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Dr. Claudette Carr

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Editorial Address

Christ the Redeemer College,
The Rayners, 23 Village Way East, Harrow,
HA2 7LX, United Kingdom
Email: info@christredeemer.ac.uk
Tel: 020 8429 4356

Editorial Policy Statement:

The Journal of Contemporary Christian Studies (JCCS) is peer-reviewed, which provides a forum for exploration of various themes within Contemporary Christianity. We invite submissions of original research in the field of Contemporary Christian studies on various themes in: Theology, Mission, Apologetics, Pentecostalism/Charismatic Studies, New religious movements, and communities in Africa and the Diaspora

Submissions are invited across disciplines and cultures. In addition to commissioned articles and reflections, we welcome unsolicited articles, reviews and contributions from scholars, students, pastors and leaders nationally and internationally. We welcome comments from readers and believe that our contribution to the theological academic world will enrich students and practitioners in their academic and contemporary practical ministries. The Journal welcomes interdisciplinary debate and dialogue.

The judgement and opinions expressed in JCCS are those of the authors alone and do not reflect the view of the Editors and the Editorial Board, or the policies of the Christ the Redeemer College, London.

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List of Contributors

Daniel Akhazemea, FCA, holds a PhD in Biblical Counselling from Canterbury Christ Church University, a Master of Divinity from the University of Liverpool, an MA in Missional Leadership from the University of Wales, and a PGCert in Higher Education from London South Bank University. He serves as Rector of Christ the Redeemer College for almost three decades, providing strategic academic leadership as the College's accountable officer and working closely with its Board of Trustees, Council of Management, and the Office for Students. Alongside this, he has consistently maintained a teaching role, lecturing and leading modules across Theology, Biblical Studies, Counselling, Leadership, Pastoral Ministry, and Missiology. A published author and researcher, Dr Akhazemea has written four books, *The Spirit and the Mission* (2025), *Mountain Heights of the Christian Faith* (2016), *Evidence of Faith* (2009), and *Holy Ambition* (2007). He has contributed chapters, journal articles, and conference papers exploring Pentecostal theology, mission, and Christian higher education. His professional portfolio also includes ongoing ministerial service as a regional pastor with the Redeemed Christian Church of God in the UK, integrating scholarship, leadership, and pastoral practice.

William K. Kay (PhD, University of Reading; PhD, University of Nottingham; DD, University of Nottingham) retired after holding academic posts in a variety of British universities in several fields. He was a senior lecturer in Religious and Theology Education at King's College, London, and later Professor of Theology at Glyndwr University and Professor of Pentecostal Studies at Chester University. He has carried out international empirical research on educational and Pentecostal topics and published over 100 peer reviewed articles, several books, chapters for books and edited collections. He edited the *Journal of the European Pentecostal Association* for about 10 years and wrote *George Jeffreys: Pentecostal Apostle and Revivalist* (2017) and *Pentecostalism: A Very Short*

Introduction (2011). He received an award for an outstanding contribution to Pentecostalism from Churches Together in England in 2016 and a Lifetime Achievement award from the Society of Pentecostal Studies in 2019.

Emmanuel Nkenjika Osegboh recently completed his master's degree in theology, Leadership and Ministry at Christ the Redeemer College, London, with the official award scheduled for September 2025. His dissertation, part of the requirements for the award, investigated the political attitudes of Black immigrant Pentecostals in Norwich, UK, and the surrounding areas. His work uses a mixed methods strategy founded on cultural awareness and rigorous ethics, thereby giving prominence to the voices of the underrepresented in civic and theological conversations. Emmanuel's academic interests span Pentecostalism, diaspora identity, and urban political dynamics.

Before venturing into theology, Emmanuel practised dentistry for many years — a foundation that informs his meticulous attention to detail and human-centred inquiry. He currently pastors Oasis Chapel, Great Yarmouth, a parish of the Redeemed Christian Church of God, where he merges spiritual leadership with a dedication to enhancing the visibility of unheard voices in academic and public arenas.

Babatunde Adedibu holds a PhD in Missiology from North West University, South Africa, and is a Professor of Church History and Missiology, Department of Religious Studies and Philosophy, Redeemer's University, Ede, Osun State, Nigeria. Adedibu has published widely on African Christianity in Africa and the Diaspora, particularly the Pentecostal strand, as well as on the interconnectedness between theology, religious creativity and innovation, development, mission, migration, globalisation, media, and civil society. He is a Professor Extraordinary with the Department of Religion and Theology at the University of the Western Cape, South Africa.

