Christian Citizens and the Moral Regeneration of the African State

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2 Vox Dei, Vox Populi

Pentecostal citizenship and political participation in Nigeria since 1999

Asonzeh Ukah

Religion, rather than economics or politics, presents vastly compelling and complexly layered terrains for the study of change in contemporary Africa.[1] In the last five years, the pervasive 'Africa Rising' narrative, championed by some members of Africa's political elite and their Western partners and reinforced, largely, by Western media outlets, postulates that Africa is rapidly transforming from an ostensible dark continent of wars, diseases and poverty to one of hope and economic empowerment. Based on a set of statistics of growth in international trade and gross domestic product (see Pillay 2015), the 'Africa Rising' narrative focuses on the export of natural resources and growth of the consumerist middle class as signs of hope and aspiration for the continent (Beresford 2016; Taylor 2016). The unstated assumption of this narrative is that the economy is the bedrock of Africa's transformation.

However, it may be argued that the most profound vector of change in Africa in the past 150 years, has been religion, not economics or politics. Notably, no continent has virtually abandoned its indigenous religious cultures and epistemological systems of producing and organising knowledge as Africa has done, in as short a time. In 1900, roughly 5% of Africans were Christian; in 2010, nearly 53% of a population of 1.1 billion Africans is Christian. (Jacobsen 2011:157–160). According to Douglas Jacobsen (2011:163), "Never before has Christianity expanded so quickly in any region of the world. . . . More than half the countries in Sub-Saharan Africa now have Christian majorities". Two primary sources of religious conversions in Africa are evangelism and population growth; Christians have been very active – and in some instances, aggressive – in recruiting non-Christians, and "Christian mothers having lots and lots of Christian children" (Jacobsen 2011:165). In 1900, Catholics made up about 50% of Africa's seven million Christians; Orthodox Church membership had about 25%; the remaining 25% going to protestant congregations, with Pentecostal Christians and members of African Independent Churches (AICs), almost, nonexistent. The situation is very different in 2016 when Pentecostal Christians constitute between 10–13% of African Christians while the AICs are approximately 30% of African Christians; sub-Saharan Africa is projected to have the largest Christian population growth between 2010 and 2050 (see: Pew

Research Center 2011:9; 54–55; 2015:61; 63). This changing religious profile of Africa has great consequences and ramifications for politics, society and the economy as this chapter will argue.

The success of Pentecostal-charismatic Christianity that is spreading in Africa since the 1970s, more than any other religious group before or after it, promises to revolutionise the continent. The promises of hope in the heart of Pentecostal ideology and activism have (mis)led some scholars to characterise the dizzying waves of conversion and social effervescence in a country like Nigeria as a "revolution" (Gaiya 2002; Burgess 2008; Marshall 2009). While the revolutionary potential of African Pentecostalism in its person-centred theology is not in doubt (see Yong 2010; Wariboko 2014), the capacity to practically, concretely and positively transform society is what demands critical assessment. Again, for many reasons, Nigeria offers a unique case study of the complex dynamics of Pentecostal conversions and political engagement. A distinctive factor is its huge and multifarious Christian population; of the more than 80 million Christians in Nigeria, between 10 and 15% – that is, 8–12 million Christians – is Pentecostal. With an equally large population of non-Christians in Nigeria, particularly, Muslims, the social and political environments offer opportunities for active engagement and often aggressive competition for resources and social presence for all groups. If Pentecostalism is a 'revolution' in the narrative practices of ways of being religious and Nigerian, then, it is possible to describe in what ways Pentecostal political activism has altered and transformed – positively or otherwise – the political practice and behaviour, aside from introducing a new language of political praxis. Although Sam Krinsky (2006:8), rightly, observes that "little is known about what effects, both real and potential, Pentecostalism is having on African lives and societies", a decade and a half of active political engagement of Nigerian Pentecostals in high political positions indicate palpable patterns and paradigms.

