



Encounter beyond routine

Cultural roots, cultural transition, understanding of faith and cooperation in development

International Consultation, Academy of Mission, Hamburg, 17th-23rd January 2011



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Preface

Encounter beyond routine

Professional routine is an indispensable part of reliable and effective cooperation in mission and development.

Why then encounter beyond routine?

The International Africa Consultation at the Mission Academy in Hamburg was the answer to the observation, that Christianity in Africa has undergone a decisive paradigm shift.

Prof. Anderson and Prof. Asamoah-Gyadu - speakers at the consultation - named it "the African Reformation".

African Christianity in the last three decades has been transformed through Pentecostalism and processes of charismatisation, be it in Mission Instituted Churches, in African Instituted Churches or in newly emerging ones. Metropolitan, well organised mega churches are a special feature.

Each day about 22.000 Africans find a new anchor in this type of Christianity, reason enough to jointly search for the implications of this paradigm shift.

Obviously the discovery of the power of the Holy Spirit in every believers every day life is an overwhelming experience, leading to new social networks in an environment of rather weak governmental infrastructures, leading to new self consciousness of congregants irrespective of ethnicity, gender, age and social status and helping to ban or break the fear of evil spirits, not only in the personal, but also in the political realm.

The charismatisation of African churches is intimately intertwined with the spirit-based culture of the African Continent and at the same time with the traditional concept of blessing as prosperity.

True believers can expect everything good from God's abundant grace and power, irrespective of governmental care. Pentecostalism inspires to confidence in an "economy of gifts and sharing".

The consultation made clear that this sweeping movement is to some extent also a political one. Prayer for defeat of corruption and misuse of power can be a decisive "weapon" in a culture in which the material and the spiritual world permeate each other every second.

European missions and church based development services are rather uncomfortable in the sight of these developments in Africa. Since the 1970ies they resorted to a partnership approach, implying that they themselves are no longer operational in the Global South, but rather assist in the missionary and developmental efforts of local partners/churches.

In view of the developments in Africa the question is what this partnership today means for Africans who look at European Christianity with suspicion.

Are Europeans real Christians, or are they contaminated by scientism and relativism? What can Africans expect from European partners who don't understand the vital importance of prophesy, healing through prayer and exorcism?

The consultation proved that it may well be high time to deconstruct Western patterns of reality-perception and obsolete views on human development. The Western view proves to be one perspective among other valid ones.

However, the consultation also proved that longstanding partnership is a reliable basis for further dialogue about content and meaning of mission and development. It was again highlighted how for African Christians mission and development are two sides of one coin, and their interdependence is seen as theologically correct.

But what does this all mean for e.g. interfaith dialogue in Africa? Does it mean that development efforts are confined to the Christian community?

What about the strife for Human Rights and good governance? What about respect of fellow human beings who have another sexual orientation?

Are the dualistic world view and the demonisation of God's creation appropriate Christian perspectives?

Can the quest for holiness in such a conceptual framework not lead to theocratic political desires?

The consultation gave valuable insights into these issues, and by this proved that the paradigm shift in African Christianity calls for further dialogue and conceptual analysis.

May the lectures documented in this booklet help to sensitize European Christians for this upcoming necessary dialogue.

Word of Greeting to the Participants of the International Africa Consultation

“Encounter beyond Routine“ on behalf of the “Evangelischer Entwicklungsdienst“ and “Brot für die Welt“

Honourable Colleagues, dear Sisters and Brothers,

it is a pleasant privilege to me to welcome you here at the Mission Academy at the University of Hamburg.

I welcome you with sincere thanks to God for his guidance in the preparation of our conference and for his protection during your often not easy travel with all what goes along with it.

And I welcome you in great gratitude for your readiness to make time and all efforts to share diligently on the topic “Cultural roots, cultural transition, understanding of faith and cooperation in mission and development”.

I do it with the lovely verses of Psalm 133: “How good and pleasant it is when brothers and sisters live together in unity! It is like precious oil poured on the head.”

The genesis of our consultation lies one and a half years back. I had to give a presentation on the paradigm shifts in the development of ecumenism, especially with regard to amazing evangelical and charismatic, respectively Pentecostal, movements world wide, on their understanding of mission and development and the relation between both. Already some years ago we were encouraged by the well known German researcher of Pentecostalism, Prof. Dr. Bergunder, to recognize, that the ecumenical movement as represented by the World Council of Churches was no more center stage in world wide Christianity. We in Germany were made aware that in the future there might be important fellowships in mission and development with partners in the evangelical and charismatic, respectively Pentecostal spectrum.

And now we open our eyes and take note of the fact, that even within in the constituency of our long standing partner churches and NGOs the influence of evangelical and charismatic belief gains ever more momentum.

The Board of EED did not want to receive “ware house” research. He encouraged me to do “made to measure” work. So in close cooperation with the Executive Secretaries of the International Department I proposed consultations with knowledgeable academics close to the churches concerned

for Africa, Latin America, Asia and the Pacific. One colleague had the splendid idea to invite also Bread for the World and Evangelisches Missionswerk (EMW) and members of the EMW. Reverend Dr. Boersma of EMW, Rev. Dr. Währisch-Oblau of the international mission society “United Evangelical Mission” Rev. Dr. Fröchtling of the Hermansburg Mission (ELM), Rev. Seitz of “Mission Einewelt” of the church of Bavaria, Rev. Vollprecht of the mission of the Moravian church in Germany and Rev. Dinkelaker of “Evangelisches Missionswerk in Südwestdeutschland”, better known by the initials “ems”, put heads and hands together in preparation of this our consultation. Unfortunately the latter ones, brothers Vollprecht and Dinkelaker are unable to come because of urgent obligations at home resp. of illness. They also greet you very cordially.

The mission department of the Methodist Church in Germany would have liked to be with us, but change of leadership in the department did not allow it. But Rev. Aichele asked me to convey his greetings and good wishes.

Joyfully I welcome the brothers Rev. Zimmermann from “Mission 21” in Switzerland and Rev. Golda, the Secretary of the Evangelical Association for World Mission in Austria. Good that you are with us. Unfortunately two sisters of the Netherlands, the Missiologists Mechteld Jansen and Martha Frederiks could not realize their wish to come.

It is also a great pity, that Prof. Maluleke of UNISA, South Africa, Prof. Priscille Djomhoué of the Theological Faculty of Younde, Cameroon, and Prof. Esther Mombo of the Theological Faculty of Nairobi, Kenya, cannot share their wisdom and knowledge because of different and certainly understandable reasons. Rev. Dr. Babatunde Adedibu of the “Redeemed Christian Church of God” got problems with the British visa authorities and sends Rev. Daniel Akhazemea from London to us. Thank you for this creative move!

Last not least: Rev. Dr. André Karamaga, the General Secretary of the All Africa Conference of Churches two weeks ago apologized for following other very urgent commitments in Geneva and Angola. Rev. Dr. Simon Kossi Doussou, the Head of the AACC Department for Theological, Ecumenical and Inter Faith

Affairs, fortunately made himself available on short notice to step in. Wonderful! And you are the right man at the right place. Be very welcome.

There is one speaker who will attend our conference only part time. He will arrive on Thursday. It is Rev. Dr. Jean Gottfried Mutombo. He and his family still mourn about the unfathomably sudden death of their beloved daughter Gisela. She passed away mid December at the age of twelve in Kinshasa. At the grave he witnessed to the living Lord by preaching that no power and no evil whatsoever would divide his family from the love of God. This witness moved many people to commit themselves to the loving care and liberating power of our God and to join the church.

In this spirit he also decided in close consultation with Dr. Währisch-Oblau, to come to us and to share his insights on the situation in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

A cordial welcome I also wish to extend to Prof. Allan Anderson, Head of School of Philosophy, Theology and Religion at the University of Birmingham, UK, who will honor us with a public lecture on "The Pentecostal Gospel, Religion and Culture in African Perspective." We know that you are a busy man. All the more we appreciate that you will be with us until Thursday.

Let me express already here heartfelt thanks to the staff of the Mission Academy and in particular Ms Kunze, the agile secretary of the house, and Mr Ferrera, the house master and provider of electronic communication, who helped a lot

in the preparation and will do so during our conference. And a very personal thanks to the angel who was sent to me to my surprise as a vicar deepening her theological knowledge at EED for four months. The preparation during the last two weeks would have driven me mad without her tremendous assistance. Thank so much Katrin Hildenbrand!

As was mentioned in the invitation sent to you, our wish on the German side is to explore whether we are still on common ground with our partners in the Global South regarding the understanding of mission and development, not only with reference to the inner motivation but also to visions, methods and goals. I guess there is quite some suspicion among the evangelical and charismatic constituency in our African partner churches and NGOs, whether the bloody Germans perhaps are part of the mess of "dry bones" or "churches of the law". If they know at all about the partnership relations, they might tolerate that their church leaders cooperate with the so-called "donors" of the North. But it is for us important to know whether we are merely seen as donors or as sisters and brothers in Christ. What are the challenges to us on the German side, what are your challenges on the African continent in the long standing interrelation?

I know that words of greeting can be seen as the contemporary way of persecution of Christians.

For that matter I close now with the wish that the Holy Spirit may be present and guide us at our consultation and grant us good insight and fellowship.

Encounter beyond routine – about the scope of our consultation

Dear Sisters and Brothers, honorable colleagues,

you perhaps remember the first sentence of the Communist Manifesto, written and published by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels 1848: „A ghost hovers around Europe – the ghost of communism.“ This manifesto has been the most influential political pamphlet in history. Today we can respond: “A ghost hovers around Africa – actually the whole world – the Holy Ghost.”

I became curious, when 1991 the 7th General Assembly of the World Council of Churches gathered under the motto: “Come Holy Spirit – heal and reconcile”.

It was the first time that a general assembly left the Christological titles like “Jesus Christ – the light of the world” and shifted from such Christ-centered statements to the invocation of the Holy Spirit. A paradigm shift emerged – from prophetic condemnations and appeals to the economic and political elites, from analytical meticulousness and future-oriented visions to direct action: healing and reconciliation. I don’t say, that this shift meant a total negation of the past. No – the WCC also emphasized the societal and political connotations of healing and reconciliation.

My feeling is that the political enthusiasm spurred by the anti-colonial movements, the so called “students revolts” in US and Europe, the opening up of the Roman Catholic Church and the negotiations between the West and Soviet Union in the 60th of the last century, gave way to a sobering assessment of world wide developments. The hazardous effects of neo-liberal globalization gained momentum, the East-West-Conflict was succeeded by ethnocentric attempts to get a worthy place in the “brave new world”, by ruthless fights for access to resources and by the search for new enemies. Huntington’s “Clash of Civilizations” might be remembered.

The post WW II – paradigm of the WCC, the universal rule of the resurrected Christ, underpinned by the political and societal enthusiasm in the Northern hemisphere, was overridden by the supplication for spiritual comfort. The essentially intellectual and middle-class-born liberation theologies, based on the concept to formulate the aspirations of the poor and marginalized and to shape a church for the poor, gave way to movements of the very poor and marginalized who

expectantly awaited a wholesome intervention of God’s Holy Spirit – beyond intellectual exercises and political concepts. There was a yearning to live in a “*church of the poor*”.

When Prof. Konrad Raiser in 1998 urged the 8th General Assembly of the WCC in Harare to consent to a Global Christian Forum, including Catholics, Evangelicals and Pentecostals into the fellowship without membership pressure, the majority of the constituency was rather hesitant and did not acknowledge the tremendous momentum of a vibrant and sweeping ecumenical movement outside the WCC. But he was completely right.

Who of all Christians in the North – except some few insiders – could believe that time, that the neo-Pentecostal awakening worldwide was a movement never seen since the era of the Reformation? Who would believe in the North, that 22.000 Africans daily would find their own answer to the devastating implications of civil strife, economic and ecological crises, of failing states and post-colonial corruption, that there is exuberant life through faith in Christ Jesus in the power of the Holy Spirit?

Who would believe that not only African Independent Churches, but also mission instituted churches would be so swiftly transformed into charismatic churches?

The lively evangelism of Evangelicals and Pentecostals, if recognized at all, was criticized a mass psychosis, while the Africans concerned all of a sudden found a solution to ethnocentrism, clerical arrogance, male dominance, social hierarchies and inherited church structures with all its dogmatic and denominationalist self-centeredness.

The deepest concerns of every day life, not least resulting from a tremendous fear of destructive chaos in the spiritual realm, are met through faith healing, deliverance, the peaceful means of spiritual warfare, through joyous services and stunning solidarity among fellow Christians in everyday life. The marginalized find back to their dignity and develop an aristocratic behavior in the best sense. No more redundant rubbish but ambassadors of Christ.

How could we comment more appropriately than shouting: Halleluja! Thanks be to God!

Now, at this stage of our consultation it is neither my task to elaborate theologically on the paradigm shift – we certainly will do it together during the forthcoming days – nor to reduce our perception of this extraordinary phenomenon to psychological or sociological scrutiny.

At this stage my task is to formulate questions resulting from the ecumenical commitment of church based development services and mission societies in Germany and Europe at large and also to make understandable why we need an intensive dialogue with you, highly esteemed brothers and sisters from Africa.

First of all, there is a question about the relation of witness and service. The Evangelical (Protestant) Church in Germany in 1973 published a programmatic statement on the church's obligation to assist partners in the Southern hemisphere in development. Development actually was understood a liberation from all want and need by empowering the people concerned to take their destiny into their own hands and become integral part of the society.

Mission and development were regarded as two sides of one coin – you see, that the plea of the Mekane Jesus Church in Ethiopia was heeded to – , but they were distinguished in that development should never be a means to lure people of other faith into the fold of Christianity. The theological motto behind was and is 1 Peter 3,15: “Always be prepared to make a defense to anyone who calls you to account for the hope that is in you, yet do it with gentleness and reverence.” Independently from governmental concerns of ideological or religious neutrality in development assistance it was and is a firm conviction of European church based development services to work together with partners in the global South in accordance to the criteria of need and implementing capacity, irrespective of religious creed and political orientation. They feel not obliged to evangelize and baptize. Implied here is the conviction – according to Psalm 24 and 104, that the whole creation is sustained by the Tri-une Lord and not given up to the devil. God's creation has a sanctity becoming ever new transparent in the profane. Implied is the conviction that people of other than Christian faith need to be respected as believers whose faith is in one or the other way inspired by the Holy Spirit of the very God in whom we trust. Implied is the firm conviction that we are forbidden to urge people of other faith to conversion because of the hope that the work of the Holy Spirit needs not to be hastened by human attempts to “organize” conversion.

Admittedly there have been times in this service that staff members had a secularist attitude in the sense that religious convictions were a stumbling block to development. The famous stereotype were the “holy cows” in India. But that is long ago.

We know that Evangelicals and Pentecostals don't consent necessarily with that distinction between mission and development. They would rather say that sound development is only possible on the basis of an intimate relation between

Christ the Redeemer, respectively the Holy Spirit, and the believer.

As to mission, of course, there is also the question, what we witness. What is the content of our witness, what image of God is preached? What does Gospel mean?

The message of the New Testament Evangelists and Apostles is pluriform.

Secondly, there is a structural ecclesiological question: we know that more money than ever in history is raised among Christians and governments of the North to support the time-honored partners in Africa in their development programs. Most of them are churches or church based NGOs. Beside church based development services and churches also congregations, church districts and short time volunteers recruit millions and millions for development projects and programs. In view of the obvious paradigm shifts among our partners in Africa there is the question whether the majority of their constituency is aware of and consents to this assistance.

Essential part of the assistance is advocacy for “good governance”, fight for conducive political, social and economic macro-structures of respective governments in order to support the efforts of individuals and groups to find a way to decent life and to participate in the reform of the nation state. Of course we realize in Europe, that the concept of nation state is a European colonial import to Africa. Nevertheless: the principles of centralization of enforcement of law and order, of checks and balances in political ruling, of reliable care for the needs of people and of the cultural obligation to foster identity and dignity of people is an indispensable task of a political entity, in whatever form it is shaped.

As far as I know, up to now the official affirmation of the All Africa Conference of Churches, that NEPAD (“New Partnership for Africa's Development”), the platform for sound development in Africa, is a valid concept, is a basis for cooperation.

Yet, the question is whether the majority of church members have any interest and hope with regard to the implementation of NEPAD. Seemingly the communitarian character of Evangelical and Pentecostal concepts of development forfeits the strife for macro-political and economic solutions because of the feeling that nation states in Africa might be “sold to the devil”.

Our question in Europe is how the members of African partner churches and church based partner organizations view the development programs of their leadership, in what way they participate in them and whether they regard the cooperation with European Christian partners as merely tactical or strategic.

Thirdly, and that may suffice for the introduction, we need to know the implications of the hermeneutics common in Evan-

gelical and Pentecostal notions of the Bible. We see a strong tendency to regard the Bible as verbally inspired and infallible in its wording. It is supported by the obvious compatibility between African religious and cultural concepts and the realm of the biblical religious and cultural setting. The ethical rigor on the one hand is socially superbly wholesome. Men, who give up drinking, smoking, gambling and womanizing, contribute significantly to the scarce budget of the ordinary family. On the other hand, biblical male-dominated traditions about subservience of woman, about dress-codes, about same sex relations and eradication of evil are highly dangerous to people concerned in this context. The obvious strife for holiness is intertwined with aggressive eradication of the presumably evil.

The mission instituted churches nowadays are conveniently labeled as “dry bones” or “churches of the law” in contrast to churches and communities of the Holy Spirit.

Our question is, whether the rigorous ethics of sanctification in the life of Christians is not an even greater danger to become legalistic and life threatening.

Does the search for significant sanctification not discriminate people of honest faith, who fall short of the conservative rules of traditional culture?

Is confessional identity based on condemnation of and segregation from fellows who yearn for solidarity and respect?

The questions stem from people who gauge the course of 2000 years of church history in which always charismatic people and congregations have disturbed corrupt church hierarchies and often searched for ecclesial concepts of theocratic dominance. You might remember the intermezzo of the realm of the radical Anabaptists in Münster/Germany. Luther’s realism with regard to sanctification of Christians has become precious to me. He stated, that every day the “old Adam needs to be drowned.” It is especially true and valid in sanctification movements. And Luther was on solid ground, although himself deeply convinced of the near end of time, he pleaded for heaven’s sake not to give up the earth, including the political structures. He recurred to Paul who had extraordinary spiritual experiences, as we know from 2 Corinthians 12. But Paul maintained that we have the treasure in earthen vessels.

As Paul said: “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” (2 Cor 12,9).

I wish you and me a very vivid consultation guided by the Holy Spirit, and I thank you for your compassionate interest in the topic.

Spiritual warfare – the royal road to liberation and development in Africa and Europe?

A comparative reflection on worldviews and hermeneutics

Introduction

Allow me to begin with two stories.

In early September last year, I visited the Communauté des Disciples du Christ au Congo in Mbandaka, Equateur Province. Among others, I met with a group of about 20 *intercesseurs*, mostly young lay people who are organized in groups to conduct the ministry of intercession. They usually offer prayer services once a week which are attended by many people who ask for individual prayers for concrete problems. I asked what the most common problems are. The answer was: Illness, poverty, family problems, insecurity and war. On Easter Sunday, Mbandaka was raided by a group of rebels who came out of the jungle by boat on the river Congo. The rebels looted and killed for several hours before disappearing again without a trace. Since then, the inhabitants of the city have been living in constant fear of another attack. I asked the *intercesseurs* whether there was anything they could do besides prayer to build peace in their area. They gave me some incredulous looks. Finally, one of them answered: “These people have guns! What can we do against them? We have no guns! Our gun is prayer.”

In October, I visited a young pastor of the Eastern and Coastal Diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania. A year-and-a-half ago, he had started a deliverance ministry in his congregation. From Monday to Saturday, he holds deliverance services in the morning, assisted by a team of intercessors; and he counsels people and prays for them individually until late in the afternoon. Every day, 50 – 150 people from all over the city come to his church for deliverance, many of them Lutherans who had before sought help from Pentecostal or charismatic ministers. Since the start of this deliverance ministry, Sunday worship attendance has exploded from several hundred to more than two thousand, and weekly offerings have skyrocketed from about 3 million TSh to 20 million TSh. With this income, the congregation now plans to build a kindergarten, primary school and a small health clinic to serve the rather poor area of the city in which it is located.

Deconstructing the leading question

The leading question that I have been given for this presentation is: Is spiritual warfare the royal road to liberation and development? The immediate response of most of those involved in development or advocacy work would likely be

“no”. This answer is based on the perception that there are on the one side those who promote liberation and development – i.e. sociopolitical action which leads to sociopolitical change –, and on the other side those who engage in spiritual warfare – i.e. prayer which expects all change from God and therefore leads to passive acceptance of the status quo. The sphere of the sociopolitical and the sphere of the religious are seen as distinct, and in consequence, religious belief is often analyzed in purely functional categories: Does it motivate and empower to the ‘right’ political and social action or not? Does it promote gender equality and empowerment of the poor or not?

It is therefore necessary to deconstruct the question and describe its underlying epistemologies before attempting any answer myself. “Development” and “liberation” are loaded terms that carry with them hidden ideologies: “Development” implies a teleological process in which the production of goods increases, living conditions improve by access to food, shelter, education and medical care, and people are able to participate as actors in sociopolitical processes. The term “liberation” already takes up some of the criticisms that have been leveled at “development”,¹ but is itself loaded with presuppositions of western political philosophy concerning individuality and agency. Both “development” and “liberation” are – at least in our discussion, I presume – connoted with “modernity”; in the sense that they are seen as the outcome of more or less rational sociopolitical processes which can be analyzed scientifically. Progress is defined as the spreading of rationality as a universal truth. Consequently, development work is devised as ‘faith neutral’.² Protestant missions and development agencies have concerned themselves with political groups and NGOs in Africa, and mistrust the religious revivalism which has swept much of sub-Saharan Africa and which is gaining an increasing influence in the classical mission churches as well.

“If Jesus is the answer, what is the question?”³ – Spirit discourses

If I were to ask you to think for a moment what the main problems of Africa are, what would you answer?

Likely something like this: Bad governance, corruption, war and ethnic violence, lack of infrastructure, lack of medical care, lack of access to education, unequal distribution of wealth, unfair trade relations, droughts and floods. In the

context of development work, problems are described in terms of materiality, sociality and politics. They can be expressed in figures and statistics, and their solution can be planned, implemented and monitored.

But how do ordinary Africans describe the problems of their continent? To understand this, we need to look at the 'subaltern' discourses, everyday conversations, *radio trottoir*⁴ (rumors), sermons, radio phone-in talk shows, locally published pamphlets, locally produced videos and so on which can give us a window into what the large majority of people in sub-Saharan Africa believe and think.

To begin with a few quotes:

"It is a fact that dark powers are responsible for most problems of the black man."⁵

"Underground witches have taken the human form of white people and infiltrated international organizations (...) the World Bank and other key organizations have been subverted by forces of evil."⁶

Researchers have also started to listen to these discourses. Here are two summaries:

"People ascribe to evil spirits such typically modern problems as unemployment, lack of money, marital strife and so on. They realize well enough that the immediate cause of losing a job may be a new management or a downturn in the economy. Why these misfortunes should occur at a particular juncture (...) is often explained as the consequence of an evil spirit dwelling within a person."⁷ People "think about problems from AIDS to food shortages to corruption as having their deepest explanation in the actions of powerful figures who manipulate the spirit world."⁸

"Nearly all successful representatives of the new Bamileke bourgeoisie from the western part of the country, who now supposedly control the national economy, are popularly associated with *famla* (the local variant of the new witchcraft of wealth)."⁹

All of these quotes show that material problems and developments are described as the outcome of *spiritual* actions, as caused by magic and witchcraft. Or, to use a term by Ellis/ter Haar, Africans express political and social developments in a "spirit idiom". This idiom builds on traditional African worldviews¹⁰ but has also creatively appropriated missionary theology. In the following, I will try to sketch in very rough strokes the development of this idiom.¹¹

Traditional religion

African traditional religions believe in the existence of an invisible world, distinct but not separate from the visible one, which is home to spiritual beings with effective powers over the material world. Human community does not only

consist of those who are living, but includes those who have already died: the spirit world inhabited by ancestors and other spirit beings strongly influences what happens in the material world. "The unseen is as much a part of reality as that which is seen; in other words, the spiritual is as much a part of reality as the material, and there is a complementary relationship between the two, with the spiritual being more powerful than the material."¹² In traditional African religion, spirit beings are conceived as morally neutral; whether their influence on the material world is positive or negative depends on the relationship the material world has to them. As long as people properly venerate their ancestors, the ancestors will bless them with health, fertility and good harvests. But if the ancestors are not properly attended to, illnesses or misfortune will occur as the consequence of a broken-down relationship.¹³ This means that both positive and negative events in the life of a community are interpreted in the light of one's relationship to the spirit world; everything material has a spiritual root. Hence, health, fertility and social peace – i.e. life in fullness – can only be achieved by religious means.

As the spirit world is seen as the source of all power, political power is also perceived as ultimately being rooted in spiritual power. Politics and religion belong to the same realm. The Nigerian theologian Ogbu Kalu describes this thinking as "covenantal": "The operative map of the universe is one in which individuals and communities weave covenants with the gods in the sky, land, water and ancestral worlds. These are legal and binding; the obligation can be inherited, deliberately entered into, unknowingly covenanted into, and transmitted into the genes of progenies."¹⁴ These obligations need to be properly fulfilled for the life of the community to be safe and fruitful.

Inversely, human beings can influence and manipulate the power of the spirit world through witchcraft, magic and sorcery. Many African cultures know both good and bad witchcraft, though in general, negative connotations predominate.¹⁵ Witchcraft can be inherited, acquired through contact with certain objects or substances, bought, or intentionally acquired from evil spirits. Witchcraft is blamed for material loss, accidents, fires, illnesses and, in particular, barrenness and sterility.

Theories about the persistence of spirit beliefs

There is much discussion about the question why beliefs in the spirit world and in magic and witchcraft are persisting in Africa despite the spread of missionary Christianity, Islam and modernity. At least since the 1940s witchcraft in particular has been perceived as being on the rise,¹⁶ and despite the fact that it is officially outlawed in many African countries, a slate of contemporary studies¹⁷ show its influence on every-day life in Africa, from social relationships to politics, sports, and even the conduct of wars.

Within a rationalistic development discourse, both spirit beliefs and their associated practices are perceived as irrational because they deal with phenomena that are not real as

they can only be believed, and 'backward', as they are based on a 'pre-enlightenment' world view. A growing number of social scientists, though, strongly state that the western way of modernity is only one cultural project within a multitude of modernities; and that discourses of the 'occult' are as modern and rational as western-style political and social analyses. Furthermore, both concern themselves with the same issues, namely power and wealth, health and well-being, morality, sociality and humanity.¹⁸

Witchcraft discourses, for example, are read in recent studies as "social diagnostics"¹⁹ in a situation where 'development' which promised concrete and visible results has become an illusion, or as "a search for justice in a spirit idiom"²⁰ with a strong, moralistic undertone. Others state that traditional religions are on the increase in Africa because they "offer means of addressing challenges proactively"²¹ by offering a conceptual framework which explains misfortunes as well as offering a means of redress of such misfortunes. In short, the persistence of spirit beliefs and their associated practices is connected with political and economic failures and social upheaval – whether it is the incredible divide between rich and poor in Nigeria or the ongoing civil war in the DR Congo, hard to comprehend global influences on local economies, or urbanization and the breakdown of traditional kinship relations in a situation of economic restructuring.²² This does not mean that these researchers are following a Marxist-functional interpretation of religion (most refute it explicitly), rather, they agree with Ellis and ter Haar's perception that "it is largely through religious ideas that Africans think about the world today, and that religious ideas provide them with a means of becoming social and political actors. The study of religious thought therefore constitutes a privileged opportunity for observing political practice in Africa."²³

"Translating the devil"²⁴

A further reason for the persistence of spirit beliefs in Africa has not been mentioned so far: The advent of missionary Christianity and the appropriation of its beliefs and teachings by grassroots believers.

It was the Dutch anthropologist Birgit Meyer who first showed in great detail how missionary preaching impacted the African understanding of the spirit world. In her seminal study, *Translating the Devil*,²⁵ she traces the "demonization" of the spirit world among the Ewe in Ghana. Similar processes took place all over Africa: 19th century missionaries introduced the --- hitherto unknown – devil into the African spirit world, and consigned all spirit beings into his realm. In consequence, 'neutral' spirit beings were re-conceptualized as evil spirits and demons. In other words: "Modern Christianity has not displaced ideas about witchcraft and the occult, but provided a new context in which they make perfect sense."²⁶ Through their association with the devil, demons and witchcraft became even more powerful and threatening than they were before.²⁷ While missionaries preached the victory of the risen Christ over these spirits and encouraged believers to burn their fetishes, and while, in the course of

the 20th century, most mainline Protestant mission churches have developed official theologies that deny the existence of demons and spiritual powers which could influence the life of human beings,²⁸ most Christians continue to believe in their existence and are afraid of their influence. Basically, they took the missionaries – and the Bible! – literally. Ruth Marshall, in her study of Nigerian Pentecostalism, argues "that the persistence of 'superstition' and the belief that dangerous powers continued to impinge directly upon the everyday doings of individuals, coupled with the willingness of individuals to turn to Christianity in an attempt to control them, reveal a greater investment in the Christian Logos than was shown by the missionaries themselves. Had missionary discourse taken these forces and their own tropes and symbols seriously as real manifestations of the powers of Satan or Christ, the grounds for 'misunderstanding' would have been considerably reduced. However, (...) missionary discourse was principally aimed at disseminating an ethics of progress through what had become a predominantly social doctrine..."²⁹

Naturally, if problems are first and foremost perceived as spiritual problems, solutions are also imagined in the spiritual rather than in the political realm. But many Protestants feel that their churches fail to respond to their most pressing questions and needs by ignoring the spiritual side of reality and concentrating on development and political action.³⁰ "Many Malawian pastors, church leaders and ordinary church members have pointed out to me that they feel that missionaries, pastors and theologians have not dealt with this issue (witchcraft) properly in both past and present and that they still live their lives in fear of witchcraft and of evil spirits."³¹ In secret, many Protestant Christians continue to seek the services of a fetish priest in cases of unexplained illness or other misfortunes.³² Pentecostal and charismatic churches, though, offer a Christian avenue to deal with spirits and witchcraft which is attractive to many believers, drawing a growing number of believers away from the Protestant missionary churches all over the continent.

Spiritual warfare

"The warfare we are presently engaged in is the battle of translating the victory of Jesus over the devil into the everyday, natural realities of our personal lives and also of our political, religious, economic and social systems. It is a battle of reclamation: to reclaim from the devil what he illegally holds in his control... It is warfare. But we are on the winning side. This is the time to muster the army – the Lord's army. Here is a clarion call to battle..."

We are disadvantaged if we lean on carnal weapons. Prayer – militant, strategic and aggressive prayer – must be our weapon of warfare at this time. It is spiritual warfare and needs spiritual weapons. This is a call into the ring to wrestle, to sweat it out with an unseen opponent. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood but against spiritual wickedness, against

invisible powers in high places (Ephesians 6:12). (...) You and I are active participants in what God is about to do. Militant, strategic, unceasing and aggressive prayers will hasten the heavenly visitation. (...) Join the Lord's army to bring about rapid changes that we desperately need in all areas of our national life."³³

Pentecostal and charismatic preaching and practices have 'baptized', appropriated and changed traditional African spirit beliefs. Charles Kraft, in his introduction to the concept of spiritual warfare, states that it is based on the idea of a "human life lived in a context of continual warfare between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan."³⁴ This concept was originally foreign to traditional African religion,³⁵ but has become increasingly plausible to many African believers in the face of wars, continuing economic hardship, and the AIDS pandemic.³⁶ The Biblical source of this idea is mainly found in Ephesians 6:12, but other Biblical passages that describe an antagonistic relationship between God and Satan or God and demons are also used.³⁷

Spiritual warfare and prosperity preaching

The spread of the 'prosperity gospel' since the 1980s has sharpened this understanding of spiritual warfare. While the Protestant mission churches instituted development departments even as they continued to preach about sin and forgiveness, Pentecostals and charismatics started to proclaim a new message that resonated with traditional African understandings of wholeness and abundant life which connect material prosperity and fertility with peace with God, the spirits, kinsfolk and neighbors:³⁸ Jesus Christ came to earth to give every believer a life in fullness,³⁹ and success in one's work, financial well-being, fertility and health were guaranteed blessings from God in response to a covenantal relationship which was honored by a holy life.⁴⁰ If they fail to materialize, demonic forces are suspected to be the cause. "Salvation means to be liberated, as *if in warfare* (emphasis mine), from a vulnerable discussion or defeat, perhaps by evil forces."⁴¹ Human life is understood as fragile and precarious, lived under constant threat from evil powers – and indeed, the sudden death of even young and healthy people of Malaria or traffic accidents is an extremely common occurrence in Africa. Early death, illness, poverty, misfortune, infertility and many other predicaments are consequently ascribed to demons which may have found an avenue into one's life through sin, "generational curses",⁴² or witchcraft, i.e. the manipulation of evil spiritual powers by someone else to harm others. Or, in other words: Material and social troubles are interpreted as spiritual problems that need a spiritual approach so that God's original intention for people's lives can actually be realized. This message of "healing, protection and financial success"⁴³ addresses everyday concerns and promises the power to deal with them.

This does not only hold true for the individual or family realm, but also in the political arena. Particularly in Ghana, Nigeria and Congo the concept of "strategic level spiritual warfare" popularized by American theologian C. Peter Wag-

ner has fallen on fertile ground.⁴⁴ The notion that demons can take the form of "territorial spirits" which have powers over certain geographical areas has been connected to the traditional African "covenantal worldview":⁴⁵ "The real sources of African problems are the controlling powers of various territorial spirits such as poverty and idolatry."⁴⁶ Consequently, these problems cannot simply be solved by social and political development. Rather, Africa has to be freed from them through spiritual warfare. "The import of this paradigm is that affairs of the earth can be changed through prayers. Political dissent and action can be pursued on one's knees, (...) in fact, the 'worn knee' approach is considered more effective and salutary because it seeks the will of God on earth and gives the battle to the Lord. Human agency in consonance with divine activity is the surest means of gaining true victory."⁴⁷

The dialectics of "rupture"

An important aspect of spiritual warfare, both on the individual and on the political level, is the necessity to "make a complete break with the past."⁴⁸ Pentecostal/charismatic biographical discourses are discourses of rupture and re-birth, setting a dark past against a glorious present and future. In the context of spiritual warfare, this past is connoted with traditional religious beliefs and practices. Consequently, each born-again Christian has to abstain from rituals like pouring libation, because the participation in such rituals would give evil spirits the 'legal right' to dominate one's life.⁴⁹ The same holds true on the national level: Government support for traditional festivals, for example, is seen as an entrance way for territorial spirits which continue to harm nations.⁵⁰ Here, the rupture would have to happen through the renunciation of traditional culture with its religious undertones, and through a re-covenanting of the nation to Jesus Christ.⁵¹

While superficially, this kind of thinking can be read as a rejection of traditional culture and an unequivocal opening to modernity and westernization, the Pentecostal/charismatic concept of rupture needs to be understood as a dialectical process of appropriation by rejection. Deliverance rituals, in which traditional spirits are driven out as demons, actually give these spirits a place within Christianity, even if only in the realm of the devil.

The role of Christians in spiritual warfare

Though God has already won victory over Satan, demons and witchcraft through Christ's death and resurrection, Christians still have a role to play in the cosmic battle between God and his enemies. They cannot simply stand by and watch; they are warriors in the ongoing process of spiritual warfare. They are not only responsible for their own life and that of their families or churches, but even for their city or country. Intercession is political praxis.⁵² In fact, the newer Pentecostal/charismatic churches in West Africa "have made evil and its removal fundamental to their message and activities."⁵³ To be able to withstand evil powers, Christians need to be commissioned and empowered, or 'anointed by

the Holy Spirit.' Like the anointing of a king in the Old Testament meant both an investiture into power and a task to do God's will, the anointing by the Holy Spirit connects the believer with divine power, enabling him or her to fight evil powers by preaching, healing and working miracles.

Spiritual warfare is fought solely by prayer – consequently, prayer groups in African Pentecostal/charismatic churches may be called “prayer warriors.” This warfare calls for a specific form of prayer, termed “authority prayer” or “prayer of command.” Such “authority prayer” significantly differs from supplication prayers: Rather than asking God to act, the speaker commands “in the name of Jesus.” Typical prayer sequences begin with utterances like “I/we come against...,” “I/we break...,” “I/we bind...,” “I/we declare...” Logically, prayers for deliverance from demonic oppression or possession also do not address God, but command the demon(s): “Get out, in the name of Jesus.”⁵⁴

In spiritual warfare, the person praying is acting in accord with God and in God's authority. The efficacy of the prayer is ascribed to the spoken word, even if oil is occasionally used in deliverance prayers. “Situations can be spoken into being or out of being. *Onoma* is metonym where the part represents the whole and the name of Jesus can be used to achieve effects in the physical realm.”⁵⁵ Spiritual warfare prayers are spoken aloud so that the effects of God's victory over all evil powers become real and visible in people's everyday lives; manifested, among other ways, in conversion, healing from physical illness, the birth of a healthy child, a job and financial success.

The power of the spoken word

The strong sense of power ascribed to the spoken word in spiritual warfare cannot be overestimated. Words, in this context, are not first and foremost conceptualized as carriers of information. Rather, spoken words are meant to create a new spiritual reality which in turn will affect changes in the visible world. They are creative words like those reported in Genesis 1. When God speaks, or when humans speak “in Jesus name” (i.e. with God's authority), their words will be turned into reality. It is striking how even very small and marginalized charismatic groups perceive themselves as extremely powerful in the spiritual realm and thereby expect to effect positive changes on the social and material level.

The authority of the spoken word is also strongly stressed within the Word of Faith movement which originated in the United States. Popularized by Kenneth Hagin and Kenneth Copeland among others, this movement claims that health, financial well-being and success are the “covenant rights” of any believer and can be possessed by “faith and proclamation,” i.e. that any believer can create positive reality by believing in it and “confessing” it. If ill, for example, one is supposed to repeat constantly the words “I am already healed” rather than reflecting on and speaking about the illness. The spoken word stands against the visible reality and will eventually affect and change it.⁵⁶ Word of Faith theology

has influenced African Pentecostals and charismatics both directly, particularly through publications that are available in all major African cities, and indirectly, through the Bible school of Bishop Benson Idahosa of Nigeria,⁵⁷ though I would argue that these influences are more superficial than they seem. The strong emphasis on the spoken word within Word of Faith theology is based on American concepts of ‘positive thinking’, but has become plausible in the African context which traditionally has had a ‘magical’ understanding of the spoken word.⁵⁸

The growth of Pentecostalism and the reinforcement of witchcraft beliefs

One of the rather troubling side effects of the growth of Pentecostalism in Africa is the reinforcement of witchcraft beliefs through Pentecostal spiritual warfare theology.⁵⁹ While spiritual warfare locates the root of problems as well as the fight against them squarely within the spiritual realm, the suspicion of witchcraft blames human agency in the end, and can have destructive consequences in the material realm.

Pentecostal/charismatic sermons and literature abound with witchcraft stories.⁶⁰ Not only in Ghana and Nigeria, ‘pentecostalite’⁶¹ witchcraft discourses are suffusing popular culture, resulting in a slate of locally made videos which serve to spread these ideas even further.⁶² Grisly testimonies of converted and reformed witches circulate widely and reinforce existing fears.⁶³ In Kinshasa/DR Congo, thousands of children have been accused of being witches, and in most cases Pentecostal/charismatic preachers are blamed for supporting such accusations.⁶⁴

Suspensions of witchcraft are common when it comes to individual misfortune, even among the educated elites and among members of Protestant mission churches. A colleague in Northwestern Tanzania recently told me how the accidental death of the child of a Lutheran church worker led to massive speculation at the funeral about who had wanted to harm the family by employing witchcraft. If such speculations lead to concrete accusations, the consequences can be gruesome. Suspected witches may be driven from their communities, their houses may be burned, and they may even be killed.⁶⁵ Not surprisingly, witchcraft accusations are outlawed in a number of African countries, though this has not put an end to the practice.

Van der Meer aptly summarizes the situation: “It appears that the ‘christianisation’ of witchcraft beliefs, divination and other related concepts has done little to reduce the fear of witchcraft and supernatural evil.”⁶⁶ I still remember a conversation with a charismatic pastor in Ghana in 2001. He told me that he would bless even a single peanut before putting it into his mouth to make sure that nobody could use this to bewitch him. In a number of conversations with charismatic believers in both Ghana and Nigeria during my field study period, I started to wonder whether the dread of witchcraft in charismatic churches was actually bigger than their trust in the risen Christ. The proliferation of deliverance minis-

tries all over sub-Saharan Africa certainly points towards this direction, as do discourses on “the power of the blood” (of Jesus Christ) which is believed to “cover” and protect believers so that witchcraft can do them no harm.

In recent years, many newer charismatic ministries have started the practice of “turning witchcraft back on the perpetrator”⁶⁷ through prayer. This custom revives traditional religious practices⁶⁸ of curse and counter-curse. While the actions remain in the spiritual realm, the consequences are clearly seen as material: The attacker may even be killed simply by the power of the Holy Spirit.

One is led to wonder whether the reinforcement of witchcraft beliefs within the Pentecostal/charismatic scene may actually have a material reason. Could it be that if the promises of the prosperity gospel prove to be as far out of reach as those of development, evil powers and witchcraft have to be blamed for what has not happened? Marshall suggests “that the relationship between the application of techniques of the self and the experience of divine power is increasingly problematic,”⁶⁹ and that divine power shows itself as more and more ambivalent, leading to an ever stronger insistence on deliverance and protection from the devil. Piot⁷⁰ disagrees, though, and claims that the concept of prosperity is so “elastic” that anything good that happens to a believer would be interpreted as a sign of prosperity, even if it was no more than the membership in a growing church. He continues: “I remain sceptical, then, of the suggestion that there are threshold material conditions that will eventually undo prosperity gospel systems of belief – and more broadly of theories of religion that see religious practice as little more than compensatory and constituted by lack.”⁷¹ Within the scope of this paper, consequently, the question remains open.

Spiritual warfare and political practice

How do spiritual warfare beliefs translate into political practice (or non-practice)? This question has both a theological and a sociological aspect.

The theological question is: Does God act in human history, and can he be influenced by prayer? Pentecostals and charismatics would certainly say so, as would many believers in mainline Protestant and Catholic churches. Nevertheless, at least Protestant prayers are often hidden calls for ethical action (“Lord, strengthen us to resist corruption.”) of an entirely human nature, while Pentecostal and charismatic prayers clearly expect God to act in miraculous and ‘supernatural’ ways.⁷² Evidently, this question can only be answered in faith, and in the form of a testimony. The “transformation” videos are such testimonies and claim that, indeed, prayer changed the political landscape in places as different as Guatemala, Uganda or arctic Canada.⁷³

The sociological question is: If people expect God to act in certain ways, how will that change their own actions? Does the expectation of a divine, miraculous intervention into the political arena make people passive sufferers of the status

quo, or does it empower them to liberating social and political involvement?

There are no easy answers to this question, and assessments vary depending on the researcher and their fields of research. On the one side, there are those who see Pentecostal and charismatic beliefs as empowering particularly those who are marginalized and have few options for ‘classical’ political action. On the other side are those, who ascribe different degrees of political and social dysfunctionality to groups which are involved in spiritual warfare.

Kalu (following David Martin) argues that Pentecostal political practice “runs in four interlocking grooves:

1. rebuilding the individual, thus bestowing the power to be truly human;
2. a predominantly covert form of social activism, attacking socio-political and moral structures;
3. an increasing assertion for the rule of saints and the politics of engagement; and
4. building the new Israel by empowering communities to participate in the foretaste of God’s reign.”⁷⁴

Individual empowerment

Katabaro, in a critique of Pentecostalism that echoes throughout Protestant mission churches in Africa, denies that the prosperity gospel may have any empowering effect. “That all social, economic and physical problems are seen as religious leads to a situation where people do not seek sustainable, scientifically valid, political and socio-economic solutions. Rather, they are led by the protagonists of the prosperity gospel to expect miracles.”⁷⁵

Kalu disagrees and asserts that a message of spiritual empowerment (“you are a child of God and have the right to a better life!”) encourages individuals to refuse to accept defeat, want, failure, pessimism and negativity, and that a prosperity gospel does not discourage individuals from applying managerial techniques or working hard. “It is not a crossless Christianity, but it refuses to idolize suffering.”⁷⁶

Piot concurs on this point: “Amidst poverty and abjection beyond belief, believers are filled (...) with a sense of agency and possibility. They walk with their heads held high; proudly refusing the colonial/postcolonial lot they have been dealt with. They lead lives of purpose and discipline, and find pleasure in worship. Moreover, the initiative comes not from without or above, but seems entirely theirs. This is a cultural production of stunning proportions.”⁷⁷

Born, who studied a Pentecostal ministry in Botswana, also describes a theology and practice that offers members a sense of control over their lives and their environment. “A

new vision of reality, an *imaginaire* of power, is created, one in which each believer is endowed with supernatural power, dignity, and the ability to craft a future filled with hope instead of despair.⁷⁸ Marshall similarly describes the “born again” in Nigeria as people who are “moral subjects” with a strong sense of agency.⁷⁹

Yong sees the same sense of individual empowerment, but is somewhat more critical about its impact. He argues that Pentecostal religiosity may go well with neo-liberal capitalism as people learn to be independent, take initiative, react flexibly, and expend money – in short, that they take initiative in a situation where government interventions decrease, that they develop a work ethic that fits neo-liberal market values; and that their “expect-a-miracle mentality” gives them hope in the midst of the vagaries of an uncontrollable free market.⁸⁰

So the more important question is indeed: How does the individual empowerment of those who believe in the power of prayer translate into social and political action?

Social and political activism

Kalu sees covert social activism, for example, in spiritual warfare practices that deal critically with traditional rituals, secret societies, “and the cultic practices reinvented by the predatory elite.”⁸¹ Basically, researchers agree that Pentecostal discourses of the occult do function as a political critique.⁸² Marshall argues that “Born-Again narratives develop an ongoing critical debate about government, one that indicts the immorality and violence at the heart of power’s exercise.”⁸³ Smith states that “popular awareness of the hypocrisy in official state anticorruption and prodemocracy rhetoric is exemplified in the widespread belief that powerful people use potent supernatural magic to attain and maintain their positions (...). The branding of such practices as satanic in Pentecostal discourse both condemns these behaviors and affirms their efficacy.”⁸⁴ But does this critique lead to discernible (if covert) social or political action?

Let me try to answer this question with another anecdote. In August 2010, I met with members of a Christian student group, the *Chambre Haute de Prière* (Upper Prayer Room), at Kinshasa University. For almost two hours, my interlocutors described to me their struggle with the “rampant occultism” on campus. At first, I was mystified. The university is severely underfunded and as dysfunctional as most other government institutions in Congo. Why would these students see their main enemy in Freemasonry and Rosicrucianism? It was only much later into our exchange that I started to realize that the group was using a ‘spirit idiom’ to describe what I in my world view would portray as a political problem: As normal institutional structures have broken down and the university is totally corrupt, students are only given a chance to graduate and earn a degree if they join the secret society of one of their professors. (For female students, this usually involves giving sexual favors.⁸⁵) As in many African countries, Congolese elite power structures are be-

ing maintained through secret societies.⁸⁶ By labeling this kind of corruption “occultism”, the students were rephrasing a mere ethical problem as one that called for a *status confessionis*: While involvement in corruption might be seen as a sin which could be forgiven, involvement in occultism means entering into a covenant with the devil, and is therefore apostasy and totally out of the question for a Christian. While the students describe themselves simply as a prayer group, they actually engage in what could be described as strong passive resistance to the corruption of their university, a resistance which actually makes their lives difficult. By building a group of like-minded people, they indeed engage in covert social action which slowly subverts the existing power structures. I would not describe this as a less political act than writing leaflets, demonstrating against corruption, or organizing a pressure group. The measure of success of this action, though, remains to be seen.⁸⁷

It should be clear, though, that even Pentecostals and charismatics who seem to withdraw from social and political action may actually engage in these fields. But we can only perceive this if we enlarge the boundaries of our understanding of political engagement beyond activities such as political protest, party or NGO politics, and the electoral process. Pentecostals engage more with “the magical substratum that underpins the political culture”⁸⁸ than with its organizational superstructure. In this, they may actually reach better into the heart of African politics than those working with western, secular political concepts.

Politics of engagement

In how far do Pentecostals and charismatics engage in politics as western political science would describe it? In 1995, Marshall described the Pentecostal involvement in the emerging civil society of Nigeria: “Pentecostal lawyers’ groups, bankers’ associations, women’s fellowships, students and youth corps groups (...) are all involved in a project of the redemption of their respective fields. Attacking corruption, exploitation, illegal practices, and ‘spiritual degeneration’ (...), the pentecostal movement not only debates civic virtue, but attempts to bring it into the civic sphere of the nation.”⁸⁹ In her grand 2009 study on political spiritualities in Nigeria, she has become far less optimistic. While Nigerian Pentecostals have strong involvement in politics, even born-again church leaders and Christian politicians have been tainted by corruption. She also observes that the movement which started out with strong holiness ethics has become preoccupied with personal success and wealth, and that the very large majority of Born-again churches founded in the 1980s and 1990s have become the private property of their founder-leaders. “Increasingly, becoming Born-Again would be seen as a mode of tapping into spiritual power for one’s personal protection and social mobility, rather than a means of radical ethical change through new modes of self-fashioning.”⁹⁰ Pentecostal politics in Nigeria do not seem to be a real alternative to politics as they are now, but simply seem to use Christian spiritual power instead of other magic to achieve gains for one’s person or one’s community.

Kalu also expresses his concern about Pentecostal politics in Nigeria in relation to Islam. He sees Pentecostalism locked in a spiritual and political struggle for the soul and the destiny of the nation because Pentecostals operate from a “vision of a theocracy.”⁹¹ Pentecostal preachers spread conspiracy theories that see Muslims plotting to make Africa a Muslim continent. To counter this, Pentecostals do not promote the idea of a secular nation (as Protestant mission churches would do), but rather say that they want to supply the rulers and make Nigeria a Christian country. “The concept of land deliverance is a policy to reclaim lost covenant opportunities for the nation and to claim a command position to work with God in the end times. The force of the concept is to lay claim to the whole of Nigeria, including Muslim strongholds.”⁹² Kalu adds that few Nigerian Pentecostals are open to interfaith dialogue, or can accept the possibility to live in a multi-religious nation.⁹³ He sees different developments, though, in Malawi, Kenya, Benin and Guinea.⁹⁴

Another case of Pentecostal political engagement can be observed in Zambia. Former president Frederick Chiluba, a born-again Christian, declared the country a Christian nation in 1991. He had the State House cleansed of evil spirits, “repented on behalf of the Zambian people from witchcraft, idolatry and immorality,”⁹⁵ and covenanted the country to the lordship of Jesus Christ. Here, we have a clear case of translating spiritual warfare into government politics. But this did not change the overall situation of Zambia: the country has remained mired in corruption and mismanagement, and Chiluba’s action is now viewed with great cynicism even by born-again Christians.⁹⁶

To sum up: While the theology and ethics of spiritual warfare could serve as a blueprint for an alternative politics of ethical governance, Pentecostal politicians do not seem to act differently than other politicians.⁹⁷

Christian communities as a foretaste of the Kingdom of God

Even if Pentecostal involvement in ‘normal’ politics does not look very promising, it is important to ascertain whether Pentecostals have been successful in building alternative communities of ‘spiritual warriors’ which could serve as models for civil society. Here again, different researchers come to quite different conclusions.

Gifford states that new charismatic churches in Ghana flourish because they constitute new communities while traditional structures crumble, because they give an opportunity to youth to exercise authority in a gerontocratic society, because they redress gender imbalance,⁹⁸ and provide “material assistance, employment, identity or opportunity.”⁹⁹ In this, they address Ghanaians most existential problems, but in Gifford’s view, their answers remain dysfunctional in an economy which is increasingly integrated into the world market.

Robbins discusses Pentecostal communities with regards to the prosperity gospel. He disagrees with the Comaroffs’

thesis that it should be grouped among “occult economies” because it makes sense of capitalism in the places where that economic system has most spectacularly failed to contribute to a flourishing social life. Robbins, in contrast, argues that the prosperity gospel actually teaches people to operate in an “economy of gifts” rather than in a commodity economy. Believers learn to interpret all good things in their lives as gifts, and are trained to give gifts to the church. “Prosperity gospel churches appeal to people not because of the material success they promise – for it is clear that this almost always fails to arrive – but rather for the training they provide in how to conceptualize and operate an economy of gifts.”¹⁰⁰ In this sense, Pentecostal communities would indeed have to be understood as alternative communities in which the free grace of God shapes all relationships.

Marshall, in her study of Nigerian Pentecostalism, disagrees. She notes the fundamental ambivalence attributed to all kinds of power in Nigerian Born-again discourse, and shows how the creation of a collective ethic is constantly interrupted by the “conflation of spiritual power and power over others, giving rise to a politics of conviction and vengeance.”¹⁰¹ Consequently, “the possession of spiritual power becomes increasingly associated with thaumaturgy of a violent or arbitrary kind.”¹⁰² This inhibits the creation and stabilization of a coherent Christian community and rather leads to a precarious collective identity which then needs to engage in identity politics.

I believe that both Robbins’ and Marshall’s observations are apt. In my own field studies in Ghana and Nigeria in 2001, I noted the very pronounced differences between the mega-churches run by ‘great men of God’ and the many small ‘mushroom churches’ which often only have a few dozen members. I experienced violent thaumaturgy and a kind of Christian consumer mentality in the mega-churches, but intense solidarity and a closely-knit community in the mushroom churches, both underpinned by a strong spiritual warfare and prosperity gospel discourse.

Consequently, in my final assessment, I have to agree with Robbins that the result “of studies of the way Pentecostalism shapes political attitudes and practices is at this point utterly inconclusive.”¹⁰³ Spiritual warfare theology and practices may lead to development and liberation in the sense of the discourse of western development agencies, but may also result in interreligious violence, in individualism that dispenses with all forms of solidarity, and in autocratic power structures that are theologically legitimized. Yong also notes that Pentecostalism invites many forms of political social and economic postures and practices. In this, it is no different from Protestantism or Catholicism.¹⁰⁴

Consequences

What now does this mean for development cooperation between German church-related agencies and African churches and NGOs?

I believe the most important inference to be drawn is that it is high time that development agencies take into account African interpretations of reality. If problems are first and foremost seen as spiritual problems, solutions on the social, legal or material level which disregard spiritual interpretations will not work. Witchcraft accusations are a case in point: While outlawed since early colonial times, and fought in many countries as a human rights issue, they are as common today as they were a hundred years ago, if not even more prevalent. Unless they are addressed as a spiritual issue, they are not likely to disappear.

The questions we need to ask ourselves are these: How do we identify the problems which we want to solve through our work? Do we immediately dismiss all kinds of spirit idioms as 'superstition', or is it possible to translate this idiom into our own political and social analysis?

And how are our development goals defined? Do we aim to build civil and political structures according to western models? Or could we imagine forms of liberation and development that do not need political rationalization, but rather take into account the "magical underside" of African politics?

This certainly means that we have to re-think the idea of 'faith-neutral' development.

I do not believe that this would mean 'going back behind the enlightenment'. I hope that I have been able to show that rigorous research can also be done within a constructivist perspective which takes beliefs serious as what they are: convictions that shape people at a very existential level, and not simply symbolic systems that actually stand for something completely different. With a narrow functionalist approach, we become unable to see what faith is actually doing to people.

Theological conclusions

As a theologian trained in a western, rationalist paradigm, I would now say that our way of doing theology is no longer up to date. Within a constructivist paradigm, the ontological question of whether demons 'exist' is simply irrelevant. Demon beliefs have an impact that can be studied, and in that sense demons are *real*.

For me as a theologian and a believer, much more important than speculation about demons and witchcraft is the firm faith that Christ is Lord and victor over all evil powers. Protestant theology in Africa needs to engage with the fear of ordinary Africans, and needs to develop Protestant practices of deliverance and protection. For this, van der Meer suggests to go back to the tradition of the Desert Fathers – which, after all, is an African tradition! They went to the desert, seen as the habitat of demons and evil spirits, as a living sign that these powers were already defeated. "The monk's focus was not on exorcizing the demons from the desert but rather on demonstrating their powerlessness by going to live in the demons' abode and firmly enduring their temptations and attacks. (...)

Not special spiritual exorcism techniques to cast a demon from an area, but standing steadfast, firm in the faith, in virtue and righteousness even to the point of martyrdom was understood as the ultimate humiliation of the Devil and the demons. It was a celebration of Christ's victory and a reminder to the powers that they were completely defeated by Christ."¹⁰⁵

Evil powers are not defeated by antagonistic power and violence, but rather overcome by love and patience – that would be the heart of Protestant theology.¹⁰⁶ Consequently, a Protestant practice of spiritual warfare would have to be grounded in a theology of the cross, of death overcoming evil, as put into words by Martin Luther:

That was a wondrous war

When death and life were fighting.

Life kept the victory,

It has swallowed death.

Scripture has proclaimed

How one death ate the other,

And death became a mockery.¹⁰⁷

Exegetically, verses like Luke 6:28 "bless those who curse you", or Romans 12:21 "Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good" would also make a good basis, particularly when it comes to witchcraft fears and accusations.

The intercesseurs in Mbandaka actually practice this. If during deliverance, the demon possessing a person will say who sent him, the team will keep this information confidential and simply start regular intercessions for the person who was blamed. "And you know," they told me, "quite often, within a few weeks the accused person will come to us to ask for deliverance."

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3 Marshall 2009, 17.

4 Cf. Ellis/ter Haar 28ff.

5 Olukoya, 28.

6 Ellis/ter Haar 92, quoting Evangelist Mukendi from the DR Congo.

7 Ellis/ter Haar, 64.

8 Ibid. 92.

9 Fisiy/Geschiere, 242.

10 That these worldviews are by no means static has been amply proven, but this paper does not have the space to look into developments within African traditional worldviews.

