EXAMINING THE CITADEL GLOBAL COMMUNITY CHURCH AND THE PROPHETIC-POLITICAL MINISTRY OF TUNDE BAKARE IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

This research paper delves into a comprehensive examination of the Citadel Global Community Church (CGCC), formerly known as the Latter Rain Assembly, a significant Pentecostal church in Nigeria spearheaded by Pastor Tunde Bakare. This study meticulously explores the theological underpinnings of CGCC, its multifaceted socio-political engagements, and its profound impact on shaping both the religious and political spheres of Nigeria. Through an in-depth analysis of Pastor Bakare's life story, encompassing his formative educational experiences, the trajectory of his ministerial evolution, and the church's established doctrinal practices, this paper aims to illuminate the intricate intersection of religious faith, governance structures, and proactive social activism within the context of Nigerian Pentecostalism. The methodological approach of this research is rooted in a synthesis of primary and secondary sources, including official church publications, extensive media reports, and critical scholarly analyses. This robust approach is designed to contextualize the church's widespread influence against the backdrop of Nigeria's intricate socio-religious dynamics. The findings of this study reveal that the Citadel Global Community Church serves as a quintessential example of the dynamic fusion of charismatic leadership, a proactive prophetic stance, and robust political advocacy. This unique combination effectively positions CGCC as a transformative entity within the contemporary Nigerian societal landscape.

***Keywords*:** Latter Rain Assembly, Tunde Bakare, Nigerian Pentecostalism, socio-political activism, Citadel Global Community Church

Introduction

Nigeria's religious topography is prominently characterized by Pentecostalism, a vibrant Christian movement distinguished by its charismatic modes of worship, the significant role of prophetic ministries, and active engagement in socio-political issues (Gifford, 1998). Within this dynamic religious landscape, Pastor Tunde Bakare stands out as an exceptionally influential figure. He is the founder of the Latter Rain Assembly (LRA), which underwent a rebranding in 2020 to become the Citadel Global Community Church (CGCC) (TheBladeNG, 2020). Established in 1989, CGCC has evolved into a ministry with transnational reach, deeply committed to societal transformation. This commitment is manifested through a blend of fervent evangelical activities and a strong advocacy for reforms in governance. This paper embarks on a detailed investigation into the origins of

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CGCC, its core theological principles, and the distinctive dual role of its founder as both a religious leader and a significant political actor. By situating Pastor Bakare's ministry within the context of Nigeria's Fourth Republic (1999–present), this study aims to highlight the complex interplay between Pentecostalism and political power, a phenomenon that has been aptly described as the "Pentecostal Republic" (Africa Is a Country, 2018).

Biography of the Founder: Pastor Tunde Bakare

Early Life and Conversion

Babatunde Gbolahan Bakare, widely recognized as Tunde Bakare, was born on November 11, 1954, in Abeokuta, Ogun State, Nigeria. His upbringing was within a Muslim family, and he was primarily raised by his mother, Madam Abigail Eebudola, following the absence of his father (Kashgain, n.d.). Abeokuta, his birthplace, is a city with a rich historical and religious tapestry, known for its significant Muslim and Christian populations, as well as traditional Yoruba religious practices (Falola, 2001). This diverse religious environment likely played a role in shaping Bakare's early exposure to different faiths.

A pivotal moment in Bakare's life occurred in 1974 when he experienced a profound conversion to Christianity. Bakare himself has described this transformation as a direct and undeniable divine encounter with Jesus Christ (Believers Portal, 2016). This experience marked a decisive shift away from his Islamic background and toward evangelical Christianity. This conversion was not merely a change of religious affiliation but a transformative event that fundamentally reshaped his theological perspectives and political ideologies. His newfound faith became the bedrock of his future ministerial and socio-political endeavors, influencing his worldview and guiding his path toward becoming a prominent religious and public figure in Nigeria.

Education and Legal Career

Tunde Bakare's pursuit of knowledge began in Abeokuta, where he attended All Saints Primary School and Lisabi Grammar School (Naijabiography, 2022). These early educational experiences laid the foundation for his later academic and professional achievements. Demonstrating a keen intellect and ambition, Bakare gained admission to the prestigious University of Lagos (UNILAG) from 1977 to 1980, where he studied law (Manpower, n.d.). UNILAG, known for its robust law program, provided him with a rigorous legal education and exposed him to critical legal theories and practices.

