

**Pentecostal Census:  
Preliminary Report of Pentecostal Churchgoers in Northern Nigeria**

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## Executive Summary

The Nigerian Pentecostal and Charismatic Research Centre collected information from Pentecostal Churches across Northern Nigerian with the intent of identifying the personal characteristics of Pentecostal churchgoers and their personal involvement in the churches they attend. A questionnaire was distributed to a representative sample of Pentecostal churchgoers across Northern Nigeria. Analysis of the questionnaire found the following:

- **Gender.** Slightly more males attend Pentecostal churches than females (Figure 1).
- **Age.** About 60% of Pentecostal churchgoers are under the age of 32 (Figure 2).
- **Marital status.** Pentecostal churchgoers are about evenly split between married and single. Virtually no respondents indicated being divorced or separated, and only 2% reported being widowed (Figure 3).
- **Education level.** Over half of Pentecostal churchgoers have completed at least one post-secondary school educational program (tertiary and postgraduate categories combined; see Figure 4). Furthermore, 15.7% of the sample reported student as their occupation, so these individuals are pursuing further education.
- **Socioeconomic status.** Of those who reported their average monthly income, 65% reported earning less than ₦19,999 per month (\$129; see Figure 5). However, 22% of the participants skipped the average monthly income item. Most of those who did not report their average monthly income were either self-employed or students, so these individuals likely have considerable variability in their average monthly income, making it difficult to report. Analyses showed that living conditions and mode of transportation have a significant association with average monthly income, so these variables can be used as a proxy for average monthly income (Figures 6 and 7).
- **Language spoken in the home.** Most of the Pentecostal churchgoers in this sample speak either English and their tribal language or English only in their homes.
- **Church attendance.** Most Pentecostal churchgoers attend service every Sunday and at least once during the week (80.4%; see Table 1). Participants indicated attending church more frequently at their current church than they did at the church they attended immediately previously.
- **Length of involvement.** Pentecostal churchgoers reported attending their current church an average of 12.6 years.
- **Previous denomination.** Fifty-eight percent of the Pentecostal churchgoers reported that they had previously attended a Catholic or mainline church. The two highest churches that were previously attended by Pentecostals included Catholic and Anglican (Figure 9). Fifty-three percent of the sample reported previously attending at least one other Pentecostal church (Figure 10).
- **Introduction to the church.** Most of the sample reported being introduced to the church through a person with whom they have a close relationship (e.g., parent, friend, sibling; Figure 11).

## **Introduction**

The Nigerian Pentecostal and Charismatic Research Centre collected information from Pentecostal Churches across Northern Nigerian with the intent of identifying the personal characteristics of Pentecostal churchgoers and their personal involvement in the churches they attend. The research is also aimed at developing an accurate statistics for the Pentecostal and Charismatic movements in the country. The research questions comprising of the following variables were adapted into a questionnaire that was administered to Pentecostal churchgoers to develop a better understanding of Pentecostals.

*Research Questions.* What are the demographic characteristics of Pentecostal churchgoers according to the following variables?

- Gender
- Age
- Marital Status
- Educational Level
- Socioeconomic Status
- Language spoken in home
- Previous churchgoing attendance
- Current churchgoing attendance
- Length of involvement in church
- Previous denomination
- How they were introduced to the church

## **Methods**

### *Participants*

The population for this study consisted of individuals ages 18 and over who attended a Pentecostal church on a given Sunday. To collect information from a representative sample of Pentecostal churchgoers, a multi-stage sampling technique was adopted. The 36 states in Nigeria are divided into 6 geopolitical zones. Therefore, one state from every geopolitical zone was selected. In the north, Katsina was selected for the North West zone, Adamawa was selected for the North East zone, and Nasarawa was selected for the North Central zone.

Each state in Nigeria is divided into Local Government Areas (LGA). Therefore, the second stage of sampling consisted of sampling three LGAs within the selected states. In each state, the state capital LGA was automatically selected because the state capital is typically the most urban LGA within the state. Since Pentecostal churches tend to cluster in urban areas, this was judged to be appropriate. Then two additional LGAs were randomly selected within the state.