11 I am well aware that this will lead to a number of generalizations each of which cries out for more nuances, but this paper simply cannot do the subject justice.

12 Opoku, 8.

13 Ellis/ter Haar, 51ff.

14 Kalu, 80.

15 Opoku 140ff.

16 Moore/Sanders, 10.

17 Among others, Ellis/ter Haar, Geschiere, Hackett, Horton, Kiernan, Marshall 1995 and 2009, Moore/Sanders, Onyinah, ter Haar, Ukah/Echtler, van Dijk, vanden Berg, Wlodarczyk.

18 Cf. Moore and Sanders, particularly the introduction.

19 Moore/Sanders, 4.

20 Ellis/ter Haar, 149.

21 Wlodarczyk, 17.

22 See also Save the children, de Boeck, Sanders in Moore/Sanders.

23 Ellis/ter Haar, 2.

24 For the following, see Meyer 1999.

25 See Meyer 1999.

26 Moore/Sanders, 16.

27 Vanden Berg, e.g., traces this process among the Lutheran Longuda of Nigeria. See also Marshall 2009, 61f.

28 "The Lutheran Church (ELCT) officially teaches that there are no spirits, and fights among its members against the belief in the existence of spirits. The belief in spirits and demons is seen as superstition." Katabaro, 82 (translated from German).

29 Marshall 2009, 62f.

30 It does not help, of course, that – let's face it – many Protestant churches in Africa are tainted by corruption particularly when it comes to large development projects, and that, in many cases, they supported dictators. (Cf. in particular Gifford 1998.)

31 Van der Meer, 250.

32 For example, the daughter of a pastor (!) of the Eglise Evangélique du Cameroun told me how her parents took her to a fetish priest when she fell very ill as a baby. The priest identified juju by one of her uncles as the source of her illness, and provided a counter-magic which healed her and protected her from further attack by this uncle.

33 Pastor M.O. Ojewale, quoted in Marshall 2009, 1f.

34 Kraft, 1091.

35 Cf. Hiebert.

36 See also Onyinah 2001.

37 E.g. Gen 3, Job 1, Dan. 10:13, Lk. 4:1-13, Acts 16:16-18 and 19:11-20, 1. Cor. 10:18-21, 2. Cor. 10:4-5, 1. Pet. 5:8, 1.Jn. 3:8, Rev. 2-3.

38 Cf. Kalu, 261f.

39 John 10:10.

40 Both Marshall 2009 and Gifford 2004 show, though, how the emphasis on holiness (in the sense of moral uprightness, self-discipline, honesty, simple living, and tithing) is being weakened particularly in Nigeria and Ghana. Instead, newer charismatic ministries bind blessing to obedience to their pastor, and particularly to material giving towards

1 This is not the place for an extended discussion of development and post-development theories. For an introduction into post-development critiques, see Rahnama/Bawtree.

2 Because of this goal, mission agencies cannot become members of the ACT alliance.

- the ministry while tolerating corrupt and anti-social behaviour of their members.
- 41 Kalu, 262.
- 42 Here the idea is that covenants with spiritual powers can be made on behalf of one's descendants. Opoku 2001 states that ancestral curses are "the belief that the consequences of the sins committed by the progenitors are recurrent in their family lines."
- 43 Born, 57.
- 44 Cf. Onyinah 2001 and 2004, Oshun, Kalu, 19f. It needs to be stated, though, that we cannot talk simply here about an imported American theology. A number of critics of spiritual warfare theology have argued that this theology is too strongly influenced by Southern 'animist' world views. Cf. for example Moreau, van der Meer.
- 45 Kalu, 80f. Van der Meer, 263, points out that traditionally, the Chewa in Malawi understood territorial spirits as benevolent guardians of the land.
- 46 Onyinah 2001.
- 47 Kalu, 218.
- 48 Meyer 1999, 215.
- 49 Here again, we find the "covenantal thinking" Kalu has described. Kalu, 80.
- 50 Cf. Oshun, who has made this case for Nigeria. I have also had personal communications with Congolese who told me that the civil wars in Congo were a direct consequence of Mobutu Sese Seko's politics of 'Africanization'.
- 51 It is for this reason that many Pentecostals and charismatics are wary of Protestant theologians' attempts to inculturate Christianity in the African context by incorporating elements of traditional African culture, e.g. by calling Jesus the "First Ancestor". Cf. Meyer 1999, 122ff.
- 52 Kalu, 219ff.
- 53 Dovlo, 80.
- 54 Soothill, 216, quotes a Ghanaian Ph.D. student who compares prayer practices of the Presbyterian Church of Ghana and the charismatic Christian Action Faith Ministries: "While the PCG woman reverently touches the hem of Jesus' garment, the CAFM woman endeavours with boldness, to pull down the hand of God."
- 55 Kalu 2003, 232.
- 56 Cf. Hagin, Copeland.
- 57 Marshall 2009, 178ff.
- 58 Cf. Horton 223 ff.
- 59 "Modern Christianity (i.e. Pentecostalism) has not displaced ideas about witchcraft and the occult, but provided a new context in which they make perfect sense." Moore/Sanders, 16.
- 60 See for example Addae-Mensah, 97f., 146f., 164f.
- 61 This term was coined by Meyer 2004.
- 62 See Meyer 2004, and Ukah/Echtler. For the situation in Malawi, van der Meer, 258f.
- 63 See as just one example the testimony of Grace Ihere, transcribed unabridged from video in Marshall 2009, 245-264.
- 64 See de Boeck and Save the Children. My conversations with a number of mainline Protestant pastors and church workers in Kinshasa in August/September 2010 as well as some interviews with children accused of witchcraft confirmed their conclusions.
- 65 For a recent example from Ghana, see www.huffingtonpost.com/clair-macdougall/ghana-witch-killing-point_b_791118.html, 20 December 2010. Witchcraft accusations which resulted in several killings have also been reported from Northwestern Tanzania (personal communication from UEM coworker Anthea Bethge, January 2010).
- 66 Van der Meer, 259.
- 67 Personal communication from Werner Kahl, but see also Addae-Mensah 146ff.
- 68 As Adewale O. shows them for the Yoruba of Nigeria.
- 69 Marshall 2009, 196.
- 70 Piot, 71f.
- 71 Op. cit., 72.
- 72 I thank Melanie Rösger for bringing this observation to my attention.
- 73 Garrard-Burnett, who researched how far Transformation's claims can be substantiated in sociological and political categories in the Guatemalan town of Almolonga, argues that there are indeed measurable improvements in terms of better agricultural methods resulting in higher yields, a higher rate of schooling, and a much reduced crime rate. As a religious historian, she attributes these changes to changed behaviors due to Pentecostal beliefs rather than to divine intervention.
- 74 Kalu, 213.
- 75 Katabaro, 189.
- 76 Op. cit., 214.
- 77 Piot, 76.
- 78 Born, 62f.
- 79 Marshall 2009, 128ff.
- 80 Yong, 22ff.
- 81 Op. cit., 216.
- 82 See Kalu, 207ff., Ellis/ter Haar, 100ff.
- 83 Marshall 2009, 124.
- 84 Smith, 214.
- 85 And the language-savvy Kinois (citizens of Kinshasa), with a pun on STDs, talk about STGs, "sexually transmitted grades".
- 86 "It is remarkable how many African heads of state are members of closed or even secret societies with a spiritual flavor." Ellis/ter Haar, 75. Kalu makes the same observation, 210.
- 87 But Protestant mission churches have not been particularly successful either in their social and political actions!
- 88 Kalu, 199.
- 89 Marshall 1995, 252.
- 90 Marshall 2009, 177.
- 91 Kalu, 220.
- 92 Kalu, 245.
- 93 Op. cit., 246.
- 94 Op. cit., 221.
- 95 Yong, 9.
- 96 Cf. also Gifford 1998².
- 97 Notabene: With the possible exception of some in South Africa, African politicians with a mission Protestant or Catholic background do not seem to be ethical models either.
- 98 See also Soothill on this issue, particularly 221ff.
- 99 Gifford 2004, ix.
- 100 Robbins, 171.
- 101 Marshall 2009, 212.
- 102 Op. cit., 214.
- 103 Robbins, 172.
- 104 It also has to be taken into account that while Protestant mission churches may preach liberation and social action, they have often colluded with dictators, and are anything but immune to corruption within their own structures.
- 105 Van der Meer, 189f.
- 106 In all of this, I am quite aware of the fact that it is very easy to suggest a theology of the cross when one lives quite comfortably and without great fears of evil or misfortune. It is an entirely different matter to believe and preach this in a situation where, for example, one's child has just died of a curable illness due to a lack of medication.
- 107 Martin Luther, Christ lag in Todesbanden (Christ lay by death enshrouded), stanza 4. Translation by the author.

“African Reformation”

“Your Life shall Never be the Same”: Mission, Development and Contemporary Pentecostalism in Sub-Saharan Africa

This essay is about ‘Pentecostalism and change’ at a certain level and hence, my choice of the neo-Pentecostal catchphrase, ‘your life shall never be the same’, as the main title. What follows examines the nature of contemporary Pentecostalism and its increasing involvement in mission through social development including the generation of human capital. It focuses on the African and African immigrant situations as contexts of underdevelopment, fear, anxiety, despair, racial tensions and deprivation. My central research question revolves around the interface between neo-Pentecostalism as an *experiential* movement *par excellence* and its socio-economic impact on African and African Diaspora societies. Whether viewed in terms of historical origins or theological development, Pentecostalism has never been a monolithic movement. It is a global movement with many local varieties that are shaped by the religious, socio-economic, and cultural exigencies of the contexts where they exist. Nevertheless, Pentecostalism is also a movement that can be defined using certain shared features, categories, tendencies and emphases that it displays wherever it is found. Thus in my writings, I have often employed the designation ‘Pentecostal-charismatic Christianity’ to refer to:

“Christian groups which emphasize salvation in Christ as a transformative experience wrought by the Holy Spirit and in which pneumatic phenomena including ‘speaking in tongues’, prophecies, visions, healing and miracles in general, perceived as standing in historic continuity with the experiences of the early church as found especially in the Acts of the Apostles, are sought, accepted, valued, and consciously encouraged among members as signifying the presence of God, and experiences of his Spirit.”¹

This definition of Pentecostalism takes cognizance of its various varieties, and privileges its pneumatic elements that are meant to be correctives to the overly rational, staid, liturgically-ordered, clerically hierarchical, bookish and institutionalized nature of historic mission Christianity. In the words of James I. Packer:

“Though theologically uneven...the charismatic renewal should commend itself to Christian people as a God-sent corrective of formalism, institutionalism, and intellectualism. It has creatively expressed the gospel by its music and worship style, its praise-permeated spontaneity, and bold ventures in community.”²

In most places, there would usually be two broad types of Pentecostalism: first, there would be the western missions-related classical Pentecostal denominations such as the Assemblies of God and the various apostolic churches; and second, there would be the historically younger and theologically versatile and autochthonous neo-Pentecostal movements and churches. The neo-Pentecostals have manifested first, as independent charismatic churches; second, as charismatic trans-denominational fellowships; and third, as charismatic renewal groups within historic mission denominations. It is in their form as independent charismatic churches that will concern us in this essay.

Contemporary Pentecostalism

The contemporary Pentecostals who form the subject of this essay are groups that have a special attraction for Africa’s upwardly mobile youth. They are known for their charismatic, gifted and media savvy leadership, dominion or prosperity theology, internationalism, transnational networking, and exuberant and expressive forms of worship accompanied by western jazz instruments and high amperage music. A majority of immigrant churches from the non-Western world that have formed in the West belong to this new Pentecostal category. The search for resident and work permits, employment and marriage, coupled with the fear that witches and demons at home in Africa may be having negative influences on their destinies abroad, drives many African immigrants in these Pentecostal churches. Their interventionist theologies and focus on the power of the Spirit to bring deliverance where it is needed make them more attractive to people than the staid and liturgically ordered services of the historic mission denominations.

In his work on immigrant Christianity in the United States of America, Jehu Hanciles, writes that African immigrant churches in the United States are overwhelmingly products of West African Pentecostalism.³ In the following observation Claudia Währisch-Oblau comes to the same conclusion:

“(Migrant) churches are not only a north Atlantic phenomenon. African, Korean and Indonesian Pentecostal/charismatic churches can be found in many major cities in the People’s Republic of China as well as Hong Kong and Singapore. There, students and business people congregate, but also reach out as evangelists to local Chinese. In Hong Kong, Pentecos-

tal/charismatic Filipinas who originally came to the city as domestic workers have also started a number of churches. Ghanaians and Nigerians have started churches in places as far apart as Johannesburg, Melbourne or Buenos Aires. The spread of Pentecostalism through migrant churches has become a truly global trend".⁴

Most of what makes Pentecostalism distinctive as a major stream of Christianity relates to its understanding of the work of the Holy Spirit. An essential theological element in contemporary Pentecostalism therefore is the desire for and mediation of Spirit-inspired renewal, empowerment, interventions, and the translation of those experiences into everyday success and prosperity. In short, the promise is that in the power of the Spirit, 'your life shall never be the same'. On account of their keen emphasis on the manifestations of the Holy Spirit in church life, the neo-Pentecostals may also be called 'charismatic'.⁵ The Pentecostal-charismatic emphasis on the *Pneuma* or Spirit, understood in terms of the power and presence of God in action, is what defines the ecclesiology of the movement. With that understanding, my definition is purposely crafted to make the point that *experience* is the heartbeat of Pentecostal spirituality. This observation concurs with Allan Anderson's submission that Pentecostalism "is best seen from its pneumatological center as historically related movements where the emphasis is on the exercise of spiritual gifts."⁶

Experience, Mission, Development

The Pentecostal-charismatic emphasis on the experience of the Holy Spirit and prayer for his felt-*Presence* in Christian life and ministry has often meant that engagement with public life is lacking. Actively dealing with socioeconomic issues and the conscious generation of social capital was until fairly recently, largely relegated to the margins of Pentecostal religious activity. This is not a surprising development. In classical Pentecostal thought, Jesus Christ was Savior, Baptizer in the Spirit, Sanctifier, Healer, and a 'Soon Coming King'. The emphasis of preaching and religious life were on the *Parousia* or Second Coming of Christ, which demanded the urgent conversion of the nations to God and the spread of the fires of the Spirit among all peoples. After all, as most early classical Pentecostals argued, the promise of the Spirit was for empowering the disciples for mission in Judea, Samaria, and the utter most parts of the earth. Allan Anderson explains this sense of mission in his work, *Spreading Fires*:

"Based on the whims of the Spirit, missionaries scattered themselves within a remarkably short space of time to spread the 'fires' wherever they went – and these fires were somewhat unpredictable and out of control".⁷

Elsewhere in his book *Spreading Fires* Anderson further notes that:

"Early Pentecostal missionaries followed their revivalist compatriots in thinking of 'mission' as 'foreign mission'...and they were mostly untrained and inexperienced. Their only qualification was the baptism in the Spirit and a divine call, their motivation was to evangelize the world before the imminent coming of Christ – and so evangelism was more important than education or 'civilization'".⁸

This essay is premised on the fact that with the delay of the *Parousia* there has been a shift from this eschatological mindset among contemporary Pentecostals. This has occurred particularly among contemporary Pentecostals because in these new movements, the Bible is used as a motivational book for inspiring people to succeed in this life. My favorite definition of mission is that given by John V. Taylor in his book *The Go Between God*. In it he defines Christian mission as knowing what the Creator-Redeemer God is doing in the world and trying to do it with him.⁹ In my writings, I have often modified that definition slightly to read: 'knowing what the Creator-Redeemer God is doing in the world and allowing him to co-opt you into the enterprise'. This must be so because our relationship with God derives from his grace that invites us into fellowshiping with him in the Holy Spirit.

Similarly, the church has no mission except the mission of God as outlined in first the person, second the mission, and third the actual work of Christ and executed in the power of the Spirit. For contemporary Pentecostals, God has co-opted them as a new breed of Pentecostal Christians to execute a developmental mission agenda that among others, includes the mobilization of human and material resources for the promotion of God's Kingdom on earth and thereby bring Christian influence to bear on public life. Thus for example, one of the reasons for the establishment of trans-denominational charismatic fellowships such as the Full Gospel Businessmen's Fellowship International, was to convert businessmen to Christ and to help them re-channel their material resources into constructive uses in this world. The whole point is that if Christians are able to dominate the economic systems of this world, public space would be 'christianized' and the 'glory of the Lord will fill the earth as the waters cover the sea'.

Neo-Pentecostalism and Eschatology

Indeed for African neo-Pentecostals, the issues of heaven and hell now feature very sparingly in preaching. It is possible to sit through services of the new Pentecostal churches in sub-Saharan Africa or in the African Diaspora for a year without hearing a single message on the Second Coming of Christ or the destruction of the world at the end of the age. Their programs and books – made up invariably of sermons preached – are usually on themes relating to finance, landed property, cars, personal jets, exotic holidays, international travel, and other such material acquisitions that have become indicators of the blessing of God for faithful Christianity. Beyond these they deal with the works of the devil,

witches and demons that make such aspirations difficult to achieve. Pastor Mensa Otobil of the International Central Gospel Church in Ghana is representative of this new breed of contemporary Pentecostal pastors widely known as ‘motivational preachers’. They like to use the Bible to inspire people to apply certain principles of success that can change one’s lot in life. This is what he states in his conclusion to Jesus’ Parable on the Talents:

“Do you sometimes look at your circumstances and fold your arms because of how helpless and hopeless you feel? I challenge you to start from where you are now and make a bold transition to the place where God would have you to be. There is a place beyond where you are now. There is a place available for you to grow into. There is opportunity and grace available to shift you from where life has deposited you to where God is calling you to be. It is time to change, shift into top gear and move on”.¹⁰

When the same passage is preached in an average historic mission or classical Pentecostal church context, the return of the master of the servants would almost always be related to the end of time and judgment. Contemporary neo-Pentecostals have shifted the emphasis from working towards gains in heaven – important as that still is – to working hard on earth and leading a good life. Thus the trend now is for believers to insert themselves very firmly into the processes of globalization and make money through investments, hard work, establishment of businesses, pursue higher education for a better future, and generally ‘build a material kingdom’ on earth because God is supposed to be a God of prosperity.

Preaching, Slogans and Symbols of Neo-Pentecostalism

What Paul Gifford describes as *Ghana’s New Christianity* is representative of the new type of Pentecostalism we are talking about here.¹¹ The observation by Gifford that contemporary Pentecostalism puts a lot of emphasis on ‘success’ is well-founded. The shift from eschatological to existential theology, which is a reflection of the movement’s emphasis on success and prosperity, is reflected in the lives of contemporary neo-Pentecostal movements and churches in various ways. First, we see it through their slogans: Pastor Matthew Ashimolowo of the London-based Kingsway International Christian Center advertises his church as one that is ‘Raising Champions and Taking Territories’; Pastor Mensa Otobil of the International Central Gospel Church advertises his church as one that is ‘Raising Leaders, Shaping Vision, and Influencing Society through Christ.’ Another Ghanaian church, the Word Miracle Church International, advertizes itself as ‘A Place where Jesus makes Everybody Somebody’. The expression ‘somebody’ in the slogan does not simply refer to conversion to Christ, but also, physical elevations that involve personal success and material prosperity in this life.

Additionally, we find that by far the most important items in Pentecostal-charismatic symbolic imagery are the dove for the Holy Spirit, the globe to underscore the international agenda of the movement, and the eagle to signify its aspirations in the world. In the context of contemporary Pentecostal cultures all three – dove, eagle and globe – are symbols of ‘power and influence’. The eagle, for example, is the king of birds and is an important symbol of dominion and power because of its physical strength and aerial territorial dominance. The eagle has the ability to soar and reach great heights; it travels far and covers distances across geographical divides; and also it is a bird that sees far ahead as it flies in the skies. Similarly, the dove may look like a weak bird, but as the primary symbol of the Holy Spirit – as seen in the baptism of Jesus – that humble bird signifies influence. When God’s Spirit goes into action, things happen. He brought order into the disorder at creation; he brought dead bones back to life in Ezekiel; and in the New Testament, overshadowed Mary and formed within her womb the Eternal Word of God as flesh. When the Holy Spirit came upon the disciples, they also received power to influence society. Contemporary Pentecostal symbols, including the globe signifying the movement’s importance in the process of globalization underlies its desire to succeed by influencing society with its brand of Christianity.

The element of success, which appears in my work as part of ‘dominion theology’, Gifford points out, is found in the names of the churches: Winners’ Chapel; Victory Bible Church International; Triumphant Christian Center; Over-comer’s Chapel International; and Eagles’ Chapel International. It is also found in the car-bumper stickers issued to members: Unstoppable Achievers; I am a Winner; I am a Stranger to Failure; With Jesus I will always Win; I am Smelling Success; and so on. A special category of bumper-stickers proclaim aspirations for a particular year: ‘1999, My Year of Dominion’; ‘2000 My Year of Enlargement’; ‘2010, My Year of Glory’; and ‘2011, My Year of Double Portion.’ The same emphasis, Gifford notes, is found in the themes of their crusades: ‘Taking your Possessions’; ‘Stepping into Greatness’; and ‘From Captivity to Restoration’.

Charismatic services held on the eve of every New Year are heavily advertized and this is done in terms of ‘cross over’ to take new territories offered by the New Year. Contemporary Pentecostalism has attracted such a large group of Africa’s upwardly mobile youth precisely because, in the face of the socio-economic and political disappointments associated with governance and the challenges that come with being immigrants, these churches have become alternative voices of hope that motivate people to do well in life with the help of the empowering presence of the Spirit of God. Where things are not working, the Spirit of God through his anointing on the leadership in particular is still available to intervene, remove physical and spiritual barriers and release people to prosper in life. ‘Release’ in this context is understood in terms of Isaiah’s words that they who ‘wait upon the Lord’ shall renew their strength and ‘mount up with wings like eagles’ (Isaiah 40). Human beings are like the decimals that

determine the value of money, according to Otabil, so where you choose to place yourself as a dot, determines the value of what life has given to you.¹² Through such motivational messages, as I will seek to point out below, people are challenged to do something about their present circumstances in like and maximize the potential that God has placed in them.

Progressive Pentecostalism

It is this theology of dominion, success and prosperity, which drives the sorts of activities that contemporary Pentecostals engage in today. The development in which contemporary Pentecostals in particular seek to engage actively in mission through physical development is not limited to the Africa region. Donald E. Miller and Tetsunao Yamamori attempt to show how this has occurred through the ministries of groups they innovatively refer to as 'Progressive Pentecostals' in their study of Global Pentecostalism:

"Pentecostalism has often been otherworldly, emphasizing personal salvation to the exclusion of any attempt to transform social reality, whereas the movement we are describing continues to affirm the apocalyptic return of Christ but also believes that Christians are called to be good neighbors, addressing the social needs of people in their community".¹³

We will proceed with the hypothesis that Pentecostal-Charismatic Christian action is not limited to individual satisfaction. The neo-Pentecostal churches under study here have reinterpreted their divine mandate by increasingly giving attention to very practical ministries. Thus this study on the socio-economic significance of Pentecostalism focuses on the shift in Pentecostal emphasis from issues concerning the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, heaven and hell and judgment which used to be the hallmarks of classical Pentecostalism, to current engagements with socio-economic issues and the generation of social and spiritual capital through youth empowerment and other practical schemes. The questions I pose here are:

1. How is the translation of the Pentecostal emphasis of 'renewal' and 'transformation' into socio-economic emancipation of society being done?
2. In what ways have the neo-Pentecostals reinvented their ministries as economically-progressive and socially transformative religious movements?
3. What are the specific identifiable projects undertaken by the neo-Pentecostals and what have been their impact on public life?

With these questions in mind, we will look at three main areas of mission and development as far as contemporary Pentecostalism is concerned:

Motivational Messages directed at Black emancipation and success

One way in which the motivational speakers or preachers of contemporary Pentecostalism have sought to change society is through the use of the media, particularly, televangelism and book-writing. For example Pastor Ashimolowo and Pastor Otabil preach a lot about how the black race in general and Africans in particular can undo the past and embrace a new paradigm of development within God's plan.¹⁴ Some of these thoughts are set out in a book by Mensa Otabil titled, *Four Laws of Productivity: God's Foundation for Living*.¹⁵ Already in the foreword to the book, Dr. Myles Munroe of the Bahamas notes how the Creator God purposely placed within the earth everything necessary for life, health and happiness. Additionally, the Creator provided 'the mental and intellectual ability and capacity to maximize and efficiently utilize these resources.'¹⁶ The book itself is based on Genesis 1:26 and 28 which reads:

Then God said, 'Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth. ...Then God blessed them, and God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.'

In his interpretation of the passage, Otabil picks on the word 'dominion' as central and poses the question: How was that dominion to be exercised? The answer he suggests is outlined in verse 28 where the human person is mandated by God to: first, 'be fruitful'; second, 'multiply'; third, 'replenish the earth'; and finally 'subdue the earth'. These are what Otabil refers to as 'the four laws of productivity' and according to him, God's main purpose for creating human beings was for humans to 'have dominion'. Part of the process for exercising that dominion 'involves being fruitful by using the raw materials of the earth to bring forth the ideas God puts into our minds.'¹⁷ Every human being, he points out, is 'a dot on assignment'; we are all on the move and can change the value of whatever talent or resource we have, no matter how small that talent may be.¹⁸

Mensa Otabil has remained true to this belief and has expended quite a bit of attention in challenging Africans in general to rise above the old paradigms of inferiority complex, backwardness, mental laziness, deferment to the white skin, and use our God-given dominion constructively to build the continent. Otabil's other publications *Beyond the Rivers of Ethiopia* and *Buy the Future* espouse similar ideas. In *Buy the Future* for example, he compares African attitudes to that Esau who traded in long term goals and ambitions for immediate self gratification. The developed nations are like Jacob, for they negotiate their difficult present for a better future. In treating the material this way, Pastor Mensa Otabil applies the Bible in ways that speak to contemporary audiences, particularly young people looking for alternative

ways to succeed in life. He directs his messages not simply at individuals but Africans/Blacks in particular and their nations by attempting to use the Bible to inspire them to do something about the negative images and circumstances of privation that have bedevilled their peoples. Mensa Otabil definitely has Africa in mind when he writes that nations build their developmental paradigm after national values. It is those values, he notes, that will make them either 'Esau nations' or 'Jacob nations':

"Much as the practical realities of the worlds of Esau and Jacob differ vastly from what our generation has to deal with, the under-girding assumptions that shape our choices are all the same as what shaped theirs. ...The future is either bought or sold by the choices of today; and the choices of today are influenced by the paradigm you operate from."¹⁹

There is much wisdom in the lessons that are drawn from the text. The main feature of the Esau paradigm, according to Otabil, is that it sacrifices the "opportunities and potential" of the future to fulfil the necessities of the present. Whereas "Esau sells the future to buy the present", Jacob "harnesses the resources of the present in order to acquire the opportunities and potential of the future". His conclusion is that people and nations "cannot operate from an Esau paradigm and expect the blessings related to the Jacob paradigm".²⁰

Social Intervention Schemes

The new message of dominion and the practical application of biblical principles to achieve redemptive uplifts in life have not been left simply at the level of rhetoric. What made historic mission Christianity popular was the establishment of formal educational structures and other social intervention schemes as part of their missionary endeavors. The Redeemed Christian Church of God in Nigeria led by Pastor Enoch Adeboye has reportedly established a number of business schools with the aim to mobilize members for participation in economic life. The Redeemer's Business Academy was for example established to help establish 'dominion' in the marketplace:

"The rationale for establishing this school, according to the church, is that the commandment given in Genesis (1:28) to be fruitful and live in dominion on the earth includes the business sector. Consequently, the RBA is designed to equip born-again Christians to bring effective witness of Christ to their business and daily economic work".²¹

In practice the older churches still dominate the field of education as a result of their long history and experience but the contemporary Pentecostals have gradually woken up to their responsibilities in those areas too. Mensa Otabil's International Central Gospel Church (ICGC) has within the last decade become one of the highest and most frequent donors to Ghana's main cardiothoracic center at the Korle Bu Teach-

ing Hospital in Accra. The only Information Communication Technology Center at Ghana's biggest orphanage, the Osu Children's Home, was also built by Otabil's ministry.

ICGC, together with several other churches like Pastor Sam Korankye Ankrah's Royalhouse Chapel International in Accra, also awards scholarships to hundreds of 'brilliant but needy children' to study in high schools and tertiary institutions throughout the country. In 2010, ICGC commissioned new borehole water projects in certain rural areas in the Greater Accra Region as part of its social responsibility programs. Mensa Otabil's church by no means an isolated example of Pentecostal involvement in socio-economic development in sub-Saharan Africa today. The Lighthouse Chapel International led by Dr. Dag Heward-Mills, himself a medical doctor by training, runs an ultra modern Lighthouse Hospital in Accra that serves the needs of the poor in the community; the Charismatic Evangelistic Ministry of Pastors Steve and Stanley Mensah have set up a program called 'Christ to the rural world' that also distributes food and clothing to rural communities during the church's evangelistic crusades.

Higher Education

The contemporary Pentecostal involvement in development also comes through higher education. In September 2007 some sections of Ghana's print and electronic media run a series of sponsored advertisements and promotions for one of Ghana's leading private Christian universities, the Central University College (CUC) belonging Mensa Otabil's ICGC. A number of others including the Living Faith Worldwide ministry of Bishop David O. Oyedepo have started the establishment of Christian private universities and have so far proven their merit in that area. Bishop Oyedepo's Dominion University in Nigeria has become one of the leading institutions of higher learning in that country in less than ten years of its establishment.

On October 26, CUC in Ghana relocated a greater part of its campus from the heart of Accra, the capital to Miotso a small community near Dawhenya in the Greater Accra Region. One of the reasons why CUC has been in the news item is that it is one of the first privately owned university colleges in Ghana. Secondly, it is owned by a Pentecostal church which belongs to stream of Christianity not traditionally connected with formal education, at least not at the tertiary level. Thirdly, its founder and President, Pastor Otabil has within the last two decades, emerged as a leading voice in African Christianity advocating for a proper synthesis of Christian religious expression and the translation of spirituality into practical everyday action. Most importantly, one of the mandatory courses at CUC focuses on entrepreneurship and leadership development and its aim is to motivate young graduates to establish their own business enterprises and provide leadership with contemporary African public life and space. The desire to establish an institution of higher learning that facilitates such an agenda led to the birth of CUC in 1988.

CUC started as a short-term pastoral training institute mainly for pastors of ICGC. It became a Christian University College in 1993 expanding its programs over the years to include the academic study of Christian theology, Business Administration, Economics, Computer Science and a select number of modern languages including French. Most of its current programs are offered up to the graduate level and in the last three years, plans to offer architecture, planning and pharmacy have been executed.

A newspaper feature on CUC that appeared in *The Spectator* of Saturday October 16 described CUC as ‘a university college in a class of its own’. The Valley View University of the Seventh Day Adventist Church was established before CUC but the latter was the first private university to run a weekend school that affords workers the flexibility of combining work and study in their desire to improve their standings in life. In that newspaper article, Prof. V.P.Y. Gadzepe the current head of CUC, is quoted as saying that he is happy that ICGC under the leadership of Pastor Mensa Otobil ‘has been able to fulfil its dream of giving holistic higher education to its students who will serve as agents of change as its contribution to address the needs of Ghana and Africa as a whole’.

Contemporary Pentecostalism and African Public Life

All this is to make the point that social action and economic impact within public space constitute important collective dimensions of contemporary Pentecostal religion beyond its emphasis that religious experience must necessarily culminate in personal spiritual and moral transformation. That even Ghanaian business concerns and commercial enterprises recognize the potential and influence of contemporary Pentecostalism has been evident in several ways. A few examples may suffice to make the point:

1. When Ghana Airways, the national airline run into management and financial difficulties, a prayer session led by a charismatic pastor was called by management to deal with the problem from a supernatural standpoint.²²
2. Several Pentecostal/charismatic media programs are sponsored by corporate bodies. These include Pastor Eastwood Anaba’s *Wind of Love* preaching on Citi FM which is sponsored by Delta Airlines and Pastor Mensa Otobil’s television program *Living Word* which is sponsored by a private business concern, Kingdom Transport Services.
3. Since November 2009, MTN the mobile service provider has been using the images of three of Ghana’s most influential charismatic pastors – Bishop Charles Aygin Asare, Archbishop Nicholas Duncan-Williams, and Pastor Eastwood Anaba to advertise its new service that allows callers to listen to special messages from the phones of these “charismatic motivational speak-

ers”. The service itself is called “inspirational callertunez” and as the advertisement goes, it allows callers “to download inspirational Callertunez from renowned Men of God and motivational speakers.”²³

4. Since the transition from military dictatorship to constitutional democracy, the various governments have consistently appointed Pentecostal/charismatic pastors to serve on public boards. They have also been at the forefront of state-sponsored thanksgiving services to thank God for successful elections.
5. Pentecostal/charismatic churches have not only established secondary and tertiary educational institutions, they are also involved in re-settling shrine slaves; and providing healthcare facilities that are benefitting several communities.

This Pentecostal/charismatic impact on public life through its transition from purely spiritual emphasis to socio-economic action and engagement in Ghana requires critical academic attention. Douglas Petersen is a trail blazer in the study of Pentecostal social concern in Latin America.²⁴ His work offers insightful directions on the importance of studies on Pentecostal social concern as recently demonstrated by the work of Miller and Yamamori cited earlier.²⁵ In a new essay, Petersen calls on Pentecostals to break out of the box of conventional thinking that tends to hold them hostage – theologically and strategically – and act to bring social transformation within a context of grinding poverty and domination of a global market economy that offers prosperity to a few. To that end, the socio-economic circumstances of Latin America are no different from that of Africa. In many places including Latin America, it is clear that Pentecostals are taking the socio-economic and even political dimensions of religion seriously and they are breaking out of their ‘social strike’ in order to bridge the gap between religious experience and decisive socio-economic action.²⁶

Conclusion

Pentecostalism, by its democratization of religious life, promise of physical and social healing, compassion for the socially alienated, and practice of Spirit empowerment, Petersen writes, “has the ingredients for a powerful moral imagination that can address the concerns of the disinherited, frustrated, and assertive persons who in large part make up the movement.”²⁷ In Ghana today, unemployed high school leavers, university graduates and professionals have found the motivational messages of the new breed of Pentecostal churches very attractive and sources of hope. The churches have responded to the desire for inspiration with the organization of business summits, conventions and campaigns that bring young people together to motivate them to do something about their circumstances or as Peterson put it, to be morally imaginative. Being morally imaginative, he explains, “means embracing a systematic and entrepreneurial

approach that links a creative problem-solving process to desired outcomes.”²⁸

Although new Pentecostal communions have attracted the urban middle class into their fold in respectable numbers, the exigencies of the African socio-economic situation as in Latin America, still means that a large part of the following of these religious movements are people with difficult economic circumstances and social struggles. The coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost and the spirituality that results from experiencing him, Pentecostalism demonstrates and integrates first the ethical and second the social character of the reign of God into the Pentecostal moral imagination: “If the Pentecostal experience of Spirit baptism is basically one for empowerment, then the task of a Pentecostal theology is to demonstrate the centrality of the experience as a key pattern to open the way to discuss how these ethical demands are actualized and become operative in the power of the Spirit.”²⁹

There is another side to the empowerment discourses associated with the new Pentecostals or charismatic ministries. With the emphasis on material prosperity and economic emancipation, socially and economically disengaged Pentecostalism is becoming a rarity in Ghana and yet the shortfalls of prosperity and dominion preaching are driving many to search for deliverance from physical and spiritual blockages to progress. One of the churches in this study has responded by setting up a hospital in which scientific medical care and counseling is offered in combination with prayer in order to discourage patients from ‘spiritualizing’ every disturbance in life. This essay has sought to make the point that there now exists within Ghanaian Pentecostalism a conscious attempt to offer an economically-progressive and socially responsible form of Christianity using not simply the transforming power of the Spirit but also appealing to a divine mandate to ‘conquer’, ‘dominate’ and transform society through the raising of social and spiritual capital from the large following that they enjoy.

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- 2 J.I. Packer, *Keep in Step with the Spirit: Finding Fullness in our Walk with God* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1984, 2005), 184.

- 3 Jehu J. Hanciles, *Beyond Christendom: Globalization, African Migration, and the Transformation of the West* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2008), 357.
- 4 Claudia Wärisch-Oblau, *The Missionary Perception of Pentecostal-Charismatic Church Leaders from the Global South in Europe* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2009), 7-8.
- 5 In most western contexts, the expression ‘charismatic’ usually refers to renewal groups within historic mission denominations.
- 6 Allan Anderson, *Spreading Fires: The Missionary Nature of Early Pentecostalism* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2007), 4.
- 7 Anderson, *Spreading Fires*, 5.
- 8 Anderson, *Spreading Fires*, 27.
- 9 John V. Taylor, *The Go Between God: The Holy Spirit and the Christian Mission* (London: SCM, 1972), 37.
- 10 Mensa Otobil, *The Value of the Dot: Turning your Liabilities into Assets* (Accra: Combert Impressions, 2005), 17.
- 11 Paul Gifford, *Ghana's New Christianity: Pentecostalism in a Globalizing African Economy* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2004).
- 12 Otobil, *Value of the Dot*, 21.
- 13 Donald E. Miller and Tetsunao Yamamori, *Global Pentecostalism: The New Face of Christian Social Engagement* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), 2.
- 14 See Matthew Ashimolowo, *What is Wrong with Being Black? Celebrating our Heritage, Confronting our Challenges* (Shippensburg, PA: Destiny Image, 2007).
- 15 Mensa Otobil, *Four Laws of Productivity: God's Foundation for Living* (Tulsa, OK: Vincom Inc., 1991).
- 16 Myles Munroe in Otobil, *Four Laws*, 3.
- 17 Otobil, *Four Laws*, 19.
- 18 Otobil, *Value of the Dot*, 21.
- 19 Otobil, *Buy the Future*, 15.
- 20 Otobil, *Buy the Future*, 16.
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- 22 J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu, ‘Christ is the Answer, What is the Question? A Ghana Airways Prayer Vigil and Its Implications for Religion, Evil and Public Space.’ *Journal of Religion in Africa*. Vol. 35, 1 (2005), 93-117.
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- 24 Douglas Petersen, *neither by Might nor by Power: A Pentecostal Theology of Social Concern in Africa* (Oxford: Regnum, 1996).
- 25 Donald E. Miller and Tetsunao Yamamori, *Global Pentecostalism: The New Face of Christian Social Engagement* (Berkeley/Los Angeles/London: University of California Press, 2007).
- 26 Douglas Petersen, ‘A Moral Imagination: Pentecostals and Social Concern in Latin America’, in Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen ed., *The Spirit in the World: Emerging Pentecostal Theologies in Global Contexts* (Grand Rapids, MI / Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2009), 56.
- 27 Petersen, ‘Moral Imagination’, 57.
- 28 Petersen, ‘Moral Imagination’, 56.
- 29 Peterson, ‘Moral Imagination’, 57.

Mission and Development by Mission Instituted Churches in Africa: An African Evangelical Perspective

1 Introduction

The Mission Instituted Churches in Africa have come a long way in carrying out Mission and development. It has been a journey full of anxiety and uncertainties. This paper will try to define Mission and Development from our evangelical perspective, explore the Church's journey in Mission and development and highlight some specific issues we have to seriously consider as the African Church partners with the global Church in implementing Mission and Development in Africa. As much as possible I will be using my home country, Malawi, as the case study.

2. Definitions

(a) Mission

Let us begin by reminding ourselves to what Mission is:

Mission and evangelism are two distinct although related concepts. Simply put, "mission is the redeeming action of the triune God towards peoples and the creation, the goal of which is the restoration of human relation to God in Christ and bringing every aspect of life under the lordship of Christ. The Mission of the Church, as a partner of God, is therefore based on this mission of God; the *missio ecclesiarum* reflects the *missio Dei*. The Church has no mission except that which God intends to do in the world. The chief end of Mission is that God may be glorified, first among his people and then, through them, in every aspect and area of life.

The mission of God and of the Church has several aspects; one of them is evangelism, the proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and establishing his people into a worshipping and serving community. Thus, evangelism is not the same as mission, but it is an integral part of mission. Mission cannot be said to have taken place without evangelism. And yet evangelism alone, in its strict biblical sense as rightly understood by the evangelicals does not exhaust all that God intends to do for humanity and the world. The Bible tells us that God is concerned about injustice, poverty, suffering, wickedness and idolatry at every level of life and that his restorative action includes, among other things, works of justice and righteousness and *shalom*, all of which make known the glory and will of the God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Some Christians, many of them evangelicals, object to this too broad a definition of mission, fearing that if everything is mission, then nothing is mission. This can be a danger, we must admit, but we need to clarify that mission is not anything that any people of goodwill can do. An action is mission or takes missionary character when it is motivated by the Kingdom of God, when it exhibits something of the gospel of Jesus Christ, and is done by the Church, the people of God who have received that Gospel and come under the demands of the same Kingdom.

(b) Development

Development is a complex concept. It means different things to different people at different times and in different places. Stakeholders define development in different ways depending on the world view that they subscribe to and this applies to the Church as well. Each group defines development in a way that benefits its own interests and aspirations. Thus development cannot and will never be defined to universal satisfaction. Notwithstanding these variations, there are still areas of broader consensus on what development means or entails. In some cases, development is defined as change plus growth.¹ This growth concerns modernity particularly in the direction of nation building and socio-economic growth.² Still there are those who define development as the realization of the potential of the human person that can best be achieved through the reduction of poverty, unemployment and inequality including self-reliance and cultural independence.³ Therefore, in short, development can be defined as the improvement of the quality of life through an increase in economic growth and distribution, the enjoyment of political and civil rights by all irrespective of gender, ethnicity, religion, race, etc.⁴

Different communities and peoples will understand development differently depending on their exposure. In a typical rural Malawian village, development, at individual or household level may be understood as: a good harvest of maize than last year, a house that does not leak, increase in livestock, ability to send children to school. Similarly, at community level, development might be understood in terms of availability of basic services like a clinic, clean water either through bore holes or most recently piped water, a primary school and secondary school, an all year passable road etc.

Recently in our village, one mobile company has introduced a phone network. People got so excited selling their livestock to procure mobile phone sets, as part of development. The majority did not even have anywhere to use the phone.

The perception of development in the cities will be completely different.

(c) What is the Mission of the Church then?

The Mission of the Church as defined above, simply put, is not complete unless it exemplifies the redeeming action of the triune God towards peoples and the creation, the goal of which is the restoration of human relation to God in Christ and bringing every aspect of life under the lordship of Christ addressing the whole needs of man; body, soul and spirit.

As has been rightly pointed out in our presentation, Mission and Social development or social service should be looked at as the two sides of the coin. They are interdependent. This is well exemplified in Acts 6:1-7. The result of such balanced mission was tremendous church growth as pointed out in Verse 7: “So the word of God spread. The number of disciples in Jerusalem increased rapidly, and a large number of priests became obedient to the faith.”

3. The Malawian Church Experience in Mission

The early missionaries to Africa understood the concept of Mission and development very well. They brought the bible in one hand and social development in the other. They introduced education and health services wherever they established their Mission work.

Education quite early in history of the Church was used as a tool of evangelization. The introduction of western education in Malawi was mainly due to the initiatives of the early Christian missionaries. Almost all of them took it as indispensable in the process of planting the faith and western civilization. A few examples will illustrate this point. John McCracken informs us that all missions in the 1890s recognised that the prime task of religious conversion, i.e. the general mission, could not be achieved without the introduction of at least a modicum of Western education. The Catholic missionaries, for instance, initially had little interest in education for the local communities. But later they changed their stance, and came to accept the complementary role of education to pastoral work.⁵ In this case, education was seen as a preparation for evangelization.

The Scottish Presbyterian Missionaries were clear in their linkage of evangelization and modernization particularly through education. They assumed that their role was that of tutors of the Africans, charged with opening up for them the access to modern civilization and progress.⁶ It does not come as a surprise that later, according to Mafuka, Scottish missions figured prominently in the development of African nationalism and independence.⁷ The most outstanding features of their efforts in education are evident in the institutions

they managed to establish both in the Northern and Southern Malawi. The Livingstonia Mission under Robert Laws established what came to be called bush Schools in the north, including what is regarded to have been the first modern institute of high education in Central Africa, the Overton Institute.⁸ In the South, the Church of Scotland also established bush schools and a similar institute of higher learning, the Henry Henderson Institute.⁹

The early missionaries therefore actively proclaimed the Gospel of Jesus Christ and engaged in social service. The Church existed way before Governments were established in Malawi. Church was therefore the only provider of social services then. They introduced education, health and agricultural infrastructure in many places, especially deep in rural areas.

The Church was also very instrumental in fighting against injustice and abolishment of slavery at that time and tribal wars in Africa. The Church also played a key role in the struggle for independency of most of the colonies in Africa.

Then later, when Government was set, it started establishing its own public institutions in education and health and started to include in its budget funding to subsidise the social services provided by the Missions agencies, especially in areas of education and health.

(a) Developments in the approach to Missions over the years

The concept of Church Mission, as understood by the early missionaries, started taking a new dimension in the late sixties.

As most countries in Africa became politically independent, the Church too started to “nationalize” its leadership. The foreign missionaries began to handover governance of mission institutions to local leadership. The local leadership experienced several challenges in the management of these mission infrastructures.

Firstly, the new leadership was mostly not adequately prepared. They lacked skills in many areas. In addition, the majority did not fully understand the concept of the full Mission of the Church. The work was greatly affected by abrupt change of leadership.

Secondly, the foreign support towards the mission institutions started to dry up as more and more missionaries started to leave. There was no longer any motivation for the sending Churches in Europe to continue supporting the work as “their missionary” was no longer part of the work. This situation was made worse by the fact that the missionaries locally did not make serious investments for the sustainability of the Church and its social programmes. This significantly affected the social services offered by churches. It should be pointed out here that until this time, all the funding for the mission work in Malawi was primarily supported from

abroad. Salaries for teachers in all Schools, printing and publishing agencies; health personnel and medication were all being sponsored by Churches abroad.

In an effort to save these facilities, from totally collapsing, the Churches requested the Government to take over the operations of these institutions. Personnel and resources for both education and health institutions were provided by Government. The Government therefore had a greater say in the operations of the institutions. As expected, the Christian values which had characterised these institutions for a long time, were not a priority to Government. This development seriously affected the implementation of the Church holistic Mission.

(b) Privatization of Mission institutions

The Church became concerned with the loss of direction of its institutions. By the mid eighties, most Churches started to engage Government to retrieve back their institutions. The Government obliged. Presbyterian Churches; these are Livingstonia Synod, Nkhoma Synod, and Blantyre Synod including the Catholic Church were amongst the first to embark on this transitional process. However, the taking over of the institutions had to be done gradually to avoid serious disruptions to the service being provided. This was particularly so because most of the Churches did not have adequate financial resources to maintain many such facilities.

To make these institutions financially self-supporting and sustainable, the services had to be paid for in full without any subsidy at all. This meant that these services previously provided by missionaries and later by Government at nominal prices or no cost at all were now unaffordable to the ordinary poor people.

The Churches had two options regarding the governance and management of such institutions. The first option was to second its own ministers within the Church system to manage the facilities. Some Churches adopted this approach. However, many of such appointees from the main stream Church lacked the technical expertise to meet the management demands of these institutions at the level where they are financially sustainable. The institutions, therefore, failed to grow and sustain themselves financially. Those entrusted with management did not have the right skills for such a task.

The second option was to recruit experienced qualified professionals to manage the institutions under the close supervision of a church board set up by the church. The majority of such personnel had come out of NGOs or other development agencies. The Livingstonia Synod and the Blantyre Synod adopted this model. In this scenario, the institutions were being managed as NGOs. They aggressively rose their own funding from whichever source including non-church agencies.

Compared to the first option, such institutions have been able to attract good funding and recruit and maintain highly

professional staff. However, an important element of Church Mission, that is evangelism, has suffered greatly as this has not always been the priority for the professionals. Many such institutions therefore were not so distinct from any of the circular NGOs.

To address this gap the Church has ended up recruiting pastors or Church ministers specifically to look at chaplaincy issues in the institutions. This has proved a challenge as support for such people had to come from the main stream of the church and not the institutions. Consequently, there are very few Chaplains still remaining in the Mission institutions due to lack of funding.

The current situation is such that these institutions are now fully privatised by the Churches. They are operating as profit-making enterprises, especially the Schools. As for health facilities, they are mostly supported by Government, through Christian Health Association of Malawi (CHAM) and also dependent on foreign funding from international donor agencies and other well wishers. Some of these donor partners are non-Church agencies, often imposing strict limitations on the use of grants. This affects greatly the manner the Church carries out its holistic Mission.

Lack of local ownership of these Mission Institutions by the locals has been a major setback regarding the financial sustainability of these Mission founded institutions. For a long time such facilities were looked at as belonging to the foreign missionaries and not the locals. There was completely no ownership of the work by the churches locally. The institutions, therefore, seriously struggled after the departure of the foreign missionaries who were in charge of management.

In Malawi, as is the case in many parts of Africa, the involvement of the Church in social affairs is evident in many areas both at policy and practical level. Such has been the journey of the Malawian Church in Missions and development since Christianity was introduced in the country. In spite of these challenges, the Church in Malawi has remained a key player in the provision of social services to the nation. For instance, the Church currently accounts for over 43% of the health infrastructure in the country mostly operating under CHAM (Christian Health Association of Malawi). In the area of education, the Church accounts for over 64% of the education infrastructure in the country. These are coordinated through ACEM (Association of Christian Educators in Malawi). This is quite a substantial contribution.

4. Issues for serious Reflection as we engage with the african Church in Mission and Development

In this section, having defined Missions and development, and narrated the experiences of the Malawian Churches, I will endeavour to highlight a few issues Mission agencies both from the North and the South need to take seriously as we partner in supporting the mission work of the Mission Instituted Churches in Africa.

(a) The centrality of the Gospel of Jesus in our Mission work

The Gospel of Jesus Christ has power to penetrate the hearts of any people's regards of their cultural background. Paul says of the Gospel in Rom 1:16-17, "I am not ashamed for the Gospel it is the power of God for the salvation of those who believe."

There is sufficient evidence coming from the mission regarding the power of the Gospel and its impact on development.

In the village of Chapsinja in the central part of Malawi, a group of traditional chiefs and their cultural advisors, who were deeply in their ancestral worship, were introduced to the Gospel of Christ through the ministry of Hope Missions Ministries. They now meet twice a month for a bible study and planning community work. The majority of them are able to testify how deep they were in occults and witchcraft before they responded to the gospel of Christ. When they were deep in their ancestral worship, they hated anything that seemed to promote education for the children and development. These were seen as threats to their culture as most of those children who got educated were reluctant to continue to engage in such secretive cultural practices. Their community, despite of the enormous funding and intervention from the Government district assembly, was very underdeveloped and backward. However, the Gospel of Jesus Christ has managed to destroy these cultural strongholds. The community leaders are now fully committed to social development in their various communities.

This experience has been repeated in many mission fields not only in Africa, but also in areas globally including South America and Asia.

We can therefore rightly conclude that any mission which sidelines God's word is bound not to have any significant transformational effect on lives of most African people who by nature tend to be very "religious." Researches by African and non-African scholars confirm this point. John Mbiti, a renowned Kenyan scholar qualifies African people as deeply religious. Each people, he observes, has its own religious system with beliefs and practices, such that religion permeates all the departments of life so fully that it is not easy or possible to isolate it.¹⁰ In traditional Africa, he further contends, there are no atheists.¹¹ K.A. Busia holds a similar view. He finds in Africa's cultural heritage religious intensity and pervasiveness.¹² Busia recalls that in primordial Africa, it was not possible to distinguish between religious and non-religious life. All life was religious.¹³ Similar views are advanced by Patrick Chabal. Crucial to the African belief systems, he writes, is the absence of a firm boundary between the religious and the temporal.¹⁴

Thus granted this scenario, the question is: How do we facilitate the transformation of "religious minds" of the African people if we sideline the Gospel of Christ which is "god's power for all that believe." And as Mission agencies committed to Mission and development how can we keep true to the

Gospel of Christ, amidst this global secularization; a clear campaign to squeeze God's word out of the society?. How do we carry out Mission work where there are restrictions placed on development grants, quite common with most institutional funding from Governments?

Twenty years down the line, where will our Mission development agencies be which started very well as tools for holistic Missions, with the Gospel of Christ as their priority?. The majority of these have now completely sidelined the Gospel of Christ due to pressure from the back donors or under pretext of political correctness. As Mission based Church Agencies, we need to pause for a serious reflection over this development. Where are we going? There is the need to get back to the Centrality of the Gospel in all our Mission and development.

(b) The role of education in Mission and Development

Education and Mission are interdependent. In countries with high illiterate rates, like Malawi, missions is slowed down and sometimes greatly hindered by the inability to read or write. The national illiterate rate is as high as 60%. It is at 65% for women and 45% for men. The ability for communities to articulate vital mission and development concepts is greatly influenced by literacy. If this problem is looked at from the lenses of a northern partner, it may not be considered a priority intervention, as every person in Europe may be literate, possibly with exception of some migrants.

Education is fundamental to the Mission, economic and social development of any community. Widespread illiteracy and low education standards contribute significantly to Africa's spiritual and economic poverty. (Lamp Magazine No 14 Octo-Dec, 1998.)

If Mission in Africa is to be effective, we need to consider education for the beneficiaries of the Mission work and the workers themselves. We have to target the communities with basic education and Bible schools and tertiary institutions with skills which will enable them to become transformational agents in their various communities.

Education is so much taken for granted by those who can afford to read and write. In one of their reports, Hope Missions Ministries narrates stories of what illiterate Women in Kayabwa Village in the Central region of Malawi go through as mothers in bringing up of children. The illiterate women cannot easily take their children to hospital in the city because they feel completely overwhelmed and intimidated. In the first place they cannot identify which bus to board when going to the hospitals. When at the hospital they would not find their way through the hospital corridors identifying the signs and symbols to the various Departments such as pharmacy, Paediatric Department and so on. As a result, the child mortality rates were very high as many of women would not quickly go to hospitals when children were sick. In the case of those who at least managed to get to the hospitals and got some drugs, they had serious problems following the

prescriptions for administering the drugs because they are unable to read.

None of these women would confidently venture into small scale businesses as they were unable to read or count, even if they had some capital to start the business. Very few of them could be elected into the Village Development Committees as they were unable to read and write.

A story is also told of a wife of a village chief who confessed publicly, on the graduation day of the first adult literacy class, that she used to destroy all the official letters and correspondences addressed to her husband from the local Government district Assembly thinking that they were love letters from his girl-friends. Such are the challenges that illiterate people, in particular women, face daily in their world.

However, after a one year course in adult literacy (functional literacy) organised by Hope Missions Ministries in the Village, the participating women, were able to read, write and count very easily. The child mortality rates were significantly reduced in the village as mothers were now able to get their children to hospitals. Pupil attendance at a local village School also increased as mothers could appreciate the role of education and started to encourage their children to go to school. The Village loan scheme, which had failed previously due to non performance, was revived.

The first two years the loan scheme had a pay-back rate of nearly 95%. Income at house-hold level improved as more women were trained in small scale business management and later joined the revolving loan scheme. The local Village development Committees were all dominated by these new graduates, confidently articulating the plight of women and children at the village development meetings. What a change as a result of literacy!

The struggles experienced by women in Kayabwa Village highlighted above are being repeated daily across the nation, often unnoticed by those who are literate.

The Malawi Government, at one time was very committed to adult literacy programs. However, the work has now been left primarily to faith based groups and community based organisations, which have no resources at all to carry out such enormous task.

At secondary levels, skills development has to be emphasised to enable the pupils gain economic and social independency when out of schools. Every year, 150,000 pupils sit for the Primary school final exams. Approximately 50,000 are selected to Secondary schools with only 4,000 being enrolled into the tertiary colleges. The majority slide back into the community without any skills for their economic survival. Of great concern is the girl child.

We therefore cannot be talking about a Mission and Development without prioritizing education. All stake holders involved in Mission and development in Africa, both our North-

ern partners and local churches in Africa, must continuously engage in uplifting the education standards of communities at all levels. Huge development monies have been pumped in Africa, with very little to show for it. Unless we begin to put education on the agenda, as the key empowerment tool, there will be little or no progress at all. Particularly the empowerment of the women in education and skills is the key to community transformation. One of our First Ladies once said "educate a man, you educate an individual. Educate a woman you educate a nation."

(c) Empowering the local Church in Africa as a hub for transformational sustainable Missions and Development

It has been observed that sustainable community development is only possible where there has been sufficient investment in skills development. The Church in Africa has already proved that it can be a key catalyst for development if it is properly empowered. It is important that all development partners need to understand the significance of focussing on the local Church as the primary development agent, for sustainable community transformation. The involvement of the local Church in the development process will enable the Church to effectively play its rightful role as the salt and light in the community. The Church then has a positive influence and impact in the community thus making it relevant.

We must all join hands to ensure that the local Church becomes the hub for sustainable Missions and Development. There must be a deliberate strategy to target all groups in the Church and community through the local Church. In order to have maximum involvement of the local churches, the following groups have to be targeted.

Firstly, institutions for leadership development such as Theological Colleges must actively include integral mission in the theological formation of church leadership. It is pleasing to note that this has been welcomed by many churches including some of the Conservative evangelical institutions.

Secondly, special courses on integral missions should be provided for those Church leaders already in the mission field using different church forums or seminars. It is important to note that the majority of the church leaders, probably over 70% who are currently Pastors of evangelical Churches in Malawi, have never had formal theological training.

Thirdly, there is a saying that "seeing is believing." Churches must be assisted to set up good practice models to promote transfer of skills and learning in integral mission. Others will only participate when they see it work. In Malawi, the Livingstonia Mission Overtone Institute was one of such early Mission models which have been copied by many Churches.