Claudette Carr (SFHEA) is Doctor of Philosophy in Education and holds a degree in Social Science & a master's in Applied Anthropology. She is also a qualified youth worker, and a youth work specialist with over two decades of experience leading and teaching undergraduate and postgraduate courses as

a Senior and Principal Lecturer in community and international community development. Working in youth ministry, and social policy at Brunel University, Birkbeck College, Lucerne University of Applied Sciences (Switzerland) and the University of Westminster, she developed the first Master's programme of its kind in Faith-Based Community Development in the UK. In her capacity as a consultant and trainer she has developed short courses in community leadership, and community-based research for community leaders and residents in partnership with several London Boroughs. Currently, she is a Principal Theology Lecturer and the Director of Research at Christ the Redeemer College.

R. David Muir is a political scientist and theologian. He holds a PhD in Black Theology & Pentecostalism from King's College, London University. David is the former Head of Whitelands College (University of Roehampton) and Senior Lecturer in Public Theology & Community Engagement. At Roehampton University, he was director of the Centre for Pentecostalism & Community Engagement. David was head of research and regional development at the Commonwealth Institute (CI) and Home Office adviser on policing, diversity, and community relations. In 2000, he was appointed by the Home Secretary to the new Metropolitan Police Authority (MPA) where he was deputy chairman and chair of the MPA's first public inquiry (The Virdi Inquiry). David was director of the Humanities Programme at London Metropolitan University (LMU) and special adviser to the Vice Chancellor. He has worked in several UK universities and has published widely on theology and politics. David was executive director for Public Theology and Public Policy at the Evangelical Alliance and is an Associate Supervisor for postgraduate students at Wescott House, Cambridge University.

Editorial Note

Claudette Carr

The articles gathered in this volume offer insights into the constitution of world Christianity, and how Pentecostalism is situated within it. In so doing, they address a gap in the historiography of Western theological discourse. Historically, the literature of Christianity has focused on Western formations, essentially positioned as the dominant narrative, and commonly known as Christendom. Increasingly, the stronghold of Western cultural hegemony in its telling of the stories of the “other”, has tended to be framed within what Daniel Akhazemea refers to in his article as the “staid denominationalism of historic mission Christianity”, and what Robert Beckford refers to as “Colonial Christianity.”

This provides something of a backdrop and context for the timely contributions of our authors, who pick up on some of the themes covered in the previous volume of this journal, which was focused on the impact of globalisation on Pentecostalism. In the present iteration of the discourse, contributors begin the necessary work of mapping and bearing public witness to the complexity of Pentecostalism, as seen through the lenses of scholars, researchers, and participants in the global south.

These contributions are representative of what the late theologian, Lamin Sanneh, described as a “fundamental historical shift” in the story of Christianity, and of “the character and fortunes of the religion and of the social modes appropriate to it”. In this reversal of the telling of the Christian story, the periphery has shifted to the centre and in this sense, perhaps one might suggest that the proverbial postcolonial chickens have come home to roost. Contemporaneous with this shift is the emergence of new epistemological paradigms to explain the meaning of new religious movements, formations, and identities, and how these are constituted and

reconstituted.

On a macro level these articles can be contextualised within the growing recognition of the global nature of African Christianity. In *How Africa Shaped the Christian Mind*, published in 2007, the late scholar and theologian, Thomas C. Oden, cites David Barrett's projection that continuing growth would result in there being 633 million Christians in Africa by 2025. That is to say, most of the world's Christians are located in the global south. Paradoxically, as Oden and several of the contributors to this journal observe in relation to a lacuna in studies of how Pentecostalism is constituted: "Christians of the Global South have had far less opportunities to appreciate or even learn of their history than have Western Christians." Oden continues, "This is especially so for Africans. The remedy is better historical inquiry, not slipshod history or the ideologically charged tweaking of historical evidence".

The compilation of articles in this volume seek to stand in that gap by representing scholarly inquiry into the Pentecostalism of the "Black Atlantic" (a term coined in 1993 by the British sociologist, Paul Gilroy, to describe the shared history of the African diaspora experience). Each of the authors conduct their own particular inquiries from micro and macro perspectives on Pentecostalism. In his article, "Pentecostal Churches Then and Now", William E. Kay provides an overarching narrative mapping the unique developments of the birth and growth of Pentecostalism in the United Kingdom. It is not a linear history, but snapshots of some of the foundational moments and key figures playing a role in the changes wrought on the movement by the upheaval of the world wars of the first half of the twentieth century, and the revivals and social changes of the second half.

Kay's analysis is divided into three acts, with the first from 1907-1950 and the establishment of the Pentecostal Church in Britain. The second act, from 1950-2000 covers the planting of African-Caribbean and West-African churches and the emergence of the Charismatic

movement. The third act addresses the period from 2000 until today, and in documenting the too often taken for granted historical exclusion of the Pentecostal movement from the wider theological discourse and public witness of Christianity, is very much a history of the present.

