Contextual Considerations in the Use of Metaphors in Nigerian Pentecostal Christian Discourse

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Abstract

Since the seminal publication of Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) Metaphors We Live By, there has been a sustained stream of scholarly works on the ubiquitous use and interpretation of metaphors in varying domains of human experience. A review of some of these works shows that the use of metaphors by the Pentecostal Christian clergy has not been critically examined. The preponderance of metaphors in this domain makes this gap fundamental as it limits adequate understanding of the discourse function of metaphors in this domain. The purpose of this study was to explore the centrality of context in the use and interpretation of metaphors in Nigerian Pentecostal Christian Discourse. Fifteen recorded sermons of three Nigerian Pentecostal Preachers- Daniel Olukoya, David Oyedepo, and Chris Oyakhilome- were transcribed and the metaphorical aspects of the data determined using the Metaphor Identification Procedure Through Vehicle Terms (MIV) developed by Cameron and Maslen. The derived metaphors were critically analysed using insights from Cameron's Discourse Dynamics Approach to metaphor analysis and Charteris-Black's Critical Metaphor Analysis. The findings of the study reveal that the metaphoricity of an utterance and the discourse function of metaphors in Nigerian Pentecostal Christian Discourse hinge on a holistic consideration of the contextual features of Pentecostal Christian Discourse.

Keywords: metaphor, Pentecostal discourse, context

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1.   Introduction

Since Lakoff and Johnson (1980) came up with their revolutionary work, *Metaphors We Live by* in which they established the prevalence of metaphors in man's daily cognitive experience, there have been increasing attempts by linguists to investigate the nature, use and interpretation of metaphors in varying domains of human life. For instance, Musollf (2004) evaluates the use of metaphor in Nigerian Political Discourse; Cameron (2007) investigates the use of metaphor in reconciliation talks; Weatheral and Walton (1999) capture how metaphors are used to express sexual experiences among the university students of New Zealand. Other such studies include Koller (2004) which appraises the use of metaphor in the business media domain and Abioye (2011) which investigates the use of metaphors by the Catholic clergy, among several others.

A thread that runs through these studies is the centrality of context in not just determining the metaphoricity of an utterance, but also in the principles that regulate the use and interpretation of metaphors in a given discourse genre. This means even though the metaphor, as Semino (2012:1) opines, 'exists in the wild' (meaning it is a ubiquitous feature of our daily language behaviour), it still possesses certain contextual uniqueness in the genre/domain in which it is used. Thus, without being familiar with the linguistic, cultural and situational dimensions of the contextual features of metaphor in given language domain, it will be difficult for discourse analysts to either establish its presence in the discourse in question, or determine its effectiveness as a linguistic tool among the language users. It is along this line of reasoning, perhaps, that Semino (2008) further opines that the metaphor is a pervasive linguistic phenomenon which is varied in its textual manifestations, versatile in the functions it may perform and central to many different types of communication.

This paper appraises the role of context in the use and interpretation of metaphors in Nigerian Pentecostal Christian Discourse. The Nigerian Pentecostal churches selected in the study are The Mountain of Fire and Miracles Ministries, The Living Faith Church (a.k.a. Winners' Chapel), and Christ's Embassy. In Nigeria the Pentecostal movement is one of the fastest growing branches of the Christian religion, with its members cutting across all the strata of the Nigerian society. A survey of its discourse which manifests as praise and worship, prayers, intercessions and prophesies, and especially sermons, shows the intense presence and indispensability of metaphors as linguistic tools in this domain. The Pentecostal clergy especially often rely on the use of metaphoric expressions as a linguistic strategy to realise the goals of Pentecostal Christian Discourse. Thus, an analysis of the role of context in the use of metaphors within this domain will enhance a greater understanding of the uniqueness of language use in Nigerian Pentecostal Christian Discourse.

2.1 <u>A Survey of Nigerian Pentecostal Christian Churches</u>

The Nigerian Pentecostal landscape is assemblage of churches, ranging from mega denominations with branches outside the country, to the smaller ones, struggling for recognition and competing for members within the country. A mega Pentecostal denomination, according to Raina (2006), is a denomination whose membership is beyond 2000. Based on the names, mode of worship and doctrinaire focus of Nigerian Pentecostal churches, the current study classifies them as follows:

    (i) The neo-Classical Pentecostals

    (ii) The Liberal Pentecostals

(ii) The Modern Pentecostals

2.1.1 *The neo-Classical Pentecostals*

These are churches whose teachings tilt more towards the Weslyan notion of Christian Perfectionism. The most visible among these churches are Christ Apostolic Church, founded in 1930 by Apostle Joseph Babalola, the Deeper Life Bible Church, founded in 1973 by Pastor William Folorunsho Kumuyi, and The Lord's Chosen established by Lazarus Muaka in 2002. Although churches under this classification may vary slightly in the degree and extent of their conformity to the Weslyan notion of perfectionism, known among the group as *Sanctification,* one remarkable difference between them and the other two is their strict emphasis on inner purity, peculiar Christian dress code and adornment, 'heavenly mindedness', and separation from 'worldly things'.

2.1.2 *The Liberal Pentecostals*

Although these churches do not outrightly object to the teachings of their neo-classical counterparts, they exhibit a liberality in their teaching and enforcement of these doctrines among their members, which the *neo-Classicals* consider as compromise of doctrine. By their religio- social disposition and mode of worship, these churches are in between the other two extremes, with some of them trying to strike a balance in terms of doctrine. Some churches in the *liberal* group are Bishop David Oyedepo of the Living Faith Church, Pastor (Dr) Paul Enenche of the Dunamis Gospel International Centre, Omega Fire Ministries founded by Apostle Johnson Suleman, etc. Another feature of some of the churches in this group is their effort to 'Nigerianise' Pentecostalism in order for it to have 'local flavour', yet not losing its European coloration. This is why in most of the churches, praise and worship are taken in both English and Nigerian languages, with the congregation always dancing to a blend of both Western and African local musical instruments. This is one major strength they seem to have over their neo-classical counterparts in terms of their appeal to the indigenous Nigerian Christians**.**

2.1.3 *The Modern Pentecostals*

This group of churches constitutes another extreme in Nigerian Pentecostalism. In matters on which the Christian Bible makes clear-cut statements of doctrine and on which both the neo-Classicals and

the liberals will stick with the Bible (albeit with sometimes slight variations), the modern Pentecostals usually adopt a *truth- is- relative position.*

Ibileye and Okpeh (2014) note that the speech events that take place in a gathering of Pentecostal Christian believers are conceptualized as Pentecostal Christian Discourse. Consequently, the emphasis in this usage excludes books and literature written by Pentecostal preachers, even though such writings can be said to be part of the corpus of data that exists generally as Pentecostal Christian Discourse. These speech events include prayers, songs, advertorials and sermons. The foregoing already clearly marks out the Pentecostal movement as a huge social institution within the larger society where members use language uniquely to enact social activities.

