

Nigerian Pentecostal Mission in Europe: Ecumenical and secular relations in Britain

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Abstract

African churches face diverse obstacles while attempting cross-cultural mission in the West. These include the influence of external forces such as racism, lack of understanding of European cultures, lack of worship spaces and various perceptions that many wider indigenous Europeans have about Africans and their churches, particularly their theological beliefs. These external factors impose real challenges, which are beyond the control of the leaders of diaspora African churches and interfere with the effort to build relations with the wider white indigenous European host population, whether spiritual or secular. This qualitative study explores the different ways through which Nigerian-initiated churches in London are engaging with British society, both ecumenically and as a social force within the communities. There are indications that a few of the larger churches are building ecumenical relations with mainline British churches, although this is prevalent at leadership level. Similarly, they are well-enough resourced to embark on social community projects which are beneficial to nationals of all races and political activities to court the British royal and political elite and are therefore establishing their presence within and creating pathways to British society.

Keywords: Cross-cultural mission, Ecumenical relations, Social action, Nigerian Pentecostal Churches, Ministry of presence

Introduction

For many academics who are exploring the concept of 'reverse mission' of African churches in Europe, one challenge involves the dynamics of repositioning themselves from 'migrant enclaves' into communities able to engage in diverse relationships with the wider white indigenous European population they wish to evangelize (Adedibu 2018: 182; Olofinjana 2020). Although these scholars do not agree on some of the challenges to the 'reverse mission' agenda, there are some common threads linking

their arguments. These external factors impose real challenges, which are beyond the control of the leaderships of these diaspora African churches and are consistent with some of the observations made in my doctoral research (Adenekan-Koevoets 2021). However, some large Nigerian-initiated churches or their branches such as the Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG) Jesus House in London, Kingsway International Christian Centre (KICC) and Winners Chapel engage in various social activities within their locations and have become accepted features of those communities (Cartledge et al. 2019). The leadership of these denominations cooperates with governmental, non-governmental, church and non-church organizations to identify and meet community needs while also building ecumenical relations with British mainline church denominations such as the Church of England at various societal levels, thus establishing cross-cultural relations. Using empirical research methods, this article first describes ecumenism, discusses Pentecostals' ecumenical engagements and the missional benefits of establishing social projects within host communities. Second, it discusses the approach of the first-generation-led Nigerian churches to mission in Britain, the differing view of the Nigerian-British second-generation to this approach and the possible relevance of these conflicting views to Pentecostals' ecumenical engagements.

Ecumenism and African Pentecostals: A brief historical analysis

Ecumenism or being ecumenical refers to events, actions by individuals and/or organizations or ideas that bring Christians from different traditions together to dialogue and act in ways that reflect the household of God (Nelson and Reith 2017: 5–6). It is a coming together that presupposes that all participants share a belief in the work and person of Jesus Christ as God incarnate and Lord. The most important goal of the ecumenical movement is the building of relationships between the followers of Jesus as they encounter each other and seek to spread the message of the gospel and envision the unity of God in the world (Robeck 2014: 115). In John 17.20–26, Jesus is praying for the Church and in verse 21 he says, “that they all may be one, as You, Father are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me”. However, there are reported challenges to this hope for structural unification and a widely held opinion within the ecumenical debate that the dialogue is stuck in an “ecumenical winter” (Murray 2014: 3; Nelson and Raith 2017: 97). This is due to a sense of disappointment among ecumenists about the seeming failure of some of the major initiatives to establish visible expression(s) of church unity. Murray further asserts that the movement has transited from the one-way ecumenism of the pre-Vatican II era (which promotes a one-way return of Christians to unity in the Catholic Church) to the Life and Work or practical model

