The economic boost strengthened local farms and improved transportation, but weakened social
structures. As discussed previously, undermining matrilineal kinship structures diminished the power of women in West Africa. Another consequence was an increase in accusations of witchcraft. Witchcraft was believed to be passed through matrilineal lineage and was responsible for a range of ills, including poor crops, impotence, and child death (Mohr "Capitalism, Chaos, And Christian Healing" 68-69). Without strong kinship ties to clearly identify those who wielded the power of witchcraft, anyone had the potential to be a witch. This social instability created a wide-spread need for spiritual healing that was experienced through indigenous healing groups and Christian healing. It was into this milieu that the American ship Shonga introduced a particularly virulent strain of influenza to West Africa, sparking the “worst outbreak of infectious disease in world history” (Patterson 485, 487).

It was not only the colonial doctors who were ill-equipped to treat influenza; most indigenous healers and Christian churches shared their inability to combat sickness (Mohr "Capitalism, Chaos, And Christian Healing” 70). Faith Tabernacle stepped quickly into the gap, moving the sick from hospitals to the Faith Tabernacle branch in Winneba, Ghana in 1918 (Mohr “Out of Zion” 74). This action made Winneba the center of Faith Tabernacle in Ghana until 1925 and it was there that many African pastors were ordained under the final authority of Joel Sacky Sam, the preeminent Ghanaian pastor (Mohr "Capitalism, Chaos, And Christian Healing” 71, “Out of Zion” 74).

Other important nodes of Faith Tabernacle came into existence under the leadership of Peter Anim. Anim had been certified by Ambrose Clark, the pastor of Philadelphia Faith Tabernacle Congregation (Mohr "Capitalism, Chaos, And Christian Healing” 71-72). In addition to his main church in the cocoa migrant town of Asamankese, Anim headed nine other churches (Mohr "Capitalism, Chaos, And Christian Healing” 71). Faith Tabernacle continued to grow,
reaching new towns via the network of railroads built to support the cocoa industry. This growth was well-documented in *Sword of the Spirit* and was attributed to “God raising up native men” who would then “gather around them a number of their friends and neighbors and form a branch of Faith Tabernacle without any request to do so from headquarters here (Philadelphia) (Mohr “Out of Zion” 75).”

Although the Faith Tabernacle missions work was headed by Africans, circumstances in North America still created ripple effects in West Africa. After separating from William Seymour’s Azuza Street ministry and crippling its mass media capabilities, Florence Louise Crawford established the Apostolic Faith Mission in Portland, Oregon. This organization was affiliated with Michael Ukpong Udo, the pastor of the first recognized Pentecostal church in Nigeria (Mohr “Faith Tabernacle Congregation” 209). Udo had previously corresponded with Faith Tabernacle and read their literature, but by 1928 his congregation was officially associated with Crawford’s Apostolic Faith Mission (Mohr “Faith Tabernacle Congregation” 209-210). Worried about religious persecution, Udo asked Crawford to send certificates of pastoral authority, like those provided for the Faith Tabernacle network. Udo was not granted certification by Crawford, but he did received assurances from the Nigerian government that there were “no special restrictions on religious activities (Mohr “Faith Tabernacle Congregation” 210). Despite those assurances, Udo and one of his assistants were imprisoned for one year (Mohr “Faith Tabernacle Congregation” 210). Udo’s church was not alone, as several other former Faith Tabernacle leaders were imprisoned or persecuted after they were no longer affiliated with that network.

Because of the nature of the trans-Atlantic slave trade, the study of the missiology of African Pentecostalism is also a study in the African diaspora. Colonialism, the partition of
Africa, the trans-Atlantic slave trade, and the eventual dissolution of that trade all contributed to changing realities for Africans (Butler, 22). Part of those changing realities were issues of African identity. As the first professionally trained African American historians, W.E.B. Dubois, Carter G. Woodson, and George Haynes all considered black American history as part of the diasporic world (Butler 24). Global Dimensions of the African Diaspora, a collection of essays from the First (1979) and Second (1993) African Diaspora Institutes, defined diasporic studies as:

The African diaspora concept subsumes the following: the global dispersion (voluntary and involuntary) of African throughout history; the emergence of a cultural identity abroad based on origin and social conditions; and the psychological or physical return to the homeland, Africa. Thus viewed, the African diaspora assumes the character of a dynamic, continuous, and complex phenomenon stretching across time, geography, class, and gender.