2.   Methodology

The study uses a qualitative method of data collection and analysis. The data of the study were purposively sampled from the sermons of three Nigerian Pentecostal preachers: Pastor Daniel Olukoya (Founder of the Mountain of Fire and Miracles Ministries), Bishop David Oyedepo (Presiding Bishop of the Living Faith Church, a.ka *Winners' Chapel*) and Pastor Chris Oyakhilome (Founder and President of Christ's Embassy). The rationale behind this selection is the fact that in terms of doctrinaire and on the basis of their mode of worship, each of these churches represents one of the three broad groups into which the study has classified Nigerian Pentecostal churches. Whereas, for instance, Olukoya represents the neo-Classical, conservative group, Oyakhilome represents the modern Pentecostals while Oyedepo represents the Liberal group.

The data of the study were gathered from a total of 30 recorded sermons (10 sermons from each group), preached by these pastors to their various congregations, between the period of 2014 and 2015, in diverse situational contexts such as Crusades, Revivals, Ministers' Conferences, monthly and end of the year conventions, consequently giving the data a wide spread of thematic concerns. The CD recorded method of data collection was used to enable the researcher to access 'live metaphors' in a natural speech context that is devoid of artificiality. The 30 CD recorded sermons were played repeatedly to obtain accurate transcriptions of data. Since the focus in the transcription of the data was on the metaphorical aspects of the sermons, the Metaphor Identification Procedure through Vehicle terms (MIV), suggested by Cameron and Maslen (2010), is used in the study to identify metaphorical terms. An adaption of the Pragglejaz's Group (2007) Metaphor Identification Procedure (MIP), Cameron and Maslen's MIV model includes the following steps: 1. The researcher familiarizes himself with the discourse data. 2. The researcher works through the data for possible metaphors 3.

Each metaphor is checked for its meaning in the discourse context, the existence of another more basic meaning, an incongruity or contrast between these meanings and a transfer from the basic to the contextual meaning. 4. If the possible metaphor satisfies each of the criteria above, it is coded as metaphor. The basic meaning of the metaphorically used words(s) can be determined through the use of external resources such as the Macmillan English Dictionary.

The suitability of the model in the present study hinges on its emphasis on metaphorically used words or phrases as metaphor vehicles, rather than single words; and it is in this regard that it differs from MIP.

3.   Approaches to Context in Metaphor Analysis

Perhaps no other term is more frequently used along with discourse than context. The reason for this hinges largely on the indispensability of context in the analysis of discourse. Besides serving as the basis for encoding, decoding and analysing language use in a given discourse, the knowledge of context is necessary for characterizing different language behaviours into their discourse genres. For instance, it is the contextual features of language use within the political domain that characterizes the discourse emanating from such use as uniquely *political*. The same discourse situated within a religious context will certainly be characterized as *religious,* as its meaning within this new context will be conceptualized along religious lines. It is this dynamic interaction between context and discourse that has engendered varying theoretical postulations on the subject. Like most scholarly concepts, no single definition or theory of context has sufficiently encapsulated all the analytical requirements of language use in discourse. In this section of the study, attempts are made to examine some modern approaches to context in metaphor analysis, and to point out the key tenets of these approaches which will be synthesised with the contextual features of Pentecostalism to form a 'new' contextual theoretical framework with which the data of the study will be analysed.

One of such approaches is Charteris-Black's (2004) Critical Metaphor Analysis, which is a theoretical approach to metaphor studies which seeks to establish a nexus in metaphor analysis between CDA, conceptual metaphor theory, and pragmatics. An essentially discourse- model to metaphor analysis, the approach, as Charteris-Black himself describes it, 'focuses on unveiling the covert intentions ideologies underlying language use' (2004: 20). One of the most useful contributions of the theory to metaphor analysis is its proposal of a three phase systematic model for metaphor analysis. These phases are: metaphor identification, metaphor interpretation, and metaphor explanation. The first phase- metaphor identification- is descriptive. At this phase, candidate metaphors must meet

linguistic, pragmatic and cognitive criteria to qualify for analysis. In meeting the linguistic criteria, a candidate metaphor should generate semantic tension by reification, personification, and depersonification. The criteria relate to the possibility of a candidate metaphor to be able to influence opinions and judgments through persuasion within a given discourse context. In the cognitive criteria, emphasis is on the conceptual contrast resulting from the use of a metaphor. The second phase of metaphor analysis, according to the theory, is metaphor interpretation, and here, the focus is on the ability of the identified metaphors to construct a socially important representation of reality between the speaker and his audience. The last phase is metaphor explanation, and at this stage the analysis centres essentially on the social agency that is involved in the use of metaphor for persuasion. It is also at this stage that the discourse functions of metaphor that permits us to establish its ideological potency and its rhetorical motivation are determined. The relevance of the foregoing model to the current study lies in both its systematicity as a framework for metaphor analysis, and the broadness of its scope in terms of which the metaphoricity of linguistic expressions and their analysis does not only bestride three aspects of linguistics, but also borrows insights from other theoretical approaches to discourse.

Another approach is the Discourse Dynamics Approach to Metaphor Analysis formulated by Cameron (2010). In the approach, linguistic metaphors are conceptualized as research tools that can be employed to uncover the socio-cultural conventions of a people's and a language users' attitude, ideas, and values through discourse analysis; hence emphasis is placed in the approach on a ' a discourse led metaphor analysis.' According to Cameron et al. (2009), metaphor in the Discourse Dynamics Approach is seen 'not as a static fixed mapping, but as a temporary stability emerging from the activity of inter-connecting systems of socially-situated use and cognitive activity' (p. 64). Commenting on the processual and emergent nature of the discourse dynamic approach, Cameron et al. opine that 'Metaphor, whether conceptual or linguistic, from the discourse dynamics perspective, becomes processual, emergent and opened to change. Rather seeing metaphor as a tool or some other kind of object that is put to use, a processual view attends to metaphor activity. Metaphor is not part of a system that is put to use; from a dynamic perspective there is only use'' (p. 67). The dynamic nature of the approach, according to Cameron et al., arises from the unfolding of the complex interactiveness of the subsystems of each of the speakers involved in the discourse activity. These subsystems, according them include 'complex dynamic language systems, complex dynamic cognitive systems, and complex dynamic physical systems' which are all connected outwards into an environmental and cultural system (p. 66). Metaphor in this approach is seen by Cameron et al (2009) as real discourse activity that emerges through a dynamic process of an evolving discourse activity over different timescales; thus its interpretation must not just be situated within the context

of the world of the discourse from where the metaphor emerged, but must factor in, the roles of the various subsystems involved in the dynamic processes that make up the discourse.

