

**A Comparison of Pentecostal and Mainline Churchgoers  
in Nigeria's South South**

**NPCRC Technical Report #N1106**

Dr. K. A. Korb  
28 November 2012

## Executive Summary

The Nigerian Pentecostal and Charismatic Research Centre collected information in order to compare Pentecostal churchgoers to Mainline churchgoers in the South South of Nigeria. The comparison between Pentecostal and Mainline churchgoers in the South South replicated the same comparison conducted by Kumswa (under review) in the Middle Belt of Nigeria.

Specifically, this study found the following:

- **Gender.** There is no gender difference between Pentecostal churchgoers and Mainline churchgoers.
- **Marital Status.** There is no difference in marital status between Pentecostals and Mainliners.
- **Age.** Pentecostal churchgoers are younger than Mainline churchgoers.
- **Educational Attainment.** Mainliners have completed more education than Pentecostals, even after controlling for differences in age.
- **Socio-economic Status.** Mainliners have a higher socio-economic status than Pentecostals, even after controlling for differences in age.
- **Occupation.** More Pentecostals tend to be self-employed, whereas more Mainliners tend to be civil servants.
- **Religious Background Growing Up.** A majority of both Mainliners and Pentecostals grew up within their same church tradition. Slightly more Pentecostals came from a Mainline background than Mainliners who came from a Pentecostal background. About equal proportions of Pentecostals and Mainliners came from a Catholic background.
- **Frequency of Church Worship.** Pentecostals tend to attend church more frequently than Mainliners.

Additionally, Mainline churchgoers were asked unique questions relating to their participation in Pentecostal phenomenon, including the following:

- **Baptism by the Holy Spirit.** Ninety-two percent of Mainliners reported being baptized by the Holy Spirit.
- **Speaking in Tongues.** Twenty-four percent of Mainliners reported speaking in tongues. Of the 69% who do not speak in tongues, 75% would like to speak in tongues.
- **Possessing the Gifts of the Holy Spirit.** Seventy-six percent of Mainliners reported possessing the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

## **Introduction**

The Nigerian Pentecostal and Charismatic Research Centre collected information from Pentecostal churchgoers across Nigeria with the intent of developing a better understanding of the Pentecostal movement. One specific purpose of the research was to determine how Pentecostal churchgoers differ from Mainline churchgoers. Kumswa (under review) compared Pentecostal churchgoers to Mainline churchgoers in the Middle Belt of Nigeria. The purpose of this study was to replicate the findings of Kumswa in the South South of Nigeria where Pentecostalism has been firmly established for decades.

*Research Questions.* The research questions comprising of the following variables were adapted into a questionnaire that was administered to both Pentecostal and Mainline churchgoers.

What are the differences between Pentecostal and Mainline churchgoers in the following variables?

- Gender
- Marital Status
- Age
- Educational Attainment
- Socio-economic Status
- Occupation
- Religious Background Growing Up
- Frequency of Church Worship

Additionally, Mainline churchgoers were asked unique questions regarding their participation in Pentecostal phenomenon, including the following:

- Baptism by the Holy Spirit
- Speaking in Tongues
- Possessing the Gifts of the Holy Spirit

## **Methods**

### *Participants*

The population for this study consisted of individuals ages 18 and over who attended either a Pentecostal or Mainline church on a given Sunday.

The Pentecostal sample was first identified. NPCRC used a multi-stage sampling technique to obtain a representative sample of Pentecostals throughout Nigeria (see Korb, 2012 for a description of the sampling technique.) The sample of Pentecostal churchgoers for this study consisted of the Pentecostals within the South South region who were part of the nationally representative sample from NPCRC. A total of 492 Pentecostal churchgoers were selected from 12 churches in the South South region.

Because the South South Pentecostal sample was selected from Rivers State, the Mainline churchgoers were also sampled from Rivers State. Three Mainline churches were purposively selected to sample key Mainline denominations within the region, including Methodist, Presbyterian, and Anglican. Once the Mainline churches were identified, then the same systematic sampling procedures were employed as were used in the Pentecostal churches (see

Korb, 2012). This required identifying every fourth churchgoer on a given Sunday. This procedure resulted in a sample of 113 churchgoers from the three sampled Mainline churches.

*Instrument*

NPCRC designed a questionnaire designed to collect information from Pentecostal churchgoers throughout the nation. The items on this questionnaire that were relevant to the research questions presented above were duplicated on the questionnaire for Mainline churchgoers in this study. The first section of the questionnaire asked about the background information of respondents such as their age, sex, marital status, and educational attainment. The second section asked about participants' church membership and church participation. In addition, the Mainline churchgoers completed a third section that asked about their involvement in Pentecostal phenomenon.

*Procedure*

In order to distribute the questionnaire in the selected sampled churches, the research assistants attended a Sunday morning service. The research assistants arrived at the church 30 minutes before the service to meet with the ushers to enlist their assistance in distributing the questionnaires. Generally, when it was time to distribute the questionnaires, the church pastor introduced the researcher to the congregation and allowed the researcher to explain the research study. In collaboration with the ushers, every fourth person in the church over the age of 18 received the questionnaire. The questionnaire was completed on the spot and returned to the researcher and/or ushers at the end of the church service.

**Results**

The first purpose of the research study was to determine whether the demographic characteristics of Pentecostal churchgoers differ from Mainline churchgoers. Figures 1, 2, and 3 illustrate the distribution of churchgoers by gender, marital status, and age respectively.

Figure 1. Gender of Pentecostal and Mainline Churchgoers.

