

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF BLACK PENTECOSTAL CHURCHES IN BRITAIN: A CASE STUDY OF APOSTOLIC PASTORAL CONGRESS (APC)

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Introduction

One of the relatively new phenomena in European Christianity and on the religious landscape is the emergence and development of black Pentecostal Churches. A century ago the face of European Christianity could have been labelled as white in terms of colour, but now it is increasingly becoming multi-coloured, if one can call it that. This change in European Christianity is part of a larger shift taking place in world Christianity. Europe used to be the centre of world Christianity and as such was sending missionaries to Africa, Asia, South America and other parts of the world. Part of the current trend in global mission is that these former mission fields have developed their Christianities to the extent that they now see Europe as a mission field. In response to this new thinking, Africa, Asia and South America are now sending pastors and missionaries to Europe. An example is the 2014 South Korean mission to Britain, which saw the Kwangmyung Presbyterian Church in Korea sending about 450 South Korean missionaries on a one-week short term mission to Britain. This intentional sending was in recognition of and gratitude for the fact that South Korea traces its

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Christian roots to the ministry of a Welsh missionary, Robert Jermain Thomas (1839–1866). The one-week mission saw the 450 South Koreans participating in ministry, prayer-walking and praying for revival in the UK at 30 different locations all over Britain.¹

Pentecostal Christianity is currently one of the fastest growing expressions of Christianity in the world. David Barrett estimates that Pentecostalism is likely to rise to 1, 140 million or 44% of the total number of Christians by 2025.² Alan Anderson, a Pentecostal historian and theologian, adds that Pentecostalism is fast becoming the dominant expression of Christianity and one of the most extraordinary religious phenomena in the world today.³

Pentecostalism as a global movement has large numbers of adherents in the Majority World. It is the expression of Christianity that is growing fastest in Africa, Asia and Latin America. It is Pentecostal missionaries and pastors from the Majority World who are taking the lead in planting churches in Europe. The continent of Europe, which used to have white Classic Pentecostals and, later, the Charismatic Movements of the 1960s as the major players within that expression, now have black Pentecostals adding to the diversity, to the extent that the history of European Pentecostals will not be complete without paying attention to the emerging black Pentecostals. How then did black Pentecostalism in Europe begin? Is black Pentecostalism a homogeneous group? What contributions do they make? These are some of the questions this essay seeks to address, profiling the history and work of the Apostolic Pastoral Congress (APC here after) as a case study. There has been a considerable amount of research and attention given to black Pentecostals in Britain, such as the Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG)⁴ and

- 1 The church that I pastor, Woolwich Central Baptist Church, and 12 other churches in south-east London, hosted 20 South Koreans.
- 2 David Barrett, Annual Statistical Table on Global Mission 1997, *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 21.1, 1997, 24–25.
- 3 Alan Anderson and Walter Hollenweger, eds., *Pentecostals After a Century: Global Perspectives on a Movement in Transition* (Sheffield, Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 19.
- 4 See Richard Burgess, “African Pentecostal Growth: The Redeemed Christian Church of God in Britain,” in *Church Growth in Britain. From 1980 to the Present*, ed. David Goodhew (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2012), 127–44; Richard Burgess, “African Pentecostal Churches in Britain: The Case of the Redeemed Christian Church of God,” in *The African Christian Presence in the West. New Immigrant Congregations and Transnational Networks in North America and Europe*, eds. Frieder Ludwig and Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu (Trenton: African World Press, 2011), 253–72; Richard Burgess, Kim Knibbe & Anna Quaas, “Nigerian-initiated Pentecostal Churches as a Social Force in Europe: The Case of the Redeemed Christian Church of God,” *PentecoStudies*, April, vol. 9, 2010, 97–121; and Richard Burgess, “African Pentecostal Spirituality and Civic Engagement: The Case of the Redeemed Christian Church of God in Britain,” Special Issue of *Journal of Beliefs and Values on Global Pentecostalism*, vol. 30, no. 3, December, 2009, 255–73.