Political and economic shockwaves: 1970–1998

From the 1970s, Nigerian 'born-again' movements evolved as a hegemonic project competing for conversions, public visibility and space, but also a vision of how to restructure and develop the postcolonial state. Pentecostal political ideology analysed the state and promised a "grand ruptural movement" (Peel 2016:198). Offering a vision for the future and a "program of thoroughgoing modernization" (Krinsky 2006:10), Pentecostal political theology identified causes of underdevelopment as well as sources of social and economic malaise, in the nation-state. Judeo-Christian scripture offered leaders of the movement a platform for reflection and hope: "When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice; but when a wicked man rules, the people groan" (Prov. 29: 2, NKJV). The oil-boom era of the mid-1970s was a critical period of Pentecostal incursion into the political arena. The military government, under Olusegun Obasanjo, and its efforts to stage the Second World Black and African Festival of Arts and Culture in 1977

(FESTAC '77) ushered in a Pentecostal political critique of state public policy as designed and directed towards the worship of the devil. Officially, FESTAC '77 was designed to promote the country's newfound oil wealth, showcase indigenous traditions, theatre and cultures; demonstrate the developmental capacity of the nation as well as make "Nigeria the locus for production of knowledge on issues relevant to the black and African world" (Falola & Heaton 2008:194). According to the Pentecostal discourse at the time, spearheaded by a few educated leaders mainly from the southwestern Nigeria, the cause and curse of underdevelopment in the country were the government's "showcasing of idolatrous culture in the name of national pride" (Peel 2016:199; Ukah 2008:119–120). Pentecostal practice and public behaviour during this period were about the conversion of the individual believer and steering of the nation towards 'proper' worship of God. The principal public enemy, for the Pentecostal community, was indigenous religions, reviled as idolatry or the worship of the devil. Many components of Nigerian civil society at the time scrutinised the FESTAC '77 events based on mismanagement of public resources, poorly executed public works, corruption and lack of accountability by public officers. However, the Pentecostal community focused, not on any of these elements, but on framing the event as a disguise for the worship of the devil.

Pentecostal public theology underwent a sharp change in the following decade with the introduction of austerity measures precipitated by two unexpected events. The first was the crash of oil prices in 1979, after a period of high oil prices occasioned by the 1973 Yom Kippur War and the 1976 Iranian Revolution. "When petroleum prices dropped between 1976 and 1979, and again during the oil glut years of the early 1980s, the Nigerian economy suffered greatly" (Falola & Heaton 2008:183). In 1986, the military presidency of Ibrahim Babangida instituted the infamous Structural Adjustment Programme, designed by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank to rein in state expenditure, deregulate the economy and downsize public service. The harsh economic environment of the late 1980s, with massive graduate unemployment, stimulated a rapid growth or expansion of Pentecostal churches and ministries through young university-educated individuals who laid claim to different types of spiritual gifts such as healing and deliverance, performance of miracles of wealth and success, and prophetic utterances and guidance. Nigeria's National Mass Communication Policy of 1990 which, effectively, liberalised the media industry is of import, too, since it greatly enhanced the public advertisement and dissemination of religious events, some of which were held in public arenas, like stadia and university campuses. During the late 1980s and early 1990s, there was a clear shift of focus in theology and practice from personal sanctification and ascetic self-discipline – being 'born-again' – to material markers of salvation through this-worldly accumulation and consumption. The oppressive and coercive military dictatorships of Ibrahim Babangida (1985–1993) and Sani Abacha (1993–1998) foreclosed active political engagements by the citizens and civil society organisations.

Arguably, the economic crisis and military strangulation of the society were highly significant in shaping a strong Pentecostal apolitical position, until 1999.[2] Following the sudden death of Sani Abacha, on 8 June 1998, a prominent Nigerian religious leader, Enoch Adeboye, declared it a Pentecostal miracle and a "New Year", in the middle of the year, for the country. The mass jubilation that followed Abacha's death was reinforced by a claim that Adeboye had prophesied such a tidal shift in the nation's political future and fortunes, three days earlier (Ukah 2008:199–200). Adeboye, arguably, the most popular Nigerian Pentecostal leader, asseverates that the erasure of Abacha was a consequence of his prayers for a restoration of the nation's high destiny. Nigeria, the Pentecostal hubris insists, would be great again in manifesting the power of God to the rest of the world, a course that would have been impossible with Abacha alive and in power. In late 1998, Pentecostalism triumphantly promised the Nigerian public a pathway to individual and collective salvation based on righteous power that will make the nation great in the eyes of God and in the comity of nations.

