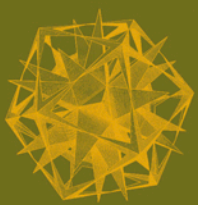
Religion Crossing Boundaries

Transnational Religious and Social Dynamics in Africa and the New African Diaspora

EDITED BY

Afe Adogame & James V. Spickard



RELIGION AND THE SOCIAL ORDER 18

BRILL

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Religion and the Social Order

An Official Publication of the
Association for the Sociology of Religion

General Editor
William H. Swatos, Jr.

VOLUME 18

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LEIDEN • BOSTON
2010

This book is printed on acid-free paper.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Religion crossing boundaries : transnational religious and social dynamics in Africa and the new African diaspora / edited by Afe Adogame and James V. Spickard.
p. cm. -- (Religion and the social order, ISSN 1061-5210 ; v. 18)
Includes bibliographical references.
ISBN 978-90-04-18730-6 (hardback : alk. paper) 1. Blacks--Africa--Religion. 2. Blacks--Religion. 3. African diaspora. 4. Globalization--Religious aspects. I. Adogame, Afeosemime U. (Afeosemime Unuose), 1964- II. Spickard, James V. III. Title. IV. Series.

BL2400.R3685 2010
200.89'96--dc22

2010023735

ISSN 1061-5210
ISBN 978 90 04 18730 6

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PREFACE

REAL GLOBALIZATION: EVERYTHING IS LOCAL

William H. Swatos, Jr.

One of the supposed benefits of getting older is the opportunity to reflect. More than any other volume under my editorship of this series, this one has provided that experience. I remember the appearances of the various ways in which sociology in the second half of the twentieth century confronted what was happening to our life-world. Immanuel Wallerstein analyzed "the modern world-system." Roland Robertson spoke of the world as "a single place." George Ritzer gave us "McDonaldization." Though there were sometimes heated debates among these styles of conceptualization, there's also a sense in which they were *all* right: The "world" had changed, and although one can take a *longue durée* approach to this process and go back to the first voyages of global circumnavigation, the truth to which all these analyses point is that the effects of what we now term *globalization* happened very fast.

It was, indeed, the case that the "world" as a concept did change dramatically at the start of the sixteenth century. What happened at the end of the twentieth century was that the everyday life-worlds of "ordinary people" around the world began to incarnate the global concept. We went from the global as academic principle to the global as life-world in less than fifty years. This volume of the "Religion and the Social Order" series takes up this reality from two important vantage points: exchanges between and within Africa—in respect to both Pentecostal/charismatic Christianity and native African expressions of religious experience—and the life-world of persons of African descent now living at least part of their lives outside of Africa. These couple with the Christian traditions of the West with which this encounter takes place, yet also (though perhaps somewhat less so) between Africa and other parts of what once were conceived as the "Third World" and the West. Whereas the fictitious Phileas Fogg could excite people's imaginations with the adventures in his travels as he claimed to be able to circumnavigate the globe in eighty days, now

anyone can circumnavigate the globe at least twice in eighty hours using commercial travel, while astronauts can do it twice daily.

Two things are true as corollaries: the speed and relative economy of international travel has changed immigration/emigration patterns for what appears to be "all time"—and it works both ways. Let me speak about this personally in two respects.

My grandparents on my father's side were Czechoslovak immigrants of what Paul Spickard speaks of as the "Ellis Island model." Perfectly. My grandparents (whom I never knew) predominately spoke Czech. My father could speak Czech—and would around my great aunt and uncle, and upon an encounter with the occasional 1950s immigrant who needed help of one sort or another, but he steadfastly refused to teach me any Czech whatsoever. "We are Americans. We speak English." It was only out of respect or compassion that he would break this rule. I speak (and know) no Czech.

On the other hand, as I live benignly in Galva, Illinois, exactly halfway between Peoria and the Iowa-Illinois Quad-Cities, I find myself very much enmeshed in aspects of the globalization processes based on the dynamics illustrated in this book, though primarily from the African side, inasmuch as my—now Anglican, up until a few years ago Episcopalian—diocese is in the (South American) Province of the Southern Cone. Our most recently retired bishop is now Assistant Bishop of Bolivia. On top of which, I am incardinated in the most historic Anglican building of the diocese (and probably in the state of Illinois) at Christ Church Limestone. *Hablo espagnol*, but I don't really have to, because about a mile away from us is an Anglican Benedictine monastery consisting of a Puerto Rican bishop (consecrated by Brazilian Old Catholics), priests, and brothers of our diocese. One or another of them fills in for me while I'm away. Our parishioners help keep them stocked with food. Together we have what we call a "Partnership in Mission and Ministry" in Peoria County. At one level it sounds simultaneously a bit fanciful and a bit absurd, but in practice it works itself out week by week in ways that no one could have imagined twenty years ago. (As a totally unintended result of the "Anglicanization" of the Diocese of Quincy, I am now, by canonical residence, also senior priest of the diocese.) Our diocese as a whole in addition has an on-going relationship with the Diocese of Upper Shire in Malawi.

The fact is, however (Marx would be pleased), that globalization didn't come to this area because of Anglican troubles. It came because

of the economy. For while I take fiendish pleasure in responding to the question, "Where is Galva?" by responding "Half-way between Toulon and Cambridge" (both county seats), I could explain instead—and make far more sense of why where I live is as "blessed" as it is—that Galva is also half-way between, and about forty-five minutes in either direction from/to, the international corporate headquarters of John Deere and of Caterpillar. The distances are slightly farther than those between Toulon and Cambridge, but I drive them weekly half the year. Between the altar at Limestone and the lectern at Augustana, I am in the midst of an incredibly global set of interchanges. — And I'll bet you didn't know that when President Nixon made his first trip to China in 1972, he took with him a Galva industrialist who was at that time the largest manufacturer of a particular type of manure spreader in the world. (Leave it to Nixon to find *him*!) The man died a couple of years ago in his nineties, having sold his production rights, but never having closed the office where he continued to receive his residuals. Equally significant: When John Deere Corporation hired its first president/CEO from outside the family (while I was here in my first incarnation), they chose a German — whom I got to know almost as soon as he arrived, because my son and his played on the same soccer team.

So globalization and transnationalism take place in many ways, some of which are certainly unique to the African situation, some are not. I can't say, for example, how significant it is that the Province of the Southern Cone chose to "missionize" the American Church any more than I can say exactly how it is that over a generation's time Archbishop Peter Akinola of Nigeria, clearly a partisan of the pan-Anglican movement in the United States, came to replace the liberal Archbishop Desmond Tutu of South Africa as *Time* magazine's religious golden boy in Africa. But "times, they are a'changin," and I do think that's what Robertson and Wallerstein and Ritzer have each been trying to tell us for the last twenty-five years or more.

I am pleased to see this contribution from Jim and Afe as a part of that continuing process and as a part of the Religion and the Social Order series. I have read these pieces with great interest and gained new insight. I hope you will too. May their tribe increase.

INTRODUCTION: AFRICA, THE NEW AFRICAN DIASPORA, AND RELIGIOUS TRANSNATIONALISM IN A GLOBAL WORLD

James V. Spickard and Afe Adogame

The common American phrase "all politics are local" could just as easily be applied to religion. Religion does not live in the world as a vague abstraction. It lives through specific people, in specific organizations, and in specific communities. Whenever we look for religion, we find it in churches, mosques, temples, synagogues, prayer meetings, pilgrimages, or in the solitude of individual holy practice. We find it in the ways that people in such places interact with one another, carry out their religious duties, and envision a universe that makes those duties meaningful. And we find it outside such settings, as these people carry their religious visions, ideals, and practices into the public sphere—where, indeed, they often use religion to fight with one another about the meaning of life, about ethics, and about public policy.

This makes the sociology of religion important. Sociology shows us the daily patterns on which religions draw and focuses on actual people as they make their way in the world. It helps us see how religions operate in specific historical moments, whether at the individual, the communal or the societal level. Lately, it reminds us to examine what is happening to religion in a globalizing world.

What do we mean by "globalizing"? Laying aside the various nuances of differing sociological theorists' understandings of that term, we simply mean that the contemporary world is interconnected as it has never been before. Swift, cheap air travel, multiple modes of communication, and the growth of a worldwide economic market have created ties between people who previously had few points of attachment. These can be as benign as having a Libyan neighbor married to a Texan, putting on a party for Anglophone neighbors that features Mexican food and dances. They can be as dire as an interconnected financial collapse, in which a crisis in one part of the world creates chaos in another. The point is that the world is now a transnational field, in which religion operates alongside other social institutions and forces. Religion's "locality" thus crosses borders in new and complex ways.

This book explores such transnational localism for one particular set of religions—those that are based in, or connected to, sub-Saharan Africa. In this introduction, we will provide an overview of religions in this sub-continent, particularly the various Christianities about which most of our contributors write, the Pentecostal/charismatic churches and African Independent or Indigenous Churches (AICs),[1] and dimensions of neo-traditional African religions. Then we will review several models of religious transnationalism, each of which focuses on a particular aspect of religions' cross-border activities—both in Africa and elsewhere. Together, these sections will set the context for our contributors' chapters, which we will summarize at the end of our introduction.

Religion in Africa: A Very Brief Overview

The African continent is extremely complex—historically, culturally, religiously, socially, and linguistically. It is home to many indigenous religions that, despite their diversity, share common affinities in their core ideas, rituals, and worldviews (Adogame 2007c: 529, 2009: 77) It has also long been influenced by outside religions—particularly Islam and Christianity, but also other Eastern and Western-related spiritualities. These introduced new religious ideas and practices, which caused the abandonment of some indigenous beliefs and rituals and the transformation or reinvention of others. Islam and Christianity also changed as they adjusted to the African context. Finally, such interreligious contact, plus the massive social changes brought about by colonialism, produced several new religions, some of which appropriated indigenous symbols and gave them a new twist (cf. Adogame 2007c: 525–547, 2009: 75–100).

Africa is thus not merely a passive recipient of global pressures. It is also a site of religious creativity that has had considerable effect on the outside world. The growth and global influence of each of the three religious heritages of sub-Saharan Africa—indigenous religions, Christianity and Islam—needs to be understood against the backdrop of mutual influence and exchange at various historical epochs

[1] Both terms share the acronym, as do two other terms for the same religious groups: "African Initiated Churches" and "African Instituted Churches." Researchers typically use whichever term emphasizes their main point of interest.

(Adogame 2007c: 545). Owing to the fact that most chapters in this volume focus on Christianity (Pentecostalism and AICs), and to a lesser extent on neo-traditional religions and indigenous religious practices, we will briefly map the historical trajectories of Christianity in this region.[2]

Christianity was present in North Africa beginning in late antiquity, where it played a large role in the development of the Christian tradition. It was, however, only weakly influential farther south, for its Latinized brand of Christianity lacked the features it would have needed to become a true missionary church and to penetrate the life of the indigenous peoples. Swept aside by the Muslim conquest, the Church left footprints in places such as Egypt and Nubia (Ethiopia); yet what remained in North Africa had little effect on the rest of the continent.

A second phase of Christianization began in the late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, with the activities of Portuguese Catholics in various African societies. Major influence was focused on Central Africa, particularly the Kongo Kingdom and the Zambezi valley; on the Warri and Benin Kingdoms of the Niger Delta area; and the hitherto unpopulated islands of Cape Verde and Sao Tome. The Portuguese were not solely religiously motivated, as there were distinct economic and political gains inherent in their venture, especially the trade in slaves. Church and State worked hand in hand to realize possibilities on all fronts. Wherever the Portuguese flag was pitched, the Jesuits and other missionaries were on its trail.

The few Christian communities established through Portuguese influence were fragile, though, and did not always survive in the African context. The Catholic mission enterprise in Africa was intricately linked with the Portuguese crown. When Portugal's imperial power dwindled, the mission shrank with it. The great weakness of the Christian efforts in Africa in these middle years was its close association with the slave trade. There was a well-recognized but unsolved contradiction between converting Africans and purchasing them as slaves simultaneously.

Protestantism had its own strong foothold in South Africa, beginning with the Dutch settlement at the Cape in 1652 and then the

[2] For more details about the history of Christianity in Africa, see Walls (1996), Sundkler and Steed (2000), Kalu (2007a), and Adogame *et al.* (2008).

Huguenot entrance into the colony in 1688. The colony held slaves, quite a number of whom were baptized, and in 1683 a regulation was passed which declared that all baptized slaves should be free. In 1737 Georg Schmidt of the Moravian Brethren came to South Africa, and the latter half of the eighteenth century witnessed the beginning of British missions, both there and elsewhere. The late eighteenth century onwards witnessed a remarkable proliferation of Protestant missionary societies. Some of the Protestant missionaries, like their Catholic predecessors, traded slaves or collaborated with the traders. This declined with the growth of the anti-slavery movement, however. The conversion of slaves to Christianity—forced or otherwise—fed anti-slavery agitation, by raising the question of how Christians could own their co-religionists. Several freed (and Christian) slaves played key roles in the campaign. With the later resettlement of former slaves in Sierra Leone and Liberia, African Christians spearheaded the evangelization of their original homeland. For example, Samuel Ajayi Crowther led the Yoruba Christians and became the first African Bishop consecrated by the Church of England. Other freed Africans led the evangelization of Buganda, Madagascar, and various parts of southern Africa (see Walls 1992).

The modern phase of missionary enterprise in Africa began with the foundation of the Baptist Missionary Society (BMS) in 1792, the London Missionary Society (LMS) in 1795, and the Church Missionary Society (CMS) in 1799. The process continued with the establishment of the British and Foreign Bible Society (BFBS) in 1804, the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) in 1810, the Leeds Methodist Missionary Society (LMMS) in 1813, the Basel Mission in 1815, and many others. While these new Protestant mission societies differed considerably in their forms of organization, they were overwhelmingly evangelical in character. Their missionary concerns were international in scope, with each Society mapping and developing a particular regional focus for actual mission work. Despite early cooperation, there was often considerable rivalry between some mission bodies. Decades of missionary endeavor produced only a small number of African converts (see Kalu 2007a).

Between 1880 and 1920, the heyday of European imperialism, there was a dramatic expansion in the number of missionaries at work in Africa. This was exacerbated by the Berlin/Congo 1884–5 Conference where the scramble and partition of Africa by European imperial powers was formalized. Missionaries in the field often supported the

imperial ambitions of their compatriots, so much so that mission and imperialism became understood by many as two sides of the same coin. The missionizing task also became synonymous with the transplantation of western civilization. The implication of this development was that African converts were taught to repudiate African culture in its entirety and assume a new status of, for instance, a "Europeanized African." Here was the quandary that lay at the very core of the missionary enterprise. To what extent should an African adopt the trappings of Western civilization? To what extent should he or she abandon the African culture in order to embrace the White man's faith? The attempt to reconcile these inherent contradictions within mission Christianity produced a new phase of indigenous and independent Christianity in Africa. The subsequent expansion of Christianity in the twentieth century has largely been the handiwork of African evangelists themselves. (Kalu 2007a)

Generally, African Indigenous or Independent Churches (AICs) can be understood from at least three levels of development. The earliest strand refers to churches that severed from the existing mission churches owing to a number of irreconcilable issues. They flourished mainly in South Africa as "Ethiopian Churches" and in West Africa as "African Churches" from the 1890s. They emerged out of similar circumstances such as conflicts over rigid White (European) missionary control and domination, discrimination against local African actors, disputes over resources, a general feeling of marginalization among educated Africans, and formal apartheid—the latter mainly in the South African context. One notable feature of these churches was that in spite of the change in the mantle of church leadership, they were still tied to the apron strings of the mission churches in their liturgical and hierarchical structures. Some of them still depended largely on the parent churches for financial resources.

The 1920s and 1930s witnessed a second wave of new beginnings within Christian independency (Adogame and Jafta 2007). They include the Zionists in South Africa, the Aladura Churches (Nigeria) and Spirit Churches (Ghana) in West Africa, the Roho Churches in East Africa, and the Kimbanguist Churches (Zaire/Congo) in Central Africa. The growth of these prophetic or healing churches was the most dramatic aspect of twentieth century Christianity in sub-Saharan Africa. The centrality of the Bible, ecstatic prayers, healing, prophecy, visions and dreams, elaborate rituals, flexible modes of worship and liturgies, and charismatic leadership shape a particularly African brand

of Christianity. They typically embrace a functional theology and a pragmatic approach to life, which endear them to many Africans. Though they utterly condemn and reject the traditional religion as "fetish" and "demonic," their belief systems and ritual structures appear to have affinities with African cosmologies. That is why they attract members not only from the mainline churches, but also from other Christian as well as non-Christian groups, including Islam and the various traditional religions.

Despite these similarities, each of these prophetic churches has its own religious dynamic. There are differences in specific doctrines and details of ritual acts and performance, along with differences in their social and historical origins. Two patterns of emergence dominate. The earlier groups emerged from or had their nucleus as "prayer bands" or "fellowship groups" within the mainline church, from which they later separated. Churches in this category include the Cherubim and Seraphim (1925) and the Church of the Lord–Aladura (1930) in Nigeria, the Musama Disco Christo Church (1922) in Ghana, and the Nazarite Baptist Church (called Nazarites or ama-Nazaretha) in South Africa (1911). Later groups were founded through the visionary experience of a charismatic figure and arose independently of any existing mission church. Typical examples are the Celestial Church of Christ (1947) in Nigeria, the Harrist Churches (1922) in Liberia, and the Kimbaguist Churches (1921) in Zaire/Congo.

The most recent development within Africa Christianity is the emergence and increasing proliferation of Pentecostal and Charismatic Churches, especially from the 1950s and 60s onwards. (see Kalu 2008) These have proliferated in virtually all parts of sub-Sahara Africa. We can distinguish at least two categories of Pentecostal/Charismatic Movements: indigenous Pentecostal groups and those founded as branches or missions by Pentecostal groups from abroad. The indigenous groups include the Redeemed Christian Church of God, the Deeper Life Bible Church, the Church of Pentecost, Winner's Chapel, and the Rhema Bible Church. Those planted from abroad include the Four Square Gospel Church, the Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship International, Campus Crusade for Christ, Youth with a Mission, Christ for all Nations, and so on. Churches in the former group were typically founded earlier, are largely independent, and hardly ever rely on external assistance, while many groups in the latter, at least in their infancy, relied on outside funds, literature and sometimes personnel from their mission headquarters. The indigenous Pentecostal groups

have also embarked on their own mission activities, by planting branches in the US, Canada, Europe and other parts of the world—a reverse mission process that is quite fascinating to explore.

Two common features of all these Pentecostal churches are an emphasis on a personal religious conversion experience or spiritual rebirth and the manifestation of charismatic gifts such as speaking in tongues (glossolalia). Some churches are more or less "holiness movements," more interested in religious experience than in rituals. Others are noted for preaching a "prosperity gospel." Some groups have assimilated ideas and features originating in American Pentecostalism. On the other hand, the commitment to the gospel of prosperity fits in well with values of the African indigenous culture, where elaborate religious rituals are performed to ensure prosperity, health, and protection against malevolent spiritual forces. That is one reason why Christian groups such as the Pentecostal/charismatic churches, as well as the Aladura or prophetic churches, have continued to expand in contemporary Africa and in the new African diaspora. Both seek to address their members' day-to-day, existential problems; both see the benevolent spiritual entities as helping people in their everyday lives.

Though there is less written about the sociology of African religions than there is on religions in other parts of the world, there is some good sociologically informed scholarship on these matters. Among Americans, the work of Bennetta Jules-Rosette (1975, 1979) is probably the best known. More European sociologists have studied the continent's religions, among them Ruth Marshall-Fratani (2001, 2009), David Maxwell (2006), Peter Clarke (1986, 1995, 1998), and John Peel (1968; Peel and Stewart 1987). African scholars of religion, sociologists, and historians are themselves joining this international conversation. Among them we can mention Ogbu Kalu (2008), Matthews Ojo (2006), and Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu (2005)—the last of whom has contributed a chapter on African Christianity's use of the media to this volume (see also the contributions to such edited collections as Olupona and Gemignani 2007, Adogame and Weissköppel 2005, and Adogame *et al*. 2008.

Seven Patterns of Religious Transnationalism

So much for the background on African religions, now a bit of background on religious transnationalism: Quite simply, people move and

they take their religions with them. Humans have always been a traveling lot, but the flow of people across national borders has been a flood for at least forty years. Economic migrants seeking opportunities far from their homelands, political refugees fleeing death or imprisonment, religious missionaries out to win the world for their faiths—these people are now found everywhere. Yes, the Roman Empire mixed peoples from all over the Mediterranean. Chinese fleets and traders spanned the Asian world and perhaps beyond. Some Africans rode to Mecca, and others were sent abroad in chains in the first African diaspora, which so shaped our present world. Willing travelers or forced by power or circumstance, people have always left their homes for strange lands.

Yet our era is qualitatively different. It is not just the number of people on the go, nor their reasons, though these matter. It is the fact that they are going everywhere at once, in all directions, even as they remain connected with all the places that they have been. Cheap, swift travel, multiple communications technologies, and an interconnected world financial system have figuratively shrunk our networked globe.

Adogame, for example has lived in Nigeria, Germany, the US, and the United Kingdom at different stages of his academic career. He travels frequently to attend professional meetings and work with scholars worldwide, enough that his colleagues dub him "the airport Professor." In 2008 alone, he made five trips to the US and Canada from his home in the UK, visiting five states, one province, and 12 cities. Professional assignments and meetings also took him to Germany, Spain, the Netherlands, Ireland, and Italy, with other visits to Singapore, South Africa, and Ghana. Alongside these were many "local" trips within the UK. Still, his itinerary cannot compare with the even fuller travel schedules of contemporary captains of industries, of politicians, or with those of the various religious entrepreneurs who traverse the globe to attend to their respective businesses, building new ties and maintaining old links and networks.

One might expect this of intellectuals and of political, economic, and religious entrepreneurs, but relative non-elites, too, lead surprisingly cosmopolitan lives. Some years ago, when Spickard lived in a California farming town, he became friends with a working-class Galician (Spanish) family that travelled freely, if not quite legally, between the US, Mexico, and Spain. Later on, a similarly situated Salvadoran family spent a year as guests in his home, refugees from the death squads during that country's civil war. At the war's end, they and

other Salvadorans floated between their two countries, as family and their economic situation required. Sociologist Peggy Levitt (2001) described the religious lives of one such community of working-class "transnational villagers," who are equally at home in the Jamaica Plain section of Boston and in the Dominican village of Miraflores. Omar McRoberts (2005) chronicled the impact of West Indian migrants on the religious ecology of another part of Boston. Karen McCarthy Brown (2001) noted the back-and-forth religious trade between Haiti and Brooklyn, as it affected Lourdes, a Vodou priestess and the subject of Brown's ethnographic biography. Olivier Roy (2004, 2010) described networks of Moslem migrants, elite and non-elite, who have lived so many places that they have become "deterritorialized." He thinks that radical Islam becomes, for them, a substitute for place, as a source of connection and meaning.

African religions and African migration deserve a place in this survey, but there is much less literature on sub-Saharan African religious transnationalism than there is about the religious lives of migrants to and from other parts of the world. Filling this gap is one of our chief reasons for producing this volume.

Another chief point of this book has to do with the limited ways that sociologists of religion have thought about the religious dimensions of contemporary transnationalism. More sociologists have focused on migration than on other aspects of cross-border connections, and most have viewed that migration through the lens of what historian Paul Spickard (2007) calls "the Ellis Island model." Based on late-nineteenth and early twentieth century European immigration to the United States, much of which came through the Ellis Island Federal Immigration Station in New York harbor, this approach sees migrants shedding their old-country identities in order to become Americans, Canadians, or citizens of a number of South American countries.

In this model, people move permanently. First-generation migrants do not fully succeed at becoming "native" to their new homes, but their children and grandchildren gradually do so. In the American case, they supposedly join the famous "melting pot," by which Latvians, Poles, Italians, French, Germans, Croatians, and the like all, in time, became Americans.[3] Similarly, Algerians and francophone West

[3] Native American activist Vine Deloria described a "melting pot" as "a cauldron in which the scum rises to the top and everything on the bottom gets burned."

Africans can become French, so long as they pledge allegiance to the French state. More recently, Swiss and Italian migrants can become German, as can Turks—at least in theory. In reality, they have more trouble being accepted, in part because Germans label Turks, even secular ones, as "Muslims" and thus as potentially unassimilable (Göktürk *et al*. 2007). The American case has precedents for this as well, especially in the anti-Catholic agitation—even riots!—of the 1840s (Fitzgerald 1992).

The Ellis Island model notes, however, that religion can also aid the assimilation process. Religion certainly helped European immigrants become Americans during the massive immigration to the US in the late-nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The Roman Catholic Church in the set up ethnic parishes to ease migrants' transition to their new land while keeping them Catholic. Various Protestant groups formed ethnic denominations: Swedish, Norwegian, and German Lutherans, German and Swedish Baptists, and so on. After assimilation, many ethnic parishes closed and various Protestant groups merged. By the 1950s, Will Herberg (1960) could write about American religion as a process by which various immigrant peoples become unhyphenated Protestants, Catholics, or Jews.

Recent sociological work on American immigrant religion sees similar processes happening today. Warner and Wittner's "New Immigrants Project" (1998) showed how new immigrants to the US can become even more religious in their new country than they were in their old. Theirs and other studies show immigrants molding their home religions to fit America's dominant organizational form—the congregation. Wendy Cadge's (2005) Thai Buddhist community, for example, has become quasi-congregational, with lay leaders taking a much larger role in the community's life than was the case in Thailand. This is typical, as immigrant laity do not wait for religious specialists to decide where (or whether) to build the churches, mosques, and temples that they feel they need. Laity buy the land, build the buildings, hire the priests, ministers or imams, and even organize the pattern of services. Anjun Appadurai (1996: 56–57) writes of attempting to visit a Hindu priest in India, only to find that he had been hired away to staff a temple in Houston—the site of Ebaugh and Chafetz's (2000, 2002) immigrant congregation studies. Clearly, religion is changed in this transnational process.

Yet, the Ellis Island model describes but a single transnational pattern, one that is perhaps not the most important in today's world.

Though instructive, the model has problems—among them the fact that it does not deal with race well (P. Spickard 2007, but see Warner 1998). While Latvians, Poles, Italians, and so on did become Americans, they really became *White* Americans, able to celebrate their optional ethnicities (Waters 1994). African-Americans, Mexican-Americans, and Asian-Americans did not have the option of assimilating to Whiteness. The problems faced by African-Americans are the most familiar, but Frank Wu (2001) has written movingly about the "perpetual foreigner syndrome," by which Asian-Americans are cast as outsiders, no matter how many generations their families have lived in the United States. Germany's Turkish citizens might also recognize this treatment (cf. Ignatieff 1993). Be that as it may, the Ellis Island model is but one of several ways in which religion crosses borders in the contemporary world.