It is therefore imperative, if we are to have sustainable Missions in Africa, that there should be an increased investment in skills development through the local churches in-order to

promote greater and effective Church participation in Missions and development. NGOs and other Church agencies will come and go. However, the church will permanently stay in the community. We all have a role to play in the realisation of this vision.

(d) Promoting the role of women Mission and Development

In the majority of the cultures in Africa, Women are subservient to the men, giving unquestioning obedience to their word. This is the cause for much backward in the women education. The traditional place for the women is the background.

In Malawi, a married woman may not easily own property nor be granted a bank loan in her own right, without the consent of her spouse. Ironically, the women are in majority both in the Churches and community. The influence of the woman on raising and moulding of character, behaviour and education of children is unprecedented.

In "Christianity in Malawi", Kenneth R. Ross on p99; observed that over 70% of the membership of Churches in Malawi comprises of women. If these women were given a chance to participate in decision making both at the Church and community level, we would be far much ahead in achieving our goal in Missions and development as Mission instituted Churches.

The neglect and inferior position of the women retards mission and development and general community empowerment. We call upon all stakeholders, supporting agencies included; to ensure that the woman effectively participates in Mission at all levels.

The recent gender emphasis in development has assisted in awakening the conscience of the African Church leadership to the plight of women and girls. There is still much to be done.

(e) The top-down approach

For so long, much of the mission and development work in Africa, has been designed and initiated from outside of Africa and transplanted to Africa, in some extreme cases, it is more or less like "cut and paste". Therefore, major steps of effective development which are consultation and participation are overlooked resulting into lack of local ownership of the initiatives.

However, this notion is changing in our time as many Mission partners around the globe are discovering the importance of community participation. One would also argue that probably the "top-down syndrome" was inevitable as the locals themselves, during the early missionary days, lacked education and could not therefore engage with the missionaries at a higher level, articulating the western ideas and concepts of mission and development.

Time has come for the African Church to take its destiny in its own hands. We need to promote meaningful partnerships aimed at empowering the local churches at community levels to take ownership and responsibility for sustainable Missions and development at grassroots levels.

The question we must all be asking now is: How do we empower the Church in Africa to take their destiny in their hands actively driving the mission and development agenda for Africa?. What role can both the local Church and the global church play in this century and 2011 and beyond, in particular?.

(f) The "NGO-lisation" of Missions and Development by the Church

The "NGO-lisation" of Missions and development, which is currently very common in most of the third world countries today, makes a mockery of the process of the genuine transformational Missions by the Churches. Sometimes there is no distinction between programs being carried out by Churches to those by circular NGOs.

The following characterizes this NGO-lisation of the Mission in our era, which should be a concern to all of us committed to genuine Missions:

The "Quick results syndrome"

Short term focussed as opposed to the long term goal associated with traditional mission initiatives. There tends to be much pressure from the back funders for quick results. Experience has shown that genuine holistic transformative initiatives most of the times are a long process requiring much patience and commitment.

Calling Vs. Skills dilemma

There is an overemphasis on high professional/technical qualifications mostly at the expense of God's calling and spiritual commitment to God. This has also contributed heavily to the Church's inability to effectively carry out its integral mission.

Motivation: External Funding or Mission?

The conspicuous "absence of much prayer and dependence on God" as the Master of the Mission.

Throughout Church history, Mission work has been well supported by fervent and consistent prayer back up. If Mission is indeed the work of God through his Church, then we seem to have left God out of our Mission work today.

(g) Investing into Projects which would promote long term sustainability of Missions and developments

The Church in Africa must be assisted to develop structures for generating income for the sustainability of Mission and development. We can pick a leaf from the Church in Europe which invested massively in buildings. Though the giving is dwindling due to falling numbers of Christians, the church is able to sustain itself. The AACC in Kenya and number of Christian Councils are very good examples.

Some of the churches, especially in West Africa are setting the pace for the whole African church towards economic independency.

In most African Churches, there is too much emphasis on visibility at the expense of sustainability. As Churches in Africa we need to begin to prioritize long term investment rather than building big cathedrals which may not be financially sustainable in the long run.

It is absolutely essential that we collectively reflect over some of these worrisome developments in the way we are carrying out missions and the long term impact on the whole mission of the Church.

(h) Promoting healthy partnership between the church and local community leadership

Experience has shown that healthy relationships between the Church and community can contribute significantly to the effectiveness of the Missions and Development in the mission field.

A deliberate strategy must be put in place to promote interaction between the Church and community leaders. They should not be left out. We need them.

5. Conclusion

The Church in Africa has great potential to becoming a transforming agent if properly empowered. The absence of effective government services in most rural parts of Africa is an opportunity for the Church to fulfil its Missionary mandate of proclaiming the whole Gospel to the whole man. This is the noble task God, our master, Jesus Christ has called us to fulfil.

Let us join hands as we work together to spread the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ across the globe through Word and deeds before the Master comes.

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- 1 Colm and Geizer, 1962.
- 2 Weidenr, 1970.
- 3 Seers, 1972, see also Todaro, 1977.
- 4 World Bank, 1991.
- 5 See *Rapports Annuels* 1908, in Nyassa, vol.3, pp.233-234, quoted in Patrick Kalilombe, "From Outstation" to "Small Christian Communities," PhD Dissertation, p.134. This is a 1910 report from Kachebere Mission in Mchinji District.
- 6 See: Patrick Kalilombe, p.52.
- 7 Ibid. p.53.
- 8 The term bush school is popular in the history of education in Africa. In Malawi, they were sometimes called unaided school. In many cases, these schools were opened by missionaries in remotes parts of the country as part of their evangelization outreach. With time, these schools could get upgraded to junior and later full primary schools, either by the missionaries themselves or government, colonial and later nationalist. About the Bush Schools in Malawi, Ian Linden says, " ...in 1897, the Livingstonia mission, now at the north end of the lake, had seventy-eight bush schools plus the well-equipped Overtoun Institute which taught English and Theology to advanced students". See Ian Linden, *Catholics, Peasants and Chewa Resistance in Nyasaland 1889-1939*, London, Heinemann, 1974, p.43.
- 9 The Church of Scotland ran *fourteen* schools from their Blantyre mission, and eight from Domasi mission near Zomba. See Ian Linden, *Catholics, Peasants and Chewa Resistance in Nyasaland 1889-1939*, London, Heinemann, 1974, p.43.
- 10 John Mbiti, *African Religion and Philosophy*, Doubleday, New York, 1970, p.1.
- 11 John Mbiti, p.38.
- 12 K.A. Busia, *Africa in Search for Democracy*, Praeger, New York, 1967, p.1.
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- 14 We can still question whether this is typically African, or that in other contexts it is a matter of imagination and institutional enforcement.

“Missionary Tradition, African Worldviews and the Growth of the Pentecostal Movement – Implications for the Fellowship with German Churches in Mission and Development”

Introduction

The twentieth century since 1914 would appear chaotic to Europeans, even more than the period between the French Revolution and the First World War. They were dismayed by the disorder in international affairs and the insecurity people felt in economic matters. Many religious voices began to clash with historic Christianity and would become a matter for religious concern. From the secular dimension, World War II also shattered colonial empires of European powers, and many third world nations began to become independent states after 1945.

The post world war II period marked the beginning of great religious changes. The eclipse of liberal, neo-orthodox and radical theologies, and the declining number of members in mainline churches contrasted with the emergence and growth of Evangelical and Pentecostal churches, especially in Asia, Africa and Latin America. The rise of para-church organisations and mega-churches in these areas and in North America began to challenge denominations of established missionary traditions. The Pentecostal revival after 1901 resp. 1906, the charismatic movements within mainline churches from the 1960s, and the “third wave”, the “signs and wonders” movements of the 1980s manifested a new interest in the work of the Holy Spirit. Church growth and increasing numbers of third world missionaries, even to the developed economies, have made Christianity the largest global religion. At the beginning of this 21st century, it is just appropriate therefore for theologians and missionaries to take a critical look at how all these and other changes have the potential to affect our mode of work. The theme for this consultation “Cultural roots, cultural transition, understanding of faith and cooperation in mission and development” could not have been more appropriate.

In this paper the term Pentecostalism refers only to the classical Pentecostal churches such as Apostolic Church Christ Apostolic Church the Church of Pentecost and Assemblies of God, while neo-Pentecostal churches refer to the post 1980s charismatic movements in Africa.

In dealing with a topic, “Missionary tradition, African worldviews and the growth of the Pentecostal movement – what does it mean for the fellowship with German churches in mission and Development”. it is important to understand the key expressions or words. A few questions then arise, such

as: what is missionary tradition? What is the African worldview? What the Pentecostal Movement? And what has been the impact of the movement on both the missionary tradition and the African world view? Finally, what does all this mean to the fellowship with German churches in mission and development (Missionary tradition)? In the next few pages I shall try to address these questions and draw a conclusion with an attempt to call for a paradigm shift in both traditions. That is to say, the adoption of only one tradition to the neglect of the other will be an unbalanced theological approach.

What is Missionary Tradition?

Traditional mission oriented churches such as Catholic and Protestant hold a belief in holistic human development. In other words, these churches’ concept of mission is to bring the gospel to a people coupled with social services such as health, education, reconciliation, commerce, that together bring total development to the people of the mission field. The churches do this through trained missionaries who are sent out to the mission field. Often times the home church of the missionary sponsored his or her stay in the mission field. Johannes B. Metz, an early twentieth century Catholic theologian from Germany, once stated that the Christian hope “must be essentially creative, so to speak, productive eschatology”.¹ Along the same line Moltmann observed that “the Christian faith evokes an intense desire for the eschatological kingdom, which desire in turn sets Christians on the edge for committed action for the human family”.² He submits that “the expectation of the promised future of the Kingdom of God, which is coming to man and the world to set them right and create life, makes us ready to expand ourselves unreservedly in love and in the work of reconciliation of the world with God and his future”.³ To the traditional mission churches (Catholic, Basel Mission, Bremen Mission, Anglican Mission, the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, Wesleyan Mission) therefore the Gospel had to be proclaimed in an actual situation, with attention to its implication for the reordering of society. With their European backgrounds, these churches exported all the political differences into the mission fields in Africa. For instance, the British-German confrontations in WW1 affected German missions across all British colonies in Africa, Ghana included. In addition all of them transported the European form of worship of cold, non-vibrant liturgy onto the continent. And from the early parts of the 19th century to the first quarter of the twentieth century African converts had to be European

before they were Christian. Hymns were sung in English while sermons in the Roman Catholic Churches were sung in Latin. This European type of spirituality did not impact in many African lives. At best many Africans lived dual spiritual lives, with allegiance to African spiritual dynamics as well as membership in the church where he/she was baptised or became a "Christian by accident" through enrolment in a church school. Would certain people have become Christians if they did not go to church schools with compulsory Sunday school systems?

It was not all negative though. The German churches were indeed responsible for the development of the calligraphy of the local languages (Ga, Akuapem Twi, Fante and Ewe, all in Ghana) of the people among whom the missionaries settled and worked. They were supported in this by local mission workers for the development of the Akuapem language.⁴ The missionaries developed these local languages to writing. The mission churches brought to Africa with the Western type of education also health service, commerce (in fact the Basle missionaries introduced the printing press and other commercial ventures that went with it), agricultural inputs and supported the African struggle for independence.⁵ By Ghana's independence in 1957, schools established and run by the European Mission Churches constituted two-thirds of the educational set up in the country.⁶

While the mother church was sending out both the clergy and lay missionaries in the 18th and 19th centuries, para-church ecumenical organizations such as the Evangelische Zentralstelle für Entwicklungshilfe (EZE, now known as EED), DED, Evangelisches Missionswerk (EMW), Brot für die Welt, Christian Aid, Action Chrétien etc., began to enter into partnership with Ecumenical groups such as the Christian Councils in Africa, Asia and Latin America. The main points of emphasis of these groups were slightly different. The church based missions centered mostly on "Evangelization and civilising" while the para-church bodies concentrated their efforts on the social, political and economic transformation of the partner countries. In the latter part of the twentieth century many of these bodies began to shift from the Christian Councils to concentrate on individual church denominations, following the virtual desintegration of the ecumenical movement. The denominations so partnered remain largely the European mainline protestant churches, the traditional mission churches. It would seem that unlike the church based missions, these para-church organizations laid greater emphasis on the socio-political development than the proclamation of the Gospel. EZE at the time said: "The end of the ideological confrontation between the East and the West led to the almost universal recognition of the important basic values of an open democratic society, the universal validity and indivisibility of human rights and the need to respect and care for ecological balance. Admittedly, the political and financial efforts to translate this into practice still have some way to go, but new opportunities for social reforms and democratization have opened up many countries."

The reason for this shift from social development to democratization programs, apart from the gradual disintegration of the ecumenical movement, was influenced to some extent by globalization which affected every facet of society, both local and international. In reviewing its principles and policy for work in 1997, EZE again stated:

"EZE has been prompted to review its work and its principles and policy guidelines by the far reaching changes that have taken place in the overall conditions affecting cooperation in development since the beginning of the nineties." Adding: "Economic globalization and international free trade are going forward on a totally new scale. The political and economic decisions of individual nations have become increasingly inter-dependent...the result is growing poverty among disadvantaged groups, accompanied by social disintegration. The polarization between the dynamic centers of growth and the regions which have missed out on this development is growing all the time".⁷

The above conclusion informed the shift in emphasis of EED and others in the 1990s from funding purely support service programs to advocacy oriented-activities.

Through the ages of German missionary activity in Africa the mission partners often times did not want to give away any of their **decision making authority**, but at the same time made the highest demands on the future of the church in Africa. For instance, just a few months after taking office, Zahn of the Bremen Mission had to end a dispute with his Committee on the question of dealing with missionaries, which was

"caused by those missionaries working in West Africa about the inadequate organization of the mission's life, and by an offer which came at the same time from Basle mission to transfer three more graduates of the Basle mission Seminary to the north German mission. However, the committee - caught up in strange processes of thought wanted to delay sending out fresh personnel until the missionaries in Africa withdrew their criticism".⁸

In this letter to his Basle Mission counterpart Zahn lamented:

"In the name of the rule of order in the world some gentlemen are so scared that they seek in their wisdom as strategists to starve out our brothers - i.e. to wait till order is present before sending anyone out".

One wonders if the situation is any different today when it comes to the partnership relations between the church in Africa and its northern partners. The church in Africa may have native leadership but do they reserve the right to take decisions on their own with regards to certain financial matter where the partner's money is involved? The case of "he who pays the piper calls the tune" comes in here. This behavior can be likened to a landlord who locks up the doors to the room

from which the tenant is to collect the money and pay out the delayed rent which the landlord is demanding. Home mission committees should add some amount of flexibility to their operations so as to listen to and allow for the field worker to have at least a degree of autonomy and authority. This would enable him take decisions that will be relevant to the issues on the ground and beneficial for both the mission and people.

What is the African worldview?

In African cosmology, the belief in and pursuit of prosperity is paramount. Africans do not honor or accept suffering or poverty. The two situations are battles Africans have always sought to fight. The belief in the gods and ancestors is primarily to ensure prosperity and individual and, societal well being. The understanding of a traditional cosmology or world view is paramount in any attempt to understand contemporary religious phenomena. This has been noted by theologians, missiologists and anthropologists. Kraft defines worldview as “the culturally patterned basic understanding (e.g. assumptions, presuppositions, beliefs, etc) of reality of which members of a society organize and live their lives”.⁹ The African worldview expresses life in two worlds – the visible world and the invisible (spirit) world. Human beings, animals and plants live in the visible world, whereas God (the Supreme Being), ancestors and the gods inhabit the invisible world. I have chosen to use God (the Supreme Being) because every group of people in Africa has a name for God. For example, the Akan of Ghana call him Onyame, the Ga also of Ghana call him Nyonmo, the Wala call him Namwini, the Luyia of Kenya call him Wele. In fact, writing about the Dinka of Eastern Sudan, Lienhardt prefers to use the term “Divinity” rather than God because sometimes it is a being, supreme, creator, personal and father, but also it is a kind of activity that ‘sums up the activities of a multiplicity of beings’.¹⁰

Namwini who is the overall chief of both the visible and invisible worlds and the source of all life is often approached through his agents, or messengers, the gods. The African believes the gods were created by the Supreme Being and constitute a pantheon of deities through which God manifests himself. It is the duty of the spirits to bring prosperity and peace by protecting the crops and domestic animals against enemies. Hackett wrote:

“In traditional, pre-colonial societies, it was common for people to associate the deities with prosperity...it was believed that a harmonious relationship with the spiritual forces was necessary to ensure good health, long life and prosperity and to ensure that one’s destiny was not altered for the worse.”¹¹

There is a local Ghanaian proverb which goes this way, “there is no one who does not want to eat salt”. In other words, everybody wants to be successful or prosperous. The rush of many Africans to the Pentecostal and neo-Pentecostal churches among other things is informed by the fact that these churches have been able to develop theological or missionary strategy that addresses this worldview. All Africans

believe in the providence of God which supplies to his people through the ancestors and the gods who give rains in good time to mature the crop, which protects his people from dangerous animals when they go out to the bush and multiplies his people through safe child bearing and good health. God has made every good thing available for the well being of his people. To the African, the result of pleasing God and the ancestors is for one to have fullness of life and have plenty of everything. “Therefore”, writes Anim, “if things are not going as expected, there must be some reason(s) for it...”¹² To the African, once he obeys the regulations of the community and lives his life pleasing to the gods and ancestors, everything must go well. Therefore, unexpected happenings in life must be as result of one or to two things.

It can be that a particular evil spirit or influence might have been instigated by a jealous relative or neighbor for the apparent success of the affected. Another likely reason may be a consequence of a breach of customary regulation or offence of the gods or ancestors.

To ward off such misfortunes and give explanations for them and assurance of peace, security and prosperity, anti-spell shrines were established across the continent which were believed to provide protection against spells that might be cast on a person or provided cure for the attacked. Examples of these cultic shrines included Senyakupo (in Bole area, Akonade in Lartey area), and others outside Ghana. In Muslim communities, *shuyukh* (sing. *shaykh*) would prepare concoctions washed from Arabic writings purported to be *surat* from the Qur’an, or charms and amulets made from folded Arabic writings, also believed to be portions of the Qur’an for both clients and victims.

With the passing of time, especially from the first quarter of the twentieth century, most of these shrines began to lose their powers partly due to the lack of modernization of their practice and partly due to intense Christian influence across the continent. In their place however, it is worthy of note that new ones such Spiritual Churches (now referred to as African Initiated Churches, AIC) with similar *modus operandi*, continue to emerge. The Pentecostal movement appeared on the scene. This leads us to the next segment of our lecture, which is the growth and impact of the Pentecostal Movement.

The growth and impact of the Pentecostal Movement

Two difficulties associate with African Pentecostalism. The first difficulty is the origin of African Pentecostalism while the second difficulty has to do with when African Pentecostalism actually started. The difficulties arise from the question of origin and date. Is African Pentecostalism inspired by and take roots from the experiences of Charles Fox Parham and William J. Seymour’s Azusa Street movement of 1901 and 1906 respectively? Did African Pentecostalism take roots in the North American initiatives? Scholars of Pentecostalism are divided as to the origins of African Pentecostalism. For Synan practically all Pentecostal groups can trace their lines

to the Azusa Mission. McGee, Asamoah-Gyadu and others disagree, saying:

“Pentecostal outbursts in India for example, are said to have predated the North American experience by at least forty years, taking an indigenous course with little or no Western missionary involvement.”¹³

Asamoah-Gyadu, quoting Frederick J. Conway goes further to say

“in Haiti, where glossolalia is considered akin to certain features of voodoo spirit possession, “speaking in tongues” which defines much of Western Pentecostalism, it is claimed, does not set the Pentecostal apart from others nearly as much as the ceremony of burning voodoo objects and paraphernalia... this study therefore identifies with the views of scholars like Pomerville, Peterson and Sepuveda, who see as erroneous the idea that all Pentecostal movements can trace their lineage to Seymour’s Azusa Street mission or to Parham’ initiative”.¹⁴

All these point to the fact that African and indeed other Pentecostal groups have their own roots and not necessarily following from Western Pentecostal movements. Indeed, the generally acclaimed “father” of Ghana’s Pentecostal Movement, the late Apostle Anim and his group started in Asamankese, and it is generally acknowledged that they received the outpouring of the Holy Spirit while praying in that small town in the eastern corner of Ghana.¹⁵

Causes for the Growth of the Pentecostal Movement in Africa

African Pentecostalism developed as a result of several factors; including the practitioners’ belief that all believers of all generations have to be baptized with the Holy Spirit and speak in new tongues as a first sign of the presence of the Spirit in the believer. The practitioners’ belief that the mainline mission churches in Africa had seriously neglected some or all of the gifts of the Holy Spirit meant for all believers as recounted in I Corinthians Chapters 12 and 14. And also, the Pentecostalists’ ability to harness the African worldview of good life and the wellbeing of the individual and society resulting from obedience of societal rules and regulations seem to make sense to the African Christian. To them if a person is born again, baptized in the spirit, such a person overcomes the powers of the invisible world. Pentecostal Christianity has always sought to grow intentional Christians and not accidental Christians. The practice of altar call at the end of every preaching session, be it private or public, requesting the listener(s) to make a personal decision for Christ supports this point. Even at this stage, in the 21st century some mainline churches still relegate altar calls and personal commitment to Christ to the background.

Theology of the Pentecostal Movement

In dealing with the theology of the Pentecostal Movement, our attention should be focused on the movement’s accept-

ance of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit as a sign of the individual believer’s second birth in Christ. This baptism must first manifest itself in the speaking in tongues by the believer. The movement emphasizes the belief in the entire Bible as the word of God and the gifts of the Holy Spirit, as found in 1 Corinthians 12 and 14.

Pentecostal theology cannot be considered without linking it to Armenian evangelicalism. Asante observed that “Pentecostalism is one stream within Armenian evangelicalism with distinctive emphasis upon a further experience after conversion, namely baptism in the Holy Spirit and endowment (sic) of power signified by speaking in tongues (glossolalia) and upon the gifts of the spirit listed in 1 Corinthians 12:8-10”.¹⁶

On the other hand, the mainline churches or the “classic reformed view” had been that the 1 Corinthian group of gifts died out either with apostles or with the completion of the New Testament canon.¹⁷ This was indeed the view of many reformed theologians such as Calvin, John Owen, Warfield and Jonathan Edwards. The New Testament position on this makes the protestant reformers’ position debatable. With consideration of the Pentecostal writers and practitioners and from the evidence in the history of the church and on the ground the classic Reformed view would be difficult to sustain. Pentecostals attribute the seeming cessation idea of the manifestation of the gifts of the Spirit in the individuals in the life of the Church “to the failure to desire, pray for and expect God’s working in these ways”.¹⁸ It is an undeniable fact that there have been periodic and uneven appearances of the gifts of the spirit in the history of the Church even as late as the 20th century. John Wesley saw the new birth as “second blessings” experience that lifts the believer’s life to a permanently new level defined and informed by holy living and powerful ministry.¹⁹ Key Pentecostal revivalists like Charles Finney, Asa Mahan, Phoebe Palmer and many Ghanaian Pentecostals who claim the baptism of the Holy Spirit was a post-conversion endowment of the power identified in the said endowment with “the sanctification” teaching of John Wesley.

Pentecostals generally see Holy Spirit baptism in terms of the full reception of the Spirit in the believer’s personal being, in assurance, glossolalia, emotional exuberance, inward strength and liberty to witness for Christ and the manifestation of diverse kinds of gifts for ministry, including ability to cast out demons. The movement sought to redirect the attention of the church on the indispensable role of the Holy Spirit, his power and his gifts in the ministry of the church in the world.

Various theological currents within Pentecostalism lead to the conclusion on a “four-square” emphasis of preaching by the movement: Christ the savior, Christ the baptizer of the Holy Spirit, Christ the healer and Christ the coming King.

All the above suggests that Pentecostalism places greater emphasis on the Gospel and the empowering and the enabling features of the Holy Spirit. The movement also empha-

sizes the other world and urges Christians to take the consequences of sin serious as they would alienate the believer from heaven. Based on this, Pentecostals call for a personal experience of the Holy Spirit, in the sense of the outpouring of the Spirit that empowers believers in Christ for efficient Christian witness. The Pentecostal Movement can be described as a spiritual renewal movement. This approach of the Movement has apparently appealed to many African Christians since the movement burst out on the continent in the first quarter of the 20th century.

In spite of the seeming positive role of the movement, Asante has identified three negative things which he refers to as “crude fundamentalism”.²⁰ The Pentecostal Movement for many decades, since its inception, relegated intellectualism to the background. In fact the movement initially saw intellectualism to be the main enemy of true faith and belief in the Bible. The movement further tends to over-emphasize emotionalism in an attempt to facilitate the individual spiritual awakening or subjective religious experience. It is difficult to define emotions but, obviously, it has to do with psychological and cognitive aspects and influences behavior. When people become emotional physical changes occur. Emotion inducing stimuli lead the individual to some kind of motion.

In addition, the movement did not see the social aspect of the Gospel to be of any importance. The movement concentrated on the spiritual life over against the socio-economic and political orderliness of this world.

Pentecostals and Social Service

As we have already indicated above, the mainline mission churches carried out holistic missionary work; that is evangelizing and civilizing the people. On its part the Pentecostal Movement's strong emphasis on the spiritual development of the individual and the great desire to enter the other world led to little concern for this world. This for a long time led to the overlooking of the “positive bearing of the Christian faith upon the transformation of human society not only in the private domain of thought and feeling but also in the public domain of law, government and economics”. We have stated above how Moltmann observed that “the Christian faith evokes an intense desire for the eschatological kingdom, which desire in turn sets Christians on the edge for committed action for the human family”. However, there are great signs of shifts in paradigm, especially on the part of the Church of Pentecost in Ghana with its establishment of schools and even a University College. It must be pointed out, in any event, that the Christian hope cannot realise itself in a purely emotional or contemplative expectation. Love and faith must express itself in real and practical concern and action (James 2.14-26).

What does it mean for German Missions in Partnership and Development

For me, the interaction of mission tradition, African worldview and Pentecostal is simple. It has meaning not for the

German churches in mission and development alone but for the two different Christian traditions at large.

The churches in Africa need the missionary partnership of the German churches. Similarly the churches in Germany need the African churches. None of the two churches can accomplish witness and service alone. The word “globalization” has emerged on the world scene for about two decades now. Taken in a broad sense, globalization can encompass both mundane and sacred issues. Just as there is globalization of economic issues, globalization of information and communication technology so can there be globalization of religious issues. Indeed religious issues have been globalized. So let me borrow EZE's observation on globalization and put it in theological terms that the German missions in partnership and development and the Pentecostal Movement should become increasingly inter-dependent. The result will lead to growing cross fertilization of spiritual and developmental ideas. In times past missionary movement was mainly from the North to the South, or from the West to Africa and elsewhere. Since the rise of the Pentecostal Movement with its emphasis on winning more souls for Christ, the missionary movement has changed from a purely North-South to a South-North endeavor, resp. “Africa- Europe and America” movement.

In the several years of German missionary partnership with Africa many missionaries did not understand, and in many cases just dismissed the African worldviews, which are built up in African life and culture. African worldviews are innate. They are part of the African psyche. The missionary outright dismissal led to two things: It produced double standard Christians. This group of Christians were baptized in the church and yet did not break from the past African worldviews, which came to the fore every time the Christian was faced with a social or spiritual challenge in life? From the worldview described above, it is clear that in African cosmology, questions relating to science and technology are not asked nor believed in. It is all about the visible and the invisible worlds and how harmonious relations lead to human and societal wellbeing. The second consequence of the outright dismissal of the European Missionaries was to produce “superficial individuals” who were neither wholly European nor wholly African. The Pentecostal Movement apart from emphasizing the personal regeneration and infilling of the Holy Spirit for witness teaches believers to be aware of the powers of darkness and the ability of Christ to protect them from the attacks of such powers.

Conclusion

It seems clear from this paper so far that the two traditions need a paradigm shift. The German churches in partnership need to strive to understand and appreciate the African cosmology. That worldview is not wholly “pagan” as perceived by some early missionaries. In fact, the Bible in several passages refer to the God of heaven and the god of this earth. An understanding of the world view coupled with an intentional facilitation of an enhanced religious experience, char-

acterized by encouragement for constant infilling of the holy spirit and openness to the gifts of the Spirit, would make the missionary tradition and partnership more meaningful to the African. Furthermore, the missionary social service activities sometimes were carried out devoid of any reference to the church or Christ, through whom the church is mandated to take care of the plight of the poor. This will require an intensification of the desire to seek inner assurance through the enhanced enabling of the Holy Spirit for holy living and witness. It must be stated that the traditional mission churches whether German related or otherwise are losing ground gradually in all fronts of mission and development. What used to be their riches is being taken over by the Pentecostal and neo-Pentecostal movements in recent times.

Recommendation

Finally I recommend that the traditional holistic missionary approach adopted by the German churches continues. I say this because faith must realize itself in a strong concern for society. Both traditions, that is the German church partners and the Pentecostal movement must intensify their evangelization intertwined with social concern. My point is that the time has come for paradigm shift in both traditions. The over-emphasis of one form of mission is not good for the church in Africa. In this dynamic world of our time one has to innovate positively for growth to take place or one remains traditionally dogmatic and is dwarfed out. I totally agree with Pope John XXIII when he called on the Catholic Church to “open the doors and windows and let fresh wind blow in the Vatican”.²¹

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2 Ibid.

3 Ibid.

4 Akrofi, a local Church worker with deep knowledge of the Akuapem language aided the Rev. Christalla to translate the Bible from a European language into Akuapem Twi in the 1870s.

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6 Ibid.

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16 Asante, *The Challenge of the Charismatic Movement*, p.1.

17 Ibid.

18 Ibid.

19 Ibid.

20 Ibid.

21 Plenary sessions of the Catholic Church between 1949 and 1950 and later the Vatican sessions of 1963-1965 saw the Church struggling to come to terms with the reality of the presence of other faiths other than the Catholic church and how the Church could relate to them. The Pope John then seemed not amused at the Church’s continuous conservative position about “the other faith”, hence his charge to the church. See Neuner and Dupuis, *The Christian faith and the doctrinal documents of the Catholic Church*, Bombay: Catholic book Publications, 1972, p. 272ff.

Charismatic Renewal, Denominational Tradition and the Transformation of Ethiopian Society

In the year 2005, I spent a few weeks in the northern Ethiopian town of Bahir Dar as part of my field research on Pentecostal and Charismatic movements in the country. After having conducted most of my work in Addis Ababa and in the town of Awasa in the mostly Protestant south, I wanted to study Pentecostal and Charismatic churches in a predominantly Orthodox area. Next to conducting a number of interviews, I tried to visit as many Pentecostal and Protestant churches as possible. For my first Sunday service, I went to a church which I will call “church A” for the moment. Church A was in the process of erecting an impressive concrete building, quite tall and roomy as if to compete with Orthodox sacral architecture. In fact, it was the tallest building in town. The worship service itself, however, was less spectacular in comparison to many other churches I had visited. The building filled to barely half its capacity, and the singing seemed rather subdued for Ethiopian conditions. People only clapped their hands when asked to do so, nobody prayed in tongues, and spontaneity was rare. When a number of deacons were invited to come forward to pray, a woman from the choir erupted into ecstatic praise; the deacons waited patiently for her to finish, but nobody in the church followed her lead. During the sermon, there was no spontaneous crowd response; and the service ended without one of the typical altar calls.

Two weeks later I visited quite a different church, let’s call it church B. Church B met in a tiny rented house, which could not hold all the worshipers gathered there. About half of the church therefore sat in the courtyard under a tarp, following the service through an open window. The singing was highly energized and loud, with spontaneous bursts of praise and tongues, as it went on for about an hour. The preacher introduced his sermon with a warning that he would have much to say and needed everyone’s patience, and in the following forty-five minutes he presented an array of bible passages and contemporary tales, all centering on his theme “joy in Jesus.” After the sermon, more praying and singing followed, and at one point the music leader prompted the church to sing in tongues. The worship service was led by a young and very energetic evangelist, whom I had gotten to know as someone who easily strikes up conversations with strangers in order to share his faith.

It may be suspected by this comparative characterization, that one of these churches belongs to a mainline Protestant denomination whereas the other is Pentecostal. This perception is true. However, the actual identification of the con-

gregations is not what one may expect. For church A – the one with the tall building and the rather structured service – belongs to the most important *Pentecostal* denomination of the country, the Ethiopian Full Gospel Believers’ Church (EFGBC), whereas the loud and slightly chaotic Sunday celebration was the worship service of the *Lutheran* church in town, the Bahir Dar branch of the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus (EECMY).

This example is not all that uncommon and it points to two important trends in the development of the Ethiopian confessional landscape. First, only twenty years ago, it would have been impossible to find such a wide array of Protestant churches in an Orthodox town like Bahir Dar, where in 2005 there were so many that I could not visit them all for Sunday worship. This change points to the significant increase of religious plurality and Protestant growth, which ensued after the downfall of the socialist military dictatorship of the Derg in 1991. In these last decades Protestants enjoyed greater religious freedom than ever before and grew at an astonishing rate. Before the downfall of the Derg, roughly 2.1 million people identified as Protestant in the 1984 census, which corresponded to about 5.5 percent of the total population.¹ By 1994 their number had more than doubled to 5.4 million, or 10.2 percent of the overall populace,² and by 2007 Protestants amounted to 13.7 million people, or 18.6 percent.³ Between 1994 and 2007 the annual growth rate of Ethiopian Protestantism was 7.4 percent and by far exceeded that of the country and those of other religions.⁴

Secondly, this Protestant growth coincides with an unprecedented spread of Pentecostal spirituality and theology to the mainline Protestant churches. It is not uncommon to observe praying in tongues in mainline Protestant churches, even from the pulpit, as well as prophecy, exorcism, and prayers for healing with the laying on of hands. The structure of services is very similar between all Protestant churches, and pulpit sharing between Pentecostals and mainline Protestant is a common practice. There are only a few smaller churches and denominations in the evangelical spectrum that explicitly resist being identified as Charismatics. The largest mainline Protestant denominations, the Kale Heywet Church (KHC), the EECMY, and the Meserete Kristos Church (MKC), are deeply influenced by the Charismatic movement. All three denominations have centrally accommodated Pentecostal theology and spirituality in their theological discussions and regulations.⁵ This conflation of Protestants and

Pentecostals has a terminological correlate in the use of the term “Pente” (coming from “Pentecostal”) for all Protestants. The collaboration between Pentecostals and mainline Evangelicals is also furthered by the Evangelical Churches Fellowship of Ethiopia (ECFE), which is the only significant ecumenical body for Protestants in Ethiopia. Pentecostal and Charismatic spirituality and theology, therefore, is not an undercurrent but a central feature of Ethiopian Protestantism. Though the intensity of Pentecostal influence on mainline churches varies between congregations and different regions, there is no church that is not influenced and challenged by the Charismatic movement in one way or another.

The following remarks will explore the consequences of these developments for Christianity in Ethiopia and church partnership between Ethiopia and Europe. They will begin with a short history of Ethiopian Pentecostalism, followed by a detailed account of how the movement entered the EECMY. The conclusion will delineate some theological implications of these developments, especially with regard to collaboration and support in mission and development.

History of the Pentecostal Movement in Ethiopia

Ethiopian Pentecostalism⁶ does not have American roots, but began with Finnish and Swedish Pentecostal mission initiatives who entered Ethiopia in the 1950s. The first Pentecostal missionaries with a long-term presence in Ethiopia, were the Finnish couple Anna-Liisa and Sanfrid Mattson who arrived in Ethiopia in 1951. Their organization was structured like an umbrella organization for otherwise independent Finnish missionaries. In 1956 a female missionary belonging to this organization opened a work center in the Addis Ababa Merkato area and began spiritual meetings there, which allowed her to connect with some Ethiopian youths, mostly high school and university students.

The second group of missionaries were Swedish Pentecostals, who embarked on a number of mission initiatives from 1959 onward. The most important one of these was the work of the Swedish Philadelphia Church Mission established in the southern town of Awasa in 1960. While the main work of the mission there was a vocational school, the mission also conducted meetings and formed a small congregation. The main importance of the Swedish mission in Awasa for the early Pentecostal movement in Ethiopia, however, lies in the annual summer Bible schools the mission conducted. These revival meetings lasted several weeks and were attended by students in their summer break from all over the country. The mission thereby functioned as an important early hub for the emerging Pentecostal groups.

The Pentecostal movement gained momentum toward the middle of the 1960s, with a number of young Ethiopians claiming the central Pentecostal initiation experience: baptism in the Holy Spirit. Some of the youths attended the Finnish or Swedish missions, but most of them congregated in mission-independent prayer groups and came in contact with Pentecostal teachings through friends or literature.

Such groups existed, for example, at the Teacher Training Institute in Harar, at the high school in the town of Nazaret, and among university students in Addis Ababa. A number of these initiatives converged in Addis Ababa and founded the Ethiopian Full Gospel Believers’ Church (EFGBC) in 1967. The group selected its first leaders and invited two Swedish missionaries to ordain them as elders. This incident led to a serious conflict between the Finnish and the Swedish mission, since the Finnish Mission had lost some of their following to this new movement and were under the impression that the Swedish were building a new following at their expense. However, this was not the case, since the EFGBC kept its distance from the Swedish missionaries and asserted their independence.

Only a few months after its foundation, the church applied for registration as a religious association. This was a bold attempt reflecting the modernizing impulses of the Pentecostal youths, given that in public sentiment and political reality the Ethiopian Orthodox Church (EOC) was the only legitimate representative of Ethiopian Christianity. All Christian groups outside of the Orthodox Church were operating under the “Regulations Governing the Activities of Missions” from 1944, and the legislation making Ethiopian religious associations possible had only been put into place very recently. The 1955 revision of the constitution for the first time had provided some measure of freedom of religious practice. This was taken up by the Civil Code of 1960, which outlawed discrimination on the basis of religion, and deemed all religious organizations outside the Orthodox Church as associations. The “Legal Notice No. 321” of 1966 provided guidelines for the registration of associations. Therefore, less than a year after this new legislation had been drafted, the EFGBC explicitly invoked the registration guidelines and became the first religious group to test this new legislation. The Ministry of Justice apparently did not know what to do with such an application and forwarded it to the Ministry of Education, which had been in charge of registering foreign missions. Nobody felt in charge there either, and after some months the application was rejected by the Minister of the Interior, which also entailed the closure of the church’s meeting places.

The EFGBC at first complied with this ruling and relied on smaller meetings in private homes and for a time used the Swedish mission property in Addis Ababa. Swedish missionaries also attempted to use some of their Imperial contacts to intervene on their behalf. During this time, the Ethiopian Pentecostal movement encountered its first doctrinal division when one of its evangelists teamed up with Oneness Pentecostal missionaries and subsequently founded the Apostolic Church of Ethiopia. Oneness Pentecostalism denies the doctrinal concept of the trinity, which of course was an extremely problematic outlook in Orthodox Ethiopia.⁷

From the end of 1971 onward, the political pressure on Pentecostals increased again, culminating in the arrest of approximately 250 worshippers on Sunday, 27 August 1972. The legal and political aftermath of this incident did not turn out

in favor of the Pentecostals, even though they had managed to bring their case to the attention of the international press (there was an article in the international edition of Newsweek) and found some Lutheran supporters, who sparked an investigation by the World Council of Churches regarding the role of the Orthodox Church in the matter. The Full Gospel Church was not the only religious group targeted by the government during this time. Alongside the Pentecostals, the government rounded up Jehovah's Witnesses, the Apostolic Church suffered severe repressions, and even the Finnish Mission in Addis Ababa was shut down for longer intervals.

When the popular revolution began in 1974, the Pentecostals were hopeful that now they would be able to attain religious liberty. The EFGBC resumed public meetings in the summer of 1974 and immediately set up a new national structure. The renewed leadership power also entailed the second doctrinal division in the church, when a group began to emphasize exorcisms more than before and contended that even born-again and spirit-filled believers may be possessed by demons. They were forced out of the church and established the Gospel Deliverance Church.

The EFGBC meetings continued until 1976, when they were interrupted as result of a neighborhood riot. In 1977 the church was granted land by the city and completed its first own building in October 1978. However, this was already at a time, when the ruling committee (the Derg) turned toward scientific socialism, violently co-opted the Orthodox Church, and settled internal differences in the bloody campaigns of the Red Terror. Many of the liberties that the revolution had initially brought were now revoked. In the country side, a number of rural EFGBC congregations had already been shut down and leaders imprisoned,⁸ and a few months after its opening the Addis Ababa church was closed as well, and its property was taken over by the government. Once again the EFGBC relied on home meetings until almost the end of the Derg regime.

Between 1975 and 1978, the Derg forced the Northern European Pentecostal missions out of their development projects and the missionaries began to turn over their church work to Ethiopians. The Swedish Philadelphia Church Mission invited representatives from its different congregations to the yearly mission meeting in Awasa in 1975, where they agreed to form the Hiwot Berhan Church (HBC). The HBC's application for registration as religious association, however, was not favorably received by the revolutionary rulers. In 1978 the Swedish missionaries were expelled from the Kefa province, and the churches there were closed and had to continue in secret cell structures. One year later the Addis Ababa HBC was shut down as well. The long-standing Awasa mission station and church continued until 1983, when they too were closed by the government and their property was confiscated. Only few local HBC congregations managed to stay open during the Derg. The Swedish mission continued some work in the country, mostly in the form of relief projects.

The Finnish Mission at Merkato in Addis Ababa appointed Ethiopian leaders for their work in 1976, who less than one year later notified the mission of their desire to be established as a financially independent national church. In 1978 the Finnish Pentecostal missionaries were forced out of their projects in the provinces of Kefa and Shewa by the Derg, and decided to leave Ethiopia. A fellowship of Finnish mission related churches was formed in June 1978, which took on the name of Gennet Church (GC), and the last missionaries departed one month later. In 1979 the Derg closed the Addis Ababa GC and imprisoned its leaders for some months. A number of other GC congregations were shut down throughout the country as well, from now on relying on private house meetings and secret programs. Only the southern Sidamo branch of the church flourished and operated publicly throughout the Derg, due to fairly tolerant local authorities.

After the regime of the Derg had been brought to an end by a coalition of guerrilla liberation movements in 1991, the new government allowed Pentecostal churches and missions to resume public meetings and returned much of their dispossessed estate. All churches reported significant gains when they reopened. In the traditionally Orthodox northern provinces, the public re-emergence of Pentecostal churches was a more difficult process accompanied by occasional riots, but the new executive and judiciary most often sided with the Pentecostals. The provisions of the 1960 Civil Code and the "Legal Notice No. 321" of 1966 pertaining to the registration of associations, were now put into practice, allowing and mandating the official registration of all religious bodies. A list of registered associations obtained from the Ministry of Justice bears witness to the mushrooming and fraying of the Christian denominational landscape in recent years. The majority of the approximately 291 religious associations in this list are Protestant denominations, smaller churches, or ministries, many of which belong to the Pentecostal and Charismatic spectrum. The most relevant recently established Pentecostal denominations are the Assemblies of God, the Bible Army Church, the Gospel Light Church, the Harvest Church of God, the Maranata Church, and the Winners' Chapel.⁹ The largest trinitarian Pentecostal denominations are the EFGBC and the HBC with approximately 500,000 members each. The Oneness Apostolic Church (ACE) is comparable in size. Other Pentecostal churches are considerably smaller with membership estimates in the five-figure-range.¹⁰

A number of important observations can be made in this history of Ethiopian Pentecostalism. First of all, the movement was Ethiopian almost right from the start. The important early adherents of Ethiopian Pentecostalism were members of the young and highly mobile student elite. The international and arguably modern style of Pentecostal Christianity matched their educational ambitions, and as agile travelers they were capable of quickly spreading their faith and forming an Ethiopian network. Moreover, they developed a strong sense of mission independence early on, partially because their own leadership ambitions clashed with the setup of the

missions, and partially because they wanted to be seen as a purely Ethiopian Christian movement.

Secondly, though the Ethiopian Pentecostals did not intend to found a political movement, they practically became one, since the political pressure on them was met by their religiously inspired defiance of the government overreach into their faith. During Emperor Haile Selassie's reign, Pentecostals practically spearheaded the fight for religious liberty by being the first group to test the new legislation for the registration of religious associations, suffering the consequences for their failure to comply with the prohibition of Pentecostal worship, and setting up effective underground structures. During the Derg regime, the same dynamics applied in an increasing manner, in part setting up Pentecostals as an alternative to compliance with the regime.¹¹

Thirdly, the relationship between Pentecostalism and development was less strained than in some Northern European contexts. For the Finnish and Swedish Pentecostal missionaries, development projects were a moral imperative and a necessity for acquiring residence permits, and they often needed to defend their development work against their European critics. During the Derg, development was the only way for the missions to stay in touch with their underground churches, although many projects had to be turned over to the Derg.

Finally, there is an unusual ecumenical component to Ethiopian Pentecostal history in their appellation to the World Council of Churches early on. This was due to Lutheran missionary supporters that the Pentecostals had, who also helped to initiate contact to mainline Protestantism during this time. Consequentially, when the EECMY general secretary, Gudina Tumsa, initiated the formation of the Council for the Cooperation of Churches in Ethiopia in 1976, the EFGBC became one of its founding members. This Council became the predecessor for the ECFE, in which Pentecostals also plays an active role.

The Charismatic Movement in the EECMY

The early ecumenical contacts, of course did not yet entail a strong Charismatic influence within the EECMY. They do, however, indicate a number of connections early on, which became important for the development of the Charismatic movement within the church. One of the first reports about Charismatic groups in the EECMY pertains to a revival in Gore; Illubabor in 1970, in which the later president of the church, Iteffa Gobena (2001–2009), was involved.¹² Iteffa had previously received the Holy Spirit baptism through a person from one of the early Pentecostal revival groups.¹³ Apparently a Full Gospel Church evangelist also worked with the EECMY in Illubabor during this time and was involved in spreading the revival to the nearby town of Metu.¹⁴ A similar and more prominent movement rose up in the Nekemte EECMY, and the youths involved here later became figureheads of the Lutheran Charismatic movement.¹⁵ At least one of these persons also had contacts to an early Pentecostal

revival group of the 1960s. The Nekemte movement clashed with the local church leadership, but the General Secretary of the church at the time, Gudina Tumsa, intervened on their behalf.¹⁶ Gudina, who had been pastor in Nekemte, by all accounts was no Charismatic himself, but he apparently valued the invigorating effects of the movement and sought to keep the youths inside the church.¹⁷ These early revivalists soon came to study at the Mekane Yesus Seminary in Addis Ababa, where a vibrant Charismatic movement emerged from 1973 onward, effectively dividing the campus into pro and contra-Charismatic groups over issues of worship style, personal commitment, and ethical demands like abstinence from alcohol.¹⁸ Pentecostal Christians from Addis Ababa also participated in the worship meetings on the seminary compound.

However, this early Charismatic movement in the EECMY should not be overestimated regarding its reach within the church at the time. When the Norwegian missionary Tormod Engelsen presented a documentary report about Ethiopian Pentecostals at the general assembly in 1973, which also included recommendations on how to deal with the movement, his report was dismissed on procedural grounds and the whole issue was not seen as relevant to the Mekane Yesus Church.¹⁹ The importance of the early charismatic movement does not lie so much in the events of the time, but rather in the fact that prominent church leaders emerged from this group, which helped to spread the movement and facilitated its acceptance later on.

The oppression of all Protestant churches under the Derg regime in certain ways functioned as a catalyst for the Charismatic movement, although in a rather indirect way. By 1976 the issue of the Charismatic movement had reached enough prominence for the EECMY to hold its first official consultation on matter. The report of this meeting essentially welcomed the movement as a long anticipated revival, but also addressed conflicts regarding authority and doctrine.²⁰ However, this declaration hardly had any effect because the increasing politicization of the Charismatic movement now resulted in quite different dynamics. The considerable public attention Pentecostals and Charismatics drew on account of their defiant attitude toward worldly authorities made them an easy target for the revolutionary rulers. For example, Charismatic youths were arrested on occasion for refusing to publicly chant socialist slogans like "The revolution above all!", maintaining that they should not put anything above God.²¹ The EECMY, on the other hand, under the leadership of the Gudina Tumsa, at first welcomed the revolution and sought to find a positive response and an active role. The church cooperated in turning over its development projects to the government and cast its vision of a more just society as an opportunity awarded by the revolution.²² On the issue of chanting slogans Gudina also opted for a pragmatic and accommodating approach, arguing that such chants were only meant to inspire people for the revolution and had no religious relevance, and that therefore they were not worth risking arrest for.²³ However, in 1977 and 1978, it became increasingly clear that the government also felt challenged by

the political ambitions of the EECMY, and a period of confrontation began, which culminated in the abduction and murder of Gudina Tumsa. In its crackdown on churches, the Derg now began to apply the derogatory term “Pente”, originally invented for Pentecostals only, to all Protestant churches. Some of the people so labeled, had never even heard of Pentecostalism.²⁴ A number of EECMY congregations reacted to this politicization of Pentecostal spirituality by banning or restricting Pentecostal attendance in their services (i.e. in places where Pentecostal churches had already been closed), and by disciplining and expelling their own Charismatic groups. At times churches even turned Charismatic youths over to the police in order to avoid difficulties.

In the following years, many EECMY congregations were closed as well and most of them established underground cell groups. It is likely that the more Charismatic elements in the churches led the way, and there may have been some conflation with Pentecostal cell structures under such circumstances. However, the amount of contact between cell groups strongly varied with local conditions. Especially in areas with high political pressure, security concerns among cell group leaders were too high to admit people from other denominations in fear of government spies.²⁵ However, it is possible that in certain areas and over time cell groups were structured less by denominational boundaries and more by interpersonal relationships and local proximity, so that as church identification lessened, spiritual practices became more homogenous.²⁶

Altogether, it can be said that the spread of the Charismatic movement during the Derg was not due to church policies but rather due to the politicization of the movement. Government propaganda increasingly identified Protestant as Pentecostal and its repressions of EECMY congregations strengthened the Charismatic wing because of its more defiant political outlook. Especially for youths in the EECMY, Charismatic spirituality offered a political alternative to the at times more accommodating approach of their church.²⁷ Furthermore, the church’s attempts to curb the political dangers invoked by these groups enabled Charismatics after the Derg to produce a narrative of moral superiority on account of the suffered persecutions by the government and their church.²⁸

After the Derg had come to an end, the new policies of religious freedom led to a rapid spread of Pentecostal churches all over the country, creating more competition between churches. This also helped the spread of Charismatic groups, even in more conservative districts. In Callia, Western Synod, for example, the missionary Hermann Domianus reported that in 1995 Charismatic youths, who were under church discipline, threatened to join the Full Gospel Church.²⁹ This led to negotiations and finally a reconciliation. In other instances the Full Gospel Church effectively took over EECMY congregations, and the so-called “sheep-stealing issue” at a time reached a dimension in which it even threatened to disintegrate the Evangelical Churches’ Fellowship. For a while, the split between the Ethiopian and the Addis Ababa and

Surrounding Mekane Yesus Church also enabled Charismatic groups to break away from their church and join the other faction.³⁰ In some of the new mission areas, the EECMY arrived later than the Pentecostals. This was the case in Bahir Dar, for example, and from the introductory remarks it is evident that by following a Pentecostal paradigm they became an attractive church in a competitive field.

The mushrooming of Charismatic groups is also evident in the writings of Bachelor students at the Mekane Yesus Church Seminary. The vast majority of Bachelor theses there deal with Charismatic groups and related issues of theology or spirituality. The EECMY steadily worked to accommodate the movement theologically. In 1993 the 14th EECMY General Assembly proposed to embrace the Charismatic movement and to work on differentiating it from Pentecostal and Neo-Pentecostal groups. In the same year, the Executive Committee of the Church accepted a report by the Evangelism and Theology Commission that found Charismatic experiences compatible with biblical teaching as well as Lutheran doctrine and tradition.³¹ A presentation to the 16th EECMY General Assembly in 2001 by the General Secretary, Megersa Gutta, basically reiterated these resolutions and pointed to the continuous need to educate the church and to address certain problems related to forms of worship, prophecy and the questioning of church authority.³² In 2008 the church reformed its liturgy in order to incorporate more Ethiopian worship forms, but also in order to address the issue of Charismatic practices. This revision to the EECMY Book on Liturgy and Worship was drafted by a German Lutheran adviser and contains a four-page section on “Worship Discipline and the Benefit of Spiritual Gifts,” which contains numerous warnings about potential abuses and erroneous applications of spiritual gifts, outlining the problems the church has experienced in this area. However, in general the document is affirmative of Charismatic gifts, seeks to develop an understanding of spiritual gifts from a Lutheran tradition, and encourages local leadership to value, guide, and train Charismatic youths.

It is evident that the EECMY has come to adopt the Charismatic movement in practice and theology. Problems and irritations persist with regard to the Pentecostal movement at large, but the main points of contention are not so much in Holy Spirit theology, but rather issues like infant baptism versus adult baptism and proselytizing.

Charismatic Movements in Ethiopia – A Theological Evaluation

The rise of Ethiopian Pentecostalism and its spread to the mainline churches in the form of the Charismatic movement contain a number of important implications for the European perception of African Christianity as well as for church partnership in mission and development.

As these brief remarks have about Ethiopian Pentecostalism and its influence on the EECMY have shown, there are a number of specific historical factors and developments that

contributed to the inception and growth of the Charismatic movement. In analyzing such movements, it is therefore important to carefully delineate the historical, theological and political complexities of such processes instead of explaining them with fairly general culturalist arguments such as “Africanization” of Christianity. Such explanations are not helpful in at least two ways. First, the underlying generalizing notions of “African culture”, “African Pentecostalism”, or “African Christianity” do not do justice to the complexities and vast differences we find in Africa, and arguably have more to do with remnants of a colonial image of Africa than the realities at stake. Ethiopians, for example, find pride in noting that they are not like sub-Saharan Africans. But even the country itself is fragmented in many ways, and any adequate theory of contextualization would have to take multiple regional, sociological, economical, and political identities into account. Secondly, culturalist explanations tend to undercut the theological thrust of Pentecostalism. Exorcisms, for example, may appear as a way of Pentecostal contextualization, because by “demonizing” traditional cosmologies and casting out these “spirits”, they relate to and appropriate an existing culture. While this is a lucid and relevant analysis from the point of religious studies or cultural anthropology, it is not the *theological* project Pentecostals are involved in. Sure enough, in Ethiopia spirits are addressed by their local names during Pentecostal exorcisms, but I have yet to meet a minister who would explain this as a contribution to indigenizing Christianity. Instead, Pentecostals insist that the spirits are named and driven out, because they are real personal entities and because Jesus came to set the captives free. So, while it may be helpful to look at the dynamics of contextualization in anthropology or religious studies, in theology “contextualization” is in danger of becoming a tool of provincializing a theological challenge: If it has to do with an “African world view” it is not as relevant to “Europeans”, who therefore do not need to be overly engaged by it. Thus, instead of assigning theological positions to separate world views, European Christians should engage in theological dialogs with Pentecostals about their assertions of the workings of the Spirit today in glossolalia, prophecy, healing, exorcisms, and more.

We need to rethink the articulation of confessional identities. The EECMY is part of a large Protestant network, in which Pentecostal ideas and practices spread without much respect for confessional boundaries. Therefore, it is indistinguishable from other Protestant churches in many aspects, and the question of where the Lutheran identity of the church can be found, is – for the most part – one of European missionaries.³³ There are, of course, official attempts to develop a specifically Lutheran approach to the Charismatic movement, for example by drawing from the Augsburg confession or even Luther’s conflicts with the left wing of the reformation. However, when one studies actual congregations or even the many seminary theses on the Charismatic movement, it quickly becomes apparent that the only relevant currency in these debates is the Bible. Therefore it seems prudent to articulate theological positions on the grounds of “*sola scriptura*” and not of confessions, outlining the different approaches

to biblical passages and their application to contemporary worship practices. Of course what goes for Charismatic practices also would be relevant to the more contentious issue of baptism, in which the EECMY holds the minority position within Ethiopian Protestantism. Using biblical arguments to sensitize its members for the possibility of infant baptism arguably is the more effective way to prevent members from seeking re-baptism, in an environment in which the confessional boundaries between Lutherans, Mennonites, Baptists, and different flavor Pentecostals are blurry at best.

Pentecostalism and ecumenical engagement do not necessarily collide. Pentecostals in many Western contexts are not known for their ecumenical engagement, but in Ethiopia, Protestant ecumenism was actually strengthened by the Charismatic movement. A number of youths in the revival movements deliberately opted to stay within their church instead of participating in the establishment of the EFGBC. When Pentecostals endured political pressure under Haile Selassie’s government, they sought the aid of the World Council of Churches through Lutheran missionaries. In 1976, the EFGBC church became one of the founding members of the Council for Cooperation of Churches in Ethiopia, and remained an active member of its successor, the ECFE. With the ECFE also holding theological consultations, this fellowship is more than a mere cooperation facility, but a venue of ecumenical dialog. In addition, there is the Ethiopian Graduate School of Theology, which sees participation from Pentecostals and mainline Protestants. This close cooperation between most Protestants has to do with their relative minority situation in Ethiopia and is not without problems of course. However, so far pragmatic solutions have carried the day, and a continuation of this close cooperation between mainline Protestant and Pentecostal churches is vital for Ethiopia. On the one hand, ecumenical bodies like the ECFE help to prevent the immense fragmentation that Pentecostalism is susceptible to and keep it theologically accountable. On the other hand, the EECMY has a lot to bring to the ecumenical table for Pentecostals, from its emphasis on development and its theological resources, to its potential role as a bridge-builder toward Ethiopian Orthodoxy on account of its acceptance of Orthodox baptism.