(which encourages the building of shared relationship and practice across formally divided traditions)] of the early twentieth century. Next is the theological dialogue model which specifically addresses doctrinal issues and operates at church leadership level with little effect experienced by members at the local level. The main aim is to clear misconceptions and establish agreements and disagreements about divisive theological topics through bilateral and multilateral dialogues. Then there is spiritual ecumenism which started in the 1930s from the work of Paul Couturier and focuses on the conversion of the heart required for Christian unity through common prayer privately and publicly with little concern for practical work or theological dialogue. Finally, there is receptive ecumenism which is projected as a way to get out of the ecumenical 'cul-de-sac'. It focuses on developing and modelling a fresh strategy in ecumenism that takes contemporary realities seriously as well as the abiding need for churches to find an appropriate means of engaging towards achieving a more visible structural and sacramental unity. Paul Murray describes it as an ecumenism that invites learning from the other on all levels of ecclesial life without asking what other traditions can learn from us and without compromising one's own ecclesial identity. It emphasises ecclesial discernment of own imperfections and the importance of learning and receiving wisdom and gifts from others to address them (Murray and Confalonieri 2008: 280; Murray 2014: 1–3; Hawkes and Balabanski 2018; Pizzey 2019).

Although sporadic, Pentecostal denominations have been involved in ecumenical conversations from the beginning of the twentieth century although scholars suggest that it has existed in Christian antiquity since the era of the apostles (Odeyemi 2019: xvii). However, the multiplications and splintering of the movement hindered ecumenical work, causing differences in ecumenical attitudes which over time underscored the need for Pentecostals to initially focus on building worldwide cooperation among themselves. This resulted initially in the formation of national Pentecostal fellowships in Europe, North America, Africa, Asia and Latin America and later an international fellowship. Following this, a series of Pentecostal World Conferences were organized which resulted in the formation of the Pentecostal World Fellowship (PWF). This is a global cooperative body open to all Pentecostals although not all Pentecostal groups participate and those from North America and Europe are more influential in matters of international cooperation. Through the PWF in cooperation with the WCC, Pentecostals participated in the first official ecumenical dialogue with the Roman Catholic Church in 1972 and this has become the model for ecumenical conversations between Pentecostals and other traditions (Vondey 2014: 79–80; Stephenson 2018).

From the perspective of African Pentecostals, ecumenism as presently conceptualized, particularly by the World Council of Churches (WCC), is seen as ideological and more focused on liturgy and sacraments as shown by the WCC document *The Church: Towards a Common Vision*. This document portrays the church as a eucharistic community, a definition of faith and Christianity dominated by a Western or Catholic definition which makes ecumenism that is dominated by a European perspective of religion a disincentive for the participation of African Christians (Rausch 2017: 91). According to Pentecostal historian Cecil Robeck (2015), who was the only Pentecostal on the Working group that drafted the document, the constitution of the delegates was slanted toward the ancient churches, which made it difficult, for a representative of the “free church” tradition to make any substantive contribution. John Segun Odeyemi, an ordained Catholic priest, in his book *Pentecostals and Catholic Ecumenism*, notes (and I agree) that African Pentecostals, whether in Africa or the diaspora, are hardly focused on weekly celebration of the eucharist or sacraments choosing rather to concentrate on biblical authority, demons and spirits, signs and wonders, and indigenous leadership. Unlike churches in the Enlightenment-influenced West, African Pentecostal churches emphasize the supernatural, the oneness of the spirit, soul and body (holistic approach) and everyday issues of poverty and violence confronting their congregations across Africa (Rausch 2017: 92; Odeyemi 2019: 55).