We have identified six other patterns of such border-crossings, which we call "religious bi-localism," "religious cacophony," "reverse missions," "South-South religious trade," "transnational organization theory," and "deterritorialized religious identity." All appear in the sociological literature, though not all have received extensive treatment. Together with the Ellis Island model, these patterns describe a very complex transnational religious scene.

We mentioned *religious bi-localism* a few paragraphs previously, in citing the work of Peggy Levitt. She studied Dominican migrants to a Boston neighborhood, finding that the presence of cheap communications and affordable air travel allowed them to become integrated into the US while simultaneously maintaining close ties to the folks back home. Specifically, they could, and did, participate in parish activities in both Boston and in the Dominican village of Miraflores, down to the details of gossip and social pressure that are so typical of church life. They did not just send money, the economic remittances that sustain many poorer countries. Equally in play were what Levitt calls "social remittances": the exchange of ideas, practices, and even identities that shifted the Dominican parish's sense of itself. These shifts ran both ways, from Miraflores to Boston and back again; both ends were changed. The title of Levitt's book, *Transnational Villagers*, aptly describes the result.

Levitt's recent work (2007) traces the family connections, social networks, and religious exchanges linking towns in the Boston area to Valadares (Brazil), Gujarat (India), Karachi (Pakistan), and Inishowen (Ireland). She shows in great detail how transnational migrants can

live fully in two worlds, remaining residents both of America and of the world of their origin. Religion plays a large role in this living. She reports, for example, on "Gurjaratis and Pakistanis who are helping to create and re-create Islam and Hinduism in this country as well as in their homeland." Her point is that religion is becoming as global as are politics and business. "People who live transnationally are the face of the future" (2007:169–170), and religious transnationalism is part of that face. Easy travel and electronic communications make migrant life different today than it was in the past.

What of the communities in which these transnational migrants settle? Some groups join immigrant "ghettos," choosing to live with people very much like themselves. For example, the city of Monterey Park, in southern California, is a noted magnet for immigrant Taiwanese, who shape the city's religious life as well as its politics and culture (Chen 2008). But there is another pattern, one that urban ecologist Greg Smith (2000) describes in the Newham area of East London. There, immigrant groups have built a mélange of peoples and faiths, living cheek by jowl. According to the 2001 British Census, "Newham is one of the most ethnically and religiously diverse districts in Britain with only 33.8% of its people being recorded as White British, with Black Africans (13%) being the next largest group, followed by Indians (12%), Bangladeshis (9%), Pakistanis (8%), Black Caribbeans (7%) and Other Whites (4%)." These people bring with them a huge variety of religions. Smith's (2000) survey of the area found over 300 religious groups using 104 different buildings for their services. The majority were Christian—some 60%—but most of these were small Pentecostal groups that catered to African, Caribbean, and Latin American migrants. There were 22 mosques, along with numerous congregations serving at least ten other major religious groupings (Hindus, Jews, Sikhs, Buddhists, and so on).

A walk through this neighborhood produces some striking juxtapositions.[4] The Calvary Charismatic Baptist Church (Caribbean Pentecostal) on Barking Road stands next door to the Canning Town Muslim Trust—a mosque that now occupies what was once the local synagogue. A betting shop flanks the mosque on the other side. Three

[4] Inspiration for this walk comes from Smith's unpublished presentation at the 2001 biennial conference of the International Society for the Sociology of Religion, Leuven, Belgium. See Smith 1999. Recent (2008) details were found at Google Maps (*http://maps.google.com*).

blocks farther east, just off Barking, is Glory House, a charismatic prosperity-gospel church, whose multi-ethnic congregation has a multi-national African leadership. Their building was once a mainline Christian church, then it became a shop. It is now a church again. Moving east, one comes to the Plaistow Christian Fellowship (named for one of Newham's sub-neighborhoods), then to the Ethiopian Christian Fellowship—a group begun in order to provide services in Amharic to expatriates. It has, however, grown largely by evangelizing second-generation Ethiopians and Eritreans born in the UK. Around the corner to the south, we find St. Andrew's Church, a successful Anglican congregation that advertizes itself as "a spiritual home to 23 ethnic groups." The list of varied religious communities and their ritual spaces go on and on.

Most of these congregations have little to do with one another. As Smith (2000: 27) puts it, "Whatever contact does exist has usually been initiated by Christians with a specific liberal theology, and has met a more open response among Hindus, Buddhists, and Baha'ists than among Muslim leaders." Smith points out that the religious vitality of this area "is a notable contrast to recent national trends in the UK." Ninety-four of Newham's religious bodies have been founded since 1971—and the proportion is higher for the Pentecostal, Hindu, Muslim, and Sikh groups that mostly serve immigrants. Unlike the older British denominations, "for the most part, these new faith communities have operated as refuges from the troubles of wider society rather than as bases for engagement with it" (Smith 2000: 23–24).

We are calling this situation *religious cacophony*. Immigration to places like Newham has created a multitude of religious voices, each crying for attention. This kind of religion does not offer a smooth transition into British life. It reformulates that life as multi-cultural and multi-vocal. Add the fact that these migrants, like Levitt's, maintain complex ties with the various places they have previously lived, and we see Newham as a miniature of very complicated world. The Ellis Island model is by no means the whole story.

The next three approaches are related to one another. "Reverse missions," "South-South religious trade," and "transnational organization theory" all break the stereotype that places the North Atlantic at the center of the religious universe. Each illustrates a kind of religious action that may include the West, but which does not privilege it.

Reverse missions are not hard to comprehend. In "the old days," American and European churches sent out missions to other parts of

the world, hoping to help "the heathen" and to "save souls for Christ." Such missions continue today, but missionaries now also come from those other parts to re-Christianize the Metropole—particularly Europe, where organized Christianity is far weaker than it used to be. Ironically, these new missionaries from the non-West are appropriating a similar rhetoric in describing Europe as a "dark" and/or "prodigal" continent in dire need of mission (reverse flow), in which the heathens Europeans—lost souls, secularized church and derailed Christians—need to be saved and brought back to "life in Christ" (Adogame 2000b, 2002, 2007a, 2007b; cf. Kalu 2008: 271–91, Ojo 2007, Akinade 2007).

As another example, we cite Rebecca Catto's recent account (2007, cf. 2008) of twenty-four Melanesian Brothers and Sisters, who came from the Solomon Islands in 2005 to bring the Christian "good news" to England. Part of the Worldwide Anglican Communion, these missionaries displayed a vibrant faith, theologically and socially conservative, but Catto writes, "in an idiom shaped by the Melanesians' ethnic and national context." They visited and preached at many English churches, commenting on how old the local Anglicans seemed, relative to their own youth, and on the emptiness of the English cathedrals as contrasted to their overflowing churches at home. Catto quotes several English Anglicans, who spoke of their own comparative lack of spiritual vitality. As she puts it, "Missionaries coming to support a struggling mother church in a far more developed nation certainly challenge concepts of mission by disrupting the traditional donor/receiver pattern" (2007: 12). As Catto also notes, there is more than mere role reversal at work here. To start, there is the very clear sense that both hosts and guests are speaking out of a long-standing cultural opposition between East and West, in which the latter's material wealth contrasts with the former's deep spirituality. Catto's informants buy into the myth that the West has won its material comfort at the price of its soul. The English Anglicans express nostalgia for a time of (supposedly) more certain belief. They do not, however, give up their relative wealth to regain that past. They do not discard their way of life in order to imitate the lives of the missionaries who have come to convert them to Jesus. They are perfectly willing to donate money to support these foreign-born preachers, but the amounts are minor. The hosts surrender neither position nor power. Unwilling to change, they must be happier with their spiritual situation than they let on, even if they are too polite to their Melanesian guests to say so.

We have left longer accounts of reverse missions to a companion volume (Adogame and Shankar forth.), though our chapter by Mei Mei Sanford on the transnational activities of a *Kerubu ati Serafu* elder touches on related issues. Various other chapters touch on missions of one kind or another, though not in a West-converts-the-Rest mold.

We have also included chapters about what we are calling *South-South religious trade*, the second pattern in our expectation-breaking triumvirate. If old-style missions used to take religious goods from Europe and North America to other parts of the world, and "reverse missions" take them back again, then South-South trade involves religious connections between parts of the global South that leave the North Atlantic out altogether. Several scholars have recently brought attention to these relationships. For example, a volume edited by André Corten and Ruth Marshall-Fratani (2001) explored the connections between African and Latin American Pentecostals. Rijk van Dijk (2001) contributed to that volume; together with Linda van de Kamp, he has also contributed to this one. This is an exciting field, especially if, as Philip Jenkins (2002) claims, Christianity's center of gravity is shifting southward. But South-South connections between Muslims also need to be explored. In this case, the standard model assumes that such ties will run through the Middle East. These ties are important, but so are direct ties between, say, Africa and Indonesia or Africa and Pakistan. We found no contributors knowledgeable about such links, so our volume contains chapters only on Christian South-South ties. We hope that other scholars will someday choose to explore these other possibilities.

The last pattern of this trio invokes what we call *transnational organization theory*. It examines transnational religious organizations, attempting to discover the organizational dynamics that shape transnational religious life. Transnational religious organizations are not hard to find. Catholicism (both Roman and Orthodox) and the Latter-day Saints are the most studied, but the Anglican Communion, the World Council of Churches, and various evangelical counterparts are also well known. Several of the "new religions" of the 1970s and 1980s operated across national boundaries (Lewis 2001). Pentecostal groups have planted churches in different parts of the world, and have attempted at least some transnational coordination (Coleman 2000). Less prominent groups do so as well.

Running a transnational religious organization is no easier than is running a transnational business, and poses many of the same

problems. Cross-cultural misunderstanding, economic inequality, bureaucracy, and offensive power relationships all get in the way of smooth operation. Previous work by Jim Spickard studying the transnational outreach of one of the new Japanese religions showed some of the issues that arise as religious organizations try to work across national boundaries (1991, 1995, 2004). Organizationally speaking, hierarchical transnational religions do not seem to work any better than do hierarchical transnational corporations. Though such corporations are clearly powerful international players, they do not always realize the promised comparative advantage of cross-national coordination and internalized transactions (Doz and Prahalad 1993). Put simply, there is a reason that International Telephone and Telegraph—better known as ITT—no longer exists as a powerful international conglomerate: it failed to make money. A good part of its problem was its inability to coordinate its various units, while hamstringing their efforts to respond to their local markets.

Successful transnational corporations, it turns out, can best be thought of as anthills, whose workers organize themselves to carry out self-identified tasks on behalf of the corporation, without waiting for orders from the central office. These corporations amount to inter-organizational networks (Ghoshal and Bartlett 1993). They consist of overlapping constituencies whose cooperation the organizational leadership needs to help, not hinder. As Gunnar Hedlund (1993) puts it, they are "heterarchical"—they emphasize the cooperation of autonomous corporate sub-units across organizational lines, for the benefit of both the sub-units and the corporate whole.

Several of the groups about which our contributors write approximate this model—among them Joël Noret's and Edlyne Anugwom's chapters on transnational cooperation at West African Pentecostal revivals. Though the cooperating groups maintain formally independent organizations, they coordinate their activities by exchanging ministers, books and videos, and hosting conferences and traveling delegations. They borrow each other's expertise, working together to generate mutual success. Yes, some of the parties are more powerful than others; even mutually beneficial evangelistic relationships are not necessarily symmetrical. But their flexibility allows them to respond well to local markets, increasing "business" for all. We think that the parallel between transnational religious groups and heterarchical transnational corporations is worth pursuing. We suggest that you read our contributors' chapters with this parallel in mind.

The final transnational pattern that we wish to highlight is a bit different. It involves again transnational migration, but not just the migration from one physical place to another. Instead, it involves the creation of a *transnational imagined community*—one made up of deterritorialized migrants, united by their religious identities. Our reference to Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities* (1991) is deliberate. Anderson described how the idea of the "ethnic nation" arose—first in Europe, then around the world—and how it reshaped the world political order. The fiction that the world is made up of separate "peoples," each having a shared language, history, culture, and "blood," fed the view that each such people deserved its own state. Anderson showed how print-capitalism, museums, maps, and censuses supported this mythologizing, and resulted in our contemporary international state system.

Migration poses a problem for an ethnically based state system, because it takes individuals, families, and groups from one place and puts them in another. Ethnic nationalism works if people stay put, but that is not the case today. Can migrants change their ethnicity, in order to participate as members of their new national community? To some degree, this depends on what they look like, as race-based nativist agitation in many parts of the world has tried to get countries to expel "unassimilable foreigners." Examples range from Uganda's 1972 expulsion of East Indians to the US Minuteman Project and France's Jean-Marie LePen. The "melting-pot" model of ethnic change works best for people who moved just once and whose skin-color and language match the locals (P. Spickard 2007). Even then, the process takes a couple of generations. American assimilation was aided by the fact that US nationalism is technically based on citizenship rather than ethnicity. German nationalism before 2000, to take an opposite example, was fully ethnic: it welcomed "Germans" whose ancestors had moved to Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union even hundreds of years ago, but made it hard for Italians, Croats, Turks, and others to become citizens, even if their families had lived in Germany for two or three generations (Ignatieff 1993).

Contemporary migration, however, does not lift people from one place to plant them in another. It is not a move-once-and-settle proposition. Instead, it sets people on a journey with many stopovers but no clear point of arrival. We might have a man born in Egypt, reared in France, educated in Germany and the United States, now teaching in Singapore after stints in Abu Dhabi, Copenhagen, and Johannesburg.

We might encounter an ethnically Japanese woman, reared in Peru or Brazil, educated in the United States and France, married to a Moroccan, now retired and living in Spain. Nation and ethnicity cannot define such people, yet they need a sense of belonging every bit as much as do others. Religions can provide this sense of belonging, precisely because the identity they confer is not based on place. "We are the people who worship God as He wishes" makes perfect sense, no matter where one happens to reside. So does "We are the people whose God has called us to travel with Him in this world." Such statements tie people to each other, both locally and around the world. It marks off those who belong from those who do not, binding the former into an imagined community.

Olivier Roy explores such a community in his book *Globalized Islam*. He argues that most contemporary migration is best conceived neither as a set of journeys to somewhere (immigrations) nor as journeys from somewhere (diasporas). Instead, it is best grasped as the creation of delocalized peoples, who must craft new identities that correspond to their delocalized situation. Muslim immigrants to Europe, he says, have become particularly deterritorialized. Those of the first generation are unable to find work in their home countries— for either economic or political reasons—and they are also not accepted in their countries of residence. The second generation feels accepted in neither place, even if they could return to their parents' countries of origin—which is not the case with many, such as exiled Palestinians. Even if they are formally citizens of one country or another, identifying with that citizenship is barred. In his words,

> Highly qualified professionals (such as computer programmers and doctors) and scholars are going from position to position according to market opportunities and political circumstances: an Egyptian born Muslim Brother may teach in Kuala Lumpur, then in Tampa or Berlin…. The same happens with political refugees. An uprooted, deterritorialized and cosmopolitan intelligentsia, sharing a common language (English or, less often, modern literary Arabic), plays a role in producing values, teachings, and world views adapted to globalization…. Regional, ethnic, or religious identities take precedence over citizenship and pristine nationalities, according to choices made by the individual (an Iraqi Kurd in exile can decide whether he is first an Iraqi, a Kurd, or a Muslim). (2004: 104–5)

The third of these has been most significant, given the problematic nature of ethnicity and the events of the last decade. In Roy's view, it is no surprise that radical Islam has found its most loyal cadres in

the West. The 9/11 terrorists (except the Saudis), for example, became born-again Muslims in Western lands. Roy writes,

> Far from representing a traditional religious community or culture, on the margins of which they lived, and even rejecting traditional Islam, most of these militants broke with their own past and experienced an individual re-Islamisation in a small cell of uprooted fellows. Here they forged their own Islam, as shown by Muhammad Atta's will. They are not disciples of anybody in Islam, and paradoxically often live according to non-Muslim standards. (2004: 52)

Roy argues that Islamic radicalism provides identity by connecting its converts to a deep religious tradition—a "chain of memory", to use Danièle Hervieu-Léger's (2000) concept—around which they can order their lives. They see themselves as heirs to a world-historical tradition, one rooted in the first century of the *hijira* calendar. It makes sense, Roy says, that "the recommunalised Muslims of the West are fighting at the frontiers of their imaginary *ummah*" (2004: 312)—in New York, London, and Madrid instead of Cairo or Karachi—because they model themselves on the first Muslim fighters, who did likewise. Their chain of memory rejects most of the intervening Muslim centuries, which were more Sufist than Salafi or Wahabi. It picks and chooses among the *hadith*, discards several traditional schools of jurisprudence, and otherwise creates a monotonic Islam, with no colors and even fewer shades of grey.

Our point is not that deterritorialized religion must be ideological, violent, or even militant, nor do we limit deterritorialized religion to Islam. The point is that contemporary transnational migration can create people who find themselves unconnected with particular places, states, or ethnic groups, but still faced with a burning question of who they are. Some of these people will find a "home" in one or another religion. There, they form communities, not of face-to-face interaction, but of shared identity and purpose. These communities are apt to be sectarian, in the sense that they do not share much with those who walk other religious paths. To use an old Christian phrase, they are "in the world but not of it." This is a far cry from the Ellis Island model, which saw religions as helping people to adjust to a new, this-worldly, home.

We have now outlined seven patterns of religious transnationalism: "Ellis Island," "religious bi-localism," "religious cacophony," "reverse missions," "South-South religious trade," "transnational organization theory," and "deterritorialized religious identity." We believe that all are

significant, though not all are active in any particular case. We have not organized our chapters around them; instead, we present them as sensitizing concepts, useful for seeing the underlying dynamics of religion in a globalizing world.

African Religious Transnationalism

We focus our volume on religious transnationalism, because African religions are increasingly transnational—and because scholars are only now beginning to put that transnationalism under their lenses. Students of African Pentecostalism have made the most progress. A volume edited by André Corten and Ruth Marshall-Fratani (2001) took a transnational perspective. It devoted two essays in the volume's Part I and its entire Part III to exploring such issues as expansion of churches beyond national borders, the new organisational patterns that such expansion requires, identity formation in transnational space, and what one contributing author referred to as "transsubjectivity" (Van Dijk 2001).

More recent studies, such as those by Olupona and Gemignani (2007), Ojo (2008), and our own first editor (Adogame 2007a, 2007b, 2008a, 2008b, 2009) are beginning to tease out the complex internal dynamics and external circumstances that shape these transnational religious processes. Here is a sample of the topics these authors cover.

The book by Olupona and Gemignani (2007) contributes significant theoretical and conceptual perspectives to the emerging field, challenging us to look beyond traditional explanations of migration from Africa, which are usually treated as matters of economics and politics. Instead, it asks us to take religious motives seriously. Among its contributors, for example, Kalu (2007b) weaves the intricate trajectories of the migration process, as both imagined and lived experiences; he canvasses "exile" and "crossing Jordan" discourses as competing models for understanding the diasporic condition. Akinade (2007) and Bongmba (2007) both explore the religious dynamics and motives of mission, in part by examining the rhetoric of "reverse mission" (which we mentioned above).

In his own contribution to another book, Ojo (2008) discusses, from a historical and contextual perspective, transnational religious networks and their interrelationship with the missionary enterprises that have been initiated and promoted by Nigeria-based independent

Pentecostal and charismatic movements within West Africa. Adogame (2008a) describes the Embassy of the Blessed Kingdom of God for All Nations founded in the Ukraine by Nigerian-born Sunday Adelaja. This is an exceptional example of a church founded by an African immigrant with a non-African majority membership. Adogame explores an instance of religious transnationalization by focusing on the increasing mobility and itinerancy of the founder/leader, as he moves between the Ukraine, several countries in Europe, North America, and Africa itself.

African religions have always had international dimensions. On Islam, we can cite works by Salzbrunn (2002), Abusharaf (2003), and Assal (2005), among others.[5] Mission Christianity in Africa was founded mainly by European and American missionaries, and some of these churches retain significant missionary connections, though they no longer depend on those connections for vitality (Kalu 2008). African Independent Christian churches (AICs) now send missionaries of their own, both throughout the continent and to emigrant groups overseas (Ter Haar 1998; Adogame 2000a, 2000b, 2002; Adogame and Weissköppel 2005). Europe, Canada, and the US host expatriate African communities, which are themselves fertile targets for mission work; many welcome missionaries from the "home country," and they also send their own missionaries back (Adogame 2008b; Walls 1996, 2000; Hanciles 2008). Some groups connect with other parts of the world: for example, Paul Freston (2001) describes a lively Pentecostal "trade" between Brazil and Lusophone Angola and Mozambique. In short, wherever Africans have gone or made connections, traits of African religions follow.

Were we to try to cover all this, we would be spread too thin. The term "African Diaspora" is certainly transnational, as it refers to the broad movement of African peoples across the world, much of it rooted in the former slave trade. A volume about transnational religious dynamics in this diaspora could include everything from Garveyism to the Nation of Islam, and from Voudon to Candomblé. All of these make interesting reading, but they neither break new ground nor do they clearly connect to Africa, one of our chief aims. To keep things simple, we have decided to concentrate on a more recent diaspora— the movement of African peoples during the 50-year post-independence

[5] See also Beck (2007), Soares and Otayek (2007), Sodig (2007).

period, both from one African country to another and to overseas. We have further decided to center our chapters only on those religions that have at least one foot in Africa, so to speak—leaving out those groups that operate solely in migrants' new homes. We have thus asked our contributors to write about one or another aspect of African religious transnationalism, in the context of these recent migrations. This gives us breadth with depth, bringing out aspects of religious transnationalism that would be lost if we tried to cover too broad a field.

This volume, then, speaks to two *lacunae* in the sociological literature: a relative neglect of religions' transnational dimension and a relative paucity of work on contemporary African religions. The first was understandable before our current global era, but will be less and less excusable as time goes on. The second simply needs to be rectified. What Philip Jenkins (2002) has said about "the Global South" as a whole is certainly true of Africa: it is a major center for religious vitality in the contemporary world. The religious life of its people thus deserves to be better known—particularly its transnational dimension, which looms large.

The Chapters

As noted, we have not organized our chapters according to either one of the foregoing category systems. Instead, we wrote our introduction to give our readers that background they need to appreciate what our contributors are adding to the literature on African and the new African diasporic religions. Now, however, it is time to provide a brief orientation to the chapters that follow.

We open our volume with a section entitled "Transnational Dynamics in African Migration." This section consists of four chapters, each of which examines an aspect of religion in the transnational migration process. The first of these, by Ebenezer Obadare and Wale Adebanwi, explores potential Nigerian migrants' use of religion in the visa-seeking process. Overwhelmed by uncertainty and by official mistreatment, would-be migrants use religion to gain a sense of control over their fates. The authors argue that post-immigration religious practices must be seen as a continuation of these pre-migration experiences.

Mei Mei Sanford's chapter describes the transnational life of a women's leader in the *Kerabu ati Serafu*, a Yoruba (Aladura) indigenous

church. Sanford shows how Enirapada helps maintain her co-religionists' symbolic and conceptual connection with Nigeria, while simultaneously adapting to residence in the US and Canada, and then explores the multidimensional strategies this leader uses to maintain her church's transnational presence.

Géraldine Mossière explores a similar transnationality among Congolese Pentecostals, this time centred on a Canadian expatriate congregation with missions to the homeland. Mossière shows how linguistic practices, the public role of religious groups, and the ideology of global Pentecostal expansion shape Congolese migrants' sense of themselves and of their mission in the world.

Rounding out this section, Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu describes how Africa's new Pentecostal/charismatic churches use new media to maintain contact with their members abroad. After showing how such media have become quasi-sacramental in the African context, he explores similar processes in an African-led Pentecostal church in the Ukraine. He argues that in this case African religious sensibilities have been transplanted to a different continent and to a culturally different population.

Our second group of six chapters focuses on transnational religious dynamics within Africa itself. The section opens with Joël Noret's study of intra-African religious transnationalism in West Africa. Drawing on fieldwork in Benin, Nigeria, and Togo, he shows how having transnational contacts provides local Pentecostal leaders with a form of symbolic capital. Being seen as part of a global movement aids their work, whether or not their actual trans-border experiences are deep and involved.

Linda van de Kamp and Rijk van Dijk contribute a chapter on South-South Pentecostal transnationalism, looking at Brazilian and Ghanaian religious efforts in southern Africa. They focus on Pentecostal efforts to distinguish between "religion" and "culture," which shapes a critical attitude toward national cultural practices. They argue that the deliberate promotion of cultural discontinuity shows a different side of transnational Pentecostalism than is typically found in North-South contacts. Thus, South-South links show how Pentecostalism shapes globalization, as well as being a response and reaction to it.

Laura Grillo explores the role that divination and sacrifice play in the West African urban diaspora—a significant intra-African transnationalism that is seldom mentioned in discussions of globalization. She shows that the ongoing appeal to divination is one creative way by

which Africans in this urban diaspora live out their commitment to their "local" indigenous ideologies, even within the globalized context of the ethnically heterogeneous city. Divination and sacrifice, she argues, foster a sense of community based on "Africanity" that transcends nationalism without recourse to divisive notions of ethnicity.

Our next two chapters focus on transnational dynamics in particular sectors of African life. Susan Kilonzo discusses the ways in which youth have forged transnational ties in several Kenyan African Initiated Churches. By creating "places to feel at home," these groups give young people an outlet for their creativity while forging connections across national borders. Damaris Parsitau and Philomena Mwaura explore similar processes in three female-founded and led Kenyan groups. They show how women leaders have forged transnational alliances to present women with different religious models from those have previously been available. By speaking directly to women's experiences and vulnerabilities, they provide African women with opportunities to exercise autonomy through religious leadership.

Ending this section, Edlyne Anugwom uses a 2008 crusade in southeastern Nigeria, led by the German Pentecostal evangelist Reinhard Bonnke, as a foil to explore the ways in which local churches use outside evangelists to strengthen their own credibility. He also shows how local people of various religious persuasions react to the Bonnke's presentation and message. He is particularly interested in their wish that religions speak to them practically, and to the trials of everyday life.

We have entitled our third and final section "Wider Implications of Transnational African Religions." It contains two chapters. The first, by Samuel Krinsky, shows how African Pentecostal ideology provides a new way for Africans to conceive of themselves, their nations, and their national destinies. Focusing on the Winner's Chapel, an international Pentecostal denomination headquartered in Nigeria, he shows how religious ideas produce a new sense of Nigerian providential significance within an international context.