We need to rethink the relationship between Pentecostalism and politics. From the historical account of Ethiopian Pentecostalism it is clear that the stereotype about Pentecostals failing to positively engage in politics does not apply. In Imperial Ethiopia Pentecostals spearheaded the fight for religious liberties and freedom of assembly. During the Derg, they did not settle for compromise and set up a model of civil disobedience with their effective underground structures. It is true, however, that Pentecostals do not tend to make their political arguments on a systemic level. Pentecostals did not feel compelled to fight for religious liberty in order to create a more democratic or pluralistic Ethiopia, but because they sought to be faithful to God, or as a Pentecostal publication put it in defiance of the government shut-downs: “When people come seeking the Lord, it is impossible to turn them back.”³⁴ This non-systemic outlook arguably is very robust

because it prevents the church from compromising with dictatorial regimes in search for a higher goal and creates a confident defiance of totalitarian authorities. However, this resource appears to be more compatible with clearly oppressive regimes directly attacking churches, rather than with a more nuanced and complex political environment like present-day Ethiopia. Today, Pentecostals are struggling just like other churches with the ethnicization of politics and culture, with finding a voice for the political and economic injustices of the country, with standing for civil liberties in the midst of increased government regulation, and with sustaining peace among Christians and with other religions. However, even now Pentecostal spirituality may be a way to recover the political power of the prophetic if together we learn to discern the Spirit of God.

Much the same could be said for the relationship of Pentecostalism and development. Despite a general skepticism toward any worldly involvement, Pentecostal missions in Ethiopia embarked on significant development projects from the beginning and defended them against critical voices from the north. The relatively late involvement of the independent Pentecostal churches in aid and development has more to do with the crippling effects of the Derg than theological reservations. In addition, a strong drive for independence and negative experiences with the effects of foreign money, has left many Pentecostals with a certain reluctance to accept financial aid from abroad. However, this skepticism may be an asset for defining clearly delimited projects, mobilizing local resources, and avoiding long-term dependence. Moreover, Pentecostals have not learned to speak the systemic language of development. In their narrative, the messianic promise of Luke 4:18–21 is not realized through hospitals, foreign aid, and educational programs, but directly by the Spirit of God in every worship service. Their insistence on God's immediate personal intervention, perhaps at the expense of celebrating systemic improvements, is at times a challenging notion for Western observers. However, in a system like Ethiopia that requires a strict demarcation between religious organizations and development agencies, this is the most efficient way to proclaim and celebrate the holistic mandate of the Gospel. Healing services, exorcisms, and the ever-present testimonies assert that God did not just send the Church to save souls, but also to address and aid in every problem one may encounter, and as such, Pentecostals send the same message as Christian development agencies. There are, of course, numerous problems and potential abuses that come with prophetic speech, Deliverance Pentecostalism, and proclamations of HIV/AIDS healings. However, when one studies the intricate and intense debates that develop around such issues within Ethiopian Pentecostalism, it is apparent that the movement already possesses the theological and pastoral resources to address these difficult issues. The question then becomes, which voices Western observers will amplify.

Finally, the resilience of Ethiopia's Charismatic movement throughout difficult political times and their impressive growth points to the enormous resources inherent in this

movement. The underlying theologies, however, often make Western liberal theologians uncomfortable on a number of levels, and arguably these feelings often have to do with conflicts with Pentecostals or Evangelicals in the West. Herein lies the primary challenge of developing common goals and programs of mission and development with Pentecostals in Africa. European financial and theological resources can still be of help to African churches, but in order to maximize this benefit, we must acquire a much better knowledge of Pentecostal and Charismatic theologies. In order to articulate our ideas about God, mission, and development in a theological language still largely unknown to us, we need to become intimately familiar with the large variety of Pentecostal theological debates and spiritual practices. Unlike thirty years ago, there now are many academic resources for this endeavor. In the past decades, a number of Pentecostal theologians have made important contributions to the established theological discourse in exegesis, church history, dogmatics, ethics, practical theology, theology of religions, and more.³⁵ The ubiquity of Pentecostalism in the majority world has sparked research in various disciplines, and a number of networks have been formed to connect these efforts in an interdisciplinary fashion.³⁶ As the available literature on Pentecostal movements steadily increases, many university libraries have begun to systematically gather the available material. With all these resources at our disposal it has become possible to gain a profound understanding for what drives the growth of Pentecostalism in Africa, and to discover potential theological allies. This may entail a steep learning curve, but for as long as we are privileged to participate in the present southward shift of Christianity, it is well worth the effort.

- 1 Transitional Government of Ethiopia, Office of the Population and Housing Census Commission: *The 1984 Population and Housing Census of Ethiopia: Analytical Report at National Level*, Addis Ababa: Central Statistical Authority 1991, p. 60.
- 2 Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, Office of the Population and Central Statistical Authority Housing Census Commission: *The 1994 Population and Housing Census of Ethiopia: Results at Country Level. Volume I. Statistical Report*, Addis Ababa: Central Statistical Authority 1998, p. 129.
- 3 Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, Population Census Commission: *Summary and Statistical Report of the 2007 Population and Housing Census: Population Size by Sex and Age*, Addis Ababa 2008, p. 17, http://www.csa.gov.et/pdf/Cen2007_prelimineray.pdf (accessed on 13 December 2010).
- 4 The annual population growth rate country-wide was 2.6 percent, those of major religions as follows: Islam 2.8 %; Orthodox 1.3%; Catholicism 1.1 %; traditional religions 1.7%. Own calculations on the basis of detailed census tables released at http://www.csa.gov.et/index.php?option=com_rubberdoc&view=category&id=72&Itemid=521 (accessed on 13 December 2010)
- 5 Cf. Hausteine, Jörg: *Writing Religious History: The Historiography of Ethiopian Pentecostalism*, Heidelberg: DTh thesis 2009, pp. 18–21.
- 6 For a detailed historical discussion of Pentecostalism in Ethiopia see Hausteine, Jörg: *Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity in Ethiopia (Studien zur außereuropäischen Christentumsgeschichte (Asien, Afrika, Lateinamerika))*, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2011.
- 7 For Oneness Pentecostalism in general see Reed, David Arthur: "Oneness Pentecostalism," in: Burgess, Stanley and Eduard van der Maas (Eds.): *The New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002, pp. 936–944. The ACE is a

- very strong church, especially in southern Ethiopia, and was featured in a number of English Oneness publications, see Freeman, Nona: *Unseen hands: The Story of Revival in Ethiopia*, Hazelwood, MO: World Aflame Press, 1987; Freeman, Nona: *Then Came the Glory*, Minden, LA: Nona Freeman, 1994; Gezahegne, Teklemariam: *The Identity of Jesus Christ*, Hazelwood, MO: World Aflame Press, 1989; Gezahegne, Teklemariam: *Acts of God in Ethiopia*, Hazelwood, MO: Apostolic Experience Publishing, 2007.
- 8 Some were held for many years without a trial, for example the Yirga Alem EFGBC pastor Tesfaye Gabbisso, who spent seven years in prison and today is a popular Pentecostal singer.
 - 9 For an annotated list of the most important Pentecostal and Charismatic churches, see Hausteijn, Jörg: *Pentecostal and Charismatic Churches in Ethiopia 2009*, <http://www.glopent.net/Members/jhausteijn/ethiopia/pentecostal-charismatic-churches-in-ethiopia>. See also Schröder, Günter: *Äthiopien. Religiöse Gemeinschaften, Organisationen und Institutionen. Ein Überblick*, Unpublished manuscript, 1997.
 - 10 Most churches do not have reliable statistical information about their membership. For the EFGBC estimates obtained with church leaders in interviews ranged from 500,000 to one million, Especially smaller churches tend to offer greatly exaggerated estimates in interviews, in hopes of recruiting foreign support.
 - 11 Cf. Eide, Øyvind: *Revolution and Religion in Ethiopia: Growth and Persecution of the Mekane Yesus Church, 1974–85*, 2nd ed., Oxford: Currey, 2000, p. 247.
 - 12 See Teka Obsa Fogi: *The Charismatic Movement in the EECMY: Some Doctrinal and Practical Issues: An Explorative and Evaluative Case Study: The Case of the EECMY Congregations in Nekemte*, M.Th. thesis, Ethiopian Graduate School of Theology, Addis Ababa, 2000, p. 36; Molte, Itessa Gobena: *Autobiography 2008*, <http://www.ethiopianetwork.org/GobenaBio.html> (accessed on 14 December 2010).
 - 13 Cf. Teka Obsa, *The Charismatic Movement*, p. 92.
 - 14 Taye Abdissa: *The Pentecostal Development and the Rise of Charismatic Movement in Ethiopia*, B.Th. thesis, Mekane Yesus Seminary, Addis Ababa, 1977, p. 44.
 - 15 Tolosa Gudina, Tesfaye Dinegde, and Belina Sarka.
 - 16 Teka Obsa, *The Charismatic Movement*, pp. 86–89; Thomas Debela: *The Effect of Charismatic Renewal upon Church Growth in the Central Synod*, B.Th. thesis, Mekane Yesus Seminary, Addis Ababa, 1999, pp. 15–16.
 - 17 Engelsviken, Tormod: *Gudina Tumsa, the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus, and the Charismatic Movement*, Unpublished manuscript, 2003, p. 11f.
 - 18 Bakke, Johnny: *Christian Ministry: Patterns and Functions Within the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus (Studia Missionalia Upsaliensia; 44)*, Oslo: Solum-Forlag 1987, p. 252f.
 - 19 Cf. Hausteijn: *Writing Religious History*, p. 23.
 - 20 See McDonnell, Kilian: “Lutheran Church – Mekane Yesus, Ethiopia, 1976: The Work of the Holy Spirit,” in: McDonnell, Kilian (Ed.): *Presence, Power, Praise: Documents on the Charismatic Renewal. Vol. II - Continental, National, and Regional Documents Numbers 38 to 80, 1975–1979*, Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1980, pp. 150–182.
 - 21 See Eide, Øyvind: *Revolution and Religion in Ethiopia*, p. 247f.; Jeto Hordofa: “*Troubled But Not Destroyed*”: *The Effects of the Persecution of 1978–1991 (1970–1983 E.C.) on the Congregations of Western Wollega Bethel Synod*, B.Th. thesis, Mekane Yesus Seminary, Addis Ababa, 1999, p. 31; Tibebe Eshete: *The Evangelical Movement in Ethiopia: Resistance and Resilience*. Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2009, p. 242f.
 - 22 Cf. Hausteijn, Jörg: “*Navigating Political Revolutions: Ethiopia’s Churches During and After the Mengistu Regime*,” in: Koschorke, Klaus (Ed.): *Falling Walls. The Year 1989/90 as a Turning Point in the History of World Christianity (Studien zur Außereuropäischen Christentums-geschichte (Asien, Afrika, Lateinamerika); 15)*, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz 2009, pp. 117–136, here pp. 124–127.
 - 23 Tumsa, Gudina: “*The Role of a Christian in a Given Society*,” in: Hoffman, Paul (Ed.): *Witness and Discipleship. Leadership of the Church in Multi-Ethnic Ethiopia in a Time of Revolution: The Essential Writings of Gudina Tumsa, General Secretary of the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus (1929–1979)*, Addis Ababa: Gudina Tumsa Foundation, 2003, pp. 1–12, here p. 8.
 - 24 See Donham, Donald: *Marxist Modern: An Ethnographic History of the Ethiopian Revolution*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press 1999, pp. 144, 164.
 - 25 Cf. Hausteijn: *Writing Religious History*, pp. 222–226.
 - 26 See Bekele Woldekidan: (*Revival. Ethiopia and the Final End*), Addis Ababa: Addis Ababa Full Gospel Believers’ Church, 2002, pp. 107, 160.
 - 27 Cf. Eide: *Revolution and Religion in Ethiopia*, p. 246f.
 - 28 E.g. Assefa Mekonnen: *A Clean Hearth for the Fire to Blaze. Evaluating Charismatic Movement in EECMY by Lutheran Theological Tradition*, B.Th. thesis, Mekane Yesus Seminary, Addis Ababa, 1997; Jeto Hordofa: “*Troubled But Not Destroyed*”; Mintesinot Birru: *The Impact of Charismatic Movement and Its Result Among Evangelicals in Gedeo Area*, B.Th. thesis, Mekane Yesus Seminary, Addis Ababa, 2002.
 - 29 Domianus, Hermann: *Essay zum TEE-Lehrbuch: The Charismatic Movement within the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus: A Theological Foundation for an African Lutheran Church between Tradition and Revival*, Unpublished manuscript 2005, p. 9.
 - 30 This was a route taken by a Charismatic group in Awasa, for example.
 - 31 Cf. Fogi: *The Charismatic Movement*, p. 97f.; Alemu Shetta: *Reflection Paper to 23rd Meeting of the Committee of Mutual Christian Responsibility*, January 21–24, 2002, Unpublished manuscript, 2002, p. 1.
 - 32 Quoted in Alemu Shetta: *Reflection Paper*.
 - 33 Cf. also Nordlander’s observations on the little awareness of Lutheran identity in Nordlander, Agne: “*Charismatic Movement and Lutheran Theology in the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus*,” in: Sannes, Kjell Olav (Ed.): *Med Kristus til jordens ender. Festskrift til Tormod Engelsviken*, Trondheim: Tapir Akademisk Forlag, 2008, pp. 193–202, here p. 197.
 - 34 Church, Full Gospel Believers’: (*The Full Gospel Church from Birth Until ... Well, it is Impossible to Turn Back the People When They Come Wanting Jesus*), Addis Ababa 1978, p. 19.
 - 35 Cf. e.g. the two leading journals of Pentecostal theology, *Pneuma* and *Journal of Pentecostal Theology*, published by Brill.
 - 36 E.g. the European Research Network on Global Pentecostalism (<http://www.glopent.net>).

The Redeemed Christian Church Of God, A Missionary Global Player: What Is Her Message Regarding Human Development?

Abstract

The Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG), a wholly indigenous Nigerian Pentecostal church started in 1952. The founder was unlearned and unable to read or write in English. The church is now a global missionary player with presence in over 140 countries of the world. The growth of the church and multiplication of its parishes in Nigeria and globally is merited to the incumbent leader, Pastor E. Adeboye's innovations and shift of emphasis in the use of the laity, coupled with a broad spectrum evangelistic drive of the organisation. The changes in the administration, theology, and ecclesiology of the organisation under the leadership of Pastor E.A Adeboye heralded a new era in the history of the organisation. RCCG presents a dynamic ambivalence in its historical antecedents as it transitions to a transnational global missionary player. The engagement of RCCG in reverse mission globally further adds credence to various assertions of her missionary zeal.

RCCG is a major employer of labour in Nigeria and highly involved in human development. Its role in human development in Nigeria demonstrates the shift of paradigm with respect to change in the framework of religion as motor for human development. The multifaceted structure and missionary drive of RCCG and its para-church organisations are not only identifying challenges, but also prescribing solutions to the myriads of socio-economic, health and educational challenges of Nigerians. The focus of this paper is not to approach the subject from an abstract theological discourse. It approaches it from an empirical perspective in terms of the gradual evolution of its policy framework on human development. This policy presents a holistic approach to meeting the spiritual, educational, social and economic aspirations of Nigerians. As would be expected, this is now a transnational phenomenon among RCCG network of churches globally.

Introduction

The seed bed for the emergence and growth of Christianity in Nigeria is attributed to the missionary endeavours of the British to Nigeria with the arrival of the first missionary team on 1st of April 1842. The lack of understanding of the

cultural nuances and diversities of Nigerians by European missionaries, Euro-centrism and imperialistic disposition culminated in the emergence of the African and Nigerian Indigenous Churches. Among these were the Healing and Prophetic Movements which included illustrious Africans in the mould of William Waddy Harris, Simon Kimbangu, Garrick Sokari Braide. Sokari Braides healing and prophetic revival movement brought the whole of the Niger Delta of Nigeria to its knees. The revival brought about social and moral transformation of the Niger Delta area of Nigeria which was similar to the Welsh revival.

The gradual flourishing of African Independent Churches in the first decades of the twentieth century was the seed bed for various expressions of acculturations of African Christianity. However, Peel (2000:314) opined that the birth of Nigerian Pentecostalism was inextricably linked with Aladura revival movement's transnational relationship with the Apostolic Church of Britain of 1930-31.

Among the African/Nigerian Indigenous Churches of the time are included the Christ Apostolic Church, The Apostolic Faith and the Cherubim and Seraphim Church. The Cherubim and Seraphim Church was under the leadership of Prophet Orimolade Tunolase (Ajayi 1977:16-17). The late Reverend Josiah Akindayomi, who later founded the Redeemed Christian Church of God, acquired his ministerial credentials as a prophet with the Cherubim and Seraphim Church under Prophet Orimolade Tunolase.

RCCG transition from an indigenous Nigerian Pentecostal Church to a transnational global missionary church has been under the search light of scholars (Ukah 2009, 2008, 2007, Burgess et al 2010, Burgess 2009, 2008, Adeboye 2005, Adogame 2005, 2007). The scholarly contributions of these authors have heightened the diverse interest of sociologists, theologians and anthropologists on the dynamics of RCCG, especially the social mobility of its elite members globally to support its global missionary drive. The RCCG elite members and ministers have succeeded in translating its indigenous Pentecostal identity into that of a global missionary player with presence in 140 countries of the world today.

This paper is divided into two parts; the first segment examines the historical antecedents and growth of RCCG as a global missionary player. The second section examines the role of RCCG in human development with emphasis on Nigeria.

History and Growth of the RCCG

Genesis

The historical antecedents of RCCG are inextricably linked to the founder of the Church, late Rev. Josiah Akindayomi (1909-1980). The late Rev. Josiah Akindayomi was born into an idolatrous family of Ogun (the Yoruba's divinity for God of Iron and War) worshippers; the family of Pa Eleyinmi Akindolie and Madam Olakuobi. The family home was situated at No. 12, Odo -Alafia Street, Odojumu area of Ondo in South Western part of Nigeria. He was christened Ogunribido Ogundolie. Ogunribido translates as "the Deity of Iron and War has found residence." From the African's perspective, names are descriptive and connotative, especially among indigenous traditionalists. It is believed that names have cultural, historical, cosmic, esoteric and spiritual implications. For Instance, among the Yorubas, this school of thought is asserted by a proverb that says "*Ile laa'wo k'a to so'mo lo'ruko*" (translated: "historical and family background is pivotal in the name a parent gives a child"). This proverbial statement is a by-product of the polytheistic nature of Yoruba culture in which there is a strong belief that a family deity or spiritual guide accompanies a child in his or her pilgrimage in life. Oftentimes the family name also indicates the theistic subscription of a family.

Olateru and Egbo (2007:27-30) highlighted the perception that Ogunribido as a child had unexplainable uniqueness among his peers; was noted to be a devout Ogun worshipper, but was churchy from youth. He was called "woli" (prophet) due to his dancing and revival antics while his colleagues took to farming. However, Adeboye (2007:32) noted that he later qualified as blacksmith and augmented his primary vocation with farming as this was the mainstay of the local economy. He was baptized in 1927 aged eighteen, at the Church Missionary Society (now Anglican Communion) and taught the rudiments of the Christian faith - catechism. He adopted the name Josiah at his baptism (Adeboye 2007:9).

Josiah Akindayomi joined the Cherubim and Seraphim Church (C&S) in 1931. His attraction to C&S was influenced by the strong adherence of the newly formed Cherubim and Seraphim Church to the infallibility of the Word of God and the doctrine of Divine Healing (Ajayi 1997:18). Peel (1968:80-81) noted that some prominent members of Church Missionary Society transferred their membership to Cherubim and Seraphim Churches at Ondo during this period. This is suggestive of a trend of intra-church migration to the newly established C & S in preference to the Church Missionary Society probably due to Africanization of the church.

Josiah was wholly committed to his newly found faith within the Cherubim and Seraphim Church where he became a prophet and served as a full time employee. In view of the ascetic lifestyle for which he was noted, he ceased to work as a farmer. This had a definite knock on effect on the economic life of the family as the wife had to engage in menial trading to cater for the family.

By 1947 Josiah had distinguished himself as a prophet within the C & S Church but the death of Prophet Moses Orimolade and Onanuga led to schism and his persecution. By 1949 there was general apathy in the Cherubim and Seraphim Church but he was committed to a puritan lifestyle. He was given to much fasting and prayer, his prophetic gifting was very pronounced and his desire to know God was unabated. The schism within the C&S movement after the death of Orimolade and Onanuga led to the emergence of various factions but Josiah refrained from joining the leadership tussle. The influence of African Traditional Religion's practices resurfaced amongst the C&S movement. The contestants were noted to have visited the grave site of Orimolade in their quest to resolve the leadership tussle of the organisation.

Ukah (2008:31) opines that although it was noted in the Golden Jubilee historiography of RCCG titled "RCCG at 50" (edited by Ukponi et al 2002) that Josiah Akindayomi repudiated the veneration at the grave site of late Prophet Orimolade to settle the leadership tussle, evidences exist that a form of veneration of the grave site had been operational since 1931 as annual memorial services were held at the graveside. Ukah (ibid) wondered why pilgrimage to the grave site should have been new in its entirety to Josiah as this presents continuity with the veneration to be expressed by the use of Orimolade's name in prayers by the members of the C&S due to perceived divine favour of his person.

Ukah (op cit) argued further that similar resonance is found in the use of "God of Adeboye" within the context of RCCG today. This may be compared to the continuity resonate amongst Jews in the use of the phrase, "God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob." It would appear that rather than assert the continuity syndrome, and comparison of the use of the names of these leaders, the phenomenon should be seen more as the fluidity of identification with the relational blessings on these leaders from God. There would appear to exist diverse schools of thought with respect to the exit of Josiah from C&S. Ukah (2008:33) explored the various scholarly contributions including the RCCG official position that he left voluntarily due to doctrinal syncretism (Bolarinwa 2006:28; Ajayi 1997:43-44).

Josiah appeared to have been involved in reflective and resourceful ministrations before the commencement of RCCG in 1952 as many sought him for prayers and prophetic guidance while still with C&S. The aftermath of these ministrations culminated in the emergence of the "Egbe Ogo Oluwa" (The Glory of God Group) which started in 1952 at Oko-Baba in Ebute-Meta. They occupied a swampy parcel of Land at No.

9, Willoughby Street, Ebute-Meta. The fellowship consisted of twelve men namely Fakunmoju, Makun, J. Adekoya, S.K. Padonu, S.A. Olonode, Fadiora, Olukwuobi, Fetuga, Adefeso A, Adefunwa and Matiluko. Bolarinwa (2006:29) states that the name of the church, Redeemed Christian Church of God, was given to Josiah Akindayomi who was an illiterate at Osogbo in July 1952 during an evangelistic campaign. This then became the name of the fellowship group.

Bolarinwa further stated that the name of the church was not only received by Rev. Akindayomi but specific instructions were also given to him concerning the church. This is thought to become God's covenant with him akin to the Abrahamic covenant of God with Israel. Bolarinwa (2006:30) opined that the "covenant" pact of RCCG with the Lord entails

- (a) Distinctive modus operandi of the church including being independent of any affiliation with another denomination or European missions
- (b) The role of the Holy Spirit should not be replaced in the church in appointing people to leadership position of the church
- (c) Sin should be judged in the church irrespective of the status of the person involved
- (d) God will meet the needs of the church supernaturally if the founder (leadership) is faithful (e) The church will spread to all the nations of the world
- (f) At the second coming of the Christ the church will still be vibrant.

Rev. Josiah Akindayomi's and Adeboye's faithfulness to the "covenant pact" with God has been ascribed as the basis for the success of the church. The holiness roots of the church were evident with the puritan doctrinal persuasions of the church at the time which included worship without drumming or dancing, segregation in seating arrangement between men and women and its ascetic disposition as a worldliness rejecting church.

It is apt to note that Rev. Akindayomi's tenure as the General Superintendent of the church saw the church grow mainly in the Western parts of Nigeria leading to the establishment of 40 parishes before his death in the early hours of 2 November 1980, aged seventy-five years. The death of Rev. Josiah Akindayomi marked the end of an era which heralded a new epoch in the history of RCCG as internal schism and indignation of the appointment of Pastor Adeboye as the next General Superintendent (now referred to as General Overseer) of the church erupted, but his appointment was effected amongst other by retired Deputy General Overseer, Pastor H. Abiona, Pastor J. A. Akindele, the Assistant General Overseer Admin/personnel (retired) and late Pastor Mrs Esther Akindayomi (late wife of Rev. Josiah Akindayomi).

The Growth Phase

The seeds of the current growth of RCCG into a global missionary player were sown by the appointment of the incumbent General Overseer, Pastor E. A. Adeboye, a PhD holder in Applied Mathematics and a former lecturer of University of Lagos. The appointment of the young University lecturer was greeted with much pessimism as Adeboye was chosen by the Holy Spirit in preference to the colleagues of the founder, the he senior pastors of the church. The succession plan outlined by the late founder culminated in schism and personal mistrust among the leadership. Some of the leaders of the church queried the rationale for the appointment of Adeboye as the General Overseer who was new and had "accelerated ordination" in 1975 just two years after he became a member of the church, and five years afterwards became the General Superintendent (Bolarinwa 2009:39-43).

The change in the leadership of the church after the demise of Rev. Josiah Akindayomi heralded a distinctive phase in the structure and theology of the church as Adeboye initiated policies and restructuring programmes for the church. For instance, he addressed the patriarchal organizational structure of the church through the appointment of his wife (Pastor Mrs Folu Adeboye) and the wife of late General Superintendent (Pastor Mrs Josiah Akindayomi) as "Mothers in Israel." According to Josiah's daughter "Baba (Pastor Akindayomi) believed that a woman should do housework" (cit in Ukah, 2007) but Adeboye's theological perception entails gender equality as he also later started ordination of female pastors in RCCG. The use of the title "Mother in Israel" appears consistent with the Aladura's ecclesiastical nomenclature from which RCCG has its roots (Omoyajowo, 1982:193). This paradigm shift within the church appears to reflect changes within the global Pentecostal prism (Lawless, 1983, 1987, 1988, 1991), Latin America (Brusco, 1995) and Italy (Cucchiari, 1990). Richard Burgess (2008) refers to these discriminatory structures as "gerontocratic and patriarchal structures" that had to be dismantled in church structures to create equal opportunities in the ministry. The process of eliminating these structures to create an inclusive and broad-spectrum utilization of potentials of people amongst Pentecostals irrespective of gender, race or social class is sometimes referred to as "Pentecostal theology of liberation". This school of thought appears to be in conformity with the Pauline epistle to the church in Ephesus concerning ministry gifts. The essence of the five-fold ministry is the equipping of the saints (men and women) in order to do the work of the ministry (Eph 4:11-13).

The obvious growth of the Redeemed Christian Church of God globally, which is perhaps one of the most successful Neo-pentecostal churches in Africa, is a result of push and pull factors. RCCG growth has been articulated through its church planting mandate. RCCG church planting policy is the catalyst for the multiplication of parishes globally facilitated by renewed dynamism of social mobility of its members. The church planting dynamism of RCCG changed significantly with the introduction of model parishes in 1988 by Pastor Adeboye with the opening of the first Model Par-

ish, Ikeja, Lagos State Nigeria on 22nd of May 1998 at Ladipo Oluwole Street, led by Pastor (Barrister) Tunde Bakare (now the pastor of Latter Rain Ministries, Ikeja, Lagos, Nigeria). Bolarinwa (2009:42) noted that model parishes were established by Adebayo to bring about the blending of old beliefs and practices of the “classical churches” which were puritan in their dogmatism and embrace new churchmanship. He further observed the shift in the use of vernacular to English language and the use of unconventional church buildings like theatres, public halls, cinemas and hotels as worship centres. The church planting policy advocates the planting of churches within five minutes driving distance in developed countries and five minutes walking distance in developing countries.

It would appear, however, that implementation of the church planting policy has profited from mobility of RCCG elite members. Due to the elimination of clericalism in RCCG the laity is adequately trained and mobilized to participate in church planting. The inherent mobilizational structure was created by the church such that “branding orientation” of RCCG members was encouraged. Members who were undergraduates belonged to the Redeemed Christian Fellowship. This was further sustained as they graduated to Redeemed Christian Corpers’ fellowship after university. The underlying principle of doctrinal and denominational branding eventually culminates into membership of Christ Redeemers Friends Universal, an organisation which aims to evangelize those in the top echelon of the Nigerian society.

The membership of the RCCG globally has grown over the years through the influence and impact of the denomination’s strategies of mobilization for growth through social and occupational mobility in Western Europe and America. This is in consonance with the observations of Miller and Yamamori (2007:12) that the deprivation theory which is multifaceted (as it includes the Karl Marx “opiate” perception, Sigmund Freud’s escapist theory and Emile Durkheim’s primitive postulations of social order), is only helpful in the explanation of growth of Pentecostalism.

The aggressive church planting mandate of RCCG was recently further given impetus with a global church planting mandate from the General Overseer, Pastor E.A. Adebayo. For instance America was given the mandate to plant 1,200 churches towards the end of last year while United Kingdom is expected to plant 1000 churches by the end of March 2011. The continued missionary drive of RCCG is predicated on the church planting mandate as a panacea to the relegation of the Christian faith to the fringes of public life due to the effects of secularisation.

The church planting mandate emanates from the mission/vision statements of the church which are:

1. To make heaven personally
2. To take as many people as possible with us

3. To have a member of RCCG in every family of all nations of the world
4. To achieve No 1 above, holiness will be our lifestyle
5. To accomplish No 2 and 3 above, we will plant churches in five minutes walking distance in every city and town in developing countries and five minutes driving distance in developed countries.

It is imperative to assert that the process of this mobilization cannot be immediately evaluated in terms of missional significance. Immigration into the United Kingdom in the 1980s from African countries, notably Nigeria and Ghana, ushered in a distinctive phase in the immigration history of Britain creating new socio-economic realities. Many of these economic migrants have Christian ministry as primary or secondary motivations.

Adogame and Weisskopel (2005:5) believe that religion, hitherto not a “motor or driving force” is vital in the formation of African Diaspora. This has further been corroborated by transnational researches (Burgess, Knibbe, and Quaas, 2010) on the RCCG in Germany, Netherlands and Britain, that religion is to some extent a driving factor in the migration process. The research shows that seven percent of RCCG pastors surveyed in United Kingdom are primarily in the country for Christian ministry while 55% of the sampled pastors indicated that Christian ministry in Britain was one of the motivating factors for choosing to stay in United Kingdom.

This constitutes a shift in the concept of mission which was synonymous with the territorial “*from the West to the rest of the world*” model which was prevalent during the halcyon days of the Western missionary movement (1850–1950). This change in prevailing mission praxis is unique and might continue for quite a while despite immigration constraints imposed on the migrants from Africa and Asia to Europe and America. Andrew Walls (2002:10) observed:

“The great new fact of our time – and it has momentous consequences for mission – is that the great migration has gone into reverse. There has been a massive movement, which all indications suggest will continue, from the non-Western to the Western world.”

It is an undeniable fact that most RCCG churches seek to engage in cross cultural missions in Western Europe and America but are oftentimes faced with lack of impact on the indigenous natives whose lack of interest in the good news is unparalleled. They, however, affirm their obedience to the global mandate for evangelization (Mk 16:16-18) as the word of God is proclaimed within the geographical and spiritual boundaries of the nations. These global missionary activities have contributed to the transnational status of RCCG in the world today with presence in 140 Countries and over

220.000 parishes globally. Adebayo in an interview with "Evangelical Now" (2007) espoused the RCCG missionary agenda in the West and America as he asserted the rhetoric of reverse mission:

"I (Adebayo) believe the Almighty God is saying there is revival at the door, that a great revival is coming, that one day not too long from now the streets of London will be practically empty on Sunday morning because people have gone to church to worship the Almighty God. I believe that the glory that was *lost will be restored*. And I believe it to be very soon. I believe that all the prayers that these thousands are sending to the Almighty God saying, 'Revive our soul, Lord! Revive our soul, Lord!' will receive an answer sooner than we expected."

The passion of Pastor E.A Adebayo to see secularised Europe back to God is reflected in almost all RCCG networks of churches in Europe and America. It is apt, however, to note that this desire is yet to be translated to missional gains as the host indigenes of most Western Countries where RCCG churches are situated are yet to accept the gospel, but this has been translated to very effective social action initiatives of some RCCG parishes in United Kingdom and North America.

RCCG and Human Development

The shift in the centre of gravity of Christianity from Global North to Global South re-echoes the role of Africans and Asians in the growth of Christianity locally according to Kalu (2005:24-25).

Ter Haar and Ellis (2006:351-367) observed the oversight of social scientists with respect to the role of religion in classic development theories. The multifaceted nature of human development has been viewed by policy formulators principally from the economic perspective that alienates the spiritual and cultural facets of the concept. They argue for a paradigm shift as religion plays an important role in human development. Ter Haar and Ellis further articulated the blurring of the inter-relatedness of religion and development as a by-product of secularisation.

Development invariably enables individuals to maximise their potentials, live life to the fullest, based on dignity, equality and fulfilment. It is thus implied that development entails elimination of social, economic and political exploitation leading to opportunities to make valid choices leading to a meaningful life. The above assertion appears in agreement with Tarimo's (2005:12) perspective on the concept of development:

"Development must be (ought to be) understood in terms of a liberation process in which the whole person and the entire community are involved. Such an integral definition calls us to approach development as an active transformation of society which not only

ensures that everybody has the basic necessities of life, but that the decision-making process in society is genuinely participatory. Development then, is a multi dimensional revolution, economic, social and cultural, to release and mobilise the energies and potentialities of the people."

It is thus apt to state that development is pivotal to the realisation and maximization of human potentials which is inextricably linked to the social, political, cultural and belief systems. There is the proposition that development should be viewed as transformational. Sugden (cit in Tarimo2005:25) stated:

"Transformation(al) (development) is to enable God's vision of society to be actualised in all relationships: social, economic and spiritual, so that God's will may be reflected in human society and his love be experienced by all in the community, especially the poor."

Religion is today being gradually recognised by Western nations and various multinational and global financial institutions, such as International Monetary Fund and World Bank, as a major factor in human development (Marshall and Keough 2004).

Ter Haar (2006:50) observed that there exist diverse perspectives with respect to what religion means to human development. The West often equates religion "exclusively with institutional expression, which arises from the history of the Christian churches in Europe" but "African people believe, not only human beings influence each other, but all forces possess a casual and ontological interdependence... All things can be traced to the highest being, who (which) created everything." Bujo (1998:16). Religions invariably shape the worldview of its adherents in their social, cultural, economic and inter relational ties. The impacts of this worldview oftentimes create a normative set of values, behavioural and social etiquettes which govern the socio-cultural and economic patterns as well as the inter-connectednesses of the adherents.

However, it is imperative to note that despite the paradigm shift with respect to the concept of human development among policy formulators and practitioners in the West, the impact of the economic policies of Western nations and financial institutions have contributed significantly to the continued under development of Africa's economies. Black British theologian Robert Beckford demonstrated this in the last few years through his historical, social, economic and religious research documentaries on Britain's Channel 4. Some of the documentaries produced by Beckford include Great African Scandal (2007) and the Empire Pays Back produced in 2005. The obvious inference from Beckford's historical and economic critique is that the Western world still contributes to the structural economic inequalities of African nations through their economic policies and the World financial institutions like the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF). Dambisa Moyo's book *Dead Aid; Why*

Aid is not working and how there is another way for Africa is a treatise to adequately explore this subject which adds credence to Beckford's assertions.

The rapid proliferation of RCCG churches in Nigeria invariably raises the fundamental question with respect to her message on human development considering her large followership. The Redeemed Christian Church of God is acutely aware of the economic and social challenges of Nigerians and is actively contributing to the social and economic life of Nigerians. RCCG theology is holistic as it seeks to serve the whole person, viewing individuals through God's eyes as persons created to live in a wholesome community.

Thus RCCG churches minister to every dimension of human needs and seek wholeness at every social level - individuals, families, communities, nations, and the global human family. RCCG values every person as a unique and marvellous creation, destined for eternity. Because of this transformational perspective, RCCG sees persons in terms of their potentials rather than their problems. This holistic agenda of RCCG is reflected in various strategies and organisations within the church that are complementary to the Federal Government initiatives in enhancing human development among Nigerians. It has established several para-church organisations to address several areas of human needs in Nigeria and Africa. A general overview of the RCCG human development agenda, especially some of its para-church organisations is thus imperative.

African Missions (AM) Initiatives: the Redeemed AIDS Programme Action Committee (RAPAC), KOMA Hills Outreach and Habitation of Hope

The global landscape was filled with trepidation with the emergence and spread of the Human Immune-Deficiency Virus/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (HIV/AIDS) pandemic. HIV/AIDS has reached epidemic proportions in the last decade in Africa, Nigeria inclusive. It thus constitutes a major threat to human development in Nigeria. An estimated 3.6 percent of the Nigerian population are said to be living with HIV and AIDS. It has been estimated that about 3.3 million people are living with HIV while approximately 220,000 people died from Aids in 2009. Life expectancy in Nigeria has also decreased. In 1991 the average life expectancy was 54 years for women and 53 years for men. In 2009 these figures had fallen to 48 for women and 46 for men. (<http://www.avert.org/aids-nigeria.htm>). HIV/AIDS has a multi-faceted impact on human development. This includes life expectancy, mortality patterns and family composition (Iliffe, 2006; Kalipeni, Craddock, Oppong, & Ghosh, 2004).

RCCG's perspective with respect to AIDS/HIV is antithetical to Tiendrebeogo and Buykx's (2005:15-16) position in relation to religious discordance with respect to preventative and remedial measures to curb the spread of the disease. They argued:

"HIV/AIDS juxtapose the interwoven issues of religious doctrines, ethics, morality and the official positions of religious hierarchies' perspectives ... In many countries, HIV/AIDS strategies, such as condom promotion, faced tremendous obstacles from religious organisations ... Religious leaders often reach a deadlock with other stakeholders over condom use and mandatory testing before marriage. They may also have contributed to self-stigmatisation which is common among followers who find themselves HIV positive."

There is no doubt about theo-therapeutic theology of Pentecostals generally with respect to convergence of African cosmologies and the Pentecostal ideals with Pauline spiritual warfare motif (Ephesians 6:12-13 and other texts) (Adogame 2007:478). It is expedient to note, however, that Adogame was restrictive in addressing Paul's warfare motif's resonance to African Pentecostalism. His assertions were products of his "deductive theology" in relation to the warfare motif of Pentecostal theology.

RCCG has responded to the scourge of HIV/AIDS not only with prayer and compassion, but also with medical assistance to many Nigerians with the infection. One of the cardinal initiatives of RCCG in the tackling of HIV/AIDS pandemic in Nigeria is the Redeemed AIDS Programme Action Committee (RAPAC). The RCCG, well coordinated with national and international Non Governmental Organisations, has contributed to the holistic ministry dynamics in alleviating the effects and the spread of HIV/AIDS.

African Missions (AM), a non-governmental organisation established at the initiative of the wife of the General Overseer of RCCG, Pastor Mrs Folu Adeboye in 1996, is a response to the spiritual and social needs of African people, based on her experiences on mission fields in Africa. The aims of African Missions include:

- (a) To identify the needs of the RCCG missions in Africa and assist them in meeting these needs
- (b) To facilitate the training of pastors and missionaries through sponsorship to fill the large manpower needs in parts of Africa
- (c) To assist with the establishment of more mission schools and Bible colleges throughout Africa
- (d) To assist missions in whatever way possible to become self-sustaining.

Africa Mission's headquarter is situated in Nigeria. It has five chapters represented in the United Kingdom, United States of America, Canada, Mainland Europe and the Republic of Ireland. In addressing the AIDS pandemic, the African Mission's North America (AMNA) chapter through partnership with CitiHope International ("CitiHope") blazed the trail to donate \$1.5 million worth of HIV drugs to Nigeria

out of the \$500 million pledge to fight AIDS in Africa. The money is aimed at funding programmes to reduce mother-to-child transmission by 40% within five years. Until now the target has hardly been achieved.

On July 11, 2003 AMNA in collaboration with CitiHope donated HIV/AIDS drugs to Nigeria to support President Bush's initiative to fight HIV/AIDS in Africa during his visit to Abuja, Nigeria. The medication was distributed in five identified target areas: Benue State, Plateau State, Abuja, Ogun State and Oyo State. Hospitals such as UCH in Ibadan, National Hospital Abuja, were beneficiaries of this project. As of March 2004, AMNA has donated a total of \$5.3 million dollars worth of medicines to Nigeria according to Africa Mission's website.

Adogame (2007:475-483) highlighted the multi-faceted nature of RAPAC approach in ameliorating the scourge of HIV/AIDS in Nigeria. The collaborative approach noted by him includes preventative methods through the educational approach, advocacy for moral restraint from sexual relationship outside marriage and giving of support for clinical management of HIV/AIDS victims. It also provides an environment facilitates coping mechanisms for sufferers against the back drop of stigmatization. RAPAC initiatives were given impetus in 2005 with the selection of the organisation as one of the agencies in Nigeria to implement the HIV/Counselling and Testing (HCT) project as part of the Global HIV/AIDS (GHAIN) initiative in Lagos state, with the support of the United States Agency for International Development(USAID)/Family Health International. Another non-governmental partner with RAPAC is Winrock International among others.

RAPAC advocacy also includes the production of Behavioural Change Communication resources such as book marks with the inscription 'Sex: If you do not educate your children, somebody else will.' Media and drama presentations are highlighting the associated challenges of HIV/AIDS infection. They are a deliberate educational initiative to alleviate the social stigmatization (that is associated with the disease) with eye catching phrases that are inclusive but yet exclusive, such as "Jesus cares for all. Care for people living with HIV and AIDS." RCCG AIDS mantra invariably eliminates the challenges of discrimination from the larger society as sufferers are integrated into the RCCG network of churches with a real sense of community that might be absent from the larger society.

The social, religious and communal space created by RAPAC further adds credence to the role of religion in coping with the challenges of stigmatization and exclusivity in Africa where there is palpable social and cultural alienation of people suffering from HIV/AIDS. Adogame (2007:481) using a pseudonym narrated the experience of an HIV/AIDS sufferer who found hope in the midst of her challenges at RAPAC:

"Funmi, a 28-year-old graduate of Business Administration has been a member of the RCCG since she

was 20. She was an active member of her local parish where she was a member of the local choir. Her ordeal began during her marriage engagement process to another male member of her local parish. Her local pastor had requested for a certified medical test for HIV/AIDS prior to marriage solemnization in the church. She recalls that her diagnosis as HIV positive evoked a combative response: 'Devil! You are a liar! My enemies will never succeed this ploy. My God is a healer and I know that He will make a way where there is no way.' She maintained that this initial determination and optimism became reinforced with her engagement with the RAPAC programme. She stressed: 'God allows things to happen for a reason. I do not think of my situation because He has assured me that He is in total control. I have never felt so loved than I experience here at RAPAC.'

It is imperative to note that RCCG has not only identified HIV/AIDS as a major health problem but is also taking preventative steps to educate the members of the church on its policy that before any marriage is conducted by any members of the clergy, a certified medical test of AIDS/HIV must be cited by the pastor. The wider implication is not only to the intending couple to understand the magnitude of their commitment, but to come to terms with the potential health challenges associated with HIV/AIDS. The conscious projection of HIV/AIDS in the religious discourses of RCCG through the pulpit, exhortations and the preaching of the General Overseer, Pastor E.A. Adeboye, demystify associated myths and stigmatization of HIV/AIDS within the Nigerian community. RCCG through RAPAC offers a beacon of hope and inclusiveness to sufferers as this initiative helps in re-orientating the moral compass of Nigerians. This is complementary to other Non Governmental Organisations' initiatives and the Federal Government effort in combating the devastating effects of the hydra headed challenge of HIV/AIDS in Nigeria.

RAPAC's approach towards sex education is unique and a shift from the religiosity of condemnation, to that of acceptance and accommodation; a reflection of the understanding of social dynamics and cultural realities of the contemporary era. Ukah (2008:131) was surprised with RAPAC condom advocacy; not only its use but also its distribution to people who visit RAPAC's stand at the Redemption Camp. He noted that condom advocacy is also promoted for safe sex among married couples as RCCG has strong moral and biblical position on abstinence from sex and fidelity amongst married couples. The basis of condom advocacy was succinctly captured in RAPAC's training for pastors, laity and students through their programme of Inter-personal Counselling and Communication on skills necessary for handling HIV/AIDS. RAPAC in late 2007 extended its preventative initiative to Lagos, Edo Anambra, Cross-River and FCT Abuja. RAPAC collaborates with the Society for Family.

RAPAC's strategy of ameliorating the effect of HIV/AIDS includes the following:

❑ Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission (PMTCT).

The programme involves preventing babies from being infected with HIV by their infected mothers. With the PMTCT programme it is possible for two positive people (man and woman) or discordant couples to be able to have children who are not infected through safe child delivery option. The programme also enables women who are not HIV-positive from being infected.

❑ Basic Care and Support Through Education:

In view of the associated social stigma and ostracization associated with HIV/AIDS patients in Africa, RAPAC through this initiative has strengthened and improved the economic livelihood and quality of life of people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWA) and People Affected by AIDS (PABA). This is an empowerment strategy that provides reasonable grants to widows/widowers and single parents who are selected, based on certain criteria outlined by the RAPAC, and are trained on various Income Generating Activities (IGA). The Micro Finance Scheme of the church is very effective in this approach in partnership with Oceanic Bank PLC which gives economic independence, dignity and sustenance to people with HIV/AIDS within the reach of the church.

❑ Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC).

There is need to minimise the impact of the HIV/AIDS on the orphans or vulnerable children who never had the opportunity of attending school or are out of school as a result of the death of one or both parents due to the devastating effects of HIV/AIDS. Literacy and numeracy Centres have been established in four states in Nigeria namely Abuja, Benue, Cross Rivers and Oyo States, in collaboration with Federal ministry of Education. The centres have a well developed curriculum in accordance with federal Ministry of Education's standards and qualified teachers. The modus operandi of this approach is to create a short term measure for the re-integration of the pupils into the National educational system.

Other socio-economic initiatives of African Mission to help the poor are provisions of infrastructures. Some of these include:

- ❑ Sinking of boreholes in Damaturu Kwambila and Gworza
- ❑ Construction of dormitories in Tantille, Kwambila and Gadaka

- ❑ Construction of classroom blocks in Gadaka, Kwambila and Ngalda

- ❑ Building of a health centre/maternity in Amuda

- ❑ Cooperative poultry and animal husbandry, cattle ranch at Barawa, Borno and Kwambila

Koma Hills Outreach

The discovery of Mani Village, Koma Hills, in Adamawa state, Nigeria by late Kayode Momoloso, then an artist and managing Director of Gold Shem and Sharon Limited, a public relation and advertising company, on July 12 1996 was the genesis of social and economic development of Koma Hills by RCCG. It was a shocking and unexpected discovery of some Nigerians who were living, as it were, in the Stone Age whilst being in the 21st century. Life on Koma Hills was full of darkness and abject poverty. Death and diseases were their kinsmen; with a life expectancy of forty years. They were all naked; concealing their nudity with fresh leaves (denge) for the women and animal skip (bante) for the men. Pastor Oluyele, a pastor in the Redeemed Christian Church of God, noted the active involvement of RCCG in contributing to the social and educational development of KOMA people through the active involvement of Pastor (Mrs) Adeboye and Africa Mission as she personally visited the community several times to render help. He said:

"I know when I was serving in the North, she was involved with the people in Koma Hills and she is still involved ... we drove through all the terrible terrains. She was there, we gave clothes out and a lot of things and she still supplies. She built schools there. She is still involved in giving them education and their future is guaranteed. So that is the angle that I believe that she has been working on to make sure that the church(RCCG) contributes its own quota to ensure that things work out well." (<http://news.biafranigeriaworld.com>)

Through the efforts of RCCG, Koma Hills now has a fully functional, complete boarding and non boarding primary school with all modern conveniences including a generating set to supply electricity to the school. The school is duly registered with the federal government of Nigeria. According to African Mission's project report published in Redemption Light Magazine of January 2010, African Missions is responsible for the funding of the school. While it was non boarding the annual budget was about N2 million and this is expected to increase with the boarding school to about N8 million yearly by 2010. RCCG also built a medical centre for the inhabitants of Koma Hills through African Missions.

Habitation of Hope (HOH)

Nigeria, with an estimated population of 150 million people is faced with diverse social, economic and political challeng-

es, one of which is poverty and homelessness. The devastating effects of the social and economic challenges of Nigeria have contributed to the urban menace of street children leading to economic, social and sexual exploitation of children in Nigeria. The Nigerian National Assembly promulgated a Child Rights Act in 2003 as a means of domesticating the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UN-CRC, 1989). These events marked significant landmarks in ameliorating the problems of street children in the country but the programmes have been found to be inadequate and the Child Rights Act is ineffective in ameliorating the conditions of the street children. Various researches, including UNICEF (2004) and Okpukpara and Odurukwe (2006), point to the fact that the problem of street children in Nigeria is increasing in both number and character. The social challenges created by street children have been identified as alarming in the public spheres such as markets, bus stops, car parks, garages, street corners, and under the bridges (Oloko,1993; Okpukpara and Odurukwe 2003).

The Habitation of Hope (HOH) was established by RCCG to complement the efforts of the Federal Government of Nigeria and other Non-Governmental Organizations in ameliorating the challenges of street children in Nigeria. HOH was established in 2003 with focus on

- (a) Rehabilitation of street children and ex-prostitutes in Lagos, Nigeria
- (b) Providing home, education, vocational training and welfare for destitute and abandoned children
- (c) Providing home, education, vocational training for ex-prostitutes and destitute women and girls.

HOH is bringing hope to the hopeless as street children who were picked up in 2004 from Kuramo beach, a long peninsula of sandy wasteland inhabited by rogue, stray dogs and men of the underworld, are rehabilitated. Adedoyin (2010:44) succinctly describes the mock structures of Kuramo Bay as he noted: "This 'posh' part of Kuramo beach, referred to as the "European Quarter", - is the best on the Kuramo landscape. The 'local or 'Nigerian quarter' is even worse with its swathe of ramshackle shacks made out of collection of fallen trees, torn plastic sheets, soggy wood, rusted corrugated sheets and cardboard".

The Rehabilitation Centre is situated a short distance from RCCG Redemption Camp, made up of multi-purpose buildings with modern convenience aimed at creating a homely environment for the children. The rehabilitation of the street children entails a mentoring and discipleship process to help the children live a normal family life. Adedoyin (2010:45) observed that each apartment has a 'House Father' who serves as a parent, mentor, role model and guide to the boys." This helps in creating social skills, sense of responsibility and accountability that hitherto might not have been cultivated by the children.

The rehabilitation of the street children also entails educational and vocational skills development. Hope Academy, a primary school for the inhabitants of the home was built in 2010 with the sum of £80,000. The former street boys now receive standard education comparable with those in any developed nation.

Campaign against Drug Abuse Ministry (CADAM)

The menace of drug abuse and its associated problems in Nigeria provides ample opportunity for CADAM which is the social arm of RCCG responsible for rehabilitation of drug addicts. The ministry is led by Dr Dokun Ayodeji, a medical practitioner. CADAM is a well structured unit of the church that recognises the holistic care delivery to drug addicts and ex-drug addicts. The understanding is reflective of their integrative approach to delivery of health and spiritual care to drug addicts. The rehabilitation centre is situated at Liberty House in Poka, near Epe in Lagos State. The process of rehabilitation starts with personal care and medical treatment for residents of Jubilee House (hostel for addicts) who might require such. It is quite imperative to note that the church recognises the contributions of medicine to human development but also affirms that health care delivery should be holistic as God can heal without medicine.

The integrative nature of CADAM activities entails post traumatic assistance to residents of Jubilee House. Those who have demonstrated significant behavioural changes with positive physiological assessments ready to be integrated into the community are transferred to another home in Akute, Lagos to undergo vocational training, and encouraged to pursue their life's dream. The process of integration of the residents to the larger community is gradual.

CADAM has enjoyed tremendous referrals throughout Nigeria. According to a publication of RCCG titled "Working with God; The testimony of RCCG" it was noted by Adeboye (ed.) (2009:37): "People who have attended the rehabilitation programmes are many and diverse, including an American-based professor, who is also a medical practitioner, but became a drug addict, went through the programme, and he is completely "washed" (drug free). He is back in America and he is doing very well. A pastor now based in Norway and a pilot are some of those that have been saved (converted to the Christian faith) through the programme." The impact of CADAM is not restricted within the borders of Nigeria which validates the fact that the transnational status of RCCG provides ample leverage to contribute significantly to human development through the CADAM initiative globally as well as among Nigerians.

RCCG Educational Contributions to Human Development

Emile Durkheim, the French renowned sociologist, advanced a theory of education in which schools are viewed as a microcosm of the larger society. "Education," Durkheim insisted, "can do no more than reflect society." The decline

in the educational standards of Nigeria as a result of the economic, social and political chaos created by inconsistent governmental policies and maladministration led to the “brain drain” syndrome in Nigeria. This is the flight of skilled professionals to developed nations for professional fulfilment and economic benefits in the mid 1980’s. It was in the light of the various identifiable retrogressive perceptions that the RCCG started the Christ Redeemer School Movement. RCCG has made great contributions in the field of education through the establishment of various nursery, primary and secondary schools and even a tertiary institution known as Redeemer’s University. Education is one of the greatest contributions of the RCCG to human development in Nigeria. The greatest engine to growth and development of any economy is human capital development.

Government regulations had reduced activities of churches in the educational sector for several years. The reduced involvement of the churches in Nigeria in the area of ownership and management of schools has impacted negatively on the quality of graduates available to serve national development (Njoku 2008:66).

In recent years, however, religious organisations are again allowed to own and manage educational institutions. RCCG’s response has been swift. It has established several schools including the prestigious Christ Hill College, Sagamu and Christ Redeemer Grammar School, Redemption Camp. RCCG’s involvement in advancing education in Nigeria might be a response to the challenges that the incumbent General Overseer, Pastor Adeboye, had to surmount to be an academician. RCCG in 2008 presented a cheque of N50 million to the University of Lagos, Akoka, during the inauguration of a Board of Trustees for a professorial chair in mathematics being endowed by the Redeemed Christian Church of God in the honour of Pastor E.A. Adeboye. A similar professorial chair for mathematics was also endowed by RCCG Apapa family on the 7th of July 2010 during the RCCG Apapa family’s annual Excel Conference.

Dele Tomori (2005), the first Vice Chancellor of Redeemers University (owned by RCCG) in his speech at the first matriculation of the university summarised the aspiration of the university in relation to the students by restating the ideals of RCCG educational opportunities to Nigerians in relation to human development in a poetic manner. He said:

“If you must contribute to make Nigeria a country we can be proud of, you must hear the song. You must dance to the words of the song. The voice of Nigeria of old is,

The silent voice of sanity

The quiet voice of probity

The mumbled voice of honesty

The calm voice of decency

The still voice of honour

The hushed voice of reason

The tranquil voice of integrity

The serene voice of virtue

The soothing voice of Godliness

I hear it, do you? Let the voice of my old Nigeria become in you the voice of the new Nigeria!”

Conclusion

The growth of RCCG with a global missionary agenda has over the years contributed significantly to the human development of Nigerians through its holistic theology in meeting the spiritual, social and economic aspirations of Nigerians generally and the Christian community in particular. This tripartite approach of its theology has fostered collaboration with other Non- Governmental Organisations (NGO) within and outside the shores of Nigeria to alleviate the suffering of the people of Nigeria. The transnational influence of the various para-church organisations of the church has not only identified various human challenges but also prescribed solutions to poverty, health and empowerment of Nigerians. It is imperative to note that Nigeria is yet to meet the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) which are the world’s time-bound and qualified targets aimed at addressing poverty and basic human rights of people to health, education and shelter. RCCG demonstrates how faith communities can contribute positively to human development through holistic ministries and collaboration with other Non Governmental Organizations within and outside the shores of the nation to meet the challenges of her citizens.

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The Pentecostal Gospel, Religion and Culture in African Perspective

The Expansion of African Pentecostalism

Pentecostalism has expanded so rapidly in the African continent over the past four decades that it has become a dominant feature of African Christianity, affecting every form, including Protestant, Catholic, Anglican and Independent churches. At the risk of oversimplification, the Pentecostal gospel that emerged at the beginning of the twentieth century in Africa was one of a God who healed and performed miracles, who gave power to the powerless through an experience of the Holy Spirit, and who raised up leaders from the uneducated (in the western sense) and from ordinary women and men. This message was preached by foreigners, but predominantly it was a message proclaimed by Africans who saw in the newly-translated vernacular Bibles a message that had been hidden from them by the extant missionary forms of Christianity.

It was a message that resonated with the African spirit world with which they were so familiar. It was a message that caught fire in Africa and resulted initially in a wave of churches independent of the western missionary movement that today form a significant proportion of African Christianity, collectively known as African initiated or African independent churches (AICs). To this day, these churches emphasize healing and deliverance from evil forces through leaders who are charismatically endowed with powers from the Holy Spirit. Most of them are known by the epithet ‚churches of the Spirit’, and in Southern Africa they are often contrasted with the other ‚churches of the law’.

It is always difficult to categorize Pentecostalism, and this is as much the case in Africa as anywhere else.¹ Whether these AICs can be considered ‚Pentecostal’ is a debate that rages on. It is obvious that AICs are no longer paradigmatic of the Pentecostal movement, as Asamoah-Gyadu has observed.² But scholars are also certain that the AIC pioneers, who were predominantly prophets and healers, were forerunners of the present-day African Pentecostalism and that they paved the way for the easier acceptance of a message of the power of the Spirit. Furthermore, I am not one of those who think that the predominant influence on Pentecostalism in Africa is that of the United States; or that it is a form of Americanization, or even of globalization. As Ogbu Kalu has observed, ‚The appropriation of global forces within local contexts and communities has drawn attention to how local cultures gestate, ab-

sorb, internalize, domesticate, or transform external change agents’.³ This lecture is about how local African cultures have transformed the globalizing effects of a rampant missionary Pentecostalism.