Once the LGA were selected, researchers met with church officials from the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) and the Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria (PFN) within the state to compile a comprehensive list of Pentecostal churches in the selected LGAs. From this list, individual Pentecostal churches were selected based on stratified sampling. The researchers made an effort to select both urban and rural churches, large and small churches, and churches from the various types of Pentecostal churches (e.g., classical Pentecostal, neo-Pentecostal, etc.)

Once the churches were selected, 25 percent of all people attending service that Sunday, including visitors, were selected. The participants within the church were selected using

systematic sampling. To achieve this, the researchers distributed questionnaires to every fourth person attending the service.

The participants had to be 18 years and above. After coding the questionnaires, any questionnaire that indicated that the respondent was under 18 was not used in the final analysis. Three questionnaires were removed because the respondent was under the age of 18.

The final sample consisted of 235 individuals from 12 Pentecostal churches in three states.

### *Instrument*

The questionnaire was designed to collect information from Pentecostal churchgoers across Nigeria to develop an accurate understanding of the type of individuals who attend Pentecostal churches. The questionnaire was made up of 4 sections. The first section of the questionnaire asked about the background information of respondents such as their age, sex, marital status, and educational qualification. The second section asked about their church membership and church participation with questions asking how long they had been attending the particular church, their religious background growing up and the other churches they had attended. The third section asked about their use of church media such as whether they listen to religious CD's or DVDs, read Christian books, etc. The final section was developed to find out the factors that attracted participants to the Pentecostal church and what kept them attending that church.

### *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 started to meet with the ushers to enlist their assistance in distributing the questionnaires. When it was time to distribute the questionnaires, the 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 purpose of the research study was to determine the demographic characteristics of Pentecostal churchgoers. Figures 1, 2, 3, 4 illustrate the distribution of churchgoers by gender, age, marital status, and education respectively.

Figure 1. Gender of Pentecostal Churchgoers.

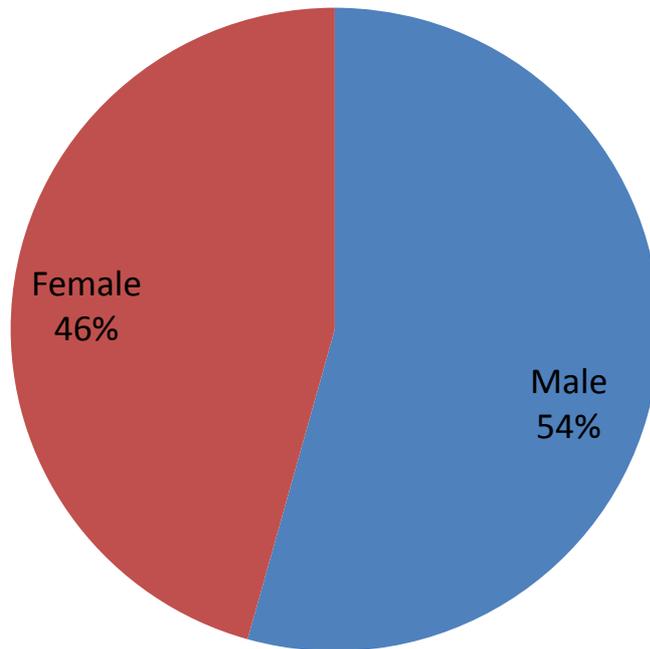


Figure 2. Age of Pentecostal Churchgoers in years.