The metaphoricity of a word thus depends on an integrative consideration of all the intricate dimensions of a spontaneous discourse activity. Although the approach borrows insights from Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) Conceptual Metaphor Theory, it is, in the foregoing regard, a marked departure from it in that it conceptualizes metaphors as resources in the 'negotiations of social reality' (Ritchie 2010: 60). Consequently, in terms of data, the overriding concern in the approach is active language use. Commenting on the dynamic nature of metaphor in the approach, Cameron (2010: 6) remarks as follows:

> As text and talk proceed, linguistic metaphors are selected, adapted, and built on with subsequent metaphors. Metaphor dynamics may result from the process of interaction, as one participant in interaction responds to another, or from development of ideas as a speaker or a writer builds an argument, clarifies the position, or constructs a description,. Our object of concern are not isolated linguistic metaphors, but strings of connected metaphors and the patterns of meaning that the produce or reflect.

In using the Discourse Dynamic Approach for metaphor analysis, Cameron suggests the need for the researcher to identify metaphors in relevant discourse, reveal the discourse functions of the metaphor, find patterns in metaphor use and function, make inferences about the people using the metaphor, and then find systematicity in how the use of linguistic metaphors in the discourse leads to establishing systematic metaphors. The foregoing are significant tenets of this approach that are relevant to the analysis of the data of the present study.

4.   A Description of the Context of Pentecostal Christian Discourse

Metaphors are very central to the language of Pentecostal Christian discourse. Thus an adequate understanding of their operations within this discourse domain must be situated within a theoretical framework that is predicated on the context of Pentecostalism. As a discourse, Pentecostalism refers to all forms of theologically motivated communication that take place in a Pentecostal Christian domain, and can exist in either the spoken mode or the written mode, but more frequently in the former mode. Aspects of the discourse include sermons, prayers, songs, announcements, advertisements, oral testimonies and even dramas. Consequently, the register of the discourse is characterised with concepts, words and phrases from the Christian Bible, which is considered the final

arbiter in all matters relating to the Christian faith. Even though some of the words that feature in the language of the discourse are the same words used in secular, everyday, 'non-religious' discourses, the religious goal and contextual basis of their usage still stand them out as the language of Pentecostalism. Consequently, the analysis of especially the metaphoric aspects of its language should recognise the theological peculiarity of these words.

The setting of the discourse is made up of both the spiritual and the temporal worlds. Although abstract in its conceptualization, the spiritual world is believed by Pentecostal Christians to be as real as its physical counterpart. The spiritual world is dominated by the forces of good and evil, with God and his angels being the embodiment of the good and Satan and his cohorts representing the bad. These two opposing forces are believed to be in fierce contest for the allegiance of man who is at liberty to decide which to subscribe to. It is the understanding of this conflict that usually evokes the war metaphors in the prayers and songs of most Pentecostal denominations.

Another aspect of the spiritual setting of Nigerian Pentecostal Christian Discourse relates to a controversial aspect of the Cognitive Metaphor Theory, namely conceptual metaphor identification. The claim in the theory is that patterns in everyday conventional linguistic expressions suggest the existence of a system of conventional conceptual metaphors such as ARGUMENT IS WAR, LOVE IS A JOURNEY, MORE IS UP (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980), and several other well-known conceptual metaphors, and the contents and structure of well-known metaphor databases such as Goatly's (2005) *Metalude* and Lakoff et al.'s (1991) *Master Metaphor List* seems to exclude the existence of other conceptual metaphors that may not be popular in cognitive linguistic literature. However, the question of cultural differences in linguistic metaphor usage demonstrates the possibility of the existence of conceptual metaphors that may not be known in cognitive linguistic literature.

An evaluation of the worldview of Nigerian Pentecostal Christians therefore reveals one of such uncommon metaphors, the SPIRITUAL LIFE IS PHYSICAL LIFE conceptual metaphor. This broad conceptual metaphor is hinged on a belief in a metaphorical 'life entity' which, although abstract in conceptualization, can be mapped on to the experiential life of the temporal world. Thus, every feature, activity and component of man's physical life in the temporal world has a metaphorical representation in the abstracted 'life entity' in the spiritual world. However, before the features and mapping process of this conceptual metaphor are discussed, it must be noted that in Christian Discourse generally, this conceptual metaphor is sometimes not immediately discernible, as spiritual life is sometimes deliberately portrayed as being significantly different from physical life. This distinction is especially so in the light of the interpretation of such popular Biblical statements in Christian Discourse as *the spirit is willing but the flesh is weak*, *Give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar,*

and to <u>God</u> what belongs to God; *The <u>Spirit</u> fights against the <u>flesh</u> and the flesh against the spirit*, etc (Mathew 26:41; Mark 12:17; Galatians 5: 17, with my emphasis). The 'spirit' and the 'flesh' in the above quotations are generally interpreted by the Christian discourse community as the 'spiritual life' and the 'physical life', respectively. Similarly, 'Caesar' being a human represents the 'physical life', whereas 'God' being a spiritual being represents the 'spiritual life'.

This general distinction notwithstanding, the SPIRITUAL LIFE IS PHYSICAL LIFE conceptual metaphor remains one fundamental feature of the setting of Nigerian Pentecostal Christian Discourse. A critical survey of the discourse reveals that Pentecostal Christians unconsciously conceptualize spiritual life in terms of physical life. Such features of physical life as death, growth, happiness, birth, sorrow, marriage, divorce, war, and such activities and components of man's life as rest, walk, work, journeys, sex and romance, wrestling, sleeping, eating, and dancing are metaphorically depicted in the 'life entity' of the spiritual world. It is in this sense that a Christian who is literally alive can be described by a Pentecostal preacher to be either in a state of 'coma' or even 'spiritually dead', or a <u>male</u> Christian said to be the 'bride' of Christ; or the faith of a Christian said to have been 'attacked', or under a 'siege', listening to a sermon described as eating 'spiritual food'. It is this broad conceptual metaphor which dominates the subconscious minds of Pentecostal Christians that is the source of every other metaphor or metaphoric expression in Pentecostal Christian Discourse. Consequently, the understanding of its centrality to the context of Pentecostal Christian Discourse is pivotal to the use, interpretation and analysis of metaphors within this domain.