Kingsway International Christian Centre (KICC).⁵ While this is good, it is important to begin to document the stories of other black Pentecostals and draw attention to their contributions.

In proceeding with this task, some clarification of terms is needed. What is meant by Pentecostals? There is no general agreement among Pentecostal theologians as to a universal definition of Pentecostals because it depends on who is defining the word and what their theological persuasions are. For example, as an African who was born and raised in an African Initiated Church (AIC), I define some of the AICs as Pentecostals because of their emphasis on prayers, use of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, prophetic visions, healing, miracles, Spirit-led experiences and Spirit-filled experiences.⁶ However, I am equally aware of the scholarly debate that questions whether AICs can be regarded as Pentecostals, as some of them are regarded as syncretistic – making them appear more as a cult than a church.⁷ In this essay, I have classified AICs as Pentecostals. For the purposes of a working definition, I have defined Pentecostals in this paper as an expression of Christianity that has its origin in Acts 2:1–13 when the disciples of our Lord were filled with the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost. It is a modern church movement that is characterised by *glossolalia* (speaking in tongues), use of the gifts of the Spirit, Spirit-filled experiences, belief in miracles and healing and free and ecstatic worship.

Origins of the Pentecostal Movement in Britain

The year 1906 is very significant in modern Pentecostal history, as it was the year that the Pentecostal revival of Azusa Street in Los Angeles started, led by William J. Seymour. Some scholars and commentators see this event as the beginning of the Pentecostal Movement, while others will argue that it was in 1900/1901 at Topeka, Kansas with Charles Parham that modern Pentecostalism originated.⁸ A further debate associated with the history of Pentecostalism is whether Charles Parham (1873–1929) or William J. Seymour (1870–1922) is the founder of the movement. Those who prefer Parham do so on the basis that he formulated the Pentecostal theology of

5 Israel Olofinjana, *Reverse in Ministry and Mission: Africans in the Dark Continent of Europe* (Milton Keynes, UK, Author House, 2010) and Hugh Osgood, *African Neo-Pentecostal Churches and British Evangelicalism 1985–2005: Balancing Principles and Practicalities* (PhD diss., School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London), 2006.

6 Israel Olofinjana, *20 Pentecostal Pioneers in Nigeria* (Milton Keynes, Xlibris Publishers, 2011).

7 See Mark Sturge, *Look What the Lord has done: An Exploration of Black Christian Faith in Britain* (England, Scripture Union Publishing, 2005), 57–58. Also Ogbu Kalu, *African Pentecostalism* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2008), 68–69.

8 Anderson and Hollenweger, *Pentecostals*, 41–42.

speaking in tongues as the initial evidence of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. However, others prefer Seymour on the understanding that the Pentecostal missionary movement and ecumenical vision which transcends race started with Seymour's movement in Azusa Street in 1906.

It is a historical error to assume that modern Pentecostalism originated in the United States with the events of 1906. The Azusa Street revival is very significant in the history of modern Pentecostalism partly because it later gave birth to Classic Pentecostal churches such as the Church of God in Christ (COGIC); the Church of God Cleveland, TN; Apostolic Faith Church; the Pentecostal Holiness Church; the Assemblies of God; the Foursquare Gospel Church, and many more.⁹ However, there were other streams of Pentecostals that emerged separately in other parts of the world, such as the Jamaican Revival of 1860–1861; the Mukti Mission in India from 1905–1907; the Korean renewal movement from 1903 (Pyongyang 1907); and the AICs at the beginning of the 20th century.¹⁰ However, the origins of Pentecostalism in Britain are closely linked to the event in Azusa Street.

The Welsh Revival, led by Evan Roberts in 1904, was the catalyst for the Pentecostal Movement in Britain as it sowed the seeds and laid the foundation for the emergence of Classic Pentecostal churches in Britain, such as the Elim Pentecostal Church, The Apostolic Church of Great Britain and the Assemblies of God Great Britain. The Welsh revival also inspired what later followed at Azusa Street revival, as Frank Bartleman, the official historian of the Los Angeles revival, corresponded with Evan Roberts inquiring about the principles of revival and also asked Roberts to pray for revival in California.¹¹ However, it was the influence of the Azusa Street revival on T. B. Barratt from Norway, Cecil Polhill, Alexander A. Boddy, and others like them that led to the start of Pentecostalism in Britain. Boddy and Polhill were the founders of the first Pentecostal missionary movement in Britain known as the Pentecostal Missionary Union.