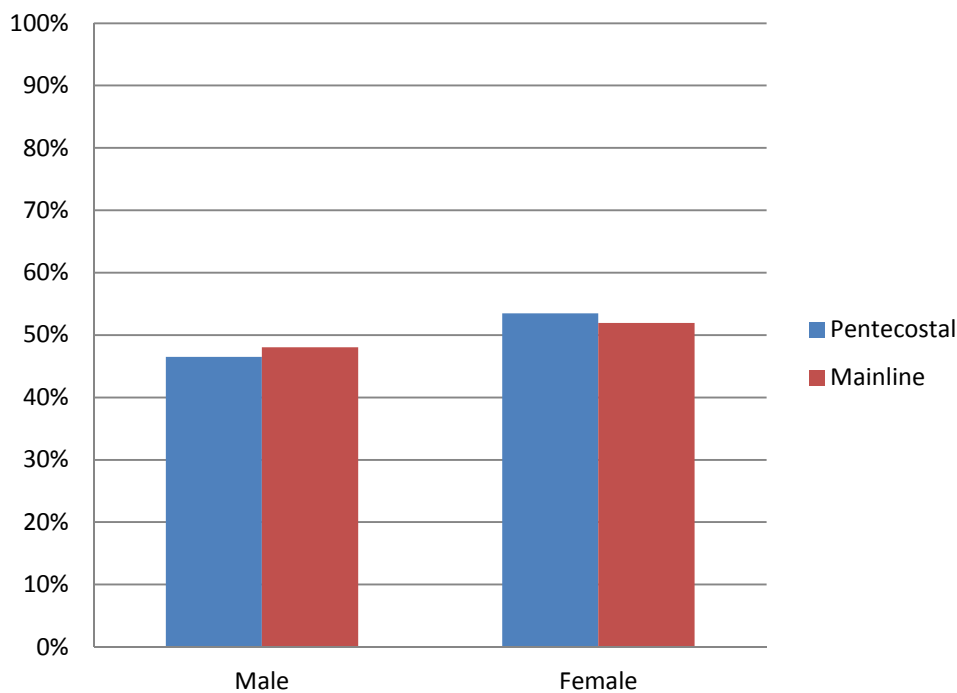


Figure 2. Marital Status of Pentecostal and Mainline Churchgoers.

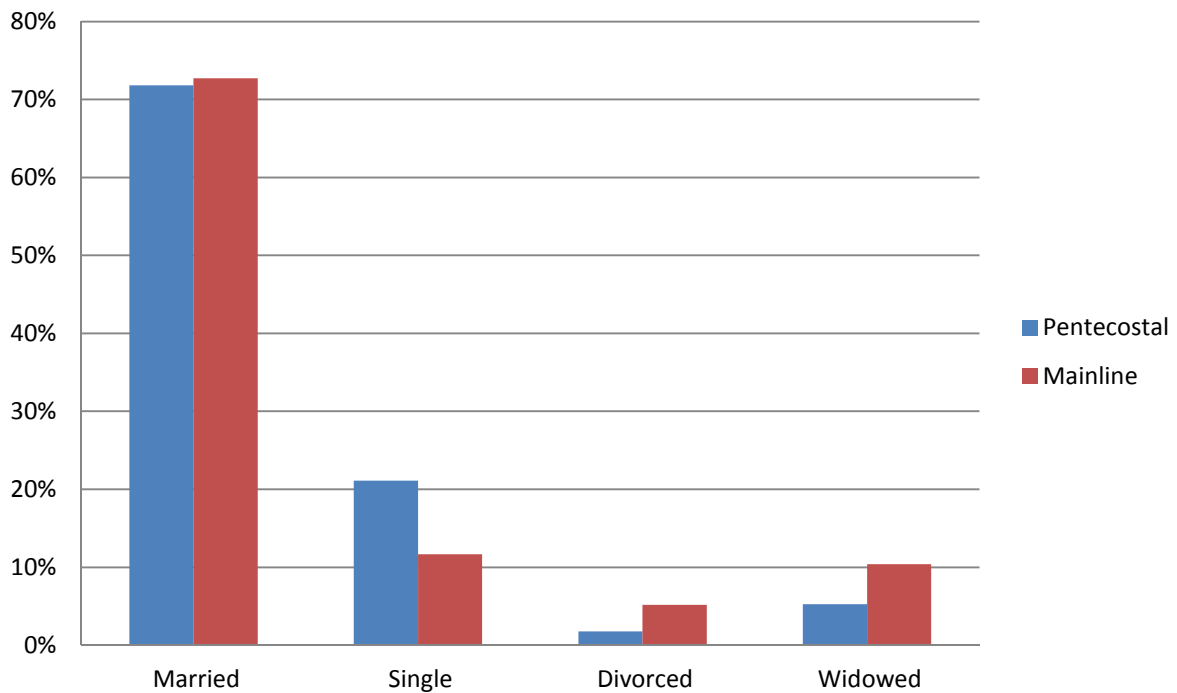
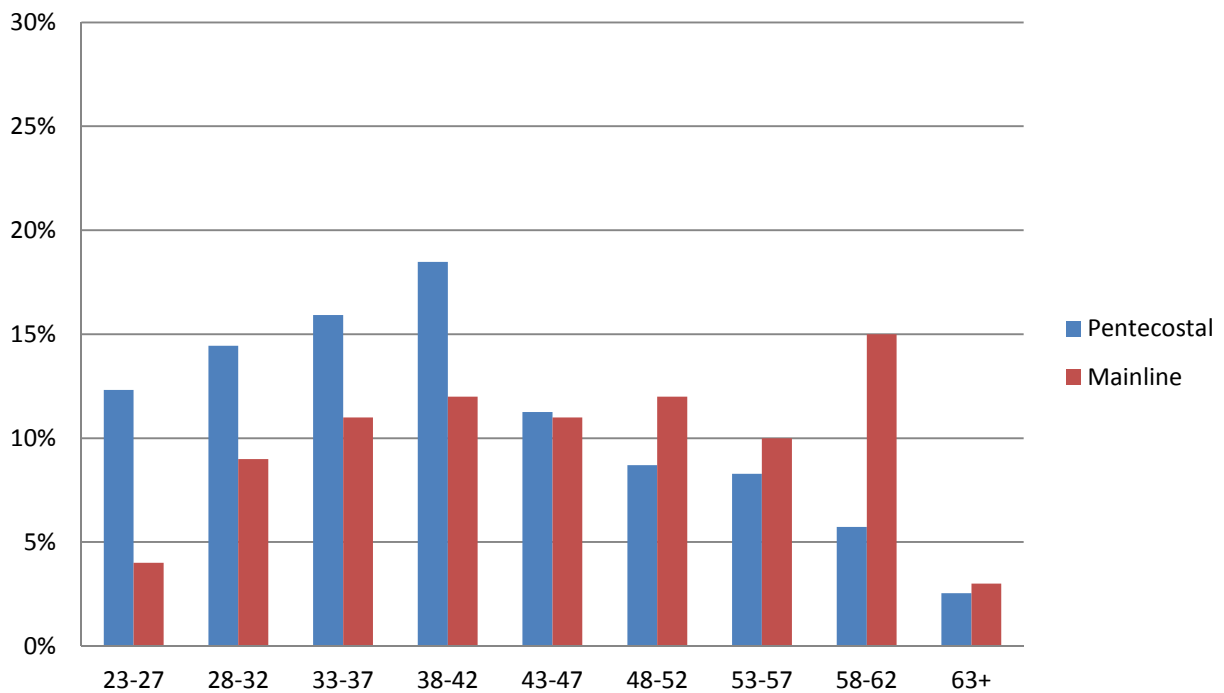