In the final chapter, Marleen de Witte shows how transnational dynamics have shaped the Afrikania Mission in Ghana and its representation of "Afrikan Traditional Religion" as a "world religion," in both national and transnational spaces. Refusing to assent to the idea that traditional religions are merely "local," Afrikania and other revivals of tradition must be understood as part of the historical globalisation of religion *per se*. Thus, neo-traditional African religion and the new African Christianity are part of a single religious field, which has

a shared and strongly transnational history. This chapter, particularly, has significant implications for theories of religious globalization.

By exploring the transnational dynamics of contemporary African religions in their individual detail, these twelve chapters shed considerable light on wider religious processes. We commend them to you, both for the individual stories they tell and as grist for your thinking.

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TRANSNATIONAL DYNAMICS IN AFRICAN MIGRATION

CHAPTER ONE

THE VISA GOD: WOULD-BE MIGRANTS AND THE INSTRUMENTALIZATION OF RELIGION

Ebenezer Obadare and Wale Adebanwi

Although religion and religious symbolisms suffuse every aspect of the transnational migration process, academic treatment of the relationship between religion and transnationalism continues to be largely one-sided. Most of the attention has been on one of five topics: (1) immigrants' use of religion to negotiate the rigors of adaptation in host societies; (2) religion and identity-making in diaspora communities (Harris 2006); (3) how religious identities inform or determine immigrant political engagement in their home countries; (4) the institutional aspects of transnational religious life (Levitt 2004); or (5) religious social movements and immigrant rights within destination societies (Hondagneu-Sotelo 2008).

The common principle here is that most of the interest has been in immigrants' religiosity following emigration. A testimony to the bias in the prevailing literature is the fact that 'religious transnationalism' invariably tends to suggest 'religious practice as it affects people who have actually emigrated' (cf. Falola and Genova 2005, Matory 2005, Olupona and Gemignani 2007, Trost 2007, Olupona and Rey 2008). This univocal understanding of religious transnationalism encapsulates and gestures at more profound analytical and methodological tensions in the emergent field of transnationalism. What is transnationalism, and what are the proper spaces and methods of inquiry for researchers? What are the proper objects of study, and how are we to delineate spatial and thematic boundaries (Hannerz 1996, Smith and Guarnizo 1998)? In this chapter, we emphasize an equally important but so far largely undocumented dimension of religious transnationalism—the role that religion plays in transnational migration *before* actual migration. In doing this, we aim to achieve at least four related objectives.

First, we point to an important vacuum in the religious transnationalism literature by highlighting how would-be migrants turn to and

instrumentalize religion in a context in which the entire migration process (including social life in the originating countries) has become defined by profound contingency and perplexing contradictions. We posit that how would-be migrants use religion is not only part and parcel of religious transnationalism, but also integral to how potential migrants themselves are reconstituted as "delocalised subjects" (Marshall-Fratani 2001). Second, by analyzing would-be migrants' instrumentalization of religion, we aim to contribute to the growing literature on the sociology of religion in postcolonial societies. Indeed, a focus on the instrumentalization of religion makes sense only when it is situated in a context in which the principle of instrumentalization appears to be built into the totality of everyday social relations. Third, by analyzing how transnational migration itself is imagined and treated as a spiritual phenomenon (for instance, Nigerians planning to relocate to major western countries often justify their plans—plus their chances of getting an entry visa—in terms of a 'divine' intervention or purpose), we provide an insight into the process by which religion and religious symbols and rituals are banalized against the backdrop of the disorderly retreat of the state from ordinary people's lives.

Finally, by taking some of the activity preceding actual migration in a sending country as an authentic aspect of the transnational field, we challenge the tendency to treat migrants' lives in the host countries as the whole of transnational behavior. We argue that since would-be migrants participate in different kinds of both religious and secular transnational networks prior to migration (joining online prayer groups, for instance), they are already inserted into the transnational imaginary and therefore need to be so recognized in the literature.

This chapter analyzes an important slice of sociological reality in contemporary Nigeria, a country at the hub of the current wave of emigration of young people (highly skilled and otherwise) from sub-Saharan Africa.[1] The country is also implicated in the contemporary upsurge of Pentecostal Christianity on the continent, an important index of a broader point: within the past two decades, a combination of failed economic programs and persistent political turmoil has produced social anomie and a social vacuum that sundry religious

[1] According to the *World Bank Migration and Remittances Factbook* (2008), the country is the leading recipient of remittances by foreign-based workers in the whole of Africa.

authorities have rapidly occupied. At the same time, collective angst at the situation in the country has fostered an "appetite for elsewhere"—Kalu (2007: 67) refers to "an odyssey of years of tortured existence spent in transit"—whereby a stream of young people has continued to look outside the country for job opportunities and a "better life." Given this imbrication of religion with the larger socioeconomic and political crisis in the country, it is all the more striking that the prevailing literature has for the most part neglected the role of religion and religious authorities in the lives of would-be migrants.

To the best of our knowledge, only two existing studies have directly addressed the role of religion and/or religious rituals in the lives of would-be migrants in Nigeria. The first is Nwando Achebe's ethnography of the lives of Nigerian sex workers "at home and abroad," which describes how the potential traveller undergoes a series of rituals "designed to break her spirit, instil fear, and ensure total compliance to the decrees of her soon-to-surface pimp." As Achebe continues,

> It is a mind-controlling initiation ritual in which the would-be sex worker is cajoled into a terrifying shrine by corrupt and conspiring medicine men who force the girl or woman to part with portions of hair (from their heads, underarm, and/or pubis), menstrual blood, and nail clippings—items she believes are used to concoct powerful death-inflicting medicines. A terrifying point during the *juju* rite is when the girl is instructed to repeat after the medicine man several times over: "If I don't pay, I will go crazy, I will be killed." *In a society where traditional religious beliefs still hold sway, these rituals are effective because the girls believe in the very potency of the medicine* (2004: 182; emphasis added).

Here we can see an indication of the prevalence of the use of traditional religious rites as a disciplinary *cum* regulatory tool, in this case to exercise some form of "control" over the lives of would-be migrants/sex workers. We supplement and correct this understanding in three ways: First, those rites are not solely for "disciplinary" or "regulatory" reasons, therefore, sex workers on their own go through various *juju* rites. Second, "traditional" rites are not merely what is "done to" would-be migrants, but part of a complex repertoire of spiritual and other resources that the would-be migrants themselves draw on to achieve their immediate goal of evacuating the country. As we show presently, different social agents use different kinds of religious resources, often betraying a syncretistic amenability that calls into question many of the distinctions casually made between, say, "traditional" and "modern"

religions, or between Christianity and Islam in African contexts.[2] For many would-be migrants, the primary concern is what "works," meaning that there is greater concern with which religious authority is putatively acclaimed to guarantee success with the visa process at any particular time, rather than his or her denominational identity. Even though religious "others" may be demonized at the discursive level, in reality, individual practitioners make all sorts of accommodations when faced with personal exigencies and emergencies. In any case, religious authorities themselves are hardly models of monism, and more often than not the "pastor," "prophet," "Alfa," "medicine man," "apostle," or "evangelist" is the same individual.[3]

Third, Achebe refers to the cajoling of the would-be sex worker by "corrupt and conspiring medicine men" (2004: 182). We feel obliged to stress that this characterization is in no way exhaustive of the variety of religious authorities who are part of the migration process. A more accurate description, in our view, is a fluid social terrain in which different agents relate to one another according to constantly changing rules and dynamics. In short, the suggestion that traditional medicine men are "corrupt and conspiring" (a claim for which no solid evidence is adduced throughout Achebe's article) is vitiated by the reality that would-be migrants in general (and not just sex workers), without coercion, tend to consult with "traditional" *juju* men, and "modern" "Alfas," "pastors," and "evangelists" simultaneously.[4]

Ogbu Kalu also addresses religiosity (specifically Pentecostal Christianity) in the lives of would-be migrants, but only briefly, and within a larger discussion of how Christianity seems vital to an

[2] This recalls Marshall-Fratani's important observation, though made in specific regard to converts to Pentecostal Christianity in Nigeria. She writes: "Conversion does not necessarily imply a rejection of other identities, but involves their assimilation within a complex of discourses and practices governing all aspects of social, cultural, economic and political life which enable them to be mediated through and subsumed within a collective system of representations. One is always a born-again first, and this implies of course that being born again is simply incompatible with other forms of identification—most obviously religious. But one can learn how to be a born-again woman, Yoruba, businessman, politician, southerner, husband, rich or poor man, youth or elder" (2001: 86).

[3] This is a phenomenon with roots in the dynamic interpenetration of religious practices, especially in the western part of the country; for an excellent analysis, see Peel 1990.

[4] Of sociological interest here is the recent emergence of a particular type of religious authority, a "daddy" figure who is consulted in regard to, and freely dispenses advice on, personal, political, financial, and marital matters, as well as religious ones.

immigrant condition that is "riddled with hope, hardship, broken dreams, and measures of success." As he continues,

> Immigrant Christianity serves as a balm in the entire process, ranging from why and how the immigrants came to their new countries, to how they cope in the new homeland. *The journey begins with prayers in Pentecostal churches and prayer camps for travel visas*, to prayers in immigrant churches for everyday survival needs such as working permits, employment, and money for rent mortgage, health insurance, and other bills. There is also the added pressure to accumulate money and goods to transfer home (2008: 282, emphasis added).

Kalu is no doubt right about the special significance of prayers in Pentecostal churches for would-be migrants, but the truth is that they are hardly episodic. They are not necessarily the "beginning" of the journey, for instance, and when they are, they do not stop at that. Instead, they form part of a bigger canvas in which religion as a whole (and not just Christianity and/or Pentecostal Christianity) is pressed into service. Elsewhere, Kalu, observing that "The migration route is full of religious agents" points to instances of those who act "as missionaries for their denominations, supervisors of international branches, and evangelists who tour the northern hemisphere ministering to either migrant communities or mixed congregations" (2007: 77). There is no reference here to the specific religious agents who, as we show presently, play such a key role in the lives of would-be migrants.

On the whole, it seems safe to say that none of these works satisfies one of the key requirements for contemporary ethnographies, identified by Lozada (2003: 798), as taking into account "the global or transnational aspects in *ways that are both empirically grounded* and with the "thick description" that can reveal *the local specificity of particular social, historical and cultural processes*" (emphasis added).

Partly in response to this, our analysis here draws on data from participant observation and ethnographic research carried out in Nigeria, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America, where we are both currently resident. We summarize primary interviews conducted with respondents within and outside Nigeria at various times between 2004 and 2008. We also make use of notes taken as participant observers in the course of repeated visits to the embassies and consular sections of major western countries in Lagos, Nigeria. Finally, our chapter draws on secondary data from books, newspapers, and newsmagazines published both on-line and in Nigeria.

Our analysis is divided into four sections. In what follows, we first examine the literature on transnationalism with specific reference to

religion. In our appraisal, we highlight how religion is addressed, and we isolate what we consider to be the salient gap(s) in that literature. By doing so, we justify our focus on the important role of religion in the pre-migration process. This is followed by an empirical section in which we describe how would-be migrants in Nigeria instrumentalize religion. We place this discussion on the larger canvas of a formation in which, in recent times, religion has become increasingly prominent, and religious authorities increasingly influential. We suggest that the turn to religion and religious rites by would-be migrants is a rational act necessitated by the uncertainties built into both the particular process of getting entry visas into western countries and with emigration from the country as a whole. We conclude our analysis by examining the implications of our findings for extant understandings of transnational processes and for the theorizing of the transnational field. We suggest that the predominant focus on "the multi-layered … religious ties that link migrants and nonmigrants across borders" is valid (Levitt 2004: 3), yet insufficient. We argue that focusing on the role of religion in the period *before* migration illuminates an important but largely overlooked aspect of religious transnationalism and transnational migration studies.

Religion, Immigration and Transnationalism: Connecting the Dots

> Indeed, global accounts in general evacuate beliefs, practices and institutions of their specific significance, leaving "religion" as little more than a reference to "the whole," or to traditions of the supernatural, sacred, super-empirical, or transcendent-whatever definition is in use (Vasquez and Marquardt 2003: 50)

God Needs No Passport is the evocative title of Peggy Levitt's well-received study (2007) of immigration and the changing American religious landscape. In this work, Levitt, a leading authority on the religious dimension of transnational migration, examines how immigrants cross borders with their faiths, and how the same immigrants continue to use their faiths in adjusting to life in their destination societies. Although her choice as a host society is the United States (a core theme of the book is how American religious culture is transformed through intercourse with immigrant religious practice),[5] there is no gainsaying

[5] Cf. in this regard Ebaugh and Chafetz (2000), Levitt (2001), Portes and Rumbaut (2001), Menjivar (2003), and Mensah (2008).

the pertinence of the book to academic and practical understanding of (religious) transnationalism as a research field.

The question that therefore arises is why this critical part of religious transnationalism has received comparatively scant academic attention. Part of the answer lies in the kind of questions scholars have been asking, which themselves are an indication of ongoing conceptual struggles in the emergent field of transnational studies. To take three examples of such questions: What is the nature of transnational religious life for ordinary individuals? How does transnational religious belonging complement or undermine other kinds of transnational membership? What difference does it make when new migrants are integrated into receiving communities and remain connected to their sending communities through religious rather than political arenas? (Levitt 2004: 2). Obviously, no matter how these questions are answered—and there is no denying that these are indeed important questions—they are most likely to solidify the diasporic thrust of transnationalism scholarship.

One other plausible answer is that the bias itself reflects a view of global transformation (globalization for short) as a process that affects (but is hardly affected by) people in the global South. It is arguably due to this partial definition of globalization that, although transnationalism is essentially about how transnational migrants "keep their feet in two worlds" simultaneously, the sum total of knowledge about one-half of those worlds (in this case the "North") is almost equal to the same amount of ignorance about the other (the "South"). This perspective misses the sheer exuberance of quotidian life in many sending societies, particularly the colourful fabric of disaster and fortune that produce and are produced by transnational activity.

To say that religion is enfolded in all this is to state the obvious, given that "Many aspects of religious life have long been global" (Levitt 2004: 1) and that religious ideas, practices and institutions continue to animate many global networks and linkages. A rapidly growing literature on the spiritual dimension of globalization offers confirmation of this (Beyer 1994; Van de Veer 2002; Juergensmeyer 2005). Nevertheless, it is easy to agree with Vasquez and Marquardt that "global perspectives on religion strongly discourage contextual understanding," and that "global accounts in general evacuate beliefs, practices and institutions of their *specific significance*" (2003; 50; emphasis added). To the extent that it elides a discussion of the impact of religion on the lives and imagination of would-be migrants, the

religious transnationalism literature can be said to be guilty of this charge of inattentiveness to the *specific* significance of religious practices and institutions.

In light of this, here we do not provide a radically new way of studying religious phenomena, but argue for a discursive space for the interrogation of beliefs, practices, authorities, and ideas whose collective importance continues to grow in tandem with the increase in transnational migration and transnational activity. It is an approach, we posit, that equally illuminates religion as a social force and the nature of the state in particular sending societies, not to mention transnational migration itself.

The Visa God

> Loving Lord! The Scripture says that You are aware of all our needs, even before we ask You. So I come to You and place this request at Your loving hands. You know how desperate I am for getting the Visa. My soul has become weary and anxious over this delay in getting the visa. O Lord! Speak in the hearts of the concerned officials, grant me favour in their eyes and help me to get my visa on time so that my purpose is fulfilled. Perfect everything for me my Master. I wait at Your feet and trust in You to make this possible. I know that You will do it for You will never let Your children down. I thank You for listening to my plea! To You alone be all honour and glory. In the sweet name of Jesus I pray. Amen. (From *www.prayertoweronline.org* accessed December 18, 2008).
>
> Pls *[sic]* join me in thanking God that I will be granted favour in the sight of the boss of the Canadian embassy in Lagos Nigeria and as a result be granted a student visa. also that God will remove every obstacles *[sic]*. thank you and God bless. (From *www.cwcfresno.com* accessed December 19, 2008).[6]
>
> For many Nigerians, there is only one major prayer point: that God should bless their efforts to get the visa of the country of their dream (Igbokwe 2008)

Here we focus on the use of religion and religious rituals by potential migrants. We show and explain how would-be migrants use religion

[6] The original 'Visa God' is the Chilkur Balaji temple in Hyderabad, India, which reportedly attracts about 100,000 visitors weekly, many of whom go to pray to Lord Balaji for visas to travel to the US and other Western countries. We have borrowed the phrase partly to demonstrate that the reality we describe in this chapter is by no means limited to Nigeria (cf. Vara 2007).

and participate in religious rituals to assuage the contingency and humiliation that characterize the process of applying for a travel visa in Nigeria. As we have pointed out, this is only intelligible against the backdrop of: (1) the profound and persistent crisis of the postcolonial state in Nigeria, which has created a situation in which many young people have come to see the "exit" option (Hirschman 2007) as the only way (save out-and-out criminality) to get regular employment and become economically productive individuals; (2) a radical turn to religiosity evidenced by the proliferation of religious groups (Adogame 2004, Obadare 2007, Kalu 2008), especially Pentecostal/charismatic churches;[7] and (3) related to these, a tendency to see the totality of life in religious terms, thus to "seek God's favor in prayer" for most things—including, but certainly not limited to: success in examinations, employment, marital stability, getting pregnant, safe delivery, deliverance from "family curse," university admission, political stability,[8] victory in elections (or, these days, at the election tribunal for those initial victories that have been challenged), cures for all sorts of physiological ailments,[9] cure for HIV, plus, of course, going abroad and living a successful life as an immigrant. A full understanding of the turn to religion by aspiring migrants requires that these related factors be borne in mind.

It seems appropriate to begin by reiterating one of the points we have made earlier, which is that the actual decision about whether or not to migrate is rarely taken by an individual in isolation. Instead, it is taken only after familial, followed by spiritual, ratification. In many cases, it is family members or close friends who will recommend a "pastor" or a "medicine man" to the would-be migrant, who also receives a stern warning about the propriety of keeping travel plans

[7] A 2004 poll of ten thousand people in ten countries found that Nigeria is the most religious country in the world, with more than 90 per cent of those polled saying they believed in God, prayed regularly and would die for their belief. This survey was conducted by ICM (a UK polling group) for the BBC program *What the World Thinks of God*. Other countries polled were the United States, the UK, Israel, India, South Korea, Indonesia, Russia, Mexico and Lebanon. (See *http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/programmes/wtwtgod/3490490.stm* [accessed January 8, 2009]).

[8] For more on how prayer is used to "narrate the nation" and/or "preserve" the Nigerian state and its ruling elite, cf. Oha 2005.

[9] Again this has to be seen within the totality of the African cosmology in which spiritual beings are seen as causes of illness, though as Westerlund has noted (2000: 152), there is no suggestion that "nonreligious etiologies of disease" are totally out of the question. For a fuller discussion of the idea of disease causation in African indigenous religions, cf. Westerlund 2006.

close to his or her chest. There are at least two ways to understand this warning. The first has to with what Marshall-Fratani captures as "[a] kind of urban paranoia about 'evil doers' who are out to cheat, deceive, rob and kill." She traces the roots of this particular paranoia to "the anxiety created by the continued influx of 'dangerous strangers' to urban centers as a result of increased rural-urban migration, the extreme instrumentalization of social relations, as well as the breakdown of many patron-client networks during the past decade" (2001: 85).

A second way of understanding the warning is as a phenomenon that is embedded in (though by no means unique to) "traditional" African cosmology—this is the idea of the "evil eye," which partly connotes the belief that a malicious person (a jealous neighbor or friend, for instance) can slow down or completely derail one's well-laid plans with a malevolent gaze. That this phenomenon is very much alive can be seen in some of the "testimonies" given during worship sessions in many Pentecostal churches. Many of these testimonies describe how the giver has been able to overcome the schemes of "evil doers" only as a result of divine intervention. In any case, many people believe that the unseen hands of what is generally called *aye* ("the perilous world") are to be blamed whenever a visa application is turned down, which is quite often. Not surprisingly therefore, most of the pre-travel planning that would-be migrants do is undertaken in absolute secrecy with close family members or friends, ostensibly away from the malevolent gaze of others. Paradoxically therefore, those who seek the "goodies" of open societies must proceed with a thick veil of secrecy.

In some of the cases involving our informants, the would-be migrant approaches the designated spiritual authority, who may or may not approve of the travel plan, depending of course on his or her "vision" of God's plan for the potential traveller. However, in a majority of cases, the "vision" or "spiritual insight" sanctions the proposed journey, given its condensed representation in a discourse of the West as an earthly paradise—a representation and discourse into which even the "spiritualists" are enfolded. If the spiritualist finds that the "elements" do not favor the journey, several courses of action are usually prescribed when the would-be migrant insists on making the journey in the face of a perceived spiritual obstacle. The most common is the prescription of a course of fasting by Christian priests. This is especially the case with the single-church denominations and many of the semi-autonomous branches of the Pentecostal denomination of the Christian church.

In the Yoruba areas, some of our informants revealed that the *ojişe* (literally, one who relays a divine message) would ask the supplicant to undergo a regime of fasting and praying whose length and severity depend on the perceived seriousness of the alleged spiritual obstacles. For example, *aawẹ funfun* (literally, white fast) which demands that the applicant abstain from food and drink for a specified period (typically 3–5 days) is an indication that the spiritual situation is portentous. In case the would-be migrant is unable to undergo the course for medical and other reasons, it is not unusual for the *ojişe* to levy him or her a certain amount of money in order to bear the brunt of physical denial on behalf of the would-be migrant. The *ojişe* can also ask the would-be migrant to bring his or her international travel passport for a special prayer session. At such sessions, the *ojişe* would sprinkle the passport of the would-be migrant with "anointing oil" in order to "remove the demon" that is believed to be "hanging on to it" and apparently depriving the owner the opportunity of getting a visa. Generally, this particular treatment is reserved for those who have been denied visas at least twice and have become convinced that their problem is not an "ordinary" one (meaning merely rational-bureaucratic). In certain cases, and depending on the inclination or expertise of the spiritual authority and his or her "reading" of the obstacles facing the would-be migrant, a decision is taken to make incisions (ritual cuts) on the chest, back, arm or/and face of the aspiring traveller. In other cases, he or she is given ritual rings or amulets to wear around the wrist and/or waist during the trip to the consulate. The aim here is to ensure that on a subsequent visit, he or she is perceived favorably by consular officials.

Part of what emerges from the preceding is the fact that most visa applicants presume, as a matter of fact, the non-rationality of the visa process and assume that getting a visa is, among other things, a matter of "chance," personal "luck," or spiritual "blessing." It is therefore common that people hold thanksgiving services in churches after being granted visas. As said earlier, part of our aim here is to establish the rational roots of this presumption as a way of explaining the common turn to spirituality. Part of the explanation must be found in the kind of treatment to which Nigerian visa applicants are subjected at the various western consulates.

Apart from the demand from various kinds of documentation, there is no shortage of anecdotes about the casual treatment and/or

systematic maltreatment of visa applicants.[10] Such maltreatment is meted out both by Nigerian employees of the consulates and by foreign officials. One of the authors once found himself on the receiving end of the butt of a security guard's gun at the British High Commission, Eleke Crescent, in July 2001. The other was severely verbally insulted by a consulate officer because he forgot to drop the IAP-66 Form sent to him by the US Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) to procure a J1 visa. In the emigration process in the postcolony, in a sense, the would-be migrant is largely regarded by the consular officials as a vagrant. The point, therefore, is that the average western consulate in Nigeria is a space of abjection[11] and humiliation,[12] and religion is one of the ways in which potential visitors to the embassies come to terms with the casual attack on personal dignity that has become an integral component of the visa interview process. The example of Olajumoke Animashaun-Bello, whose case became, at least momentarily, a *cause célèbre* in 2006, provides a perfect illustration, particularly in regard to the radical invasion of visa applicants' privacy.

After winning the American Green Card Visa Lottery in July 2005, Animashaun had applied for an immigrant visa together with her spouse, with whom she had tied the knot just before receiving news that her Visa Lottery application had been successful. Her treatment at

[10] It is not the fact of documentation itself, but the rigor with which it is pursued in a culture not particularly renowned for record keeping, that we wish to highlight. One untold consequence has been the emergence of extensive and well-developed paralegal, semi-criminal, and outright criminal networks which produce on demand an 'authentic' double of any required document. This development also has to be inserted into the broader reality of youth criminality amid the flourishing of a shadow economy in the country (cf. Ismail 2007).

[11] In an interview published in the London *Sunday Times*, the Nigerian writer Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, had the following to say about what it is like to go through a visa interview at a foreign embassy in Nigeria: "There is something authentically Nigerian about being humiliated in foreign embassies when you want to get a visa. The only embassy which has ever been polite to me was the Canadian embassy. Do you want to hear about the British embassy in Lagos? Horribly rude. I will never forget this old man ahead of me in line once. He must have been in his seventies, spoke bad English, and this official was shouting at him, 'You are a liar, you're a liar. Security, get him out of here.' And I thought: you don't have to do this. At least leave him with his dignity." (Rosie Millard, "This is the Africa you don't hear about." June 10, 2007: 5).

[12] To see this in its totality, we must include that potential interviewees used to be forced to camp outside the embassy grounds overnight, they receive rough treatment at the hands of consulate security guards, they cannot talk back to their interviewers lest their interview be abruptly terminated and they are thrown out of the consulate, and finally, the fact that, in a culture where rules of seniority are ingrained, relatively young consulate officials regularly talk down to senior citizens.

the hands of the consular officials at the American embassy in Lagos became front-page news because her interviewees appeared to have gone too far—even when you allow for the serial incivility that had become an 'acceptable' part of the visa application process. Following is an excerpt from Animashaun's account of her experience at the visa interview:

> He (the embassy official) asked when I and my husband got married, why we got married, and the wedding photographs. Then he asked me to go sit down while he questioned my husband. He asked him what side of the bed do I sleep on, colour of my tooth brush, etc. The officer later repeated the same questions with me. Next, he consulted with two other officers and told us to come back at 2 P.M. of the same day. At 2 P.M., we returned to the administrative area where I was taken upstairs by a woman who they refer to as F.P.U. extension 317. As this woman was taking me upstairs in the elevator, I leaned on the wall. She asked me if I had never been in an elevator before. I told her that I have, but it makes me feel light on my feet. She said in such an insulting way: "how do you then fly in a plane." Well, that was just a tip of the iceberg. Her next question completely startled me. This woman asked me when the last time I had sex with my husband was. She asked if there were scars on my husband's body, when was our first kiss. She asked this question in such a way that an American woman who was being interviewed in the same office asked me when the F.P.U. woman had gone downstairs to bring my husband: 'what did you do and why are they treating you like this?'[13]

This excerpt vividly portrays the reality of personal humiliation and invasion of privacy that is part and parcel of the visa interview process at the embassies of the western countries in Nigeria. As we have maintained, this is crucial to any understanding of the resort to spirituality by potential migrants. In fact, such is the sense of terror with which the grounds of the embassy are regarded that the immediate perimeters are ringed by different religious entities who vigorously pray for visa applicants and administer all kinds of on-the-spot rituals. The most common form of prayer in broken English—"*come today, come tomorrow, will not be your own*"[14]—is itself instructive in that it speaks to the all-too-familiar experience of being asked to provide "additional

[13] See Emmanuel Mayah, "I won visa lottery and my trouble started. We saw hell in American embassy… They wanted to know what position I take when we make love." *Daily Sun* (Lagos) November 4, 2006, available at *www.sunnewsonline.com* accessed on November 22, 2008.