The temporal setting also includes such religious events as prayer meetings and bible studies, crusades and revivals, naming ceremonies and child dedications, funeral services, Sunday worship services, etc, plus the themes/topics of the sermons and exhortations preached and given at these events. The significance of this to the analysis of metaphors within the Pentecostal domain is how these events influence the choices made by the Pentecostal clergy in their use of metaphors. Except on rare occasions when the contents of the discourse do not tally with the theme/topic of the event, the choice of metaphors by the Pentecostal clergy is usually influenced by the type and nature of the event that necessitates the use. Also significant about this aspect of the setting is the display of intense emotionalism during the service, which usually manifests in loud and vigorous singing, intermittent eruptions of affirmative responses from the members, and loud praying and 'speaking in tongues', all of which are absent in the worship style of the Orthodox and Catholic Christians. This unique feature of the context of Pentecostalism is understood against the background of the historical context of the birth of Pentecostalism in Los Angeles on April 14[th,] 1906. Reporting what transpired that day, Beckar (2004: 8) remarks about:

> ... the waves of glory that ... hit the meeting room and the people responded by crying out in prayers of thanksgiving ... and received the baptism in the Holy Spirit. Some worshippers were speaking in tongues while others were engulfed in 'holy quietness' or 'slain in spirit' which is a trans-were state where the person would fall to the floor unconscious and receive visions from the Lord.

The tenor of Pentecostal Christian discourse is premised on a hierarchical ideology that recognises the unquestionable role and authority of an 'overseer', or a group of overseers, considered to be the 'men of God' from whom the other discourse participants, social actors in the discourse, must always take instructions. These overseers, whose titles vary from Pastor, Evangelist, Bishop, Prophet, Reverend to even Apostle, are considered to be the visible representatives of God who is also believed to be invisibly present in the congregation. The 'men of God' coordinate the liturgical activities of the worship session, on God's behalf, by determining who says *what*, *how* and w*hen* in the course of the service. As God's representatives and 'mouth pieces' to the congregation, whatever they say (especially within the context of a Pentecostal Christian gathering) is considered sacrosanct and divine, as God is always believed to be speaking through them.

This ideology is physically reflected even in the architectural design of the building, and seating arrangement of the members, of most Pentecostal Christian churches. In a typical Pentecostal gathering, there is usually an elevated platform considered to be the 'altar' on which only the overseers or 'men of God' sit. Usually sitting close to the altar are the associate pastors/deacons (who can be mandated by the 'Man of God' to carry out one or two activities in the course of the service). Almost on a par with this group in the sitting arrangement are the choristers whose closeness to the altar is premised on the understanding that they should herald, by way of singing, the message coming from God thorough the 'Man of God'. Next to the associate pastors are the team of church workers who serve in various units such as ushering, sanitation, the technical crew, etc. The last in the structure of power relations and chart of information flow is the general congregation (comprising young men and women, the aged and sometimes children) who all sit together. Even in this general group, a distinction is usually made in the pastor's consciousness between the newcomers and the 'old timers'. This heterogeneous composition of the congregation influences the choices the pastor makes in his use of metaphor. To reach out to the needs of all the worshipers within a single sermon, or during a prophetic session, the pastor has to consciously select metaphoric expressions that will bring the message home to the intended group within the larger group in such vividness and clarity that they cannot misinterpret. Figure 1 shows a diagrammatic representation of this hierarchical ideology.
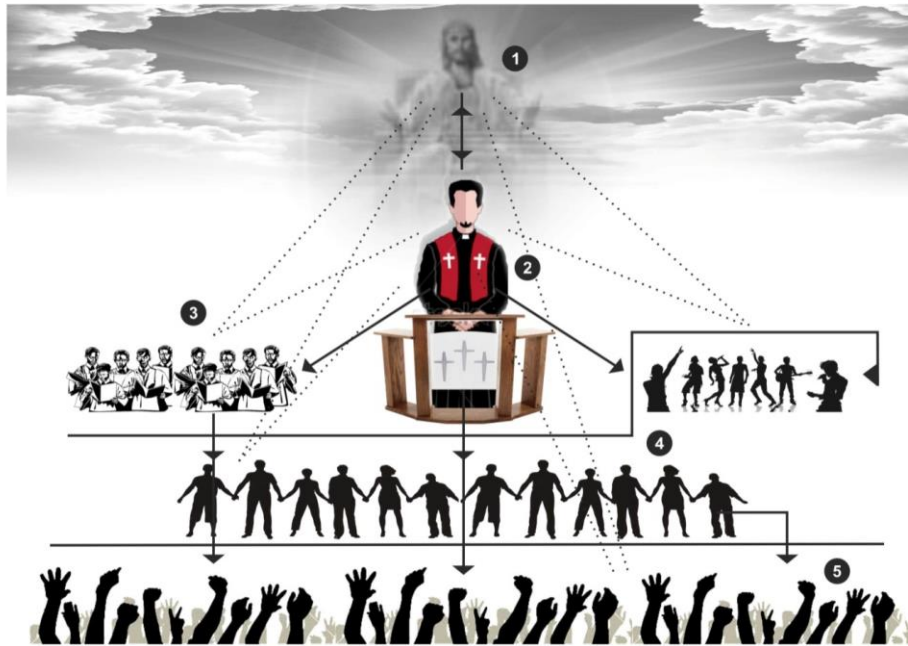
Key:

1: God.

2. Senior Pastor/Founder.

3: Associate Pastors.

4: Team of Church Workers.

5: Members

Source: The Author

Fig. 1: The Structure of Power Relations and information flow in a typical Nigerian Pentecostal Christian Church

As is obvious from Figure 1, the nature of power relations and information flow in Pentecostal Christian discourse is rigidly *top to bottom*, and flexibly *bottom to top.* This means the information that flows from the upper echelon (represented by the thick arrows descending downward) has a more domineering and hegemonic influence on its recipients than the information that goes up (represented by the dotted lines ascending upward). The flexibility of the *bottom–top* information flow is because of its susceptibility to the whims and caprices of those at the higher strata of the organogram represented by the Senior Pastor, who is always both the sole initiator of the discourse and the chief controller of its turn-taking mechanism. The structure of the discourse is such that the general congregation who are at the base of the hierarchy hardly ever initiate the discourse; their contributions to the discourse usually in form of prayers or intermittent affirmative responses during worship or the sermon, are responses to instructions from the top.

A very key feature of the analysis of language use in Pentecostal Christian discourse is what can be called *recursive contextualization*. The term is used here to conceptualize the serialization of the various contexts that usually exist within the broad contextual space of Pentecostalism. The theory in practice means that the interpretation of every fragment of discourse or language use in a Pentecostal domain is usually within a given context which is also a microcosm of a wider context, itself also a part of a much wider context in a recursive process of contextualization. In this connection, the immediate context of a given sermonic or prophetic discourse is not usually sufficient to provide an adequate explanation of the pragmatic import of such a discourse.