The expansion of the Pentecostal message in Africa over the past forty years can be attributed, at least partially, to religious and cultural factors. Swiss theologian Walter Hollenweger was one of the early advocates of this view. He considered the ‚oral structures’ of Pentecostalism, like Christianity itself, to be the reason for its initial growth. His list of the characteristics of these structures is well known and includes oral liturgy, narrative theology and witness, reconciliatory and participant community, the inclusion of visions and dreams in worship, and understanding the relationship between body and mind revealed in healing by prayer and liturgical dance.⁴ He points out that spontaneity and enthusiasm in Pentecostal worship, rather than leading to an absence of liturgy, produce flexible oral liturgies memorized by the congregation. The most important element of these liturgies is the active participation of every member in the congregation.⁵ This was certainly the case with early Pentecostalism, although the more recent creation of large urban megachurches has dissipated this characteristic. Nevertheless, Hollenweger’s observation is that Pentecostal liturgy has social and revolutionary implications in that it empowers marginalized people, takes as acceptable what ordinary people have in the worship of God and thus overcomes ‚the real barriers of race, social status, and education’.⁶

There are many different expressions of Pentecostalism in Africa. It now constitutes a significant proportion of African Christianity, and in some countries has become the majority of Christians there if its older varieties in the AICs are included.⁷ Their reformation of missionary Christianity has gone much further than the ‚Ethiopian’ and ‚African’ churches had done before them. Many observers consider the free African liturgy of music and dance in the AICs to be their most obvious demonstration of their indigenization or ‚African-ness’.⁸ This has been overtaken in recent Pentecostalism by the use of electronic and modern music. However, the emphasis on ‚freedom in the Spirit’ has rendered the Pentecostal movement inherently flexible in different cultural and social contexts worldwide, and Africa is no exception, even when it changes

from a rural to an urban culture or from a local to a ,global' one. This flexibility has made the transplanting of the central tenets of the Pentecostal gospel more easily assimilated in Africa. Many older missionary churches arose in western contexts of written liturgies, set theologies, highly educated and professional clergy, and church structures with strongly centralized control. This often contributed to the feeling that these churches were ,foreign' and that people first had to become westerners educated in formal western education before becoming Christians.

In contrast, the Pentecostal emphasis on immediate personal experience of God's power by the Spirit was more intuitive and emotional, and it recognized charismatic leadership and formed African church patterns wherever they were needed. Even in most Pentecostal churches with western missionary involvement, leadership was not kept long in the hands of missionaries, and the proportion of missionaries to church members was usually much lower than that of older mission churches. This was another reason for its rapid growth and its acceptance in African communities. By preaching a message that promised solutions for present felt needs like sickness and the fear of evil spirits, Pentecostal preachers were heeded and their message readily accepted by ordinary people. Churches were rapidly planted in African cultures, and Africa took on its own, different expressions of Pentecostalism.⁹

One of the outstanding features of African Pentecostalism is its religious creativity, entrepreneurship and spontaneously contextualizing character, characteristics held as ideal by missionary scholars for over a century. The ,three self' formula for indigenization of missionary leaders Henry Venn and Rufus Anderson in the mid-nineteenth century - self-governing, self-supporting and self-propagating churches - was automatically and seemingly effortlessly achieved by African churches long before this goal was realized by European mission churches.¹⁰ At first, the AIC movement represents ,a kind of Christianity that has the trademark of African culture'.¹¹

Today, many Pentecostal churches have programmes for recruiting new members that transcend national and ethnic divisions, and have international departments with missionaries in other African countries and wherever the African diaspora is found. Their belief in the movement's universality and message for the whole world is a radical departure from ethnically-based religions. Most of the biggest of the older African Pentecostal churches, like the Christ Apostolic Church, the Zion Christian Church, and the African Apostolic Church, as well as several of the largest newer ones like the Church of Pentecost, the Redeemed Christian Church, Deeper Life and Winners Chapel, have transcended parochial limitations and have become international and multi-ethnic African movements, forming new voluntary organizations to replace traditional kinship groups. The planting of these churches in the ,African Diaspora' is an example of the multi-ethnic and international dimension of this form of African Christianity.

It is true that the German evangelist Reinhard Bonnke and his Christ for All Nations organization has probably done more

than any other single person to popularize Pentecostalism in Africa, especially in countries like Nigeria and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. He is undoubtedly the most popular Pentecostal preacher in Africa, who is now in his seventies and still ,without honour' in his own country. However, his popularity in Africa remains unabated and his meetings, in which his successor Daniel Kolenda does most of the preaching, draw hundreds of thousands of Africans nightly. His simple and positive message of hope and faith strikes chords in those African communities for whom there is little reason to be hopeful or positive. However, thriving African churches, established in Africa without the help of foreign missionaries, were founded in innovative initiatives unprecedented in the history of Christian missions. They were motivated by a compelling need to preach and even more significantly, to *experience* a new message of the power of the Spirit. These African churches have been established for over a century and have fundamentally transformed Africa's religious landscape, a veritable reformation of African Christianity.

Harvey Cox suggests that for any religion to grow today, it must demonstrate two vitally important and underlying capabilities. First, the religion ,must be able to include and transform at least certain elements of preexisting religions which still retain a strong grip on the cultural subconscious'. Secondly, ,it must also equip people to live in rapidly changing societies'. He finds these two ,key ingredients' in Pentecostalism.¹² African Pentecostalism is in constant interaction with the pre-existing African spirit world, western culture and the Christian message. In the words of Birgit Meyer, African Pentecostalism has ,translated the devil'. It may be true that some African Christians might need to have a greater appreciation for the rich diversity of their cultural and religious past and not feel the need to bow to the cultural hegemony of western Christianity. Pentecostals who demonize the African cultural and religious past (and sometimes other churches) do not help explain either the present attraction of Pentecostalism for African peoples or those features which are in continuity with that past, even though it might sometimes help promote African Pentecostals in the religious competition that is a feature of pluralist societies today.

Cox sees the largely unconscious interaction of Pentecostalism with indigenous religions as helping people recover vital elements in their culture that are threatened by modernization. Pretorius and Jafta speak of ,the intrinsic affinity between traditional African conceptions and Pentecostal religiosity'.¹³ African Pentecostals have found in their own context, both culturally and biblically acceptable alternatives to and adaptations from the practices of their ancient religions, and they are seeking to provide answers to the needs inherent there. Any religion that does not offer at least the same, and preferably more benefits as the old religion does will probably be unattractive. Christianity, particularly in its Pentecostal emphasis on the transforming power of the Spirit, purports to offer more than the traditional religions did.

The Pentecostals have changed the face of Christianity in Africa because they have proclaimed a holistic gospel of salva-

tion that includes deliverance from all types of evil oppression like sickness, barrenness, sorcery, evil spirits, unemployment and poverty. This message may not have engaged always effectively with the more structurally oppressive political and economic monopolies, but the needs of people have been addressed more fundamentally than the rather spiritualized and intellectualized legacy of western missionaries. African preachers declare the good news that God meets all the needs of people, including their spiritual salvation, physical healing, and other material necessities. The phenomena of mass urbanization and immigration results in African churches providing places of spiritual security and personal communities for people unsettled by rapid social change and new cultural and spiritual centres for Africa's upward mobilizing youth. The more relevant the church becomes to its cultural and social context, the more prepared it will be to serve the wider society.

Pentecostalism, African Religion and Culture

African Pentecostalism raises many questions concerning the central theological issue of the relationship between Christianity and other religions, particularly because of their emphasis on the Spirit. Chinese American Pentecostal Amos Yong says that the experiences of the Spirit common to Pentecostals and Charismatics demonstrate 'indubitable similarities across the religious traditions of the world'. This opens the way for a constructive Pentecostal theology of religions that explores 'how the Spirit is present and active in other religious traditions'.¹⁴ In an attempt to apply scientific principles to human cultures and languages, more conservative forms of western theology assumed that there was a pure Message free of cultural constraints and that when the purity of the gospel was affected in some way by cultural adaptations, the result was syncretism. The word syncretism was often used to suggest that the gospel had somehow been corrupted by culture. But as Chilean Pentecostal Juan Sepúlveda points out, the concern for preserving the purity of the Gospel has always been stronger than the desire to incarnate (or inculturate) the Gospel in a particular situation. He says that we cannot grasp any meaning without the help of our precious cultural categories, and so purity is not given to us. Some sort of syncretism is inevitable.¹⁵ And so, Pentecostalism in its different expressions, like Christianity everywhere, is inherently 'syncretistic'. Because of the way that African Pentecostals proclaim the Christian message, however, a selective rejection of some religious practices as a means of solving problems takes place. In some AICs, the syncretizing tendencies are seen in the rituals and symbols adapted and introduced from both the western Christian and the African religious traditions. Sometimes completely new ones appear, usually with local relevance and including enthusiastic participation by members and lively worship.

It must be remembered that although most scholarly attention has been given to Pentecostal megachurches in Africa's cities, African Pentecostalism also does well in Africa's rural heartlands. This is because African Pentecostals proclaim a pragmatic gospel seeking to address practical and contextual

issues like sickness, poverty, unemployment, loneliness, evil spirits and sorcery. In varying degrees and in their many different forms, and precisely because of their inherent flexibility, these churches offer answers to some of the fundamental questions asked in their own context. A sympathetic approach to local culture and the retention of certain cultural practices are undoubtedly major reasons for their attraction. This is especially true for those millions overwhelmed by urbanization with its transition from a personal rural society to a more impersonal urban one. At the same time, African Pentecostals confront old views by declaring what they are convinced is a more powerful protection against sorcery and a more effective healing from sickness than either the existing churches or traditional rituals had offered. Healing, guidance, protection from evil, and success and prosperity are some of the practical benefits offered to faithful members of their churches. Holistic, ecstatic, and experiential religious practices are found in Christianity throughout the world today. The antiphonal singing, simultaneous and spontaneous prayer, dance and motor behaviour found throughout worldwide Pentecostalism, all of which are also essentially African practices, emphasize the freedom, equality, community and dignity of each person in the sight of God.

Whenever Christianity, unencumbered by its various foreign cultural expressions, encounters another living religion and culture as it does in African Pentecostalism, a transformation takes place in both directions. The Christian message challenges, confronts and changes whatever seems incongruous or inadequate in African popular religion and cultural practices, and African religion and culture transform and enrich the Christian message so that it is understandable and relevant within the worldview in which it is submerged. And so the Christian message becomes more appropriate and comprehensible to both those to whom it is proclaimed and to those who proclaim it. At the same time, the Christian community throughout the world discovers new depths in its message that it would not have discovered except for this encounter with African religion and culture.

In a small book written almost twenty years ago, I outlined what I saw as the parallels between African concepts of 'power' and biblical ones, making the Christian concept of spiritual power easier to assimilate.¹⁶ This biblical message of the power of the Spirit finds familiar ground among African people, and is possibly one of the main reasons for the rapid growth of Pentecostal churches. Ancient African beliefs have been transformed in these churches so that Christianity is presented as an attractive and viable African alternative. These churches encounter African religions and provide answers to a host of perplexing questions that seem inherent there.

Although this analysis is not exhaustive, at least from this particular Christian perspective, it appears that African popular religions are inadequate on several fronts and seem to be seldom completely satisfying and leave people uncertain, threatened and fearful. 'African' problems caused by a loss of power and life through the malicious workings of sorcery,

magic and witchcraft, and through capricious spirits often demanding more than people can provide, demand a Christian response.¹⁷ The great attraction of African Pentecostalism is that it does offer answers to these problems. In their encounter with African religions, Pentecostals have themselves been challenged and enriched concerning the content of their message, which would have been impoverished and ‚foreign‘ without this encounter. Their message of the power of the Spirit challenges evil powers and what are roundly declared to be the work of Satan. In many churches, ancestors are confronted as impersonating demons from which people need deliverance and evil spirits are exorcised in the name of Jesus Christ. Sorcerers, witches and even diviners are declared to be agents of the devil.

These churches acknowledge all these various African forces as realities and not as ‚ignorant superstitions‘ from which people need ‚enlightenment‘. African Pentecostals offer realistic solutions by accepting these problems as genuine, conscientiously attempting to provide real explanations, and expecting to resolve the problems through faith in God. The response involves prayer to an almighty God for deliverance from the evil, protection from its possible future occurrences, and the restoration of wellbeing found in Christ. The methods by which this deliverance is effected may differ and the use of symbols vary greatly, but the outcome is the same: God is glorified as demonstrably more powerful than other ‚gods‘.

The emphasis on the power and provision of the Holy Spirit in African Pentecostalism means that we should consider whether traditionally western concepts of revelation are adequate. What theological value should be given, for example, to direct ‚revelation‘ (prophecy) given to individuals, or to visions and dreams? The prominence of healing also forces us to consider a theology of healing. Any theological reflection that is done in this type of study should be made with extreme caution and tentativeness and can never be definitive when the phenomena under discussion are dynamic and under a constant process of change.

It might be appropriate, finally, to repeat a word of caution sounded in an earlier study.¹⁸ If there is a criticism often justifiably leveled at Pentecostals and Charismatics, it is that they have sometimes expounded a theology of success and power at the expense of a theology of the cross. This is particularly true of the popular western fringes of the Pentecostal movement where emphasis is placed on ‚health and wealth‘ through faith in God. But at the same time this crude form of North American Pentecostalism needs to be separated from its African counterpart. As Asamoah-Gyadu has pointed out:

„Pentecostals draw attention to the fact that the gospel is about restoration, so it is expected that the transformation of the personality would be manifest in personal health, well-being and care, in short salvation is holistic and includes spiritual as well as physical abundance.... In African Pentecostalism generally, prayer for well-being and success has become one of

the critical concerns. Some may view this as an obsession with this-worldly concerns but this could hardly be otherwise in a precarious context in which, besides the divine, people may virtually have no other means of survival.“¹⁹

The emergence of Pentecostal churches in both Africa and Europe in the twenty-first century indicates that there are unresolved questions facing the church. But there are not always instant solutions to life’s ups and downs. Spirituality is not to be measured merely in terms of success. People are not only convinced by the triumphs of Christianity but also by its trials. The history of the church in Africa is clear evidence of that. A one-sided pneumatology is a danger to all of us, whether in Africa, Europe or somewhere else. The Spirit is also a gentle dove, a Spirit of humility, patience and meekness, of love, joy and peace. The Spirit is the tender Comforter, the one who comes alongside to help and strengthen us whenever we encounter trials and problems. This comforting ministry of the Spirit also needs to be emphasized in an African world plagued with famine, poverty, economic and political oppression and disease. Overemphasizing the power of the Spirit in terms of outward success often leads to bitter disappointment and disillusionment when that power is not evidently and immediately manifested. Christian theology must not only provide power when there is a lack of it - it must also be able to sustain through life’s tragedies and failures, especially when there is no visible success.

The remarkable growth of African forms of Pentecostalism should be examined to discover whether there is something in African Pentecostalism from which all Christians can learn in the on-going task of proclaiming the gospel. And conversely, there might be something that other churches have failed to do or did wrongly which resulted in such a huge response. There was sometimes a close identification between western missionaries and colonizing Europeans and sometimes African clergy were discriminated against. Part of the reasons for the emergence of AICs can be attributed to these factors, particularly the first ‚Ethiopian‘ and ‚African‘ movements.

There were also times when missionaries protested against injustice and oppression by the colonizing powers. Reflecting on the mistakes of missionaries in the past should not overlook the enormous, often self-denying contribution that they made to alter the face of African religion. But the growth of Pentecostal forms of African Christianity is a different story. That African Pentecostals often continue to gain strength at the expense of older churches has implications for these churches, and it no longer has anything to do with the mistakes of European missionaries. It does not help being polarized and accusing Pentecostals of ‚sheep-stealing‘, for as one African leader once remarked, ‚We don’t steal sheep; we plant grass‘. The grass is sometimes greener on the other side. If the teachings and practices of older churches are perceived as powerless to meet people’s everyday felt needs, then these churches cannot continue with ‚business as usual‘ in the face of as yet unidentified shortcomings. The Organization of Afri-

can Instituted Churches' 1996 manifesto spelt out 'one main reason' for the drift away from 'mission churches':

„...The Western God was spiritually inadequate and irrelevant to deal with the reality of many aspects of our lives. The result was a Christian faith and conviction which were only 'skin-deep' or superstitious, in spite of the successful spread of Christianity on the continent. There was and is still the question of how deep the Christian faith really is when so many of its affiliates still continue to visit the caretakers of the African traditional religions.”²⁰

This penetrating remark challenges older churches in Africa with the need to rethink their entire mission. Without such a serious reappraisal, their decline will probably continue and new forms of Pentecostal Christianity will continue to grow. This is not always a negative thing. Many older African churches have been influenced by Pentecostalism and have adopted its methods. Further questions are raised concerning the relationship between the gospel and culture. A rapidly growing religious movement demands our attention, whether we agree with its theology or not.

In seeking to find out *why* these churches are growing we must know how to relate to and learn from them missiologically. Part of the reason for their growth may be that they have succeeded where western-founded churches often failed - to provide a contextualized Christianity in Africa and in those parts of the western world in which they have been transplanted among African diaspora communities.²¹

The phenomenon of African Pentecostalism is largely of *African* origin, and has its roots in a marginalized and underprivileged society struggling to find dignity and identity in the face of brutal colonialism and oppression in Africa, and marginalization in Europe and North America. In some parts of Africa, it expanded initially among people who were neglected, misunderstood and deprived of anything but token leadership by their white ecclesiastical 'masters'. But despite these important social and historical factors in Africa and in the African Diaspora, fundamentally it is the ability of the Pentecostal gospel to adapt to and fulfill *religious and cultural* aspirations that continues to be their strength. These aspirations should be defined more precisely, to help answer the question of whether all churches are addressing these needs today. Turner suggested that AICs offer solutions to problems existing in all Christianity, 'a series of extensive, long-term, unplanned, spontaneous, and fully authentic experiments from which (Christianity) may secure answers to some of its most difficult questions'.²² This analogy may be extended to other forms of African Pentecostalism.

The contribution of African Pentecostalism is of great importance to the mission of the universal church and its effective proclamation of the gospel. Turner's observation of the AICs can be applied in the wider context of Pentecostalism. These African churches help older churches understand 'the overriding African concern for spiritual power from a

mighty God to overcome all enemies and evils that threaten human life and vitality, hence their extensive ministry of mental and physical healing'. He points out how different this is from 'the Western preoccupation' with theoretical and rather esoteric theological issues.²³ All these questions in turn raise further questions concerning the problem of continuity and discontinuity, the intercultural communication of the Christian gospel and the encounter between Christianity and another living religion. There are many questions about the post-colonial history of African Christianity. African Pentecostalism has created a new Christian identity for itself that includes an African style of worship and liturgy (even when modern electronic music and English lyrics are used), and a holistic Christianity that offers tangible help in this world as well as in the next. These and other features together form an African contextualization of Christianity.

If churches in Africa are to be at the cutting edge of Christianity they will have to address and remedy their shortcomings or continue to minister to a decreasing membership content either to practice Christianity side by side with African popular religions, or succumb to a materialistic society that no longer practice Christianity at all. At the same time, African churches are challenged to recognize that their cultural context in an increasingly technological and urbanized society is a rapidly changing one; and that in order to avoid becoming archaic and irrelevant, the contextualization process must continue.

This is a lesson that the whole Christian church must learn. The experience of the power of the Spirit can be a unifying factor in a global society that is still deeply divided, and it can be the catalyst for the emergence of a new society where there is justice for all and hope for a despairing world. But it dare not become an escape mechanism to flee from the harsh realities of life. The Spirit should liberate us from prejudice, arrogance, isolationism and ethnocentrism - in short, all our abominable selfishness. We should be brought to the place where God can truly bring God's dominion to bear on all facets of life as we experience it - that God's kingdom may come, and God's will be done throughout the earth, as it is done in heaven.

- 1 Defining Pentecostalism has been discussed in Allan Anderson, 'Varieties, Taxonomies, and Definitions', in A. Anderson, M. Bergunder, A. Droogers & C. van der Laan (eds.), *Studying Global Pentecostalism: Theories and Methods* (Berkeley & Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press), 13-29.
- 2 J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu, 'Born of Water and the Spirit: Pentecostal/Charismatic Christianity in Africa', in Ogbu Kalu (ed.), *African Christianity: An African Story* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2007), 341.
- 3 Ogbu Kalu, *African Pentecostalism: An Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 12.
- 4 Allan H. Anderson & Walter J. Hollenweger, (eds.), *Pentecostals After a Century: Global Perspectives on a Movement in Transition* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), chapter 1; Walter J. Hollenweger, *Pentecostalism: Origins and Developments Worldwide* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1997), 23.

- 5 Hollenweger, Pentecostalism, 269-71.
- 6 Hollenweger, Pentecostalism, 274-75.
- 7 This is true of most Southern African countries, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Nigeria and Kenya. Further information on this is found in Allan H Anderson, *African Reformation: African Initiated Christianity in the Twentieth Century* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2001).
- 8 John S. Pobee & Gabriel Ositelu II, *African Initiatives in Christianity: The Growth, Gifts and Diversities of Indigenous African Churches - A Challenge to the Ecumenical Movement* (Geneva: WCC, 1998), 26; Deji Ayegboyin & S. Ademola Ishola, *African Indigenous Churches: An Historical Perspective* (Lagos: Greater Heights Publications, 1997), 151.
- 9 Harvey Cox, *Fire from Heaven: The Rise of Pentecostal Spirituality and the Reshaping of Religion in the Twenty-First Century* (London: Cassell, 1996), 246; Hollenweger, *Pentecostalism*, 52.
- 10 David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1991), 331-32.
- 11 Ayegboyin & Ishola, *African Indigenous Churches*, 150.
- 12 Cox, *Fire from Heaven*, 219.
- 13 Cox, *Fire from Heaven*, 228; Hennie Pretorius & Lizo Jafta, '„A Branch Springs Out“: African Initiated Churches', R. Elphick & R. Davenport (eds.), *Christianity in South Africa* (Oxford: James Currey & Cape Town: David Philip, 1997), 217.
- 14 Amos Yong, '„Not Knowing Where the Wind Blows...“: On Envisioning a Pentecostal-Charismatic Theology of Religions', *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 14, 1999, 85-7, 99-100.
- 15 Juan Sepúlveda, 'To overcome the fear of syncretism: a Latin American perspective' L. Price, J. Sepúlveda & G. Smith (eds.), *Mission Matters* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1997), 167.
- 16 Allan H. Anderson, *Moya: The Holy Spirit in an African Context* (Pretoria: University of South Africa Press, 1991), 113-15.
- 17 Anderson, *Moya*, 67-68.
- 18 Anderson, *Moya*, 72-73.
- 19 Asamoah-Gyadu, 'Born of Water', 354-55.
- 20 Pobee & Ositelu, *African Initiatives*, 68.
- 21 Wilbert R. Shenk, 'The Contribution of the Study of New Religious Movements to Missiology', A.F. Walls & W.R. Shenk (eds.), *Exploring New Religious Movements* (Elkhart, IN: Mission Focus, 1990), 198.
- 22 Harold W. Turner, *Religious Innovation in Africa* (Boston, MA: G.K. Hall, 1985), 209.
- 23 Turner, *Religious Innovation*, 210.

Healing the Wounds of the Past and Promoting Development in Rwanda: The Church's Stance on the Genocide and Civil War

In Rwanda, manipulation of the national memory has contributed significantly to the division of the Rwandan people into groups of enemies. In effect, theories and myths depicting the Rwandans as a people without a shared history, strangers to each other, one group oppressing the other, fuelled the instrumentalisation of the collective memory. This view of the country's past sparked the socio-ethnic conflicts that culminated in the 1994 genocide carried out against the Tutsi.

While the Rwandan Church left its mark on the history of modern Christianity through, amongst others, the Spiritual Revival, it has also abetted or assisted powerlessly in this dangerous process of manipulating the collective memory. It failed to unmask the evil spirits behind the different theories of racial segregation by preaching the Gospel of love and the divine link inherent in every human being.

In the aftermath of this incomparable tragedy, the Rwandan people (perpetrators, victims...) has been strongly committed not only to sustainable development but also to the duty of remembrance. However, the question arises how a people divided by the events of the past is supposed to face the challenges of the present and, subsequently, build a common peaceful future. We are convinced that the only viable solution is to purify the collective memory, and the Church will have an essential to play role in this endeavour.

This speech will focus on the Rwandan reconciliation process and the approach the Church should take to ensure these efforts are sustainable. We will first discuss the importance of collective memory in reconstructing a community, then describe how the manipulation of the collective memory, which was supported by the Church despite the Spiritual Revival, triggered the genocidal carnage, and finally talk about different mechanisms that can be used in the current healing process in an effort to prevent recurrence of the errors of the past and to break the circle of violence. We will also discuss how new denominations (neo-pentecostal churches) are involved or influencing other churches and the Rwandan society in general in this process of memory healing

The Importance of Memory in a Community

Human memory is defined as the ability to store and to make available information, which is a facility man and machine

have in common (Encyclopædia Universalis, 1990, pp. 945-956). Many philosophers have been fascinated by this phenomenon, among them Bergson (Henri Bergson, 1939) and Paul Ricœur (Paul Ricœur, 2000).

We will examine the collective dimension of memory, regarded as "a society's perception of its own past that is taken as a basis for reconstructing its identity" and facing its future (Charles Ossah Eboto, 2006, pp. 41-56).

Bergson (Henri Bergson, 1939, p. 82) identifies two types of memory: memory as a representative function and memory concerning habitude. This allows using the past to deal with the present. Halbwachs makes a distinction between individual memory and collective memory. The latter is founded on legends and myths as well as on common perceptions based on emotions such as passion and affection. It has to build on history, which is the scientific view of the past due to its objectiveness and critical assessment of past events. P. Ricœur has demonstrated in which way manipulation of the collective memory can trigger a tragedy such as the one that occurred in Rwanda in 1994 (P. Ricœur: *La mémoire, l'histoire et l'oubli*, 2000).

The importance of the collective memory cannot be overemphasized. It is to a society what the soul is to the body. In fact, its function is reminiscent of that of *zakhâr* in the Old Testament and in Judaism in general, which means preserving the tradition that serves as a basis for the existence of God's people. It highlights the relevance of the past for the present, allowing every generation to be part of the historical promise of YHWH and to reap the eternal and unique benefits of His promise. *Zikkarôn* (remembrance) offers the opportunity to restore the situation created by the intervention of God. According to the Deuteronomistic view, Sabbath and Easter (forming an integral part of *zikkarôn*) are to remind the worshippers on a weekly or annual basis, respectively, of the relevance of YHWH's promise and his Covenant, which are the basis of Israel's identity and the prerequisite for forging the future founded on the promises of the past. All members of the Israeli community define themselves by the collective memory, that inspires their ways of seeing and doing things.

The imperative to keep remembrance of the attacks of Amalek (cf. Dt. 25, 17-19) demonstrates that a community can hardly forget the pain inflicted on it. However, remem-

bering Amalek is more than mere commemoration. It calls on all generations to remain attentive in order to face the common foe that could re-emerge anytime, anywhere to attack again: Amalek suddenly appears from behind, attacking the hindmost, those who are feeble and inattentive. This is what attention should be paid to, and this is also where the origins of *zékher*, initiated in Israel, can be found.

The *zékher* law and its imperative to remember certainly refer to the past. However, it does not stop there: referring to the past launches a dynamic and creative process which enriches the present and the future and even trespasses the limits of time.

The worshipper inevitably finds inspiration for this dynamic and creative process in his or her faith. Therefore, faith is closely interconnected with memory. For the theologian R. Dri, *proclaiming one's faith means remembering one's history* (R. Dri, 1999, pp. 2-9). He explains that man becomes subject through memory, which is the reason for memory being of such crucial importance to his existence throughout the time during which he sees himself as a conscious being (Paul Ricœur, 2000, 123-130). If the past consisted only of what is long gone, man would no longer exist, either. The 'has been' of the past needs to be the 'is' of today for man to be able to exist. This can only be possible if memory constantly leads the past into the present. Losing one's memory means to stop being a subject due to the loss of consciousness of time and of oneself: man turns into an object susceptible to manipulation or falls into a vegetative state (The American Journal of Medicine, 81 (1986), 91-95)¹.

Using its collective memory, a group can forge and construct its identity. The act of remembering, above all of sharing memories of painful experiences, always offers an opportunity to reconsider identity. Who am I? Who are we? Why did this happen to us and not to somebody else? Why did they inflict so much suffering on us? How can we protect ourselves to prevent recurrence of such events? All these are questions, among many others, that arise after a painful experience.

The painful memory of the past that raises all these questions leaves long-lasting scars on all those who have had to endure this suffering or on those whose beloved have fallen victim to the same tragedy. In fact, it has been proven that shared suffering has a stronger uniting power than shared joy (J. Candau: *Mémoire et identité*, 147). For this reason, the survivors of a catastrophe often associate to form an exclusive group after having gone through the same dreadful experience together.

According to J. Candau, a group can also use its links with the past to build an identity based on the shared memories of a glorious history. Nonetheless, identity often roots in the memory of all the tears shed and anguish suffered as a group. As a consequence, a major share of the historicised identity is constructed on the grounds of the memory of these collective tragedies (Op. cit., 148). These can only be passed on with reference to their authors. The Incas are one example

for a people whose vision of the world changed completely after the destruction of their empire by the Spanish (ibid.). Their vision of the world, which comprised a particular social order, took a tragic turn after the arrival of the Spanish. The Inca civilisation was transformed into a people of warriors fighting for their lives at a time when their community perceived the West as the living representation of death and destruction.

In Switzerland, the massacres of the Swiss Guards, serving the French King in Paris, in the summer of 1792 have become a "myth conveying a positive sense of identity", represented by the Lion of Lucerne erected in 1820 (Op. cit., 149).

The shared memory of slavery has a very uniting effect on the Afro-American community, whereas the blacks in South Africa feel united by their shared memory of Apartheid and in particular of the massacres of Soweto in 1976 and 1977.

In Rwanda, the "Abacitsekwicumu"², those who escaped the 1994 genocide, increasingly constitute a separate group, seeing themselves as a category of Rwandans of its own. Movements linked to the tragic events of the genocide illustrate this very well. Two examples of such movements are AVEGA, the Association of the Widows of the Rwandan Genocide (Association des Veuves du Génocide d'Avril 1994), and AERG, the Association of Student Genocide Survivors (Association des Etudiants Rescapés du Génocide).

These examples show how memory, in particular in the context of remembering the horrors of the past, is one instrument to pave the way for strengthening a group's sense of identity and unity. In the past and present, social groups have always followed this logic. Once the collective memory has become the cornerstone of a group's unity and identity, it can boost the development and ensure that history does not repeat itself – or, if manipulated, it can provide the breeding ground for a circle of violence serving to justify a certain political ideology.

Manipulation of the Collective Memory and Justification of Power Claims: Memory and the Trivialisation of the Circle of Violence in Rwanda

Biased by the politico-military, social, and cultural organisation, colonial scholars wrote historiography based on myths labelling the two major communities. While, according to the Myth of the Hamite, the Tutsi allegedly originated from Ethiopia and Asia and the Hutu, the Bantu and the negro slaves from the surroundings of Lake Chad (G. Van't Spijker, 2007, 92-96), the Myth of Ibimanuka (typically Rwandan) claims divine provenance for the ruling clan. Its members are said to be direct descendents of a certain Kigwa (a deity who fell from heaven). This myth served to justify the domination of the ruling elite.

In the course of the independence movement, ethnical conflicts intensified with writings of the respective independen-

tist elites of the different groups. The Hutu and their leader Grégoire Kayibanda, former seminarian and future president, published "The Hutu Manifesto" on 24 March, 1957. The ethnic Tutsi responded with a document imputed to *Bagaragu b'Umwami* (the servants of the King). Based on the myths of origin of both groups, this document denied any fraternal link between the Hutu and the Tutsi. In the face of these publications, the Church decided to intervene. While Mgr. Peraudin, head of the Catholic Church in Rwanda, condemned the state of social injustice, unfortunately, he reinforced the ethnic dimension of the problem. With him drawing on the term "race" in his manifesto, the Rwandan conflict turned into a Hamite-Hutu or Hamite-Bantu conflict entailing exclusion even amongst the members of the Church.

As a result, many generations of Rwandans grew up against a background of distorted history. This mythical perception of history was exploited by the republican³ leaders to foster people's fears of seeing the Hamite oppressors reassuming power. The collective memory, intoxicated by the manipulation of history, was turned to the leader's advantage, seeking to consolidate their power based on segregationist policies. The Tutsi community was made their scapegoat, the alleged strangers and intruders were to be expelled by all means. They were successful in spreading their ideology in a way that the peasants, who lived together and shared sorrow and joy, felt obliged to adhere to it.

Whenever the Tutsi refugees (nicknamed *Inyenzi*, "traitors") made an attempt to return to their home country by force in the course of the years 1960, 1966 and 1973, the innocent Tutsi population that had stayed in the country was savagely massacred. According to T. Gatwa, the *Inyenzi* attacks were used as a pretext for the elimination of the internal opposition, in particular that of the *Batutsi groups* (T. Gatwa: Rwanda, 2001, 117-118).

Back then, many legends demonising the monarchical regime were passed on to the younger generations. One example is the disturbing story of Kanjongera⁴, one of the queen mothers, who is said to have leaned on a sword jammed into the stomach of a Hutu baby, fattened by the royal court for this purpose, to get up. Another story tells that Karinga, the royal drum, had to be constantly decorated with the genital organs of the Hutu enemies. However, the 'barbarity' attributed to this dynasty was wrongly transposed to the entire ethnic Tutsi community. In the collective memory, all Tutsi were considered potentially evil. Therefore, the Hutus considered it their right to direct any form of violence towards the Tutsi population in the name of vengeance.

With the 1990 war and the emergence of the multi-party system, the media (e.g. Kangura with the publication of the ten commandments of the Bahutu), radio stations (above all RTL) and other propagandists⁵ for the leading elite and extremist parties (MRND, CDR), started whipping up hatred even more. They called for the Tutsi to go home via Nyabarongo.

Manipulation of the national memory has resulted in the demonisation and exclusion of the other, who is perceived as a dangerous rival and thus should be wiped out for good. Bear in mind that the country was Christianised to a large extent, and the Catholic and Protestant Churches alike vaunted having contributed to the Spiritual Revival of Christianity.

Spiritual Revival Powerless over the Instrumentalisation of the Collective Memory

Irrespective of socio-spiritual movements such as the "Tornado" on the Catholic side or the Spiritual Revival on the Protestant side, the Church officially adopted and followed this ethnicity-based ideology in its dealings with its subjects.

In its Christian work, it applied segregationist principles almost systematically. For instance, the Catholic Church founded a school specifically for the children of the Tutsi elites that were in power in 1910, in accordance with Father Schuhmacher's studies that proclaimed the necessity of "favouring Rwanda's Mututsi".

After the events of 1959, the Church even consciously or unconsciously contributed to the manipulation of the collective memory, which demonised the other side rather than battling the underlying evil by teaching a distorted history and by remaining silent over the manipulation of the collective memory.

The Church proved incapable of condemning the abuse of the collective memory. It allowed the whole historic memory of a people to be manipulated by a small group of people working towards a Machiavellian ideology (Gatwa, 2001, 86). Some raised their voice in doubt of the sincerity and effectiveness of the Spiritual Revival in Rwanda in the 1930s because of this situation, heating up the situation in all of East Africa (ibid.).

We should recollect that the first Christian missions were set up in Rwanda in 1900, when the Catholic Missionaries of the White Fathers arrived there. In view of the obvious resistance of the reigning class against the new faith, the first large groups the missionaries managed to attract consisted mainly of Hutu. But after King Musinga was deposed and deported in 1930, he was replaced by his pro-Catholic son Rudahigwa. He was considered a new Constantine, and the Catholic missionaries succeeded in making Catholicism almost a state religion when most of the Tutsi elite converted between 1933 and 1939. 90% of the highest-ranking leaders were baptised during this period. To the missionaries, this mass conversion constituted a "Tornado", a manifestation of the Catholic triumph. When King Rudahigwa was christened Leon Charles in 1946, Rwanda became a Christian State officially dedicated to the Christ the Lord and the Virgin Mary (Gatwa, 2001, 85). This might have been the reasoning behind the merciless and aggressive campaign against Protestantism, which was considered as the propagation of heresy. In fact, the first Protestant missionaries, who had come from Germany and set foot on Rwandan soil between

1906 and 1907, were deemed heretic preachers. They left the country at the end of the first World War, and their missions were handed over to the Belgian Association of Protestant Missions in Congo, which became the Presbyterian Church in Rwanda after the independencies. The Anglican Church in Rwanda had its roots in the south of Uganda, where the CMS (Church Missionary Society) had set itself up at the end of the 19th century in the south-west of Uganda. From 1910 onwards, young doctors from the Anglican Hospital in Mengo (close to the Ugandan border) had been impatient to set up a mission in Rwanda (André Corten, 2003, 28-47). They finally succeeded in officially entering Rwanda in 1922. Their first mission station was constructed in Gahini in 1925, which was considered to be the capital and birthplace of the Spiritual Revival movement.

This movement was characterised by an atmosphere of conversion and repentance, embracing Christ's appeal to mankind and His presence in the Holy Spirit. Its followers were referred to as *Abaka*, "those who shine" or "the radiant" (Gatwa, 2001, 87). At first, the term was used pejoratively, but later adopted by the followers themselves (Robins, 1975, 135).

The converts publicly confessed their sins, sometimes addressing the people around them and demanding that they, too, should proclaim repentance. W.F. Church (a missionary, whose family roots go back to converts of John Wesley, the founder of the Methodist movement) retraces how the *Abaka* dared to criticise the missionaries, judging their acts by the test of the Gospel against the criteria they had established for the indigenous population (André Corten, 2003, 28-47). On the Ugandan side, the same type of contestation originated in Kigezi, where these groups were referred to as *Balokole*, stemming from *Kuwokoka* – to have been saved or to have escaped from a catastrophe. *Balokole* can be translated as "those who were rescued" or "the chosen" (Behrend, 1993, 179).

According to Th. Gatwa, the movement allowed many to confess their sins, including ethnic attitudes, which in turn helped openness towards an attitude of fraternity and companionship. In consequence, the *Abaka* formed a community of "brothers and sisters" who had been saved, distinctly set apart from those who had not been saved, called *Abisi* or "the worldly", the term comprising both laypeople and clergy. This sectarian attitude obliged the *Abaka* to keep a distance from socio-economic and political life and all other matters they considered as the mundane issues of those who had not been saved (Gatwa, 2001, 87). In terms of missionary activity, owing to teams of evangelists and itinerant preachers, the movement began setting up a number of Anglican missions in the Great Lakes region and Eastern Africa. It also paved the way for Pentecostalism, which took on in the 1950s, so that the term *Umulokole* has become synonymous for Pentecostalism in collective awareness.

The *Abaka* turned to eschatological and apocalyptic forms of belief, and opposed formal theology and secular or politi-

cal activities that required public commitment. Faced with the socio-political and ethnic crisis that began in 1959 and finally led to the 1994 genocide, both the movement and the Church in general were put to a test. Certain people believed that if the Spiritual Revival had been a veritable movement, the genocide would never have taken place. No-one raised their voice loudly and clearly to denounce the injustices committed against the "brothers and sisters".

On the other hand, the Christians in Uganda - more specifically, the leaders of the Spiritual Revival movement - stood firm against Idi Amin's dictatorial rule (Gatwa, 2001, 87). Archbishop Luwum was assassinated by Idi Amin in 1977 and Bishop Kivengeli was forced into exile because they had dared to condemn his bloodthirsty reign.

Clearly, the devaluation of ethical and political dimensions of Christian life struck a fatal blow to the Evangelical testimony of the movement in particular and the Church in general. The prophetic and Christological dimensions of a church that assists the poor and oppressed as a way of bringing about the Kingdom of God were not considered. This attitude does not reflect the dimension of ecclesiology and eschatology in the collective Christian memory. The prospect of a better future (the Kingdom of God that is yet to come) is what the Church's existence and nature are founded upon, and this consequently entails an obligation to protest against and unmask idol worship and a political ideology which, by means of manipulating collective memory and thus collective consciousness, aided the rise of totalitarianism (J.B. Metz in *Concilium*, 76 (1972), 9-25).

Today, the Church's task is to help society heal the wounds of the past and reconcile the painful memories in order to break the circle of violence.

Taking Action to Heal the Memory: A Socio-Theological Process

In the Jewish community, days to commemorate liberation, among which Passover takes a particularly important place (cf. Dt. 16), dominate the sphere of festive days. Celebrating these feasts is not a way of re-enacting the events, but a means of emphasising the identity of a people in relation to such events, of allowing new generations to grasp their meaning, and of bringing generations closer together. The celebration of Passover, the Passover Seder (A.C. Avril and D. De la Maisonneuve, 1993, 119), is also an occasion to reflect on the suffering of others; a drop of wine is spilled from the cup to symbolise the lives the Egyptians lost in the course of the liberation (ibid.).

In Rwanda, the world of memorials is generally built around genealogy, myths around the founders, historic names of regions, and festive days in remembrance of the times before and after independence. Today, the sites of the genocide, the burial sites of its heroes and the national week of mourning to commemorate the genocide dominate the sphere of memorials. A close observer will realise that some memorials

have disappeared while others were imposed by the powers that emerged from the conflicts, leaving a part of the population feeling defeated, frustrated and rejected. The problem of healing the wounds of the past and issues regarding the future of these memorials arise because not all parts of society can relate to them.

Currently, the collective memory is dominated by the genocide. The country's history is read and interpreted in relation to this event, the scope of which we must never make light of. It is only logical that the survivors of this tragedy are primarily concerned with the burden of their memories. But while great room is given to the memories of both victims and perpetrators, it is a lamentable fact that those who resisted and opposed the massacres in the name of their faith, comparable to the "Righteous among the Nations" during the Shoah, tend to be forgotten. Many documents and accounts are devoted to the massacres, but considerably fewer focus on those who fought against the forces of evil in the name of their faith. J.D. Bizimana devotes a couple of lines to the issue in his work:

The cruelty of the genocide committed in Rwanda makes us instantly forget individual Hutu's extraordinary acts of courage. The terrible killings, in which so many of us died, are what primarily inhabits our memories, and we tend to forget the risks these Hutu took when they hid away Tutsi. (J.D. Bizimana, 2001, 140)

In the process of purifying the painful collective memory, this 'small remnant' should be a symbol of God's love and His constant presence in the world. The Church ought to gather accounts from heroic Christians in order to preserve these examples for the benefit of future generations and symbols of hope for the Church's and the nation's future, without denying its role in the country's sombre past. A similar phenomenon can be seen when you look at the African slave trade. Men like J. Newton or W. Wilberforce, who fought against slavery in the name of their faith, are not often cited in African settings. It is frequently ignored that certain missionary societies, such as the Anglican Church Missionary Society (CMS), were born in the wake of anti-slavery movements (F. Zorn, 1993, 41-50).

Another phenomenon that can be witnessed is what J.M. Chaumont refers to as "rivalry of victims" (J.M. Chaumont, quoted from E. Kattan, 2002, 70). When painful memories are used as an excuse, the former victim clings to them in order to claim favours and privileges it receives as an oppressed and disadvantaged person (T. Todorov, 1995, 54). T. Todorov notes that there is a frenzied competition to obtain the status of most disadvantaged person or victim, since belonging to a group that was oppressed in the past entitles its members to official privileges. Meanwhile, the group of 'guilty offenders' is left to itself, which provokes a certain frustration and an attitude of denial among the group regarding the crimes it is accused of. In the aftermath of the incontestable genocide against the Rwandan Tutsi, we can

observe how a rift is forming between the different groups of victims quarrelling over the status of the most 'wounded'. This way, each group is denying or belittling the crimes inflicted on the other.

It is of utmost importance for Christians to know how to deal with memory, especially when it evokes a traumatic past. Christians are part of community that shares a collective memory embodied in the celebration of the Eucharist, the Blessed Sacrament; we call it the *sacrament of commemoration* here: "Do this in remembrance of me". The Church is the 'living memory' of the deliverance brought to us through Christ, for which it does not matter whether we are Jewish or Greek, perpetrator, victim or culprit. The fact that all these categories are united in one Church does not mean that their pasts are wiped out. But they are united in a community of faith where they appreciate each other and each other's memories of overcoming death. Each one tries to understand and accept the suffering, the joys and sorrows of the other. This awareness of the suffering inflicted on others can set a whole process of reconciliation and forgiveness in motion.

Towards a more Positive Memory: Forgiving without Forgetting

A good theology is one that contributes to the healing and development of man and his reconciliation with God and his neighbour. In general, the Deuteronomist view is that the will to purify one's memory emerges from the love and hospitality shown to strangers (Dt. 10, 11-21) as well as from the Shabbat laws (Dt. 5, 15) and that of integrating Edomites and Egyptians (Dt. 23, 8). The collective memory that brings the Jewish community to life is one that takes the enemy into consideration while seeking to purify itself in the same way the International Theological Commission interprets the notion of purifying the memory:

Purifying the memory means eliminating all forms of resentment and violence from the individual and collective memory left behind as a legacy from the past, based on a new and rigorous historic and theological judgement, which in turn is the foundation for reformed moral behaviour (...). Its goal is to promote the reconciliation of humans in truth, justice and charity (...). (International Theological Commission, 2006, 67)

The referral to the past does not divide society into classes of masters and slaves. On the contrary, it unites all its members. Evoking the past is not only in the Israelites interest, but also and mainly for the well-being of those who are in a weak position today.

By remembering his or her past, an Israelite understands that they are neither the author of their present nor their future. Hence, this memory is not a source of humiliation, neither for slaves or their former oppressors, but primarily a moment shared with fellow humans (free man, slave, or

stranger) and also one shared between humans and nature (Dt. 5, 13-14). When inserting commemoration into the Decalogue and the Deuteronomic code, the author of the Deuteronomy had understood that it is not possible to create a theology for a society if you ignore its identity, which is always linked to its past. According to R. Dri, we define ourselves in relation to our past, and the latter makes us into subjects. A subject may be an individual or a community. Consequently, "if the subject's past is truly over, has ceased to exist, the subject itself has ceased to exist. It is no longer, it descends to the category of an object. The past essentially constitutes the subject" (Op. cit., 4).

The reference to the past that reappears in the laws regarding the Sabbatical day of rest and love and hospitality towards strangers thus stems from an exemplary memory which, according to T. Todorov, is fundamentally liberating (Op. cit., 37-39)⁶, as opposed to the literal memory which, by focusing solely on the facts of the past, shuts man off and thus mortgages his future. The memory of Egyptian slavery, which motivated Deuteronomist law, enables us to recognise the importance of freedom in man's life. It helps us not to forget past experiences and not to repeat errors.

Forgiveness is an Evangelical rule that needs to be taught to all and applied by all Christians. But one great mistake some over-zealous preachers make, certainly if they have not personally or directly lived through such an experience, is to demand victims to forgive and quickly forget even serious crimes which are not subject to a limitation period at international level such as the genocide. If a victim hesitates, the victim is made to feel guilty itself. The crime becomes even more devastating as the victim is not heard, but finds itself entangled in a net of fear and develops hateful feelings towards the whole world. To V. Elizondo, the "ultimate malice of sin and what is most tragic about it is that it turns the victim into a sinner" (V. Elizondo, 1986, 89-98).

Sharing the memories of painful experiences, wrongdoings, grief and hurt in a community of faith can transform them into a great resource for a successful ministry of mutual forgiveness and reconciliation. But this requires thoroughly thinking through the psychological and theological approach. It would be misleading to preach forgiveness at random when something irreplaceable and irrecoverable has been committed, as P. Kemp calls it (P. Kemp, 1997). It is our duty to keep searching for ways and means of shaping a better future. The Church, in its quality as the avant-garde of society, needs to act as a sentinel (EHz. 3, 18ff.). In cooperation with men and women of good will, it is actively involved in the process of healing the wounds of the past. The famous "Truth and Reconciliation Commission" in South Africa, which was presided by Archbishop Desmond Tutu, one of the Church's highest authorities and theologians, should never cease to be an inspiration to us.

The innovative South African approach enabled the reconciliation of collective and individual memories and forgiveness, but never demanded forgetting about the past. The Church's

role in this noble task was decisive. By creating a space in which both the defector and the defeated, the victim and the culprit could express themselves, enabling confessing and listening to each other, the Commission made an invaluable contribution to the purification of the collective memory.

Healing of the Memory for a Sustainable Development in Rwanda: The Role of Historical Churches

Even if development can be seen as a set of processes aimed at transforming society towards holistic well-being, it is still a project that involves and necessitates in-depth knowledge of a people's times and history (the past, present and future). Consequently, it is difficult to discuss sustainable development in a society whose members have neither this profound knowledge nor a common understanding of where they come from. Once divided by their past, they will remain strictly divided to present day and the future will follow the same logic if nothing is done. It is only possible to reconstruct a community if its members share a past and see it in more or less the same light. As was pointed out earlier, the erroneous historiography and manipulation of memories served to uphold differing political ideologies and have thus contributed to the deep rift among the Rwandan population. What we need to do now, in order to find a way of breaking the circle of violence and to envisage a sustainable development, is to heal the people's memory. The government and other social players are making efforts geared at reconstructing the people's identity and unity *to the detriment of ethnic identities*. The churches are contributing to this process across the board:

Church Services that consider a People's History

While the painful memory of the Jewish people does not constitute an act of revolt against God, it does raise questions about the people's responsibility vis-à-vis the Torah and the Covenant and provides an opportunity to review a people's notion of its God and to reaffirm its identity amidst other peoples. After the events at Auschwitz, theologians and philosophers raised questions on problematic issues of faith, such as God's omnipresence and omnipotence. Hans Jonas, for instance, demonstrated that God had stripped himself of his powers and his responsibility in order to pass them on to man. This idea is a call on our own responsibility, even if we continue to see God as the maker of history. The Lord's Supper is a chance for Christians to re-experience the act of redemption at Golgotha (cf. Acts 2, 44-46, Luke 21, 19) and the reconciliation with Jesus Christ that followed. This way, the Church commemorates and turns into collective memory how He re-established life by reconciling man with himself, with God and with his fellow men.

Some African authors, such as E. Mveng, E. Kodjo and L. Magesa, invite their African readers to reflect on their past, which is marked by numerous tragedies, in order to come to terms with it. According to Magesa, these events ought to be part of our cultural and liturgical heritage in order to

discern God's presence in them and hear his call for us to formulate a theology of social justice, examine our conscience, and heal our memories (L. Magesa, 2001, 20).

Faith is closely linked to the history of the individual or community. When this history is told by a witness account, this is an opportunity for the audience to learn about the past, to understand the vagaries of our present day, and to see a vision for the future (P. Poucota, 2001, 63-81).

"Telling the story of suffering" is one of the five models T. Gatwa proposes to help the Rwandan people overcome the 1994 genocide (T. Gatwa, 2001, 268-269). He believes that the manipulated collective historic memory was propagated in order to support an ideology which has turned the Banyarwanda into irreconcilable enemies. Based on the importance P. Ricœur places on the telling of stories in psychoanalysis, T. Gatwa suggests that there should also be a place for telling the story of suffering. For D.J. Louw, telling the story of one's suffering ("story telling") is more important than talking about reconciliation and forgiveness (D. J. Louw in *All Africa Journal of Theology*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (January 2001), 39-51).

Many churches in Rwanda have also provided dedicated space for telling stories of suffering in a ritual called *ubuhamya* in Kinyarwanda: a verbal account of the acts of God in an individual Christian's life. The individual tells his or her story spontaneously during worship or in a prayer group. Ubuhamya is a liturgical element in certain churches, often referred to as "new" churches or obedient Pentecostal churches. Both in shape and substance, ubuhamya resembles the "historical creed" (cf. Dt. 26) spontaneously expressed by a Christian. Often, they tell of God's intervention in a sombre past (characterised by sin or suffering) and the undertaking entered into after such deliverance.

After the 1994 tragedy, these personal accounts gave back hope to those Rwandans who were asking themselves whether God had abandoned their country during the genocide. The memories of those Christians who had upheld their faith, brought to life in their stories of miraculous survivals, confirm that God had acted and continues to act in the course of Rwandan history. But such institutionalised confessions are not well received. For instance, many have refused to acknowledge the value of the "Confession of Detmold", a document signed by a dozen Rwandan Christians of all ethnicities and different religious denominations, in which these expatriate Christians accept their failures and responsibilities in the painful history that led up to the tragic events of 1994 (P. Godding in *Dialogue*, 195 (January 1997), 55-60).

We have noticed that there are fewer victims of trauma and stress in those churches that have incorporated such accounts into their liturgy. Giving these accounts over and over again allows them to purify their memories while guarding those memories that are positive and, most importantly, recollect divine intervention in a grim past.

However, when it comes to doctrine, the traditional churches are not prepared to stray from their routines despite the influence and competition of the new churches, 300 of which were founded after the genocide. The Confessing Church in Germany is a source of inspiration: the Barmen Declaration led it to review its theological approach and liturgy in response to Nazi rule and its consequences (H. Metter in *Etudes évangéliques*, 3-4 (July-December 1963), 146-159). The whole Christian doctrine and its relation with Judaism were questioned. In view of the sad events that have left their mark on African peoples' history, the Church should develop declarations relating to these events enabling our future descendants to understand the Church's stance on certain situations and thus providing a source of inspiration for them. It would also be a good occasion to think about certain rituals in memory of specific events. According to G. Delteil, a ritual has the power to represent the original event and structure our memories in such a way that they are not only cognitive, but involve us emotionally and physically as well (cf. G. Delteil in *ETR* 70 (1995), 229-239).

Promoting Participatory Justice and Battling Impunity

In this regard, the Church has become actively involved in the Gacaca community justice system, cultivating truthfulness as a mindset and giving it an ethical and missionary dimension. The Rwandans share a common - tragic - history which has left them almost irreconcilable, yet they are condemned to living together. It is necessary to heal their collective memory by accepting and facing their dark past, but above all, by encouraging a theology that focuses on *what remains*, so that this memory can be based on life and not on death.

The Gacaca court's greatest merit has been that of an individual and conditional pardon as opposed to the general amnesties granted under military pressure in Latin America. Rather than wiping out the past, it was revealed; instead of covering up the crimes, they were uncovered, and former criminals had to become a part of the rewriting of national history in order to be pardoned. As J. Pons said, immunity needed to be earned, and that involved publicly admitting ones crimes and accepting the new rules of democracy (S. Pons, 2000, 17).

The Gacaca courts also permitted offenders to take part in shaping collective memory and liberate their relatives of the collective sense of guilt. Once they have officially completed their work, the feelings of distrust on the one side and guilt on the other make way for relationships marked by trust and dignity. It was even noted that the number of Rwandans who take part in the ceremonies during the national week of mourning has almost tripled. Despite some weaknesses, this system of justice has set the process of sharing and incorporating these painful memories in motion.

Rewriting and correcting history: steps towards a new social covenant

Another way of leaving the past behind that is currently being explored is that of correcting history according to G. Van't Spijker. One of the great mistakes of the Christian mission in the 19th and 20th centuries was backing the classification of races, which created a sense of superiority in some and a feeling of inferiority and revolt in the others. Van't Spijker expresses his regrets that the Gospel did not lead to seeing the evil hidden beneath the deceptive appearance of the racial stratification of a people (G. Van't Spijker, 2007, 98-99). The Hamitic theory, which emanates from this view of the world, has made the people of Rwanda into a nation that does not share the same home country or history. Because of the way history was taught, which had formed the basis for the ideology that eventually led to the genocide, the government imposed a nation-wide ban on history lessons for more than 11 years. This was an important and necessary process as it marked a moment to stand still and reflect on the role of history. Other countries that have been faced with similar tragedies have reacted in almost the same way. There were the 'de-nazification' and 'anti-fascist' movements in Germany and Italy respectively in the wake of the Jewish Holocaust. De-segregation set in the United States after black people were integrated.

The socio-ethnic crisis in Rwanda has turned part of society into stateless people, even though recent research has clearly demonstrated that designation by ethnicity in Rwanda was based on a false interpretation of the country's socio-economic reality. Seeing that Rwandans share the same culture, the same language and traditional religion, their ethnicities are nothing but social categories. This hypothesis was recently confirmed by the results of research in the North of the country, which showed that there are Hutu and Tutsi with common ancestors.

One means of correcting history is restoring and revitalising traditional schooling, *Itorero ry'Igihugu*, which has become a kind of national institution of civic education. Every Rwandan is obliged to attend this school in order to learn about national values, history and identity. This institution instils a feeling of nationality in upcoming generations rather than a feeling of ethnic belonging.

This correction of history will surely clear the path for a new social covenant, necessarily based on a reinterpretation of the social reality that leaves the passions and political ideologies of the past behind. In order for this process to bring about the expected results, a space for dialogue needs to be created, where each ethnicity or social category (Hutu, Tutsi) can freely express its view of history and the home country. The re-writing of history requires respect for objectivity and scientific rigour to replace the privilege of being part of the party in power. The downside of this could be that history is twisted in a different way in order to justify certain political practices.

Reinforcing Koinonia and effective Christian service

The Christian cult of Eucharist completes the task of creating a 'positive memory', by means of reconciling man with himself and reconciling man with the world. To the communicants, Eucharist means *igihango* (a pact sealed in the Rwandan culture) and unites them, without any distinction whatsoever, in a common destiny. The communion must always maintain its two essential dimensions: the vertical, transcendent one, which signifies the relationship all faithful Christians have with God, and the horizontal one, which signifies the bond between all faithful Christians across times and places.

In practice, communion translates not only into the sharing of rituals, but also into playing an active role in reviving the hope to live. This is why Christian service, as the Church's ministry of sharing, healing and reconciliation, is so important (Sixth Assembly of WCC in Vancouver, 1983).

After the genocide committed against the Tutsi, the Churches and many Christian associations responded to issues relating to the moral and social consequences of the tragedy by initiating projects in the spirit of Christian service. They offered assistance to widows and orphans left behind by the genocide against the Tutsi in 1994 as well as for women who were victims of rape or children whose parents were imprisoned.

How are Neopentecostal Churches involved in this Process?

The growth of a huge number of new denominations is one of the characteristic features in Rwanda after the genocide against Tutsi. The number of those churches was estimated in 1997 at 150 and in 2010 at more than 500. It is noteworthy to mention that African independent churches had never developed in Rwanda, and the neo-pentecostalism was merely absent before 1994. The growth of the numerous new churches must therefore be linked to political changes observed since 1994.