The Pentecostal messiah: Olusegun Obasanjo's second coming (1999–2007)

Following the release of Olusegun Obasanjo (b. 5 March 1937) from prison on 16 June 1998, Pentecostal apolitical stance experienced a shift towards activism. Significantly, Obasanjo was imprisoned on 28 February 1995, by the Abacha dictatorship for his alleged involvement in a phoney coup attempt. His sentence was, initially, for life but, following the intervention of Nelson Mandela, Helmut Schmidt and Jimmy Carter, commuted to 15 years. While in prison, Obasanjo claimed to have received a new spiritual experience of the 'born-again' type and ordained by God as a pastor. As a demonstration of his newfound faith, Obasanjo, a Baptist Christian, moved from one Pentecostal church to another in celebration of his survival of prison life. Mainstream Pentecostal leaders and organisations as well as the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) (under the leadership of Primate Sunday Mbang), collectively adopted and endorsed Obasanjo as a born-again political personality (Ojo 2010:44–48). From 1998 onwards (and following in the footsteps of the *Aladura* churches (see Ojo 2006:183), prophecies and revelations publicised by Pentecostal leaders became an important political discourse to chart a new future and fortune for the country. Additionally, such political prophecies were pathways of courting the emerging political class jostling for active engagement in the soon to be inaugurated Fourth Republic. Political entrepreneurs – like risk takers, generally – are drawn to prying into the future and so, Pentecostal political prophecy soon became veritable instruments of political permutation.[3]

Adopted by the Pentecostal community and bankrolled by the military, Obasanjo easily won the February 1999 presidential election. The relationship between Obasanjo and the Pentecostal community in Nigeria before and during his eight-year administration was a very complex and tenuous

one. He was a (lapsed) Baptist Christian who was unapologetic about his moral and social conduct. His post-prison narrative about incarceration and survival of the draconian Abacha regime, inevitably, led to an increase of pious ardour. Surviving the draconian Abacha regime gave Obasanjo a renewed purpose in life; God, he reasoned, must have *saved* him for a higher destiny. In that political milieu, especially with the military eager to relinquish power to a trusted insider, Obasanjo was the most likely candidate, being a former military general from the same ethnicity as Moshood K. Abiola, the presumed winner of the annulled 1993 presidential election. The clamour, particularly from southwestern Nigeria, was that the election of 12 June 1993 and the mandate presumptively given to Abiola by the Nigerian electorate be "actualised", albeit indirectly. According to Julius Adekunle (2009:10), "electing a Yoruba in the 1999 presidential election seemed to be a reasonable compromise". Obasanjo supported the annulment of the 1993 presidential election and became a direct beneficiary. He had maintained that Abiola was not the messiah Nigeria needed.

Interpreted as the fulfilment of Pentecostal prayers and prophecies, Obasanjo's victory of 1999 was a validation of Pentecostal political activism and a test of what Pentecostal citizenship could mean or do for the nation. It meant the salvation and redirection of the nation towards achieving its lofty destiny. In essence, the divine choice of a leader has been validated through the ballot box. The euphoria following this event pointed to the symbolic, affective attachment and values as well as the legal responsibility which the Pentecostal community claimed to have for Nigeria as a country. Henceforth, Pentecostals believed that loyalty to God implies active participation in politics and the public life of society.

As a president, even when his aides tried rebranding him as "the father of the nation", Obasanjo left no one in any doubt that he was the 'born-again' Yoruba president from southwestern Nigeria. His self-advertisement as a "Christian" president created so much resentment among some Pentecostals and non-Pentecostals who felt he was neglecting to be a president for all Nigerians (irrespective of religio-ethnic affiliation) in preference to running a "Pentecostal presidency" in cohort with an emergent theocratic class (Obadare 2006). It is against this background that the utterances and activities of Tunde Bakare, another Pentecostal leader and founder of Latter Rain Assembly, in Lagos, are situated. Tunde Bakare (b. 11 November 1954),[4] former Muslim-turned-Christian, and former-lawyer-turned-pastor, made his now (in)famous prophetic proclamation that Obasanjo was not the country's "messiah". Rather, Bakare likened Obasanjo to "King Agag" with a prophetic axe dangling over his head.[5] Bakare's political prognostications raised prolonged public furore; he was arrested, detained briefly and released. His fellow Pentecostal pastors, most of whom were seeking political visibility, recognition, and easy money from political and the military classes, came heavily against him (Ojo 2008:112; 2010:14; Onuoha 2013:217). The Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria (PFN),[6] through its erstwhile President, Bishop Mike Okonkwo, dissociated itself from Bakare and

his prophecy. However, one year into Obasanjo's second term in office, Bakare's vision started gathering popular support. On 31 January 2011, Bakare announced he would be running for office as a vice-presidential candidate to Muhammadu Buhari, on the platform of the Congress of Progressive Change political party. Buhari lost that election to Goodluck Jonathan, of the PDP, who got 58.89% of votes.