Upon graduating from UNILAG, Bakare's legal acumen was quickly recognized. He was called to the Nigerian Bar in 1981, officially becoming a Barrister and Solicitor of the Supreme Court of Nigeria (Keninfo, 2023). This marked the formal commencement of his legal career. Bakare honed his skills and gained invaluable experience working in the chambers of two of Nigeria's most distinguished legal luminaries: Gani Fawehinmi Chambers and Rotimi Williams & Co. (Biography of Tunde Bakare, n.d.). Gani Fawehinmi was renowned for his staunch human rights advocacy and pro-poor activism, while Rotimi Williams & Co. was celebrated for its expertise in corporate and constitutional law. These formative experiences in such esteemed firms significantly

shaped Bakare's legal philosophy and broadened his understanding of law in both corporate and human rights contexts.

In 1984, leveraging his growing expertise and entrepreneurial spirit, Bakare established his own legal practice, Tunde Bakare & Co. (El-Shaddai Chambers) (Wikipedia, 2025). Specializing in corporate and constitutional law, his firm quickly gained prominence, serving a diverse clientele and handling complex legal matters. Despite his considerable professional success and financial stability in the legal field, Bakare experienced a profound spiritual calling in 1988. This calling was so compelling that it led him to make a dramatic career change. In 1988, he made the life-altering decision to abandon his thriving legal career to dedicate himself fully to ministry (Tunde Bakare Biography, n.d.). This transition underscored the depth of his religious conviction and his commitment to pursuing what he perceived as a divine mandate, setting the stage for his emergence as a leading figure in Nigerian Pentecostalism.

Ministry: From Latter Rain Assembly to Citadel Global Community Church
Founding and Growth

Pastor Tunde Bakare's ministerial trajectory began within the established frameworks of two prominent Pentecostal churches in Nigeria: Deeper Life Bible Church and the Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG). Initially, Bakare served as the legal adviser for Deeper Life Bible Church, utilizing his legal expertise to support the church's administrative and operational needs (Believers Portal, 2016). Later, he joined the Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG), where he took on a pioneering role by establishing the Model Parish (Manpower, n.d.). This initiative was significant as it aimed to create a parish that catered specifically to the needs of professionals and upwardly mobile individuals within Lagos, a demographic often overlooked in traditional church models.

In 1989, driven by a distinct vision and calling, Bakare founded the Latter Rain Assembly (LRA) (Wikipedia, 2025). At its inception, LRA was conceived as an "end-time church," with a strong emphasis on eschatological prophecy and the pursuit of holiness within society. This focus resonated deeply in the socio-political climate of Nigeria during the late 1980s and early 1990s, a period marked by economic challenges and political instability. The church's message was timely, attracting a burgeoning demographic of urban professionals and young adults who were drawn to Bakare's dynamic and impassioned sermons. His preaching was characterized by a fiery critique of societal corruption, moral decadence, and governance failures, issues that were acutely felt by many Nigerians (Keninfo, 2023). This bold and uncompromising stance, combined with his charismatic leadership, fueled the rapid growth of the Latter Rain Assembly, establishing it as a significant voice within Nigerian Pentecostalism.

Rebranding and Expansion

In a strategic move in 2020, the Latter Rain Assembly underwent a significant transformation, rebranding itself as the Citadel Global Community Church (CGCC) (theBladeNG, 2020). This rebranding was not merely a change of name but symbolized a broader shift in the church's mission and outreach. Coinciding with this rebranding was

the unveiling of CGCC's new, state-of-the-art headquarters in Lagos, a sprawling complex aptly named "The Citadel" (Pastor Tunde Bakare Renames Latter Rain Church, 2020). This "Wonder-on-Earth" complex is more than just a place of worship; it is a multi-faceted facility designed to address the holistic needs of its community. It boasts a 5,200-seat auditorium for worship services, advanced healthcare clinics to cater to the physical well-being of congregants, modern educational facilities for learning and development, and a 24-hour prayer center intended as a spiritual sanctuary (Pastor Tunde Bakare: Celebrating a Visionary Preacher @70, 2024). This comprehensive approach reflects Bakare's long-held vision of a ministry that addresses not only the spiritual but also the socio-economic needs of its members and the wider community.