For instance, the metaphoric expression, 'With this mantle in your hand you will cross the Red Sea of life' made by Bishop Oyedepo in the data of the study, (see number 79 in appendix) will be interpreted not only within the immediate situational context of the sermon in which the utterance was made; recourse would be made, for a more comprehensive interpretation and analysis, to other dimensions of contexts, the first of which is the linguistic context of the metaphorically used words (in this case, *mantle* and *Red Sea*). Here the consideration is on the basic, literal meaning of the word in the target domain from which they were sourced. Since the linguistic meanings of the metaphorically used words are insufficient to comprehend the metaphors (as they obviously are not the meanings intended by the preacher), recourse is unconsciously made to the situate the linguistic meanings within a broader context of situation of the utterance (the basic features of which are *what* the pastor is doing, *where* he is doing it, and other extra linguistic considerations).

It is the knowledge of the context of situation that creates the semantic tension between the source domain of the metaphor and its target domain. The context of situation here is a Pentecostal church situation where a pastor is preaching to a congregation. However, to understand the pragmatic import of the metaphors, the context of situation has to lodged in yet another context, the context of culture where the consideration is on the cultural norms, values and circumstances surrounding the interpretation of the metaphor from the biblical point of view, which supposedly resides in the consciousness of both the preacher and the congregation. It is within this last context that the discourse goal of the metaphor is realized. Analysis of how the metaphor functions in Pentecostal Christian discourse is hinged on an integrative consideration of these various dimensions of contexts. The diagram below illustrates this serial contextualization process.
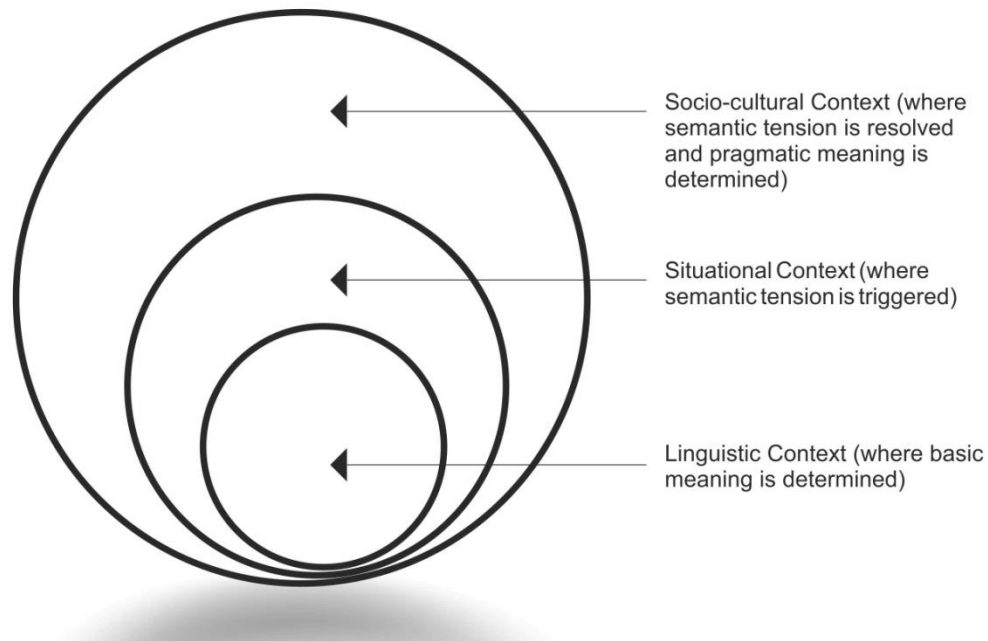
Fig. 2: The Principle of 'Recursive Contextualization' in Nigerian Pentecostal Christian Discourse

Source: The Author

5.   Discussion

For space constraints, the bulk of the data of the study is presented separately as an appendix at the end of the study, to which reference is constantly made in the course of the analysis. What is presented below are findings resulting from the analysis of the data.

6.1 Functions of Metaphors in Nigerian Pentecostal Christian Discourse

Metaphors are central to the language of Pentecostal Christian Discourse. One of the key evidences of this centrality is the metaphorical density of most of the utterances that make up the data of the study. Like in every other discourse genre where the metaphor is used, its function in Pentecostal Christian discourse is highly context-dependent. Consequently, an understanding of the principles governing its operations (as described in the earlier parts of this paper) is pivotal to any reliable analysis and interpretation that will be made of the discourse functions of metaphor within this context.

One of the foremost functions of metaphors in Pentecostal Christian Discourse is their use in concretizing the abstract notions of Pentecostal Christianity. Like every other religion, Pentecostal Christianity operates in abstraction in that most of the concepts, ideas and experiences it projects are components of a spiritual world believed in Pentecostal theology to be as 'real' as its physical counterpart, and so should be accepted by faith, even though this 'reality' is neither visible nor tangible to the human senses. However, since Pentecostal Christians function and operate in a visible world, a means must be sought via metaphor to 'concretize' the invisibility of their spirituality. The Pentecostal clergy therefore use metaphors to lodge their teachings within the daily human experiences of their flock, who will also in turn be able to effectively communicate their spiritual experiences among one another, and to their leaders, through the same agency.

Many utterances in the data of the study vividly illustrate the foregoing. For example, the invisible relationship that is believed by Pentecostal Christians to exist between 'born again' Christians and God is metaphorically conceptualized by a human family relationship where God is said to be the Father and the Christians believed to be His children. The underlined words in such expressions as _heir of Christ, bonafide son and daughter of God, child of God, Papa God,_ among others, contained in the Metaphor of Filial Relationship in the data of the study (See nos. 59, 60, 62, 89, 67 of appendix) illustrate how the metaphor can concretize obviously abstract concepts and notions. These metaphorical expressions first and foremost concretize the various stages of spiritual growth a 'born again' Christian is believed to experience from the point of his 'spiritual birth' to the stage of maturity. First, he/she is a 'child', then a 'son/daughter', and finally an 'heir', the stage of maturity when he has the legal right to step in to the inheritance of his father. (See the use of 'mature sons' at number 65 of the Appendix).

Analysis of the metaphor also portrays 'born again' Christians as not just belonging to the same 'spiritual' family, but also as having a filial relationship with God. The concretization of this father-children relationship as depicted in the above metaphors are obviously not to be viewed in biological 'terms; but rather in terms of God taking the prototypical role of a father – protection from danger, provision for material needs, moral guidance, etc, and the Christian taking on the prototypical attributes of dependency'. (Charteris-Black, 2004: 175). By the use of these metaphors, the preachers attempt to concretize the notion of unlimited access Pentecostal Christians believe they have to God. A further analysis of the metaphors in question shows that although the relationship between the born again Christian in this context goes with all the filial duties usually expected of sons, daughters, heirs and children within the human family system, within this context, it is a relationship of informality. This discourse function of metaphor within the context of Pentecostalism illustrates a fundamental ideological difference between Pentecostal Christianity and other religions of the world

in which God is conceptualized with a sense of awe, dread and inaccessibility to his creatures. Thus, these same metaphors situated within the context of these other religions will be semantically incongruous and pragmatically inappropriate.