Tunde Bakare represents a distinctive Pentecostal conception of Christian citizenship in Nigeria since 1999. Among Nigeria's high-profile Pentecostal leaders, he represents a minority voice. However, he demonstrates skill and sharp intellect in articulating a strategic religious understanding of social processes and a critical political interpretation devoid of populist pressure. His penetrating insight into exploitative social and political structures and their implication for economic development and leadership deficits in Nigeria is unrivalled among his peers. His activist socio-political spirituality led him to establish the "Save Nigeria Group" (SNG) in 2010 to rescue the country, according to his publicised intentions, from the stranglehold of a cabal of political entrepreneurs bent on keeping the then medically incapacitated President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua in power. His is one strong Pentecostal voice of dissent, socially responsive and responsible citizenship that resonates across religious lines. For Bakare, Christian citizenship means both light and salt to the nation; Bible-believing Christians' salvific vision – modelled after the inspiration of the Judeo-Christian scriptures, history and experience – needs to be brought to bear on governance structures and culture. Holding civil, political and religious leaders to account for their actions (and inactions) is a critical aspect of this obligation. Leadership is a public trust that requires public accounting. Failing to perform this duty is an abnegation of responsible Christian citizenship. His SNG was able to mobilise Christians and Muslims to campaign and protest against corruption, mismanagement of national resources and (constitutional) misrule by politicians. Bakare, following Achebe's The Trouble With Nigeria (1983), understands that the key problem of Nigeria is more political, particularly leadership deficits and abuse, than economic. For Bakare, unethical or inequitable (rather than unchristian) leadership structures in Nigeria exacerbate economic exploitation and stunt the country's transformation enterprise (Warikobo 2012:47–48).

The second momentous challenge Obasanjo faced from within the Pentecostal fold came from the Reverend Kris Okotie (b. 16 June 1959).[7] Okotie, founder-pastor, Household of God Church and the presidential candidate of the Justice Party in 2003 and Fresh Democratic Party (FDP) in 2007 and 2011, was already a household name before becoming a pastor. Okotie alleged that the worrying spate of bloodletting in the country since 1999 was because of the struggle for the leadership of the country being waged between the "forces of evil within the government" and the forces of good which he and those in his group represent. These "occultic societies within government . . . have almost destroyed President Obasanjo", he alleged.[8] Okotie was insistent that Obasanjo had run out

of ideas in handling the affairs of Nigeria because Obasanjo represented an older generation of politicians not in touch with contemporary realities. Okotie criticised Obasanjo, claiming that he (Obasanjo) represented the clique of oppressors "whose only ambition is to conquer the rest of civil society, capture power and continue with the circle of deceit, killings, maiming, looting of the public treasury and sharing our commonwealth within their family and amongst their cronies".[9] Okotie's ideas resonated with those of another Pentecostal leader, Chris Oyakhilome, who, in a rare interview declared:

> Today's Nigeria is the dream of yesterday's men, of our present crop of leaders. . . . Jesus said you cannot put new wine in old wine bottles. You cannot expect a new Nigeria from an older generation, so the only new Nigeria that can evolve is the new Nigeria that would be the dream of the younger generation. . . . The new one cannot be given to us by the present crop of leaders because this is an outgoing generation. Age is not on their side.[10]

Effectively, Oyakhilome was saying that the mainstream Pentecostal community was in support of a dying generation of politicians who were out of touch with the present generation of Nigerians and the vision of God for the country.