The rebranding to Citadel Global Community Church also signaled a strategic evolution in the church's messaging, moving away from a primarily apocalyptic, end-times focus to a more community-centric approach to evangelism. This shift aligns with global trends observed in many megachurch models, which emphasize community engagement, social services, and a more inclusive approach to outreach (Stark & Finke, 2000). This evolution allowed CGCC to broaden its appeal and relevance in a rapidly changing societal landscape, positioning itself as a church deeply invested in the overall well-being of its community, rather than solely on eschatological pronouncements.

Global Apostolic Impact Network (GAIN)

Expanding his influence beyond the Citadel Global Community Church, Pastor Tunde Bakare presides over the Global Apostolic Impact Network (GAIN), a significant network of churches and ministries (TheBoss Newspapers, 2024). GAIN serves as a collaborative platform designed to foster evangelism and enhance leadership development across its member organizations. Through GAIN, Bakare extends his leadership and vision to a broader audience, promoting strategic partnerships and shared resources among diverse Christian ministries.

GAIN's initiatives are diverse and impactful, reflecting Bakare's comprehensive approach to ministry and societal transformation. Key among these initiatives is the School of Government, which aims to train and equip leaders in governance with ethical and transformational leadership principles (Citadel Global Community Church, n.d.). Recognizing the critical role of business and entrepreneurship, GAIN also established the Business & Leadership Academy. This academy is focused on nurturing "kingdom entrepreneurs"—individuals who integrate their faith values with business practices to create ethical and sustainable enterprises. Furthermore, in response to pressing socio-economic needs, GAIN has developed Skills Acquisition Centers. These centers are designed to provide practical vocational skills to empower individuals, particularly the youth, enhancing their employability and entrepreneurial capabilities (GAIN, n.d.).

Through GAIN, Bakare effectively promotes the concept of "kingdom entrepreneurship," a philosophy that blends evangelical Christian values with entrepreneurial endeavors. This approach emphasizes that business and economic activities are not separate from spiritual life but are integral components of fulfilling God's kingdom mandate on earth. By fostering leadership, ethical governance, and economic empowerment, GAIN under

Bakare's guidance plays a crucial role in shaping a generation of leaders and entrepreneurs who are driven by both faith and a commitment to societal transformation.

Beliefs and Practices

Theological Tenets

The Citadel Global Community Church, rooted in its Latter Rain Assembly heritage, firmly adheres to core Pentecostal doctrines that emphasize fundamental aspects of Christian faith and experience (Wikipedia, 2025). Central to its theology is the doctrine of salvation, which posits that salvation is attained through personal faith in Jesus Christ and repentance from sin (Walls & Rossow, 2007). This foundational belief underscores the necessity of a personal relationship with God as the basis of Christian life. Divine healing is another critical tenet, with the church believing in the power of God to heal physical, emotional, and spiritual ailments through faith and prayer (Wimber & Springer, 1986). This belief is often manifested in healing ministries and prayer sessions within church services.

A defining characteristic of Pentecostalism, and thus of CGCC, is the emphasis on the baptism of the Holy Spirit. This doctrine teaches that believers can receive a post-conversion experience of empowerment by the Holy Spirit, often evidenced by spiritual gifts such as speaking in tongues, prophecy, and divine revelation (Poloma, 2003). Pastor Tunde Bakare's sermons frequently incorporate prophetic declarations, a practice consistent with Pentecostal traditions. These declarations often involve claims of divine revelations concerning the future of Nigeria, reflecting a belief in God's active involvement in national affairs and guidance through prophetic voices (Gifford, 1994).

Bakare uniquely positions himself within CGCC as a "prophetic-apostolic" leader (Bakare, 2018). This hybrid role combines the functions of a prophet, who delivers divine messages and visions, with that of an apostle, who provides institutional and doctrinal oversight. This self-designation reflects a trend within contemporary Pentecostalism where leaders often assume multiple roles to enhance their authority and influence within their congregations and beyond. The "prophetic-apostolic" designation allows Bakare to not only guide the spiritual direction of CGCC but also to engage in socio-political commentary and activism, claiming divine mandate for his pronouncements and actions in the public sphere.