Figure 3. Age of Pentecostal and Mainline Churchgoers.



As can be seen in Figures 1 and 2, there are only trivial differences between Pentecostal and Mainline churchgoers in terms of gender and marital status. Kumswa (under review) also found few differences in marital status between the two types of churchgoers. However, whereas in the South South there are only small differences in the gender balance between Pentecostal and Mainline churchgoers, Kumswa found considerable differences in gender in

the Middle Belt, with Pentecostal churches attracting more females than males, whereas Mainline churches attracted considerably more males.

Like Kumswa, this study also found that the Pentecostal churchgoers were considerably younger than the Mainline churchgoers. Figure 4 presents the proportion of each group that are considered Youth in the Nigerian context (37 years of age or younger). Whereas over 60% of Pentecostal churchgoers are considered youth, only about 35% of Mainline churchgoers are youth.

Figure 4. Percentage of Churchgoers who are Youth (37 years or younger)

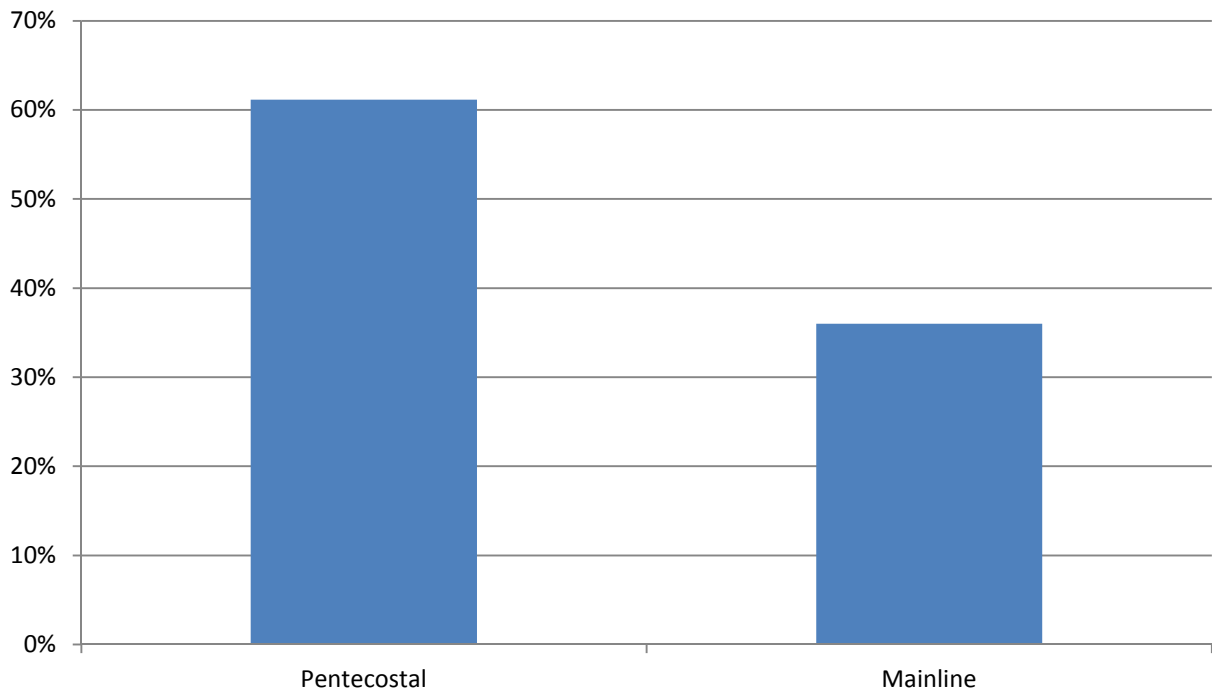


Figure 5 presents the level of education that Pentecostal and Mainline churchgoers have completed. It is clear that Mainline churchgoers have completed more education than Pentecostal churchgoers. However, based on the findings above that Pentecostal churchgoers are younger than Mainline churchgoers, it is possible that the difference in educational attainment may be due to the fact that Pentecostals are simply younger than Mainliners. Therefore, to control for age, Figure 6 presents the educational attainment for only those in the sample who were over the age of 33 years. This figure demonstrates that Mainline churchgoers have a higher level of education even after controlling for age. This also replicates the findings of Kumswa in the Middle Belt of Nigeria.

Figure 5. Educational Attainment of Pentecostal and Mainline Churchgoers.