Goodluck Jonathan: the accidental and miraculous president

Unlike Obasanjo's self-projection as a "Pentecostal messiah", Goodluck Jonathan (b. 20 November 1957) presented himself as the meek and righteous servant-president of Nigeria. For the evangelical community, especially its leadership, Obasanjo was the answered prayers of the righteous and faithful community of God, while Jonathan was the Pentecostal miracle, God's fortuitous gift to Nigeria. Arguably, the most dramatic demonstration of Pentecostal political power was during the general electioneering campaign of 2010/2011, when, in spite of the massive opposition by the Muslim north against the candidacy of Jonathan, he won a decisive victory over a formidable opponent, Muhammadu Buhari, who paired with a firebrand Pentecostal pastor, Tunde Bakare.[11] The north believed it was their "right", under a gentleman's agreement within the ruling PDP, to field the next presidential candidate to complete the second term of late president Yar'Adua. Jonathan's decision to contest the election, they argued, went against such an understanding. Notwithstanding the massive mobilisation of the northern electorate against the PDP, Jonathan won the election on his own cognisance, but benefited immensely from the power of the Pentecostal voting bloc. To bring Jonathan to power, the Pentecostals were eager to capitalise on their numbers to adequately sensitise their communities to the hope that their candidate would exercise righteous authority and implement a 'born-again' governance roadmap.

In December 2010, in the heat of electioneering campaign, President Jonathan visited the Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG) Camp for prayers and endorsement by Adeboye. In what emerged as the high point of a politico-religious drama, the president knelt down before Adeboye for blessings and prayers. Similar to endorsing Olusegun Obasanjo during the 1999 and 2003 presidential contests, Adeboye endorsed and actively campaigned for Jonathan and the PDP in 2010. "A kneeling president before another citizen [had] no precedent in the history of Nigeria. The image of a kneeling Jonathan before an establishment pastor graphically capture[d] the place of religion [and the power of Pentecostalism] in Nigeria's Fourth Republic" (Ukah 2014:88). To bolster this theological reading of political events, some political pastors and prophets became visible in the media with prognostications of the high destiny of the nation in God's plan. Numerous pastors believed and preached that the dire state of the nation was because of Muslim misrule of the country. In this respect, for example, Paul Adefarasin, founder-owner of House on the Rock, Lagos, in a sermon said "Nigerians used to be the most educated people in the world until the likes of Abacha and Murtala Muhammed came and scattered our educational system to slow down the South so that the North can catch up, instead of speeding up the north" (*PM News* [Lagos], 15 November 2010). From the preceding, in Nigeria Pentecostal citizenship developed, arguably, as an assertive, even aggressive, exercise against the background of the rhetoric of demonisation of Islam and Muslim domination.

Yemi Osinbajo: waiting in the wings

Nigeria's current vice-president, Yemi Osinbajo, is a senior Pentecostal pastor in the RCCG. During the Holy Ghost Service, a popular all-night vigil service, held on 2 January 2015, the patriarch of the RCCG, Enoch Adeboye, instructed his teeming audience and fans to obtain their Permanent Voters Cards (PVC), a requisite document for voting in the coming elections.[12] He further instructed church members to bring their PVCs to church service on the first Sunday of January for prayers. During the Holy Ghost Congress convened in the sprawling, 2,000-hectares Redemption Camp, from 8–13 December 2014, Adeboye made a similar announcement from the pulpit. On that occasion, he held up his and his spouse's PVCs for his audience to see, as visual and material evidence that he intended to vote in the coming elections. By encouraging his congregation to obtain their own PVCs, Adeboye was exercising his civic responsibility – as a moral and religious gatekeeper – by ensuring that the Christian community in Nigeria participated fully in the 2015 general elections. However, by instructing Christians to bring their PVCs to church on Sunday, 4 January 2015, Adeboye was transgressing the boundaries of religious obligation or service by turning his church, effectively, into a micro-political infrastructure. Consistent with his political engagements and adventures since 1999, Adeboye was performing a strategic political power play; he was informing all political stakeholders that he had the power to sway the voting patterns and outcomes in the coming elections. Praying over PVCs was intended to invoke the Holy Spirit to guide voters to align their voting practice with the will of God. The voice and will of God inform or supersede, even trump, the decision of the electorate.

Significantly, Professor Yemi Osinbajo, a Senior Advocate of Nigeria (SAN), was the former Commissioner of Justice and Attorney General of Lagos State (1999–2007), and, largely, an unknown political figure with elective political experience, before 2015. However, his most important political credential turned out to be religious capital. He is a Christian from Lagos State and, crucially, a senior pastor of the RCCG, an organisation that the politically savvy Adeboye heads. His selection as a vice-presidential candidate was to moderate, even neutralise, the perception and construction of Buhari as a Muslim fundamentalist with sympathies for the dreaded Boko Haram insurgency. Specifically, Christians in northern and central Nigeria who have endured most of the religious violence since 1999 might have had some confidence and reassurance in the choice of a Pentecostal leader as the vice-presidential candidate to Buhari.