Socio-Political Activism

A distinctive feature of the Citadel Global Community Church's ethos is its seamless integration of spiritual convictions with active engagement in socio-political issues. This is prominently exemplified through Pastor Tunde Bakare's establishment of the Save Nigeria Group (SNG) in 2010 (Premium Times, 2017). SNG emerged as a significant civil society organization that mobilized widespread protests against contentious government policies, notably the removal of fuel subsidies and instances of electoral fraud. These protests were pivotal in galvanizing public opinion and exerting pressure on the government, earning Bakare the reputation as "the voice of the oppressed" (TheBoss Newspapers, 2024). His role in SNG underscored his commitment to social justice and

good governance, extending his ministry beyond the church walls into the broader Nigerian public sphere.

Bakare's socio-political activism reached a significant milestone when he declared his candidacy for the Nigerian presidency in 2019 under the All Progressives Congress (APC) (Wikipedia, 2025). This presidential bid was a direct manifestation of his belief in "political priesthood," a concept he articulates to justify the involvement of religious leaders in political governance. According to Bakare, political priesthood is a divine calling for certain individuals to bring ethical leadership and spiritual values into the realm of politics (Bakare, 2011). Although he did not succeed in winning the APC primaries, his participation in the electoral process highlighted the increasing intersection of Pentecostal leadership and political ambition in Nigeria. It also provided a platform for him to articulate his vision for national transformation and to advocate for policy reforms from a faith-based perspective.

Controversies

Pastor Tunde Bakare's public pronouncements and actions, while garnering a substantial following, have also been accompanied by notable controversies. His rhetoric has, at times, been perceived as inflammatory, particularly concerning sensitive ethnic and religious issues. For instance, his labeling of Fulani herdsmen as "terrorists" drew sharp criticism and accusations of ethnic profiling and exacerbating inter-ethnic tensions in Nigeria (Vanguard, 2019). Similarly, his public criticisms of Muslim leaders and Islamic practices have led to accusations of Islamophobia from various quarters, raising concerns about religious tolerance and inclusivity in his public discourse (Muslim Rights Concern, 2021).

A particularly polarizing event was Bakare's 2019 prophecy in which he declared himself as Nigeria's "16th president" (Sahara Reporters, 2019). This prophetic declaration was met with mixed reactions. While some of his followers and supporters viewed it as a bold statement of faith and divine destiny, critics widely dismissed it as an act of hubris and self-aggrandizement. The prophecy became a subject of intense public debate and ridicule, with many commentators questioning the appropriateness of such pronouncements from a religious leader. This incident underscored the fine line between prophetic leadership and political ambition, and how such claims can be perceived in a religiously and politically diverse society like Nigeria. These controversies highlight the complex and often contentious nature of religious leaders engaging in the socio-political arena, particularly in contexts marked by ethnic and religious diversity.

Conclusion

The Citadel Global Community Church, formerly the Latter Rain Assembly, stands as a compelling example of the transformative capacity of Nigerian Pentecostalism, effectively blending spiritual authority with proactive socio-political agency. Pastor Tunde Bakare's dual identity as both a pastor and a politician vividly illustrates the evolving and increasingly prominent role of religious clerics in the sphere of national governance in Nigeria (Adogame, 2013). This trend, while viewed by some as a positive integration of faith-based values into public life, is also critically assessed as potentially

problematic due to the complexities of religious influence in secular governance and the risk of blurring the lines between religious and political authority (Marshall, 2009).

On one hand, CGCC's extensive community programs and consistent advocacy for social justice have undeniably played a role in uplifting marginalized groups and addressing critical societal needs. These initiatives reflect a commitment to social responsibility that is commendable and impactful. On the other hand, the church's close alignment with political elites, exemplified by instances such as Bakare's N160 million loan to Governor Nasir el-Rufai, raises legitimate ethical concerns about potential conflicts of interest and the implications of financial relationships between religious organizations and political figures (Premium Times, 2016). These concerns underscore the need for transparency and accountability in the engagements of religious bodies with political entities.

Despite these complexities and controversies, the legacy of CGCC is significantly shaped by its audacious vision for a "New Nigeria." This vision encapsulates a blend of prophetic hope for national renewal and pragmatic strategies for societal reform. It represents an ambitious attempt to fuse spiritual aspirations with concrete actions aimed at transforming Nigeria into a nation that reflects the values and principles espoused by Pastor Bakare and his church. This vision, while aspirational, continues to inspire and mobilize a significant segment of the Nigerian population, highlighting the enduring influence of Pentecostalism in shaping national discourse and aspirations.

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