Within this definition, several aspects relate directly to Africa-based Pentecostal missiology. Voluntary and involuntary global dispersion of Africans is still happening today. According to the American Immigration Council, one-third of all refugees admitted to the United States in 2015 were African ("An Overview of U.S. Refugee Law and Policy"). Between 2000 and 2010, African foreign-born population in the United States doubled, increasing to 1.6 million individuals ("African Immigrants in America: A Demographic Overview"). Within those numbers of immigrants and refugees, Pentecostals and Charismatics are the largest religious group (Olupona “Communities of Believers” 31).

The “emergence of a cultural identity abroad based on origin and social conditions” is also very much a part of African missions. Although the religious experiences of immigrant Africans are different than those of African Americans, academic studies usually categorize African immigrants under the auspices of the “Black Church,” a reference to African American communities (Olupona “Communities of Believers” 28). That “inclusion” is effectively an
exclusion of the contributions of immigrant Africans who function as foreign missionaries, while precluding a full understanding of the religious plurality of the United States. The idea of “mission” is defined rather broadly by African religious groups; missions often take the form of social engagement, including issue-based civic discourse about the well-being of immigrants (Olupona “Communities of Believers” 30). A definition of “African missionary” must then include voluntary and involuntary foreign-born African immigrants in addition to the traditional context of a missionary sent into the field by a home church. African missionaries often find themselves as “strangers in a strange land,” negotiating an identity that must balance the expectations of a home church with the secular and religious centers of their mission field (Olupona “Communities of Believers” 33).

Pre-existing indigenous religious structures, the appropriation of political and religious colonial influences, and movements that emphasized a charismatic leader all combined to create an African Pentecostalism that was not under foreign control. The evolution of these movements produced the Aladura church in the post-World War I era and eventually gave rise to modern African Pentecostalism. Post-colonial Africa represented the most “vigorous” stage for religious expansion and was mainly driven by Charismatic Christianity (Sanneh “The Last Great Frontier” 67-68).
CONCLUSION

Although Pentecostalism in West Africa and North America were initially independent of each other, they were not independent of other religious influences. Rather, these Pentecostalisms were formed out of self-identified origins that intersected with other religious institutions. Belief in glossolalia, healing, and a supernatural world thrived amongst Baptists, Catholics, and Methodists. Fed by a renewalist doctrine and commitment to missions, this proto-Pentecostalism quickly adapted within local cultural contexts, giving rise to a uniquely Pentecostal brand of Christianity. Origins are important in Pentecostalism. Acknowledgement of African agency imbues African Pentecostalism with indigenous political and cultural relevance, while a belief in Azuza Street as a modern revival of “original” apostolic doctrine imparts historical importance to North American Pentecostals.

Research strongly indicates that the origin of global Pentecostalism cannot be a series of straight lines that all lead back to Azuza Street. Just as unlikely however, is a straight line between indigenous religions and Pentecostalism in West Africa. It is impossible not to acknowledge the similarities between Pentecostalism in West Africa and North America that runs deeper than outward charismatic signs and basic doctrinal beliefs. Both traditions have origins and structures rooted in the traditions of other established Christian churches. Both traditions also spread via indigenous missionaries, evolved doctrinally, and have experienced modern diversification. As described by Ogbu Kalu, “Christianity has a global impulse that Pentecostalism inherited and intensified” (Kalu African Pentecostalism 17). This is true of Pentecostalism on both continents.
Foreign missionary efforts are often romanticized, but Christianity did not spread beyond the periphery of settlements until Africans broke from established structures and spread Christian beliefs. Those Christian beliefs were informed by indigenous beliefs. Many Africans then joined established churches, but brought their own frame of reference. In understanding the dissemination and evolution of African Christianity in this way, it becomes possible to acknowledge the role of African agency in African Pentecostalism and to recognize the religious and economic imperialism of disparate Christian denominations that contributed to the doctrine, experience, and structure of African Pentecostalism.

There are many research questions that still need to be addressed, chiefly those of terminology and temporality. At the beginning of this project I was convinced that, although there is not a unified “West African” or “North American” brand of Pentecostalism, there were “Pentecostalisms” distinct to West Africa and North America. What became clear throughout the research process was that a delineation between early African Pentecostalism and early North American Pentecostalism is unclear. Pentecostal church services on both continents would have been nearly indistinguishable in the early days, as they would have read much of the same literature, used many of the same symbols, conversed in “missionary tongues,” and sought the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Although the scope of this paper ends with the early twentieth century, Africans and North Americans have continued to intersect, as Pentecostals from both continents continue to plant churches at home and abroad.
WORKS CONSULTED


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