Many also stress the gospel of prosperity in their context where the majority of the population lives below the poverty line and looks to church leaders for political and economic direction. Findings from my PhD indicated that although there is growing sympathy for ecumenical participation among the more cosmopolitan African churches and their leaders in the diaspora, pastoral care of their largely black congregations remains a priority. My interactions suggest that suspicion of the ecumenical movement and the WCC persists, particularly among Pentecostal members (Adenekan-Koevoets 2022: 359–77). For example, the World Council of Churches document does not recognize “church” as a group of Christians living by the example of Jesus and witnessing to his reign but rather as a eucharistic community. The new churches from the global South including African Pentecostals characterize the document as one written from a Catholic perspective, too Western, Eurocentric, and not representative of their position (Loughran 2013: 9; Rausch 2017). This is where the teaching of “exchange of gifts” by receptive ecumenism becomes relevant. It is a way for the post-Enlightenment Western church to see that in addition to their often-abstract theological language about faith, there is an experiential aspect to faith through the indwelling power of God, the importance of prioritizing mission, and about the forgiveness of sin that African Pentecostals (in their various forms) profess (Rausch 2017: 94). Pentecostal churches, on the other hand, should train upcoming leaders to

understand the nature and purpose of ecumenism. As Keshishian (1992: 2) suggests, unity should not be taken to mean ecclesial uniformity, so it is pertinent that Pentecostals maintain the independence of their churches, preserving denominational boundaries while addressing unexplored or unexamined assumptions to improve ecumenical relations (Robeck 2015: 5–7).

Research Methodology

I adopted an ethnographic approach. Data was collected through participant observation, in-depth semi-structured interviews and focus groups which ensured that the research questions were viewed from different angles to give as well-rounded an account as possible. A total of about 80 people and three Nigerian Pentecostal churches, the RCCG, House on the Rock (HOTR) and Winners Chapel, participated in interviews and group discussions both in Amsterdam and London from 2017 to 2019, although this article refers mostly to the London results. The case studies included two parishes¹ of RCCG – a small parish of about 30 members named RCCGLKP located in Southwest London and Jesus House located in Brent Cross, London with about 3000 members; HOTR, housed in a renovated Anglican Church building, the ‘Rock Tower’ in Islington with 100-150 members. There were also branches of Winners Chapel, a small branch (WCIL) with 100-150 members and the European headquarters with about 2000 member-capacity campus. Congregation size was vital in this study, and this will be discussed shortly. In data collection and analysis, one of the challenges is the issue of researcher bias, whether as an insider or outsider. As a Pentecostal Nigerian migrant, I was an insider, but as a female educated researcher, I was also sometimes an outsider. This is important because the stance of the researcher can affect the interpretation of the data and therefore the validity of the study. Since qualitative research cannot be value-free, it is vital to acknowledge own biases and assumptions and be as neutral as possible (Gillani 2021). It was not possible to identify with the researched group in all cases and sometimes not with the same intensity, therefore, I adopted a dialectical (logical argumentation) approach which allows the preservation of the complexity of differences and similarities (Kawulich 2012: 154; Dwyer and Buckle 2009). My positionality as a Pentecostal but also a researcher was made clear to participants and I was also very self-aware. In listening to and interpreting their stories, the experiences of the sacred were not excluded from the research. Rather, I was open to the way in which those being researched, “intersubjectively”

1 In the RCCG, a parish is a congregation or unit of administration ranging from as little as ten regular attendees to large mega-parishes of 4000 members and the number/area is not limited by geographical distance.

experience reality and to use that as my reference point. Additionally, ethical considerations around anonymity, confidentiality and freedom to participate were taken seriously, discussed and agreed with participants in advance using Consent Forms which participants read and signed. Ethical approval was received from the graduating institution.

Research Findings

In the UK, the RCCG is one of the Churches that is more ecumenically engaged and in its ecumenical statement, affirms “its commitment to work with other ecumenical partners in the United Kingdom and beyond to promote Christian unity and advance the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ” (RCCGUK 2017) While acknowledging that differences exist within and between Christian denominations, the RCCG seeks to continue to collaborate based on the love of God that embraces difference “as enrichment to the various valid expressions of the Christian faith” (RCCGUK 2017). RCCG’s strategies for ecumenical engagement include inter-church worship, knowledge exchange and partnership with other churches to enhance Christian social action and services to the needy within the communities. As a matter of church policy, parish pastors at all levels are motivated to relate in different spheres and cooperate in local prayer meetings and mission activities; findings from my study confirmed this cooperation. Agu Irukwu, the senior pastor of RCCG Jesus House, while speaking during a Vineyard leadership conference acknowledged some interactions, noting:

we have 850 odd churches spread across the nation. I visit those churches, I get the report, I hear about prayer meetings being held with the vicar of the Anglican church, with the priest of the Catholic Church, with the Reverend of the Baptist Church and they are meeting once a month to pray for their community and their cities (Irukwu 2018).