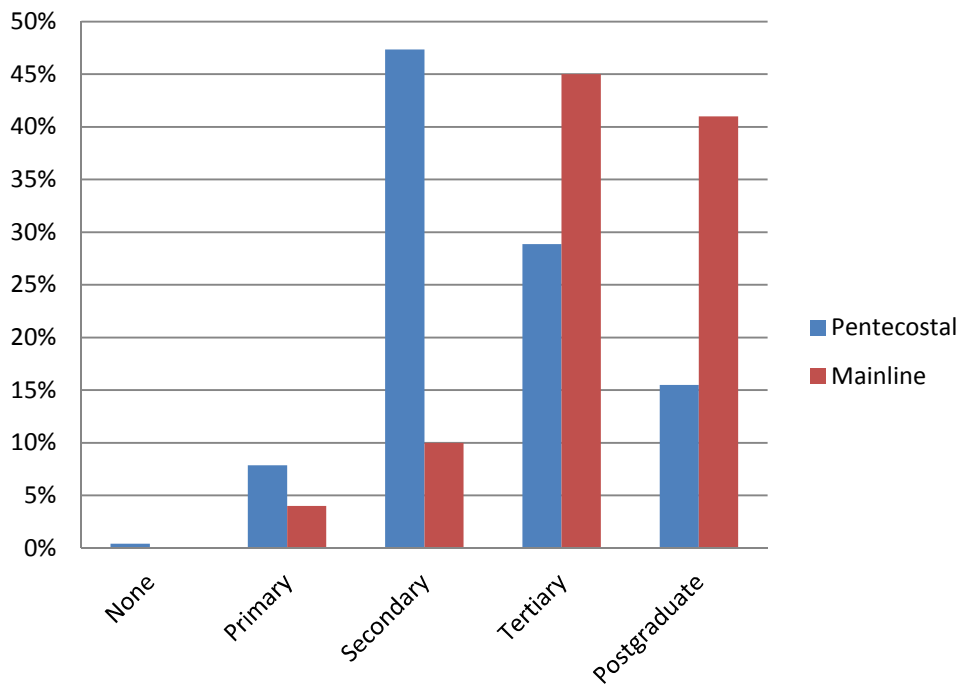
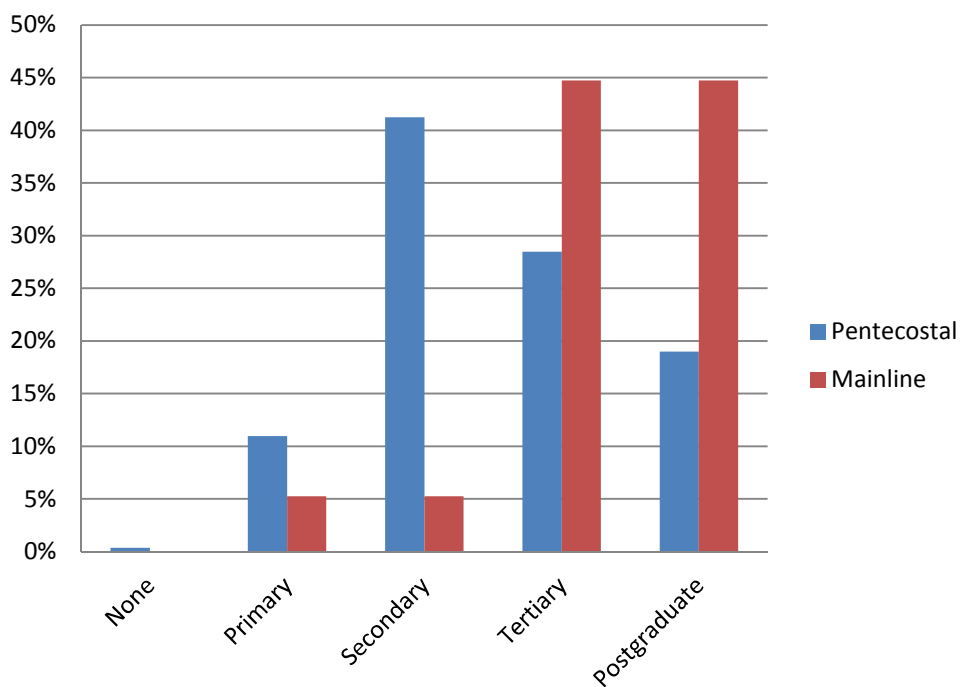


Figure 6. Educational Attainment of Pentecostal and Mainline Churchgoers over 33 years of age.



To measure socio-economic status, churchgoers' living conditions (Figure 7) and mode of transportation (Figure 8) were used (see Korb & Kumswa, 2011 for justification of the use of these two variables as a valid substitute for monthly income, which a large proportion of the sample did not report).

Figure 7. Living Arrangements of Pentecostal and Mainline Churchgoers.