Alexander Boddy (1854–1930), an Anglican priest at All Saints in Monkwearmouth, Sunderland, is considered the father of Pentecostalism in Britain because his church was a meeting point where different people came to

- 9 Some of these churches started before 1906 but the events of the revival shaped their theology, ecclesiology and mission.
- 10 Some of the AICs developed as a result of praying for healing during the influenza that took place after the First World War and as a reaction against the Colonial Christianity that the Mission Churches introduced into Africa. See Roswith Gerloff, "Churches of the Spirit: The Pentecostal/Charismatic Movement and Africa's Contribution to Renewal of Christianity," in *Christianity in Africa and the African Diaspora*, eds. A. Adogame, R. Gerloff and K. Hock (London, Continuum, 2008), 209.
- 11 Frank Bartleman, *Azusa Street: The Roots of Modern Day Pentecost* (Plainfield, NJ, Logos International, 1980), 13–15 and Robert Liardon, *God's General* (California, Roberts Liardon Publishing, 1998), 89–93.

experience the baptism of the Holy Spirit beginning in 1907.¹² One of the people who was baptised in the Spirit through Boddy's ministry was Smith Wigglesworth (1859–1947), a true pioneer of the faith.¹³ Another person who was baptised in the Spirit at one of the revival meetings in Sunderland was Rev. Kwame Brem-Wilson, a Ghanaian businessman and schoolmaster.¹⁴ Brem-Wilson was born in Dixcove, Ghana in 1855 and came to Britain in 1901. In 1906, Brem-Wilson started Sumner Road Chapel in Peckham, South East London. As a result of his attendance and contribution at the revival meetings in Sunderland in 1907, Brem-Wilson developed relationships with the founders of the Apostolic Church of Great Britain, D. P. Williams and W. J. Williams, as he hosted an Apostolic Church conference in London in 1923. These interracial relationships were very important at that time when it was generally not socially acceptable among white Christians to associate with black people. It reveals the Pentecostal significance of breaking down church traditions and racial barriers. In addition, it also demonstrates the ecumenical inclinations of early Pentecostalism in Britain. For instance, I find the relationship between Alexander Boddy, an Anglican minister, and Kwame Brem-Wilson, a black Pentecostal, notable. This early relationship is quite significant and foreshadows some of the Anglican-Pentecostal relationships that are currently emerging; for example, that between Jesus House and Holy Trinity Brompton; the Anglican-Pentecostal Theological consultations; the instalment of Bishop Eric Brown of the New Testament Church of God (NTGC) as the first Pentecostal president of Churches Together in England (CTE); and the partnership that exists between the Church of England and the APC. The latter example will be considered later under the ecumenical contributions of the APC.

Origins and Diversity of Black Pentecostals in Britain

Kwame Brem-Wilson may be regarded as a pioneer of black Pentecostalism in Britain, but the development of the full movement did not occur until the arrival of the Caribbean migrants after 1948. In tracing the next phase in the development of black Pentecostal churches in Britain, it is worth highlighting that black Pentecostalism in Britain is not a homogeneous movement but is rather heterogeneous in culture, ethnicity, ecclesiology, mission and theology. For example, some of these churches are unitarian (Oneness Pentecostals) while others are trinitarian;¹⁵ some have embraced Black Liberation Theology while others preach a Prosperity Gospel; some have

12 Peter Hocken, *Streams of Renewal: The Origins and Early Development of the Charismatic Movement in Great Britain* (Australia, Paternoster Press, 1986), 145.