This statement underscores the fact that there are collaborations between leaders of RCCG and mainline churches (Anglicans, United Reformed, Baptists) at local, city and regional levels. As Dyer (2019: 110–11) notes, this is particularly successful with the mainline churches which have absorbed a flavour of charismatic styles of worship used in Pentecostal churches like the RCCG. Nevertheless, the need for increased mutual recognition and dialogue leading to a renewed understanding of each other’s ecclesiology must not be overlooked. Ecumenism and ecclesiology are linked in the work of Christian unity, and it is beneficial for Christian communities to develop compatible ecclesiastical operating systems and recognize “church” in one another; this could be a key to a truly multicultural church (Gibaut 2015: 222).

Another observation is that the size of the congregation has implications for the ability to engage and the level of engagement in ecumenical discussions. Large churches like RCCG Jesus House, with a more diverse congregation not only in stock of human capital (having a higher population of young university-educated members) but also age, are better positioned to engage in ecumenical relations. During my fieldwork, I observed that its members cut across age, gender, economic and educational attainment with an average age of 35 years. In that regard, smaller congregations like RCCGLKP, made up of much older members, with less stock of human capital (in terms of theological/secular educational qualifications) do not have the capability for effective participation in ecumenical debates with mainline churches who emphasize theological training for their clergy and, in some cases, profess different theologies. This corroborates the findings of Cartledge et al. (2019: 20) in their work on London megachurches that size is vital and influences the amount of capital (human, social or physical) available for engaging with local communities. Others, like HOCR with more members and its own worship premises, face challenges in participating in church networks or ecumenical discussions because their resources are more focused on pastoral care of members; as its lead pastor explained, “our activities as a local church are so consuming” (Pastor T, interview 4/2/2020).

How have leaders like Irukwu become prominently involved in ecumenical conversations? There may be some attributes that differentiate those who are ecumenically engaged from others who are less involved. Irukwu is a former corporate banker, well-educated and very cosmopolitan in his approach in both spiritual and secular domains. He was sent to the UK as a missionary from his home Nigerian church to pastor the then newly-established RCCG London parish. Additionally, Irukwu is one of the visible Nigerians who is a prominent leader in ecumenical organizations like Churches Together England (CTE) where he was Pentecostal president from 2017 to 2021. According to Davey and Reardon (2005: 5), CTE has been rooted in inter-denominational consultation and debates at local and national levels since its inception and has been at the forefront of inter-church relations in the UK. In a sermon at the leadership conference of Vineyard Churches (a movement established by John and Carol Wimber in 1977),² Irukwu revealed his commitment to inter-denominational relationships and cooperation in the UK.

2 Vineyard churches are a movement of churches in the UK and Ireland which was started by John and Carol Wimber in the United States of America in 1977. Its goal is to plant, or begin, new, healthy, fully functioning churches which in turn will plant healthy churches (Vineyard Churches 2012; 2019). It is known by many Christians today through its well-known worship songs that are sung in different churches.

When we gather once a year that meeting is a cloud, when I sit in a meeting with leaders of the orthodox churches ..., now I'm Pentecostal, Orthodox Church leaders traditionally think Pentecostals are rascals, they don't even understand us. Now we think they are archaic and dinosaurs so there is no meeting point. ... But we are talking about Christ, we are talking about revival we are talking about the persecuted church, we are praying together. I'm praying with the Archbishop of Canterbury, my wife and I We are sitting down and talking about strategies for thy kingdom come (Irukwu 2018).