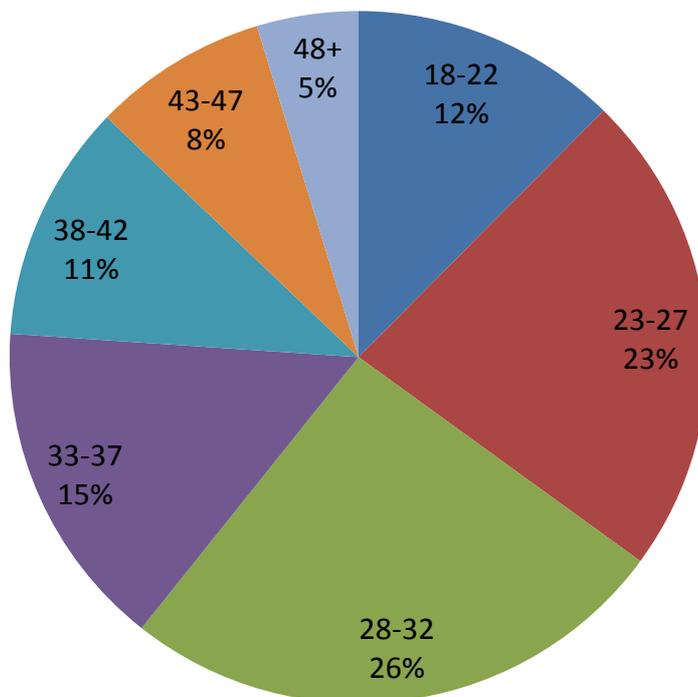


Figure 3. Marital status of Pentecostal Churchgoers.

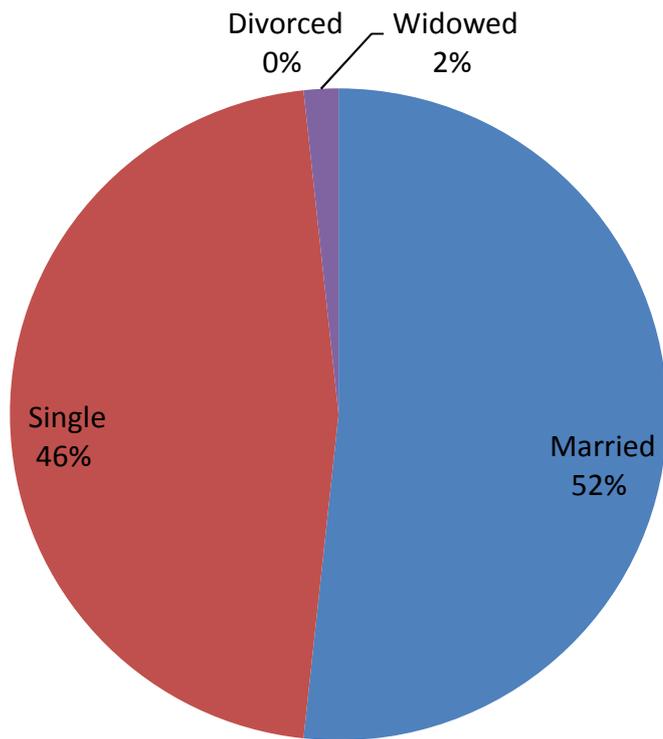


Figure 4. Level of Education Completed by Pentecostal Churchgoers.