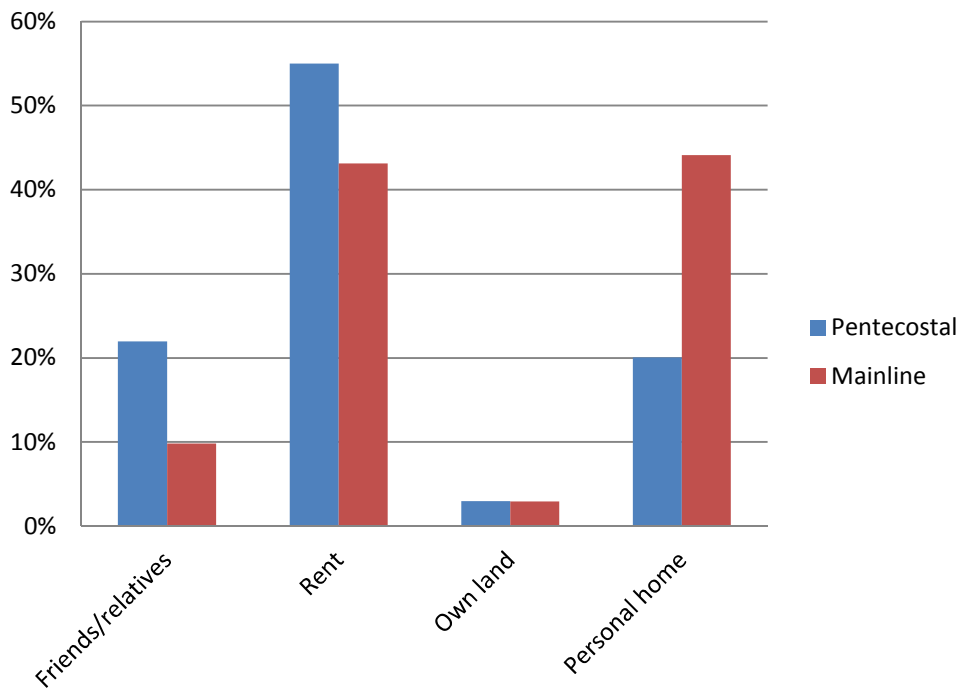
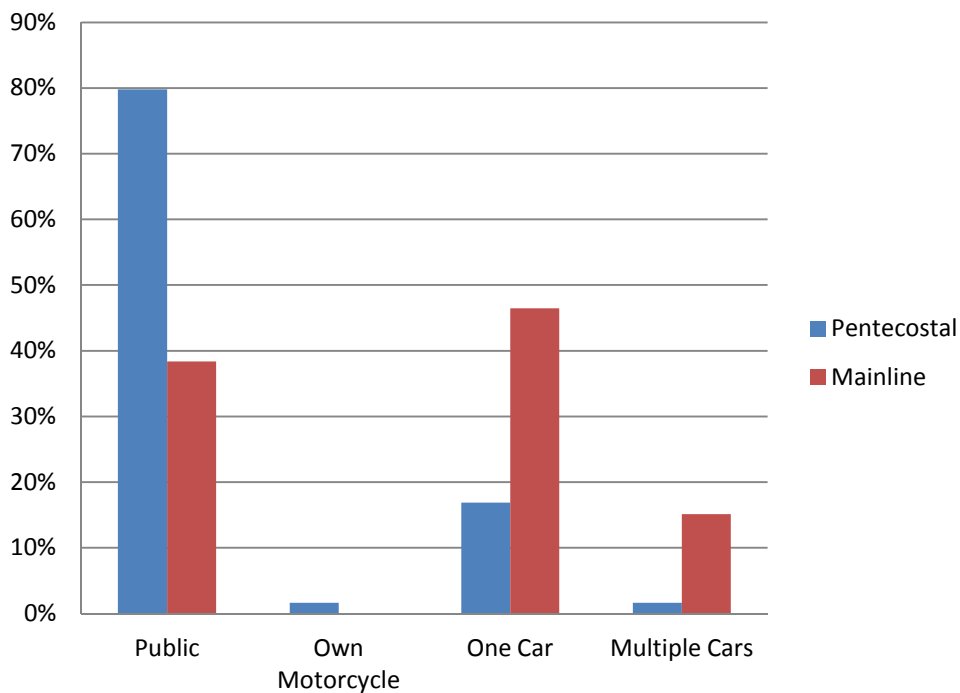


Figure 8. Mode of Transportation of Pentecostal and Mainline Churchgoers.



According to Figures 7 and 8, Mainline churchgoers have a higher socio-economic status than Pentecostal churchgoers because more Mainliners drive personal cars and live in a personal house. Again, this may be due to the fact that Mainline churchgoers are older than Pentecostal churchgoers. Therefore, Figures 9 and 10 report the living conditions and mode of transportation for both Pentecostal and Mainline churchgoers over the age of 33 years. Even after controlling for age, Mainline churchgoers have a higher socio-economic status than Pentecostal churchgoers. This also replicates Kumswa’s findings in the Middle Belt.



Figure 9. Living Arrangements of Pentecostal and Mainline Churchgoers over 33 years of age.

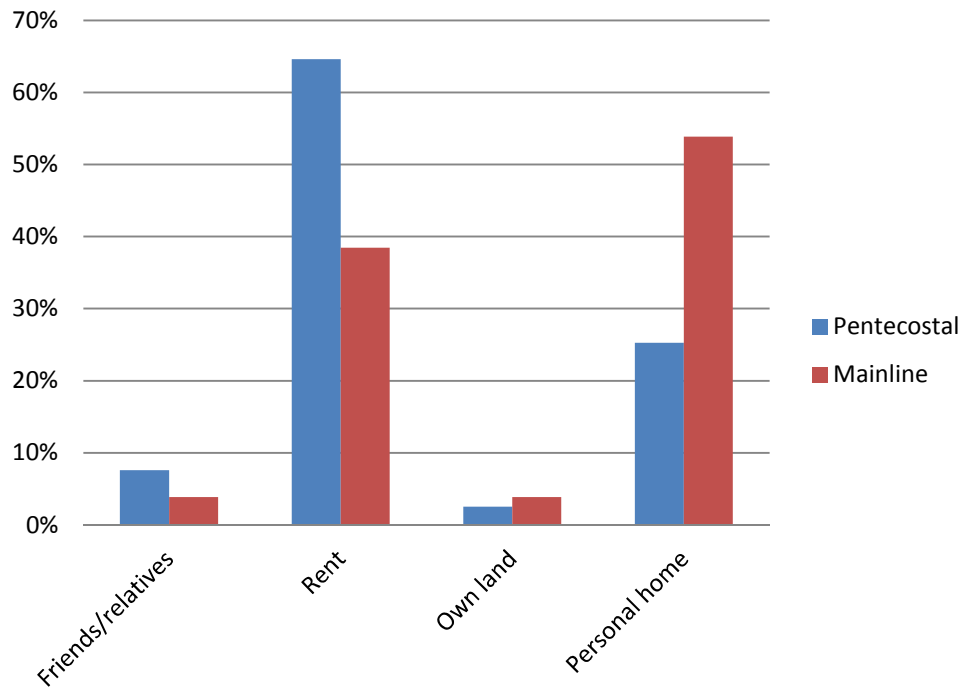


Figure 10. Mode of Transportation of Pentecostal and Mainline Churchgoers over 33 years of age.