Irukwu is convinced of an imminent change in the missional, political, social and economic situation in the UK and urges the Church to unite and “pray for the cloud to cause a rain over the nation”. He has also involved leaders of British mainline churches in RCCG’s programmes, despite differences in ecclesiology and theology. The RCCG Festival of Life (FOL) has been a platform where individuals like the Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby, the British Charismatic worship leader Lou Fellingham, and Sam Miller of Open Heavens have participated. The Archbishop of the Coptic Orthodox Church in London, Anba Angaelos, was the special guest speaker at the 2019 festival (RCCG 2019). Interdenominational collaboration has the potential for achieving one of the central objectives of receptive ecumenism, which is, seeking what one church tradition needs to learn and can learn from others without compromising its own tradition and thereby developing deepened relationships. This is perhaps one way that receptive ecumenism helps towards achieving an ecumenical ethic and strategy for living between the times (Murray 2014: 1).

Pastor E explains that ecumenical engagement is relational, and the interested individual should be able to network across cultures and church expressions wherever they are located. He discussed his ecumenical connections in the UK referring to the period when he left his old church to start a new one: “I spent more time with Hugh Osgood getting to know him as a person and got quite close to him as a mentor” (Pastor E, 11/2/2019). Through this relationship building, his new church became actively engaged with CTE, the Free Churches Group and the Evangelical Alliance. Pastor E emphasized the interpersonal aspect of inter-church engagement, which, he argues, is only possible through close relationships built over time. As Robeck (2015: 9) explained, ecumenical encounters begin with personal relationships and friendships. Given time, the friendships can grow into genuine love and care for one another and the potential to mesh into each other’s lives. When this ability to grow into each other’s lives is extended to churches, it results in mutual respect of each other’s beliefs and actions. These interactions can be the basis for critical reflections on institutional differences and create opportunities for change. Getting to know Christians from different traditions, sharing the joy of being Christians, becoming

friends, associates and brethren removes the tag of being the “other” and breaks walls of tension and alienation erected against each other. Grassroots level engagement where every day Christians engage in “real dialogues” that address the many practical problems that churches face could be vital in this process (Murray 2014: 3; Rausch 2017: 96).

Rubbing against each other and gravitating towards each other provide the opportunity for loosening creedal characteristics and bringing Christians closer to their original identity as family members. Ecumenism brokers relationships, both at micro and inter-church levels, and relationships enable better self-awareness, opening the possibility of gaining another perspective; thus people can move outside of their comfort zones, creating the likelihood of taking seriously those who are different. Developing new ecclesial relationships may begin with leadership but this can shift to members if leaders teach it from their pulpits. As Rausch suggests, ecumenical engagement needs to be on multiple levels. Finally, it is through ecumenical and ecclesial relationships that the Church can demonstrate reconciliation and unity to the world and therefore enhance mission (Mladin et al. 2017: 25–26).

Social and political participation

My study also indicated that despite challenges, African Pentecostal churches provide different types of support to their host communities. These activities include provision of groceries indirectly through food banks and directly to the public as during the 2020–21 lockdowns brought about by Covid-19. Pastor T explained how his church had collected (from church members) and donated great amounts of groceries to their local food bank and received commendation for their support (Pastor T, interview 4/2/2020). In cases where direct distribution to the public was necessitated, the churches cooperate with local governmental and non-governmental agencies to identify and support the needy (Burgess 2021: 331). These churches also distribute food packs during festive periods like Easter and Christmas. An example is RCCG Jesus House “Christmas lunch on Jesus” initiative which started in 2007. Through the programme, quality food hampers are delivered to individuals, families and homes in communities across the UK who would otherwise face a difficult or lonely Christmas. Initially started in North London, it has now been franchised to the south-west and in 2021, more than 9000 hampers were distributed across ten London boroughs. Others are Abigail’s Court, which organizes regular visits to elderly care homes, and the Novo centre, which provides a safe space for families to help combat the causes of youth-related offences through mentoring of young people and providing alternative social contexts for self-expression (Cartledge et al. 2019: 220–26). In addition to providing sustenance and other social services to the vulnerable within British