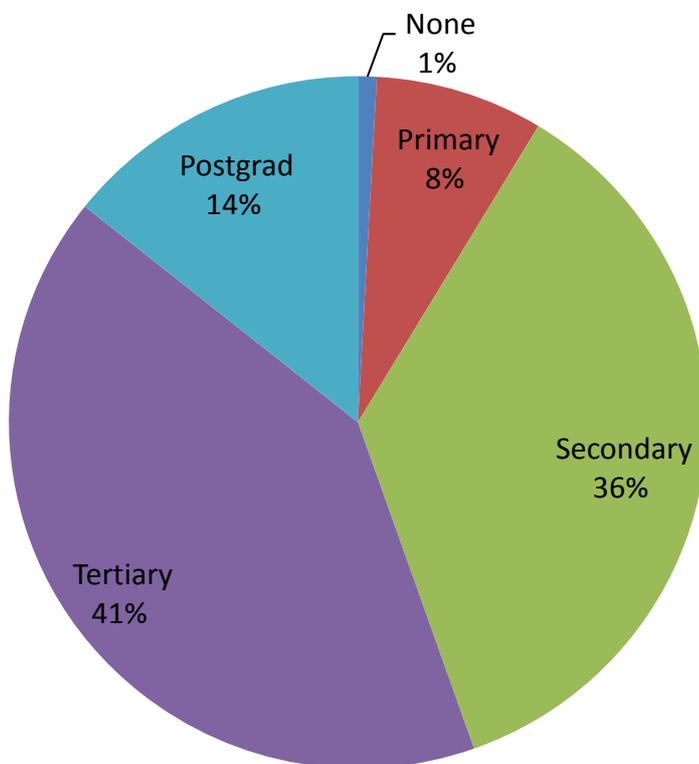


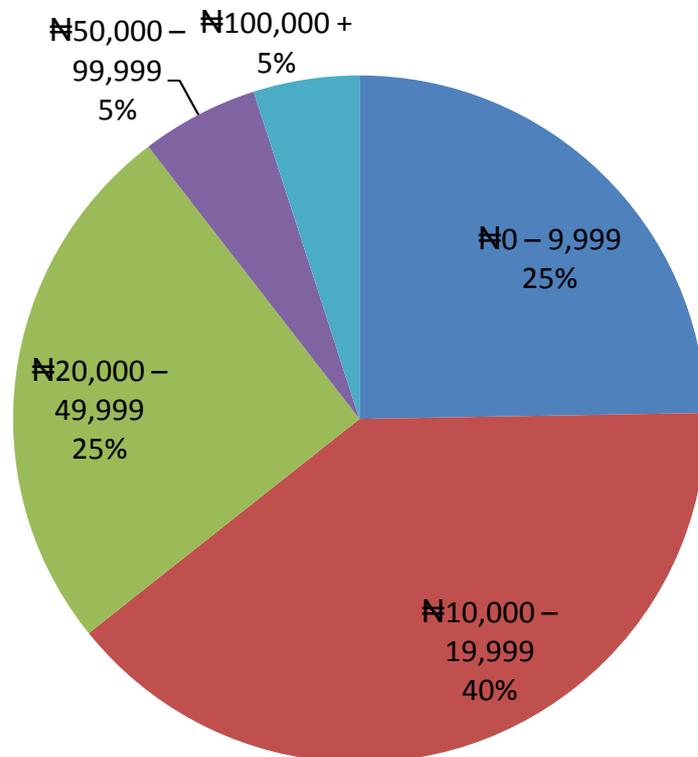
Figure 1 demonstrates that slightly more males attend Pentecostal churches than females. Figure 2 reveals that the typical Pentecostal churchgoer is rather young. In terms of marital status, Figure 3 shows that the sample is rather evenly split between being married and single. Considering that well over half of the sample was below the age of 32 (60%), many of the Pentecostal churchgoers are still within the age bracket when the typical Nigerian gets married. Of interest, none of the participants reported that they were divorced or separated. As marriage is acknowledged as a sacred institution and should not be broken, the lack of divorced individuals in the sampled Pentecostal churches maybe because of the stigma attached to being divorced.

The educational qualifications in Figure 4 reflect the level of education that has been completed. Just under half of the respondents indicated that they had completed a tertiary education. This may include a diploma, a higher degree (as obtained in the polytechnics) or a university degree. Many participants also indicated completing secondary school. However, when examining occupational data, 15.7% of the sample reported that they are currently a student. Therefore, many of the participants who indicated completing secondary school may be in the process of pursuing a tertiary degree.

*Socio-Economic Status*

Socio-economic status of Pentecostal churchgoers is difficult to pinpoint exactly. An item on the questionnaire asked participants to indicate their monthly income. However, 22% of the participants skipped this item. Figure 5 reports the percentage of individuals in each income bracket among the 182 participants who indicated their monthly income.

Figure 5. Monthly Income of Pentecostal Churchgoers.



Note. ₦10,000 = \$65. ₦20,000 = \$129. ₦50,000 = \$323. ₦100,000 = \$645.

Another way to measure socioeconomic status can be a person's living situation and mode of transportation. In Nigeria, a continuum of living situations range from the poorest individuals living with friends or relatives, to renting, to owning land that a house will be or is being built on. The most well-to-do individuals live in their personal home. The continuum of mode of transportation ranges from taking public transportation to owning a motorcycle to owning one car to owning multiple cars. The living conditions and transportation of Pentecostal churchgoers are depicted in Figures 6 and 7, respectively.

Figure 6. Living Conditions of Pentecostal Churchgoers.