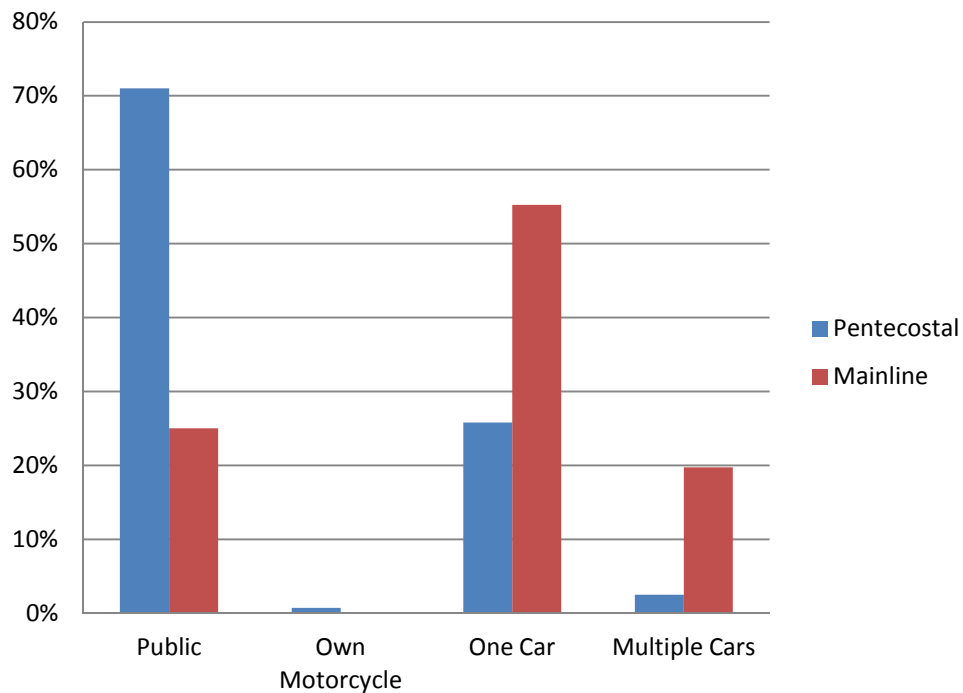
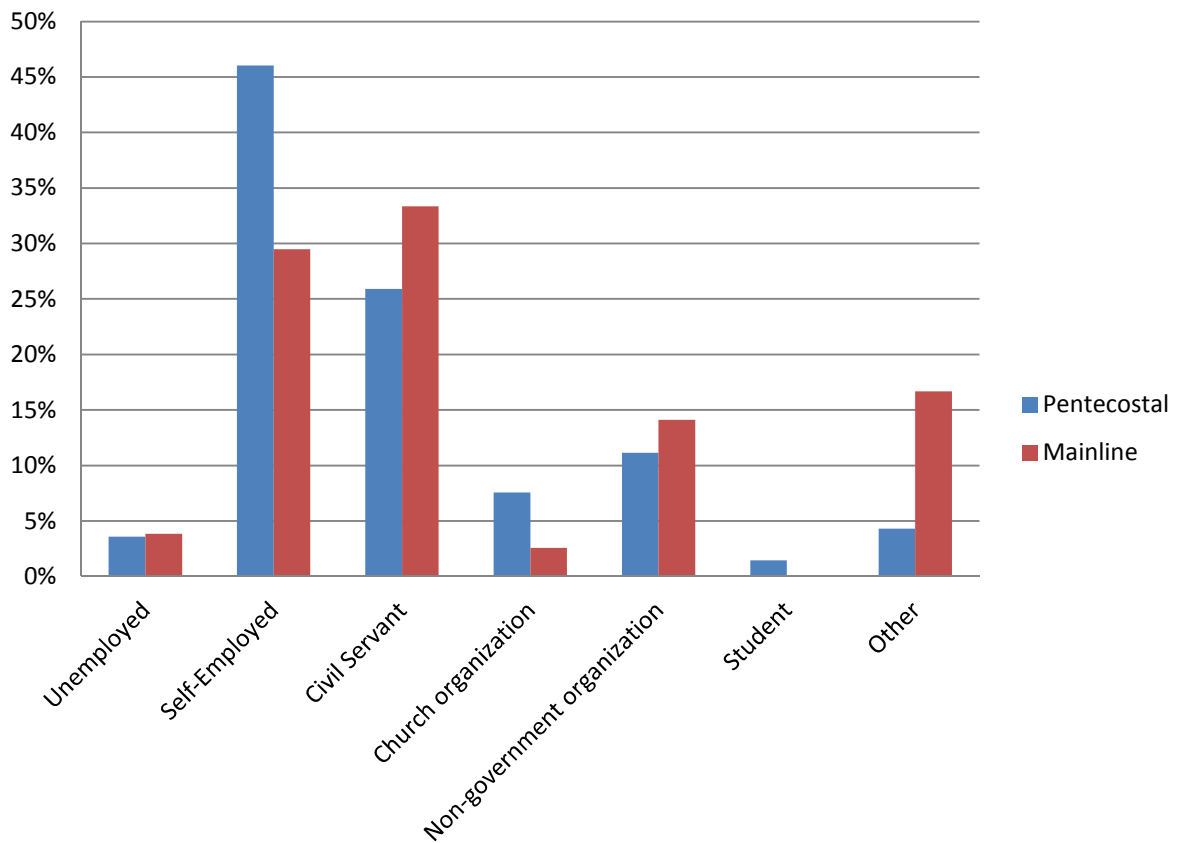


Figure 11 presents the occupation of Pentecostal and Mainline churchgoers. More Pentecostals are self-employed whereas more Mainliners are civil servants. This also replicated Kumswa’s findings in the Middle Belt.