society, migrant churches like Jesus House use these as opportunities for public-facing engagement at the grassroots to build relationships and do the work of mission. For them this is a way of being rooted in the place and context in which they are located. It is about being part of the communal life and being present, which is deeply human, very personal, communal and God-shaped (James 2016: 20). Other aspects of RCCG UK's social activism include empowerment programmes, such as the African Caribbean Education Project (ACES) aimed at improving the educational outcomes of young people of African and Caribbean descent (Cartledge et al. 2019: 221–8).

There is socio-political activism through which RCCG congregations and leadership interact with those in the position of political and civic power in ways that have indicated significant forms of “give” as well as “take”. This implies letting these powers see not just what they can do for the Church but what the Nigerian community is contributing to British society. Irukwu has been consistent in cooperating with Christian and secular leaders and has a wide sphere of influence in the UK which has been beneficial in RCCG's efforts at building relations across church traditions albeit mostly at leadership levels. For instance, in 2008 Tearfund celebrated its 40th birthday at Jesus House with Archbishop Tutu as guest, while in 2015 David Cameron (then Prime Minister) made a key speech at FOL (RCCG 2015). Through these connections with the seat of power, RCCG Jesus House brings its contributions as a faith-based organization into the limelight and public discourse. For example, as member of Parliament, Boris Johnson visited the Novo centre (a drop-in centre run by Jesus House to help combat the causes of youth-related offences through mentoring of young people and provision of alternative social contexts for self-expression), while in 2021, as PM, Boris Johnson and Charles the then Prince of Wales visited Jesus House to observe the church premises being used as a vaccination centre for the public during the Covid-19 pandemic. They both later commended the church as an example of faith-based intervention that should be emulated (Jesus House 2021, March 7). African churches like Jesus House take social responsibility seriously and operate it in such inclusive terms that the British public benefits, including people of other faiths and none and those of diverse cultures.

Second-generation Nigerians: Way Forward

In another paper, I highlighted the inter-generational differences observed among Nigerian Pentecostal diaspora churches around beliefs and practices and the impact on cross-cultural missional engagement (Adenekan-Koevoets 2021). The hierarchic power structure, where the first generation constitutes the majority of the leadership, ensures that power is concentrated at the top and trickles down to members

including young people. Pastor E describes it as the “very big head and very small body” type, the “kwashiorkor” kind of depiction because that is the reality of our systems of leadership in the diaspora. He argues that such leadership styles will invariably affect the way church missions are planted (interview, 11/2/2019). Both hierarchic leadership and power dynamics that concentrate authority in the hands of the first-generation, who are mostly influenced by their Nigerian cultural and religious background, institutes Pentecostal liturgies that are designed along familiar “home” beliefs and practices. The second generation is wary of hierarchical leadership structures, arguing that they create unequal power relations which allow limited opportunity for youth to influence change. This discourages sincere and constructive discussions between the leaders and members, leading to frustration and diminished participation in church activities (focus group, 23/2/2018). Decisions around strategies and practices for evangelism – important for building cross-cultural relations – are made by church leaders who are mostly first-generation Nigerians. The result is that methods like street evangelism, door knocking and leafleting – described as “in your face evangelism” (Catto 2008: 123) – that worked in Nigeria but are less effective in western liberal societies, persist. These young Nigerian-British citizens are convinced that there is a need for contextualization and adoption of attitudes and strategies that are more inclusive for non-Africans. One of the suggestions is “taking the church outside” to meet the people through conversations, demonstrating the love of God (power evangelism) and building relationships. “Apostle Paul did not give out leaflets, they [the apostles] just went into the fold ... you [need to] make it personal to people. It is about how you make people feel” (focus group, 23/2/2018). The limited level of success of cross-cultural mission by other African migrant churches in the UK is similar as attested to in a study of the Ghanaian Church of Pentecost UK (Neate 2022: 33–34).