[14] "May you be spared the horror of being asked to come back repeatedly." This is a common prayer by beggars who regularly speak to the uncertainties and apprehensions experienced by the would-be migrant.

documentation," thus having to return and reappear for interviews on multiple occasions.

This is why, for the visa applicant, the interview date is a unique one, requiring special preparation. This may include relatively mundane things like being coached on the interview process by people who have previously undergone it. Much more symbolic, however, is the virtual assumption of a new identity, something seen for example in the fact that many potential interviewees go to the extent of "dressing for the part" by borrowing or renting "smart" and "consulate-friendly" clothes from a friend or relative. The more crucial point here seems to be how something as seemingly straightforward as the process of planning to be an immigrant can (and often does) lead to a repackaging of selfhood and self-identification. In addition, it is an ample illustration of the popular definition of and acceptance of the entire visa process as unpredictable. In this little world, (physical) "appearance" is believed to matter as much as the "reality" of having "proper" documentation.

Up to this point in our analysis, we have discussed the social background to the instrumentalization of religion by would-be migrants, and have provided specific examples of its operation. However, our discussion would remain incomplete without a mention of how many would-be migrants join online communities, where they submit prayer requests about their forthcoming visa interviews and general travel plans. A majority of these online "communities" are regular Christian websites, of which would-be migrants may or may not ordinarily be members. Crucially, however, the fact that many of them are foreign is in itself an indication of how would-be migrants are already plugged into transnational discourses. Examples of such websites are: *www.prayabout.com, www.prayertoweronline.org, www.freedomchristianhouse.org*, and *www.helplinetv.com*. In addition to prayer requests, such websites also feature testimonies from people who have successfully secured travel visas after initially posting their prayers. The following is the excited testimony of a would-be migrant whose application had been thus successful: "I thank God Almighty for answering my prayer request. I asked the Morris Cerullo Helpline to pray for my visa application submitted to the British High Commission/Nigeria after being refused the visa twice in two consecutive years. This time I received the visa!"[15] This is the other face of the approach to seeking visas that ignores the

[15] See *www.helplinetv.com* (accessed on December 19, 2008).

rule of secrecy, which is otherwise compelled by the fear of "evil ones." But even this face speaks instrumentally about the visa process. Therefore, openness (or publicity) and secrecy are two sides of the same instrumental coin.

Overall, pre-migration religiosity is important, not just because it shows the length to which aspiring migrants often go in an attempt to realize their dream of leaving the country; it is also significant in that it raises a theoretically interesting dimension of how people who have not yet emigrated key into transnational networks, although in this case virtual ones. As "places" for the exchange of information, sharing of experiences, and moral support—most of the time among people who have had no prior physical contact—such virtual networks are an important part of transnational religiosity and a crucial part of how would-be migrants negotiate the ambivalences of the entire migration process. On the whole, because the West is an *El Dorado* for those in the global South, particularly Africa—captured in the oft-repeated description of the United States as "God's Own Country"—therefore, the prayers and other spiritual efforts can be seen as paths to a heaven on earth.

Finally, a caveat: although we have focused on the role of religious authorities (for example, Christian pastors) in the nexus of agents who pray for and counsel potential travellers, it is important to stress that such agents or authorities are far from unanimous in their perception of either the simple fact of leaving the country, or the western countries to which young people are emigrating. For instance, one of the biggest and most prosperous congregations of Pentecostal Christianity, Winners' Chapel, led by Bishop David Oyedepo, discourages this pattern of migration, describing it a new form of enslavement—specifically of his adherents, but also of Africans generally.

Therefore, while there is clearly a great appetite for exit among the younger part of the population, in particular by unemployed university graduates, the truth is that it is far from universal, and religious authorities are divided as to the benefits versus the problems of people in general wanting to leave the country. Thus, while some pray for brethren with forthcoming visa interview dates, and some (for example, some parishes of the Celestial Church of Christ) go to the extent of featuring advertisements for the American Green Card Visa Lottery on their websites, others are scathing about America in particular and about "the West" in general. The reasons are of course very diverse, ranging from a perception of the West as being "morally bankrupt"

and "permissive," to a palpable hostility toward all would-be migrants who are defined as "bastards" or "running away from their country." The most truculent have called on the Nigerian federal government to ban the Visa Lottery program.[16]

Conclusion

The crux of our argument in this chapter is that while the transnational migration literature has adequately addressed the subject of the transnational religious activity of immigrants, the same thing cannot be said of the religious activity of the same immigrants *before* their departure from their home societies. We contend that this dimension of immigrant religious activity should be regarded as a key part of transnational religious activity, especially in light of the evidence that a good portion of the religious activity that migrants engage in upon arrival in host societies is a *continuation* of relationships established with a range of religious figures in their home countries *before* actual migration. Also, such activity is central to how future immigrants are reconstituted as delocalized subjects, and its analysis is an important departure point for engaging with the character of the state and its relationship to society in any sending society.

But the dilemma persists: if the period before actual migration is so important, particularly in any analysis of how would-be migrants use religion to cope with the asperities (both real and concocted) of the visa application process, why has the literature been mostly apathetic? Our argument is that even though transnationalism is generally understood as the process by which immigrants "keep their feet in multiple worlds," transnationalism scholarship has been partial toward what takes place in one of these bifurcated worlds, even while overlooking the fact that these worlds, even if spatially dual, are multiple in their encounters, transgressions, and implications. Our analysis in this chapter is partly an attempt to refocus the analytic gaze and point to some of the usually overlooked social dynamics that transnationalism

[16] See Folusho Olanrewaju, "Cleric wants FG to ban US visa lottery" *www.biafranigeriaworld.com* (accessed on November 22, 2008). All this has to be seen in the context of many of the pastors' broad, if ambivalent, engagement with the West, including citing the West/America as examples in their sermons, dressing/speaking like American pastors, having branches in the West, and of course receiving financial support from Western religious organizations.

ramifies as a way of challenging existing conceptualizations of transnationalism.[17]

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[17] The authors gratefully acknowledge funding support from the MacArthur Foundation Writing and Research Grants (2005) for the research from which this chapter emanates. We thank Bolaji Moyosore and Sola Asa for their assistance with data collection.

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CHAPTER TWO

A NIGERIAN MOTHER IN ISRAEL AT CONEY ISLAND: AUTHORITY, GENDER, AND TRANSLATION IN A TRANSNATIONAL YORUBA RELIGION

Mei-Mei Sanford

Enirapada, Prophetess and Mother in Israel in the Eternal Sacred Order of Cherubim and Seraphim (ESOC&S) Nigerian independent church, stands with me one night in the water's shallows at Coney Island in Brooklyn, New York. The water touching our ankles, traveling east-southeast, touches Nigeria. For her, and for other Nigerian expatriates in the New York area, Coney Island is their Bar Beach, the holy place of prayer on Victoria Island in Lagos, Nigeria. She is a Prophetess, one of the most senior women in the ESOC&S worldwide, and Mother in Israel for North America, where only one woman is senior to her. Mother travels widely for the church in Nigeria and in the Yoruba diasporas of Canada and the United States. The transnational dimension of ESOC&S is nowhere more clearly evident than in the Mother herself: in her travels as a church administrator, in the multiple spatial centers—geographical and cosmological—that constitute her authority, in the strengths and constraints of her identities as a woman and as a mother, and in her adaptations to turn-of-the-century Yoruba expatriate life and the fluency she has acquired in cultural and religious translation. This chapter will endeavor to understand and contextualize the religious authority of this Yoruba woman leader in its multiple dimensions. In doing so, it will emphasize the complexity of her national, religious and gender identifications, her strategies of translation, and the vitality and flexibility which underlie them.[1]

Aladura is the Yoruba name for the indigenously led independent churches which developed in the early twentieth century—among them the Eternal Sacred Order of Cherubim and Seraphim Church

[1] This chapter is based upon my ongoing association with Mother, which began in 1993. Aside from the quote from Baba Alakoso and academic references, all information in this chapter is from Mother.

(*Kerabu ati Serafu*), the C.A.C (the Christ Apostolic Church), and the C.C.C (the Celestial Church of Christ). "Aladura" literally means "the owners of prayer" or "those who pray," and one of the Cherubim and Seraphim churches' earliest organizational forms was the Praying Band, which focused communal prayer to heal. Today these churches are characterized by their focus on healing and other gifts of the spirit, including prophecy and visions. J.D.Y. Peel (1968) and J. Akinyele Omoyajowo (1982: 123–24) contend that the church, officially registered in 1925 by Moses Orimolade and Christianah Abiodun, was the only one of the Aladura churches that from its beginning eschewed foreign missionary influence and affirmed the centrality of continuous revelation and prophecy and the use of "*omi iye*" (living water) in healing. The ESOC&S has experienced numerous schisms and contestations over leadership, yet all the factions have continued to claim the name. In the mid-1980s, the factions formally reunited. The ESOC&S Worldwide does not recognize Abiodun as a founder.[2]

Authority

Mother's awareness of her vocation as a Prophetess and healer dates from her early life. She grew up in Ibadan, Nigeria, the daughter of first-generation Christians and devout Cherubim and Seraphim. "Of course," she says, she "followed them" to church. She remembers an event in Osogbo when at ten years of age she witnessed the Church's powers of prophecy and healing. In the church, people entered trance and healed those who came for help. Customarily, the authenticity of a person's trance state was tested: true trance made the person insensible to the pricking of pins or the heat of hot wax. Mother tested them in her own way. She rounded up lame, blind, and sick beggars who congregated at the busy roundabout near Station Road and conveyed them by taxi to the church. One elder in the church, AtunbiJesu, prophesied that they were coming before they arrived. As they entered, AtunbiJesu healed them. In telling the story, Iya emphasizes that the infirmities of

[2] In this chapter I refer to Iya Aladura's church affiliation as she does, as ESOC&S (the Eternal Sacred Order of Cherubim and Seraphim). Some church members, when speaking in Yoruba, may say simply "*Kerabu ati Serafu*," yet also use ESOC&S on church buildings and printed materials. When I quote the church elder Baba Alakoso, I follow his practice of saying "*Kerabu ati Serafu*." When I quote scholars who speak of "*Kerabu ati Serafu*," I follow their practice as well.

the beggars were real, and that they were Northerners, neither Christian nor Yoruba, and therefore had no previous knowledge of or investment in the church. They subsequently became and remained members. AtunbiJesu now lives in Nigeria, but he travels frequently to Mother's Bronx church community, and he and she are close colleagues. Such working associations bridge the Atlantic.

The ESOC&S was registered in New York in 1975, the first "white garment" (Aladura) church to do so, according to Mother. She was a member of the ESOC&S group in New York at that time. She officiates as a "Mother in Israel" at the North Provisional Headquarters, located in the Bronx, New York, and which has jurisdiction over all members in the United States, Canada, and the Caribbean. Only one woman in the region, a Senior Mother in Israel, outranks her. However, because this woman is extremely advanced in age, Mother carries out most administrative and traveling duties for the Headquarters. She oversees women's affairs, issues and groups within the membership, ministers to those junior to her in rank, male and female, and assists her elders. She attends American member churches' anniversaries and adoption services (harvest/thanksgiving services), and accompanies the Baba Aladura Worldwide, head of the ESOC&S, and other church executives on their American visits.

When I asked Mother the meaning of "Mother in Israel," she said, "You know where it comes from in the Bible, don't you?" Yes, I said, it is in Judges 5: 6–7, and refers to Deborah who "arose as a mother in Israel." "And you know what she did?"[3] Deborah was, significantly for *Kerabu ati Serafu*, "a prophetess, she led Israel at that time." (Judges 4: 4).[4] In addition, Deborah's martial leadership fits well with church imagery of the cherubim and seraphim as warriors for good.

The Cherubim and Seraphim churches relate strongly to the Hebrew Bible, as well as to the New Testament. They do not eat pork; they allow polygamy. Jerusalem and the Holy Land figure large in their religious imagination. Members make pilgrimage, if possible. Numerous songs refer to Zion; psalm reading and meditation on the psalms are frequently used technologies of prayer. The title "Mother in Israel" traces Mother's authority through Nigeria, where ESOC&S originated, back to the Holy Land itself. The title is not only a reference to Deborah.

[3] Iya Aladura, personal communication, December 29, 2008.
[4] Translation from *Tanakh* (1988: 382, 384).

"The Matriarchs"—Sarah, Rebekkah, Rachel, and Leah—are "Mothers in Israel," so to be a "Mother in Israel" is to be cast in their mould. Mother's title of "Mother in Israel" works transnationally, conferring the power of Zion to her religious actions in Nigeria, New York, or in other parts of the ESOC&S diaspora. It is also gender specific. Her obligations, as Mother describes them are: as Prophetess, to deliver prophetic messages; as Mother in Israel, to act as "mother to the Holy Order, to love them, behave well, care for them, [and] respond with help at any time it is requested."[5] Leadership in the church is imaged as parental, and that those so titled are enjoined to protect, support and care for their juniors.[6]

A major, and particularly Nigerian, source of Mother's authority was her 1975 journey with twelve others to convey founder Moses Orimolade's body from his tomb at Ojokoro Village near Agege to its final resting place in his hometown of Ikare. The Development Council led by I. K. Dairo chose the thirteen and included members from many different church factions, including some from Captain Abiodun's church. The move, from the earlier pilgrimage site, was dictated by a prophecy in early 1975 and fulfilled an earlier, longstanding prophecy.[7]

Mother derives authority from her membership in the inner circle that received and acted upon the prophecy. Equally, her authority derives from her physical closeness to the founder during the process. She remembers that the body of Saint Moses, as he is known, "was completely fresh, as if he was sleeping."[8] In Yoruba traditional thought, spiritual power is, specifically, authority, which must be conferred from one being or person to another. The dead, particularly those of great spiritual power, do not disappear, but operate with increased efficacy in the affairs of the living. Closeness to the founder's body at the important time of transition was an occasion for her to receive power and blessing from him. The original tomb's importance was obviated by

[5] Personal communication, April 19, 2009.

[6] The head of the church is "Baba Aladura Worldwide," which means "Father of the Aladura, or Praying People Worldwide." Three senior women, all at the church headquarters in Lagos, Nigeria, have the title of "Iya [Mother] Aladura Worldwide." Their individual and singular titles are, beginning with the highest rank: Mother Cherub, Captain, and Mother Seraph.

[7] A photograph of a supplicant praying at Orimolade's tomb in Ojokoro Village appears in Omoyajowo's book (1982: 218, 244).

[8] Mother, personal communication, November, 1993.

prophetic decree. Orimolade's body at the new site remains the single most important geographical site of spiritual power for ESOC&S members internationally, and a site of annual pilgrimage.

For the ESOC&S, a religion of revelation, the ultimate source of authority, and of all good, is Heaven. Mother, whenever I thank her, responds: "Let's thank God!" In Lalate Oke Ogun, in 1975, while in trance, Mother received from God the name "Enirapada." While it can be glossed as "healer," its meaning is more encompassing—literally, "the one who redeems." The iconic redeemer in Christianity is Jesus, and to redeem is to deliver a person from sin, illness, or even death. It is healing in its widest sense, corporeal and spiritual, and requires great expenditure of spiritual power. Mother stresses that "Enirapada" is a name. Unlike a church title, such as Mother in Israel, "Enirapada" is personal and an unmediated gift from the divine.

Mother facilitates healing—she would say that "only God heals"—as do other ESOC&S, with prayer, spoken psalms, and songs, and with water, oil, soap, and candles. Particular psalms are specific remedies for particular maladies or obstacles. She has, on occasion, spoken prayers into a bowl of water and given it to me to bathe with. She spontaneously receives prophecy during some consultations with clients, as do other senior Aladura. The client may require blessed olive oil, soap, honey, or salt. The blessing of these is done according to the instruction of the prophecy, and may require the healer to make a prayer vigil for a certain number of days, perhaps fasting or refraining from sleeping.

Healing may be effected in church with the support of a Praying Band working as a spiritual battery for the healer, as utilized by Orimolade in the early days of the church. It may also take place at the Mother's home altar. Her altar customarily has Bibles open to particular psalms, containers of water and of oil, a cross, candles, and her staff. The staff or rod is possessed only by "anointed members and leaders of the church" (Omoyajowo 1982: 158). It is also a means of conferring healing power and blessing to water. On one visit, I asked where she had gotten the water. "I brought it from Nigeria," she said, then added, "It comes from Jerusalem."

Water is a vital conduit of health and blessing for ESOC&S members. Aladura theologians point to Genesis 1: 1 for evidence that, of everything in the world, only water was uncreated, existing with God from before the beginning. Omoyajowo quotes a church Lenten pamphlet as saying: "Pharaoh was conquered by water while Noah was saved by

water and Naaman (the leper) was cured by water" (1982: 174, 183).[9] As mentioned earlier, ESOC&S, from its inception, affirmed the use of "omi iye" (living, fresh water) as a vehicle of healing. Water, preferably at its natural source or drawn directly from it, is ritually infused with blessing.

Water for prayer, spatially, may be as contained and intimate as a bowl of water drawn from a city faucet, or as vast as the Atlantic Ocean. In between the two are the wells dug and consecrated in some Nigerian ESOC&S compounds. The urban location of most churches has made this untenable in the United States, but as more and more American Nigerian communities appear in the suburbs, church wells become a possibility. This spatial range makes the technologies of ESOC&S healing flexible and adaptable. Presence at a Nigerian river or at Bar Beach in Lagos, where thousands of prophets have labored in the Spirit, is not required. American rivers and beaches also become healing sites, with certain of them "built up" by repeated ritual. Likewise, the simplicity of the home altar makes it easily constituted in expatriate homes, even when space or money is limited.

The viability of simple and portable home altars can be seen as a reflection of the power of individual ESOC&S members and their ability to constitute authentic spiritual lives wherever they are. All members can pray, commune directly with God, and receive gifts of the spirit. A young member may receive a revelation that is authoritative and binding for a senior Aladura. Omoyajowo writes: "the members see themselves as belonging to a 'spiritual' organisation in which the Holy Spirit can use any member who lives a life of faith and devotion" (1982: 199). This is not to argue that individual members do not need churches, they do, but that they, together, can extend and reconstitute these churches transnationally and transatlantically.

Gender

Mother's authority is constituted independently of her gender, because of it, as an exception to it, and in spite of it. As noted earlier, gifts of the Spirit are understood by ESOC&S to be conferred by the divine, irrespective of gender, age, or worldly status. Mother's gifts are

[9] Quoting from *ESOC&S Morning Star: Lenten Pamphlet with Seventy-three Questions and Answers* 3: n.d.

considerable, evidenced by her name, "Enirapada." In addition, her offices within ESOC&S, "Prophetess" and "Mother in Israel," explicitly recognize and confirm her powers of prophecy.

At the same time, these titles are gendered. "Mother in Israel," in particular, identifies Iya as a mother. In traditional Yoruba culture, a mother's love and willingness to act for her children are unparalleled. A popular proverb says: *Iya ni wura, baba ni jigi*. "Mother is gold, father is a mirror." A mother or grandmother's words have the power to bless, and it is not coincidental that most performers of *oriki* (praise poetry) are women.[10] Most relevantly, mothers have the potency to heal their children when all other means fail. Rowland Abiodun writes that when a healer had exhausted all other modes, he or she would ask if the patient's mother were living. If she were, the patient would be instructed to suck at her breast (Abiodun and Beier 1991: 32). The roles of Iya Aladura and of Mother in Israel, like that of the biblical Deborah, are not confined to biological relationship; they have responsibility for and authority over those who are junior in rank, women and sometimes men.

Mother's authority as a member of the group of leaders who accompanied Orimolade's body is as an exceptional woman. She was the only woman in the party. Her achievement of this, as a woman, or in spite of being a woman, is a matter of considerable pride. A brief gendered history of ESOC&S is relevant here. The preponderance of Nigerian independent churches were founded by women or by women and men, and subsequently led by men.[11] At the time of the ESOC&S church's founding Abiodun entered extended trance during which she accompanied an angel on many journeys, even ascending to heaven. (According to Mother, ascent in trance to heaven is not unusual: "That's what trance is!"[12]) Evangelist Orimolade was called to minister to her during the trance. They created the new church with complimentary strengths, she as a charismatic preacher, he as a healer. By 1929, there was a schism, with Orimolade expelling her, and with Abiodun retaining her own followers and declaring that the separation was not of her choosing (see Omoyajowo 1982: 65–70 *et passim*). When Orimolade

[10] *Oriki* is efficacious speech. It is that which not only greets (*ki*) the inner head or destiny (*ori*) of a person, but which also provokes (*ki*) that person to carry out his or her destiny.

[11] See Crumbly (2008) concerning this tendency in African independent churches and in African-American storefront churches.

[12] Personal communication, April 19, 2009.

died in 1933, there were three contenders for the head of the church: Abraham William Onanuga, whom Orimolade had named as his successor; Orimolade's older brother Peter Omojola; and Abiodun. When the factions could not agree, the Alake, sovereign of Abeokuta, attempted to broker a deal: the two men would assume the roles of co-leaders and Abiodun would have the position of leader of the women of the church. Abiodun angrily refused.

The factions did not reunite as one church until the mid-1980s. Omoyajowo is of the opinion that opposition to Abiodun was based on her gender and believes, given the fact that she was the sole surviving original founder, that if she had been a man, she would have successfully reunited all the Lagos factions (Omoyajowo 1982: 201). Abiodun sued in the courts to obtain headship of the church. Oyeronke Olajubu (2003: 56) writes that in 1986, the courts judged Abiodun to be the rightful leader of the *Kerabu ati Serafu* churches. The ESOC&S Worldwide, however, does not recognize Abiodun's leadership and regards Orimolade as the sole founder. Iya Aladura concurs with the normative view of her church. Indeed, in the ESOC&S currently, citing Abiodun's precedent as a leader would not be effective. The role of "Mother in Israel" as headship of the women would seem to parallel the role offered by the Alake to Abiodun which she refused.

Women in ESOC&S are subject to certain restrictions. First of all, they cannot head the Church. Mother's response to Captain Abiodun's claims of headship is: "How can a woman be 'Baba'"?[13] Women of whatever rank are barred from attending church during menstruation or for a certain period after childbirth.[14] While no woman may say grace at the end of a service, a man of the lowest rank may do so.

Mother's role is a particularly transnational one. She not only travels frequently from New York to Nigeria to attend church anniversaries and adoption services, but she accompanies the Baba Aladura Worldwide and other Nigerian senior churchmen and women on their visits in the Americas, smoothing the way, providing food, and interpreting culturally and sometimes linguistically. In some part, this role is culturally determined. Historically, in Yorubaland, women

[13] Personal communication, April 19, 2009.

[14] See Crumbley (2008) for an extensive discussion of issues of women's power and the constraints on that power in Nigerian Aladura churches.

rather than men have been the traders, linguists, and long-distance travellers.

Is this itinerant vocation a result of Mother's particular gifts or of her unique, even anomalous, position—or both? According to Laverne Scurlock, at one time a medium in the African-American Metropolitan Spiritual Church, when a church conferred the title and office of "Evangelist" on a woman, sending her to travel and preach in many places, this meant either that the church was drawing her closer—elevating her to a high position, close to or higher than that of the pastor, or it was pushing her away—recognizing in her strength a rival for the pastor's authority, hence distancing that threat by sending her "on the road."[15] While Mother is of exalted and personal authority, exemplified in her membership in the burial group, for example, her duties are wide-ranging, and not centred and focused on one congregation.

Historically, one of the tenets of ESOC&S is that clergy do not make a living from their role in the church. This was instituted to discourage charges of charlatanism and mercenary motives. This dual demand for service and financial independence can be particularly onerous for an expatriate woman, raising children on her own, and not primarily rooted to a single religious community. Any single one of these factors is challenging. Jobs can be difficult to find for new Nigerian expatriates, with or without university credentials, and such available jobs as cab driver or security guard are often dangerous, particularly for women. In addition, Mother has had to find employment that she could leave, sometimes on short notice, to travel, sometimes for weeks at a time. Travel to and from Nigeria has been even more difficult to accommodate to a regular work schedule, since trans-Atlantic flights are subject to cancellation and rescheduling, and phone service between Nigeria and the US, until the recent cell phone revolution, has been extremely unreliable. She has often worked as a security guard.

She has reared her children by herself, a difficult task, especially since her extended family is in Nigeria. Expatriate men, if married, usually emigrate with their wives and children, or arrive alone, leaving

[15] Laverne Scurlock, personal communication, 1994. Note that both Orimolade and Abiodun were described as "Evangelists" at particular points in their ministry. Omoyajowo's list of *Kerabu ati Serafu* ranks lists "Evangelist" above "Pastor" and below "Prophet/Prophetess." Mother, citing ESOC&S rules, does not list "Evangelist" as a rank, and places "Pastor" above "Prophet/Prophetess" and above "Mother in Israel." Personal communication, April 19, 2009.

the children to be cared for at home. Single parenting is difficult enough for indigenes. Mother has had to negotiate differing styles and expectations with her children's teachers and guidance counselors, and with her children as well. Finally, unlike an ESOC&S pastor, prophet, or leader of a church in the US who lives and works in a single community, Mother has church responsibilities that repeatedly remove her from daily, local support systems. The transnational dimensions of her religion and work for the church have chosen and challenged her.