Several other conceptual metaphors in the data of this study with their metaphorical expressions, also clearly function in the discourse as potent means of concretizing the abstraction of Pentecostal spirituality.

Another discourse function of metaphors in the Pentecostal domain is their use by the clergy for rhetorical effect in sermons and prayers. Rhetorical devices are linguistic devices used by speakers to enhance their communicative effectiveness, which is pertinent to the realization of the discourse goals of Pentecostal spirituality. The thematic features of Pentecostal Christian Discourse deviate markedly from those of mainstream Christianity. Consequently, to retain their flock and win more converts, the Pentecostal clergy should have a communicative edge over their orthodox counterparts. The emotive properties of metaphors that give them a rhetorical and therefore persuasive edge make them an effective communicative weapon in the hands of the Pentecostal clergy. Perhaps this is so because more than any other sect within Christianity, Pentecostal Christianity is a profoundly emotional spirituality, and this is understandable against the historical context of its origin. A typical Pentecostal Christian worship session is characterized with intense emotionalism which manifests in sensational worship, vigorous singing and dancing, prophecies and 'speaking in tongues', loud prayers, etc. Thus any language use that will be suitable in such an atmosphere has to possess the ability to either trigger such emotionalism, or sustain it. Consequently, the choice and use by the preachers of such emotionally-laden metaphorical expressions as *boiling anger, angelic firing squad, angels of fire, spiritual civil war, bullets of prayer, holy ghost fir*e, *fire that consumes fire, unquenchable fire, faith fire,* among several others (See nos.5, 8, 9, 2, 4, 29 & 32, 36, 35, of the Appendix) contained in the data of the study are intended for rhetorical effect. For example, the underlined lexical metaphors in *boiling anger, bullets of prayer, faith fire* and similar terms in the data of the study are emotionally packed, and their usage within this context are intended by the preacher to stir up the emotion of the congregation in order that they might pray fervently against the undesirable experiences they go through which are believed to be caused by spiritual forces. Also, the pictorial effect of such metaphorical expressions as *fire that consumes fire, unquenchable fire, holy ghost fir*e as used by the preachers enables the congregation to 'see' the activities and entities depicted in the expressions from the preachers' point of view. Not only is this rhetorical function of metaphor in this context pivotal to the theological foundation and philosophical motivation of Pentecostalism as a religious movement, its effectiveness hinges on mutual beliefs shared by the preachers and their congregation, regarding the pragmatic import of the metaphorically used words within the context of the Christian Bible. It is

the absence of this contextual consideration that will make the rhetorical function of these metaphors to fail in a different religious context where the metaphors have negative connotation in their religious world view.

Another contextual consideration needed for the rhetorical potency of metaphors in Nigerian Pentecostal Christian Discourse is the need for the clergy to recognize and factor in the heterogeneous composition of the membership of their congregation in their choice of metaphors. A typical Nigerian Pentecostal mega church is made up of worshippers from varying social and educational backgrounds. In order not to leave out any class of worshippers within the congregation, the pastors often deliberately use metaphors of different conceptual domains to accomplish a rhetorical goal within a given sermonic discourse. An evidence of this is the broad and multiple spread of various conceptual metaphors in the data of the study. For instance, besides the FIRE and WAR conceptual metaphors in the data of the study, there are other ones such plant metaphors, metaphor of trade and commerce, biblical metaphors, and metaphor of banking (see Appendix), all of which reflect the heterogeneity of the membership of a typical Nigerian Pentecostal church. Therefore, the use by the clergy of lexical metaphors that reveal the above conceptual metaphor categories do not only reflect the clergy's broad knowledge of these domains of human experience; it, more significantly, demonstrates their understanding of, and sensitivity to, the professional affiliations and social backgrounds of their followers, a consideration necessary to carry all the congregation along in the course of the sermon. Sometimes however, depending on the focus of the sermon, a given metaphor category can be more preponderantly used by the clergy. In such cases, it is the topic of the sermonic discourse that determines the choice and use of metaphor by the clergy. In a sermon on victory in Christian living, for instance, it will be natural for the preacher to engage more WAR metaphors in order for both rhetorical purposes, and the need for him to achieve the discourse goal of the sermon.

The use of metaphors in Pentecostal Christian Discourse serves the purpose of establishing a relationship between the Pentecostal clergy and their flock. This relationship is important in order for the clergy, not just to realise the goals of Pentecostalism as a religious movement, but to be able to sustain their hegemonic influence on their congregation. This discourse goal of metaphor is very much illustrated in the following utterances contained in the Metaphor of Filial Relationship made by Oyedepo who represents the Liberal Group in our categorization of Nigerian Pentecostal preachers:

i. *There's a unique breakthrough unction to which every bonafide son and daughter of this prophet is entitled. (no.62)*

ii. *You must leave here this morning with an undeniable proof that the spirit of your father is resting on you.* (no.63)

iii.   *Tell the Lord to make you a child of this Prophet. (no. 60)*

iv.   *Receive a duplication of the grace on me as your father in the name of Jesus. (no.64)*

Any correct interpretation of the above metaphoric expressions must be contextualized against the background of the tenor of Pentecostal Christian Discourse. The tenor of the discourse is structured on a hierarchical relationship which recognises first, an overseer of the church believed to have been appointed by God to manage the affairs of the church on God's behalf; next to whom are his associate ministers (who also discharge leadership responsibilities on the instructions of the overseer), and then the members of the congregation who are at the base of the organogram (see Figure 2). Both the choice and the use of the above metaphorical expressions and their interpretation must be situated against this contextual consideration, otherwise it will be difficult for the congregation to 'co-operate' with their pastors and overseers in the realization of the discourse goal of the metaphorical expressions. The underlined metaphors in *every bonafide son and daughter of this prophet* suggest the preacher's effort to create a filial bond and affinity between him and the congregation. In this relationship, the 'sons' and 'daughters' of the prophet (like the biological offspring of a man) are usually dependent on the prophet for 'spiritual' nourishment and direction because the latter is considered to be the 'mouth piece' of God. Also, the use of the word 'bonafide' to qualify son *and daughter* is a pragmatic attempt to secure the submission of the members who should ordinarily do everything to be 'bonafide' sons and daughters of the 'prophet'. The semantic tension in the use of these metaphors will be difficult to resolve in a speech context where the tenor of discourse has a different structuring.