13 Lester Sumrall, *Pioneers of Faith* (Sumrall Publishing, 1995), 171.

14 Babatunde Adedibu, *Coat of Many Colours* (London, Wisdom Summit, 2012), 26.

15 This is becoming less of a problem now.

grown to become church denominations, such as the New Testament Church of God, the Church of God of Prophecy, the Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG) and the Church of Pentecost; while others are still independent churches, such as the New Wine Church in Woolwich, the Tabernacle Church in Lewisham, the Christian Life City and Ruach Ministries. Some are church plants from their denominational churches back in the Caribbean or Africa, such as the Victory Bible International Church, the Church of the Lord *Aladura*, the International Central Gospel Church and Forward in Faith Ministries International; others are churches that have started here in Britain and have planted churches in other parts of the world, such as Kingsway International Christian Centre (KICC), Christ Faith Tabernacle and the Jubilee International Churches. It is within this latter group that we can locate and situate the history of the APC, although the APC is a Congress of churches that broadly retain their independence and distinctiveness while adhering to the wider ethical, ecclesiological and theological framework of the Congress.

The second thing to note is that black Pentecostal churches in Britain are part of what is usually regarded as Black Majority Churches (BMCs), a term of which many black church leaders are growing wary. BMCs are independent Pentecostal and Charismatic churches that have originated within the black community and have a black majority congregation and leadership. These are churches that have emerged from the African and Caribbean diaspora.¹⁶ When used in this sense, BMCs do not include those congregations that have emerged within historic churches such as Catholics, Baptists, Anglicans, and Methodists. Two problems arise with this definition: (1) not all BMCs or black Pentecostal churches can be described as such since group identities are usually too complex to generalise; (2) many BMCs or black Pentecostal churches are actually increasingly multicultural, multi-ethnic and intergenerational churches, so that while they appear black to an outsider, to an insider they are truly many nations!

Caribbean Pentecostal Churches

The 1940s and 1950s saw the influx of Caribbean families into the UK due to the invitation of the British government to come and help rebuild the country after the devastation of the Second World War. Many people from the Caribbean responded to this call but to their surprise and dismay they were rejected by society and the Church. This period is usually referred to

16 Israel Olofinjana, "Nigerian Pentecostals in Britain: Towards Prosperity or Consumerism?" in *The Public Face of African New Religious Movements in Diaspora*, ed. Afe Adogame, (England, Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2014), 234.

as the Windrush generation, as the ship, SS Empire Windrush, brought about 493 people from the Caribbean on the 22 June 1948 to Tilbury, London. The majority of the people from the Caribbean saw and regarded themselves as British citizens, being part of the Commonwealth, and therefore expected to be treated as such. Instead, they were faced with posters saying, “No Irish, No Blacks and No Dogs.” They soon realised that the idea of a commonwealth was an illusion; the wealth was not common and they were second-class citizens. Walter Hollenweger, in an introduction to a seminal book on the black church in Britain written by Roswith Gerloff, comments that, “Christians in Britain prayed for many years for revival, and when it came they did not recognise it because it was black.”¹⁷ This rejection, coupled with other factors, such as loyalty to church brands and the formality of British Christianity, led to the formation of Caribbean Pentecostal and Holiness Churches. The first Caribbean Pentecostal church founded in the UK was Calvary Church of God in Christ, which started in London in 1948. The church became affiliated with the Church of God in Christ, USA in 1952, and they now have about 21 congregations in the UK. Others soon followed, such as the New Testament Church of God (1953); the Church of God of Prophecy (1953); Wesleyan Holiness Church (1958); and the New Testament Assembly (1961), now with about 18 congregations in Britain.¹⁸