The political calculus that informed the choice of Pastor Osinbajo could not have been separated from the desire of the APC (All Progressives Congress) to divide the Pentecostal political market or voting bloc. Enoch Adeboye is a publicly known PDP sympathiser who calls Goodluck Jonathan "my son". While in office, Jonathan visited Adeboye's "Miracle City" on three occasions, at least. Adeboye played a significant role as Jonathan's emissary of peace and reconciliation to former president Obasanjo. To pick a pastor from the politically perceptive and economically powerful RCCG as Buhari's running mate was a shrewd and pragmatically (even religiously) informed political move to forestall the dominant PDP, which relishes the official endorsement of the church. It was also a public acknowledgement of the voting power of the Pentecostal community to shape the future of governance in Nigeria. The nomination of Osinbajo as Buhari's running mate, therefore, positioned him and the APC as the first choice of RCCG members in the 2015 election. Religion – and ethnicity – rather than ideological consideration, was the most significant variable, and, therefore, a formidable political capital of the APC in its attempt to wrest power from the PDP. The APC, like the PDP, instrumentalised religion in its pursuit of political power. For the two dominant political parties in Nigeria, religion, rather than political ideology and philosophy, is key to their exercise of political power.

Pentecostal citizenship: the fiction, the failure and the reality

Citizenship is the status of citizens encrusted "in politico-legal rights and responsibilities and the symbolic-affective terms for group identification and shared value" (Chidester 2003:31; Taiwo 2004). There is a diversity of self-understanding and conceptions of Nigerian Pentecostal Christians

relative to their dual membership of the nation and a religious community. For some Christians, their primary allegiance is to their religious community, not the nation-state. Writing about the "weight of citizenship", Nimi Wariboko (2014:226) says, "Believing that this is the accepted time to stand up and act for Nigeria, Pentecostals are engaging the plight of their country [. . .] by correlating their existential experience with the Bible and Christian tradition". Nigerian Pentecostal Christians offer two forms of citizenship: moral and political. Moral citizenship derives from the proposition that Nigeria will emerge from the ashes of corruption and deprivation by the personal conversion and holiness of individuals. According to Ruth Marshall (2009:125), Nigerian 'born-again' Christians offer "a vision of citizenship in which the moral government of the self is linked to the power to influence the conduct of others". Pentecostal moral citizenship projects a vision and responsibility for the future of the nation-state, especially as an alternative to secular, postcolonial development paradigms. This political principle of Pentecostal revival, in Nigeria, from the 1970s, it is fervently hoped, will save the country and realise its destiny.

Political citizenship, based on Proverbs 29:2,[13] is mobilising members of the Pentecostal community to take up positions of political responsibility and govern with the fear of God, exercise righteous authority and revert the downward spiral of the country such that God will accomplish his covenant with the nation and resurrect it from its present prostrate status. The Pentecostal vision of citizenship, godliness and a godly people, is averred as cardinal to the realisation of the compromised promises of the post-colony. Corruption, nepotism, fanaticism, economic mismanagement are collectively the outcome of ungodliness in the rapacious and predatory postcolonial state. The transformation of the wickedness of the human heart and conduct is the work of the Holy Spirit, who reforms and informs the "new creature" in mapping out a new vision where God is at the centre of socio-economic and political development. As the ultimate cause and curse of all the problems facing the nation-state is the devil or Satan[14]; the goal of citizenship is the production of righteousness that enhances the practice of virtue and the constitution and perpetuation of the community of believers.

Conception of Pentecostal citizenship defines the nature of agency and activism, which believers can exercise in transforming their societies. However, the inverse conception that attributes all the ills of nation to a metaphysical source directly absolves criminals, corrupt persons and organisations of any wrongdoing. The fundamental and foundational basis of both democracy and citizenship is "the people". Pentecostal citizenship dispenses with "the people", replacing it with the inscrutable will of God – as mediated and interpreted by powerful wo/men of God. This overly spiritualised conception informs and explains Pentecostal pragmatic engagement with politics and public office. The performance of economic, social and political duties and practices is informed by the conceptions and conditions of citizenship. Where Pentecostals in public office fail to execute Spirit-driven programmes and transformation, the devil, rather than the individual, readily takes the blame. The failure of the Obasanjo and Jonathan administrations, cumulatively 13 of the 16 years of democracy in Nigeria's Fourth Republic, to transform and improve the socio-economic and political conditions of citizens and 'heal' the nation is attributed to the devil's intent on thwarting and sabotaging the efforts of believers and the destiny of the nation.[15]