The majority of the new communities were founded by former Rwandan refugees who fled the country in the years 1959-1973 and returned after 1994. The majority of them did not want to join the existing churches because of their assumed implication with the genocide, and of linguistic and cultural differences. Most of the old refugees belonging to the Tutsi ethnic group, the result is that for the first time in history churches in Rwanda seem to be organized along ethnic lines. This situation can explain why many of them support closely the new political regime.

But in Rwanda, the phenomenon is not to be explained exclusively from the political situation. These communities seem to be part of the new wave of religious consciousness in Africa, the neo-pentecostal revival, characterized by baptism by immersion, ecstatic expressions in worship services, the conscience to life in an apocalyptic time and the expectation of the imminent return of Jesus Christ. Often an excited

style of preaching is combined with the use of new electronic equipment.

These churches are only located in cities and targeting the businessmen or businesswomen and the politicians; what people call: “*fishng big fish*”. They preach the gospel of prosperity. But this prosperity is first of all for the leaders or the founder who is called “*Apostle*” in many new churches.

The neo-pentecostal churches have now to organizations: Forum of Born Again Churches and Organizations of Rwanda and Salt and Light (Sel et Lumière).

In many ways, the new communities are influencing historical churches: Some churches (Presbyterians and Anglicans) have adopted two ways/forms of baptism: aspersion and immersion. They are using juice instead of wine for Holy Communion. There are no alcoholic drinks in several public ceremonies. The Christians of historic churches learn from Pentecostal Christians to have a feeling of ownership of their communities (fundraising for building chapels). The liturgies are also changing (spontaneities, many Halleluiahs).

Conclusion

In Rwanda, a misguided ethnic policy employed distorted historiography and myths and legends deeply engraved into the collective memory to construct an ideology that inevitably led to genocide.

The Church, in its capacity as the vanguard of society, was not watchful enough in its role as sentinel (Ez. 3, 18ff.) and failed to defuse the bomb that would explode later. Today, the painful memories play a predominant role in the country’s socio-political life. Hence, the call for vigilance is addressed to making sure the errors of the past are never repeated. The Church is still the institution with the best position for helping the mainly Christian Rwandans to integrate the painful collective memories into their daily lives and experiences and come to terms with the consequences. In cooperation with other social players, all Churches (traditional, Pentecostal or neo-pentecostal...) need to take on an active role in the process of healing this collective memory and the wounds of the past by promoting a theology adapted at the context, participatory justice, the Koinonia and effective Christian service. The sustainable development of a nation can only be assured if its citizens accept that they share a past and shoulder the vagaries of the present in the light of this past together in order to create a better future.

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- 1 This description is reminiscent of Alzheimer's disease, which, following the loss of memory, also entails a loss of self-consciousness and of any ability to communicate. The patient lives in a persistent vegetative state waiting for death to come.
 - 2 This expression literally translates as "those who escaped the spear".
 - 3 Following the abolition of monarchy, Rwanda obtained its independence and a republican form of government was introduced on 1 July, 1962.
 - 4 Kanjongera was the queen mother of King Yuhi V Musinga, who was deposed in 1931 by the Belgian colonial administration and exiled to the Belgian Congo (what is the Democratic Republic of Congo today). He was succeeded by his son Mutara III Rudahigwa, who was found to be more compliant than his father. Kanjongera has contributed significantly to the coup d'état of Rucunshu (in the 1890s) during which Rutalindwa, legitimate heir to the throne, was killed. Musinga, his half brother, who was still too young, succeeded him. Until Musinga was old enough to lead the government, his mother Kanjongera and his maternal uncle Kabare, who was alleged to have plotted the coup d'état mentioned above, assumed his duties.
 - 5 The case of some artists could be stated as an example. One of them, Bikindi, wrote one of the most provocative songs with the title *Nanga abahutu. batibuka*, which literally means: I hate Hutu who do not remember.
 - 6 T. Todorov distinguishes between two kinds of memories - literal memory, by means of which an event is remembered by the facts and remains aggravated as an unchangeable fact; and exemplary memory, by means of which the past becomes a driver for a better future.
 - 7 In Kinyarwanda, the term Itorero also means Church in Protestant jargon.

Let's Face The World!

Comparison between Members of a New Pentecostal/Charismatic Church and Other Christians in Gauteng

In 2007 the Arnold Bergstraesser Institute in Freiburg commissioned a representative attitude survey² of South African opinions on politics, society and religious issues. The South African survey is part of a much larger project on Charismatic Churches with special emphasis on Pentecostal/Charismatic churches, especially the mega churches which have mushroomed throughout the world in countries including South Africa since the end of apartheid. To better understand the phenomenal growth of these denominations in South Africa, we included a special survey of a typical charismatic-type mega church in our study.³

In this paper we will compare results from a sub-sample of the representative South African survey, namely black respondents in Gauteng, with the survey conducted in a Charismatic/Pentecostal church in Soweto, Grace Bible Church. For both samples we have about 400 interviewees, a sufficient number that allows us to draw statistically relevant conclusions. All interviewed members of the mega church are black. In order to exclude a statistically relevant factor such as race, we took as our comparison group the black respondents in the same region of Gauteng province. Gauteng represents South Africa's industrial and commercial hub. It is the richest of the nine South African provinces attracting the greatest number of immigrants who aspire to share in its opportunities, according to the latest Statistics South Africa Community Survey.

This paper will not discuss the theological differences of Pentecostal or Charismatic churches but take a closer look at members of a particular church - one that calls itself charismatic and exhibits all the specific characteristics of the new Pentecostal churches (such as emphasis on the Holy Spirit, speaking in tongues, faith healing) - and compare them with other people in the same region.

Reading the data one has to bear in mind that as is the case with most Pentecostal churches, women are slightly over-represented in the Grace Bible Church. Its members also tend to have slightly higher levels of education and income than the comparative Gauteng sample. Select characteristics of the two surveyed groups are given in the appendix.

Grace Bible Church

Grace Bible Church in Soweto was founded in 1983, that is some 25 years ago. It is a relatively young church which currently has about 11 000 members.⁴

Its rapid development from a small group of worshipers to its present numbers may be typical of many Charismatic/Pentecostal-type churches in urban centres. However, it initially had to overcome many obstacles to growth, in particular during the turbulent years of the apartheid era. A pastor of Grace Bible Church⁵ interviewed in 2006, recalled that the church started with about 35 members in September 1983. Members met in a school hall after they were evicted from the community hall where they had first met.

Later they rented a church that could seat about 300. The church was free on Sundays because its regular congregation met on Saturdays. When the church building became too small for them, the congregation moved to a school which was burnt down in 1985 (at the height of apartheid). "Only the roof was still there but no walls." The following year, in 1986, the congregation moved to a former exhibition hall that was also without walls - it had space for 900. When the church again ran out of space, its congregation moved to a structure that could accommodate 3000. In October 2001 the church moved into its own building in Soweto.

Our survey sought to identify what attracts people to a Charismatic/Pentecostal church such as Grace Bible Church in the post-apartheid era that allows for "more opportunity to express faith without oppression and without somebody telling the churches what they have to preach".⁶

According to our survey, approximately a quarter of church members are under 25 years, and the average age is some 35 years. Unlike the church elder who recalled how Grace Bible Church grew in spite of many setbacks, a quarter of its contemporary congregation was not yet born at that time. This means that half will have been thirteen years or younger in 1985 when Grace Bible Church found itself in a building burnt down at the height of apartheid.

Itineraries: Paths leading to Grace Bible Church

How did respondents in our survey come to be members of the Grace Bible Church? According to our survey results only 4% were born into their church. In all, 96% belonged to other churches before gravitating to Grace Bible Church. Looking at respondents who actually changed their denomination, the percentage is slightly higher.

New Pentecostal	6
Grace Bible Church	3
Other charismatic	2
None	8
Other	3

Percentages in this and the following tables are rounded.

What was their religious home before joining Grace Bible Church?

Almost a fifth of the respondents grew up in a Methodist church, approximately a sixth in either an Old Pentecostal or the Catholic Church, and a good tenth in the Anglican or an African Independent Church. When we look at the previous church membership of the respondents before they joined Grace Bible Church, the picture is similar: The transition from the Old Pentecostal and the African Independent Churches and from the three mainline churches (Methodist, Catholic and Anglican) to a new Pentecostal/Charismatic church seems to be an easy one. One can assume that the spirituality of these churches is more compatible with the new Pentecostal churches than with others. In contrast, the transition from other Protestant churches, such as the Dutch Reformed or the Lutheran Churches, is less frequent.

Also astonishing is the fact that only 6% of our respondents came from a new Pentecostal-type church - which refutes the common notion that members of the new Pentecostal churches are prone to "church shopping".⁷

Worth noting is that a sizeable proportion of respondents (10%) grew up in or were former members of an African Independent Church (12%) before joining the Grace Bible Church congregation in Soweto. The African Independent Churches are known to have played an important role in assisting rural migrants to assimilate to urban life and to cope with its economic hardships during the 1990s.⁸ It is possible that the newer Pentecostal-type churches may similarly be well placed in the democratic era to cater for the new needs and aspirations of an emergent black middle class. This is a point we shall return to later.

Grace Bible Church:

In which denomination did you grow up? %

Mainline Christian churches:

Methodist	18
Catholic	14
Anglican	12
Lutheran	5
Dutch Reformed Churches	3
Presbyterian	2

Pentecostal-type churches:

Old Pentecostal	16
African Independent/Initiated Churches	10

Grace Bible Church:

What was your previous denomination? %

Mainline Christian churches:

Methodist	18
Catholic	14
Anglican	12
Lutheran	5
Dutch Reformed Churches	4
Presbyterian	2

Pentecostal-type churches:

Old Pentecostal	19
African Independent/Initiated Churches	12
New Pentecostal	6
Grace Bible Church	3
Other charismatic	2
None	1
Other	4

Reasons for Change of Denomination

Our study asked persons who were not born into the Grace Bible Church about the reasons for changing denominations. It is obvious that the majority changed their church for spiritual reasons ('the way my church explains the faith'). The style of worship and faith healing are attractive. Many join because their family or friends are members and they like the pastor of the church. Interestingly, convenience is not an important factor. It appears that mega churches do not operate as neighbourhood churches but provide a spiritual home for worshipers who are prepared to commute to church.

Grace Bible Church

What attracted you to your church? %

The way it explains the faith	53
The way the services are conducted	44
Faith healing	30
Relatives/friends are members	23
Quality of the pastor	22
Opportunity to participate actively	15
It is in my neighbourhood	4
It offers education facilities	2

Respondents gave up to two answers. Percentages are based on 382 respondents not born into the church.

Since moving to Grace Bible Church respondents have seen many improvements in their lives, even though they did not change their church membership for worldly reasons. The same applies to the Gauteng respondents who also state that many aspects of their lives improved after changing church membership. However, if we compare members of the Grace Bible Church and reborn Christians in Gauteng who changed their church membership, we find that a higher proportion of Grace Bible Church members have benefited from improvements to their health, social relations, self-assurance, and finances.

Grace Bible Church respondents %	Reborn Gauteng ⁹ respondents %
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Since you have been reborn, which of the following have you experienced?

My health has improved.	99	82
I am more relaxed and friendly with colleagues.	99	82
My family life has improved.	97	91
I feel more secure and more self-assured.	95	77
I get more cooperation from others.	94	79
My financial situation, my career/business have improved.	76	56
I stopped drinking.	64	59

More Religious than Others

There is further evidence of the importance of the spiritual needs which led to a change of church membership when we examine responses to questions concerning religious behaviour and beliefs.

Looking at religious practices, we find that members of the Grace Bible Church pray far more often than the average black person in Gauteng. Over seven in ten Grace Bible Church members attend religious services at least once a week and almost all try to live according to the teachings of their religion.

As members of a Pentecostal/Charismatic church almost all Grace Bible Church members have had charismatic experiences such as witnessing other people speaking in tongues and being healed by the Holy Spirit. Two thirds have spoken in tongues themselves and 85% were healed by the Holy Spirit.

Grace Bible Church respondents %	Reborn Gauteng respondents %
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Members of Charismatic churches

I have witnessed people of my church speaking in tongues.	97	53
I have personally spoken in tongues.	65	47
I have seen people with serious diseases healed by the Holy Spirit.	87	82
I have myself been healed by the Holy Spirit.	85	77

Members of the Grace Bible Church believe in life after death. They cannot imagine living a happy life without God.

Grace Bible Church respondents %	Reborn Gauteng respondents %
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I believe in life after death where good people will be rewarded and bad people will be punished - agree.	95	69
I can be happy and enjoy life without Believing in God - agree.	3	30

Grace Bible Church members seem to be steadfast in their faith. Some six in ten believe their religion is the only true¹⁰ one. At the same time, they exhibit a higher degree of religious tolerance than the average Gauteng black person when they state that there are many different ways to lead a proper religious life and people of all religious persuasions can lead an honest life.

Grace Bible Church respondents %	Reborn Gauteng respondents %
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I am convinced that my own religion is the only true one - agree.	62	45
There are many acceptable, different ways of conducting a religious life - agree.	89	72
No matter what people's religious beliefs are, the most important thing is that everybody leads an honest life and is a good human being - agree.	82	67

Have more fundamental beliefs than others

Studies in other countries¹¹ have shown that members of new Pentecostal/Charismatic churches tend to be more fundamentalist. Almost all Grace Bible Church members are con-

vinced the Bible should be taken literally. Similarly, most believe there can be no grey areas between right and wrong.¹²

	Grace Bible Church respondents %	Reborn Gauteng respondents %
The Bible is the actual word of God and it is to be taken literally - agree.	94	74
Right is right and wrong is wrong and there are no grey areas - agree.	98	71

At first glance, a further survey response seems to confirm religious fundamentalism among members of the Grace Bible Church. Almost nine in ten Grace Bible Church members think faith and religious values must determine all aspects of society and the state.

	Grace Bible Church respondents %	Reborn Gauteng respondents %
Faith and religious values must determine all aspects of society and the state - agree.	89	63
We cannot respect the authority of a government that permits abortion, homo-sexuality, same-sex marriage, and has abolished the death penalty - agree.	65	54

Consider, however, that this response may not be a true expression of fundamentalism but shows a real concern about the lack of moral values in contemporary South African society.

Two-thirds of Grace Bible Church respondents express no respect for a government that condones abortion, homosexuality, same-sex marriage and has abolished the death penalty - the strong measure that might keep crime in check. A good half of the Gauteng respondents are of the same opinion.¹³ In a society that is plagued by crime and corruption and many other social ills, it is important to draw a definite line between good and bad behaviour. Transgressions show a lack of respect for fellow human beings.

Since coming into power in 1994, the ruling African National Congress has promoted legislation to uphold free choice and equality for all South Africans in line with the country's progressive Constitution. However, in the opinion of many ordinary South Africans, such laws promote licentiousness and loose morals. Combating crime was spontaneously identified as the most serious problem facing South Africa by the largest number of Grace Church Bible members (33%).¹⁴

On the other hand, Grace Bible Church members are not at all conservative about other values such as women's libera-

tion. Only 6% are of the opinion that 'women should stay at home' in contrast to 30% of the Gauteng respondents. Here our Pentecostals/Charismatics are decidedly modern!¹⁵

	Grace Bible Church respondents %	Reborn Gauteng respondents %
Women should stay at home and look after their children and family - agree	6	30

More socially engaged than others

Members of the Grace Bible Church are not only more religious than their compatriots; they are also more compassionate towards the poor and needy. They are keenly aware of the social problems facing South Africa. They believe their church must lead not only in spiritual but also in worldly matters.

In the view of a pastor, the church should engage government and declare that oppression is unjust and must be condemned. The church should show the right path and not just point a finger. It should seek to rid society of oppressive trends, be a model of justice, and side with the victims of oppression. The church cannot be neutral but should be seen to stand for justice. But church leaders should not participate in party politics. That would corrupt them. Those who have a calling for politics should follow their inclination ("go for it") but leave the church.¹⁶

	Grace Bible Church respondents %	Reborn Gauteng respondents %
The task of the church is spiritual and not worldly. It should never interfere in politics - disagree.	71	33

A church should not only be concerned with its own members but also with social, economic and political policies to deal with such problems in the country - agree.

As a matter of principle, Grace Bible Church respondents expect their government above all to be honest. Interestingly, they consider integrity and economic development to be far greater priorities for their government than equity issues.

	Grace Bible Church respondents %	Reborn Gauteng respondents %
In the present situation what is the most important thing the government should achieve?		
Complete honesty in government	51	27
Effective economic development	21	20
Enforcement of the law	18	21

Efficiency of administration	8	19
The right proportion of races in all positions	2	13

Grace Bible Church members consider the gap between rich and poor to be far wider than any other difference in South African society including the racial, religious and ethnic ones. At the same time they also appear to be prepared to make their individual contribution to alleviating poverty and underdevelopment in their own community.

	Grace Bible Church respondents %	Reborn Gauteng respondents %
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Which difference do you consider to be the widest in South Africa?

Rich and poor	65	32
Blacks and whites	13	30
Christians and others	19	18
Language groups	4	19

Almost all, some 97% of respondents of Grace Bible Church members give to their church - regularly or sometimes - compared to only 78% of other Gauteng respondents. Some of these church funds will go to charity and to the church's education and skills training programmes.

	Grace Bible Church respondents %	Reborn Gauteng respondents %
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Do you give donations to your church?

Never	3	22
Sometimes	63	53
Regularly	34	25

Not only do Pentecostal/Charismatic church members give, they are also convinced that charity is not enough. They believe the church should also assist the poor to help themselves. Or as the senior pastor of the Grace Bible Church put it: If people help us because we are poor, they should meet us when we are already halfway there.¹⁷

	Grace Bible Church respondents %	Reborn Gauteng respondents %
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The church should help the poor not only by charity but by helping the poor to help themselves - agree.	99	82
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Social Capital and Outlook on Life

We have demonstrated that members of a Charismatic/Pentecostal church expect their church to take the lead in addressing some of the social problems in society. In turn, do members of a Charismatic/Pentecostal church have the drive and ambition to play an active role in this endeavor?

	Grace Bible Church respondents %	Reborn Gauteng respondents %
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South Africa currently faces a number of serious problems. In addition to crime,¹⁸ members of the Grace Bible Church identified unemployment and poverty as the most serious problems facing their country.

A major obstacle to the creation of the jobs that would alleviate poverty in South Africa is the shortage of suitably qualified persons to drive the economy. The skills shortage is the legacy of the past; under apartheid blacks received an inferior education. Similarly, black entrepreneurship was stifled. The new South Africa is placing its hope in the youth to overcome these problems.

The question we ask here is whether members of the new Pentecostal/Charismatic churches perceive the new opportunities in their environment and are keen to grasp them. In short: Can we detect any differences in the outlook on life between the members of the Grace Bible Church and their regional compatriots?

The differences are quite striking: Respondents from the Grace Bible Church feel less powerless, are less afraid of the future, and are far more willing to accept change than the other Gauteng respondents. The teachings of the senior pastor of Grace Bible Church seem to have fallen on fertile ground. He explained the mission of his church in an interview in February 2006 along the following lines:

"If people are filled with the spirit in a charismatic manner, we could have left it at that. But we also want them to gain more self-confidence to change their lives."¹⁹

	Grace Bible Church respondents %	Reborn Gauteng respondents %
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There is very little a person like me can do to improve the life of people in my country - agree.	33	55
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I feel uncertain and fearful about my future - agree.	16	46
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If you try to change things you usually make them worse - agree.	13	44
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On the other hand Grace Bible Church respondents tend to be somewhat cautious when it comes to taking risks and do not show a high level of trust in their social environment. They tend to feel closest to their co-religionists, their brothers and sisters in the church.

One should be sure that something really works before taking a chance on it - agree.	90	67
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One must be very cautious with people; you cannot trust the people who live and work around you - agree.	81	70	Grace Bible Church respondents %	Reborn Gauteng respondents %
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I feel very close to people of my own religion, whatever their education, wealth or political views - agree.	93	68	41	66
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What do members of Grace Bible Church see as the most important ingredients of success? What ambitions do they hold for their future social status?			21	45
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	Grace Bible Church respondents %	Reborn Gauteng respondents %	96	71
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In your opinion, which one of the following things is the most important for achieving success in life?

Education	44	22
Working hard for yourself	33	37
Working with others ... as a group	9	15
Experience	9	10
Religious belief	3	2
Other	2	14

There may be some fear of falling back down the social ladder given the high social status that members of the Grace Bible Church assign to themselves. They are likely to question whether the next generation will be capable of maintaining their high standard of living.²⁵

Grace Bible Church respondents %	Reborn Gauteng respondents %
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Education and hard work are important factors for success in both surveyed groups.²² However, twice as many Grace Bible Church members stress the importance of education. Interestingly, religious belief plays a minor role. Members of the Grace Bible Church believe South Africans should be appointed on the basis of merit. They do not endorse affirmative action.

I am afraid that our children might not enjoy as high a standard of living as we have - agree.	59	49
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Grace Bible Church respondents %	Reborn Gauteng respondents %
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How should jobs be filled? According to the rules of affirmative action or by people who are best qualified?

In private business: By people best qualified	71	48
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In the new South Africa, there is a need for investment and small business formation to drive an economy that will create more jobs and secure livelihoods. If they had a windfall by winning the lottery, Grace Bible Church members state they would be somewhat more inclined than others to start a business or invest rather than spend the money. Owing to their better-off social status, they may have less need of using lottery money for their immediate needs.²⁶

In government: By people best qualified	82	57
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Grace Bible Church respondents %	Reborn Gauteng respondents %
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There is evidence of energy, drive and ambition among Grace Bible Church members in response to a number of survey items. Consider that respondents in the Grace Bible Church are currently less satisfied with their income²³ than members of the comparative group. However, Grace Bible Church members are also more confident that they will eventually get the education and job to which they feel they are entitled.²⁴ They continue to be optimistic when they think of the future of their children. In short, our Pentecostals/Charismatics are quite confident that they and their children stand a good chance of achieving their goals in life.

Imagine that you are lucky and win a lot of money in the lottery. On which of the following would you spend it?

Starting a business	36	29
Investing in a bank with good profit	35	36
Other: Spend the money on family or home improvements	29	35

Status consciousness

Members of the Grace Bible Church declare themselves members of the privileged class. Their life circumstances have improved dramatically over the past ten years. Here we

find a stark contrast between the Grace Bible Church and the comparative Gauteng group.

	Grace Bible Church respondents %	Reborn Gauteng respondents %
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As regards your life conditions, are you better or worse off today than ten years ago?

Better	78	51
Same	18	26
Worse	4	23

In most social surveys, when asked about their social class, people tend to place themselves into the lower and lower middle classes. Not so the members of the Grace Bible Church. They clearly see themselves as middle class in contrast to the comparative group of Gauteng respondents and South Africans in general. This self-assessment may in itself inspire both confidence in the future and a sense of entitlement in the new South Africa.

	Grace Bible Church respondents %	Reborn Gauteng respondents %
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Upper	3	2
Upper middle	6	12
Middle	63	44
Lower middle	24	28
Lower	4	14

In short, members of the Grace Bible Church are self-confident people who feel their lives have improved over the last ten years. They also have the drive and ambitions that are conducive to improving their lot in life. Some of this energy seems to spill over into charitable works, community upliftment, and entrepreneurship.

Political Orientations

In a country such as South Africa that has seen such dramatic political change over the past 18 years, it would be interesting to know if followers of one of the nation's youngest churches have different political attitudes than others.

	Grace Bible Church respondents %	Reborn Gauteng respondents %
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Even if political leaders act in a way I do not understand or agree with I would still support them in an election - agree. 16

38

Only 16% of respondents of Grace Bible Church show unconditional support for political leaders²⁷ compared to 38% in our comparison group. More than three-quarters are willing to wait for the next election to effect a change of government (compared to two-thirds of the other group).

On the other hand, Grace Bible church members show greater respect for legitimate authorities (88% versus 74%). This is not a contradiction. Respect for the authority of persons occupying an office in government is a different matter from support for aspiring politicians in an election.

Do Grace Bible Church members accept other fundamental pillars of democracy such as free and fair elections, freedom of speech, separation of powers, and a free press etc?

Interestingly enough, here we find no significant differences between the two groups concerning the following items: Six out of ten are in favour of a multi-party system, four in five opt for independent courts of law, and six out of ten for a free press. Some 13 years since the first open elections, it seems that most South Africans are well versed in what constitutes the most important pillars of democracy.

However, there are significant differences in the following instances: Members of Grace Bible Church are considerably more in favour of a president who is accountable to parliament (88% versus 62%). Here we again find less unconditional support for a leader. Grace Bible Church respondents are also more in favour of decentralization of authority (66% versus 44%).

When asked to assess a range of different political solutions, we find that 'majority rule' is considered by both groups to be the best solution for South Africa. However, respondents in the Grace Bible Church agree with 96%, the comparative Gauteng group with only 84%. A power-sharing solution of 'joint government' is considered the second-best option by both groups but here the other Gauteng respondents are slightly more in favour (72% versus 64%). Members of Grace Bible Church are least likely to accept 'partition' of the country (16%); which is acceptable to a quarter of the other group.

When asked their views about the single best political solution for South Africa we get the following result:

	Grace Bible Church respondents %	Reborn Gauteng respondents %
Majority Rule	57	43
Joint (power sharing) government	28	25
Single party without opposition	7	7
The numerically strongest group rules	4	8
One group rules	3	8
Partition	2	9

Although both surveyed groups show similar tendencies, Grace Bible Church members are more in favour of 'majority rule' and least in favour of 'partition'.

Given the strong views on morality in Pentecostal/Charismatic churches, one would expect Grace Bible Church members to condemn violence and disrespect for the rule of law

in a democracy. Such sentiments were put to the test in our survey in the following items:

	Grace Bible Church respondents %	Reborn Gauteng respondents %
Violence and killing can never be justified, no matter how important the struggle - agree.	74	67
It is acceptable to break the law if it is in the interest of my family - agree.	6	43
In the present conflicts of our country all sides concerned should seek compromises and try to find agreement - agree.	98	84

While almost three-quarters of Grace Bible Church respondents think that violence is never justified, two-thirds of the other respondents are of the same opinion. Only 6% of Grace Bible Church members find it acceptable to break the law in the interest of their own family while 43% in the other group do. In the Grace Bible Church we seem to have a peace-loving and law-abiding community which is also determined to keep the peace: 98% of its members favour the search for compromise in conflicts in South Africa compared to 84% among the Gauteng respondents.

Outlook on the Future

The new South African government has sought to provide a 'better life for all' by raising the material living standards. As we have seen, while catering for the spiritual needs of the emergent black middle class and those who aspire to join this group, Grace Bible Church has also awakened social responsibility and the courage to address the economic and moral challenges facing society.

Earlier studies found that the majority of black South Africans were dissatisfied with their lives although they were optimistic that things must get better in future.

In contrast, the minority of economically better-off South Africans expressed satisfaction but projected pessimism and anxiety about what the future might hold. This unique constellation of being 'satisfied at present' combined with 'optimism for the future' was characteristic of the emergent black middle class. Like the Grace Bible Church respondents in our survey, this black middle class in the earlier survey reported that their lives had improved in the past ten years. It is likely that this sense of success fuels their confidence in the future.²⁸

Members of Grace Bible Church exhibit precisely this unique combination of current and future life satisfaction along with a sense of accomplishment that is characteristic of South Africa's new black middle class.

	Grace Bible Church respondents %	Reborn Gauteng respondents %
Better off today than ten years ago	78	51
Taking all things together, how satisfied are you with your life as a whole these days?		
Very satisfied or satisfied - now	65	44
Dissatisfied or very dissatisfied - now	11	36
How do you think you will feel in ten years' time?		
Very satisfied or satisfied - in future	92	55
Dissatisfied or very dissatisfied - in future	2	26

This positivism on the part of the Pentecostal/Charismatic church along with its energy and exuberance may well constitute an important driving force that propels South Africa's young democracy to achieve its goal of becoming a model society.

Conclusion

The new South Africa likes to present itself as a multi-racial, non-racist country. Looking at the following items, members of the Grace Bible Church appear to have internalized these principles and made them their own.

Survey results show that they accept the ethnic plurality of their country to a much greater degree than their compatriots. They believe cultural diversity is an asset rather than a liability. Friendships can bridge cultural divides. They strongly support language rights and mutual respect for their compatriots.

	Grace Bible Church respondents %	Reborn Gauteng respondents %
A good friend is a good friend whether he is called Jannie, Siphon, Michael or Mohammed - agree.	98	79
Ethnic diversity makes a country culturally richer and more interesting - agree.	93	68
(Support) a government which gives everybody the full right to use his/her own language in public, in offices, courts and parliament.	96	26
Even very different ethnic groups living in one country can accept each other as they are and respect each other's mutual rights - agree.	78	72

Grace Bible Church respondents are better equipped to cope in a competitive society as they are, as we have seen, far more self-confident than other Gauteng respondents, and positive and optimistic. They do not approve of reliance on affirmative action to achieve one's goals. For them the colour of one's skin is not an issue; a good friend is a good friend regardless. Importantly, they stick to their moral principles.

Finally, our Grace Bible Church members are the strongest supporters of the concept of the 'rainbow-nation', which helped their country, especially during the first years of the new South Africa, to overcome the shadows of the past.

This is the survey question we asked for the first time in May 1994, one month after the first free elections: ⁸

Over the last years a lot has been said by religious and political leaders about the rainbow, symbol of peace, and about a new covenant with God as a sign for the future of South Africa. People differ in what they think about this. Which of the following opinions is closest to yours?

	Grace Bible Church respondents %	Reborn Gauteng respondents %
For me, it has no meaning at all.	5	18
For me, the covenant is a religious matter only and should not be used in politics.	12	21
I believe that God has offered to all South Africans, black and white, a new covenant for a peaceful life in a common nation.	83	60

Over eight in ten members of Grace Bible Church believe in the rainbow symbol. And they are far more worldly and interested in politics than one might expect: Not even three out of ten²⁹ are convinced that you should keep out of politics to find peace and have a clean conscience. It seems that our Pentecostals/Charismatics are ready to play their part in taking responsibility for a new South Africa.

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Appendix

	Grace Bible Church respondents %	Reborn Gauteng respondents %
Age group		
Up to 24 years	23	30
25 - 34 years	23	25
35 - 49 years	29	30
50+	25	15
Gender of respondent		
Male	27	40
Female	73	60
Highest level of education		
Up to Grade 11	33	55
Grade 12	43	31
Grade 12+	24	14
Occupational level		
Higher professionals, executive	3	4
Middle, semi, lower professionals	11	8
Clerical, sales	20	12
Skilled manual	3	3
Semi-, unskilled	12	17
Economically inactive	51	56

Read newspaper

Yes 87 83

Watch TV-programmes

Current affairs and information 30 21
Religion 8 1

Have access to personal computer

Yes 41 19

Have a personal cellphone

Yes 77 68

10 The belief that their religion is the only true one is above average among women and respondents with the highest and lowest levels of education.

11 See Hofer 2006.

12 Here housewives (75% agreement) are less rigid.

13 Pentecostal/Charismatic churches are known to have strong reservations about abortion, homosexuality and same-sex marriages, see Centre for Development and Enterprise 2008.

14 Members of the Grace Bible Church appear to be attuned to current thinking among the general public. The 2003 South African Social Attitudes survey conducted by the Human Sciences Research Council found that 75% of South Africans were in favour of the death penalty for people convicted of murder, 70% disapproved of abortion even in difficult economic circumstances, and 78% disapproved of homosexual sexual relations. See Rule 2006: 260.

15 The male-female ratio among Grace Bible Church respondents who are of this opinion is equal. But the over fifties, retired persons, housewives and respondents who work in transport, in the mines and as labourers are less in favour of women at work. The weekly German magazine 'Der Spiegel' provides an interesting comparison: People were asked if a woman who has children should stop working. 34% of male respondents and 62% of female respondents agreed. See Der Spiegel Nr. 17/21.04.08, p. 71.

16 Interview with a pastor, February 2006.

17 Interview with senior pastor, February 2006.

18 At the time of the survey in March 2007, crime was a major topic in the media. Many South Africans perceive a link between the country's high crime rates and its unemployment problem. In March 2007 the official unemployment rate was 25.5% according to the strict definition and 38.3% if discouraged work seekers were included.

19 Interview with senior pastor, February 2006.

20 Among those who feel powerless are the less educated, the over fifties, and more women than men.

21 Those expressing above-average fear of the future include the less educated and unemployed respondents.

22 Among the Grace Bible Church members, the older respondents (35-49 years and over fifties) tend to believe more in hard work, while younger respondents up to 34 years set more store by a good education.

23 The unemployed and persons working in the service sector are least satisfied with their income.

24 The oldest and least educated respondents are least confident.

25 Here fear increases with age and declines almost linearly with level of education. This means better educated respondents (and also the ones with a good job) are less anxious about their children's future.

26 It is mainly the under 35 years, the better educated, students, and persons with a good job who would invest their lottery money. The over fifties and the less educated would improve their housing.

27 Only 7% of men but 18% of women.

28 Moller 2004.

29 Here it is the women who state a preference to stay out of politics (33% of women versus 19% of men, 29% total).

1 Taken from: Helga Dickow & Andreas Heuser (eds.), Religion on the Move. Exploring Passages in South African Christianity, published in Lebanon by the International Centre for Human Sciences, B.P. 225 Byblos (Jbeil), Liban. Byblos 2008.

2 The survey was conducted by MarkData. The authors are indebted to Prof. Theodor Hanf and Prof. Lawrence Schlemmer who developed the questionnaire. Lawrence Schlemmer also translated the items and allowed us to replicate items from his earlier research. Special thanks go to Petra Bauerle at the Arnold Bergstraesser Institute for data processing and statistical advice.

3 We are especially grateful to the leadership of Grace Bible Church for their support and encouragement to conduct the survey in their congregation and to the members of the congregation for their readiness to answer our questions.

4 Information on Grace Bible Church is from interviews conducted with pastors in 2006 and from the church's homepage (<http://www.gbcsoeweto.org.za/AboutUs/GBC/History/tabid/64/Default.aspx>).

5 The pastor, interviewed in February 2006, had joined Grace Bible Church as a student. He had witnessed its growth since inception.

6 Interview with the same pastor, February 2006.

7 Asked about their previous denominations the other respondents in Gauteng gave the following responses: African Independent/Initiated Churches (8%), Methodist (5%), Catholic (4%) and Old Pentecostal (4%).

8 A point emphasized by Lawrence Schlemmer, the author of the Centre for Development and Enterprise Report, Dormant Capital, 2008.

9 Here we compare Grace Bible Church members with those persons in the Gauteng comparative sample, some 39%, who consider themselves to be reborn.

Transformation of Mission Instituted Churches in Tanzania: “Charismatic Renewal, Denomination Tradition, and Transformation of the Society.” A Lutheran Voice.

Introduction

African continent, which was baptized as “a mission field” by the Edinburgh conference of 1910 and continent without the knowledge of the Savior, is today an evangelizing continent to the once called Christian countries in the Northern hemisphere. I personally worked as a missionary in Sweden in the early 1990’s. The existence of African Initiated Churches, movements, ministries concur with the above idea. Despite this fact, the emerging and fastest growing of charismatic renewal and neo-Pentecostal groups in Africa, pose the challenge of where mission instituted churches in her development need to reflect and what to do in order to let her transformation be effective witnessing community of abundance life proclaimed by Jesus Christ.

This paper is a critical analysis of some historical facts found in Mission Instituted Churches and contribution of a Tanzanian Lutheran voice on what should be one of the key point to be worked upon as mission Instituted churches undergo the process of transformation. My argument in this paper is: until Mission Instituted Churches in Tanzania attend well Pneumatological teachings which are Biblical Grounded, her transformation will remain scriptural and never be experiential. This paper will confine the whole work to Tanzania because Tanzania is my native country. Before coming to the contribution it is better to undergo some lexicology. Translation of the words in this paper will not go to the roots or historical back-ground of the word rather will go to the use of the word in a theological/Christian perspective.

Key Words: Transformation, Mission Instituted Churches, Charismatic Renewal, and

Pneumatology

Definitions:

The word **transformation** relate to some extent to the word development. In a Christian perspective it means that a person move from a nominal Christian and become a responsive witnessing Christian. Thus, when a Christian is transformed, he never remains stagnant but changes to a better believer. However, it is important to put it clear that Christian transformation is different from other forms of development because according to Bruce Bradshaw, Christian

transformation “points toward the supremacy of Christ, and affirms that the development activities that improve human welfare bear witness to the character and activity of God through Christ.”¹ Therefore, a transformed Church bears the witness to her inclusiveness and respect of all God’s creation.

Mission Instituted Churches are churches started by missionaries especially in Africa and Asia where missionaries evangelized. Since these churches are many to mention, it should be enough to say that Mission Instituted Churches are Churches which came to Africa before the epoch of neo-Pentecostal churches.

Charismatic renewal literally means having to do with the *charismata*, or “gifts” of the Holy Spirit as delineated in several Pauline texts. In a general sense anyone who is the part of the body of Christ, the church, and who exercises any gift of the Spirit may be said to be charismatic. However, in the mid-twentieth century a movement arose that emphasized the practice of the “sign” gifts (such as speaking in tongues, healing and miracles) and an emphasis on the “baptism of the Spirit) as an experience subsequent to conversion. Hence, Charismatic Renewal emphasizes the looking a new on the ways of using spiritual Gifts for the glory of God.

Pneumatology is the teachings about the Holy Spirit. The word ‘Spirit’ in Greek, which is the language of the New Testament, is *pneuma*. The Greek word *pneuma* and its Hebrew counterpart *ruah* have slight difference in meaning. As the biblical scholar, John Breck, notes: “Whereas *Pneuma* denotes a natural physical or psychological force of divine origin, *ruah* signifies *the presence of divinity itself*. The Spirit of the Old Testament and of most Hellenistic Jewish writings is the personal manifestation of God within human life and history. *Pneuma*, on the other hand, is never personified in Greek usage, nor does it ever acquire personal attributes or qualities.”² This difference might be one of the reasons why the personification of the Holy Spirit has been debatable in theology. And the fact that the Holy Spirit was presented as a dove in the Bible has added even more confusion. However, despite this long definition, it should be put clear that when this paper talking about the Spirit denotes third person of the Trinity who revealed herself to all creation.

The Tanzanian Contribution as mentioned above can be reached where this presentation will look critically on the

Pneumatological contributions from missionaries. Christianity in Tanzania was presented by missionaries from outside and inside, Mission instituted churches in Tanzania therefore, attributes the missionary's contribution and Tanzanians who worked hand in hand with missionaries at different capacities in the process of evangelization. In 2010, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania, had twenty Dioceses with 5,302,727 members.³ This figure according to the LWF records, makes Lutheran Church in Tanzania to be the leading Lutheran church in the continent.

The missionaries who worked in Tanzania were influenced by enlightenment ideologies which negated the reality of the spiritual world. They did not put seriously teachings about the Holy Spirit because for them one needed to reason and decide how to continue in life. Other power to lead someone beyond reason was unrealistic for them. The missionaries' omission of the deep teachings of the Holy Spirit and doctrine of charisms has certainly influenced the Lutheran church in Tanzania today, making it difficult for both theologians and lay Christians to explain who the Holy Spirit is and how the Holy Spirit brings us to faith and gives life to all of God's creation.

Hans W. Florin is giving the point why missionaries neglected the teachings of the Holy Spirit when he reports that the missionaries' strategy of the nineteenth century was twofold. One molded and shaped the Anglo-Saxon concept of Henry Venn and Roland Allan that "aims at winning an individual to the Kingdom of God. While, the Germans set out to gather in entire tribes and nations"⁴ The fact that these missionaries prioritized secular education and neglected doctrinal teachings like that of the Holy Spirit left the Lutheran Church in Tanzania with unending doctrinal questions. S.Von Sicard, who was himself a missionary to Tanzania points out a missionary curriculum which also lack the teachings about the Holy Spirit. The missionaries curriculum had four main teachings-one about God as love from creation stories, a second about the knowledge of sin from the study of the fall, a third about the knowledge of God's anger over sin studied from the flood and the fourth about the knowledge of God's redemption of man through his Son.⁵ Even the work of missionaries shows clear that the doctrine of the Holy Spirit was missing. Carl-Erik Sahlberg, a Swedish missionary to Tanzania, in his research though not mentioning directly what was missing from Berlin III⁶, notes, "Its theological stand was basically Lutheran but ecumenically open and not attaching any major importance to a confession creed."⁷ Therefore, for one to know how he can be redeemed without knowing how one can be sanctified, demonstrates the missionaries' miscommunication of the message of the Gospel. Since early missionaries did not bother much with the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, Tanzanian Lutheran Church theologians followed the same path and failed to emphasize the doctrine of the Holy Spirit who sanctifies us and makes us experience God in our lives.

The points laid above shows how the first attempt to plant Christianity was already missing the foundations of pneu-

matological teachings. Not only that but even the later teachings by Martin Luther were not well introduced by missionaries in Tanzania. Such tradition by missionaries was seen even by Josiah Kibira, one of the bishops of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania and once a President of the Lutheran World Federation, in his work wonders why missionaries did not teach the Luther's Catechism and make his teachings known until the Lutheran Church in Tanzania was caught up in contradiction between the Lutheran teachings and other adopted traditions. He says, "until recently the constitution of our church included a catalogue of sins, of what to do and not to do, and how to punish trespassers, be they alive or dead. The constitution was formulated by an 'expert' on these things from Europe some years before the church became independent."⁸ Here Kibira is dealing with the question of the role of the Holy Spirit in justification and sanctification. With such legalistic faith, there is no concept of grace but self-justification. From the constitution mentioned above by Kibira, one can imagine the struggle the people encountering as they attempted to fulfill the law. To do "what is forbidden" by their church. Sin here is understood as *doing* rather than *being*. As a result, Christians live in fear instead of living in the freedom given by Christ the Savior who declared that the sinner's sins are forgiven.

The negligence of the teachings of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit was inherited by Mission Instituted Churches. Some Lutherans try to seek teachings about the Holy Spirit through visiting both churches, that is, attending Lutheran services and functions and attend services and functions in Neo-Pentecostal churches or ministries. Some have completely joined churches which stress on pneumatology tradition regardless of the correctness of pneumatological doctrine. The discrepancy observed in this paper concurs with my argument that there is a need for Mission Instituted Churches to undergo teachings about the Holy Spirit and his gifts because missionaries did not pay attention on the subject matter. Having said these, it is better to look at what the Lutheran church in Tanzania is doing with the regard of the teachings about the Holy Spirit.

Tanzanian Lutheran Teaching on Pneumatology

The Lutheran teachings on the Holy Spirit and His role in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania are initially taught to confirmation classes. During this time, baptized Lutheran Christians learn Lutheran doctrines and other dogma so that they understand their identity and the faith for which they stand. What is challenging at this stage of pneumatological intensive learning in the Lutheran church in Tanzania is that, the teachings about who the Holy Spirit is, are at the Appendix of the Confirmation book. This means that, teachings about the Holy Spirit can be taught or neglected. This reveals that even at that important moment there is very little attention paid to the teachings of the Holy Spirit in the Lutheran church. Moreover, teachings on the Holy Spirit in the Confirmation Book are not well elaborated to allow one to know who the Holy Spirit really is and how his gifts should be used.

There are also teachings about the Holy Spirit during the day of Pentecost in the church calendar. This means that after confirmation, Lutheran Christians get pneumatological teachings once per year. Because of the lack of prior knowledge of the Holy Spirit, preachers of that particular day insist on the importance of the event rather than imparting knowledge about the role of the Holy Spirit in the life of a believer. That is why this paper calls for pneumatological teachings as Mission Instituted Churches undergo the process of transformation in both their traditional doctrines and develop their society in this world of globalization.

For reasons arising from the above inadequacies, I want to encourage allocation of more time and emphasis on the teachings of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit based on Martin Luther's teachings and also consult the Bible which is the ground of our faith on the subject.

In the Augsburg Confession, Article 1 in the Book of Concord of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, the teachings of the Holy Spirit can be summarized thus, "The Holy Spirit is the third person of the Godhead, of the same divine essence with the Father and the Son, who from eternity proceeds from the Father and the Son, and in time is sent forth by both, to sanctify the hearts of those who are to be saved."⁹ The Lutheran teachings in the Book of Concord continue: "Father, Son and Spirit are, therefore, God in such a sense, that the entire divinity is predicated of each of the three; the one and undivided essential is ascribed to the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit. The one and undivided divine essence is entire in each."¹⁰ The Holy Spirit is known by how He is revealed in the Bible.

As it was revealed on what is taught in the Lutheran church in Tanzania, this paper therefore suggests that such teachings should be insisted in the Bible study groups in order to take away ideas such as H/S is a dove, a thing and a power or energy furthermore these teachings will confirm that H/S is a third person of Trinity.

Coming to the Bible, Lutherans teach that is the only source of divinely revealed knowledge. "Wherever the Word of God is, there is the Holy Ghost, faith, and other gifts must necessarily be."¹¹ Luther used the capital "W", different from normal "w" to mean the Word, which is beyond the mere words but Jesus himself. In one of his descriptions Luther says, "remember that God has said: When the Word of Christ is preached, I am in your mouth, and I pass with the Word through your ears into your hearts."¹² Here, Luther confirms that in the Word of the Gospel, all members of the Trinity are incorporated and are working in unity. The Bible is then the source for understanding the oneness of God.

Though using the Bible is the basis for understanding the oneness of Trinity, the Bible does not talk about three persons in one God. Instead, it shows the development in understanding the relationship of the Trinity. Brian Gaybba reveals this by saying, "the scriptures talk about Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit in a way which necessitated the development

of the Trinitarian views about God."¹³ For example, in John 15:26-16:15, Jesus explains the relationship to the Father and to the Spirit. In Matthew 28:19, all three are portrayed and named equally alongside each other. Even the Apostle Paul, in 2 Thess. 2:13-17, associates all the three with the divine task of saving mankind. Again, in Ephesians 4:3-7, the three contribute to the unity of the church as they are themselves united. On the experiential side, I will therefore suggest for the introducing teachings which reveal the culture of the Bible in understanding the doctrine of the Holy Spirit.

Despite the negligence observed in this paper, I can also say, Tanzanian church unknowingly attempted to do teachings about the Holy Spirit through "East African Revival."¹⁴ Referring to the work of Bengt Sundkler and Wilson Niwagila, Abednego Keshomshahara notes that charismatic Lutherans do "put emphasis on the role of the Holy Spirit as the one who orders the life of a person who accepts Jesus Christ as his/her personal savior" and "who enables that person to produce the spiritual fruits."¹⁵

The EAR challenged the MIC to move from nominal Christian traditions and commit themselves to Christ by living exemplary lives. Commenting on the importance of the East African Revival to MIC, Josiah Mlahagwa says: Most mainline churches were still solidly encased in the traditional missionary doctrines, which did not subscribe to a belief or promotion of the manifestations of the most visible gifts of the Spirit, such as speaking in tongues, prophetic utterances, and healing.¹⁶

Therefore, East African Revival ministry was introduced to enrich the needs of the people and to awaken the sleeping MIC's. According to Mlahagwa, the EAR movement in Tanzania brought two basic dimensions: "It brought a tangible quantitative aspect of church growth. Quantitative is seen in church attendance and increase of the activities during the weekdays. Qualitatively is every week a seminar, a crusade meeting or denominational evangelical rally."¹⁷ Members of the EAR qualitatively learned to relate daily behavior to their faith. They had become more committed believers. Bible studies and Christian fellowship raised their level of understanding of the scriptures and testimonies edified many of them. More important is that this fellowship raised the level of ecumenism as members of the fellowship belonged to any Christian denomination. Lay leadership was also welcomed, thus giving full participation to all members of the group.

This observation is supported by Annet Munga, who describes revival movements within Lutheranism as a process in which members express their faith through the varied modes of sermons, teachings, testimonies, general prayers, exorcism, healing, and songs. Through these practices, members in these revival movements speak of God, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit, Satan, sin, evil, salvation, holiness, spiritual gifts, the church, eschatology, and similar topics. There is, Munga argues, evidence of an implicit theology emerging in these revival groups.¹⁸

Moreover, in this emerging theology and practice, much more attention is given to the importance of charismatic gifts than is usually found in traditional Lutheran theology and practice, a theme discussed in Samson Mushemba's study of the history of Lutheran revival movements in Tanzania.¹⁹ In a similar vein, Manase E. Mzengi argues that "many Christians have left the Lutheran church to join Pentecostal churches because they believe that the Neo-Pentecostals are teaching the true and full gospel."²⁰ In his study, he quotes a parishioner, Charles Wawa, who had moved from a Lutheran church to a Neo-Pentecostal church saying, "It is better to go into the 'spiritual churches' rather than to stay in the Lutheran church where the 'teachings are dry' . . . because many Lutherans including their pastors have not yet received the power of the Holy Spirit."²¹

Nonetheless, Fidon Mwombeki, a Tanzanian Lutheran theologian, has argued that "charismatic Lutherans have not adequately stressed the role of the Holy Spirit but instead they concentrate on the person and work of Jesus Christ."²² In his view, the Christological soteriology of Lutheran renewal movement has focused primarily on issues related to personal confession and reconciliation and has tended toward a kind of "self-justification" of its members. I would agree with Mwombeki's observation because EAR emerged from MIC which from the beginning lacks the pneumatological teachings, though stresses on reviving the church, third part of trinity is still far from their understanding.

On the question of salvation, according to Aneth Munga, the EAR teaches "salvation as a process where both God and a person in the process of being saved are active participants under the guidance of Christ."²³ Kwabena supports this fact by adding the role of the Holy Spirit saying, "but more fundamentally in the conscious personal decision that a person need to make to accept Jesus Christ as Lord . . . the coming to Christ is a process in which the life of the believer is invaded by the life giving Spirit, who transforms a believer within."²⁴ Kwabena's point avoids self-justification and accepts the fact that it is the Holy Spirit who transforms a believer.

The EAR in Tanzania tried to orient the pneumatological teachings especially on the role of the Holy Spirit but with little knowledge. For example, in their teachings the place of the Holy Spirit in Trinity was neglected and the gifts of the Holy Spirit were webbed into few gifts of speaking in tongues, exorcism, healing, reconciliation and prophecy. That is why, this paper argues for the mission instituted churches to work further step on teaching her members on the place and role of the Holy Spirit which is Biblical grounded. That is teachings which has broad understanding on the place and role of the Holy Spirit.

The coming of Neo-Pentecostal groups also came with the same claim of insisting the role of the Holy Spirit but since her teachings does not emphasizes further on who is the Holy Spirit and how does the Holy Spirit works in the life of a believer, this paper therefore suggests spiritual experiences

which surpass teachings by former groups. These Teachings are found in both Old and New Testaments.

Biblical Grounded Pneumatology as an issue at stake?

This paper aims at reminding the mission instituted churches to teach the Biblical grounded pneumatology in her process of transformation and to work on Luther's teachings about who the Holy Spirit is and how the Holy Spirit works in the life of a believer. I reached this decision not because the Bible is not taught in the Lutheran church in Tanzania about the Holy Spirit but because there is on the one hand no well organized teachings about who the Holy Spirit is in the Bible and on the other hand, no comprehensive teachings in the Lutheran church in Tanzania from Luther's work about who the Holy Spirit is and how he works in the life of believers. It is clear from his work that, Luther did not make a comprehensive teaching on the doctrine of pneumatology as he did for the doctrine of creation and soteriology. But even the little he wrote remained in the writings and never directed to experiential parts of the lives of believers. Such negligence, was also inherited by the Lutheran Church in Tanzania. That is to say, lack of clear knowledge about who is the Holy Spirit and what she does, make Lutheran Christians to feel the absence of power in their churches. For example, in my research in another work on the question of why Lutherans are switching to Neo-Pentecostals and ministries, 25 lay Christians answered that " in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania there is no...sufficient teachings about the Holy Spirit and her gifts."²⁵ They wrongly run to other Neo- Pentecostal groups to search for the Holy Spirit. The question then in this paper is, does it make sense that the Lutheran Church which celebrated 100yrs jubilee still has some members who do not understand if in their church there is Holy Spirit or not?.

The Lutheran Christians seek for the Holy Spirit experience because, phenomenologically, spiritual gifts are the most distinguishable characteristics of the spirit presence among believers and it fits very well in African world view as John S. Pobee unveils that; "Common to all these is an experiential supernaturalism which seeks for and believes in the promise of Christ to send his Spirit. This is natural to the world which is full of spirits, having religious ontology and epistemology."²⁶ I believe that in teaching about the Holy Spirit and her gifts which is Biblically grounded will encourage the Lutherans to yearn for the experience of the Holy Spirit in their lives and parishes. Although in the Bible there is no systematic arrangement about who the Holy Spirit is and how the Holy Spirit works in the lives of the believers, the Bible gives the historical background on the origin and development of Christian understandings of the Holy Spirit and his gifts. Through the Bible it is expected that there will be teachings about the Holy Spirit and his gifts that will help the believers to understand who is the Holy Spirit and what his gifts are and should be used in Tanzanian Lutheran Christianity.

The Holy Spirit in the Old Testament

The Holy Spirit has been active since creation and will continue His work on into the future. It is very important to make distinctions in understanding the Holy Spirit during times of the Old Testament, the New Testament and today. Understanding these distinctions between different times will serve to show the development of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit in contemporary Christianity and specifically in MIC in Tanzania.

The Old Testament people did not understand the Holy Spirit to be a part of the Trinity, rather, generally, the Holy Spirit was discerned as God's power having part in the creation of life (Genesis 1:2), in establishing order and beauty in the universe (Isaiah 40:12-13). The Holy Spirit's work was continually renewing and preserving the process of life (Psalms 104:29-30). Therefore, one can say, as Veli-Matti Karkkainen once said that,

It is the characteristic of Old Testament pneumatology that *ruah* is common to both humans and animals. It is not a specifically human endowment, and it denotes God as the source of life for both. Related to this concept as well in the Old Testament is the Spirit's cosmic function that goes far beyond the human sphere of life.²⁷

Similarly, on the role of the Holy Spirit, Tony Neelankavil said that, "The Spirit enables us to understand how God works in other cultures, other expressions of faith."²⁸ Kärkkäinen and Neelankavil want to support that the Holy Spirit cannot be fenced in the church only but the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of all God's creation. He blows where he wills. This understanding is very important to be insisted in the church today because, as the world cries for environmental crisis, believers should be reminded now and then that they need to respect all other creation of God because when one removes the spirit of life in animals and trees he/she also shortened his/her life because they both depend on each other for life as God's creation. Apart from above understanding there was also particularity in the understanding of the Holy Spirit working to the people in the Old Testament according to time and activity which was taking place. One can also say that, Old Testament understanding was divided into three periods.

Firstly, during the time of Judges through Kings, the Old Testament people understood the Holy Spirit to be a special power coming from God to a special person and gave one a supernatural dynamism to serve God. It was believed that if the Spirit was diminished or was lost, a person with the Holy Spirit faded away and died as in (Josh 5:1; Ps 143:7). For example, in the reigns of David and Solomon, the Spirit was brought into association in the anointing of the Kings (I Sam 16:13ff). When God's Spirit left Saul, David who became a King was known to be a person with the Spirit of God (Psalm 89:20, 21). When the Spirit came forcefully upon the leaders of Israel, they were seen as Holy Persons and they did strange things as a sign of their being considered Holy Persons (Judge 3:10;15:14-17, I Sam 10:6). From the above,

it is seen that the Holy Spirit often empowered people and made them able to do different tasks, but did not necessarily transform. God was the only actor by bringing the Holy Spirit and leaders were just recipients.

Secondly, during the pre-exilic prophetic times of prophets Amos, Hosea, Micah, Isaiah, Jeremiah the Holy Spirit was understood as the Spirit of Judgment and Salvation. At this time, there was a shift from the revelation where the Spirit of the Lord was talking to Israeli's leaders and prophets bringing the Lord God's word. In Second Isaiah, for example, the Spirit and the word are teamed up. *Ruah* is of judgment and the word is the Lord's promise. The Holy Spirit is associated with the coming judgment; that because of their sins, Israeli will be punished by being taken into captivity. This prophecy was fulfilled when the Israelites were taken to Babylon as captives. Being in Captivity, they expected the coming of a Messiah who will establish eschatological peace, and this Spirit will assure a new ethical life. At this time, the Spirit was understood more openly related to creation (Gen 1:2) and to a moral sense of a personal responsibility of people to God (Psalm 51:13). The Spirit was consciously dignified with the title "holy" that is God's power set men and women apart from evil and enlisted them to make Israel a Holy Nation. It is clear that, in this understanding, the Holy Spirit is still understood as the subordinate of the Father. Father is the main actor who sends the Holy Spirit to empower God's people, to save or judge them.

Thirdly, The Holy Spirit in the exilic prophecy of Ezekiel, Second Isaiah and post-exilic prophecy of third Isaiah period, was understood as the promise of the Eschatological Messiah. The Oppressed people received a new Spirit to prepare them to return to their homeland. In Ezekiel's experience, the Spirit of the Lord is everywhere. Now the emphasis is shifted from human beings only to all other creation again. The Spirit is going to renew the covenant. Here people will receive new Spirit, which will change their hearts. Hence, the new Spirit brings the new heart through which Israeli were made Holy people (or nation). The third understanding of the Holy Spirit came out of postexilic era. At this time, the Holy Spirit was believed to have forsaken apostate Israel until the new age arrives. It was a period which was full of promise of a new beginning, called a new "age" when the Spirit will be in evidence in human experience (Isaiah 59:21: 61:1-4:63:11); creating new people (Ezekiel 39: 29, Joel 2:28). God gives a new Spirit to heal and restore his people (Ezekiel 37:1-14). This eschatological expectation is the one, which brings the New Testament. A time when Israeli's expectation in Isaiah 6:1ff as well as in Luke 4:18-19, the coming of Jesus as now was fulfilled.