Since the 1990s, new generation Caribbean Pentecostal churches have emerged in Britain. These churches have a wider appeal to Caribbean British Christians who are second- and third-generation descendants of the original immigrants. Many of the leaders are second- or third-generation Caribbean British Christians as well. These churches are Pentecostal and as such have dynamic worship and worship teams; they make use of the gifts of the Holy Spirit and have creative preaching styles. These churches are very proactive in terms of community and social engagement, providing services such as food banks, debt counselling, soup kitchens, prison ministries and many more. Examples of these churches are Ruach City Church Ministries, led by Bishop John Francis (1994); Rhema Christian Ministries (1996), formerly known as Croydon Rhema Fellowship (1990), founded by Pastor Mark Goodridge and now led by Marva Scott; Christian Life City (1996) led by Bishop Wayne Malcolm; Micah Christian Ministries (1998) led by Pastor Denis Wade; The Tabernacle Church (formerly called The Bible Way Church of the Lord Jesus Christ Apostolic) led by Pastor Michael W. White; Greater Faith Ministries led by Bishop Lennox Hamilton, and host of other churches.¹⁹

17 Roswith Gerloff, *A Plea for British Black Theology*, vol. 1, (Eugene, OR, Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2010).

18 <http://www.open.ac.uk/Arts/religion-in-london/resource-guides/black-majority-church.htm>.

19 Olofinjana, *Reverse in Mission*, 41.

African Pentecostal Churches

The independence of sub-Saharan African countries from 1957 onwards led to increasing numbers of African diplomats, students and tourists coming to Britain. When they discovered, as had the Caribbeans before them, that they were rejected by the British churches and society at large, this led to the founding of African Instituted Churches (AICs) in London. The first of these churches to be planted was the Church of the Lord (Aladura), planted in 1964 by the late Apostle Oluwole Adejobi in South London. This church has its headquarters in Nigeria. Others soon followed, such as the Cherubim and Seraphim Church in 1965; the Celestial Church of Christ in 1967; and Aladura International Church in 1970. Others include Christ Apostolic Church (CAC) Mount Bethel founded by Apostle Ayo Omideyi in 1974; Christ Apostolic Church (CAC) of Great Britain in 1976; and Born Again Christ Healing Church founded by Bishop Fidelia Onyuku-Opukiri in 1979. All these churches were led from their headquarters in Nigeria. The first of the Ghanaian churches to arrive in England was the Musama Disco Christo Church (MDCC) in London in 1980.²⁰

The 1980s and 1990s witnessed the rise of New Pentecostal Churches (NPC) from West African. For example, one of the largest churches in Western Europe is Kingsway International Christian Centre (KICC) founded in 1992 by Matthew Ashimolowo (a Nigerian). Another of the fastest-growing churches in the UK is The Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG), which was started in Nigeria in 1952 by the prophet Josiah Akindayomi. This church began in the UK in 1988/89 through the efforts of David Okunade and Ade Okerende and they now have about 700 churches in the UK. They also have churches in Germany, Norway, Spain, Holland, Italy, France, Belgium, Switzerland, Poland, Austria, Denmark, Sweden, Finland, Greece, Portugal, Luxemburg and the Czech Republic. The current General Overseer is Pastor Enoch Adeboye, and the UK National Overseer is Pastor Agu Irukwu of Jesus House in North London. Jesus House is one of the largest black churches in the UK with a membership of 2,500.²¹ RCCG London also organises a Christian Festival called 'Festival of Life' at the Docklands Excel Centre which attracts around 40,000 people every year.²²

Apostolic Pastoral Congress

The historical development of the APC starts with its presiding bishop, Doye Teido Agama. Bishop Agama was born in 1956 to Anglican Nigerian parents in Shirley in Southampton, England. His parents came to England in 1953

20 Olofinjana, *Reverse in Mission*, 37.

21 *Christianity*, August 2006, p. 15.

22 *Keep the Faith*, Issue 47, 2009, 12.

for further studies.²³ Agama was, however, fostered by a white family as a baby for some time to allow his parents time to complete their studies. This was fairly common in those days due to the lack of an African diaspora community to provide support to such student families. He later joined his biological parents in Nigeria in the 1960s. Agama became a Christian in 1968 at a Scripture Union event in Nigeria. In 1973, while still in Nigeria, Agama started work as a teaching assistant and from around 1975 was involved in community development projects as part of the efforts led by the Council of Churches to repair the damage of the Nigerian Civil War.