Translations

Another of the stresses of Mother's expatriate life is that her clerical role is not easily understandable or even apparent to her non-ESOC&S neighbors. Present-day Americans are used to the presence of women clergy in most Protestant denominations, but expect to hear the title "Reverend" or "Pastor" or even "Bishop," see the clothing of a generic "professional" dress code and perhaps a clerical collar, and to perceive a formal linkage with a particular church building and congregation. None of these is apparent in Mother. Her peripatetic office, financial needs, maternal involvement with her children's schools, all require her to function within and outside the local ESOC&S enclaves.

So does her role as a facilitator of healing. The healing range of ESOC&S healers has always been wider than their church memberships, including occasional church visitors and outsider clients. Spiritual counseling and healing require making ESOC&S religious concepts and realities understandable to visitors and outsiders. This is a matter of translation, not only between religious and quotidian realities, but sometimes between different religious realities.

Elsewhere I have framed correspondences voiced by senior ESOC&S between church and Yoruba *orisa* religious realities as religious complexity (2001: 237–50).[16] For example, the founder of an ESOC&S branch formulated the relationship of the Yoruba *orisa* (deity) Osun to *Kerabu ati Serafu* in this way:

> In the beginning, Olorun, the High God, created water and divided it in two, and the *orisa* Yemoja … and Osun [both deities of water] came into being. Osun, … [Baba Alakoso] said, is the same as Orisanla, the chief of

[16] *Orisa* are indigenous Yoruba deities.

> the *orisa* funfun, the cooling white deities … [Baba Alakoso] went on to equate Orisanla, and thereby Osun, with Olodumare, which is a name of God. It was only after Baba Moses Orimolade, the founder of *Kerabu ati Serafu*, pleaded with Olorun for forty years that Olorun … changed Orisanla/Osun into *Kerabu ati Serafu* (Sanford 2001: 240).

Baba Alakoso's theological explanation connects the two religious worlds by placing them in a single narrative. It begins, midrash-like, as a retelling of Genesis 1: 6, God dividing and separating the waters, and makes clear, as Genesis does not, that God has created the waters and, therefore, created the deities Osun and Yemoja. The narrative moves to the transformation of the deities into *Kerabu ati Serafu*, yet retains them as divine antecedents within God's creation.

While this can be seen as an example of religious complexity, it can also be interpreted as an instance of religious translation. In fact, Mother, a close associate of Baba Alakoso, responded to his narrative by saying that the transformation in it was "a refinement of the name" (Sanford 2001: 241). Translation is performative; it is an action. While religious complexity presupposes identities, translation is situational, a strategy (not in the sense of inauthenticity, but of contingency) to effect understanding or healing.

On occasion, Mother responded to me, a devotee of the *orisa* Osun but not an ESOC&S member, in translation mode. Once in 1995, I was talking on the telephone with Mother, telling her about a health worry, when I heard a woman's voice speaking rapid and urgent Yoruba in the background. She was prophesying, Mother said. The woman spoke to me on the phone and instructed me to read certain psalms over a glass of water, then to drink half and bathe with half. I should promise God that when I was well, I would make a public testament of thanksgiving in five churches on five Sundays. Later, when I spoke to her privately, saying I didn't want to make a vow to go to church, she said that was all right, I could pray at home at my own altar. "Pray to your own God. Prayer is prayer," she said.

Conclusion

This chapter examines religious transnationalism in the ESOC&S, in the work and life of one Nigerian-American woman leader. Mother's work is physically transnational, moving her between the United States, Nigeria, and Canada. Her spiritual landscape extends further, to

The Holy Land and to Heaven, where Church members travel in trance. Her authority and gender roles are informed by these multiple sites, as is her ability to understand her Church and to translate it for others. A familiar sight as a plane on a transatlantic flight between Nigeria and the US or Canada begins its descent is scores of people removing one SIMM card in their cell phone and replacing it with the local one. A cell phone with multiple SIMM cards is an apt metaphor for Mother's ability to translate between worlds with flexibility and precision.

One of the purposes of this volume is to begin to define "transnational religion." Among the transnational elements touched on in this chapter are: geographical range and physical travel within it; multiple sites of authority, potency and pilgrimage; the impact of multiple national histories and mores; expatriate life; and religious portability and the reconstitution of spiritual and social geographies.

A conclusion of this chapter is that all parts of a transnational religion are not transnational to the same degree. Some roles, elements and individuals, participate in and drive its transnationality more than others. Case studies of particular individuals, roles, and liturgical or organizational stress points, are valuable subjects for future study. This chapter has only touched the surface of the subject of ESOC&S gender roles. Pre-colonial, colonial, and recent Yoruba histories, Nigerian and Diasporic, of gender institutions and mores are relevant.

The viability and vitality of ESOC&S is also evident in the preceding study. The radical democratic promise of its vision of "spiritual community," and its emphasis on gifts of the spirit and the simplicity of its material requirements, make the religion eminently portable. The centrality of continuous revelation and of healing keep it responsive to Spirit and to Nigerians, at home and expatriate. Gabriel Okara's 1961 poem "One Night at Victoria Beach" (in Roscoe 1971: 44–45) remains relevant:

> …with eyes fixed hard
> on what only hearts can see, they shouting
> pray, the Aladuras pray…
> Still they pray, the Aladuras pray
> With hands pressed against their hearts
> And their white robes pressed against
> Their bodies by the wind…Still they pray…
> To what only hearts can see…
> And standing dead on dead sands,
> I felt my knees touch living sands.

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CHAPTER THREE

MOBILITY AND BELONGING AMONG TRANSNATIONAL CONGOLESE PENTECOSTAL CONGREGATIONS: MODERNITY AND THE EMERGENCE OF SOCIOECONOMIC DIFFERENCES

Géraldine Mossière

According to the World Bank, 570,000 former residents of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC, formerly Zaire) currently live abroad—120,000 of them in Western Europe and North America.[1] Given the high number of undocumented migrants, these figures are likely underestimations. A large part of this Congolese migration remains confined to the African continent (e.g., Cameroon, Tanzania, South Africa). Among Western countries, the most important destinations were traditionally Belgium and France, though recent migration there has generally been restricted to study or work purposes. Growing political repression in the DRC, as well as economic decline and social upheaval, have significantly changed this migratory pattern: today, most Congolese students never return home, while political refugees have emerged as a new type of migrant. Furthermore, North America (with Québec in particular) now features among the most important destinations.

Most of these migrants flee civil wars and poverty in the DRC, as well as daily struggles induced by the demise of state institutions and services (e.g., public health, transportation, housing). This context of persistent crisis is nurtured by growing unemployment; most people in the DRC have to combine various jobs in order to survive (Devisch 2003). While living standards regularly decline, formal economy salaries do not cover a family's basic necessities, nor can they finance traditional matrimonial and gender practices (such as dowries).

In the midst of this social upheaval, more and more Congolese have joined local Pentecostal and Evangelical churches that are currently

[1] International Migration Institute, Oxford University: *http://www.imi.ox.ac.uk/recherche/perspectives-africaines-sur-la-mobilite-humaine/republique-democratique-du-congo?set_language=fr* (accessed May 20, 2009).

proliferating. Their leaders propose healing sessions for the physical and symbolic pains of believers, as well as practical programs to aid those struggling toward personal salvation (Ngandu Nkashama 1990, Pype 2006, Coyault 2008). In the DRC, religious actors have traditionally dealt with mismanagement in public affairs and funds by offering basic services and infrastructures (schools, hospitals, and clinics) to local populations, connecting religion with civic identity (Wild-Wood 2008).

In the aftermath of the colonial encounter, the Congolese religious landscape was first dominated by the Catholic Church. While its influence is decreasing today, it is still deeply anchored in the social services it develops at the grass-root level of the public sphere. In the postcolonial period, concerted missionary activities have contributed to the spread of Protestant Christianity and its various denominations, which paved the way to the proliferation of exogenous Pentecostal churches. The latter are now united within the ECC (*Église du Christ au Congo*), a Protestant umbrella organization whose membership represents 29 percent of the population (Barrett 2001). In the last few decades, charismatic renewal has provoked an explosion of the so-called *Églises de Réveil*, a local term defining home-grown churches, which literally means "Churches of Awakening." Members of these churches, like Pentecostals, believe in manifestations of the Holy Spirit or spiritual gifts such as healing, prophesying, and speaking in tongues. While some of these *Églises de Réveil* remain independent and locally rooted, others are affiliated with the national platform that is recognized by the Congolese government and commonly called *Églises du Réveil du Congo* (ERC). Most of these still aim to belong to a transnational congregational network (Fabian 2005).

Besides these mainstream religious groups, the emergence of indigenous prophetic churches like the Kimbanguist Church has paralleled movements calling for the revival of African traditions and for their empowerment. Some of these were launched by Mobutu's "Recourse to Authenticity" campaign or were inspired by an overall disappointment with modernity's promises. As the *Églises de Réveil* embrace globalization and modernity, they are currently the most influential religious resource in the DRC. Their success is also linked to their reassuring discourse on salvation and on the apocalypse, in a social and political context that is still dominated by idioms of witchcraft and sorcery (De Boeck 2004).

Not long after arriving in their new host countries, Congolese migrants very often reproduce such religious patterns, either by creating their own *Église de Réveil* churches or by joining already-existing ones. In Montréal, the rising number of evangelical groups is indeed attracting a growing population of immigrant ethnic minorities of all types—Africans, Haitians, Filipinos, and so on (Germain *et al.* 2003). Drawing on multi-sited ethnographic research, this chapter examines the transnational trajectories experienced by Congolese members of a Pentecostal congregation located in Montréal, the *Communauté Évangélique de Pentecôte* (hereafter CEP). After introducing the congregation and its members, I focus on three discourses that frame their migratory and transnational experiences: the believers' linguistic practices, the role they assign to religion in public spaces, and the church's vision of global expansion. Such discourses are framed by existing political tensions in Québec society, but they are also shaped by specifically Pentecostal dynamics that call Pentecostals to balance their mission of global expansion against their need to develop strategies of local adaptation. I argue that the discursive construction of transnational experience reorganizes traditional power structures around new social categories based on modern frames of reference, such as formal education and learning, to the benefit of young, educated, and French-speaking members. This case confirms Wild-Wood's (2008) thesis that migration challenges accepted generational and gender norms and practices, leading to contested relations between the traditional and the modern and to the negotiation of new possibilities for ethnic, national, gender and generational identities.

Discourse and the Construction of Transnational Experience

Based on Michel Foucault's (1971) theory of discourse and on Berger and Luckmann's (1966) interpretative paradigm, I consider discourses here to be structured sets of social practices and representations. Gathered under the generic term of "performances," they constitute a meaningful social reality for a particular set of actors. As Howarth and Stavrakakis (2000: 3–4) explain, "[D]iscourses refer to systems of meaningful practices that form the identities of subjects and objects.… They are contingent and historical constructions which are always vulnerable to those political forces excluded in their production, as well as

[to] the dislocatory effect of events beyond their control." I contend that the migratory process of CEP members is built at the intersection of various discourses produced within a "transnational social field." Based on Glick-Schiller's (2005) definition, itself inspired by Bourdieu's notion of *champ* (field), this takes into account the power structures underlying transnational communities or diasporas, particularly imperialist interventions. As it reassesses the taken-for-granted association between ethnicity, society, and the nation-state, this heuristic device moves beyond the notions of transnational communities and diasporas in the sense that Clifford (1994) uses these terms. The "transnational social field" is no simplistic emphasis on political imperialist power, for that, as Glick-Schiller observes, may ignore the complexity of social, political and cultural forces whose struggles influence, and even sustain, the transnational movements underlying contemporary African migrations. Of particular interest is her idea, based on Foucault's notion of "governmentality," whereby "global relations of power become part of everyday practices and modes of interpretation by those who suffer their consequences" (Glick-Schiller 2005: 454).

This approach is consonant with Fabian's perspective on concrete-historical dialectics, since "the local is the global under the conditions of globalization that pertain at this moment of history" (2005: 362). In this regard, as the CEP emerges as a transnational movement it is shaped by both global and local tensions that put pressure on Québec's nationalist aspirations, as well as on customary practices and relationships related to the homeland, and on Pentecostalism's universalist claims.

This chapter draws on ethnographic research that I have carried out since 2002 in a Congolese Pentecostal congregation in Montréal and in the various churches that it sponsors in Kinshasa, the capital of the DRC. Over the period of a year, I conducted intensive participant observation in this congregation; I attended Sunday rituals as well as various religious and social activities of both formal and informal nature, such as cell meetings or homiletic classes for training preachers. I also interviewed members from a variety of social backgrounds (refugees, student immigrants), socioeconomic statuses, and roles in the church (e.g., worship leaders, newly enrolled members). In order to document transnational links between the CEP and the churches it supports overseas, as well as to grasp the religious and social activities, organization, and structure of governance among those churches, I conducted fieldwork for several months in Kinshasa and the province of

Bas Congo. My informants there were highly mobile, so I followed them to a training session for African evangelists and pastors in Pretoria and documented the Pentecostal Congolese transnational network as well as North American missionary activities in that area.

In this chapter, I present verbal and non-verbal data, including interviews with believers and my observations of their religious and social behavior, which I interpret as the discursive forms that construct their experience of the world. Unlike Foucault's view of passive and controlled subjects, my approach grants agency to individuals, in that through their everyday behavior they produce their own representations of their migratory reality. Among the various performances that build the CEP and its members' transnational experiences, I will focus on their vision of the Church's global expansion, their discourse on the role of religious groups in the public sphere, and their linguistic practices. I show how both the conditions imposed by the host society (Québec) and the religious tenets by which these believers abide shape the construction of their transnational reality. As a result, I pay particular attention to the political tensions in the host country and the entangled economic and social situations in the homeland, as well as to local and global dynamics that are embedded in a Pentecostal vision of the world.

The Congregation and its Members: A Transnational Network Hosting Congolese Christian Migrants

Of Kasai origin, the founding pastor studied in Kinshasa, where he created his first church before going to Belgium to finish his education. After an unsuccessful attempt to build a church in Belgium, he moved to Québec where he founded the CEP in 1992.[2] During a prior visit there, he had had a divine vision revealing the province to be the land of his mission. Starting with only a few participants in his living room (mainly his family and his children's friends), the new congregation developed by both rhizome and pyramid dynamics, mobilizing transnational evangelical networks.[3] Its reach now extends westward to

[2] The pastor briefly mentioned his experience as a pastor in Belgium during a sermon, presenting the lack of attendance at his church services as proof of racism by locals.

[3] A rhizome is a root-like, subterranean plant stem that can grow and spread in any direction sideways; it is commonly horizontal in position. In the social sciences this

other parts of Canada and southward to his homeland, where it finances affiliated churches. After fifteen years abroad, the pastor now returns to the DRC two to three times a year in order to manage his sprawling religious enterprise—now gathered under the umbrella name of the "CEP International." His personal experience mirrors the transnational process of most congregation members, although few of them return to DRC regularly, both for lack of financial means and out of fear of political and economic chaos or retaliation.

In Montréal, the CEP now attracts approximately 430 members to a large building that the congregation acquired through general offerings and tithes. While participants live in different parts of the city, the church is located in a multi-ethnic and multi-religious neighborhood. The vast majority of its participants are Black first-generation immigrants. Some have immigrated recently from the DRC or from other parts of Francophone West Africa—Angola, Benin, Burundi, Cameroon, Congo, Ivory Coast, Rwanda, and Zaire—as political refugees, fleeing civil wars and political retaliation. Nevertheless, they were part of the well-educated and comfortable social class in their home country. Others are younger and better off, having usually left the DRC at a young age and spent time in French-speaking Europe (Belgium, France, or Switzerland) before immigrating to Québec. Though most are skilled and well educated, they face settlement difficulties, a reduction in their living standards, and usually a sharp decline in social status, compared to their former abodes.

Members' family profiles are quite diverse, ranging across young singles, students, single mothers, families, and divorced or widowed men and women. Nearly half the members are less than 30 years old, and most are women. By and large, they reflect Québec's Congolese immigrants as a whole. In 2001, out of a total population of slightly over seven million people, the province had a population of 4,810 people who were born in DRC: 58.7% of these were newcomers who had landed in Quebec between 1996 and 2001, half of these being between 25 and 44 years of age, while 37.4% were less than 25 years old (Gouvernement du Québec 2005). Nearly all of this population knew French upon arrival in Québec, half claiming it to be their mother tongue. Congolese newcomers are usually more educated than the

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metaphor is used to describe how people and organizations interact in interconnected, nonhierarchical structures. It is opposed to the top-down pyramid approach or the bottom-up tree dynamic.

Québec-born population, as much in secondary as in post-secondary education. Nevertheless, though only little more than a third of Congolese newcomers to Québec officially identify as Protestant, nearly all the CEP members were Pentecostals before arriving in Québec. Those who decide to convert (spoken of as "accepting Jesus") are required to renounce any form of "fetishism." Referring to biblical precepts, the pastor criticizes such behavior for its "incapacity to yield success and positive effects in the lives of members." As a result, deliverance rituals are sometimes held behind closed doors, and objects associated with occult practices or considered to be occult are destroyed. Such rituals are not generally enacted in the church's premises; instead, they are conducted exclusively with the new member by the pastor and his assistants.

The congregation revolves around various ministries and local cells, so that on a voluntary basis each lay member is given a particular role and task in the community. These institutional groups connect to very active informal networks, which gather members and other Christian or Congolese people around specific activities, such as prayers over the phone or nights of mourning. Although the church also attracts people of Haitian and French-speaking African origins, Congolese believers by far dominate overall membership. In the Montréal and other DRC churches, governance is concentrated in the hands of the pastor's family or in the hands of more highly educated members. The pastor is the head of the congregation. He is in charge of the organization as a whole and maintains personal ties with all members while his wife and daughters are responsible for ministries like the ministry of *mamas*. In the long term, his son is the most likely to take over his role as religious leader.

The Vision of Global Expansion: Local and Global Dynamics Embedded in the Pentecostal Vision of the World

Although Pentecostals typically portray the faith as universal and transnational, strategies for expansion are characterized by flexibility and by an ability to adapt to local practices, supported by the members' strong conviction of being invested with a social mission (Robbins 2004). The CEP manifests this ambiguity by subtly combining a global vision of proselytism through evangelization with strategies for adaptation to local contexts.

A Universal Family of Christian Sisters and Brothers

The CEP maintains close relationships with other French-speaking Pentecostal churches located in Québec: pastors and choirs circulate from one church to another to deliver sermons or conduct ritual worship. Such networking relies on a sense of belonging shared by these self-affirmed "sisters and brothers in Christ," no matter their cultural origins. In this worldview, "accepting Jesus in one's life" ties believers to a global imagined community referred to as a universal Christian family, in which CEP members define themselves as the "children of God."

Most CEP members come from the DRC, but notably from diverse ethnic groups: some leaders are of Kikongo origins, while the founding pastor is Luba. Much like the Anglican believers whom Wild-Wood (2008) interviewed in the North-East Congo, my informants never mentioned their ethnic origins. Instead, they reframed their ethnic identity as "Congolese"—*i.e.*, within a larger national belonging. Nevertheless, transnational experience seems to overtake this national category when the pastor defines himself as "*décongolisé*" (de-Congo-ized) and claims an international referent that hinges on the Christian community. In this sense, he naturalizes the church's identity by using the metaphor of a family that transcends not only ethnic and political differences, but especially conflicts related to their country of origin:

> Here I build a family spirit, and people learn how to live together. It has been very difficult during the war between Rwanda and the Congo. Congolese members say "they have invaded our country," while Rwandans say "we are not appreciated here." In my visits and sermons, I make them understand that we live 18,000 km away from our home countries. We cannot put our problems from Africa in our bags and bring them here. The church is not Congolese. It is not Rwandan. It is for all those who agree to walk with Jesus Christ, and Congolese who don't want to join with the Rwandans have left—and *vice versa*.

This discourse of belonging transforms members' vision of the world and rebuilds social relationships around new categories of Christian/non-Christian or the saved/unsaved, effacing traditional ethnic or even racial power structures. As one member explains: "Since I am Christian, I don't see all those problems like 'this one is black, that one white.' Every one of us, we are all human beings working for God. I have white friends, but you still have to make the difference if you're baptized or not."

However, while the CEP's social norms and liturgical style emphasize Pentecostal universal tenets, members still relate to local practices both in their country of residence and in their country of origin. For instance, clothing, food, and bodily expressions like dance, hymns, melodies, and rhythms often refer to life back home. Meanwhile, migratory experiences like the hardships of resettlement are understood through references to such Québec values as the social mobility that comes through education and studies. The pastor's sermons reflect such local adjustments in Pentecostal language: "I have worked my liturgy and my homily over again and again: in front of an audience of Québec natives, I won't talk about the streets of Kinshasa, but the events that occur here. Therefore, to some extent I have adapted myself."

What is more, the congregation's structure relies on social networks that hinge on various activities on both local and global scales, exceeding the physical boundaries of the congregation. At the grassroots level, CEP's cell meetings attract individuals from the home country who share a common experience of migration, even if they are not CEP members. These weekly meetings lead to the sharing of typical Congolese meals, the exchange of news from the homeland, and memorial services for deceased family and friends back home. They may even give rise to new informal support networks. As was the case with the US immigrant congregations that Ebaugh and Chafetz studied (2000), religious institutions often represent the only space available to socialize and renew solidarity with fellows from the homeland. This rhizome-shaped structure emerges within local cells and expands beyond the congregation's borders, though it also often leads new members to the church. According to the CEP's pastor and members, the most reliable form of recruitment to CEP is indeed by word-of-mouth, assisted by social ties associated with the homeland. Public or semi-public agencies responsible for settling immigrants in Québec also direct newcomers to associations such as these. In this way, they reproduce feelings of belonging to the homeland that may later be supplanted by members' commitment to the church.

Ambiguously, members claim they identify more with their church's ritual content and with its biblical roots than with its local modes of expression. They argue for instance that upon their arrival in Québec, the first social space they seek for is a church in order to praise the Lord, whatever the cultural taste of its liturgy and the ethnic origins of its membership. This affirmation of a universal and transnational

Christian identity is part of a larger global movement of contemporary religious revival. In Africa, this Awakening movement (*Mouvement de Réveil*) accompanies the reinterpretation of traditional practices through a vision of the world that was first imported by Christian missionaries (LeBlanc 2003). For example, in the CEP, the question of dowry payments becomes revisited through teachings in the Holy Scriptures. For those who have not been socialized in the DRC, members with legal education often give seminars outlining its legal, biblical, and cultural meanings. Emphasizing that dowry "is not a purchase price, as a person cannot be bought," the pastor is still personally in favor of this cultural practice. Consequently, as universal as they may seem, Pentecostal ethics often do not prevail over local references and traditional symbolic systems. The latter frequently live on, even as they come to bear new meanings in social spaces reconfigured by colonization, migration, and political hegemony (Van der Veer 1996). The CEP's strategy of international expansion can be located in this tension between universality and locality.

Evangelizing the World to Fulfill God's Work—Starting with Host Country and Homeland

Long-term international expansion projects are portrayed as part of the fulfillment of God's work. They are motivated and shaped by the mission of Pentecostal global expansion, which is related to Christian universalism and its missionary proselytism. The congregation's logo exemplifies this ideology: a dove enlightened by the scriptures of the Holy Book, whose wings cover a globe. Considered as universal, such evangelizing behavior is presented as a *habitus* embodied by all Christian Pentecostal believers. Typical, for instance, was the pastor's reaction to his son's announcement that he would not open a new church in Ontario, when he left the church he had founded in Vancouver to pursue his studies. Laughing, the father confided to me that "He will do it. I am sure. I know him! He won't be able to help himself!"

Whereas the CEP's expansion strategy is based on this exclusively evangelical logic, it parallels and instrumentalizes the international experience of its members. Since 2007, the congregation has aimed to build a new church in Canada each year that would be directed by a pastor educated at the CEP. In 2008, the congregation opened one such congregation in Calgary, while the pastor's son established another one in Vancouver. The majority of the Vancouver church's thirty members

are white French-speaking Canadians who feel attracted by the possibility of praying in their mother tongue. In a disadvantaged area of Montréal, another pastor trained at the CEP has recently taken over a church mainly composed of Québec natives. Most of these churches scattered throughout the country maintain on-line links through evangelical websites, such as the French-speaking *Top Chrétien (www .topchretien.com)*.

On the other hand, since 2005 the CEP has founded approximately ten churches in the DRC. These are located in the capital city of Kinshasa and in Kasai, the pastor's natal province. It reproduces thereby the Pentecostal proselytic vision in both northerly and southerly directions, reciprocating channels first opened by early European Christian missionaries. Being part of the CEP's religious consortium requires a Congolese church to follow the CEP's guidelines for the content of its sermons and for its liturgical structure, as well as to consult regularly with Montréal's congregation about its development. This collaboration is highly ideological, since the pastor trains church leaders in the CEP's evangelical message and preaching techniques. Nevertheless it also involves the material circulation of various resources and commodities to the Congolese churches. For instance, Montréal's mother church may fund the purchase of musical instruments or motorcycles for pastors in Africa, or may help the branch churches by paying registration fees or arranging ritual spaces. Under the non-governmental organization it has created, called *Citadelle de l'Espoir* (Citadel of Hope), it also organizes a micro-credit program for widowed women and single mothers who are members of these churches. Other projects include adult literacy and classes on domestic accounting.

However, as in most immigrant churches established in the North, this encompassing project specifically targets the establishment of affiliated churches in the homeland. In this regard, most churches that the CEP finances in the DRC have been set up by the pastor, who appointed former students in theology to lead them. While those local leaders are of diverse ethnic origins (i.e. *bandus, lubas, kikongos*), they are usually linked to the pastor's own pre-migration network. In fact, they all met in Kinshasa, within the same university Christian association that was itself created by the CEP's pastor in 1983. The latter is considered by several members as their spiritual father, and for those who have lost their own father, as a social father as well. What is more, the headquarters of the organization *Citadelle de l'Espoir* is located in a *commune* (area) of Kinshasa, on a plot that the CEP's pastor owns.

The NGO is governed by his sister, in collaboration with a Christian man educated in economics who is member of another *Église de Réveil* of the area. The CEP's international development is therefore based on personal relationships as well as the moral authority that the founding pastor established before moving abroad. Such symbolic capital is all the more salient, given socioeconomic conditions in the DRC, which force members of affiliated churches to depend on resources that the mother church sends. The CEP's missionary activities accompany the circulation of members back toward their country of origin, in particular for younger people, many of whom have not returned since leaving twenty years earlier.