This thinking gives the devil too much power over believers. As a form of externalisation of blame, it also reinforces the lack of self-appraisal among the Nigerian Pentecostal community. It is comforting to corrupt politicians and public bureaucrats. As Ojo (2010:47) points out, the failure of Pentecostal adventure into national politics stems from its inability "to understand the complexities of the socioeconomic and political factors pertaining to governance, they still hold on to the belief that governance could be better if Christians were in the position of power, a myopic perception which negates the everyday reality on ground".

However, a critical issue that Nigerian Pentecostal leaders have elided, which needs addressing, is the practice of citizenship within the church and its contentious relationship with the larger society, as exemplified by the undemocratic organisational character of Pentecostal institutions in Nigeria.[16] Pentecostal churches are governed like fiefdoms of their founders and general overseers. The wo/man of God or prophet/ess is completely in charge of doctrine, administration and fiscal control, and not accountable to members of the church, or ecclesiastic organisations, like the PFN and CAN, autonomous auditing agencies or a governmental agency (Ukah 2015). Given the dynamics of opacity in Nigerian Pentecostalism, their activities and practices in democratic governance only perpetuate a culture of obtuse accountability and absence of transparency. Holding leadership responsible and insisting on public accountability are foundational elements and duties of citizenship. When Pentecostal leaders are unaccountable to their congregants for their actions and conduct, the membership is unable to demand and hold political leadership to account for its policies and stewardship.

Believing that they are only to account to God for their actions and the large sums of money they collect from members – and the voice of God must represent the voice of the people – it is paradoxical, even hypocritical, for them to claim to inculcate the virtue and practice of public accountability and political citizenship among their followers. Consequently, when Christians fail to question or scrutinise their pastors' actions and excesses, they invariably carry the learned behaviour over to their political (mis)rulers. It is hard, therefore, to envisage how these (undemocratic, authoritarian, even despotic) institutions, their powerful owners and leadership can foster enduring practices of responsible and accountable citizenship (legal, social, political) in a religiously plural and complex society like Nigeria; especially, as the key conundrum of Pentecostal citizenship practices in Nigeria shows marked disjunctions between the vision of moral citizenship and the practice of political citizenship, at local (church, municipal and sub-national), national and international levels.

Notes

1 Part of the fieldwork for this study in Nigeria in 2016 was done under the Nagel Institute for the Study of World Christianity project on "Religious Innovation and Competition: Their Impact in Contemporary Africa", sub-project, "Miracle Cities: The Economy of Prayer Camps and the Entrepreneurial Spirit of Religion in Africa" (ID: 2016-SS350), funded by the John Templeton Foundation. The author thanks all those who in various ways helped during fieldwork. Thanks also go to the editors, anonymous reviewers and Professor Jude Akudinobi who read early drafts and offered comments. The usual caveat holds.

2 At the beginning of the Pentecostal resurgence in Africa, politics and political activism were not important priorities for born-again believers, organisations and their leaders. There are many reasons for this, some of which are: i) theological emphasis on salvation in a next life or afterlife, ii) overriding concern with conversion drives rather than socio-economic/political transformation, iii) contestation with mission churches over theological purity, iv) their initial minority status, v) lack of informed political intelligence or knowledge.

3 See, for example, Femi Adesina, "2015 Polls: Prophecies that Hit the Crossbar". *The Sun* (Lagos), 17 April 2015. available at: http://sunnewsonline.com/new/2015-polls-prophecies-that-hit-the-crossbar/

4 Tunde Bakare studied law at the University of Lagos, where he graduated in 1980 and was called to the bar in 1981. He established his own legal firm in 1984 and in 1988 was called into full time Pentecostal ministry. He was born into a Muslim family but converted into Christianity. He later joined the Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG) and became a pastor in charge of one of the experimental model parishes of the RCCG. On 1 April 1989, he broke away from the RCCG and founded his own church, the Latter Rain Assembly, in Lagos. Among his reasons for leaving the RCCG was that the leader of the church, Enoch Adeboye, was being elevated to the pedestal of a deity.

5 1Samuel 15:32ff.