Kay concludes by summarising some of the key developments behind the shift of the diverse forms of Pentecostal churches from the periphery to the centre that can be found in a globalised and digitalised Britain. At the heart of these dynamic developments in Pentecostalism in the UK, Kay asserts, are core beliefs about the presence of the Holy Spirit. It would seem that the dynamism and uniqueness of the Pentecostal movement gives credence to this, as we read in the Joel 2:28 prophecy and its manifestation in Acts 2:17-18, and in Zachariah 4:8, “Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,” Says the LORD of hosts.”

This segues rather fittingly into the previously-mentioned contribution of Daniel Akhazemea, who explores “The Distinctives of African Pentecostal Approaches to Education and Training”. In a micro-case study of the Redeemed Christian Church of God, Akhazemea presents a cogent overview of the history of pedagogical practices in Pentecostal spaces. He begins by acknowledging the difficulty in reaching a uniform definition of Pentecostalism, and delineating three important nodal points in the history of the movement, which he describes as: Classical Pentecostalism and Neo-Pentecostalism, itself interchangeable with Charismatic movements.

Akhazemea explores the unique characteristics of African Pentecostal approaches to education and training, shedding light on how various distinctive features shape these educational experiences. He also highlights some common themes within the broader movement, such as how local cultural influences have been integrated with African Pentecostal pedagogical practices, and, in the Nigerian context, the paradox of “continuity and rupture” in which Pentecostalism is simultaneously “inside and outside” of African traditional religions. The

tensions between the former and the latter highlight the need for further contextualisation of the ways in which these forms of Christian practice are reconstituted within different cultures of Pentecostal practice, even as syncretism is contested. The study emphasises the holistic nature of Pentecostal education, which seeks to develop individuals intellectually, spiritually, socially, and emotionally. Significantly, the study points toward the uniqueness of RCCG's global network of schools, universities, and training institutes as a demonstration of how Pentecostal movements combine ministerial preparation with wider academic and vocational education, cultivating graduates who are both spiritually grounded and professionally competent.

So much of what we have reviewed not only speaks to the need for a solid historiographical framework that addresses the gap in Pentecostal studies identified by Thomas Oden, but also what Akhazemea identifies as the need for "Pentecostal Charismatic churches to develop their own theological paradigms that challenge and transform Pentecostal and Charismatic spirituality".

Certainly, the contributions of Emmanuel Osegbob, Onesimus A. Ngundu, and Babatunde Adedibu, point towards the need for a new paradigm of ontological anthropology that might serve as a theoretical framework that can engage with multiple narratives emerging from within and without the global south and Black Atlantic Christian experience.

Osegbob's empirical research examines perceptions of Black immigrant Pentecostals in Norwich and its environs, and their involvement in local community politics. Drawing on a mixed-methods approach that integrates quantitative and qualitative data, the convergence of findings through a triangulated analysis highlights both consistency and divergence across data strands that enhance the validity of the study's conclusions. The study reveals that while political action is increasingly seen as a spiritual responsibility, structural and racial exclusions shape both participation and skepticism, while dual affiliations produce nuanced and sometimes

ambivalent political attitudes.

Osegboh offers a welcome study into the involvement of Black immigrant Pentecostals in the arena of public theology/ political theology, and the concomitant socio-political concerns of faith-based community development and engaged citizenship within small urban settings in the United Kingdom.

Currently theological programmes in the academy increasingly focus on “decolonizing the curriculum” through an intentional policy practice aimed at decentering dominant western narratives across a range of disciplines to ensure inclusion.

Onesimus A. Ngundu’s study speaks to this historical shift and particular cultural moment. Ngundu explores the difficulties that arise from the importation of western marriage laws and practices into the countries of sub-Saharan Africa. Marriages in these countries are traditionally conducted and formalised by the *lobolo* system. The study identifies various issues that emerge from this, before providing a solution in the form of an African Christian marriage practice that combines both traditions.

The potential for an ontological anthropological approach is found in Babatunde Adedibu’s study, which presents a unique view of how African Indigenous ontologies shape narratives of African Pentecostalism. As an example of the contextualization of global Pentecostalism, Adedibu presents a nuanced rendering of the ontological belief that underpins African Pentecostalism. The study highlights “spiritual warfare songs” as a medium for hope, and an example of the way African ontological ideas continue to permeate African Pentecostal/Charismatic Christianity and Spirit-inspired artistic expressions.

The multidisciplinary gathering of scholarship reflected in this journal, demonstrates the need, not only for a new paradigm of thinking, given the ascendancy of African Christian theology discussed here, but also for a new global collaboration between scholars in the global south and the

African diaspora. By combining their skills and expertise, they are able to amplify and bridge a historical gap that has resulted in the omission of many voices and stories.