One-way Mobility in a Globalized World: Shifting Power Dynamics

Although this expansion strategy involves the international circulation of believers, administrative and legal constraints in the DRC have meant that Montréal's members can visit Kinshasa's churches, but not the other way around. For most groups and countries, the global circulation of people and resources seems to involve an increasingly broad range of social actors, including the very disadvantaged, such as political refugees (Werbner 1999). However, local social and political forces still hinder Congolese Pentecostal transnational experiences. For instance, due to immigration restrictions, the head pastor in Kinshasa's CEP-affiliated church has never had the occasion to follow his Montréal mentor's teachings in Montréal itself. Nevertheless, he has gained his evangelization and preaching skills from special training provided by the Canadian organization Mission Expansion and Trading (MET), whose main offices are located in Pretoria, South Africa. Typically, such facilities are provided and funded by evangelical North American Assemblies and missionaries, while on the ground they are carried throughout the continent by pan-African networks and by local pastors. As one of MET's local representatives in the DRC, the head pastor was in charge of organizing the evangelization conferences in Kinshasa in 2008 and in Lumumbashi in 2009.

On the other hand, though international mobility is reserved to more well-off members of the congregation, believers who have had the occasion to visit a fellow church abroad are usually invited to make long, detailed, and enthusiastic reports of their experiences to their sisters and brothers as they come back. On the other hand, in the DRC, visiting members from the Montréal mother church are always

warmly welcomed, and special meetings are organized for them to give testimony on their congregation's activities for fulfilling God's work. As such accounts are ritualized during religious services, they integrate local members with fewer resources into the transnational experiences of those who are more well off, all within a global and interdependent community. This global dynamic transforms the social categories and power relationships between members who stayed in the Congo and expatriates who settled in northern countries. For example, citing safety reasons and sometimes fear of discomfort, CEP members in Montréal have, on occasion, cancelled or postponed their trips to affiliated churches in their homeland. Conversely, members of the churches in the DRC can rarely obtain the legal documentation needed to visit the CEP in Québec, so they cannot participate in activities in North America. Both these factors, plus the Congolese members' dependence on their expatriate colleagues for creating and developing churches in the DRC, shift power relationships in favor of the expatriates and their vision of expansion.

Local techniques for attracting new members take good advantage of this power struggle, which is (in the last analysis) based on economic deprivation. For instance, the CEP leaders in Montréal and in Kinshasa report that in poor areas they offer food to people, since "it is always better to go to the church than to look for food." Many of the *Églises de Réveil* also create NGOs dedicated to helping orphans and widows, as a means of evangelization. These churches are frequently noted for gaining membership by focusing on musical instruments, rhythms, and bodily expressions in a country where people are strongly inclined to music and dance. These and other evangelistic efforts transform traditional social structures along generational and gender lines, increasing the influence of new social actors, particularly young and formally educated pastors and evangelists.

Religious Communities in the Public Sphere and Linguistic Practices: Negotiating with Québec Politics

Québec's immigration policy relies on an intercultural approach, which recognizes newcomers' religious and ethnic diversity while integrating them into a collective moral contract. This is intended to bind newcomers to an array of social and symbolic references that support Québec nationalism, the most fundamental of which is the perpetuation of the French language (Costa-Lascoux and McAndrew 2005).

Although the process of building the nation is supposed to be based on a consensus about values that is shared by all social groups, public policies and social behavior rely on the recognition of the religious and ethnic plurality of the province, which was created by different migratory waves. The respect for such cultural diversity is guaranteed by public measures known as "reasonable accommodations." Under the pretence of cultural relativism, these aim to neutralize systemic discriminatory practices that are likely to develop. In fact, this compelling rhetoric of cosmopolitanism (Meintel and Le Gall 2007) emphasizes the "valorization of eclecticism and cultural cosmopolitanism" (Fridman and Ollivier 2004), inducing a moral attitude of openness toward other cultures (Hannerz 1996). However, recent and lively debates caused by the application of these measures highlight the existence of political tensions within the province—tensions between the myth of a national identity on the one hand and the promotion of religious and ethnic diversity on the other. The CEP's discourse and social practices mirror the dialectics of identity in Québec, by adapting to both French-speaking and Western values and to its alleged openness to ethnic and cultural diversity.

The Role of Religious Communities in the Public Sphere: Contributing to the Construction of Civic Society

In Montréal's congregation, as in its DRC affiliated churches, discourses on the role of religious communities and believers in the public sphere center on, and advocate for, social and economic mobility. Incorporating and adhering to the Western values of personal advancement and liberal behavior are imaged as efforts by individuals and collectivities to struggle against political chaos in the DRC, while simultaneously working to overcome the economic and social hardships of settlement in Québec. On the ground, the situation is more complex. People struggle to adapt both local (Québec) and traditional behaviors to Pentecostal codes, especially those regarding gender. In the DRC, current economic challenges to men in fulfilling their conventional breadwinner role or in making the customary dowry payments when getting married bring into question their status in Congolese society, as well as their authority in the family environment. For women, such socioeconomic upheavals open spaces for accessing new agency. While women maintain their role as homemaker, they can now also enter the public sphere to pursue financial strategies to sustain their families. The *Églises*

de Réveil that proliferate in this context accompany this emancipation process by providing symbolic support, as well as material and psychological resources. As this facilitates upward social mobility and public visibility, it also legitimizes women's new agency through both a normative and religious frame of mind. For instance, although customs from the home country permit polygamy and extend authority to the extended family, in Montréal as in the DRC, Pentecostal leaders advocate a family model based on the nuclear, biparental family. According to this model, a married woman may not be repudiated for not bearing children. Churches emphasize that their involvement at the grassroots level has no interest other than balancing the destabilizing social effects of state politics and corruption, as well as economic and social upheaval.

However, for women, this transformation of status is constrained by the surrender to God and to Pentecostal authority. As key tenets of Pentecostal churches are based on a conservative vision of the family, celibacy and divorce are discouraged. Submitting to God indeed involves ascribing authority to men, as these are seen to represent the divine figure in the microcosm of the family. In the DRC, influential religious movements like the ministry of *Mama Olangui* command women to be obedient spouses, devoted mothers, and unobtrusive daughters-in-law. They simultaneously urge them to develop their own means of material achievement and religious salvation.

In Québec, CEP sermons both reproduce and re-appropriate the host country's immigration politics. Populations of migrants are officially recognized as playing a fundamental role in the demographic and economic development of Québec. However, their settlement is challenged by various obstacles to integration, for which their church emphasizes active answers. In this sense, the pastor argues that religious groups are supposed to contribute to the overall development of society by preparing newcomers to adapt to and thrive in the host society. According to this philosophy, which he calls "the Church in the City," religious communities "must contribute to the development of the society by equipping believers and mobilizing them to be effective and productive" (Mossière 2006). This implies a relative adaptation to standards of life in the country of residence. In particular, education and self-sufficiency are highly valued during cell meetings, where information and resources related to the new country of residence are often distributed (e.g., administrative procedures, job offers, etc.). Sermons aimed at incorporating the Pentecostal vision of the

world are designed to shape members to become good citizens striving for economic prosperity. As a charismatic branch of Christian Protestantism, Pentecostal ethics emphasizes typical Protestant values like work, discipline, and economic accumulation (Weber 1985). In fact, these values help Christian immigrants integrate favorably into North American society. Similarly, one's level of education helps underline the CEP's discourse on work. In the Québec context, where professional recognition of qualifications acquired in the DRC is nearly impossible, the pastor constantly urges members to return to their studies and to acquire job qualifications.

The CEP's philosophy of "the Church in the City" is as much a way of legitimizing the congregation's presence in the host society as it is a sign of adhesion to Québec's nationalist linguistic values and its liberal socioeconomic structure. Consistent with Pentecostal ethics, this attention to member employability is framed in a Christian paradigm and justified by religious commitment to the congregation. In fact, the CEP's social and political discourse is as specific to the host country as it is to the Pentecostal ideology (Robbins 2004). The perfect Pentecostal believer is indeed modeled as an economically successful citizen and a rational, modern entrepreneur, driven by a project for personal development in his or her quest for a divine grace.

Linguistic Practices in Religious and Social Activities: Promoting Diversity in a Francophone Realm

According to its website, the CEP's official language is French, while the use of other languages is limited to worshiping activities. Religious activities are indeed conducted in French, as are individual prayers during rituals. As Québec's nationalist claims rely almost exclusively on the idea of the *francophonie* (that is in belonging to an international French culture and language), the CEP's selection of French as its official and liturgical language gives credit to the group's settlement and sense of belonging in the host country. In this regard, the congregation has also elected a white native Québec woman as the congregation's vice-pastor. The use of the French language is presented as a condition for living in the province, often transforming immigrants' relationship to their homeland. As the pastor explains: "Congolese who live here are uprooted people. It may happen that we start singing in Lingala, but the members just don't burst out with the usual joy when functioning in French and living in another culture…".

More than just a token of commitment to the host country, the choice of the French language also transfers social power and status to its speaker. Indeed, this language is usually associated with intellectuals, the educated, and the wealthy from this former European colony. As such, some members educate their children only in French. Valuing this language mirrors the CEP's claim of belonging to a global French-speaking community. For instance, the pastor is proud of listing his congregation on the French Christian website *Top Chrétien*. He uses this site to post his sermons and to carry on an extensive correspondence with other believers around the globe. Interestingly, the Congolese Pentecostal congregations that I observed in South Africa demonstrated the same adjustment to the linguistic practices in their country of residence: for them, activities may be conducted in French or in English, though ritual leaders favored the former by making sure that a French version of all sermons was available.

Apart from a minority of older members who came directly to Canada as political refugees, the CEP's younger members have usually had an international trajectory before joining the congregation. They relate this transnational experience to their French-speaking identity. Having left the Congo at a very young age, they have all been socialized in French, and some even report hardly mastering any of the common languages of the DRC. They say they have "Congolese skin but my mind is more Western than anything." For example, Ludovic (who is in his thirties and holds a master of science degree) went to French-speaking Switzerland at the age of five with his parents as political refugees. He grew up there and identifies with Switzerland to the point that he asserts, referring to his military service, that "it is my country, I grew up there, it was normal for me to do my national service there!" He then adds, "the Congo is my roots, I have been reared as a Congolese!" While he speaks French with his parents, he knows Swahili only more or less, as well as a language from his province of origin that he uses when communicating with the pastor. He also tries to communicate in Lingala, but he is at most ease in French.

During Sunday worship, only rarely does one hear a song in Lingala, Swahili, Kikongo, Tshiluba, or a creole vernacular language. If one occurs, a French translation is projected on an overhead projector so that "everyone can find one's own place, and people aren't pushed into a corner like they don't have anything to do in our space." Nevertheless, informal gatherings such as cell meetings may be held in any of a number of vernacular languages for the sake of an older *mama*. Ritual

hymns may casually borrow Congolese or Haitian rhythms. Moreover, ritual performances often mobilize corporal expressions from the culture of origin. At the beginning of each ritual, visitors and newcomers are formally welcomed by a wave of *yuyus*, while many women attend the Sunday worship in *libaya* (the Congolese traditional clothing), or with a loincloth and a jersey. One member explains: "There are values from the past I can't deny. When I worship I am empowered by my people's culture. A Haitian who dances is different from an African who dances! Therefore denying my culture is contradictory to me. But my culture shouldn't limit my faith. My faith has to be expressed through my culture!"

The pastor comes to terms with these cultural performances by appropriating Québec's dominant liberal attitude on diversity: "Québec encourages each community to promote these values, as long as it doesn't annoy anybody and that it doesn't go against the law." Indeed, the CEP's website (*www.eglisecep.org)* presents the congregation as a "multicultural assembly […] that is composed of persons from various countries."[4] In an interview, the pastor reports being: Concerned for having 30, 40, 50 nations within the same place. Because the world has become like a village. People live together without taking account of cultural differences […]. Here in Montréal, within a one-kilometer radius, how many nations are there? Why should I live isolated in my little universe?" As a result, he legitimates mixed unions formed between members from Congolese and Québec natives or between immigrants of different origins. He also welcomes white Québec visitors who, according to him, seem attracted by the exoticism displayed during times of celebration. In addition, the CEP reproduces Québec's dominant attitude on diversity and cosmopolitism through various strategies to render the group more visible in public spaces. These include collaborative projects directed at locally disadvantaged populations, such as working with soup kitchens. However, congregation members were dismayed to learn that local Hassidic Jews refuse to organize common charitable activities, an attitude that church members regard as sectarian.

[4] *http://www.eglisecep.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=14&Itemid=28*. Accessed December 29, 2008. "Aujourd'hui, la CEP est une assemblée multiculturelle réunissant des hommes et des femmes qui ont foi en Jésus-Christ. Elle compte parmi ses membres des personnes de divers pays."

On the other hand, all migratory experiences do not systematically induce cosmopolitan behavior (Roudometof 2005). In fact, the congregation's membership is still dominated by African believers, and some Haitians have claimed discrimination when it comes to getting access to positions of influence or greater responsibility. Meanwhile, other white native-born Québeçois whom I interviewed mentioned social pressures for perpetuating some Congolese cultural practices, for instance addressing elders as *mamas* or *papas*. In fact, openness to diversity requires skills that are still limited to those from the more privileged social classes, who are likely to have material and educational resources. French language skills, physical and economic mobility, or access to virtual technologies are all necessary for negotiating with diverse discourses and visions of the world (Bauman 1998, Nava 2002). As a result, although cosmopolitanism is presented as desirable in the congregation, its appropriation by members introduces new processes of differentiation. The CEP's linguistic choices exemplify the shift in power relations, most notably emphasizing those of an intergenerational sort. Speaking French is seen as a condition (among others) for accessing management positions and other roles of responsibility. On the other hand. older members who do not share the international profile of their younger counterparts still try to claim the authority traditionally devoted to elders. While a rare occurrence, they sometimes ask for songs to be sung in their vernacular languages while during worship, younger participants may also translate sermons to their elders, avoiding their exclusion from fundamental collective activities.

In fact, the new, youth and elite-oriented power structure is generally reinforced by Christian ritual and liturgical style. In the DRC's *Églises de Réveil*, worship is actually conducted in one of the four official languages in order to attract the largest possible audience. However, leadership positions are still held by young, educated men who have mastered the Pentecostal techniques of preaching; they also need to display their ability to theologize people's experiences of material, physical, and social suffering. In the Pentecostal transnational field, linguistic practices shift traditional authority away from elders to new social actors who are distinguished by their level of education, their category of age, their socioeconomic status, their discursive abilities, and their charismatic skills.

New Forms of Political Subjectivity in the Transnational Field: Shifting Social Borders and Categories

The transnational circulation of Congolese migrants is framed by religious networks and by a Pentecostal paradigm that both work beyond national categories and strictly ethnic lines. Among Congolese expatriates worldwide, ways of belonging are negotiated through new logics of social ties, gatherings, and belongings. In Pentecostal churches, transnational experiences are more closely related to socioeconomic and gender status than to ethnic or other traditional identity referents. In this regard, born-again groups appropriate Christian representations in a utilitarian way while the CEP displays a liberal interpretation of the Scriptures. This process remodels the traditional ethnic and intergenerational power structure, bending it around socioeconomic categories that rely on modern values such as formal education and learning. In particular, this benefits a new class of young, educated, French-speaking believers who experience mobility across national boundaries. In the CEP, reference to the home country is mediated by a modern grid of referents drawing on the Pentecostal vision of evangelization as much as it is mediated by Québec discourse on diversity and the logic of cosmopolitanism.

Empirical research on religious renewals in non-Western contexts tends to show that modernity is a relativist perspective on a global condition, which local groups reinterpret in a plurality of temporal and spatial frameworks (Assayag 2005, Mahmood 2005). For Congolese, as for most African believers, Pentecostalism bears several attributes of modernity. Although clearly appropriated and modified by locals—indeed, they have created new and vibrant forms, especially regarding ritualistic activities—Pentecostalism's core tenets were imported by American and European missionaries; it is thus associated in Congolese minds with the modern (outside) world. Its enthusiastic liturgy, with its emphasis on glossolalia and other charismatic gifts, provides a ritual role for all participants, no matter their age, sex or social background. Furthermore, its worldview acknowledges an egalitarian status for both lay and clerical believers. As a whole, those characteristics promote social and economic mobility (Robbins 2004) and also shift spiritual powers and symbolic authority to younger generations (Fabian 2005).

In the DRC, this concern for modernity is coupled with the Africanization movement. The latter was first prompted by Catholic

clergy at grass-root levels through initiatives of local development and native empowerment (along the lines of the so-called Base Ecclesial Communities or *Communautés Ecclésiales de Base*), and later appropriated by Mobutu's national campaign (Mukanya 2008). In fact, religious tenets imported by European and North American missionaries are often reappropriated in such a way that traditional idioms are reformulated by Pentecostal discourse. This inspires an indigenous born-again vision of the world that is portrayed as modern. For instance, while Pentecostal tenets strongly reject local beliefs in evil spirits and the practices of sorcery, leaders still integrate such local systems of representation into their liturgies; yet they do so in order to claim dominance over them and to convince potential members of their spiritual power (Cox 1995). To take just one example, hymns describe the fight of evil spirits against Jesus Christ and against his vulnerable followers empowered by the Lord, a battle in which Jesus Christ is always ultimately victorious. Members say they are strengthened by these stories of struggle in which the Holy Spirit always wins, because as one popular chorus in the CEP runs, "God of victory dwells in us." These hymns describe the believer's path as a journey of struggle between good and evil. They also lead converts to reinterpret their past and present lives through the prism of their new status as God's children, protected by His power. On the collective level, such a reinterpretation demonstrates an effort at reconstructing postcolonial social memory along "*nouveaux récits*" (new narratives) (Mbembe 1988). Such narratives display local adhesion to the concepts of progress, acculturation, economic development, and modernization, as well as their hopes for economic and spiritual wealth and success.

Conclusion

The example of the CEP demonstrates that people's experiences of transnationalism are constructed by—among other things—various discourses about linguistic practices, about the role of religious congregations in local public spaces, and about the collective project of transnational expansion. For transnational actors, such experience helps shape a new sense of belonging, as well as a new practice of relying on diverse social structures that operate on local and global scales. On the one hand, this experience is governed by the Pentecostal dialectics to which believers claim exclusive allegiance—that is, a

dialectic between an encompassing proselytic vision and a strategy of local adaptation. On the other hand, it is shaped by economic predicaments and social transformations in the homeland, as well as by political tensions in the host society, in this case principally between nationalist ideals and those of cosmopolitanism.

This whole process organizes relationships around new power structures and social categories. Far from disappearing or crystallizing, social borders fluctuate and redefine centers and peripheries, while traditional forms of authority retreat in favor of a new class of young, French-speaking, and educated believers who have international experiences and skills and are regarded as the custodians of the dynamism and future of the community. In the long term, as the number of second-generation members rises in the CEP, relationships between host and home countries may also transform the way that ideological representations and practices build community identity. One may ask whether or how participation by elders may in time reveal responses like resistance to this new social configuration. Although formal education and learning are valued as much by the society of residence as they are in the Pentecostal worldview, the CEP reinterprets the discourse of modernity by revisiting home country customs. The principles that CEP leaders and members mobilize to legitimate such discourses almost always refer to a religious frame of mind; migrants compare their transnational process to a spiritual one, scattered with divine signals and challenges. Along the transnational networks opened by migratory experiences and the project of global evangelization, the Congolese congregation's vision bears a political meaning that poses new social differentiations between saved and lost souls.[5]

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[5] I would like to thank Jim Spickard and Rita Henderson for their editorial assistance with my English text.

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CHAPTER FOUR

MEDIATING SPIRITUAL POWER: AFRICAN CHRISTIANITY, TRANSNATIONALISM AND THE MEDIA

J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu

Africa's new Pentecostal/charismatic churches started emerging in the late 1970s. I use the conjoined expression "Pentecostal/charismatic" to refer to Christian churches, ministries and movements that value, emphasize, and consciously promote the experiential presence of the Holy Spirit as part of normal religious life and worship. One of the most distinctive features of Pentecostal/charismatic groups is "speaking in tongues." Related to this are such pneumatic expressions as prophecy, seeing visions, falling into trances, exorcism, and other signs and wonders that are attributed to the work of the Holy Spirit. Within a generation, Pentecostal/charismatic streams of Christianity have grown to become some of the most powerful and influential churches in Africa. Significant numbers have also developed into transnational organizations—an orientation that their ability to use new media helps to facilitate and sustain. One of the most attractive features of contemporary Pentecostal/charismatic Christianity is its very forceful message of hope and empowerment. As Emmanuel Lartey (2001: 8) writes:

> The success of charismatic Christianity in Africa has lain largely in its ability to propagate itself as "powerful and efficacious" in enabling people to be set free from the dangers and troubles of life. The worship and teaching of these churches have by and large been geared towards experiencing of the effective presence of the Holy Spirit. Christians have been urged and have experienced "God in their midst" in demonstrable ways. In this sense the ministries have been found relevant, vibrant and effective.

The movement of some of these African Christian churches into the African diaspora in the West has led to the reconfiguration of transnational religious networks. In the past, Christians in Africa used media to patronize Western forms of the faith, first through the solicitation of Christian literature by mail and, later, through mass media resources including radio and television. From the 1970s, for example,

West African countries like Ghana and Nigeria could access the media ministries of American televangelists like Oral Roberts through national television. Oral Roberts's publications and those of other North American televangelists, such as T.L. Osborn and Benny Hinn, were mailed to many African Christians and students free of charge on request. The thrill of receiving a book from Oral Roberts by mail encouraged the placement of multiple orders by using different identities; the extra volumes were passed on to friends, sometimes for a small fee. The Christian literature distributed by Oral Roberts and his television ministry consistently taught the Pentecostal/charismatic principle of "sowing and reaping" by which listeners and readers were taught that if they sowed money, which was seen as "seed," into the ministry of the "man of God," they stood to reap their investments many times over through God's blessing. That was when the idea of "sowing and reaping" as a formula for divine blessing was sown in the minds of young African Christians and blossomed through repetition in local Pentecostal/charismatic contexts as an integral part of the theology of prosperity, positives, and possibilities.

Contacts with foreign preachers and ministries, along with increased migration in recent decades, have led to corresponding increases in the numbers of African migrant and immigrant churches in Europe and North America. Contacts between Christians who live at "home" and those located "abroad" occur at the popular level. Increasingly, they also occur between Christian leaders, pastors, prophets, and other purveyors of spiritual power who are located in Africa, on the one hand, and members of Christian communities in the diaspora on the other. The expansion and appropriation of modern media technologies—particularly television, radio, and the internet—have enabled the transmission of charismatic power across borders in ways that were unthinkable a decade ago. For example, people call into the early prayer morning sessions on Accra's *Joy and Peace* FM stations from New York and Toronto asking for prayers as they pursue employment opportunities or wrestle with immigration problems.

The tightening of immigration rules and requirements and the lack of employment opportunities means that many Africans in the diaspora have become increasingly vulnerable. For example, some cannot seek medical care in their host countries because the system labels them as "illegal aliens." Asking for prayer support from home countries or from some of the many prophets who have relocated in those foreign contexts becomes their only 'medical' option.

These examples illustrate how, in contemporary African experience, as Rijk van Dijk points out, not only have notions of "strangerhood" been "transforming from the regional to the intercontinental level, but religion has also changed in order to accommodate and facilitate new processes of identity formation" (1997: 136). New media have aided this process.

Migration and African Vulnerabilities

The first source of vulnerability for African immigrants is the fear of "negative spiritual influences." This refers to the fear of envious relatives, family witches and other sources of supernatural evil—both real and imaginary—that are believed to conspire to thwart the efforts of the immigrant to succeed within a physically and spiritually precarious diaspora space. Having cleared the first hurdle to international travel, which is in most cases the acquisition of a visa, the immigrant now begins to struggle with those fantasies and fears that threaten his or her existence. Even problems with immigration authorities, it is believed, could be traced to the workings of "forces from home"—that is, evil powers from a person's background that do not want the immigrant to succeed. This means the two sources of vulnerability—the physical and spiritual—are actually interrelated. Pentecostal/charismatic leaders, with their emphasis on the ability of the Holy Spirit to intervene in the lives of the troubled and anxious, have developed ministries that attract those looking for "help from above." Thus in what follows, we see how Pentecostalism seems especially able to cater to the tensions and vulnerabilities associated with life in the precarious diaspora by providing ritual spaces and places where people can express and come to terms with such anxieties. Prayers over the phone, internet radio, and even the mailing of physical substances like powerful books and magazines to African patrons abroad help such overseas clients tap into the Pentecostal/charismatic churches' anointing power.

Van Dijk explains this transnational significance of contemporary African Pentecostal/charismatic Christianity as follows: "Pentecostalism is historically a transnational phenomenon, which in its modern forms is reproduced in its local diversity through a highly accelerated circulation of goods, ideas and people. The new charismatic type of Pentecostalism creates a moral and physical geography whose domain is one of transnational cultural interpenetration and flow" (1997: 142).

The transnational significance of Pentecostalism partly lies in its perceived ability to transport through various charismatic persons spiritual power of which the vulnerable immigrant stands in great need. In her work on African Christians in Europe, for example, Gerrie ter Haar notes that the futures of African immigrant churches, whether for good or for ill, are "determined in part by the immigration policies which have earned the European Union the sobriquet of Fortress Europe." She continues:

> New trends in migration … have given rise to a European policy, which is based on a determination to reverse the processes at work. Over the last few years, most, if not all, countries in Western Europe had designed policies and developed new legislation to try and [*sic*] prevent certain categories of immigrants from entering their countries. This may even go as far as infringing the rights of those immigrants who previously had been living legally in a particular country. This was, for example, dramatically illustrated in France in August 1996, when a veritable army of policemen and riot-troopers, estimated at between 1,000 and 1,500 in number, stormed a Paris church to remove a large group of African immigrants…. The example shows how the status of immigrants in Europe has changed in recent times, becoming less secure as it becomes subject to new legislation (1998: 110, 113).

The second source of vulnerability thus arises from being an illegal alien, and from consequent unemployment, discrimination, and other such concerns that make life in the diaspora uncertain for many African immigrants. This, too, has its religious side. Consider a recent personal encounter with a Ghanaian immigrant in Amsterdam: During a visit to one Ghanaian congregation in Amsterdam in December 2008, a middle-aged female member walked up to me and asked for prayer: "*Osofo mereye aka akwantuo mu; m'atena ha mfe du, me ni nkrataa enti bo mpae ma me*." Literally she was saying in Twi, "Pastor, I am getting stuck abroad [meaning she cannot visit Ghana] because I have lived here for ten years, and I still do not have proper documentation or papers. Please pray for me." In the religious life of African immigrants, prayers for *nkrataa*, "papers" (that is, proper resident documents), rank next only to healing in requests made at prayer services. The same is true for requests made through other media, such as radio and telephone calls asking pastors in Ghana to help them deal with fears and insecurities. In that context, prayers for proper documentation and employment are perceived as belonging to the same "realm and discourse of treatment and healing as other types of affliction and

misfortune, thus qualifying as topics for the attention of prayer leaders" (Van Dijk 1997: 146).