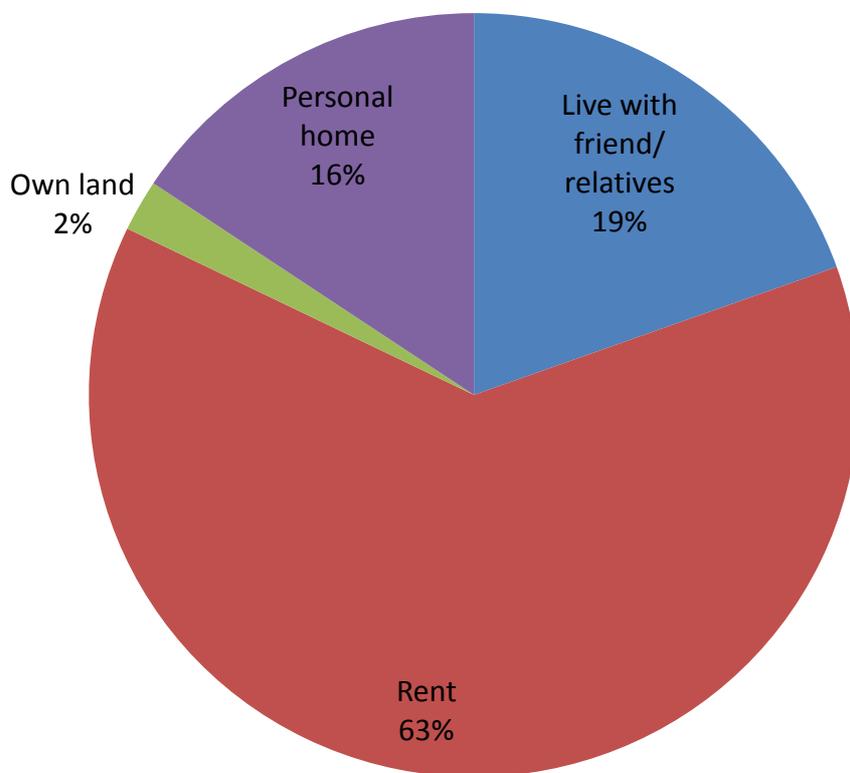
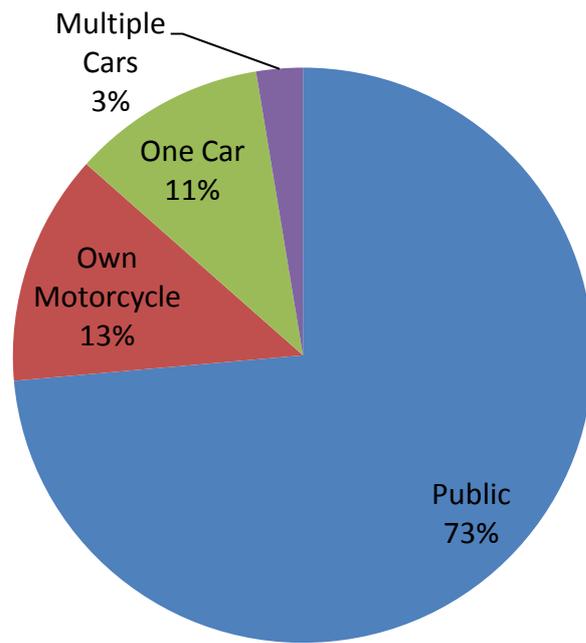


Figure 7. Mode of Transportation of Pentecostal Churchgoers.

