



African Pentecostalism: An Introduction

Ogbu Kalu

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Across Africa, Christianity is thriving in all shapes and sizes. But one particular strain of Christianity prospers more than most -- Pentecostalism. Pentecostals believe that everyone can personally receive the gifts of the Holy Spirit such as prophecy or the ability to speak in tongues. In Africa, this kind of faith, in which the supernatural is a daily presence, is sweeping the continent. Today, about 107 million Africans are Pentecostals -- and the numbers continue to rise. In this book, Ogbu Kalu provides the first ever overview of Pentecostalism in Africa. He shows the amazing diversity of the faith, which flourishes in many different forms in diverse local contexts. While most people believe that Pentecostalism was brought to Africa and imposed on its people by missionaries, Kalu argues emphatically that this is not the case. Throughout the book, he demonstrates that African Pentecostalism is distinctly African in character, not imported from the West. With an even-handed approach, Kalu presents the religion's many functions in African life. Rather than shying away from controversial issues like the role of money and prosperity in the movement, Kalu describes malpractice when he sees it. The only book to offer a comprehensive look at African Pentecostalism, this study touches upon the movement's identity, the role of missionaries, media and popular culture, women, ethics, Islam, and immigration. The resulting work will prove invaluable to anyone interested in Christianity outside the West.

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