Social action is seen as another activity which could be beneficial in bringing the activities of Nigerian churches to the British public space and has been useful in creating public awareness and establishing the presence of Nigerian churches within different communities. However, it has had limited success in the aspiration of Nigerian migrant churches to build cross-cultural congregations. Most of these young people were born in Europe, others migrated as young children, but all of them went through both African and European socialization processes so they can be described as African Europeans. Their worldview is neither African nor European but a blend of both and they are therefore well positioned to be the bridge between cultures and begin the process of building cross-cultural denominations in Europe. They have the societal reach that the FG does not have but need their seal, zeal, experience and resources.

Conclusion

This article has discussed the external relations of Nigerian Pentecostal churches and how their missional aspiration is affected. First, the study indicates that Nigerian diaspora churches respond, within their capabilities and available resources, to some of the social problems encountered within their host communities. Whether through empowerment programmes, such as the African Caribbean Education Project (ACES), care for the homeless and the elderly, food donation to the needy or hampers at festive seasons, large branches of established churches like the RCCG or others like KICC have been at the forefront of community engagement in and around London. Second, contextualization of Pentecostal beliefs and practices, both in terms of outward-facing evangelism and embedded religious and spiritual activities, remain the key to missional success. Street preaching, leafleting and other Nigerian-tested methods are the preferred practices despite their ineffectiveness in evangelizing white British people. Third, although the level of ecumenical engagement is limited, through the actions of some of the more cosmopolitan leaders of these churches there are ongoing efforts on matters of liturgy, joint evangelism, learning, caring and sharing in faith matters and shared worship and prayer sessions. These activities are also means of building personal relationships and friendships which are vital for receptive ecumenical encounters that are based on mutual respect and willingness to learn and accept what the other has to offer. In addition to engaging with those in the seat of British power and politics, Nigerian Pentecostal leaders also encourage members to serve in various spheres including politics, jury service, magistracy, voluntary service, fire service and so on. These are seen as means of societal participation and engagement through which they can build cross-cultural relations and influence policies that affect their lives. Finally, the second generation is a resource that could be the transitional factor towards achieving the aspiration for cross-cultural interactions, church growth and territorial expansion of migrant churches. As one participant noted, kingdom work is inter-generational, and it is important to

train our children who are more integrated in Western societies and straddle both cultures in the things of God ... so that they have the skill, our seal, and the fervour we have but then they also have the reach we do not have. They in turn can bring their friends who cut across all cultures and races and be more effective than us. They can use their language and technological skills in combination with the culture of their parents as tools to reach the wider community (Pastor E, interview 11/2/2019).

There is need for the means and ways of achieving the missiological agenda of African diaspora churches, especially Nigerian Pentecostal churches in this study to be more contextual as the audience and context change. The UK is a different context compared to Nigeria and evangelizing white British people requires that

African Pentecostal churches design evangelistic strategies that take British thought and culture into consideration. This will be vital for future ecumenical encounters.

About the author

Adebisi Adenekan-Koevoets received her PhD from the University of Roehampton in 2022. Her research focused on Nigerian Pentecostals and reverse mission in London and Amsterdam. She is passionate about second-generation Africans and their engagement in mission and other issues such as identity construction, belonging and social mobility. Her publications about young people include "Nigerian Pentecostal Diasporic Missions and Intergenerational Conflicts: Case Studies from Amsterdam and London" in *Mission Studies* (Brill) and *Targeted Evangelism and Knife Crime in London: A Case of Corporate/Church Social Responsibility by Migrant Pentecostal Churches in the UK* (Galda Verlag).

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