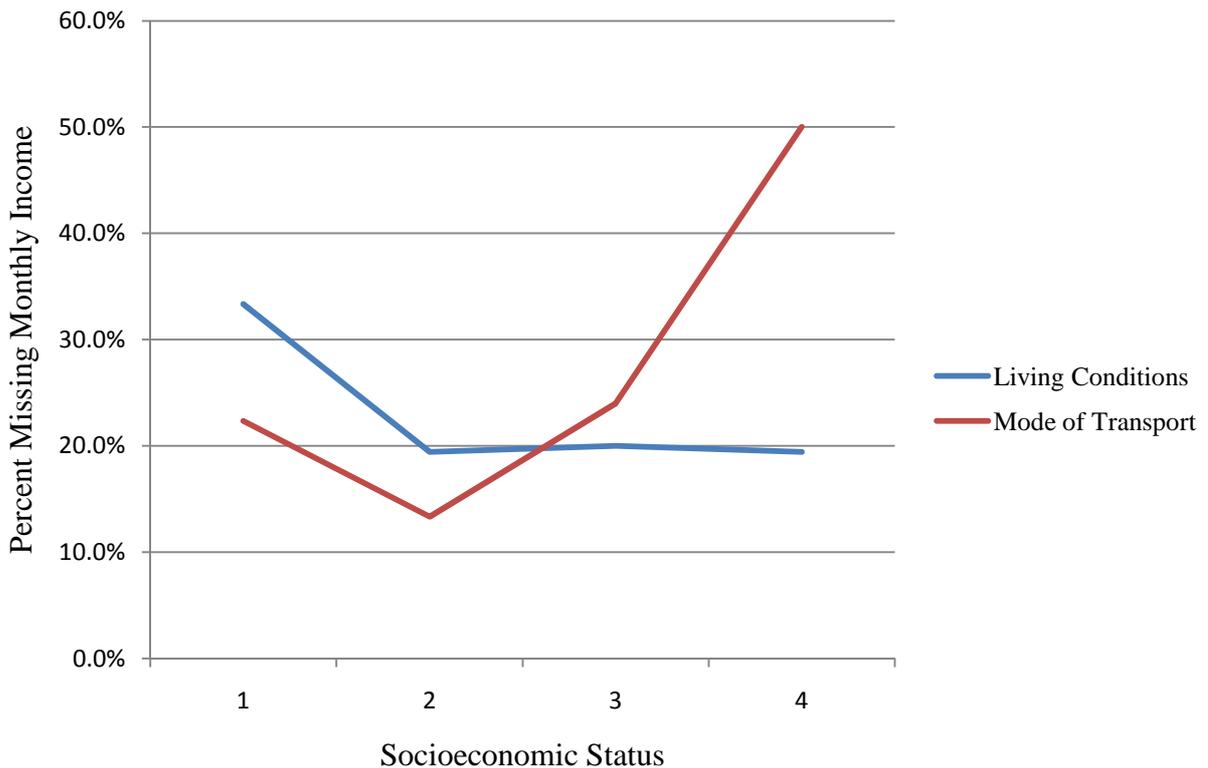


To determine whether living conditions and mode of transportation accurately predict average monthly income, a Pearson Chi-Square Test of Association was conducted. Because there were so few respondents in the highest income levels, the categories of ₦50,000 and higher were combined into one category. Living Conditions had a significant association with average monthly income ( $\chi^2(9) = 17.20, p < .05$ ). Mode of transportation also had a significant association with average monthly income ( $\chi^2(9) = 27.21, p < .01$ ). Therefore, both living conditions and mode of transportation can be used as a proxy for average monthly income when analyzing socioeconomic status..

Further analyses were conducted in an attempt to try to explain why 22% of the respondents did not report their monthly income. One possibility is that either wealthy or poor individuals did not report their income. Therefore, the frequency of those who did not report their monthly income was analyzed within the categories of living conditions and mode of transportation. However, as can be seen by Figure 8, no clear picture presents itself based on proxies of income (see Figure 8). For living conditions, the lowest socioeconomic status individuals appeared to have the most missing data. However, the reverse is true for mode of transportation. It is therefore unclear about which types of individuals did not report their monthly income based on the amount of living and transportation luxury they possess.

Another reason for skipping the item may be that many Nigerians' salaries are not stable but depend on the amount of business that they take in per month. Indeed, 33% of the sample reported being self-employed and an additional 15.7% reported being a student. When analyzing the missing data for monthly income by occupation, it is clear that most of the missing values come from the self-employed (35%) and students (40%). Therefore, 75% of the missing values in monthly income come from self-employed and students, professions that rarely have a stable income.

Figure 8. Missing Monthly Income



Note. Socioeconomic status for living conditions: 1 = Living with friend or relatives. 2 = Renting. 3 = Own land. 4 = Personal home. Socioeconomic status for Mode of Transport: 1 = Public. 2 = Own Motorcycle. 3 = Own One Car. 4 = Own Multiple Cars.

