


Performing Power in Nigeria

For decades, Pentecostalism has been one of the most powerful socio-cultural and socio-political movements in Africa. The Pentecostal modes of constructing the world by using their performative agencies to embed their rites in social processes have imbued them with immense cultural power to contour the character of their societies. *Performing Power in Nigeria* explores how Nigerian Pentecostals mark their self-distinction as a people of power within a social milieu that affirmed and contested their desires for being. Their faith, and the various performances that inform it, imbue the social matrix with saliences that also facilitate their identity of power. Using extensive archival material, interviews, and fieldwork, Abimbola A. Adelokun questions the histories, desires, knowledge, tools, and innate divergences of this form of identity, and its interactions with the other ideological elements that make up the society. Analysing the important developments in contemporary Nigerian Pentecostalism, she demonstrates how the social environment is being transformed by the Pentecostal performance of their identity as the people of power. This title is also available as Open Access on Cambridge Core.

ABIMBOLA A. ADELOKUN is Assistant Professor in the Department of African and African Diaspora Studies at the University of Texas at Austin where her research focuses on the politics and performances of Pentecostalism. She is the author of articles in journals including the *Journal of Women and Religion*, *Jenda: Journal of Culture and African Women Studies*, and co-editor of *Art, Creativity, and Politics in Africa and the Diaspora* (2018).



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Performing Power in Nigeria

Identity, Politics, and Pentecostalism

ABIMBOLA A. ADELAKUN
University of Texas at Austin



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For Marcel, Iyunola, and Irawoola

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Acknowledgments

In Nigerian Pentecostal churches, “testimony time” is an integral part of worship. Someone comes forward to publicly testify to the goodness and faithfulness of the Lord in their lives. Or, as they tend to put it, “I have returned to give God all the glory.” When they are done with the narration that led to their eventual triumph, they thank God for what he has done. Some do not stop there. They also thank the human agents – family, friends, acquaintances, and even strangers – who participated in making their testimony an eventual reality. Underlying this public performance of gratitude to God and their community for what He has done is an acknowledgment that divine deeds require human vectors. My heart bursts with gratitude to everyone, from family and friends to various institutions, who supported me all through the process of writing this book.

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