Closely related to the above is the role of metaphor in both linguistic and cognitive creativity. Semantically, metaphor binds its users in a joint act of meaning creation that is originally outside the semantic system of the language (Charteris-Black, 2004). Such expressions from the data of the study as *memory bank of the waters, spiritual antenna, marine bank accounts, satanic ware house*, etc, associated with the Neo-Classical Group (See nos. 90, 96, 89 & 94 in the Appendix) illustrate a novel meaning-creation exercise. Their use in this context widens, not just the semantic system of Pentecostal language, but also that of the English Language which, like other languages, has a continually evolving system that is open to new words, and extended or new meanings of old words. Although the words that make up these metaphorical expressions already have well-established meanings in the registers where they are drawn from, their use in this context (especially as noun phrases) is a novel linguistic attempt at naming and describing phenomena that are unique to the Pentecostal Discourse Community. For example, *memory bank of the waters* and *marine bank accounts, satanic warehouse* are, within the context of Pentecostal Christian Discourse, metaphorical names for 'spiritual' strongholds where the spiritual and material benefits of Christians are believed

to seized and kept by spiritual forces supposedly living in the waters. Similarly, *spiritual antenna* is a metaphorical conceptualization of some kind of 'spiritual synergy' believed among Nigerian Pentecostal Christians to exist in the spiritual world against them. The cognitive dimension of this creative potential of metaphors in Nigerian Pentecostal Discourse is their usefulness in stimulating new ways of thinking and conceptualizing familiar concepts. Each of the metaphoric expressions cited above illustrates a cognitive interaction between two contexts and domains of human experiences, the result of which is a new conceptualization of the topic of the metaphoric expression.

In religious discourse generally, metaphors serve a discourse function of providing social direction and leadership by exploring the potentials and possibilities of a better world. Within the context of Pentecostalism, this function is realized through the use of the metaphors conceptually christened in the data of the study as 'Biblical Metaphors', which are metaphorical allusions to characters and phenomena in the Bible. The linguistic expressions of this conceptual metaphor in the study are utterances such as *the powers of the world to come, end time army of saviours, realm of the world to come, heaven on earth, angelic world, the Joshuas and the Elishas of this prophet*, etc (See nos. 76, 77, 81, 86, 83 in Appendix). Joshua and Elijah are two figures in Biblical narratives who played very significant roles in the history of the ancient Israel. The former was said to have led the children of Israel to the Promised Land while the latter brought an end to idolatrous practices in ancient Israel. The metaphorical allusion made to them here, does not just illustrate the possibility of a better and more sublime world that can be explored by the adherents of the Pentecostal faith, but also provides social direction as these biblical characters are projected as beacon of moral rectitude to Pentecostal Christians. The allusion made to 'the world to come' 'angelic world', 'heaven on earth', 'feast of heaven' are, from the biblical point of view, graphic depiction of a human society devoid of all the social vices such as crime, robbery, poverty and lack, corruption, murder etc that are typical features of the present world system. This knowledge is mutually understood by both the Pentecostal clergy and their followers, hence the success of this discourse function of the metaphorical expressions.

6.   Conclusion

The metaphorical density of the utterances of Pentecostal preachers, as revealed in the data of the study and discussed in its analysis, shows that metaphoric language is central to the discourse of Pentecostalism as a social practice. However, the successful realization of the discourse goals of metaphors as linguistic tools in this domain hinges on a proper understanding of not only the operational dynamics of metaphorical language in the domain, but also the uniqueness of the context

of Nigerian Pentecostal Christian Discourse, the operational features of which include the linguistic context of the metaphorically used word(s), the situational context of the ongoing discourse (including its setting), and a larger socio-cultural context where the pragmatic meaning of the metaphorical expressions is determined and the discourse goal of the metaphor(s) realised. All of these 'sub-contexts', it was argued, occur in a recursive process of contextualization. The findings of the study thus reveal that context is so pivotal to Nigerian Pentecostal Christian Discourse that metaphoricity, the usage and the discourse goals of metaphors in this domain cannot be correctly interpreted and understood without a holistic consideration of all the contextual features of Pentecostal Christian Discourse. It is from this 'contextual perspective' that a given metaphor category can realize a different discourse function when situated in a different discourse domain. Consequently, metaphoricity, metaphor usage, function, and its interpretation are sensitive to issues of cross-cultural differences.

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Appendix

CLASSIFICATION OF METAPHORS IN PENTCOSTAL CHRISTIAN DISCOUSE

The words in brackets are the names of the Nigerian Pentecostal Pastors from whose sermons the data were sourced. These pastors represent the three broad groups into which Nigerian Pentecostal churches are classified in the study.

A. War Metaphor

1. The enemy has *bombarded* you with accumulated debts; you shall be delivered in Jesus name. **(Olukoya)**
2. Let this dust release *spiritual civil war*, scattering violent angels against my enemies. **(Olukoya)**
3. Let the light of God *crush* every darkness in your life in Jesus name. **(Olukoya)**
4. Your *bullet of prayer* shall put your enemies on the run. **(Olukoya)**
5. Pray and *decree it with boiling anger.* **(Olukoya)**
6. Their neck and their legs with their *chains of warfare shall be broken.* **(Olukoya)**
7. Locate the unprotected *forehead of your Goliath.* **(Olukoya)**
8. *Angelic firing squad*, shoot my evil load in the name of Jesus. **(Olukoya)**
9. *The battle line* is drawn by the enemy against the children, the young and the aged in our generation. **(Olukoya)**
10. Faith is a dynamic *weapon of our warfare*.**(Oyedepo)**
11. God is saying 'I am turning your *financial captivity* around. **(Oyedepo)**
12. We engage in *spiritual warfare* to ensure the fulfilment of prophetic utterance. **(Oyedepo)**
13. The devil is a *sworn adversary resisting* our access to God's inheritance. **(Oyedepo)**
14. Fasting is the platform for *resisting spiritual strongholds* and *overpowering oppositions* on the path of destiny. **(Oyedepo)**
15. Pride is a destroyer of destiny we must *wage war against* it. **(Oyedepo)**
16. God is raising giants in *this army* that will shake their world **(Oyedepo)**
17. God has not left his children to be *victims* in life. **(Chris)**
18. Sometimes God gets his people to sing their way to the place of *battle*, because he is the extraordinary *strategist*. **(Chris)**
19. Live everyday with a sense of *victory*. **(Chris)**
20. Some issues of doctrines are *contentious* among Christians. **(Chris)**
21. God sometimes has to train his children in order that might trust him to *fight their battles*. **(Chris)**
22. When demons *collide* with us, they flee! **(Chris)**
23. When sickness *attacks* your body, don't cry because the law of the Spirit will overthrow it. **(Chris)**
24. The bible tells us there are *weapons* given to us; we don't sleep with these weapons, we use them to make war with. **(Chris)**
25. You are taken *captive* with the words of your mouth. **(Chris)**