There are various ways in which people may interpret the sources and causes of their difficulties. In the African cultural context, witchcraft beliefs and the activities of evil spirits, as I have noted above, tend to be quite strong and prevalent. Religion, particularly in its charismatic Pentecostal form, therefore remains a major survival strategy for African immigrants because it is made to cross boundaries in aid of vulnerable clients in the diaspora. By providing access to a set of powers embedded in a worldview of mystical causation, this form of Christianity has demonstrated a strong ability to offer support to Africans who need to deal with those fears and insecurities that arise from transnational life. The ability to respond to diasporic needs is part of the conscious pursuit of internationalism, which has become part of the self-definition of the new Pentecostals since the 1980s. To cite van Dijk again:

> The "global claim"… showed that they are not confined to the limits of the present nation state, but actively seek interpenetration with other cultural contexts beyond its borders and cultural boundaries, giving these a place in their ideology, organization and further religious experience. The claim is not just that Ghana "is too small a place for our message," but that interpenetration with other cultural contexts deepens, enriches and essentialises the religious experience of Pentecostal communities (1997: 142).

The new use of religious media facilitates this process of interpenetration.

Religion, Migration and Media

In Africa, religion is a survival strategy that permeates the entire spectrum of life in its physical/spiritual, sacred/profane, and natural/supernatural realms. Times of uncertainty, personal and communal crises, and the search for meaning are usually the times that one finds the centrality of religion in African life (Blakely and Van Beek 1994). When the economies of African countries south of the Sahara started to collapse in the 1970s, following the massive corruption associated with various military dictatorial regimes, young African school graduates sought better fortunes abroad. The trend has continued since then, and by the end of the twentieth century, international travel had become

one of the major aspirations of African workers, whether unskilled, skilled or professional.

Religion has its part to play. Jericho Hour is a weekly "prophetic prayer service" held at the Prayer Cathedral of the Christian Action Faith Ministry (CAFM) in Accra that attracts between 3000 and 4000 people every Thursday morning between 9:00 a.m. and noon. CAFM is a mega-size, new Pentecostal church with a strong orientation toward interventionist prayers and prosperity. Participants in the Jericho Hour program are constantly promised breakthroughs in international travel. During one of my visits, the leader even saw a vision of angels distributing fifty KLM and fifty British Airways tickets. At the announcement of the vision people scrambled for them in midair as they screamed, "I receive it. I receive it. I receive it."

These developments must be understood against the backdrop of the fact that the Western world symbolizes for many young Africans hope, success and prosperity. Pentecostal/ charismatic Christianity in Africa has bought into that mindset, with its prosperity theology. In this view, religion rightly brings personal benefits for the church and its leaders as well as for its followers. It is not uncommon, for example, for pastors and prophets to claim visions in which members have secured visas to travel abroad, made it big, and therefore become living testimonies of how God particularly elevates those who pay their faith tithes faithfully or "sow their seeds" as faithful giving is normally called.

Religion has always been a mediated phenomenon and in Africa, one of the attractions of Christian innovation was the ability of new independent churches to build a strong relationship between the charismatic personalities of their prophets and religious power. One such early twentieth century charismatic prophet, Garrick Sokari Braide of the Niger Delta, was considered so powerful that substances that had touched his body were believed to exude supernatural therapeutic power: "As his reputation for holiness grew, so did a superstitious reverence for his person: people sought physical contact with him in order to receive healing or protection from danger. The water in which he washed was collected and dispensed as containing magical properties. His words were received as charged with spiritual force" (Sanneh 1983: 182).

The idea that items coming from a charismatic person or that have touched his body in some way possess sacred power was very strong in the older African independent church movement that Prophet Braide represented. In modern times that worldview has been sustained in the relationship between African Pentecostal/charismatic leaders and their

followers. Bishop Dr. Dag Heward-Mills is founder of the Lighthouse Chapel International. His media resources are very much sought after by Ghanaians who live in the African Diaspora in the West. Bishop Heward-Mills (2000: 2) states categorically that it is possible to receive the anointing of God through books and tapes:

> Many people have received the anointing through listening to tapes and reading books, but they do not understand what has happened to them. Many of those who have received the anointing through this channel cannot teach it because they do not fully understand it. I believe that it is my duty to teach this simple and real method of catching the most essential ingredient in ministry—the anointing.

Media Resources

For both their producers and consumers, these media materials possess a sacramental value, in which physical things are conduits for ontological graces. This is, for instance, evident through the uses that this type of Christianity makes of what David Morgan (2007: 221) refers to as "image texts." He describes how this works in the American context:

> Texts appear throughout the interior and on the exterior of storefront churches in the manner that devotional images and icons populate the walls and altars of Catholic, Orthodox, and some liturgical Protestant churches. These texts may be characterized as 'image texts' inasmuch as they combine the features of textuality with visuality, creating a visual artifact that is neither purely text nor image, but both. Rather than operating as icons that visualize the appearance of a sacred figure, the Evangelical image-text visualizes the Word of God – the Bible as a living text, as the holy spoken word, the speech of God. And it visualizes the authorizing utterance of the pastor, the charismatic leader of the community whose speech conveys the anointing of the Spirit of God.

What Morgan describes within contemporary American Evangelicalism is evident throughout the neo-Pentecostal world, including its African-led versions, whether located in Africa or abroad. The import of my reference to African-led charismatic Christianity lies in the fact that generally, Africans take a sacramental view of the universe. The conviction that there are no sharp dichotomies between what is physical and what is spiritual tend to be stronger in African than in Western thought systems. Accordingly to Ghanaian theologian Kwame Bediako, in the African context, the "physical" acts as vehicle for "spiritual" realities (2000: 88). African cultures share this sacramental

worldview with Pentecostals, whose pneumatic emphasis includes the ability of the Spirit to mediate God's power and presence through words and objects (Asamoah-Gyadu 2005). This sacramental worldview, which is a shared worldview, is what explains the import of Morgan's image-text in African charismatic Pentecostalism. Due to its theological emphasis on unmediated access to transcendence, Pentecostalism has often been presented as a religion that de-emphasizes ritual and the use of sacramental objects in the transmission of faith. Although Pentecostalism, wherever it is found, makes use of substances like anointing oil, handkerchiefs, water and other "signs and tokens" as symbols for healing, the use of these things are not as widespread and institutionalized as one may find within African expressions of that of type of Christianity. Thus the African-led Pentecostalism discussed here employs sacramental objects more extensively than may be found in Western Pentecostalism. African Pentecostalism also innovatively utilizes new media in fascinating ways, to mediate the 'anointing' of the Holy Spirit. Words, texts, and images of the anointed of God, when reduced to print or captured on various audiovisual storage systems, are believed to possess the same powers that inspired their initial oral delivery.

Religious Sensations and the Anointing

One way of interpreting this is to say that African Pentecostal/charismatic Christianity is making use of indigenous sacramental views of the universe as a place where the visible is often a vehicle for the invisible. Books and recorded sermons serve as major means of pastoral care, but are also direct channels of blessing or interventions in crisis. For instance in *Catch the Anointing*, Pastor Heward-Mills (2000: 9) teaches what he calls "the art of soaking in tapes": "Soaking in the messages from tapes is a scriptural practice. 'Soaking' in tapes simply means to listen to the words over and over again until it becomes a part of you and until the anointing passes on to you! When a tape is fully 'soaked,' both the Word content and the Spirit content are imbibed into your spirit. The anointing is not something you learn, it is something you catch."

To that end, one finds Birgit Meyer's idea of "religious sensations" very apt in understanding the uses of the resources under scrutiny here. "Sensation," Meyer explains (2006: 8), encompasses " 'feeling' and 'inducement' which is inspired by those 'sensational forms' that makes what is transcendental 'sense-able'." According to Meyer, "religious

feelings are not just there, but are made possible and reproducible by certain modes of inducing experiences of the transcendental." I find that the examples that Meyer gives resonate with my own understanding of sacramental objects and their uses in charismatic Pentecostalism:

> [The] notion of 'sensational form' can also be applied to the ways in which material religious objects—such as images, books, or buildings—address and involve beholders. Thus, reciting a holy book as the Qur'an, praying in front of an icon, or dancing around the manifestation of a spirit area also sensational forms through which religious practitioners are made to experience the presence and power of the transcendental.

My understanding of enchanted texts and audiovisual material has been greatly helped by the work of David Morgan, particularly through his two seminal publications, *The Sacred Gaze* (2005) and *Visual Piety* (1998). Belief is mediated, he says, so it follows that we must think about the media through which this happens. As he explains, "Belief happens in and through things and what people do with them" (2005: 8). I contend that such material media serve to induce therapeutic feelings of religious excitement and hope in practitioners. Even when produced in Africa, sacramental media resources circulate freely, including among the faithful who live abroad.

In the African Christian context, the ultimate sacramental object is the Holy Bible, which has acquired a symbolic and ritual use in African revivalist Christianity. In modern times, church magazines, books, and audiovisual materials have acquired similar, though lesser, statuses. The practice is very common at the Pure Fire Miracle Ministries led by Nigerian Pastor Enoch Aminu in Accra, Ghana. Pastor Aminu for instance, specializes in praying for women with reproductive health problems, a key concern that makes women the chief clients of pneumatic Christianity in Africa. At a special service to pray for such women in December 2006, he encouraged participating couples to buy copies of his magazine, *Pure Fire*. Keeping that magazine on one's matrimonial bed, he explained, would induce the divine anointing required to make conception possible. The magazine was considered to be particularly useful for relatives living abroad who were having fertility problems. It would serve as a point of contact with the prophetic anointing active in Pastor Aminu's life. People were encouraged to send copies to their relations who lived outside the country, to enable them achieve whatever breakthroughs they needed. In an African traditional context, in which diagnoses of all types of problems frequently

refer to supernatural causes, the magazine, having acquired an enchanted quality following prayer, was expected to ward off evil and make effective God's miraculous power of procreation for couples.

The Pentecostal/charismatic churches discussed here emphasize "charisma" and the mediation of power. They affirm the world and modernity, and they effectively appropriate sophisticated modern media technologies to create formats that channel participants' encounters with the Holy Spirit. Through such media and other sensory forms, Meyer (2006: 9) points out, these religions manifest their presence within public space, not simply bringing a message of transformation to the public but also establishing a constituency for the charismatic personality—the pastor—at the center of it all. The pastor is seen as the human channel of the graces that the followers seek. Things associated with his person, as noted with both Prophet Braide, an early twentieth-century prophet of the Niger Delta and Bishop Heward-Mills, a contemporary charismatic pastor in Ghana, acquire the required sacramental potency for serving various religious ends—including his or her words and the external objects he or she touches. It is precisely this type of interventionist theology that has served as a great attraction for Africans in the Diaspora. In the case of Bishop Heward-Mills, what this tells us is that new media is being used in very innovative ways.

African Pentecostal Christianity in Post-Communist Europe: The Embassy of God

The adoption of new religious media does not happen in a vacuum. It is linked, as Meyer observes "with broader social and cultural processes." She is right in pointing to the need to investigate "how all kinds of practices of religious mediation and the sensational forms produced and sustained by these mediation practices are situated in those broader structures that characterize neo-liberal capitalism" (2006: 15, 28). I shall do so, by examining a case of African Pentecostal/charismatic Christianity active in Eastern Europe, where the collapse of the communist experiment has left millions of people bewildered, disappointed, and overwhelmed by the challenges of building personal and communal lives within new capitalist structures. The stresses of negotiating one's way in nascent capitalist systems has led to social problems with increases in drug abuse, prostitution, armed robbery and other such social vices. The problems have exposed the deficiencies in

state machineries that are supposed to deal with the social costs of adjustment. In modern Eastern Europe, Christian and other religious groups—including various versions of Islam—have either been introduced, or where they were dormant, have found new leases on life in response to the desire for spiritual fulfillment. In the midst of the process of secularization, many people have found new places to feel at home in the ministries of religious groups that promise divine solutions to social and personal tremors.

Pastor Sunday Adelaja, a charismatic Pentecostal pastor, has become an icon in the Ukraine through an interventionist ministry that is intended to bring much-needed hope to the masses. Pastor Adelaja started the "Church of the Embassy of the Blessed Kingdom of God for all Nations" in 1994. It belongs to the Word of Faith movement. Indeed, that was the original name of the church until it was changed in 1992 to reflect its broader mission and its desire to engage with the world as a whole. By its fourteenth anniversary, Embassy of God claimed a membership of twenty-five thousand adults. Membership is distributed among its various branches, mainly within Eastern Europe but now also with about six in the US. The central assembly in Kiev attracts upward of eight thousand adults to its three services every Sunday. More than 90 percent of the membership is Eastern European. The current name of the church, as Catherine Wanner explains, "signaled the church's new mission: to establish a public role for religion and to bring the faith to 'all nations' through extensive missionizing" (2007: 211).

Embassy of God's Media Ministry

In African charismatic Pentecostalism, we have noted, words may have a performative force behind them. Once spoken, they are believed to acquire lives of their own, an ontological quality that is sustained even when they come to be captured in print or as audiovisual material. At every Embassy of God event, a lot of physical space is devoted to the marketing of Pastor Adelaja's books and tapes. As Marlene De Witte writes: "Media technologies like television and film can make things and persons more beautiful and attractive than they really are, while at the same time presenting them as true and accessible. They give them a mystical kind of authority and makes people desire to follow them" (2003: 174).

Pastor Sunday Adelaja presents exactly this kind of mystical authority. His charisma is not only evident through his personal presence and

ministry but also mediated through the plurifold media resources that he makes available to the public. Testimonies are invited from those who have experienced the relevant religious sensations simply by reading a book, listening to a recorded message, or viewing an audiovisual version of Pastor Adelaja's sermons. These resources are now distributed widely across Europe and increasingly to North America as well. At the center of it all is his own charismatic personality as the anointed of God who exudes Holy Spirit power for the benefit of a following seeking various forms of intervention from God. Through his international network, Pastor Adelaja's books and their contents are religiously appropriated by other pastors who work under his "covering."[1] This is the way to "catch" the minister's anointing: " 'soaking' in books written by anointed men is an invaluable way of associating with them…. The words of anointed men of God contain the Spirit and life" (Heward-Mills 2000: 4).

Pastor Adelaja is indeed prolific, having produced, by his own count, close to seventy books since the ministry began. Three observations are *apropos* about these books, including both those published in Russian and the electronic versions of Pastor Adelaja's teachings: First, they are all published by the ministry's own publishing house, Fares Publishing. Second, there are pictorial representations in all of them that tell the story of Embassy of God and Pastor Adelaja's successes in particular as an anointed servant of God. Third, the church members do not make a big distinction between how Pastor Adelaja's live teachings are received and how they are treated when in print or in the various electronic formats. It is the sense of reverence with which the visible material, whether books or tape recordings, are received that contributes to their sacramental value. Thus, an investment in these materials literally constitutes an investment in one's blessing and prosperity. As one leader proclaimed during a 2007 prayer and fasting camp meeting, dubbed "Winter Fast," people should read "such truths as [are] written by Pastor Adelaja." This will influence the world with the Christian message. During one prayer session, he exhorted the congregation along the following lines: "The books contain revelations, anointing, and vision, and they were also inspired by the Holy Spirit." The congregation was therefore urged to pray and even repent of the

[1] "Covering" is a process of mimicry, in which younger pastors read the books, listen to audio tapes, watch the video tapes of their mentors, and imitate what they see and read (Kalu 2008: 123–146).

fact that the books of the "man of God" had not been handled as responsibly as they should. The subject matter of "books and influence" seemed quite important to the meeting. Bose, the wife of Pastor Adelaja, at one point herself came to the microphone and, in a combination of glossolalia and plain language, implored God to intervene and show "us" ways in which Pastor Adelaja's books might be made accessible to the world and more and more influential through the anointing they bring.

Enchanted Media and the African Worldview

The prayers offered at the Winter Fast were indicative of the fact that the use of pictures and images in the media materials is not done simply for their aesthetic value. It is for this reason that some scholars have drawn attention to the other expression *aesthesis*, understood as organizing "our total sensory experience of the world and our sensitive knowledge of it" (Meyer 2006: 18). In this type of charismatic Pentecostalism, it is the personal psychology and the perceived graces in the life of the leader, his charisma, which drives the people. In line with this thinking, Wanner (2007: 212)makes the important observation that the strategy that Pastor Sunday Adelaja has employed to bring nonbelievers under conviction and to yield such impressive and rapid growth "trades on spiritually rooted understandings of illness and cure." The original and core membership of Embassy of God, as she rightly observes, is constituted by "recovering addicts, and their grateful family members, who see the addict's cure and transformation as a 'miracle', testimony to 'God's grace.'" The understanding of the roots of social crises to be fundamentally spiritual also determines the choice of therapy, which for a Christian charismatic movement invariably means prayer and deliverance. This worldview, although present in western Pentecostal thought, is available in African thought systems in a very central way.

Thus it should be considered important when Wanner notes that although there is nothing Nigerian, or even African, about the services the Embassy of God offers, the doctrine espoused by Pastor Adelaja draws on trends in theology that are well developed in Nigeria. Those familiar with the work of scholars like Birgit Meyer (2005) will be aware of the strong worldviews of mystical causality that are reflected through Ghanaian-Nigerian films. In these films, the Pentecostal pastor, who is a charismatic (or a "thaumaturge" to use the expression preferred by Bryan Wilson), is above all else an interventionist on

account of the anointing of the Spirit upon his life. The charismatic leader has the power to bless and curse, and the effect of such a personality in African prophetic religions cannot be underestimated. As explained by C.G. Baëta (1962: 6–7):

> [Prophetism] appears to me to be a perennial phenomenon of African life, and the basic operative element in it seems to be personal in character. Whether in relation to or independently of events or developments in society, the individual endowed with a striking personality and the ability to impose his own will on others, believing himself and believed by others to be a special agent of some supernatural being or force, will emerge from time to time and secure a following. Powers traditionally credited to such persons, of healing, of revealing hidden things, predicting the future, cursing and blessing effectually, etc., will be attributed to him whether he claims them or not…. Such things as the above-mentioned endowment, inward illumination, a sense of divine vocation, spontaneous enthusiasm … are facts of life.

Being synonymous with "the functional power of the Spirit," anointing has traditionally been associated with the "spoken word" and "touch" or the "laying on of hands." The key word in the process of mediating the supernatural here is "anointing," which is understood in this stream of Christianity as "the power of God in action" and strongly present in the ministry of the prophet. Anointing has great emotional appeal when it comes to African religious sensibilities because the indigenous religious context itself is one in which "power" determines the viability of religion. Thus the key concept of anointing is germane to our understanding of the popularity of contemporary African-led charismatic Pentecostal Christian groups, such as the one led by Pastor Adelaja in Eastern Europe. It would be difficult to separate his style of ministry and his interpretation of social crisis and misfortune from his African background. Whether or not he *consciously* brings that background to bear on his ministry thus becomes a moot point.

Charisma and the Enchanted Word

In *Visual Piety*, David Morgan argues that although language is a symbolic form that is generally shared, "it should not be understood as an isolated or autonomous operator in the construction of reality…. Language and vision, word and image, text and picture," he continues, "are in fact deeply enmeshed and collaborate powerfully in assembling our sense of the real" (1998: 9). With the introduction of new media into the ministries of contemporary African-led Charismatic movements,

anointing can now be mediated through texts and tapes—indeed anything containing the "spoken word" of the anointed. These words, like those of Prophet Garrick Braide quoted earlier, are believed to be charged with a spiritual force that can make things happen. Thus to "catch the anointing," as Dag Heward-Mills has titled one of his books, "you have to read my books and listen to my tapes" because "for many people, the close association with [great] men of God is not possible except through the medium of books and tapes" (Heward-Mills 2000: 4). This is a religious exercise that members and believers in the ministry of the leaders of charismatic Pentecostalism take seriously. What we have in these developments are not mere texts and tapes but enchanted new media that mediate supernatural power.

As a result of the African belief in the power of words to bless and to curse, the Bible has been put to some very innovative uses in popular Christianity. The Bible is *holy*, and in the African imagination, what is holy exudes power that could even be dangerous. In African hands therefore, the Bible has been received as something that is more than written text for academic study. Beyond the written text and its interpretations, the Bible quickly acquired new uses as a sacred book with inherent spiritual power. In one of the most popular African independent churches in Ghana, a copy of the Bible is kept perpetually on the table from which the prophet speaks. Sometimes it is tied to the ailing part of a person's body to mediate healing. The symbolic and talismanic uses of the Bible are therefore quite common particularly in independent indigenous Christianity in Africa because for these local Christians, it is more than text.

In contradistinction to Western liberal positions, African Christians, particularly those belonging to the Pentecostal/charismatic streams of the faith, celebrate the divinity and supernatural status of the Bible. African Christian uses of the Bible as a symbol of sacred power, however, do not in any way undermine its didactic uses. Thus, attention needs to be drawn to the inseparable link between the Bible as text and the Bible as a Holy Book in African Christianity. The African universe is one in which the supernatural is hyperactive. It is not uncommon for people to bury medicines, charms, and amulets on their properties to secure such places against the presence of evil powers. Birgit Meyer (1999: 70) illustrates from the Ghanaian context, how people use *dzo*, medicine or juju not only to cure bodily ills, but also to improve their trade, the growth of their plants, to become invulnerable in war, or to be protected against evils inflicted upon them by others. It is a similar

sort of status that the physical media resources have acquired in African charismatic Pentecostalism. Their primary use of these resources is not for talismanic purposes, yet there is a strong connection between their perceived sacramental or talismanic power and how seriously their contents are regarded.

Conclusion

Using the example of an African-led charismatic church in Kiev, this chapter has examined the uses of texts and other audiovisual material in the mediation of divine power, presence and intervention in the lives of people. This has been done through what is arguably the fastest growing stream of Christianity in various parts of the world. Eastern Europe offers a prime example of the transnational nature of contemporary Pentecostalism and its innovative appropriations of modern media technologies. In this process, African sacramental worldviews have found a place to feel at home in the hearts and lives of people going through challenges similar to those of Africans, as they attempt to find their way within the new capitalist maze. Sacredness courses through religious media, which are the locus of religious sensations. The new African charismatic Pentecostal religion we have encountered here has taken the uses of such religious media to another level.

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TRANSNATIONAL DYNAMICS WITHIN AFRICA

CHAPTER FIVE

ON THE INSCRUTABILITY OF THE WAYS OF GOD: THE TRANSNATIONALIZATION OF PENTECOSTALISM ON THE WEST AFRICAN COAST

Joël Noret

Studies on the development of Pentecostalism in West Africa have multiplied in the last fifteen years, tracking the impressive growth of Pentecostal churches, missions, and ministries that has occurred in the last two decades in many West African countries. Various authors have examined the Pentecostal ambitions for a religious reform of society, the various social and personal changes that these churches promote, the aspirations to "modernity" that they reveal, as well as the ambiguities of their logics of rupture with "African traditions" and with the pasts of "the faithful" themselves (cf. Gifford 2004; Laurent 2001, 2003; Marshall-Fratani 1998; Mayrargue 2001; Meyer 1998, 2004).

In parallel to studies of the churches and ministries themselves, studies of the transnational historical dynamics of Pentecostalism in West Africa have burgeoned in the last decade. Pentecostal missionaries were present in West Africa almost immediately after the emergence of the movement in the United States, and certainly before 1910 (Anderson 2002). During the next decade, American missionaries from the Assemblies of God penetrated inland West Africa and settled in the Mossi region of Burkina Faso. From this hub, they explored and settled in the neighboring countries. Quickly however, Africans, too, began to play an effective role in the propagation of the Pentecostal "Good News." Mossi evangelists were active alongside American missionaries from the 1930s onwards, and Nigerian and Ghanaian Pentecostal evangelists started to propagate their faith among their colonized compatriots in the same years. Furthermore, the link between migratory flux and the transnationalization of religious movements is well known and documented. Pentecostalism in West Africa is certainly not an exception in this respect: the centers of immigration formed by the big cities of the West African Coast played an important role in the transnationalization of the movement.

Finally, the polycentric nature of the transnationalization of Pentecostalism, in West Africa and beyond, has also been strongly emphasized. The roles of Ghana and above all Nigeria as centers of propagation have been extensively noted: both countries sent missionaries to the whole of West Africa as well as to the West and in Asia. (cf. Corten and Marshall-Fratani 2001: 1–21; Fancello 2003a, 2003b, 2005; Laurent 2003, 2005; Marshall-Fratani 1998; Mary 2002; Mary and Fourchard 2005; Mayrargue 2004; Moyet 2005; Noret 2004a, 2004b, 2005; Ojo 2005).

Drawing on fieldwork in Benin, Nigeria and Togo, this chapter intends first to highlight the diversity of movements and logics implied by these phenomena, as well as the differences among several styles of transnationalization and multiple forms or types of transnational bonds. Second, the chapter will show how being part of transnational Pentecostal movements is today a form both of symbolic capital (see Bourdieu 2001: 107–113) and of socially recognized achievement for Pentecostal pastors.

To this end, I will build on three historical and ethnographic cases that will allow me to highlight these different points. The first case is the Assemblies of God of Benin, whose style of transnationalization is quite depersonalized, and which has taken on some aspects of a transnational religious corporation. The 2002 National Convention of the Foursquare Gospel Church in Nigeria (FGCN) and its aftermath in a Togolese village will constitute the second case. Finally, the third case will examine the logic of the construction of transnational connections by the Ministère d'Evangélisation et du Perfectionnement des Saints (MEPS), one of the most successful Charismatic churches in Benin in recent years.[1]

The Assemblies of God in Benin: A Transnational Religious Corporation

The Assemblies of God (AG) was among the very first Pentecostal Churches to settle in Benin (then known as Dahomey). American missionaries used the Mossi region of Burkina Faso (then Haute-Volta) as

[1] My research in Benin mainly took place between 2002 and 2004, but further research was also conducted in 2007. One-month research stays in Nigeria (Lagos) and in Togo took place in 2002 and 2003 respectively.

their hub to settle in other neighboring regions. For instance, a Mossi evangelist of their church was based in Dapaong (northern Togo, just on the other side of the border) beginning in the late 1930s, and American missionaries opened a missionary station in northwest Benin in 1945 (see Noret 2004a, 2005).