6 The Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria is a loose association of a large number of Pentecostal and charismatic churches and para-churches that was established in 1991. Although there are other smaller associational bodies of Pentecostal and charismatic churches and organisation, the PFN is the nationally recognised representative body of Pentecostal churches and organisations in Nigeria; it is one of the five associations that make up the Christian Association of Nigeria. Membership is open to churches and organisations who subscribe to mainstream Pentecostal beliefs and practices. Since 1999, the PFN has played prominent and controversial role in public life and politics of the country by its overt support for some politicians (Olusegun Obasanjo and Goodluck Jonathan, for example) and political programmes in the country. (www.pfn.org.ng/membership/)

7 Born Christopher Oghenebrorie Okotie, he modified his name to Kris Okotie during his days as a pop musician.

8 "Obasanjo Can't Rule this Country Again – Okotie". *Vanguard* (Lagos). 14 February 2006. available at: www.vanguardngr.com/articles/2002/politics/february06/130226/p113022006.html (accessed 14 February 2006).

9 "2007: Okotie vs the Military Heavy weights". *Daily Sun* (Lagos). 26 August 2006, p. 29.

10 Chris Oyakhilome, Interview, *National Standard* (Abuja), vol. 1, no. 7, January 2005, p. 22.

11 Fielding a Pentecostal leader, who was also a public agitator or crusader, was both recognition of Pentecostalism as a public force and religion and also to split the evangelical voting bloc.

12 The PCV is the official document that authenticates a citizen as a registered voter.

13 "When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice; But when a wicked man rules, the people groan" (NKJV).

14 For many Nigerian Pentecostals, Islam is a religion of Satan designed to subvert the will of God for his people.

15 Some Christians defend Obasanjo from any charge of underperformance by citing the Sharia controversies that dogged his first term in office. Similarly, some defend Jonathan's administration by citing the Boko Haram insurgency. Apart from these two factors – Sharia re-implementation and Boko Haram insurgency – both administrations were grossly corrupt and inept in dealing with social and economic problems (Adebanwi 2012). Apart from the tokenistic gestures to satisfy the Pentecostal constituency, there was nothing consistently "Christian" or "Pentecostal" about these administrations.

16 According to Matthews Ojo (2010: 44), "Pentecostal and Charismatic movements [in Nigeria] have started to raise some doubts about their own originality and intentions, basically, because of the contradictions inherent in their posture towards politics and materialism".

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3 Election prophecies and political stability in Ghana

Emmanuel Sackey

In recent years we can observe the emergence of so called *election prophecies* in the Ghanaian political landscape. By election prophecies I refer to the pre-election declarations in the public sphere, pertaining to the outcome of national elections, by religious clerics who attribute their revelations to the will of God. This phenomenon is perceived to have become pronounced during the second round of the 2000 presidential elections.[1] To a significant extent, the return to democratic dispensation in 1992 (Gyimah-Boadi 2001; Addo 1997), partly contributed towards freedom of religious clerics to channel their prophetic ministration onto the political terrain. Even though a few traditional spiritualists and Moslem clerics also engage in the practice, Pentecostal-charismatic pastors remain the most prominent. This chapter examines the recent upsurge of election prophecies in Ghana, and its potential implication for political stability. Ghana has been touted among the most politically stable countries in Africa (Van Gyambo 2015; Boafo-Arthur 2008) yet the prospects of violent post-election conflict have remained a major national concern in every election year.

Since the return to multiparty politics in 1992, there have been six general elections out of which the outcome of three, (the 1992, 2008 and 2012) brought some tensions. Whereas contestations over the results of the 1992 presidential elections led to a boycott of the parliamentary elections by the NPP, the results of the 2012 presidential election were contested at the Supreme Court.[2] Even though there have been extensive studies on the connection between religion and political conflicts in Africa, only a few (Deacon 2015; Deacon & Lynch 2013; Vullers 2011) have paid attention to the phenomenon of election prophecies, and the extent to which it impacts post-election conflict in the continent. This chapter has responded to two key questions, namely why do clerics of the Pentecostal-charismatic denomination tend to engage in the practice, whereas those belonging to the *mainline* churches do not? And more importantly, to what extent could election prophecies impact on post-election conflict in Ghana? The chapter is based on the outcome of a qualitative study conducted between 2013 and 2016 that involved content analysis of 21 election prophecies that were broadcasted on radio, TV, newspapers as well as the internet. The content analysis of the prophecies was complemented with an extensive literature review