B. Fire Metaphor

26. The evil garment on your body is *catching fire*. **(Olukoya)**
27. The satanic warehouse and bank holding your breakthrough shall *catch fire* and release your breakthrough. **(Olukoya)**
28. Every stone that wants to stop you, the *angels of fire* shall role them away. **(Olukoya)**
29. *Holy Ghost fire*, separate me from inherited darkness. **(Olukoya)**
30. The satanic warehouse and bank holding your breakthrough shall *catch fire* and release your breakthrough. **(Olukoya)**
31. Every stone of demonic origin the *angels of fire* shall role them away. **(Olukoya)**
32. *Holy Ghost fire,* separate me from witchcraft manipulation **(Olukoya)**
33. The satanic warehouse and bank holding your breakthrough shall *catch fire* and release your breakthrough. **(Olukoya)**
34. The anointing oil is *fire that consumes fire*. Therefore, every barrier on your life is consumed. **(Oyedepo)**
35. There is a strange *faith fire burning* here tonight. **(Oyedepo)**
36. Every satanic deposit in you is *consumed with unquenchable fire*. (**Oyedepo)**
37. Holy Ghost fire, deliver me from witchcraft darkness. **(Olukoya)**
38. When there's fullness there'll be *fire*. **(Chris)**

C. Plant Metaphor

Whatsoever they have *planted* in your life, I *uproot* it in the name of Jesus. **(Olukoya)**
39. Every arrow of darkness and *plantation* of the enemy in the body, hear the word of Lord, you
40. Every *plantation* of disgrace, every plantation of stagnancy, be *uprooted* now in the name of Jesus. **(Olukoya)**
41. Every arrow of darkness and *plantation* of the enemy in the body, hear the word of Lord, you the stranger in the closed places, 'get out now in the name of Jesus. **(Olukoya)**
42. Jesus is the rod out of the *stem* of Jesse. Jesus is the spiritual wood needed to keep the fire burning. **(Oyedepo).**
43. You can *plant* and water, but if there is no grace, there will be no increase. **(Oyedepo)**
44. Bring your *money seed* to God and it will reproduce for you *a harvest*. **(Chris).**
45. The more seed you sow the more harvest you'll have. **(Chris)**
46. God expects you to grow up in your faith life without even knowing how to beg. **(Chris)**
47. In our lives we are constantly *sowing and reaping*. **(Chris)**
48. When you give, you're *sowing on God's soil* and he'll cause your *seed to grow*. **(Chris).**

D. Metaphor of Trade and Commerce

49. *Warehouse in the waters*, release my virtues. **(Olukoya).**
50. Some destines have been *exchanged*. **(Olukoya).**
51. In Shiloh we come to *take delivery of our inheritance* in Christ. **(Oyedepo).**
52. God's word is the channel for the delivery. **(Oyedepo).**
53. The demand of godliness is a non- negotiable demand for those who want to have heaven on earth. **(Oyedepo).**
54. As the third day dawns, your series of packages will begin to land on you. **(Oyedepo).**

55. I take speedy delivery of all my possession for my welfare. Thank you Jesus. **(Oyedepo).**
56. Fill out your open check for your anticipated packages. **Oyedepo).**
57. As a Christian you've been bought with a price. **(Chris).**
58. You're valuable to God because he paid dearly for you. **(Chris).**

E. Metaphor of Filial Relationship

59. As a believer in Christ, you're an *heir*. **(Oyedepo).**
60. Tell the Lord to make you a child of this prophet. **(Oyedepo)**.
61. Being *born again*, we have a covenant connection with Jesus. **(Oyedepo**).
62. There's a unique breakthrough function to which every *bona fide son and daughter* of this prophet is entitled. **(Oyedepo).**
63. You must live here this morning with an undeniable proof that the spirit of *your father* is resting on you. **(Oyedepo).**
64. Receive double of the grace that is upon me, your father **(Oyedepo**).
65. This revelation is for the select few; for the *mature sons*. **(Chris).**
66. God wants us to develop from *babies* to a *full grown man*. **(Chris).**
67. I just want to be a *child* of God. **(Chris).**
68. Jesus is the head of the church, which is *God's family* on the earth. **(Chris).**
69. When Jesus died, *Papa God* saw us, *his children* dyeing with him. **(Chris).**

F. Biblical Metaphor

70. Locate the unprotected forehead of *your Goliath*. **(Olukoya).**
71. May this dust deal with all enchanters, sorcerers and witchcraft after the order of *Moses*. **(Olukoya).**
72. Do *a Jacob prayer* on your environment. **(Olukoya).**
73. This dust will evacuate all your *Goliaths, Herodes*, and *Senecharims*. **(Olukoya).**
74. Be the *David* against *your Goliath.* **(Olukoya).**
75. Locate the unprotected forehead of your Goliath. **(Olukoya).**
76. Anyone fighting a member of Mountain of Fire shall receive *angelic slaps* and the *stones of Goliath*. **(Olukoya).**
77. The *powers of the world* to come *turn men into angels*. **(Oyedepo).**
78. There shall be a release of the *end time army of saviours*. **(Oyedepo).**
79. Welcome to the *realms of the world to come.* **(Oyedepo).**
80. Many shall be initiated into the *angelic world*. **(Oyedepo).**
81. With your mantles, you'll cross every *Red Sea of life.* **(Oyedepo).**
82. Lord, speak my *heaven* open, let my heaven come down. **(Oyedepo).**
83. This *Shiloh* is ordained to give you the days *of heaven on earth*. **(Oyedepo).**
84. We are going back carrying *heaven* back to our various environments. **(Oyedepo).**
85. Tell the Lord to make you of the *Joshuas* and *Elishas* of this Prophet. **(Oyedepo).**
86. Welcome to the realms of the *world to come.* **(Oyedepo).**
87. I decree a *feast of heaven* for your tonight. Many shall be initiated into the *angelic world*. **(Oyedepo).**
88. You are a bonofide citizen of heaven on earth to command dominion. **(Oyedepo).**

89. Shiloh is a mountain of word encounter. **(Oyedepo).**
90. Some Christians believe they are in the wilderness of life; they believe they are still marching to Zion. **(Chris).**

G. Metaphor of Banking

91. There are *many marine bank accounts* holding the resource of people. **(Olukoya).**
92. The *memory bank of the waters* will no longer hold your resources. **(Olukoya).**
93. Anyone whose body organ has been *banked in the waters* is hereby set free. **(Olukoya).**
94. I release my wealth from the grip of *marine bankers* by the power in the blood of Jesus. **(Olukoya).**
95. The *satanic warehouse* and bank holding your breakthrough shall catch fire and release your breakthrough. **(Olukoya).**
96. I release my money from marine bank accounts.
97. I destroy every ancestral spiritual antenna monitoring my progress in Jesus name.