Agama had a spiritual experience in 1991 that transformed his life. He became a pastoral assistant in the Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG), serving later as the Regional Secretary for Evangelism in the East of Nigeria under Pastor Dave Okunade in 1992. He left to start an independent work, Strongtower Christian Ministries, in 1994, which later became the Christian Way of Life Churches. He also served in Elim Churches International and later joined the Apostolic Congress of Great Britain, led then by Bishop Henry Kontor. As a result of these roles, he became further involved in oversight and mentoring of other Christian ministers from around 1992. He was ordained in 1994 by the Apostolic Congress and was consecrated a bishop ten years later in 2004.

Bishop Agama began to wrestle with the issue of *limitation* in emerging black Pentecostal churches. He saw part of this limitation as churches being confined to the four walls of their building and therefore having little or no recognition or relevance in the wider community. He also felt that there was a gap in ministerial training, representation, and ecumenical relations of the BMCs. This led to a period of praying and seeking God for vision and direction. What became the APC began in an informal process of mentoring a number of church leaders to discover the areas of challenge in their ministry and to find adequate solutions. Most of these early mentees were members of the Upper Room Christian Leaders Forum in Manchester. There was also an earlier attempt to form a Black and Minority Ethnic Christian Association (BMECA), which, like many other groupings, did not last long. This vision and passion to reach the wider community beyond the walls of the church led to the formal beginnings of the APC in 2007 with the cooperation and encouragement of the Greater Manchester Churches Together and the Minority Ethnic Christian Affairs section of Churches Together in England. The vision of the APC is to help close the gap in the provision of personal and professional development for independent (mainly black Pentecostal)

23 His father was a prince who later became His Royal Highness Chief Frederick Abiye Agama, the Ogbotom Edede of the Epie-Atissa Clan in Bayelsa State of Nigeria. His maternal grandfather, Chief Nelson Kemeninabokide Porbeni, was the Etonkepua of Kabowei Kingdom, and the Ododomedo of Asideni in the Delta State of Nigeria. Bishop Agama's mother was Her Royal Highness Chief Beatrice Agama (nee Porbeni).

church ministers by encouraging and providing access to pathways for continuous improvement. This is through training and providing members with forms of certification, recognition and accountability. Part of the APC's vision is also to enable networking among these ministers and also to assist them in networking with leaders of other churches and civic and community leaders. In addition, the APC also provides a measure of advocacy and representation on behalf of members at several levels. The APC also works to close the gap between the Pentecostals and the established denominations. In addition to being Pentecostal, the APC understands itself to be episcopal, historic, liturgical and sacramental. They have a general rule that sacraments should be accompanied by some liturgical form and function, but all other meetings and aspects of church can be freely Pentecostal.²⁴ This fusion of historic church liturgy and Pentecostal elements such as *glossolia* (speaking in tongues) is one of the unique features of the APC. However the APC is rather unique in seeking and finding a measure of acceptance among the Church of England and other established historic churches, including some Orthodox.

Today, the APC have roughly about 100 members representing congregations and community projects in 20 towns and cities across England, with a very small number of other affiliates. They also have members in the Americas, the Caribbean, Africa and India. In England, APC churches are engaged with the community in a variety of ways, from prison chaplaincy to enhancing trans-generational community cohesion through cottage industry skills in Manchester. The level of community engagement by member churches varies from one church to another. One of the differences between the APC and other black Pentecostal churches or denominations is that they are not based in London; the APC is based in Manchester. This was a deliberate move as Bishop Agama saw the need for BME Christian Leadership outside London and the South-East of England, and a need to then link with existing southern leadership for more national leverage. He also intended to reach beyond mono-ethnic church lines in areas outside the South-East with its large BME populations. It must, however, be mentioned that the APC is not the only black Pentecostal church or denomination outside London. Other examples are the New Testament Church of God, the Church of God of Prophecy and the Wesleyan Holiness Church, all of which have their headquarter churches in the Midlands. Nevertheless, this vision to intentionally not reside in London is commendable; it points to the important changes in the self-understanding of some black Pentecostal churches' identity and mission. In terms of identity, the APC argues that they are not an African organisation