People in the Old Testament understood the Holy Spirit as the power, which comes from God to guide the Israelites in their daily lives. Whatever happened to them was attributed to God and God was the one who sent the Holy Spirit. Therefore, the Holy Spirit was believed as power from God who can change things to better or worse depending on God's will. Earlier, they believed that the Spirit was confined to

special people appointed by God. Later, they realized that the Holy Spirit belonged to other creation too. They came to such an understanding because all creations were waiting for the liberating eschatological Messiah. In order to know if this understanding of the Holy Spirit was correct, it is necessary to go to the New Testament when the expected Messiah came to his people.

The Holy Spirit in the New Testament

In general, Henry Van Dusen would say that

The New Testament is, pre-eminently the book of the Holy Spirit. Every writing except the second and third letters to John refers to it; each Gospel opens with the promise of its effusion; Acts is devoted to its operation in the creation, guidance and expression of the Christian church; whilst the Epistles constantly refer working in the individual and collective life of believers.²⁹

The argument of this paper at this point is how MIC's in Tanzania put the above understanding into organized way so that her transformation will capture the understanding of its Christians? The Holy Spirit which understood as Pneuma points to two different spirits; the spirit of man and the Spirit of God. According to Kärkkäinen: "... in several instances it is not absolutely clear whether the word refers to the human spirit or the divine spirit (Mark 14:38, Rom 8:15; 11:8; 1Cor. 4:21; etc)."³⁰ However, the keen looking at the Bible reveals that the Holy Spirit is the third person of the Trinity. The New Testament recognizes the reality of a battle between the Kingdom of God and evil spirits, a perspective depicted especially in the synoptic Gospels (Mark 3:23-27). Since there are both good Spirit and bad spirits, the church and individual Christians are called to determine the spirits (1Cor 12:10;14:12; 2Cor.11:4)³¹ It is Precisely the position of the New Testament that : " the activity of the Spirit in the world prior to the historical advent of Christ is an activity that related to the advent of Christ prophetically or proleptically." ³² "The New Testament knows no work of the Spirit except in relation to the historical manifestation of Christ."³³

Generally, the theology of the Holy Spirit in the New Testament gives the evidence that the expected Messiah has come among his people. The coming of the Messiah then, is the fulfillment of the God's appointed time to liberate his creation. It is through the cross, death and resurrection when people are called by faith to come to Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit then His role is seen as the proclaimer of Christ's coming. And also through the Word proclaimed, the Holy Spirit is a caller of people to faith. This fact is witnessed in (Luke 1 and 3:1-18) and (Mathew 3:1-17). Dunn insisted that "Jesus saw his ministry in the Spirit in terms of eschatological blessing: good news, freedom, healing. Indicative of this eschatological ministry of the Spirit is Jesus' role as the Baptizer in the Spirit."³⁴ The Biblical Pneumatology which is Biblically grounded therefore points to community and not to an indi-

vidual or a thing as our churches see him today. This Holy Spirit is working hand in hand with Jesus Christ.

Biblical books in the New Testament have different insistence on how the Holy Spirit should be understood and work. For example, Paul's teachings on the Holy Spirit are found in all of his seven letters. Pneumatological theology found in those letters give resources. According to Paul, the Spirit was active before the coming of Jesus. Jesus indeed was filled with the Holy Spirit since when he was in Mary's womb. Paul's main concern is not how the Holy Spirit is working in Jesus' life and ministry but his concern is how the Holy Spirit is working in an individual and in the life of the community of believers that is the church.

So the Holy Spirit, according to Paul is the assurance of the personal divine presence thus empowering the believer to overcome the flesh. The "signs and wonders" that accompany the proclamation, but also the endurance and perseverance of the weak in faith in the midst of suffering furnish evidence that the Holy Spirit has already been received. Therefore, experiential manifestation of the Holy Spirit was a normal expectation of Christian initiation in the Pauline Churches and that reliance on the mere sacramental rite to identify Christians falls miserably short of Paul's understanding of the Christian life. Through letters, Paul teaches the community of believers the importance of the Holy Spirit in their lives and the life of the community as well. When he found the gifts of the Holy Spirit were abused, he directed them in the right way. He always insisted the importance of diversity and not uniformity. Hence, experiential manifestation should be adopted in MIC's in Tanzania as part of fulfilling what is Biblical. I have chosen few Books from Paul's letters and Gospel to redirect the MIC's in Tanzania as resource in teaching pneumatology theology in her process of transformation.

The Teachings of the Holy Spirit in Romans

The main teachings of Romans on the Holy Spirit is that the Holy Spirit imparts Love in a believer and enable a believer to love God through serving neighbors.(Romans 5:1-5). Paul stresses that it is with the Holy Spirit that Christians are baptized in his death (Rom 6:3), the Holy Spirit in fills them and they are enabled to inherit the Kingdom of God and find victory over sin (Rom 8:13). The Holy Spirit helps believers in praying (Rom 8:26); and Paul here uses the word "groaning" to mean the moment of prayer during which the power of the Holy Spirit is built up prior to its release in a redemptive act. He endows believers with gifts. A spiritual gift is a God given ability to service (Romans 12:6-8); these gifts must be held with humility and modesty (Rom 12:3).

The Teachings of the Holy Spirit in Galatians

In Galatians, Paul sees that the Lord is the Spirit and wherever the Spirit of the Lord is there is freedom. In commenting on the work of the Holy Spirit in Galatians, Alan Padgett said:

The Spirit is the proof of adoption and freedom for love. If we have been crucified with Christ, then it is the Spirit that makes us alive, and therefore we should walk in the Spirit. This Spirit is the Holy Spirit of God, therefore should be called he/she and not it. When we understand this then, we can live by the Spirit (5:16) our flesh is the sinful part of human. Fruit of the Spirit grow naturally and not by human efforts. It comes about by daily relationship with Christ and the Holy Spirit. Hence, our job is to dwell in the Holy Spirit and let her work in us and makes us like Christ's.³⁵

Spirituality without community, without the church is one of the greatest deceptions. Christians are called to correct the sin we see in others (Gal 6:1) to bear one another's burden. Christian Spirituality should be practical and communal. Worship, prayers, songs, Bible study are all expression of community of the Christian Spirituality.

Theological Teachings of the Holy Spirit in 1 and 2 Corinthians

In the 1 Corinthians Paul speaks of Eschatology, and the church. The event of Christ's death and resurrection, and subsequent gifts of the Holy Spirit therefore are very crucial to Paul because they open a new chapter.

According to Gordon Fee:

Christ's resurrection marks the turning of the ages; the subsequent gift of the eschatological is certain evidence that the end has begun. But the fact that we still live in bodies subject to decay(15:49-53), and that there is yet a future Parousia of the Lord (11:26;15:23) with a subsequent resurrection (15:20-28), is also clear evidence that what has begun have not yet fully brought to consummation...We are therefore both "already" and "not yet."³⁶

Christians live in the reality of the present Kingdom with Christ and his Spirit but at the same time they await for the coming Kingdom where even the last enemy will be defeated. Thus Fee says, "Christian life is paradox, apparent contradictions held together in tension."³⁷

As community of believers, they are building the body of Christ. (10:17;11:29;12:12-26). Paul stressed more of diversity rather than the uniformity because diversity recognizes needs for all the various manifestations of the one Spirit. Otherwise there is no body but certain figure. (12:15-20).

Furthermore, Paul's work in Corinthians goes beyond Gospels and other Paul's works because, in Corinthians, he is not only giving knowledge of who the Holy Spirit is or how his gifts works among individuals but he shifts from an individual to the community where gifts are given by the Holy Spirit and shared for the common good. Through his work, Paul showed the division of the gifts and that gifts are the

right of all believers, therefore, must be exercised for the common good of the community.

Luke and Acts on the Holy Spirit

In Luke there are rich information about the Holy Spirit on how he came into full authority. The expression "Holy Spirit" in Luke's Gospel occurs thirteen times and forty-one times in Acts. An important theme of the Holy Spirit is that Jesus Christ gives authority to his disciples who later became apostles. There are abundant teachings in the book of Acts with special themes. These are sanctification, baptism, exorcism, healing, and prophecy.

In the first chapters of Luke for example, he seems to stress the new activity of the Spirit; for Luke, the coming age, the age of the Spirit, is dawning. Meaning that the time for the Holy Spirit to be in full authority is already fulfilled. This coming is experienced in the lives of Elizabeth (Luke 1:41), Zechariah (Luke 1:67), we read that Jesus' mother and father, are "filled with the Holy Spirit". And prophetess, Anna filled with the Holy Spirit gave prophecy on Jesus as Messiah who has come to redeem Israel.(Lk.1:36-38). Simeon, an aged servant of God, is described as having Holy Spirit 'upon him (Luke 2:25), who directed him to go to the temple and see Jesus, the savior.

From Luke's work on the Holy Spirit, it is also seen that healing is essentially liberation. (Luke 4:18) Not only from diseases but also from all other oppressive powers. Luke proves this point when he added more healing acts, which are not in other Gospels. These are healing of a woman with a 'spirit of infirmity' (Luke 13:10-17), of a man with a dropsy (Luke 14:1-6), and of the ten lepers (Luke 17:11-19). The healing of the first two was done on the Sabbath day. Though the Pharisees thought that it was wrong to heal on the Sabbath day, Jesus told them that it was a day of liberating the sick too. George Montague put Jesus thinking in right words by saying, "If the Sabbath was the day God had given Israel as a release from the bondage of labor far from being the wrong day, it was most appropriate day to release the sick from the bondage of their infirmities."³⁸ Further mention of the Holy Spirit in the Luke is when the Holy Spirit is no longer with Jesus only but has extended the Kingdom of God to others, as Jesus sent forth his disciples (Luke 10:17). It is not only the disciples who received the Holy Spirit but also even those who will receive Him from the disciples. The Holy Spirit is also a giver of joy (Luke 10:21), a joy which Jesus Christ felt when the disciples came and gave good report that even the demons obeyed them. The Holy Spirit's role is also to provide teaching to people on what to say (Luke 12:12). Both Jesus and the seventy disciples their overall ministry was born of the Spirit.

By inserting the statement that at the baptism of Jesus the Holy Spirit descended "in bodily form" as a dove, Luke apparently intends to show that this was simply a visible manifestation of what has already taken place in the unseen mystery of Jesus' conception. The Holy Spirit's like a dove descended on Jesus at his baptism as described in the Gospel of Luke.

The descent of Holy Spirit's is described as an act of anointing, that is, Jesus is anointed for the mission. During his ministry, Jesus was filled with the Spirit (Luke 4:1) ready to proclaim the good news of liberation from evil spirits and all other evils surrounding human beings. Luke using Greek words, he is shifting from using *Pimplemi* to *Preloo*, the two words differentiates between being filled with the Spirit, which is for some and being filled by the Spirit, which is for all. This shift will also be seen as the examination of the work Luke continues in the book of Acts.

The promise of the Holy Spirit in the book of Acts appears in three passages.

First, in (Acts 1:2-8), where in verse 4 the Holy Spirit is identified with the "promise of my Father." This verse gives a clear connection with the Gospel (cf. Luke 24:49). What is important from the beginning is that Luke wants to address the fact that the disciples were given authority from both Jesus and the Holy Spirit. The teachings in Acts, lead to an interesting issue that of the criteria for receiving the Holy Spirit. When the disciples received the Holy Spirit, they spoke in new languages and many other people witnessed the events of Pentecost. Peter, reminded those who heard disciples speaking in tongues that this was a fulfillment of the Joel's prophecy (Joel 2:28-32). Peter also told them to repent and to be baptized in order to receive that gift (Acts 2:37-46). The criterion here is that the Holy Spirit works with proclamation of the Word. This means biblically, baptism is important but not necessarily a pre-requisite for one to receive the Holy Spirit.

Second, in Acts 10:44ff there is a story of the Holy Spirit coming upon gentiles and Cornelius' house. This is interesting because in the MIC's and especially the Lutheran tradition, the pre-requisite for one to receive the Holy Spirit is through baptism. In this story, the Holy Spirit came upon them before them being baptized. Lois Malcolm, a Lutheran theologian would say, "they received the Holy Spirit because there was proclamation."³⁹

Third, information in (Act 2:4; 4:3) confirms that disciples were filled "with the Holy Spirit", and therefore received the gifts of the Holy Spirit (2:38). Hence, it is legitimate to say that the first Spirit filling occurred on the day of Pentecost. (Acts 1:5 Acts 11:15-16). Disciples were empowered to start a community of believers, the church. Thus, the Luke in Acts directs the disciples in the same way as Jesus did.

That Jesus did not start his ministry without the empowering power, his Spirit.

Jesus was first conceived by the Holy Spirit (Luke 1:31-35) and then 30 days later was filled with the Holy Spirit (Luke: 3:21- 22;4:1) Though born as the Son of God, Jesus still needed the empowering force for ministry that occurred when the Holy Spirit came upon him. So it is with believers who have been reborn by the Spirit as sons of God.⁴⁰

This belief also has its roots in Luke 24:49, in which Jesus commands His followers to wait in Jerusalem until they "are clothed with power from on high". After His followers received this experience, they are to be His witnesses "in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth" (Acts 1:8). This infilling of the Holy Spirit for empowering one for the ministry is what Neo-Pentecostals call the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. Montague on the same point said, "The term "baptized with (or in) the Holy Spirit" seems to be used here to connect and contrast the beginning of the church with the beginning of the gospel and to parallel the coming of the Spirit upon Jesus."⁴¹ The Spirit will never lead in a manner contrary to the word of God (Acts 8:29). The infilling is also a repeated experience. On the Pentecost, the disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:4), and a few days later, they had such an experience again (Acts 4:31). The condition for being filled involves dedication of the self to God.

The issue of when one receives the Holy Spirit raises a philosophical question. As how external rites (water baptism, and the word) and inward experiences (spiritual transformation) works in an individual and what is the order of their precedence. It seems clear that the differences on the issue of when one receives the Holy Spirit lies more on proclamation of the Word than on the ritual of baptism of water as an outward signs. However it is important to add that God has many ways of calling, rescuing and giving his gifts and his self.

The Teachings of the Holy Spirit in John

John stresses the incarnation rather than the resurrection therefore, Jesus' glorification begins with the cross. Incarnation means that God through Jesus Christ became flesh, while truly remaining divine. His reason was that, John was against Docetism, the belief that Jesus physical body was an illusion, as was his crucifixion that is, Jesus only *seemed* to have a physical body and to physically die, but in reality he was incorporeal, a pure spirit, and hence could not physically die. This belief treats the sentence "the Word was made Flesh" (John 1:14) as merely figurative.

Apart from combating the Docetism teachings, John also wanted to teach that Jesus, God who is made man has already come to fulfill the promise of the eschatological Messiah. By being human, Jesus is giving the answer that the expected now is here with the community of believers to show them the way of getting out of their sins and tribulations.

In John, Jesus starts his ministry immediately by performing signs. Sign like changing of water to wine at the wedding in Cana (John 2:1ff) were meant to reveal the glory. Jesus wanted and showed that he was the real Son of God sent to liberate his people. In John 3 Jesus talks about new birth in water and Spirit as the pre-requisite for one to enter the Kingdom of God. For John begetting is the work of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit cannot be caught and possessed; rather one is possessed or moved by it. Hence, Holy Spirit is the agent of

the new life by which man is born again (John 3:5-8). Here, John refers to the new birth, which is fulfilled by the work of Incarnated Christ and the Spirit of God. This Spirit is given without measure (John 3:34).

Jesus called himself the source of the living water. (John 4) Living water has double meaning. First, symbolically it means the stream water that flows with the meaning of the Holy Spirit which will be poured (flows from Jesus himself) to those who will come to him in faith through baptism. Secondly, again symbolically the water of life means the Holy Spirit who gives life. Montague quoting John 6:63 said "It is the *Spirit* that gives life; the flesh is useless. The *words* I spoke to you are *Spirit* and *life*" For the revelation of God cannot be understood without the Spirit, and the Spirit's function is to testify to the revelation of Jesus and to illuminate it."⁴²

In continuation of Jesus teachings, Jesus gave peace to his disciples (John 14:25-26). Jesus' peace is not like the worldly peace. Jesus peace sums up all good things, life and prosperity as well as inner well-being. The action of breathing upon the disciples evokes (Gen 2:7); to the lives of the disciples, this was the new creation. By being filled with the Holy Spirit, disciples were transformed in a way of seeing Jesus not only as teacher but also a Savior who is also sending them to witness about Jesus so that others will also recognize who Jesus is and come to faith in him.

When the Spirit was poured to the disciples it meant that the Holy Spirit continues the work of Jesus and that through the Holy Spirit Jesus is glorified in the presence of the Father. The Holy Spirit's purpose then was to glorify Jesus. Since Jesus and the Father are one, the Holy Spirit was glorifying the Father. John wants to give a clear picture that the Holy Spirit works hand in hand with both Jesus and God the Father. That though we may see Jesus as one seen physically, but is not alone; other persons of the Trinity are working with him.

The Paraclete in John

Paraclete is peculiar to the Johannine literature. It occurs four times in the Gospel of John. On Jesus' farewell discourses in (John 14:16, 26, 15:26, and 16:7) and once in 1John(2:1). Apart from all roles of the Holy Spirit mentioned in John, there is an additional role of the Holy Spirit as Paraclete. For John Paraclete plays an important role because, from John 15:18 for example, John warns of the world's hatred and in verse 20 he speaks of coming persecutions, V. 21 gives the reason that "all these they will do to you on my account. But despite these persecutions, the paraclete will be present (John 15:26). John sees Paraclete as not only coming to give disciples gifts but also to empower disciples for facing difficulties.

Thus Paraclete's work is to stay with the disciples after Jesus had gone; his presence helped the disciples to understand the teachings of Jesus Christ and stand as his witnesses. "A paraclete is one who comforts, who cheers, who encourages,

who persuades, who exhorts, who stirs up, who argues forward, who calls on paraclete is to the soul; one who call us on to good."⁴³ In (1John 2:1) Jesus was been a Paraclete to his disciples. The Holy Spirit will do what Jesus was doing for his disciples and will remain forever in disciple's lives. This means that through the Holy Spirit, the promise of God through (Isaiah 7:14) that "God with us" will be realized.

Paraclete who is the "Spirit of Truth" is given as a gift to those who believe in Jesus and is given by the Father at the request of the Son (John 14:16ff). The Spirit of truth is against Spirit of falsehood. This Spirit helps the sons and daughters of the light to fight against powers of falsehood. Hence, the Spirit is battling alongside the disciples. Since Jesus and the Father are one, the one without excluding the other giving and sending is work done by the same person. The role of the Spirit of truth is to witness on behalf of Jesus. In the physical absence of Jesus, the Holy Spirit prosecutes and condemns the world for its sin. In (John 16:4-11) the disciples received the Holy Spirit, who Jesus breathed on them. He sent them away and giving them authority to either to forgive or to let unrepentant sinners retain their sins and be condemned.

Theology of the Holy Spirit in John

The Holy Spirit in John is about the "realized *eschatology*" meaning that the promised future goods are already possessed in Jesus Christ. Jesus is the anointed one on whom the Spirit rests from the beginning of his ministry. (John 1:33). John is talking about the "casting of the prince of this world". The way to cast him out is not through exorcism but through saving death and glorification of Jesus Christ. (John 12:31-32; 16:11). This shift from "*exorcism-in the synoptic Gospels*" to "*lifting up*" of Jesus shows that for John the greatest problem of Satan upon the world is the sin of unbelief in Jesus Christ and the failure to recognize who Jesus Christ is (John 16:8-11). Death and glorification of Jesus, serves as the unique act of deliverance of the world from Satan power.

John mentioned only seven works of miracles by Jesus. These are changing of the water into wine at Cana of Galilee, John 2:1-11 as a sign of God of nature; healing of nobleman's son John 4:46-56 as a sign of Jesus being Lord of life; healing of the paralyzed man, John 5:1-15 as the sign of the restorer of the lost powers; feeding of the five thousands John 6:1-14 as a sign of the food by which we live; calming a storm and Jesus walking on water John 6:16-21 sign of Jesus being our guide and helper; giving sight to a blind man John 9:1-7, the sign of Jesus being our light; and the raising of Lazarus from the dead, John 11:1-34 a sign of God the giver of life.

John stresses that faith is not ability for one to possess charismatic power but a personal commitment to Jesus as the Son of God. Jesus promises charismatic power to his disciples so great that their words and deeds will be greater than his (John 14:12). Jesus sends missionaries beyond his circle of Apostles. He sends them after Easter after giving them the power to forgive sins. (John 20:21-23).

An Assessment

The issue at stake in Mission Instituted Churches in Tanzanian Christianity which this paper has addressed is the lack of pneumatological teachings which are Biblically grounded. This paper, has offers new ways of looking and understanding of the place of the Holy Spirit in trinity. The role of the Holy Spirit in baptism, healing, and communal life. Issues and points found on this paper about the Holy Spirit from Biblical perspective should be proclaimed boldly and help Mission Instituted churches as they undergo the process of transformation.

Mission Instituted churches in Tanzania needs to emphasize that, Baptism is important for one to enter the Kingdom of God and receive the Holy Spirit but baptism is not the only means for one to receive the Holy Spirit. One receives the Holy Spirit where there is proclamation. This understanding will help the MIC's in Tanzania to acknowledge other means used by the Holy Spirit as He wills. Furthermore, reception of the Holy Spirit must be differentiated from receiving the gifts of the Holy Spirit. That the gifts of the Holy Spirit must not necessarily received during Baptism, they can be received later. As it was clearly seen in the Book of Acts.

There is also the lack of hermeneutic reading of the Bible in MIC in Tanzania. This tendency lead MIC's to the attributing all negative aspects of life to evils which in turn lead to see the world as demonic. (this is the habit which is also borrowed from the Neo-Pentecostalism). Hermeneutic reading of the Bible will help MIC's to understand that not all Gospels are dealing with evil powers but there is also a problem of not believing or knowing Jesus, like the teachings of the Gospel of John. Therefore, to look more on the strategy of lifting up Jesus than the way they do today by lifting up demonic powers. This will also help believers to live in faith instead of living in fear because the Holy Spirit is with them to *paraclete* to them. The Biblical hermeneutic will help mission instituted churches not to attribute every negative in life to the world of evil spirits because problems and adversity must be looked as part of our lives.

Bible will help MIC's to reverse the new adoptive teachings of material prosperity from neo-Pentecostalism and teach to seek peace instead. Material always perish and does not give one peace but Jesus' peace helps one to get both spiritual and material blessings. John can be a good teacher of Peace from Christ. With Peace of Christ believers can be able to face difficulties under the leadership of the Holy Spirit. MIC's need to understand that the gifts of the Holy Spirit are given for the building of the body of Christ. Therefore, whoever has a gift is called to share it for glory of God and building the body of Christ. This means that, MIC's must open freely the opportunity of one to exercise his/her gifts by giving more space to other Christians rather than working with only those who belong to the hierarchical structural of the church. The Bible will also help MIC's to understand that all gifts are equally important in the building of the church. The gift of hospitality must be counted equally important like that of exorcism. For the use of the Gifts, the Bible helps MIC's to

understand that since all gifts are equally important, they both equally needed to be used for the building of the church. Speaking in tongues, exorcism, and healing should also be allowed to be exercised in the MIC's.

Conclusion

The insistence of Pneumatological teachings which are Biblically grounded to MIC's intends to fill gaps in the teaching and preaching of the MIC's. The Biblically grounded Pneumatology is currently noted for setting agenda for theological inquiry in the MIC's. This is compelling MIC's theologians to offer answers to questions that ordinary Tanzanian Christians is asking especially this twentieth first century where Pneumatology Theology is lifted up in ecumenical Christianity. Theology is always a dialogue. As the aim of this consultation is, Pneumatological teachings which are Biblically grounded will help MIC's as she works for her transformation in responding to the existing realities in the life of the Church today. I conclude my words that MIC theologians should dare to learn Pneumatology doctrines and give insight and guide the whole exercises of witnessing the abundance life given by God of Trinity.

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“The general situation of the Democratic Republic of Congo”

Honourable Ladies and Gentlemen,
Dear Sisters and Brothers,
Dear Participants of the International Africa Consultation,

I convey cordial greetings of your sisters and brothers in the Lord in Kinshasa. From this town my family and me departed on January 6 and arrived on January 7 at our new domicile at Iserlohn. I am grateful for God’s protection so that I could safely arrive at the consultation in Hamburg. Thanks to the Protestant Development Service (eed) and United Evangelical Mission for the invitation to this important meeting.

My family’s difficulties in recent weeks through the sudden death of our daughter in Kinshasa only few weeks before our journey and then the problems of moving our home to Germany led the organisers of the consultation to the request to focus on the general situation of the Democratic Republic of Congo, instead of lecturing about the suggested topic “The Church of Christ in Kongo – a healing community amidst destructive forces”.

Regarding the situation in my country, I would like to introduce to you in this context five ways to the healing of Congo and also describe the role of the church in this situation. It is about

- democracy
- fight against corruption and impunity
- peace and security
- good governance and combating poverty
- (re)construction of infrastructures

1. Democracy

2011 we have elections in Congo. For, in the end of this year the electoral period ends and we have elections of the president and the parliament. If that takes place, these elections will bring to normal the democratic process and slowly develop a democratic culture in the country. These elections enable on the one hand the reform of the Congolese politi-

cians and the debates on good governance. On the other hand they might serve to denounce certain people and to continue with violence and civil war in order to come to or to retain power .

On June 30, 2010, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) celebrated the 50th anniversary of independence from Belgian colonial rule. Beside the celebration the opportunity was used to lecture on the wounds of the political history of Congo and attempts to heal these wounds.

Wounds were: the brutal and violent rule of King Leopold II of Belgium with the blessings of the mighty powers at the Berlin Conference in 1885 and the violence after the Belgian colonial regime. This history of exploitation and violence because of the rich resources (copper, diamonds, gold, uranium, manganese, Colton, etc.) and the regard of Congo merely as a reservoir of resources affected not only the colonial powers but also Congolese politicians. In that setting the politicians did not make for the wellbeing of the entire population but fought for power and money with all means.

In this mood of thought the country has been and still is governed harshly and violently. Already in the beginning of the 60th the country stumbled into political chaos – ethnic conflicts, rebellions, secessions, politically motivated murder, coups, etc.. This continued after the dictatorship of the Mobutu regime (1965-1997) under the rule of the presidents Kabila senior and junior.

The treaty in 2003 at Sun City in the Republic of South Africa proved to initiate an important phase of healing of the country. Through this treaty a transitional government and parliament were established and further five political institutions in order to protect democracy. The role of the churches was as important as decisive. Prayers at home and in worship services were organized, church leaders led political debates. Some of the political institutions were headed by church leaders. The expectations were to have these institutions influenced by the Holy Spirit and the Word of God.

The country succeeded in the end of the transitional period (2003-2006) the first time after 40 years to promulgate the new constitution and to organize elections. In 2006 on the national level President Kabila senior, senators and parliamentarians were elected.

Those elections were the answer to the so called “third world war” in Africa, which led to destruction of the state, division of the country, exacerbation of tribalism and regionalism and to the death of three to four million country fellows. The war brought about systematic rape of women, the recruitment of child soldiers and child labourers, divorce of families, killings of innocent people, which resulted in abject poverty of the population. The social phenomenon of so called “child witches” is part of this turmoil.

Now the country prepares for new elections. The challenge is to avoid conflicts prior to, during and after the elections. Would the elections lead to peace, reconciliation, security, stability and development, it could sustain national but also regional efforts to heal the country and their citizens.

Some articles of the constitution (71, 126, 149, 197, 218 and 226) pertaining to rules of elections have been revised. Now the tenure of office of the president is one electoral term, no more two, as it was before. This revision aroused political dissatisfaction on the one hand between the majority and the opposition, but also of the Catholic church and civil society. The international community, represented through the UN and the EU, and also the US and several European governments uttered their concern.

In order to organize these elections, a national independent electoral commission has been mandated. It is headed by Rev. Dr. Daniel NGYO Mulunda and consists of seven members (4 from the political majority and 3 from the opposition). The call of a pastor to lead the commission expresses the desire to be led by the Holy Spirit and Christian values in the electoral process. In 2006 the electoral commission was headed by the Catholic Spiritual Abbé Apollinaire Malu Malu.

Elections mean more than ballot sheets. It needs a culture of mutual respect of government and the population who is to accept the incoming government. The elected must know how to take their responsibility and the citizens must be able to always ask what their politicians have done with their power. One does not want elections with corruption and violence. People also do not want bribery in order to come to power. The Congo needs credible and trustworthy people as said in Exodus 18,21: “reasonable people who fear God, who are truthful and abhor unjust gain.”

2. The fight against corruption and impunity

The long standing “culture of impunity” in the country has made corruption, e.g., a rampant evil. It has reached all strata of the Congolese society. There is greed for positions of power and money. The feelings, the attitudes and decisions are influenced by it. The political elites as also the elites of the church are influenced by the love for money. A “politics of the belly” hinders to serve the other and is merely for gaining money in whatever way.

Governmental accounts are miraculously feeding ones own pocket. In the church, e.g., many people are exploited by

the leadership to build or buy homes and cars for the leader, resp., Guru, in the name of the unwritten law: “The man of God must look beautiful, rich and mighty.” What is utterly disturbing: most of the congregations are poor and feel helpless.

They are forced to pray for the leadership of the church who in turn does nothing to alleviate their plight.

A disease affecting quite some leaders: they like to present themselves under the umbrella of influential politicians and business people. The church leaders provide support e.g. in elections, and the politicians and business people vice versa. It is seen as very normal.

It is also regarded normal, if incoming governmental ministers or business men build luxurious houses. They are praised in the society. But if such a minister tries to live modestly and humbly, he/she is condemned by family and acquaintances as stupid.

Very seldom it is questioned where and how the person has got the wealth. As it is still virulent in the country, corruption can endanger the elections and nurture the impression that only those with money could be elected and then rule.

So it is with justice in the country. There is talk of “justice with two tracks or speeds”: justice for the poor which moves slowly, because there is lack of money for the infrastructure, and unfortunately justice of the powerful, speeded through money. For decades the judiciary system is defunct.

So you find innocent people in jail, even tortured, only because somebody has paid money in order to harm the other or to let him suffer.

During the war and also in conflict zones many people are killed, innumerable women and children maltreated and raped, without consequences for the perpetrators.

Fortunately the situation has changed during the last years. The project “zero tolerance” and the International Law Court at The Hague brought some perpetrators to court or prison. The victims and the population of the country wished to see more, for there are still many responsible ones living at their liberty.

Each time the victims and the civil society are confronted with it, it discourages. That creates rage and revenge which again trigger conflicts and endanger peace and reconciliation.

3. Peace and security

The eastern part of Congo is ruled by the “laws” of the local Mai Mai and foreign armed groups (LDR and FDLR), while the other parts of the country live in relative stability. The above mentioned groups and the governmental military forces as well are accused of numerous violations of Human

Rights: plundering, malevolent destruction, burning of villages, theft, rape of women and children, and so forth.

The joint military operations of the Congolese and the Ugandan armies and of the Congolese and the Rwandan armies succeeded in reducing the destructive force of these negative groups.

The search for peace and stability remains an important aspect of the activity of churches. In this search for peace churches severally or in ecumenical fellowship issued declarations, conducted worship services, talks and other events to foster peace. For the Father of Christ Jesus not only is the God of peace, he also wants all human beings and peoples to make for and to live in peace.

During and after the war there have been many small weapons in the towns creating much insecurity. Because of that the Ecumenical Program for Peace and Reconciliation (PAREC) under the leadership of Rev. Dr. Daniel NGOY Mulunda began to exchange weapons for bicycles or 50 – 100 US\$. The program showed good results in the provinces Katanza, Kinshasa, North and South Kivu.

Observers of the regional situation around the Great Lakes of Africa say that lack of true national reconciliation and democracy in the neighbouring countries on the one hand and illegal exploitation of the resources of the Congo and bad living conditions of the Congolese soldiers on the other hand threaten peace, security and stability not only in Congo but likewise in the entire region.

The improvement of diplomatic relations between Rwanda, Burundi and Congo on governmental and parliamentary level in the framework of the “politics of good neighbourhood and peaceful coexistence” and the revitalisation of the economic community at the Great Lakes could lead to the emergence of a region of peace and mutual trust.

The churches of the region have often laboured for the foundation of peace. Since some of the churches in Rwanda and Congo are members of United Evangelical Mission, many initiatives for peace have been supported in order to make possible good understanding between the peoples and governments of both countries.

But, as is written in the book of Isaiah, “peace will be the fruit of righteousness” (Is 32, 17). It makes plain that there is no peace without justice. Yet, if one looks at the situation of soldiers in Congo, the first impression is that most of them live under adverse living conditions and without education. This leads to undisciplined and violent action. It is not astonishing that several of them are responsible for insecurity and violation of Human Rights. Today’s Congolese army is built from different former armed groups. The harmonisation of those groups and the improvement of the life of the soldiers belong to a reform package decided on by law in the parliament.

Part of it is also the removal of child soldiers from the army. Goal is to establish a republican army of professional soldiers. The same applies to the police who must be well trained in order to guarantee the protection of citizens and their property instead of misusing people.

After so much chaos and war there is no need to have people in power, dictators, who maintain their position through manipulation of the army. The population wishes solely to be governed by men and women who exert their responsibility and give answers to the problems of the population. It is expected from them to transform the natural resources into a source of happiness and development of human beings. Unfortunately there are many military and political offices involved in the smuggle of the natural resources.

4. Good governance and the fight against poverty

It is unbelievable and utterly disappointing that only few people benefit from the wealth of the Congo while the majority of the population lives in extreme poverty. In deed three quarters of the population live on less than one Dollar per day. In a country with many rivers there is lack of drinking water.

Causes are a weak leadership of public institutions and companies but also a culture of egotism and exploitation. Yet, the main cause is bad governance of the political leadership.

Many companies regard the Congo as a milk cow, without thinking about fair distribution of basic means. We live with reports on misuse of public funds and manipulations in state companies.

This weakens the ability of the Congolese government to put in practice their programs. The national budget is fed to 50% by foreign donors.

It implies that the state can not reduce joblessness by creating new job opportunities. Youths after completion of their studies wait hopelessly for a job. It results in a predominantly informal economy that to a great extent is not controllable by the government.

While most of men live without job, many women through different economic activities take care of family, household and education and provide for medical care for their children. They guarantee the stability of the family and fight against poverty. Financing of micro economic projects is made possible through support of local and foreign partners. Churches support these projects with their money in order to secure that women have a chance to continue their activities. To strengthen this the Protestant University of Congo specialised on micro finance in close cooperation with the Banking Academy in Frankfurt/M, Germany. The program is further supported by the German government and eed. President Kabila used the National Micro Finance Fund for micro credits to fight poverty. As said, the churches support this in the spirit of what Jeremiah said: “Seek you the best of the town,

whereto I let you be deported, and pray for it to the LORD; for, when it fares well, so also you will fare well." (Jer 29, 7).

5. Reconstruction of infrastructures

The Democratic Republic of Congo is sick of bad road conditions. Therefore the government began to repair roads and build new ones. The exploitation of natural resources led to many large and small holes at some places, not only at abandoned mines and quarry sites but also in many roads. So most of the roads cannot be used. Some roads make very time consuming slow gear driving necessary. The same pertains to the quality of air and train traffic. Aviation companies who overstress the mostly already old machines make them real "flying coffins".

Lack of infrastructure impedes the development of the country. The basic infrastructures as schools, hospitals and administration offices are in worst condition and run under inefficient working conditions.

Through international cooperation several projects for improvement of infrastructures are financed and completed. In the church we feel the active support of United Evangelical Mission, eed and other German partners through the financial assistance of projects in formal and informal education, health services, micro credit systems and others. Obviously most of the still functioning infrastructures belong to the churches.

Beside reconstruction of the infrastructure for many the improvement of working conditions has priority. Public officers are badly paid or even underpaid, a disposition for corruption.

6. Conclusion

To be church as a healing community is a task to be taken very seriously in Congo. It needs to be based on biblical and theological reflection leading to further education in the congregations so to equip them to act on all levels against destructive forces in the Congolese society.

Despite the high number of Christians in the Congo the evil effects of destructive forces seem to be stronger. Violence against women and children, corruption and impunity, joblessness, the general social injustice and other factors more are challenges to the churches' mission to urgently render professionally and practically reflected action. The churches, especially their leaders, are called to develop a prophetic life style in order to contribute to the healing of the society. That means the churches and their leadership shall remain faithful to Christ, in cooperation with all partners of good will, to serve the people with their contribution to sound development of the country.

[Translation by Rev. Wilfried Neusel]

Reverse Mission and Social Integration

The Challenge of Non-Denominational Migrant Churches from sub-Saharan Africa

1. Introduction

Within the past two decades we have witnessed the arrival of tens of thousands of migrants from sub-Saharan Africa in Germany.¹ Similar developments have taken place in all other European countries. Different from our large Muslim population with a Turkish background, the vast majority of Africans migrating here are Christians hailing predominantly from Ghana and Nigeria. Many of these new inhabitants have become German citizens. While some African migrant churches were already founded in the eighties of the last century, most of them were established in the nineties and in the first decade of the new century. In Hamburg alone we count about 80 migrant churches. In Germany there might be about 1000 of them. The majority of these churches can be classified as independent neo-Pentecostal ministries. Others represent branches of mega-churches in West-Africa. Most of these churches are registered as social clubs. Their size varies: Some have only about a dozen members, most between 30 and 60 members, and a few more than a hundred. Many of these congregations celebrate their services in church-buildings of the *Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland* (EKD: The Protestant Church in Germany), after the end of the Sunday morning service of the locals. Many others have rented a large room in an office building which they have decorated and consecrated as their place of worship.

In the last decade, new developments have taken place with respect to the phenomenon of the presence of migrant churches from West-Africa in Germany, and I would like to point out some of them:

a) Some “mainline” churches like the *Presbyterian Church of Ghana* or the *Methodist Church of Ghana*, but also the classical Pentecostal church *The Church of Pentecost* have established ministries in Germany. In addition, there are large *Catholic Missions* for migrants from West-Africa. Typically these congregations for expatriates were founded in Germany by members of these church bodies, on their own initiative, and they then requested for a pastor to be sent from Ghana. These congregations have seen an enormous growth within recent years. This development has taken place to the disadvantage of quite a number of independent Neo-Pentecostal ministries who have lost members to the mainline churches.

What are possible reasons for this shift of allegiance? First of all, there is a wide-spread feeling of frustration and disappointment with the leadership in at least several of the so-called “one-man churches”: Just too few of the members have received their miracle for a better life. In the meantime, they have carried quite a portion of their little income to the church, and also to “bless the pastor”. Many a times, church ceased to be a secure place to feel at home due to the stress caused by church-splits.²

The majority of Christians from West-Africa grew up in churches which were founded by foreign mission bodies in the nineteenth century. However, their home churches were absent in Germany when the first wave of migrants from the sub-region arrived here in the nineties. Neo-Pentecostal ministries which quickly grew out of prayer cells in the homes of African migrants provided a first spiritual and social home to many. It is not only due to the very establishment of congregations of mainline-churches in recent years that accounts for their remarkable growth: In the past two decades, back in Ghana the Charismatization of mainlines churches has taken place. These congregations with their solid structure, their well-trained pastors, and their more balanced Charismatic spirituality for many seem to provide an attractive and meaningful alternative to the “one-man churches”, as a place to feel at home. In addition, the age factor might also play a role: As people grow older, far away from home, the Presbyterian, the Methodist or Catholic hymns they grew up with, and which are absent in most neo-Pentecostal ministries, re-gain new significance. Their usage in the mainline churches also contributes to feeling at home.

b) Relating to the former point: A generation shift is presently under way in African migrant churches. The children of the migrants were either born here, or they have spent quite a number of years in this country. Different from their parents, these young people many of whom are now in their late teens or early twenties speak German as their native or first language. To these young adults, Germany is their only home. Here they attend school or university, and – this is important to note – they share the values of their peer-group here in Germany. In addition, they have internalized the common local knowledge system which is quite different

from that shared in most cases by their parents. The way these young people interpret and construct reality, and the strategies they employ to deal with life issues, represent mainline culture in Germany.

To give some examples: The spirituality of their parents does not make much sense any more to many of the young people, some of whom have completely turned away from church. Especially the fear of spiritual bondage caused by ancestral spirits or witches in West-Africa, which is so wide spread amongst African migrant Christians, is not very meaningful to many of the second generation. In fact, it is not uncommon among the youth to make fun of the “superstition” of their parents. All these observations are indications that a generational conflict is taking place in the churches. This also adds to the stress of parents and of their ministers. In particular at issue is the question of obedience: Within the German educational system the African children are trained – like all others – to think for themselves, to develop a critical and reflective mind and to ask questions if they do not understand, even to the extent of questioning their very teachers if they do not agree. It is a great challenge for many African parents in general, and pastors in particular, to be confronted with critical questions by their own children. Back home in West-Africa this behavior would typically be interpreted as insubordination, and it can be punished physically. Many of the migrant parents have not learned to embrace cultural rules, legal frameworks, and societal expectations in Germany. Now: If you beat up your child severely in this society, not to talk of rubbing hot chilli pepper into the genitals of children if they do not behave according to expectation, as is a wide spread practice in West-Africa, you may face that your smart teenage boy or girl turns to the *Jugendamt* (the office for the well-fare of children).

To sum up this part: The transformation from the first to the second generation adds to the stress of families.

The distancing of the youth from their parents also in spiritual matters does not necessarily imply a complete turn away from spirituality or from church. In fact, we are presently witnessing in Hamburg the remarkable development of a para-church organization of older teenagers and young adults with an African background: About three years ago the youth organization “His Kingdom United” was founded, solely at the initiative of young people from African migrant churches. They meet once a week on Monday evenings to pray, sing and play, to educate and to discuss issues relevant to them. They have their own leadership of young adults. As such, they are able to reach about eighty youth from various African churches, and in addition, they count quite a number of other internationals as well as teenagers with a German origin amongst them. This development is seen with a certain degree of suspicion by at least some Neo-Pentecostal pastors, and to put it mildly, they have not been very helpful in supporting these youth. For assistance and for co-operation, this group has turned to representatives of the *Evangelische Kirche* on local and regional levels, and they have not been disappointed. Some of their leaders, e.g.,

have just completed a course run by the *Evangelische Kirche* aimed at teaching skills in leading youth-groups and young adults (the so-called *Juleica*). The certificates for the course have been handed over to the candidates at the *International Gospel Service* in the beginning of February 2011. By the way, the *International Gospel Service* is the only joint service of Christians who belong to different German and African churches in Hamburg, taking place on a regular basis once a month. This service was conceptualized by a small team of German and Ghanaian mainline pastors five years ago. The service is well attended regularly by about one hundred to one hundred and fifty participants, made up especially of people with German or various West-African backgrounds. We have tried to carefully combine German liturgical elements with West-African Pentecostal worship elements, giving space to spontaneity of expression, participation of each and everyone, and to spiritual experience.

These are two models of faith based activities which are first expressions of social integration between Christians with a German and those with a West-African origin. It should be noted that both models came into existence not as the outcome of long strategic deliberations by theologians. Rather, it needed like-minded individuals with a common vision who tried to begin something new, even on an experimental basis, which then proved to be meaningful to a number of others effecting the success of the program.

When we look at the history of mission we realize that it were often those unforeseeable, spontaneous and uncontrollable circumstances and moments that propelled the development of local churches in ways very different from what was envisioned by the respective missionary societies in Europe. I call this the *irony of the unfolding of the Gospel in history*. A case in point is the attempt of planting churches by both the Basel and the Bremen Mission societies among the *Akuapim* and the *Ewe* in the former Gold Coast of the nineteenth century respectively. In both cases the German missionaries were unable to reach the Africans in ways they had planned. The missionaries failed to plant congregations. Among the *Ewe*, it was solely due to the initiative of some of the local people that first congregations were established – after the mission stations had been deserted by the missionaries!³ As for the *Akuapim*, the success of the missionary endeavour has to be attributed to the efforts and abilities of a group of 22 West Indian Christians who were persuaded by Basel Mission representatives to help out in planting a congregation in Akropong, after the German missionaries had suffered great losses in human lives coupled with the complete inability to “win souls” among the local population.⁴

2. Reverse mission – the vision of migrant pastors

Claudia Währisch-Oblau has shown in her well researched and instructive study on the *Missionary Self-Perception of Pentecostal/Charismatic Church Leaders from the Global South in Europe*⁵ that many of the African pastors interpret their migration to Germany according to a standard pattern:

they followed a call from God to travel to Europe in order “to win the inhabitants for Christ”. As such, they are here on a powerful divine mission, claiming to “bring back the Gospel” and “to cleanse the land from evil spirits”. This self-understanding clearly undermines common categorizations of these pastors in terms of “victimized migrants”, i.e. people reduced to objects of diaconical care.

In contrast to their claim to be here on a mission reaching out to the German inhabitants, these pastors are typically leading congregations of fellow *African* migrants, and only in exceptional cases one would find a small number of participants with a German background in these church services. After twenty years of the presence of African neo-Pentecostal churches in Germany it can be concluded that up till now the claim of migrant pastors has *not* materialized. The main reason for this failure on the part of the missionaries from the South is a wide-spread inability to communicate the Gospel in ways that are meaningful for the general population. In short, many missionaries from the South – unknowingly emulating the unpreparedness and an intercultural ignorance, coupled with theological arrogance of their German missionary counterparts in West-Africa in the nineteenth century – do not speak the language of the inhabitants: often in the literal sense of the term, but also with respect to encyclopedia in the semiotic sense: their knowledge of the world (*Weltwissen*) and their spiritual strategies to deal with problems do not seem plausible over here. In turn, the missionaries from the South regard the locals as ignorant in matters of the Gospel and of the spiritual dimension of life; because they confuse Gospel and culture.

Attempting to tackle existential problems of their church members absorbs all the time and the energy of pastors. The situation is even aggravated if the pastor – as is true in many cases – has a regular job, often in a factory.

The concept of reverse mission would imply an attempt to actively engage the locals. This, however, is not taking place. Those who have in fact tried to do street evangelism the same way they know it from back home in Nigeria or Ghana, here in Germany got quickly frustrated by mockery of by-passers or by non-reaction. Most of the neo-Pentecostal ministries exist in isolation from the wider society in general and from the local community churches in particular, even if they are hosted in *evangelische (protestant)* church premises. In sociological perspective, this trend to insulation is typical of immigrants of the first generation in general and even more so in a very foreign environment that often appears outright hostile. To many of the African migrants who are struggling just to survive under very insecure living conditions there is a great need to find a place to connect with other people from home and to get spiritually up-lifted. A German congregation or an *evangelische (protestant)* pastor could just not cater for these needs. We can observe here an inverse proportional relationship between the suffering of people and their readiness for social integration: The more hostile the societal environment and the heavier the stress in dealing with everyday life, the less the preparedness for

co-operation with the locals, church officials included. For, the more severe the problems of these migrants from West-Africa, the stronger their tendency to spend time in their churches trying to solve their problems in ways they are familiar with those from home, i.e. by means of spiritual warfare and deliverance.

3. Irritations and challenges on the side of the Evangelische Kirche

We in the *Evangelische Kirche (Protestant Church)* should not be frustrated by the fact that most migrant ministers remain insulated. This is just a necessity and often a typical strategy of first generation migrants to cope with life in a very foreign place. Providing a space for these ministries in our church premises for their members to unfold their spirituality undisturbed, can be of great help. By all means, we should try to avoid adding to the stress of the migrant congregations whom we host in our church buildings, e.g. by requesting high rent or by interfering into their ways of worship. If requested, we should be prepared to assist the migrant Christians from West-Africa on their difficult journey to fully arrive in this society. We cannot push the development, and as indicated above with reference to *His Kingdom United*, new unforeseeable and uncontrollable developments are already under way or will surprisingly evolve when least expected.

When at first African pastors approached their *evangelische (protestant)* colleagues in the ninetieth with the request to use the church buildings for worship on Sunday afternoons, they were often rejected and their ministries regarded as sectarian. We did not know back then that these Christians represented a powerful new trend in world Christianity. In the meantime however, perceptions have changed, and many *evangelische (protestant)* churches especially in the larger cities do host migrant congregations regardless of denominational differences. Nevertheless, the distance between the two remains enormous, and even occasional joint programs are the exception.

In four regions of Germany, theological training courses for migrant pastors are offered by institutions or regional churches of the *Evangelical Church in Germany: kikk* (church in intercultural context) in Wuppertal, *KiM* (church in migration) in Frankfurt, *MiSüNo* (mission south north) in Neuendettelsau and *ATTiG* (African theological training in Germany) in Hamburg. Each program has a different focus and structure. As for *ATTiG* at the *Academy of Mission*, it is a two year program where African leaders of migrant churches meet once a month from Friday afternoon to Saturday afternoon. The functions of *ATTiG* are manifold, but first and foremost its aim is to equip the pastors and deacons with knowledge about church life, theological traditions, and society in Germany. At present, the fifth course is running with twenty five participants from different West-African countries and from various denominational backgrounds. By means of *ATTiG*, of course, new contacts are being established between the students but also between the participants and their teachers. And as is expected, the discussions

in class between neo-Pentecostals, “mainline” Christians from West-Africa and Lutheran professors or pastors can be heated at times. But ATTiG, and the same is true for similar programs, has become one of the few places where such an interaction actually can take place. We even succeeded last year to devote a special seminar on the controversial issue of homosexuality and the church, to which the speaker of homosexual ministers in the *Lutheran Church of North-Elbia* was invited. We were able to conduct the seminar in a way that everyone could feel free to express his or her viewpoint, without anybody leaving this gathering in protest. At the end of this remarkable meeting, closing with a prayer, the twenty or so participants spontaneously joint hands while standing in a circle. These are examples of space created by church for social interaction and mutual understanding to evolve.

I would like to mention at this juncture a new development which has taken place within the main Pentecostal umbrella organization in Germany: The *BFP* (Bund Freikirchlicher Pfingstgemeinden/Convention of Free Church Pentecostals) also has begun to offer theological training programs for African migrant pastors of a neo-Pentecostal orientation. And in the fall of 2010 the first batch of sixty three African pastors received their certificate. In addition they were ordained as pastors of the BFP, gaining a new status as recognized pastors in Germany. I think the BFP should be congratulated for this bold step of integration. It is interesting to note in this context, that the BFP has not registered any substantial growth among Germans in recent years. It is only due to the presence of migrant churches, especially from Africa, but also from Asia and Latin-America, that a sharp increase in the number of members has occurred within the past decade. In 2009, more than 700 congregations with about 120.000 active (= 40.000), passive and associate members belonged to the BFP, 32% of which represent “churches of a different language and origin.”⁶

These numbers, however, should be put into perspective in comparing them to certain facts with respect to the two mainline churches in Germany, i.e. the *Roman-Catholic Church* and the *Evangelical Church*, which together account almost evenly for about 50 million members according to the official statistics of 2008, with about one million people visiting the roughly 20.000 services of the EKD alone on a regular Sunday.⁷ These two church bodies alone still represent mainline Christianity in Germany covering about 60% of the total population. Against this evidence the influence of the migrant churches on church life in Germany in general should not be overestimated. In fact, it is minimal!

The strong presence of migrant churches in the BFP creates, however, a great challenge for this Pentecostal church organization, and one can only wish that the leaders will be able to tackle up-coming problems, pertaining among others, to the following topics: the role and authority of the pastor; an undue emphasis on prosperity gospel and evil spirits; handling of money and official documents.

Due to growing contacts with migrant churches in Hamburg, be it through ATTiG, be it through field research, some quite irritating beliefs and practices in at least some of these ministries have come to light in recent months. I would like to point out two examples:

3.1. Supernatural Healing

At the end of November 2010 I visited a branch of *The World Miracle Church* with an international group of theologians for a Bible-study. The congregation meets on a rented floor of an office building for gatherings. On that Wednesday evening only about ten members of the congregation were present. The pastor from Ghana in his teaching claimed that supernatural healing takes place through his mediation, at the expense of medical treatment. He gave an example of a woman who was diagnosed with cancer and after prayers her condition changed with the result that a following medical check-up at hospital could not find any evidence of cancer in her body anymore.

This of course is a stereo-typical motif encountered in Pentecostal preaching and teaching. To us as visitors and cultural/theological outsiders this message was irritating not only because it could not be squared with our own experiences, expectations and strategies pertaining to dealing with illness. The message also seemed to be in tension with the physical condition of the members present most of whom looked worn out and not very healthy. There was an obvious gap between the claim of the preacher on the one hand and the reality on the ground on the other hand.

I do not want to deny that unexpected changes of predicaments do occur in the lives of believers after prayer, and there is no good reason why Christians should not reckon with the possibility of miracles since their faith is based on the good news of God’s resurrection of Jesus from the dead. However, *biblically and theologically* we are talking here about *God’s* possibility and choice. In many neo-Pentecostal ministries it seems as if pastors as “powerful men of God” claimed to be able to actually *force* God to intervene. As such, these pastors appear to be powerful, and *their* supposed power is being displayed in services, while the power of God recedes into the background – not to speak of any lack of power with respect to Jesus during his ministry, or of the apostle Paul. Their claim, however, clearly presents an *unbiblical concept*⁸ which is informed by African traditional religion (ATR). It represents a transformation of local *Juju* beliefs into Christian terminology driven by a magical understanding of the world in general and of the pastoral role in particular.

The fact that after prayers for healing even serious health conditions might change for the better, has however to be balanced by other observations: It has long been described from a medical perspective that occasionally *spontaneous remissions* of cancer do occur in patients, *regardless* of any previous spiritual activity or religious affiliation. The possible relevance of the latest medical research on the *Placebo*

effect for the assessment of “spiritual healing” should also be considered.⁹

In Neo-Pentecostal ministries I have noticed a wide-spread vulnerability on the side of many West-African migrants who – and this aggravates the situation – at times do not enjoy health insurance coverage. This disposition makes it easy for many to fall prey to the claims of so-called “powerful men of God” who dictate miracles, often for a fee.

I would also like to question the effectiveness of spiritual strategies to overcome serious health related or any other existential problems in this society, based on my empirical knowledge – not of the structures of reality, but of certain patterns of behavior on the side of West-African neo-Pentecostal migrant Christians including ministers in crises: It is a fact that many a times members of these churches would eventually turn to representatives of the *evangelische Kirche* for assistance, typically as last resort when it is often *too late* for effective help with respect to medical treatment or the threat of deportation. In those cases, it is the devotion and expertise of diaconical personnel and lawyers which – after great efforts – at times result in a solution of the problem. One might want to call *these* instances miracles!

3.2. Reversing curses, spiritual killing and witchcraft beliefs

In May 2010 I visited another neo-Pentecostal migrant church with a West-African leader- and membership in Hamburg, together with a student group for a regular joint Bible study on a Wednesday evening. When we arrived at the meeting place of the congregation – again a large room in an office building in an industrial area – we learned that the Bible study was replaced by a service due to the presence of a visiting preacher from Ghana. The sermon was delivered in the Ghanaian language Twi, and it was rendered into English by a translator. The topic was: The experience of failures in everyday life due to spiritual attacks from home and the power of the believer to overcome such problems. The sermon was based on Mt 18,18: “Truly I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.”

Afterwards the preacher led the thirty or so participants of the service in prayer. Everyone was supposed to pray aloud for Jesus’ intervention to save them from spiritual missiles sent by family members in Ghana and to return the missiles to the senders resulting in their death. The African visitors all engaged in such prayers for about 15 minutes, shouting and running up and down the room while making slashing movements with their arms as to act out the cutting down of their enemies “in the name of Jesus.” Following the procedure, the visiting preacher announced that the participants should be prepared to receive phone-calls from home within the next couple of days communicating the premature death of their father, their mother, an uncle or aunt, or their child. By implication he meant that such a person was the witch causing the misfortune of a relative in Germany.

Such belief in the reality of witchcraft is common knowledge among people of all walks of life and social status in and from West-Africa, even though there are various degrees of readiness with which people might attribute a misfortune to the activity of a witch. At times, the wish to spiritually kill a witch translates into the *physical* killing of an accused person. A recent case in point is an incident that was reported from Ghana by the English speaking worldwide media at the end of November 2010: An elderly woman who was accused to be a witch by a neo-Pentecostal pastor was burnt alive which eventually caused her death, by a group of people around that spiritual leader in the large industrial town of Tema.

My colleagues Cephas Omenyo and Abamfo Atiemo of the *University of Ghana* at Legon have described this rather recent trend in West-African Christianity in an article published in 2006 in the *Ghana Bulletin of Theology*: “Claiming religious space: The Case of Neo-Prophetism in Ghana.” In this article they maintain a continuity of this type of prayer with African traditional religion. For example, Akan “libations always include imprecations pronounced on (so-called) enemies (within the community) – that they should become impotent or barren; that they should come to shame and not live”.¹⁰ From a traditional perspective, the enemies are those who have the spiritual power and wish to destroy one’s divinely bestowed spirit, the *sunsum*, resulting in failure of all kinds of endeavours, eventually leading to sickness and sometimes untimely death.

Omenyo and Atiemo observe, that in mainstream Pentecostalism, a distinction is being drawn between actual persons and spirits, i.e. the “enemy” is perceived as spirit not to be identified with the human vessel it employs. Here comes to expression the attempt within mainstream Pentecostalism“ to balance the traditional view with the New Testament. In that sense, alleged witches ought to be shown love and considered as victims who need deliverance”.¹¹

Neo-Prophetism, however, presents an unbroken continuation of conceptions and practices within ATR. This continuation indeed is – from a New Testament perspective in general and from the perspective of Gospel in particular – problematic, since it is the result of an uncritical appropriation of a Biblical passage. I give some examples of prayers against human beings within this latest version of neo-Pentecostalism in Ghana:

“Lord,
when I clap my hands and pray,
may the enemies who work against me
be struck by thunder;
may they get hit and killed
by a car;
whether it is my father,
whether it is my mother
or whoever it is that is my enemy
let them all fall.”

“In Jesus’ name
 you enemy who does not
 want me to prosper
 I cane you.
 I destroy you
 in Jesus’ name.
 I destroy all your works
 against me in the name of Jesus.”