#### *Language spoken in the home*

Most Nigerians in the north are either bilingual or trilingual. The Hausa language is the majority language in the north and is typically spoken in the marketplaces. Individuals from minority tribes are also likely to speak their tribal language in addition to Hausa. Finally, many individuals speak English since that is the national language of communication in school and government. The highest proportion of respondents (75.3%) reported speaking both their tribal language and English at home. Next, 12.3% of the participants indicated that they speak only English at home and 8.9% indicated that they speak only their native language at home. It should be noted that all of the services that the research assistants attended were conducted in English. In one church, the English service was also translated into a local tribal language.

Compared to the typical Nigerian's language use at home, it is surprising that so many Pentecostals speak exclusively English or English with their tribal language. It is possible that Pentecostal churches cater mostly to English-speaking individuals. The church-level questionnaire that was administered provides information about the language of church services. This data will be forthcoming in subsequent reports.

#### *Church attendance*

We were also interested in how often participants attended church, both in the current Pentecostal church and in the church they attended immediately previously. Only 4% of the

individuals reported being a visitor to the church on the Sunday that the researchers collected data. A further 18.7% reported that the Pentecostal church that they attended that day was the only church they had ever attended. Current and previous churchgoing attendance is reported in Table 1.

Table 1. Churchgoing Attendance of Pentecostal Churchgoers.

Church Attendance	Previously <sup>1</sup>	Currently <sup>2</sup>
Every Sunday and Weekly	63.1	80.4
Every Sunday	25.6	15.3
Once per month	4.8	0.4
Once per year	2.4	0.0

<sup>1</sup> The percentage of previous church attendance is based only on those who have previously attended another church. 18.7% of the respondents indicated that they have only attended the church they attended that Sunday. A further 4.3% indicated only attending the previous church once or twice.

<sup>2</sup> Of those currently attending the church, an additional 4% indicated that they were just visiting.

Most of the respondents said they attended every Sunday and weekly activities. Comparing this to previous church attendance, the participants indicated attending church more frequently at the current church than at the previous church.

#### *Length of Involvement*

Participants were also asked to indicate how long they had been attending the church. Of the participants that completed the questionnaire, 3.8% indicated that they were visitors at the church. Only 8.1% said they had been attending church for less than a year. The mean (average)<sup>1</sup> length of time that participants had been involved with the current church was 12.6 years (standard deviation = 9.30 years).

#### *Previous Denomination*

One item asked participants to indicate all Catholic or mainline churches they had attended for more than six months. On this item, 58.3% of the sample indicated that they attended a Catholic or mainline church for more than six months prior to the Pentecostal church. Figure 9 provides the frequency with which Pentecostal churchgoers previously attended specific Catholic or mainline churches. A second question asked how many Pentecostal churches that they had previously attended. Figure 10 provides information about the number of Pentecostal churches that churchgoers had previously attended for more than six months.

<sup>1</sup> This item had three options: a) I am a visitor; b) Less than 1 year; c) More than 1 year: write number of years \_\_\_\_\_. In calculating the average, the participants who indicated attending the church for less than a year were counted as attending for 0.5 years.

Figure 9. Frequency that Pentecostal Churchgoers Previously Attended Mainline Churches for Six Months or More.