24 I had the privilege of observing a combination of Pentecostal dynamics with historic church liturgy at one of the APCs ordination services where there was the sacrament of the Eucharist, as bishops and priests were ordained into ministry accomplished by speaking in tongues. I attended an Apostolic Pastoral Congress ordination service at Manchester Cathedral as a participant observer.

but a grouping of British churches.²⁵ One can understand this argument, given the fact that bishop Agama was born in the UK. Thus, he identifies with both black British and African. This self-understanding reveals that we should not always look for clear-cut blanket solutions to the issues of identity. The APC Training Courses also place a great emphasis on cross-cultural missions and contextualisation of ministry. As such, they strive to enable Christian ministers born outside the European or Western context to re-orient their ministry focus into the new environment.

This intentionality to do church in northern England also has implications for mission. The APC has a vision to be a church where black and Asian British feel welcomed and are reached. In an interview with Bishop Agama, he said, “The church [APC] is geared toward the needs of mainly black and Asian British Christians, but also some white and other mixed heritage church leaders who are committed to going beyond the existing stereotypes of ethnicity in expressions of church, both in terms of worship, but also in engaging with community.”²⁶ The articulation of this vision for ethnic minorities who are British is, in my estimation, very significant, as it recognises that there are second- and third-generation migrants who were born in this country and who would firmly identify themselves as British. Many immigrant churches are struggling to reach these British born Africans, Caribbeans or Asians.

Another area to which the APC is contributing in mission is through the professional ministerial training that takes place at their St Hadrian’s College. This college offers internal certificate courses to ministers who seek to translate their experience of ministry in the southern hemisphere into a European urban setting. St Hadrian’s offers Pentecostal ministers training, accreditation and licensing. The training at St Hadrian’s College also enables African Pentecostal ministers to play a better role in community cohesion and development both in the West and in their nations of origin. In addition, the College equips BME Christian leaders to play a better part in the wider community, and also to enable their congregations to do so. The college encourages all the above in the context of sound biblical management and leadership principles, as well as supporting healthy homes and married life.

Another area in which the APC is contributing is through the development of ecumenical relationships between black Pentecostal churches and historic churches. The APC is working towards increasing the unity of the global church by educating emerging Pentecostal leaders about aspects of the historic church and vice versa. In addition, the APC is also working to increase the unity between different branches of the BME Christian diaspora. This ecumenical vision is being achieved through the relationships Bishop Agama has built with the Church of England, the Coptic Church, the Greek Orthodox Church and the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. He is also actively involved in

25 Questionnaire Interview with Bishop Doye Agama.

26 Interview with Bishop Agama.

the ecumenical scene through his involvement in Churches Together in England; he is one of the directors, trustees and moderators of Churches Together in England. In Manchester, he is the co-president of Greater Manchester Churches Together. The APC have done very well in their partnership with the Church of England and, in spite of some fundamental differences, they have continued to use their Cathedrals for ordinations and consecrations of Pentecostal ministers.

Conclusion

To conclude, this essay has traced the historical development of black Pentecostals in Britain by looking at the various phases in their formation at different periods. It has shown that black Pentecostalism in Britain has its roots in the beginning of the Pentecostal movement in Britain and did not develop later as an offshoot of this. This significant beginning is important as it broke down the barriers of race and racism that were prevalent at the time. Black Pentecostalism in Britain is also far from being a homogeneous movement, but is rather a movement that encompasses different theologies, ecclesiologies, mission and cultural diversity. This leads to caution regarding terms such as BMCs, which do not necessarily demonstrate the diversity that exists. Black Pentecostals are contributing to the church scene in Britain and this was argued by looking at the APC as a case study. The APC as one of the black Pentecostal church groups situated in Manchester identifies itself as a British church and therefore sees part of its mission and identity as reaching out to black and Asian British people. The APC also contributes through the professional and ministerial development of Pentecostal ministers; this is done through their College, St Hadrian's. Lastly, through Bishop Agama's relationship with the historic churches and leaders of other black Pentecostal churches, the APC is able to negotiate the terrain of ecumenical relationships.

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