Figure 11. Occupation of Pentecostal and Mainline Churchgoers.



Figures 12 and 13 compare Pentecostal and Mainline churchgoers' religious practices.

Figure 12. Religious Background of Pentecostal and Mainline Churchgoers.

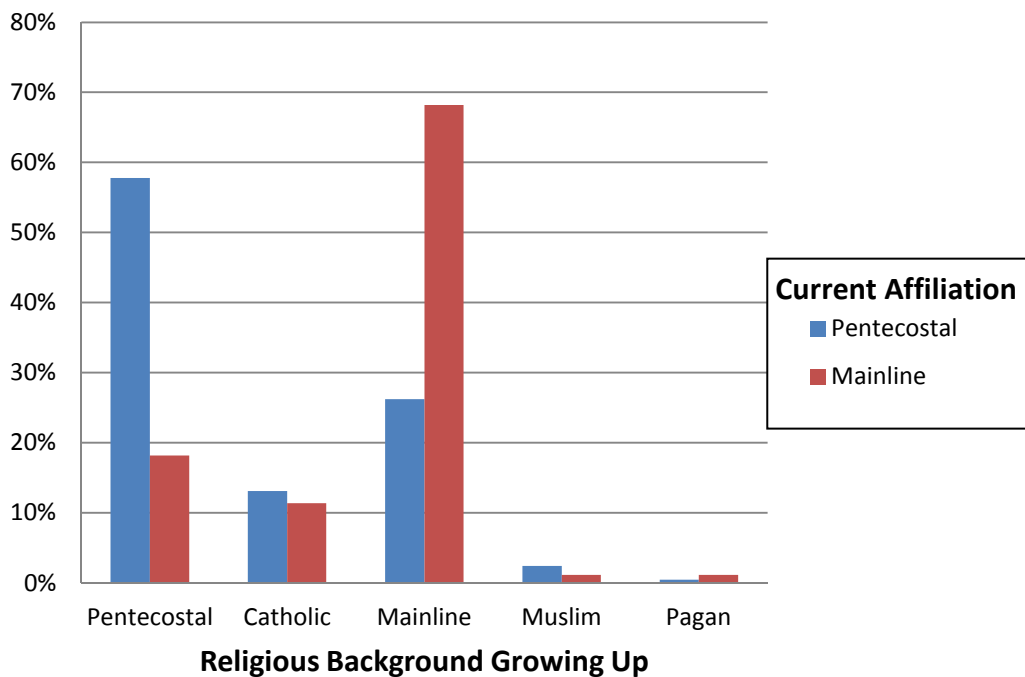


Figure 13. Frequency of Attending Worship Services among Pentecostal and Mainline Churchgoers.

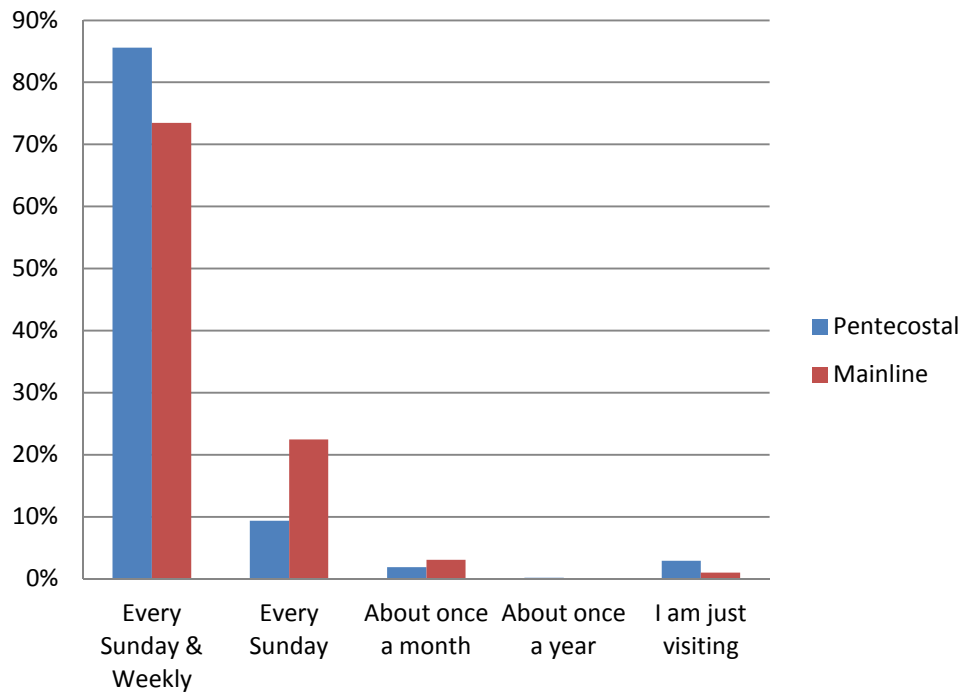


Figure 12 illustrates that more Mainliners grew up in a Mainline denomination (68%) than Pentecostals who grew up in a Pentecostal denomination (58%). Among the Pentecostals, 26% grew up in a Mainline denomination. Among the Mainliners, 18% grew up in a Pentecostal denomination. Approximately equal percentages of Pentecostals and Mainliners grew up Catholic (13% and 11%, respectively).

According to Figure 13, Pentecostals tend to attend church more frequently, with 86% of Pentecostals attending church every Sunday and weekly programs, whereas only 73% of Mainliners do likewise. This replicates Kumswa’s findings from the Middle Belt.