“The enemy or enemies
 that are harassing me
 and work against my prosperity
 I shoot them in Jesus’ name – pee!”¹²

It is no coincidence that these prayers were expressed in the Ghanaian language Twi, and the Hamburg experience supports this view: The visiting preacher in the Hamburg congregation was *not able* to communicate fluently in English. What comes to expression here is the fact that this type of neo-Pentecostalism thrives predominantly among those with a low level of formal education. At the same time and in contrast, classical Pentecostalism and mainstream neo-Pentecostalism in general just recently discovered the value and need of theological education in seminaries and at universities:

“When the Pentecostal/charismatic-type churches become routinised they tend to de-emphasise spiritual power and charisma and, in the process, develop Church cultures that leave virtually no space for people with low educational level to participate in leadership and general church life. (...) This development also creates room for a kind of spirituality that met the desires of ordinary Africans who do not find fulfilment in existing Christian traditions.”¹³

In other words, in an up-ward moving society where the Pentecostal/charismatic movement has “become the religion for the new educated urban middle class”¹⁴, neo-Prophetism expresses the fears, struggles and wishes of those left behind economically and socially. The majority of West-African migrants in Germany represent this stratum of their societies back home.

This development clearly undermines the interest of the EKD related church bodies to support human rights and to up-lift human dignity especially amongst those most vulnerable to abuse, i.e. women in migration. It creates a great challenge to co-operation with migrant churches involved in the aforementioned activities.

4. Conclusion

In general I am sceptical that *evangelische (protestant)* Christians in general and pastors in particular can learn from the spirituality of Neo-Pentecostal migrants. The underlying cultural frameworks of conceptualising reality are just too different. This difference also accounts for the failure of missionary ambitions on the side of migrant pastors among Ger-

mans. However, our church should create space for qualified encounters between locals and migrants. There is certainly an urgent need to learn *to live together* in society which might eventually lead to growing-together as Christians. This process will take time. I project that many of the neo-Pentecostal ministries will vanish from the scene with the decline of the first generation migrants, i.e. within the next two decades. In fact, this process is already under way as can be observed in Hamburg where the membership of quite a number of migrant ministries has dwindled drastically.¹⁵ And it is needless to mention that almost all West-African migrant churches face enormous challenges from within, especially due to power-struggles which often lead to splits and the fragmentation of congregations.

The second generation might become instrumental in bridging the gap between the two traditions involved, i.e. the West-African and the Western European heritage. *His Kingdom United*, which celebrated its third anniversary in March 2011, is a case in point. Also the mainline-church congregations from West-Africa which represent a more balanced Charismatic version of Christianity, including the Church of Pentecost, are promising partners for co-operation and exchange.

By the way, I would like to draw our attention to the potential of the Ghanaian Presbyterian congregations in our midst: The EKD churches might want to engage in closer partnership especially with this migrant church and support it. The *Presbyterian Church of Ghana* is of course the result of missionary endeavours of the *Basel Mission Society*. While the BFP has included their Pentecostal brothers and sisters into their fold, and while the *Ghanaian Methodist Church* is closely linked to the *Methodist Church* in Germany, the *Presbyterian Church of Ghana* – our “natural” partner as sister church and one of the big players among the migrant churches – keeps on floating freely. The *Presbyterian Church of Ghana* in Germany is registered as private association (*Verein*) while the neo-Pentecostal churches many of which are rather small in membership legally represent a public body (*Körperschaft des öffentlichen Rechts*) due to their connection with the BFP, enjoying more recognition and rights. I would like to add that the present overseer of the *Presbyterian Church of Ghana* in Germany, Rev. Decker, is presently pursuing his master’s degree in intercultural theology at the *Mission Seminary* at Hermannsburg, in conjunction with the *University of Hamburg*, indicating his ability and willingness to engage himself in a joint theological discourse of high academic standard.

Establishing closer contacts with mainline churches from West-Africa whose leadership is well trained theologically has the potential to actually entice the locals to search for new forms of a holistic spirituality which embraces both personal and societal dimensions of existence – a spirituality that does not deny our traditions and our knowledge of the world but that might deepen our faith and our understanding of the world and of the meaning potential of Gospel.

While co-operation with the mainline churches is the most obvious, most promising and least challenging task before us, encounters with the more “foreign” neo-Pentecostal ministries should also be encouraged, and they should be intensified. Of course, these ministries engage very different theologies and liturgies from what we may regard as standard. It should, however, not be forgotten that they represent a growing version of Christianity in the South, and in some respects they show affinities with the experiences and aspirations of the Early Christians who can also be described as Charismatics – including Paul!¹⁶ Many of these ministries are struggling abroad with their pastors trying hard to serve well, and to many migrants these ministries are a place to feel at home socially and spiritually.

The frictions caused by encounters, especially by hosting these congregations in our church buildings might also be productive in challenging us to reflect critically our spiritual life and church structures. Church history and especially Mission history teaches us that the Gospel often times unfolds ironically, and if we disregard the voices and the choices of the migrants from the South as expressions of unqualified subalterns, we might miss our chance to live up to the Gospel.

1 This paper is an up-dated version of my lecture. The lecture style has been retained.

2 It should be noted, however, that also a few of the branches of the mainline churches with a West-African membership in Germany have experienced splits. One major contributing factor has been the lack of preparedness on the side of the ministers sent from the home country to take serious the specific needs and also certain changed attitudes of their congregation due to their exposure to particular circumstances in a foreign place, often over many years. Here the church members are often the experts in many areas of life, not the newly arrived pastor from home who is a total cultural outsider.

3 Cf. with respect to the mission attempts among the Ewe, the instructive description by W. Ustorf, *Bremen Missionaries in Togo and Ghana:*

1847-1900 (Legon Theological Studies Series: Ecclesial Studies 4), Accra, Ghana 2002, 271-275.

4 Cf. The interesting details in D.N.A. Kpobi, „Conviction of things not seen: The West Indian Factor in the Establishment of the Presbyterian Church of Ghana, in: *Trinity Journal of Church and Theology* 16,2 (2008), 5-25.

5 Claudia Währisch-Oblau, *The Missionary Self-Perception of Pentecostal/Charismatic Church Leaders from the Global South in Europe. Bringing Back the Gospel (Global Pentecostal and Charismatic Studies 2)*, Leiden/Boston 2009; cf. my review of the book on the website of Interdisziplinärer Arbeitskreis Pfingstbewegung, Universität Heidelberg.

6 Cf. the website of the BFP on statistics with respect to 2009 (<http://www.bfp.de/pages/wir-ueber-uns/statistik-zahlen.php>).

7 Cf. the websites of the EKD on statistics with respect to 2008/2009 (<http://www.ekd.de/statistik/gottesdienst.html>; www.ekd.de/statistik/mitglieder.html).

8 In NT studies, my distinction between bearers of numinous power, petitioners of numinous power, and mediators of numinous power has been widely accepted as helpful tool to get close to an emic appreciation of the NT and other ancient evidence with respect to the functions of actions by subjects involved in miracle healing procedures, cf. W. Kahl, *New Testament Miracle Stories in their Religious-Historical Setting: A Religionsgeschichtliche Comparison from a Structural Perspective (FRLANT 163)*, Göttingen 1994; cf. St. Alkier, *Wunder – Neues Testament*, in *4RGG* 8 (2005), 1719-1722, esp. 1720.

9 Cf. U. Bingel e.a., *The Effect of Treatment Expectation on Drug Efficacy: Imaging the Analgesic Benefit of the Opioid Remifentanyl*, in: *Sci Transl Med* 3/70 (2011), 70ff.

10 C.N. Omenyo and A.O. Atiemo, *Claiming religious space: The case of Neo-Prophetism in Ghana*, in: *Ghana Bulletin of Theology* 1,1 (2006), 55-68, 63. For further discussion of this phenomenon, cf. W. Kahl, *Spiritual Violence “in the name of Jesus”*. The case of neo-Pentecostal Ministries from West-Africa in Germany, forth-coming in: A. Bieler, Ch. Bingel and H.-M. Gutmann (ed.), *After Violence*, Frankfurt 2011.

11 *Ibid.*, 63.

12 *Ibid.*, 64f. I have adjusted the capitalization.

13 *Ibid.*, 68.

14 *Ibid.*, 67.

15 For a random example I would like to point to an experience on Sunday, Febr 27, 2011 when I visited two Ghanaian ministries celebrating their cervices in church buildings of the evangelische Kirche, in Hamburg-Altona. The membership had receded to nine in a Ewe speaking congregation and to two (!) in a Twi speaking congregation. Interestingly, in both cases women served as preachers and leaders.

16 Cf. G. Williams, *The Spirit World in the Letters of Paul the Apostle. A Critical Examination of the Role of Spiritual Beings in the Authentic Pauline Epistles (FRLANT 231)*, Göttingen 2009, and my review of the book, up-coming in *ThLZ* 2011.

“Cultural Roots, Cultural Transition, Understanding of Faith and Cooperation in Development”

The Challenge of the African Reformation for Fellowship in Mission

Preliminary remarks

The phenomenon of Pentecostalism, in Africa considered as the “African Reformation”, challenges ecumenical mission theology. The Pentecostal movement in its different theological shapes seems to offer compatible alternatives for a Christian life beyond the traditional Mission Instituted Churches. While some of them give way to new forms of spirituality which is inspired by Charismatic experiences, others feel threatened by the mission practice of emerging Pentecostal churches. These transformation processes affect partnership relations between the traditional Western mission churches and their counterparts in Africa: While Christians in German churches and missions might question shapes of Christian faith which give priority to supra-natural experience, charismatic Christians in Africa may consider Christianity in Germany as a “dry bone” without any life. While charismatic Christians in Africa might prefer to put their hope in the victory of Christ over all evil powers, Christians in Germany might ask for more theologically legitimized commitment to socio-political processes in their partners’ countries. This paper tries to explore possible theological dialogues which could enable mutual learning in order to expand ecumenical relationships beyond traditional western mission. The point of departure is taken from the recent developments in ecumenical mission theology.

“Come, Holy Spirit, heal and reconcile!” The motto of the World Missionary Conference in Athens 2005 was deliberately chosen to mark a paradigm shift in ecumenical mission theology. The ecumenical movement opened itself up for the “pneumatological turn” that had started in the 90ies as a reaction to the growing visibility of religions and cultures all over the world. The political framework was the breakdown of the East-West block system that had determined world politics for half a century. In fact, as a fruit of the ongoing decolonization precolonial religions and cultures gained momentum. Postcolonial theories as developed e.g. by Edward Said for literature aimed at the deconstruction of imperial worldviews and also entered theological thinking in order to deconstruct the companionship of Christianity with imperialism.

As a special turning point for theology the 500th centenary of the so called *Conquista* in Latin America in 1992 could be considered. It was marked by a new self consciousness of the precolonial religions and cultures which nowadays are politically recognized in states as Bolivia and are taken into consideration in theological education, as e.g. in Brasil where the study of Afrobrasilian religions and cults is compulsory in theological colleges.

The growth of Pentecostal churches on the ground of vernacular religions and cultures seems to indicate that Pentecostalism offers fitting concepts for the creation of a Christian spirituality that includes non-Christian religious beliefs and customs. While Harvey Cox puts it in the metaphor of Jazz which uses the same elements everywhere but sounds different according to the specific contexts, Walter Hollenweger (1997) stresses the capacity for syncretism as a specific strength of Pentecostalism. And he encourages traditional churches to embrace syncretism and open up for Pentecostal spirituality.

Obviously, the pneumatological turn in ecumenical theology together with the recent criticism on the secularization theorem in Western countries open new possibilities of encounters between traditional ecumenical theologies on the one hand and Pentecostal theologies on the other. I want to focus on the following issues:

1. The Kingdom of God and the Holy Spirit: History and Eschatology
2. Communicating the Gospel
Secularization
Health and Healing
Culture
Justice
3. Conclusion: Ecumenical Mission Theology, Pentecostal Christianity and Development - Partners for a Critical Fellowship?

1. The Kingdom of God and the Holy Spirit: History and Eschatology

The Kingdom of God has been and continues to be the most powerful metaphor for ecumenical mission theology. At the beginning of the *Life and Work* Movement, preparing for the first World Conference in Stockholm 1925, Adolf Deißmann, one of the pioneers of the ecumenical movement, stated a new endeavour for *God and His Kingdom* among Christians of all the nations. The longing for peace and justice as one of the roots of the ecumenical movement joined hands with the endeavour for evangelism of the mission movement. The Biblical metaphor of the Kingdom of God unified evangelization with the practical work for justice and peace. Henry Sloan Coffin during the first World Mission Conference in Edinburgh identified the Kingdom of God with the “Christ-like social order”. These beginnings set the guidelines for the ecumenical movement and its related mission theology, which understood history as the development towards the Kingdom of God, while at the same time the metaphor of the Kingdom always transcended social and political systems.

In the centre of this theological approach for about seventy years was Christology. It combined the common efforts of the churches to work for evangelization, unity and peace. This is spelled out e.g. in the confession of the *World Council of Churches* and is very manifest especially in liberational theologies, which show Christ as God in solidarity with the poor. Thus, the Christologically centred metaphor of the *Kingdom of God* became the powerful driving force for decades of struggle of Christians in solidarity with the poor.

The historical Pentecostal movement, however, shows similar critical attitudes towards exclusion and oppression. Most Pentecostals according to Hollenweger originally were pacifists. Arthur Booth-Clibborn e.g., son-in-law of the founder of the Salvation Army William Booth, criticized “organized sin” which he considered much worse than individual sin – thus anticipating the concept of “structural sin” adopted by the ecumenical movement from the late fifties onward. An explicit pacifist attitude expresses itself in the letter of the Assemblies of God addressed to President Woodrow Wilson in 1917, heavily criticizing the war economy¹.

While the ecumenical movement was inspired by the theology of the Social Gospel, critical thinking in the Pentecostal movement was nurtured by certain traces within the sanctification movement. It is this legacy which implies the commitment to work for peace and reconciliation, to anti-slavery and even feminist attitudes. This legacy, however, later on was neglected. Large parts of the Pentecostal movement adopted more or less evangelical positions on ethical questions. Hollenweger, criticizing heavily this change, offers a provisional response for it: The first period of the Pentecostal movement was characterized by the so called *postmillenarism*, i.e. the conviction that the saints would be taken away to Christ *after* the Millenium so that their commitment to justice would enhance the coming of the Millenium. It was World War I and the worldwide economical crisis that changed eschatology towards premillenarism, i.e.

the rapture of the saints *before* the Millenium that affected the change from committed pacifism towards a more individualistic view upon salvation. This then was perceived as being redeemed from the sinful world, making salvation an individual concern. Along with this, another reason for this change was the struggle of Pentecostals to get recognized by the association of Evangelicals. The fraternization between Evangelicals and Pentecostals led to significant changes within traditional Pentecostal theology, above all the loss of their original Pacifism.

Notwithstanding, the “relevant Pentecostal witness”, as Hollenweger puts it, continued in specific contexts as e.g. in South Africa during the Apartheid regime which was challenged by Pentecostal Frank Chikane. He struggled against the racist tendencies within his Apostolic Faith Church and risked his suspension from ministry. His example shows the struggle for a theological concept of sanctification in socio-political perspective thus resisting the individualization of the concept of salvation and the escape from the responsibility to shape history according to faith.

While on the one hand Pentecostal theologians nowadays pick up again the critical roots of the movement - Juan Sepúlveda in Chile is one example -, on the other hand within the ecumenical movement the development optimism faded out during the 90ies of the past century. The concepts of “realized eschatology” gave way to a more holistic interpretation of salvation including especially the issues of healing, reconciliation and dialogue with other religions. Questions may be asked as to whether these developments present a paradigm shift similar to the one Pentecostalism underwent after World War I.

Can both movements learn from one another comparing their theological reactions on global political events? I think a critical historical approach to the respective theological traditions could lead to interesting insights in the way history is perceived and addressed which could be helpful to overcome the theological deviations today still existent between ecumenical and Pentecostal strands of theologies and churches. Whether common perspectives on history can be achieved one cannot predict, but desire. I think it would be worth while to explore whether the metaphor of the “Kingdom of God” can be accepted by both the movements and figure as a common base of doing theology.

2. Communication of the Gospel

In German mission theology, the question whether mission is first of all hermeneutics or communication of the Gospel has long been debated. No doubt, Pentecostal mission theology gives priority to the communication of the Gospel. As communication includes the whole witness of a Christian community by words and deeds, I want to start with the practical witness. The transformation of history towards the Kingdom of God, in ecumenical theology heavily debated since its beginnings in the twenties of the past century, gave high priority to the commitment of Christian churches for

justice and peace. In the dialogue between Western mission churches and Charismatic churches, the question of theological legitimization of development work and its relevance for Christian mission is sometimes controversial. Without going into detail on the questions of development cooperation – this will be discussed later by Prof. Dr. Lothar Brock – I want to highlight briefly the theological aspect. The difference in the perception of the relevance of development work for Christian witness in my opinion partly has its roots in the theory of secularization that for decades has prevailed also in German mainstream Protestantism. The encounter with Pentecostal forms of Christianity as well as with the revival of other religions in the world challenges the theorem of secularization.

2.1 Secularization

Secularism in Europe for decades has been perceived as the ideology of progress. Even theologians have praised secularism as the most adequate form of modern society, being the legal inheritance of Protestant thought. Theology, in their opinion, should therefore embrace secularism as it gives way to a perspective on the whole creation that is not filtered through religious precepts. Mankind, finally, would accept its responsibility for the creation and start working for liberation.

This perception of secularism has been contested by theologians and scholars of other sciences. American Sociologist Peter Berger questions the theory of secularism at all. He claims that in reality we are witnessing a process of constant pluralisation of religions and other worldviews. This causes a high degree of uncertainty for people who are not becoming less religious but differently religious. In the end, this doesn't mean modern societies are overcoming religion and developing towards more liberation for everyone. On the contrary: What can easily be observed is that many societies rejoice in religious revivals. This has led to the critical opinion that the theory of secularism in reality was very much centred on Western Europe. At the same time, the theory of secularism is questioned for being a theory of Western dominance promising progress of development to societies which have never embraced it. In the words of Allan Anderson, "the Western God could not help Africans".

Together with the new self-consciousness of religions all over the world, also the Pentecostal movement challenges the secularization theorem within Protestantism.

To be more specific on this issue, let me take the example of health and healing.

2.2. Health and Healing

The *Conference for World Mission and Evangelization* (CWME) picked up health and healing as a new paradigm for ecumenical mission theology – on one hand to sum up mission theology in the beginning of the 21st century; on the other because of the growth of Christian movements which

make healing a special focus of their work². The ecumenical movement makes it a point to enter into dialogue with these movements. WCC's Christian Medical Commission stated: "Health is a dynamical form of being of the individual as well as the society; a condition of well being of the body, the mind, the soul, the spirit, on the economic, political and social level, harmony with others, with the material environment and with God."³ This definition comes close to the one by the World Health Organization of 1946. Differently from WHO, the Christian Medical Commission understands health as dynamic process relating to the individual as well as to the society, including also the relationship to God, i.e. the spiritual dimension of the personality. This holistic approach is based on the biblical anthropology. It takes into account the different relationships of the personality as well as the different aspects of anthropology, making spirituality a dimension of the human.

At the same time, this holistic concept of healing takes up former concerns as liberation from all kinds of oppression towards justice and peace for all. And it reaches out beyond traditional Christian ecumenism opening up for interreligious cooperation: The relationship with non-Christian religions appears in the perspective of reconciliation, including e.g. the concern for indigenous people and cultures which have been oppressed by Christian colonialist powers as in Latin America and for sure also in Africa. Health and healing as a new paradigm for mission theology, thus, offers a vision that includes the yearning of all nations and the whole creation (Rom 8!) for peace. It aims at the concept of shalom, which means reconciliation of all the creation. Reaching far beyond the healing of a single person, this concept includes an eschatological perspective which finally aims at the transformation of the whole creation into the Kingdom of God.

During our consultation, we heard the impressive presentation of Viateur Ndikumana on the healing and reconciling work churches are carrying out in Rwanda after the genocide. He criticizes the Spiritual Renewal Movement initiated by the Church Mission Society from 1925 on for its apocalyptic attitude, claiming salvation only for the members of the own community and leaving socio-political concerns to those who had not been saved. His paper shows the interconnectedness of theology and awareness of ethnic, social and political issues. Healing in a context of genocide, therefore, requires theological thinking that includes all these levels. Ndikumana rightly points out that traditional Western missions have been blind to the role that ethnic, social and political factors should play in the theological reflection and practical action of the church. He rightly refers to the processes that churches in Germany have gone through during and after the genocide on the Jewish population during the Third Reich.

At the same time, it shows the danger of theologies that focus on individual healing and salvation as can be found in the spectrum of Pentecostal theologies. As these theological concepts offer an easy escape from the huge task of healing and reconciliation as are undertaken in Rwanda, they prove

to be not only wrong but dangerous to a country's health and peace. I think the ecumenical experience and theological reflection offers important resources to critically oppose concepts of healing that do not take into account the socio-political contexts. Mainline churches in Africa who adopt these concepts should not hesitate to challenge Pentecostal theologies and practices which refrain to individualistic concepts thus putting in danger social health and peace of the society. Instead, Pentecostal churches should be invited to join reflection on the different concepts of health and healing.

At the same time, institutions of theological education should be requested to revise their teachings in order to enhance theological reflection of the socio-political contexts. In Rwanda, institutions as the *Centre de Formation et Documentation* have deliberately chosen to develop theology critically from the genocide experience in order to enhance reconciliation and peace. Churches should be requested to support institutions like that. Pentecostal churches, on the other hand, should be approached in order to motivate their students to attend these institutions and foster an ecumenical spirit in theological education.

A second important example of the theological concepts on health and healing is the question of HIV and AIDS in Africa. As this is strongly connected to the question of cultural rites, I will discuss this in the next paragraph.

2.3 Culture

The communication of the Gospel leads to the encounter with cultures. Ecumenical theology has broadly discussed the relationship between Gospel and culture. Sure enough, protestant missions in the beginning have been very critical on syncretism. Generally we could say that the tendency was to replace indigenous culture by Western cultural patterns. But as early as the second decade of the 20th century, missionaries started to question their own practice and in many places gave way to new and more indigenous cultural forms of Christianity. It was the global decolonization process, starting in the 40ies of the 20th century that enhanced these processes. On the ecumenical level, the political processes found their reflection in the debates that culminated in the World Mission Conferences in Bangkok 1973 and in Salvador da Bahia 1996 which put hallmarks in this discussion. It was agreed that Christianity only exists in the form of cultural varieties. This also included postcolonial criticism: The Western form no longer was considered the only valid shape of Christianity. Today, contextual theologies all over the world explore the relationship between Christian faith and the ethnic, socio-political and religious contexts⁴.

As mentioned above, the Pentecostal movement seems to offer specific concepts to the challenge of socio-cultural and religious contexts. Allan Anderson quotes Harvey Cox, who suggests that "for any religion to grow today, it must demonstrate two vitally important and underlying capabilities. First, the religion must be able to include and transform at

least certain elements of pre-existing religions which still retain a strong grip on the cultural subconscious... Secondly, it must also equip people to live in rapidly changing societies."⁵

As for the relationship between Christianity and culture in Pentecostal practice, Allan Anderson holds that "A sympathetic approach to local culture and the retention of certain cultural practices are undoubtedly major reasons for their (the Pentecostal churches' in Africa, VG) attraction."⁶ This underlines Hollenweger's position that Pentecostalism has a specific inclination towards syncretism. Juan Sepulveda agrees, stating that "we cannot grasp any meaning without the help of our precious cultural categories and so 'purity' is not given to us. Some sort of syncretism is inevitable."⁷

Sepulveda here does not only speak for Pentecostal mission theology. What he expresses nowadays is common sense also in ecumenical theology. The ecumenical debate on Gospel and culture, starting with the World Mission Conference in Jerusalem 1928 and culminating in Salvador da Bahia 1996 shows the transformation of the concept of culture from the so called "accommodation theory" towards a modern anthropological concept. Culture is no longer judged in "higher" and "lower" developed forms from a Western point of view but from within the respective society. Contextual theologies deliberately examine the respective socio-economic and cultural contexts in order to pronounce the Gospel accordingly into the context. Still, contextual theologies also express critical theological analysis of the context; cultures cannot be uncritically adopted.

From the Pentecostal perspective, Hollenweger, Anderson and Sepúlveda agree: "Whenever Christianity, unencumbered by its various foreign cultural expressions, encounters another living religion and culture as it does in African Pentecostalism, a transformation takes place in both directions. The Christian message challenges, confronts and changes whatever seems incongruous or inadequate in African popular religion and cultural practices, and African religion and culture transform and enrich Christian message so that it is understandable and relevant within the worldview in which it is submerged."⁸

These processes, however, include conflicts. Ecumenical experiences show that the fields of combat are political and economic power structures as well as gender relationships. Let me cite only one example which touches all the three of them: the question of theology in times of HIV and AIDS. Female African theologians since the 80ies have been critically analyzing African cultures from the perspective of the role of women and the construction of gender relationships. The publications of the Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians, founded in 1989 by Mercy Amba Oduyoye, show that discrimination of women is deeply inherent in many African cultures. Since the 90ies there is a strong debate on African cultures and their reception in Christianity between male and female theologians in Africa. With the spreading of the HI-Virus and the AIDS pandemic, critical analysis es-

pecially of African rites have been made. Female theologians reveal that many original African rites concerning the treatment of women before their marriage or after becoming a widow have been “baptized” by Christian churches but nevertheless did not transform the discrimination and disadvantage of women⁹. This is especially true for the questions of female genital mutilation, of forced marriage of daughters for atonement, of polygamy and the related questions of the law of succession and of the cleansing of widows. While African female theologians are debating the questions which African cultural inheritance can be considered helpful and which have to be transformed, Musimbi Kanyoro states: „It was necessary to come to terms with identifying in our cultures those things that were beautiful and wholesome and life-affirming and to denounce those which were denying us life and wholeness.”¹⁰ Among the most important theological efforts to build a critical Christian consciousness is the so called Tamar-Campaign which started in South Africa in 2002 and meanwhile is spread in many African countries and reformulated into different languages and contexts and adapted to different target groups. The efforts of the *Ecumenical HIV and AIDS Initiative in Africa* (EHAIA) in many regions are joined by Evangelical and Pentecostal Christians. The fact that since 2007 also male African theologians have picked up the issue and discuss critically the concepts of masculinity inherent in their respective cultures which up to the moment also have been uncritically adopted by Christian churches is perhaps the most important success of the efforts to make theology in times of HIV and AIDS and on the long run will be the most powerful transformation of African cultures.

These considerations show that the relationship between Gospel and culture cannot refrain from the question of justice.

2.4 Justice

As mentioned above, Cox states that for the success of any religious movement today it is necessary to include pre-existing elements of the other religion and to equip people to live in rapidly changing societies. Both of the issues have been treated in ecumenical theology, too. Besides the debate on Gospel and culture, during the late fifties and sixties of the 20th century, the study programme on societies in rapid social change was a main concern in the work of the World Council of Churches since the late fifties. Empowerment of the poor and solidarity by the rich were issues heavily debated during the World Mission Conferences in Bangkok 1973 and Canberra 1980 as well as during the General Assemblies of WCC. Anyhow, the discussion has changed although economic globalization continues to produce poverty. Still, the *Decade to Overcome Violence* together with the AGAPE-movement carry on the struggle for economic justice in a multipolar world¹¹.

What are the specific approaches within the Pentecostal movement towards this issue? Anderson claims that “The Pentecostals have changed the face of Christianity in Africa

because they have proclaimed a holistic gospel of salvation that includes deliverance from all types of evil oppression like sickness, barrenness, sorcery, evil spirits, unemployment and poverty.”¹² We heard the excellent analysis by Claudia Währisch-Oblau on this issue which criticizes from experience that spiritual warfare not by itself is the solution for poverty and mismanagement. Anderson himself admits that, “This message may not have engaged always effectively with the more structurally oppressive political and economic monopolies (...)”¹³. What, then, is the specific contribution of the Pentecostal movement to the debate on poverty and socio-economic justice? According to Anderson, “the needs of people have been addressed more fundamentally than the rather spiritualized and intellectualized legacy of western missionaries.”¹⁴ The excellent presentation we had by Jörg Haustein shows the importance of this approach in Ethiopia where the Mekane Yesus Church answers the needs of the extreme poverty of people by opening up for Charismatic influence. Does it, then, come down to the empowerment of the poor by the spiritual experience, by taking into account the socio-cultural context of the believers, including their traditional religious and cultural rites?

Sure enough, the issue of empowerment of the poor has been addressed in a specific way also by Liberation Theology. It is not possible to discuss in detail the analogies and differences here. Let me only point out the following: The empowerment of the poor in Liberation Theology has been theologically legitimized by “God’s option for the poor”. This approach is Christologically centered and takes its point of departure from incarnation and crucifixion. The poor and oppressed are identified with the suffering Christ, while the rich are invited to become followers of Christ identifying with the cause of the poor. On the level of ecclesiology, the answer was to found basic communities. Educationally, the pedagogy of liberation by Paolo Freire aimed at teaching the illiterate thus enabling them to participate in society.

What is the specific contribution of the Pentecostal movement? Walter Hollenweger points out the significance of narrative theology, oral liturgy and syncretism for the empowerment. It is not possible here to discuss in detail this approach. Personally, I think that traditional mainline theology can learn a lot from this, especially reshaping liturgies and taking serious the narrative approaches developed e.g. by feminist theologies. At the same time, the effect on education has to be discussed: What is the contribution of oral traditions to societies in rapid social change? To which extent do oral theologies empower the excluded people to participate in society?

It seems significant to me, that Pentecostal theologies develop different forms and exercise different impacts in different socio-economic contexts. While the Mekane Yesus Church in Ethiopia is confronted with a society in extreme poverty, in urban regions e.g. in a country as Ghana which is among the “model” countries of IMF Pentecostal churches focussing on “Prosperity Gospel” are very successful. They address mainly sectors of society which are socially and

economically upward mobile. We had the excellent presentation of Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu on this issue and I cannot discuss this in detail now. From a self-critical position, we should recognize that congregational life in German main-line churches usually comprises the middle or upper middle class and to a large extent is far from the prophetic role that the ecumenical movement and especially the Liberation Theologies requested from Christians. However, the phenomenon of the Prosperity Gospel raises the theological question for Christology: While Liberation Christologies challenge the rich to critically solidarize with the poor the question must be asked which Christology is inherent in Prosperity Gospel? While on the one hand Christians in rich Western societies should be careful to criticize such Pentecostal churches in less developed countries who focus on Prosperity Gospel, these churches on the other hand should be asked for their solidarity with the poor people within their own context. Ecumenical theology has developed models beyond paternal models of just “helping the poor” towards emancipation of all. What is the answer of the so called “Third Wave Pentecostalism” that focuses on Prosperity Gospel to this challenge? Finally, relevant Christian witness in times of economic globalization cannot refrain from taking into account the lack of justice produced by the neoliberal economic system. Ecumenical bodies on African as well as on global level must challenge Pentecostal churches to think about their own answers to this phenomenon. This question leads us back to the theological interpretation of history and the concept of the Kingdom of God.

3. Conclusion: Ecumenical Mission Theology, Pentecostal Christianity and Development - Partners for a Critical Fellowship?

Post-colonial theories criticize secularism and all related theories – i.e. development theories based on purely secular perspectives as well as religious science – as expressions of Western colonial thought. Purely secular development theories are criticised as a limited perception of human life from a positivistic perspective. To be fair, we should admit that such concepts had already been rejected by the ecumenical study programme for regions in rapid social change by the end 50ies and beginning 60ies. A purely materialistic view was never the perspective of ecumenical theology and development work.

Liberation Theologies as were especially developed in Latin America have always affirmed Christian religion as a factor in social change. At the same time the new visibility of indigenous religions beginning with the 5th centenary of Latin American colonization in 1992 showed that even 500 years of colonization could not eradicate completely indigenous religions and cultures. I understand that the success of the Pentecostal movement in Africa shows that the same is true for this continent.

Moreover, the new visibility of religions and cultures traditionally shaping societies, before Western colonial Christianity became state religion, requires that development organi-

zations take them serious. Religions must be taken serious as powerful paradigms of personal, social and political life. This in my opinion gives way for a new critical partnership between church development services and the churches. Church development services, ecumenical theology and the local churches together form a good platform to address cultural and religious diversity. Concerning the labour division between missions and development organizations in Germany, which in fact is a very special question, I am of the opinion that we should work together as closely as possible. The institutional division owes itself to historical facts much more than to fundamental theological differences. In the degree that secularism is being questioned, approaches to development that do not take into account religion as a paradigm of human life on its own that has a strong influence on values and practices become more and more questionable. In my opinion, missions and churches in Germany on the background of ecumenical theology have a lot of resources to offer to church development services. At the same time, ecumenical theology has developed a strong critical potential towards models of development that were taken from Western socio-economic models. The African Reformation for sure will not bring about a philosophical and political enlightenment and the same social revolutions Europe went through. Missions, therefore, should not withdraw from development projects as some voices seem to suggest but, quite to the contrary, play a strong role as critical partners, engaging in theological dialogue with the development services on the guiding theoretical principles of their work.

Finally, recent mission theologians try to overcome the colonial perspective of mission altogether, rejecting religious sciences as developed in the course of the 18th century as a dominant theory to legitimate the separation of church elites from the state. Religion – in their opinion – can by no means be defined in itself and seen separated from culture. Religion is practice and in the centre of Christian religion there is the worship. Worship, therefore, becomes the central category for mission. At the same time, the worship distinguishes true believers from those who venerate false Gods as e.g. the market¹⁵. Here, the new mission perspective joins hands with Liberation Theologies. The question remains how within this theological framework a peaceful cooperation of different religions and cultures is possible.

As every social system produces borders and exclusion of people, Christian mission cannot renounce to focus on the human beings that suffer from exclusion. Christian mission always has the responsibility to spell out freshly the Christian witness among other religious believes. Christian mission always advocates for the other.

Last but not least: Christian mission has to accompany critically the ambivalences of other religions and cultures and it will be self-critical enough to take into account that the own Christian insights have to be critically revised in the light of the encounter with the others. This is especially true in contexts where indigenous religions and cultural costumes are revitalized and affirmed without any critical reflection.

In this respect, Christian development agencies cannot dispense with sound theological reflection. Especially the phenomena of fundamentalisms in other religions as well as within Christianity have to be carefully addressed. Ecumenical frameworks have proved to be the best way out of fundamentalisms. Ecumenical mission theology, therefore, is a good partner for Christian development initiatives which cannot resolve these concerns by themselves.

That ecumenical theological discussion is already reaching out for the encounter with Pentecostal Christianity is clearly shown in this conference. We also have seen some of the critical points that need further discussion. To conclude, let me summarize some of the questions which in my opinion are promising for further exploration:

Ecumenical as well as Pentecostal theologies have gone through changes concerning their perspectives on history. Can the Biblical metaphor of the Kingdom of God in its new interpretation after the “pneumatological turn” in ecumenical thought offer a common platform for ecumenical and Pentecostal deliberations on history?

The new focus on Pneumatology in ecumenical theology still needs further reflection in its relation with the Christological focus developed in the 20th century. As the focus on sanctification in traditional Pentecostalism, today expressed especially by the “spiritual warfare”, also parts from Christology, I would like to ask for the relevance of Pneumatology in Pentecostal tradition. In which way is the “pneumatological turn” reflected in Pentecostal theologies?

Which possibilities are there to develop an approach to an Ecumenical Trinitarian Pneumatology, taking into account the Christological traditions both in ecumenical and Pentecostal theologies? A Trinitarian Pneumatology should lay the foundations for a critical approach to the question of cultures and their transformation as well as to the question of the concepts of history and salvation.

It, finally, could help churches of traditional ecumenical and of Pentecostal origin to become critical partners in the common Christian mission of transforming both, the individual and the society towards the Kingdom of God.

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1 Hollenweger 1997, 211ff.

2 Cf. Jakob 2010.

3 Cf. Deutsches Institut für Ärztliche Mission, 1990. 9.

4 Cf. Grüter, 2010.

5 Harvey Cox, *Fire from Heaven, The Rise of Pentecostal Spirituality and the Reshaping of Religion in the Twenty-First Century*, London 1996, 219; in: Allan Anderson, *Pentecostal Gospel*,....

6 Anderson, *Pentecostal Gospel* ...

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8 Anderson, *Pentecostal Gospel*,....

9 Cf. Chitando 2009.

10 Chitando 2009, 57.

11 Cf. Grüter, 2011.

12 Anderson, *Pentecostal Gospel*,.....

13 Ibid.

14 Ibid.

15 Cf. Geel 2010

The Challenge of the “African Reformation“ for Fellowship in Mission and Development

A Social Sciences Perspective

Long Abstract

I talk to you as a Social scientist. So please do not expect any theologically inspiring speculations.

My task is to address the implications of the „African Reformation“ for Church-based development cooperation.

I see at least four possible implications:

1. the first one refers to the meaning of development;
2. the second to the contextualization of church-based development cooperation;
3. the third to the relationship of mission and development and
4. the fourth to the larger world political frame of our debate, i.e. to the global power shift and the growing role of religion in conflict

In the following, I will elaborate and discuss these implications.

1. Development as an essentially contested concept

I fully agree with Rev. Francis Mkandawire who, in his contribution to this consultation, observes that

“stakeholders define development in different ways depending on the world view that they subscribe to (...). Each group defines development in a way that benefits its own interests and aspirations”.

As he expressly states, this goes for the Churches, too.

So can development be defined at all in an inter-subjectively meaningful way?

Though he concedes that there will never be a universally accepted definition of development, Rev. Mkandawire offers a definition which, as he sees it, sums up the broad debate on the term:

“development can be defined as the improvement of the quality of life through an increase in economic growth and distribution, the enjoyment of political and civil rights by all irrespective of gender, ethnicity, religion, race, etc.”

Practically all countries have subscribed in one way or the other to the values and goals of development contained in this definition. The problem is, of course, that these values and goals have to be realized in a fundamentally heterogeneous world. That is to say that the political, economic and cultural implications of development differ just as fundamentally as the conditions under which development is to be achieved. This is why development cooperation has always been disputed with regard to the question whether it really serves its purpose or rather amounts to a self-serving policy in the guise of a universal aspiration.

But development is not only disputed because of its uneven consequences, but also with regard to its very meaning: In this sense development is an **essentially contested concept**.

The mainline Churches have always supported the notion of development as such, but they saw themselves as critical counterparts of governmental ideas on what “development” stands for. Over the years this has changed. The dispute between the donor churches and “their” governments now centers on the priorities and functions of development cooperation. The Churches pioneered the concepts of empowerment and ownership. But now this pioneer work seems to be locked into a discourse on aid effectiveness which stresses the instrumental value of empowerment and ownership in pursuing pre-given development goals. This new orientation of the development discourse has been taken up by the OECD Paris declaration of 2005 and its follow-up in the so called Accra Process.

Yet, as aid effectiveness has moved to the fore as a central topic of development cooperation, a new round of debate seems to evolve around the *meaning* of development.

In their developmental thinking the mainline Churches have associated development with progress (as understood by Marxists), with modernization (as featured by liberals) or with a civilizational process (as expounded by Norbert Elias).

Today, all these connotations of development are becoming shaky – not the least because of the break-down of Real Socialism and because the West is not as sure any longer as it used to be regarding its role in spearheading a better world.

The important point in the context of our debate is that the rise of the Charismatic Churches increases these feelings of uncertainty. The bewildering successes of Charismatic or Pentecostal churches in not only drawing crowds but also in leading people on a path of effective self-help challenge the preferred strategies of the mainline churches in their developmental work and even more so their very understanding of development. Is there a solution in sight to this growing uncertainty about development? With this question let me turn to my second point:

2. The contextualization of church-based development cooperation

In his contribution to the present consultation, Allen Anderson cites the manifesto of the Organization of African Instituted Churches of 1996:

“The Western God was spiritually inadequate and irrelevant to deal with the reality of many aspects of our lives.”

Why? One of the answers given by Allen Anderson is that the western-founded Churches in Africa failed in providing a contextualized Christianity. What does that mean with regard to development? Borrowing a formulation from Claudia Währisch-Oblau’s paper, the development institutions of the mainline Churches can be said to understand development as “the outcome of more or less rational sociopolitical processes”. This is to say that “progress is defined as the spreading of rationality as a universal truth”.

This view has come under pressure. To cite Claudia Währisch-Oblau again: “A growing number of social scientists strongly state that the western way of modernity is only one cultural project within a multitude of modernities”. Under this perspective, African religiousness as expressed in African Charismatic or Pentecostal Churches would not represent backward social forces but a non-Western cosmology which describes material problems and developments as the outcome of spiritual actions expressed in “a spirit idiom”.

The question then is to what extent mainline Churches have to learn this “spirit idiom” in order to better contextualize their work. I think we all agree that the mainline Churches have to stop ignoring this idiom if they have not done so yet. But should they also begin to change their cosmology and the normative preferences that go along with it?

Rev. Mkandawire in his contribution tells the story of Chapsinja Village in Malawi, where a group of traditional chiefs and their cultural advisors meet once a month for a bible study and planning community work.

“The majority of them are able to testify how deep they were in occults and witchcraft before they responded to the gospel of Christ. When they were deep in their ancestral worship, they hated anything that seemed to promote education for the children and development. These were seen as threats to their culture as most of those children who got educated were reluctant to continue to engage in such secretive cultural practices. However, the Gospel of Jesus Christ has managed to destroy these cultural strongholds. The community leaders are now fully committed to social development in their various communities.”

How does this experience relate to the preaching of those who believe in “spiritual warfare” as explained by Claudia Währisch-Oblau? She states that the idea of continual warfare between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan’ (Charles Kraft) “was originally foreign to traditional African religion, but has become increasingly plausible to many African believers in the face of wars, continuing economic hardship and the Aids pandemic”.

This formulation suggests on the one hand that the world views connected with “spiritual warfare” are gaining ground. But it also makes it clear that we should be careful when talking about an African Reformation. There are many influences coming together including external interests and time-bound patterns of thinking which may be internalized and localized, but still may be counterproductive, for instance when they reinforce superstition and witchcraft beliefs in such a way that they reproduce traditional patterns of rule and subjugation or create new patterns of inclusion and exclusion.

As Claudia Währisch-Oblau and Allen Anderson demonstrate, the concrete impact of Charismatic or Pentecostal political practice on the people, their communities and the entire public realm is open for debate. This is to say that the political, social and cultural functions of Charismatic or Pentecostal preaching are just as ambivalent as those of the mainline Churches have been over time. This observation converges with the recent research on the role of religion in conflict. Here, too, we are confronted with ambivalence which is to say, there are limits to generalization about the function of religious beliefs in specific circumstances. The findings of Dickow and Moeller corroborate this interpretation. They come up with a wide variety of answers as to what people get from attending the Charismatic churches in South Africa which were the objects of interrogation.

Referring to “ambivalence” should not be associated with “anything goes”. So the issue is not one of exercising more tolerance but of a better understanding of what the spirit idiom stands for. The task ahead may be even more ambitious. Claudia Währisch-Oblau concludes her observations by asking: “Do we immediately dismiss all kinds of spirit idioms as ‘superstition’ or is it possible to translate this idiom into our own political and social analysis?” In the context of the general argument, this question is more or less rhetori-

cal at least in the sense that we should try to translate the spirit idiom into our own political and social analysis. To do this, may lead to a better contextualization of our thinking on development in Africa and it may thus help to overcome some of the uncertainties about church-based development cooperation that plague us today.

On the other hand, the African context, too, is changing. It is becoming more and more heterogeneous and it will be difficult to contextualize development work in a way that does not lead to more confusion than there was at the outset. But this is a challenge that goes along with contextualization, not an argument against it.

This leads me to my third point.

3. The relationship between mission and development

The rise of the Charismatic or Pentecostal churches also serves as a catalyst for the ongoing attempts to clarify the relationship between mission and developmental work within the mainline Churches. The reason is that the Charismatic or Pentecostal churches stand for all those (spiritual) things which seem to be lacking in present day church-based development cooperation. Let me explain.

The mainline Churches of the donor countries have always stressed their fellowship with their overseas partner Churches. It was this spiritual link which distinguished the Churches as actors in development cooperation from secular actors (perhaps with the exception of those who exercised an ideologically grounded solidarity with their partners). On the other hand, the mainline Churches of the donor countries acted as donors themselves, thus replicating, to a certain degree, the donor-recipient relationship which contradicted the practice of fellowship.

Equally important, the “donor” churches came under pressure to adjust to their organizational environment. This meant firstly, that they tended to create special institutions for dealing with developmental issues, and secondly, that they had to professionalize their action in order to meet the standards of adequacy set in the political world. Thus, the respective Church bodies became part of a development industry in which they thrived and prospered by indulging partly in the same kind of action that everybody else was pursuing.

On the “receiving end” this “NGOization” of Church-based development cooperation also took root as Rev. Mkandawire rightly points out. Thus, partner NGOs were formed which sustained themselves by taking up the idiom of development (“development speak”) and by learning how to raise funds and to please the donors. This trend was reinforced by the fact that the Churches at least in some African countries were under considerable financial pressure to outsource their social services to specialized organizations functioning like private actors on a market place.

This type of Church-based development cooperation has come under critique within the mainline Churches themselves. The issue is, of course, the relationship between mission and development. As already mentioned, this debate is being enhanced by the (imagined or real) successes of the Charismatic churches.

There are functional and substantive arguments for re-orienting Church-based development in response to the rise of Charismatic or Pentecostal thinking. On the functional side, it can be argued that the more or less “technical” development cooperation does not serve its purpose – at least not in the African context, because it does not reach the people and thus contributes little to their empowerment. A more substantive argument is that “technical” development cooperation does not meet the spiritual needs of the people as such. In this respect Rev. Mkandawire states:

“The early Missionaries understood the concept of Mission very well. They brought the Gospel in one hand and development in the other.”

In his view, then, we have to return to the old practice of a holistic mission which addresses the needs of body, mind and soul. Should missionary and developmental activities, then, be re-joined? I think this would be difficult to achieve in countries in which both have developed specific institutional identities. More importantly, there are some substantial differences in the way the needs of people are being addressed under the perspective of mission on the one hand, development on the other. For instance, Rev. Mkandawire writes:

The absence of effective government services in most rural parts of Africa is an opportunity for the Church to fulfill its Missionary mandate of proclaiming the whole Gospel to the whole man.

This argument for holistic action which reconciles mission and development is intriguing. But there is a problem to it. Should we go for a more encompassing missionary work as an alternative to state building? The developmental approach would be, of course, to build up more adequate public services, i.e. to indulge in state building instead of mission building.

I agree with the strong plea of Belay Olam for not separating theology or mission and development. But to me it seems that there would be nothing wrong with bringing the two perspectives into a systematic dialogue with each other instead of trying to (re-)join them. Both, mission *and* development, have to be understood and practiced as holistic concepts. But that does not mean that they are identical or have identical things to do.

For instance, there is a strong need to address macro political and macro social issues which always have been part of church-based development cooperation but not necessarily of mission. In this regard, church-based development coop-

eration not only has to reach the **people**, it also has to reach **governments** and **international organizations**. It has to qualify as a partner competent to raise issues like those spelled out by Rev. Mutombo with regard to the DRC (democracy, good governance, poverty reduction, infrastructure as well as peace and security). The churches will only be heard if they acquire or retain an **expertise** that matches or even trumps the expertise of secular organizations. But, of course, part of this expertise is that churches know more about the spiritual needs of people than secular organizations and that they do not try to instrumentalize these needs for their own purposes but rather help to provide the political and social space in which these needs can be articulated.

In sum, I agree that good governance, poverty reduction, better public services etc. can only be achieved by holistic action. But I would like to stress that this does not necessarily call for a merger of mission and development. I stress this point not only with regard to the need for addressing macro political and macro social aspects of development in a systematic way, but also with regard to my last point concerning the global framework of mission and development, i.e. the global power shift and the present role of religion in conflict. I will be very brief on this point.

4. The global framework

The power shift that we observe today between the new East and the West proceeds mainly in a secular setting. But it has a religious side to it, especially with regard to the relative weight of Christianity and Islam in the present world. There is increasing tension within and between the two religious formations or to put it more adequately, there are increasing opportunities for power brokers to instrumentalize religious patterns of inclusion and exclusion for their own purposes. In this respect Samuel Huntington was right when he stressed that after the ideological clash between East and West, cultural and religious factors (we could also say spiritual factors) would gain in importance. The outcome of this “cultural turn” depends very much on present and future developments in Africa.

The IHT in its January 21/2011 edition ran a front-page story on Iraq. It read:

“The last Christian man in town goes to church each morning to clean the building and to remember the past. Romel Hawal, 48, was born in this town in

Anbar Province when most of the population were Christian. Now, he said, his 11-year-old son knows no other Christians and has no memory of attending church service. ‘When my son swears, it is on the Koran, not the Bible.’”

There are many in Africa, especially on the Southern rim of the Sahara who fear that this may be the future of their countries. On the other hand, many Muslim communities in this area feel on the defensive since they fear to be crowded out of their traditional ways of living. So there is little leeway on both sides for dialogue and mutual understanding. Recurrent clashes between Christians and Muslims in North Eastern Nigeria remind us of how serious the situation can get. And Hans Spitzbeck tells us that very often the only thing left to do is to pray for those who feel victimized not to let their hearts harden and to keep their minds open for reconciliation. How do we contextualize development cooperation in such situations? The Protestant Development Service in Germany (eed) sponsors the by now well-known film on the priest and the muslim preacher in the Jos area in which, in the midst of violence, both try to travel the road of peace. But what is the effect of their example? Have they become show figures which serve the purpose of calming our own conscience? I do not know. There are situations that make us feel very humble. So I conclude on the note that whatever new concepts come up with, we should keep them from turning into one-fits-all slogans. Holistic concepts for approaching difficult situations are fine as long as we do not claim to be more holistic than the others, be they from the development or from the mission side.

In the word of Allen Anderson, the “churches of the law” simply have no choice but to re-assess their relationship with the “churches of the spirit”. But that goes the other way around, too. Church-based development experience tells us, for instance, that there is a lot to learn from “the law” which has to be regarded as a historic achievement and not just as a straightjacket for spirituality.

One last thought: in a multi-religious world inter-religious development cooperation is inevitable. In this respect I wonder to what extent we really “have to re-think the idea of ‘faith-neutral’ development” as Claudia Währisch-Oblau suggests in her highly inspiring paper. I am not sure whether it would really be helpful to give up this notion. But it certainly would be important to give up ‘faith-ignorant’ development cooperation.

Shared memories in the Hamburg “Encounter beyond routine” 2011 and the way forward

1. Shared spiritual life

We, the African and European participants of the consultation, reflected on biblical key texts on the work of the Holy Spirit. This Bible sharing helped us to experience the encounter as a spiritual fellowship and opened us up to recognize the multifarious ways in which the Triune God interacts and intervenes in our lives and in His whole creation.

2. Shared perception of the contemporary Pentecostal/Charismatic movement

We learned that the tremendous impact of contemporary Charismatic/Pentecostal movements is supported by some common traditional cultural and religious patterns that are widespread in Sub-Saharan Africa, such as

- the conviction of the interdependence of the spiritual and the material world,
- the influence of spiritual powers on individual, family, communal, societal and political life at large,
- the importance of prophesy, dreams and healing, and
- the aspiration for prosperity (well-being) in every aspect of life.

Some of these patterns already shaped the AICs (African Instituted Churches) and the Eastern Africa revival in the 20th century and continue to impact the Mission Instituted Churches (MICs)

We also learned, that the contemporary Charismatic/Pentecostal movements in Africa are quite diverse. The different Sub-Saharan regions, shaped by specific cultural, natural, socio-economic patterns and different political ideologies as well as the impact of colonialism and missionary traditions show different shades and shapes of Charismatic/Pentecostal life. There is also a marked difference between mega-churches in major towns and Charismatic/Pentecostal congregations in rural areas and minor towns.

Common are

- the vibrant and enthusiastic congregational life, not only in Sunday services but also in prayer vigils and in everyday social interaction,
- space for young people and women to participate actively in congregational life
- attractiveness to young people
- the striving for holiness in one’s personal and professional life,
- the deep conviction and experience of the proximity and overriding power of the Holy Spirit and His influence on every aspect of life,
- the experience of divine healing, of deliverance, of the power of prophesy and of the momentum of dreams,
- the expectation of the spiritual and material fruits of divine blessing (prosperity),
- an understanding of “mission” that includes evangelization, attractive fellowship and the transformation of individual, societal and even national life,
- an extensive use of modern media (“integral mission”).

Empiric studies show that marginalized as well as middle and upper class people in Charismatic/Pentecostal congregations are empowered to have confidence in the future, gain internal strength in adverse circumstances and show high readiness to actively involve themselves in congregational and in communal life.

We see the movement of members from MICs to Pentecostal and Charismatic churches, but differ in our interpretation of the reasons of this move.

On the other hand, there are differences and even contradictions among traditional and Neo-Pentecostals and Charismatics with regard to, e.g.:

- ❑ the definition and practice of holiness,
- ❑ the teaching on prosperity,
- ❑ the understanding of healing and deliverance,
- ❑ the understanding of the gifts and manifestations of the Holy Spirit
- ❑ the use of scientific medical and psychological assistance in the healing process,
- ❑ the willingness to engage in inter-church cooperation,
- ❑ the willingness to engage in interfaith dialogue,
- ❑ the attitude towards involvement in political life,
- ❑ the understanding of development.

A new feature, particularly strong in some neo-Pentecostal churches, is the effort

- ❑ to serve with educational facilities on all levels, so to foster Pentecostals in strategic business, administrative and political positions,
- ❑ to adopt scientific analysis and professional medical care (HIV/Aids).

3 Theological challenges

We see a living church in Africa, empowered by the Holy Spirit. The Pentecostal/ charismatic movements in Africa pose spiritual and theological challenges not only to the African MICs, but also to European Christianity. Those affect not only our personal lives, but also our perception of denominational traditions and our exegetical research.

We respect the hermeneutical proximity of Pentecostalism to the world views appearing in the books of the New Testament. We need to critically examine the Pentecostal understanding of power by relating it to the theology of the cross. We deem it necessary to relate the predominant radically present eschatology to the yet unseen consummation of God's creation. Still: we see that our theological tradition has underestimated significant portions of the Bible that clearly indicate the efficacy of the intervention of the Holy Spirit here and now.

We cannot ignore a wide range of competence in practices of healing and deliverance in Pentecostal/charismatic movements. We admit that people seeking divine healing have often not been accommodated by our churches. Nevertheless,

we are also aware of the danger to misuse power in the name of God. But there is an equal danger to mistrust the power of the Holy Spirit.

We share with Pentecostals and Charismatics the hope that macro-economic, macro-political and macro-cultural structures can be transformed, to express God's shalom. However, we sometimes disagree on what is the best way to realize that hope: personal conversion and sanctification, or spiritual warfare, or social and political action on behalf of the marginalized.

Together with Pentecostals and Charismatics we believe that it is the will of God that all people have life in abundance. Therefore, we are challenged by the health-and-wealth message (prosperity Gospel) preached in many charismatic and (Neo)-Pentecostal congregations to develop a theology of blessing which does not disregard the theology of the cross. The very core of the "prosperity Gospel" is corrupted when there is no critical analysis of how prosperity is gained.

4. Shared theological convictions

We share the conviction that the message of love (1st Cor 13) is the theological and existential core of the reflection on the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

We agree that the diversity of profiles of piety as such is no reason to segregate from each other.

We accept that different approaches to the biblical message are enriching as long as they are not seen in exclusive terms.

We recognize that life styles, world views, traditions and cultures have a heavy impact on theological reflection.

We recognize that the Pentecostal movement offers some answers to the spiritual realities that many people are facing today. At the same time we are convinced that a Trinitarian Pneumatology should reflect both on the work of the Spirit in all creation (Ps 104, Rom 8, 18-27) and on the meaning of suffering in the discipleship of Christ (conf. 2 Cor and Phil). Concepts of power and success need to be critically examined in this light in order to achieve Christian fellowship.

We consent in the hope that through the guidance of the Holy Spirit we will come to common conclusions on the foundation of our Christian life and work despite all dividing factors and forces that impede our unity.

5. Shared prospects on the way ahead

The charismatic revival within African churches affects our fellowship. In addition we realized that the emergence of neo-Pentecostal churches and their emphasis on independent mission and development challenge traditional ways of partnership. It calls for further exploration. The entrepreneurial spirit of contemporary African Pentecostalism also has an impact on the patterns of cooperation in development.

The African insistence on holistic understanding of mission and development is in accord with the basics of European Christian understanding of development. We however hold that both mission and development are holistic concepts in their own right, related but independent.

Further mutual consultation on the relation of mission and development is needed.

We encourage theological institutions to highlight ecumenical teachings and enter into discourse with Pentecostal theology. Oral liturgies and spiritual experiences in the Pentecostal movements may enrich practical pastoral work. Mission Instituted Churches can learn from Pentecostal churches how to involve youths and women in meaningful ways.

We discussed critically Pentecostal approaches to healing and deliverance and their effects on individual and social life. We learned that some Pentecostal Christians address experiences of socio-political oppression in a "spirit idiom".

We cannot ignore that Christian exertion of healing and deliverance processes cover a wider range of dimensions. With regard to the work of the Holy Spirit we need criteria to discern divine healing and the pastoral praxis of deliverance

and prophesy. Ecumenical positions plead for a comprehensive understanding of health and healing in eschatological perspective that can be experienced even if physical and/or mental health is not (fully) restored.

There is a need for further joint reflection on a development relevant to the African situation and on specific Christian goals and ways to accomplish it.

We encourage African Churches, to address political and socio-economic structures and reflect them theologically in order to contribute also to the ecumenical efforts to overcome such devastating macro-structures.

For the sake of peace we also need to jointly find an understanding of the work of the Holy Spirit in secular life and in communities of other faith.

Some African Christians feel called to share the exuberant enthusiasm of faith with European Christians and engage in reverse mission. European churches need to acknowledge this zeal and to foster close fellowship with African migrant congregations. We encourage them to continue to offer programs for theological education of pastors of migrant churches.

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