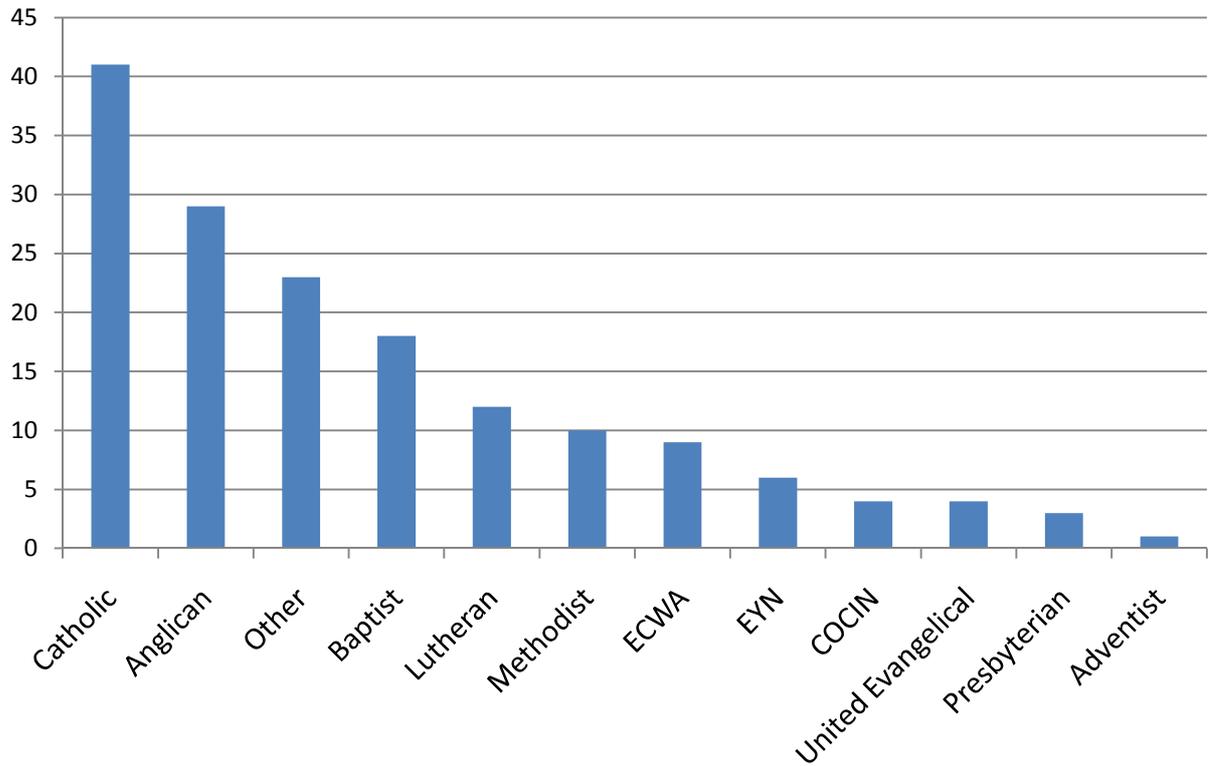
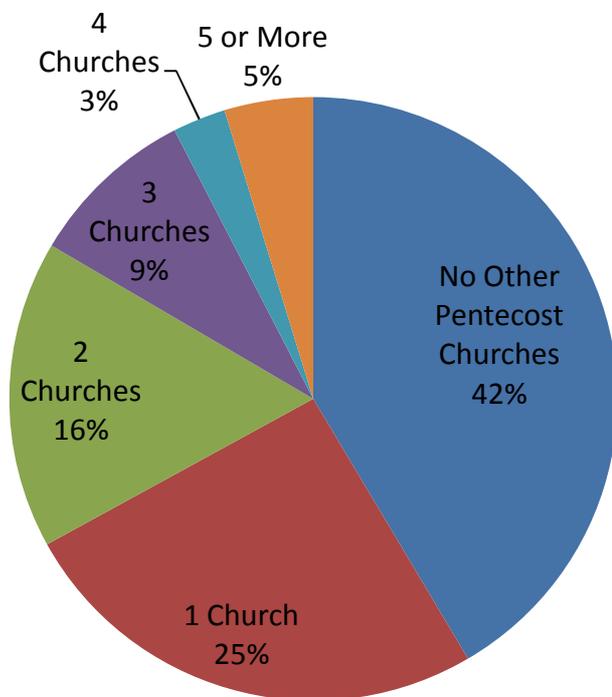


Figure 10. Number of Pentecostal Churches Previously Attended.



### *Introduction into the Church*

We asked participants to indicate who or what introduced them to the church on a forced-choice item. The results are presented in Figure 11. Of the categories presented of who or what introduced the respondent to the church, parents had the highest frequency. This likely includes those who were born in the church. The next highest frequency item was that they introduced themselves to the church, indicating an independent decision to join a church. Tied with self-introduction, friends also encouraged participants to attend the particular church. Other categories that attracting a sizeable number of churchgoers included a sibling, and a spouse. Other categories included in the questionnaire that were not as successful in attracting churchgoers included an advertisement (less than 1%) and the church building (0%). These categories, together with other family member (4%) and other (4%) were lumped together in the other category in Figure 11. This indicates that attending a Pentecostal church is largely influenced by personal relationships.

Figure 11.