Figures 14 through 17 present information regarding Mainline churchgoers’ participation in Pentecostal phenomenon.

Figure 14. Percentage of Mainline Churchgoers Report Being Baptized by the Holy Spirit.

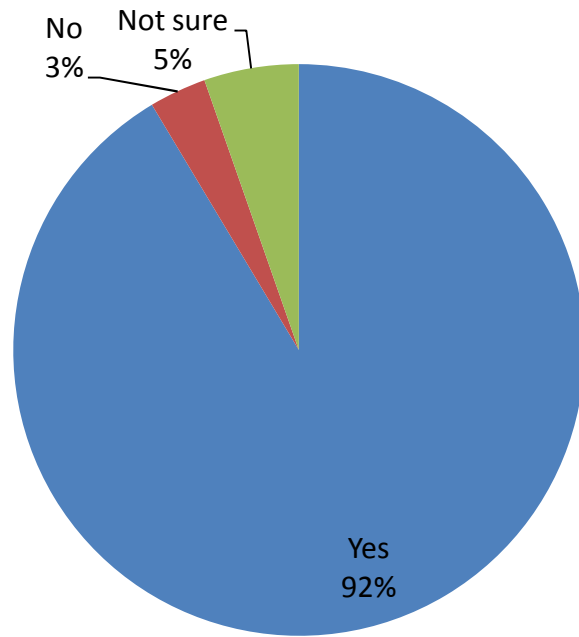


Figure 15. Percentage of Mainline Churchgoers Report Speaking in Tongues.

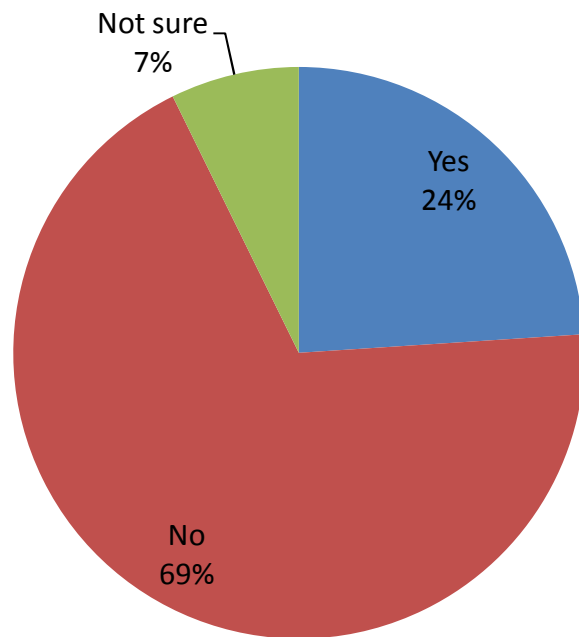


Figure 16. Of Mainliners Who Do Not Speak in Tongues, Percentage who Want to Speak in Tongues.

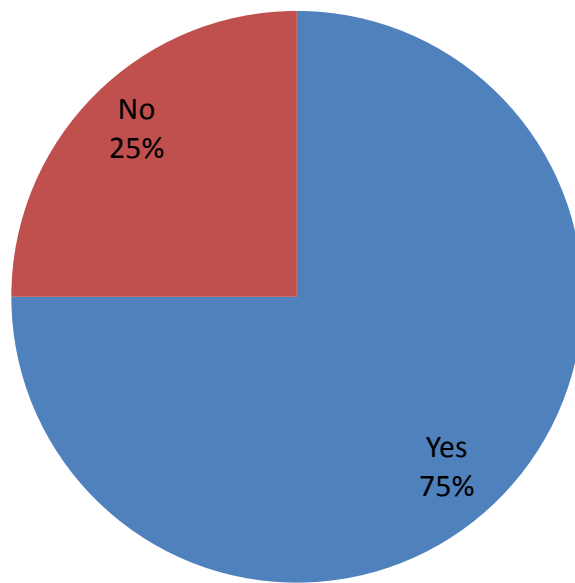
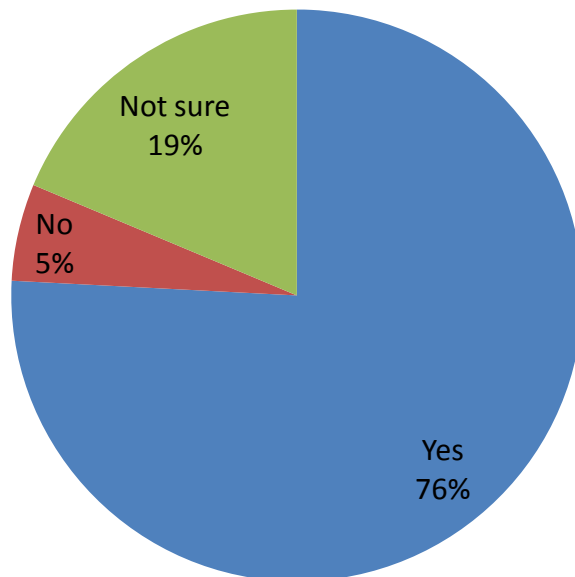


Figure 17. Percentage of Mainline Churchgoers Report Possessing the Gifts of the Holy Spirit.



## References

- Korb, K. A. (2012). *Census of Pentecostal Churchgoers in Nigeria* (NPCRC Technical Report No. N1104). Jos, Nigeria: Nigerian Pentecostal and Charismatic Research Centre.
- Korb, K. A., & Kumswa, S. K. (2011). Pentecostal census: Preliminary report of Pentecostal churchgoers in Northern Nigeria (NPCRC Technical Report No. N1103). Jos, Nigeria: Nigerian Pentecostal and Charismatic Research Centre
- Kumswa, S. (under review). A comparative analysis of Pentecostals and Mainliners on their church involvement in Nassarawa State, Nigeria. *Journal of Pentecostal Studies*.