Simultaneously, in the southern part of the country, some African Pentecostal evangelists crossed the Togolese and Nigerian borders, starting missionary work in two places. They worked in Cotonou, Dahomey's economic capital, which was the destination for many economic migrants. They also worked in the Yoruba-speaking region along the Nigerian border, where ethno-linguistic similarity eased the settlement of Yoruba evangelists (see De Surgy 2001: 19–25, Noret 2009). These initiatives, however, were personal ones and depended on individual biographical trajectories. The AG settlement in northwest Dahomey, which was negotiated with the *Fédération des Églises Protestantes d'Afrique Occidentale*, appears to have been a more institutional and planned initiative, and was carried out far from the big cities of the West African Coast—places that otherwise played such a primary role in the transnationalization of West Africa Pentecostalism (see Fancello 2003b, 2005; Noret 2004a; Laurent 2005).

In 1949, the AG created a Bible Institute in Natitingou, the church's headquarters in northern Benin. Between the late 1940s and 1960, some American missionaries and Mossi evangelists, as well as a French-speaking Ghanaian, worked in the neighboring villages and towns, while American missionary couples taught the first generations of Togolese and Beninese pastors at the Institute itself. In 1956, the Daho-Togo church of the Assemblies of God (grouping the churches of Dahomey and Togo) became formally independent from the American mission. In Dahomey, 21 parishes were founded before 1960, in the northwest part of the country alone. The Beninese and Togolese churches of the AG were divided in 1965 and become two national bodies.

After independence in 1960, the AG was free to settle everywhere in the country, as the *Fédération des Églises Protestantes* ceased managing the settlement of churches. More branches were progressively opened all over the country, but mainly in the south. However, it was not until the 1990s, after the demise of the so-called Marxist regime of Mathieu Kerekou and the restoration of complete religious freedom, that AG growth really accelerated (cf. Mayrargue 2005, Noret 2009). According to the AG's own statistics, from 130 parishes in 1990, the AG grew to 488

in 2000 and to approximately 750 parishes in 2007. They are still the dominant Pentecostal church in Benin, as has always been the case (as they are in neighboring Togo, see Noret 2004b). They now attract faithful from all social strata.

The human and material support of American missionaries was key at the beginning, and it actually never stopped, even as the missionaries' role in church development progressively decreased. Nowadays however, the AG of Benin is involved in more complex and diverse transnational networks and relationships than just with these missionaries. Though there are of course the individual connections between particular pastors and their foreign peers, one of the main characteristics of the AG transnational networks is that they can function without personalization, in a quite bureaucratic and anonymous manner. The AG is actually, at an organizational level, quite distinct from smaller Pentecostal churches or ministries built around the personality of a charismatic founder, as we shall see below.

In Benin, as in the other AG churches of the neighboring countries (Togo, Nigeria, Burkina Faso), the national chairman of the church is elected from among the senior pastors, as are most of the other members of the national council. From the local parish to the national-level organization, the church makes room for democratic procedures. The delegates who participate in regional and national elections are themselves elected in their own parishes. Nevertheless, this way of functioning obviously does not imply that this local democracy operates without ethno-regional logics and tensions, which have been transferred from the political field to the church.[2] This is true even if this topic is not easily spoken about by the pastors of the AG whom I interviewed.

In electing its President and most of the members of the national council, the Beninese AG clearly distinguishes between the officeholder as a person and that office's organizational function. This logic also applies to transnational ties and connections. For example, the last report of the executive board of the church (covering 2003–2007) called the American mission of the AG, which is still present in Benin today, the "privileged and traditional partner" of the Beninese church (Sambiéni and Bio-Yari 2007: 15). This transnational bond, whose seniority is underlined in this passage by the word "traditional,"

[2] On local democracy in Benin, see Bako-Arifari (1995).

is not here a matter of interpersonal relationships, but rather of collaboration between institutions. Missionaries and national Presidents may change without the cooperation being called into question. A personalized relationship may ease the collaboration, making it closer or more distant, but the latter is neither based on nor governed by personalities. Nowadays, the national board of the AG maintains regular relations with the American mission (which still has two missionaries based in Benin), as well as with the *Action missionnaire* of the French AG, as well as with the Swedish AG. These relations are personalized in different manners depending on the case. They may be highly personalized, such as when the widow of a former American missionary in Benin decided to fund a large part of the construction of a new church building in the village where her husband had lived some decades ago. But they may also be very loosely personalized, such as when a new national President is elected and inherits the church's transnational partnerships. This was the case in July 2007, when I interviewed the new President of the church while he was preparing to travel to France in order to meet his colleagues of the French Assemblies of God to discuss some cooperation projects.

Finally, Ruth Marshall-Fratani (1998) argued a decade ago that, in the Nigerian case, most of the money of the Pentecostal churches and ministries was raised locally, through the gifts and tithes of the faithful. In this perspective, the Western (and especially American) contribution to the African Pentecostal field was essentially symbolic, as Western pastors first and foremost testify to the global nature of the Pentecostal movement, which was key in the "universalizing strategies" (see Bourdieu 1997) of the African pastors, and in the construction of their legitimacy. The case of the Assemblies of God in Benin only partially fits in this model, since this case also highlights that in a transnational religious body such as the AG, North-South transfers are real. Although an important part of the church's money is produced locally, the American and European contributions are certainly not negligible. Between 2003 and 2007, different European and American "partners" have invested more than 100 million CFAF (that is, more than $200,000) in Benin. To these contributions, one must still add the contributions of the American mission, whose budget has never been known to the Beninese national executive board. Gifts of motorbikes to pastors of remote rural zones must for instance be taken into account, as must the construction of a new Bible Institute (and its library) in the center of the country (in Dassa, a small town this is also known locally

to be the main Catholic pilgrimage center in Benin), both of which were entirely funded by the American missionaries (see Sambiéni and Bio-Yari 2007: 13–16).

Between Lagos and Togo: The 2002 Convention of the FGCN and Its Aftermath

The Foursquare Gospel Church is, like the AG, historically an American Pentecostal Church. It was established in Lagos in the mid 1950s by an American missionary couple. During the following years, the church started growing slowly in the Lagos region. The first Nigerian missionary of the church settled in Benin at the end of the 1960s (see De Surgy 2001: 27), and the Nigerian church became independent from the American Church in 1971, under the name of Foursquare Gospel Church in Nigeria (FGCN). Progressively, the church spread all over the country, and a department of foreign missions was created in 1980. Since then, the Nigerian church has sent missionaries to more than thirty countries, mostly in Sub-Saharan Africa, but also to Great Britain, the United States, and Spain (on the history and developments of the FGCN, see Adeogun 1999, Noret 2005). By 2002, when I observed its annual convention in Lagos, approximately 1500 parishes had been established in Nigeria.

During this event—an "encampment" of between three and four thousand mainly Nigerian delegates, I witnessed several different aspects of the church's transnational politics. Two months later, I had the opportunity to witness other transnational social effects of this meeting in a Togolese village, when I spent a few days with a Togolese pastor I had met at the Lagos convention. This portion of the chapter recounts these transnationalisms.

Patterns of Transnational Greetings

On 10 November 2002, the first day of the national convention, the national president of the church, Dr. W. Badejo, was formally introduced as "an international leader." A few minutes later, in his welcoming address to the assembly, he underlined the presence of delegates coming from other African countries. With more emphasis, he highlighted the attendance of representatives from the American church, the *International Church of the Foursquare Gospel*. After Dr. Badejo's welcoming address, the national choir sang various praise songs, before

Ron Kenoly, an African-American Pentecostal singer, entered the stage. Applauded with much enthusiasm, Kenoly was introduced with much more ardent verbosity than the short welcoming words that had been addressed to the delegates of the other African countries at the beginning of the meeting. Later on, the crowd was invited to provide a warm greeting to two Papuans coming from the Foursquare church of Papua New-Guinea, who came to Nigeria on request of the chairman of the American Foursquare church. They came in order to testify to the global outreach of Foursquare on the one hand and on the other hand to get to know the developments of the Nigerian church. Their presence, like Kenoly's, highlighted the Church's politics of imagination, which clearly aims at giving the impression that Foursquare is a global (or "international," quoting the typical local phrasing) church—a claim which the attendance of Papuans undoubtedly better illustrated than did the participation of pastors and missionaries coming from other African countries.

During the week of the Convention, speaker after speaker faced the crowds, giving speech after speech and receiving applause after applause. During the evening sessions, well-known Nigerian speakers—invited because of their religious legitimacy in the national Pentecostal field—competed to deliver the most powerful preaching and prayers.[3] These speakers were introduced with much fanfare. Significantly, their links and "friendship" with Foursquare (rather than with its President, W. Badejo) were systematically stressed by the Foursquare pastor in charge of their introduction, who also listed their main achievements.

Reciprocally, the first thing invited speakers did on taking the microphone was to thank Foursquare (and its President) for having invited them and welcoming them so warmly. They returned every compliment with superlatives, exalting the greatness of Foursquare or its relative (and respectable) age among Nigeria's Pentecostal denominations. Invited speakers and their hosts thus engaged in ostentatious

[3] Mike Okonkwo, founder of the Redeemed Evangelical Mission (TREM [see Noret 2005]) and then president of the Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria (PFN), or Matthew Ashimolowo, founder of the Kingsway International Christian Centre (KICC) and another prominent figure of Nigerian Pentecostalism abroad, are both examples of the speakers at these evening sessions. Such pastors are evidently considered to be among the "new figures of achievement and power" in contemporary Africa (see Banégas and Warnier 2001, Marshall-Fratani 2001).

exchanges of reciprocal legitimization before the former began to speak—something that I have long witnessed in such Pentecostal meetings. However, at the FGCN Convention, these exchanges were less personalized than is typical in younger and less bureaucratized churches than Foursquare. These younger-church exchanges seem more like meetings between two big men of God. At the FGCN Convention, the speakers most often underlined the fame and prominence of the guest on the one side and the achievements of the Foursquare church as a whole on the other, instead of focusing on its current (elected) President (see Noret 2005, and below).

Hierarchies

As I knew from the inaugural session of the Convention that African delegates coming from neighboring countries were present, when I was walking around between the sessions, I soon found the Togolese pastors who had been quickly welcomed during the opening session. As mutual French speakers, we were all glad to converse together in this English-speaking environment where they hardly understood anything of the speeches. We sympathized with one another, and watched out for each other the rest of the week. In the middle of the week, one of the two Togolese discreetly asked me to buy him a sticker and a small badge of the Convention as souvenirs, which I of course did.

On the last Sunday of the Convention, the presence of Togolese, Ghanaians, Cameroonians, and people from the Central African Republic was again briefly acknowledged, and a French translation of the preaching and other presentations was finally officially offered to pastors and missionaries from French-speaking African countries. During this worship service, organized in the national stadium of Lagos, the President of the FGCN, Dr. W. Badejo, was surrounded by numerous prominent guests, with whom he exchanged ostentatious signs of camaraderie, warm handshakes, and embraces. Their presence attested to the national and global (or "international") social capital of the church, in showing the ability of the FGCN to gather prominent international guests. Among these guests, the presence of Dr. Paul Risser, the President of the International Church of the Foursquare Gospel (that is, the American church), as well as of two governors of states of the Nigerian Federation, the Oni of Ife, an Igbo prominent chief and other princes and chiefs, were particularly emphasized. Beside these high-ranking figures of power and prestige, missionaries

and pastors of other African countries appeared to be quite modest transnational guests and much smaller figures of the global outreach of the church. They were thus confined to more subordinate "employee" positions, being treated more as religious workers of the FGCN abroad than as guests attesting to the Church's "international" connections. A hierarchy in transnational connections, perceptible since the inaugural session, was evident here again.

Social Capital

Two months later, in January 2003, I visited a southern Togolese village, where the pastor for whom I had bought a sticker and a badge in Lagos was in charge of a small Foursquare parish. The village parish was in a sense typical of the poorest version of West African village Pentecostalism, with its small church building made of traditional construction materials, canopied with a thatched roof and without electricity. However, a poster of the Nigerian church hung on the door of the church building, and the sticker that I had bought for the pastor was put on the door of his hut.

The pastor had obtained no material support at the Lagos Convention, where he could moreover hardly understand anything of the public speeches and could witness only the impressive size of the Nigerian Foursquare church, as compared to five small Foursquare branches in Togo at that time. However, this pastor was undoubtedly part of the Lagos convention, even if it had been at a more modest position than the prominent "international" guests who had been welcomed as real Pentecostal stars. The convention had, in a sense, ritually established him as a transnational actor: he had acquired a form of transnational social capital. Even if he attended the FGCN Convention in a marginal position, he was now one more transnational Pentecostal actor representing openness to the wider world. Besides, my coming to the village for a few days was the occasion to recall to the dozen of faithful that the two of us were part of the Lagos convention and to position him as an embodiment of the transnational religious imagination of the village faithful, whose experience of global Pentecostal networks was even more marginal.

The MEPS: Personal Charisma and Personalized Networks

In southern Nigeria, the local category of "one-man churches" refers to Pentecostal churches entirely built around the charisma of their

founder, who often appears to be their President for life, too. Actually, such an expression epitomizes the prominent place taken by charismatic figures in many West African churches and ministries, among them the MEPS.

Nowadays, Pastor Elvis Dagba, founding President of the Ministère d'Evangélisation et du Perfectionnement des Saints (MEPS), is a primary figure in the Beninese religious field. In 2002, the MEPS was still a small ministry, similar to hundreds of others in southern Benin. At the time a young and dynamic pastor, Dagba told me that his ministry was also established in Ivory Coast. In Cotonou, he was collaborating regularly with Ernest Oueounou, a founding figure of the "neo-Pentecostal" or "charismatic" wave of the 1990s in Benin (see De Surgy 2001: 58–60, Mayrargue 2005, Noret 2009). We had met at a "crusade" organized by Oueounou, where Dagba was in charge of the praise and the musical animation.

Until 2007, the history of the MEPS had known troubled periods. MEPS began as a small prayer center, then was later established as a church in the family compound of Dagba's father. The growth of the group then forced Pastor Dagba to rent a meeting room in a hotel. Then he rented a building in a neighborhood where the church was quickly considered too noisy and was forced to leave. Pastor Dagba then rented a cinema, and finally one of the largest spectacle auditoriums in the city, whose rent was excessively—even prohibitively—expensive. Meanwhile, Pastor Dagba started to preach on various radio stations, which aided the growth of MEPS and allowed him to inform his congregation of the church's moves. In May 2006, he also started to preach on television, and he was the first to have a weekly show on a private television channel, where he systematically invited viewers to attend his church services. Finally, in 2006, Pastor Dagba established the MEPS on a bare plot of land in an inner suburb of Cotonou, where he has now erected a temporary temple with a capacity of several hundreds seats. This church building is of course much smaller than the huge auditoriums of Nigeria's most successful Pentecostal assemblies, which have capacities ranging from several thousand to tens of thousands of seats. In Cotonou, however, the MEPS is now among the largest of church buildings, and Pastor Dagba has become a renowned personage of the Beninese audiovisual landscape.

As the MEPS is currently built entirely upon the personal charisma of its founding President (there is no room here, at the moment, for a distinction between the person and that person's position), its

transnational connections are similarly much more personalized than are the two groups discussed above. In May 2007, for the "Night of Excellence" that he organized to celebrate the first birthday of his weekly TV program, Pastor Dagba invited as a special guest the Ivorian soap actor Michel Gohou, who is well-known throughout Francophone West Africa for his participation in the "Guignols d'Abidjan" and for his character in the television series "Ma famille." Dagba had already solicited Gohou several weeks earlier to record a television commercial announcing the event and promoting the activities of the church: the teaching session on Tuesday evening, the "faith clinic" on Thursday morning, the "shot operation" (against satanic spirits) on Friday evening, and of course, the Sunday morning service, which is a marathon starting at 9 a.m. and ending at 1 p.m. By inviting Gohou, Dagba exhibited a clear intention to affiliate with another star of the Beninese audiovisual landscape.

However, it is of foremost significance to other important "men of God" that Dagba sought to establish cooperative relationships, which would testify to his significant renown in the neighboring countries—another form of transnational religious capital. For instance, one of the speakers, the Togolese "Apostle" Kodjo Adjognon, declared when he was invited to speak (according to the interpreter, whom the audience needed because Adjognon was speaking English): "We will thank the Lord for the life of Pastor Dagba. He is my friend. He is also my brother. We walked together. And God blessed us together. Each time he visits my church, it is always a time of benediction. The people in my church love him so much. I want you to clap for him one more time."[4] He then blessed, as well, the wife and the son of pastor Dagba. Similarly, Rev. Jean-François Comoe, coming from Ivory Coast, declared at the beginning of his message (in French): "Be blessed in the name of Jesus. Today we give thanks to the Lord particularly for the life of the man of God who gathers us together today, that is Pastor Elvis Dagba. I remember yet the first radio program that we launched together. It was at Radio Capp FM [etc.]"

The style of this speech is clearly that of the evocation of friendships between big men of God. When pastor Dagba commented on the

[4] Apostle Kodjo Adjognon is the founder of the *Église Biblique Salut et Vérité*, whose rise to popularity in Togo took place very recently, as he was not a prominent figure during my research in Togo in 2003 (see Noret 2004b).

event to me some weeks later (in July 2007), he added, after having underlined the success of the event, "Gabon was represented, Ivory Coast was represented, Ghana, Democratic Republic of Congo, etc. I invited my *friends* from all over the place [my italics]. "

Transnational networks of the MEPS are thus highly personalized, and actually governed by personal relationships. But these transnational connections also seem to be limited to the construction and the periodical reproduction of relations of reciprocal legitimization between "men of God," who find occasions to (re)produce a transnational renown in the mutual invitations they address to each other. Through such occasions, their reputation as transnational speakers increases, both through the events of which they take part as guest speakers (as for Comoe or Adjognon in Cotonou), and in their own churches as well. There, it will be announced that "the pastor traveled," "the pastor is in Ivory Coast" (in Congo, in Gabon, etc.). One speaks anyway much more here of "invitations" of "friends" than of relations between "partners." During the same interview, for instance, Pastor Dagba further commented on the event: "when you invite somebody … how does it work? Well, perhaps you take charge of his flight, you accommodate him, and finally, you give him an envelope [with money] to thank him. And when you are invited, it is the same for you."

Friendship and personalization of relationships are of course not absent in churches such as the Assemblies of God or Foursquare. Pastors of these churches who have transnational connections are similarly likely to invite friends from abroad to preach in their parishes when occasions come. The relation between the person and the institution is, however, not the same as in the MEPS. Whatever their personal charisma, pastors of the AG always involve themselves in transnational networks as members of an institution that encompasses them, and not as founders of an organization that extends them (as it is the case for the MEPS and other recent and highly personalized churches). The different relationship between individual and organization in the two cases can even be what motivates those pastors who think they can become religious leaders based only on their personal charisma, to found or create their own churches or ministries: the figure of the transnational *entrepreneur* is certainly a model of success, having a strong appeal for many African pastors today (see Banégas and Warnier 2001).

Conclusion

Centers of immigration in the big West African coastal cities and linguistic and ethnic continuities across colonial (and now national) borders have certainly both played an important role in the crossing of borders by Pentecostal pastors and evangelists in West Africa, as this discussion of Pentecostalism in southern Benin illustrates. However, other modes and forms of transnationalization have also shaped the current Pentecostal landscape in the region, as the case of the Assemblies of God clearly demonstrates. Planning is here most evident, and different ways of crossing of boundaries can actually easily be distinguished between, on the one hand, the cases of itinerant evangelists, crossers of borders inscribed for instance in broader migratory dynamics and, on the other hand, the much more planned initiatives such as those of the AG (see Noret 2004a for a broader picture of their progressive settlement in West Africa).

Moreover, depending on how much room churches or ministries make for strong personal charismas (the two poles being here recent and still highly personalized churches built around the personal charisma of their respective founders, and more bureaucratized churches as the AG or the FGCN), the nature of their transnational links may also vary in substantial ways. There is a wide gap between the vast networks of "partners" of the executive board of the Beninese AG, and the highly and inescapably personalized transnational connections of Pastor Dagba. These cases hence illustrate some of the varying transnational dynamics of West African Pentecostalism.

Finally, modernity is certainly not only an ensemble of processes and institutions shaping conditions of existence, but also a local category in African popular discourses. To be or not to be "modern" is at the very heart of many social debates and personal dilemmas. Indeed, "modernity" is a "floating signifier" (to quote Lévi-Strauss 1950) and is seen as highly desirable in most contemporary African societies (see also Karlström 2004). Being mobile, well-traveled, having international experiences and relationships; being part, in other words, of globalization, is valued *per se* in many African countries—much as being a mobile tourist and traveler is often valued in the West (Bauman 1998). Conversely, disconnectedness and a sense of being marginalized by global flux may be experienced as alienating and frustrating (see Ferguson 1999). Yet, Pentecostal churches and ministries typically

"deploy notions of identity and belonging that deliberately reach beyond Africa" (Meyer 204: 453). In such a context, there are actually forms of religious legitimacy that derive from the possession of a capital of transnational relationships. In other words, transnational social capital is also for African pastors a symbolic capital—a legitimate resource, whose value is known and recognized by social agents (Bourdieu 2001: 107–113, 201–211).

As we saw at the Foursquare Convention, transnational connections are, like other social relations, organized into a hierarchy. Missionary "employees" cannot expect the same degree of public recognition as famous guest speakers or singers, for instance. All social actors surely do not have the same experiences of globalization (cf. Inda and Rosaldo 2002: 1–36). However, participating, even in marginal positions, in a transnational religious community assures the village pastors and missionaries of forms of local recognition. For Pentecostal *entrepreneurs*, such as Pastor Dagba, being able to exhibit a network of transnational relationships, as well as being regularly invited abroad, is similarly key in what makes them successful international men of God in the Beninese national religious field. Widely recognized as desirable and culturally legitimate, membership in transnational networks are certainly today among the important symbolic resources West African pastors seek to accumulate in their sometimes tumultuous religious careers.[5]

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[5] I wish to thank Anne-Laure Cromphout, Philippe Lemay-Boucher, and Robyn d'Avignon for their kind assistance editing my English. I am extremely grateful for their aid. Responsibility for any mistakes remains mine.

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CHAPTER SIX

PENTECOSTALS MOVING SOUTH-SOUTH: BRAZILIAN AND GHANAIAN TRANSNATIONALISM IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

Linda Van de Kamp and Rijk van Dijk

This chapter aims to demonstrate why and how distinctions between "religion" and "culture" are of particular concern to Pentecostalism in Africa in the manner in which it relates to transnational migration and mission. Though Pentecostalism is often analyzed from the perspective of globalization, because of its rapid global spread and success, it is a mistake to assume that Pentecostalism responds to or interacts with local cultural contexts in globally uniform ways.

Various scholars have written about the apparent "fit" between Pentecostalism and globalization, and about the diverse ways in which this "fit" has manifested itself (see e.g., Droogers 2001, Meyer forth., Robbins 2004). The growing and dominant form of Christianity today is Pentecostal/charismatic Christianity.[1] The Pentecostal view of the world, as the site of a spiritual battle between demonic and heavenly forces, supports a Pentecostal global project to spread the Gospel among all nations. Most Pentecostal churches operate in global networks of exchange, whereby public media as well as the circulation of charismatic leaders, ideas, books and all sorts of other materials are crucial in targeting localities around the world—part of the faith's project to transform nations, communities, and personal lives through the power of the Holy Spirit.

While this form of Christianity often serves as the exemplar of cultural globalization in modern times—*i.e.*, in the way that it appears to foster a homogenizing of the Pentecostal born-again identity around the world—the precise manner in which the faith relates to local cultural traditions and circumstances appears to result in a myriad of diverse engagements, ritual styles, and cross-cultural exchanges.

[1] Often also called neo-Pentecostalism or the third wave within Pentecostalism. In this piece we use the term Pentecostalism as shorthand, while being aware of the variety of Pentecostalism*s* (for Africa, cf. Asamoah-Gyadu 2005, Meyer 2004).

This view runs counter to the currently dominant perception of Pentecostalism, which emphasizes the way that its doctrine, organizational format, and services become easily adopted all over the world, seemingly irrespective of local cultural variation. From the perspective of the pursuit of a homogenizing Pentecostal identity, it hardly seems to make any difference where one attends a Pentecostal church. Services in Lagos, Johannesburg, Seoul, Amsterdam, Rio de Janeiro, or Chicago are often described in the existing literature as appearing strikingly similar to each other (Martin 2002, Poewe 1994). In considering this global homogeneity, most scholars have stressed Western cultural dominance (cf. Robbins 2004: 118), because the origins of Pentecostalism are generally traced to developments in Western Christianity at the beginning of the twentieth century (see Anderson 2004 for a historical development of Pentecostalism). The current rapid growth of Pentecostalism in the southern hemisphere (Barrett and Johnson 2008) is mainly treated as a global cultural flow originating in the West and from there expanding all over the globe, encroaching on various local settings. As such, Pentecostalism is often viewed as something more than a mere neutral "bridge" between the global and the local; instead, it is interpreted as tending to superimpose itself on local religious environments. Pentecostalism then becomes part of a local reaction and response to globalization or a "conversion to modernity" (for Christianity as a whole, cf. Van der Veer 1996).

Yet, in studying this homogenizing tendency of Pentecostalism and its project of creating a modern Christian identity, we cannot fail to see the diverse ways in which, moving from setting to setting, the faith negotiates and navigates local cultural traditions differently. In this regard, the faith's South-South links offer an interesting and different perspective on the standard discussion of the linkage between globalization and Pentecostalism. As we will show in this chapter, by looking at Ghanaian Pentecostalism in Botswana (Rijk van Dijk) and Brazilian Pentecostalism in Mozambique (Linda van de Kamp), Pentecostalism is not necessarily part of a globalizing *Western* modernity. Its Southern forms contribute to and shape processes of globalization in specific ways. Analyzing the transnational features of South-South Pentecostalism makes clear that it is not only the global aspects of Pentecostalism that render the faith relevant for its followers, but the faith's position toward the nation-state and national cultural projects as well. The specific ways in which southern Pentecostalism fosters identities that transcend national borders and cultural projects, like

those of Botswana and Mozambique, points to the role of southern Pentecostals in raising a critical awareness of and reflective attitude toward certain local cultural practices.[2]

By emphasizing the *trans-national* aspects of South-South Pentecostalism as fostering a critical awareness of national culture(s) and identities, Pentecostals may develop a transnational identity, thus transcending their local and national ones (cf. Beyer 2001, Rudolph and Piscatori 1997, Van Dijk 2006). This southern Pentecostal identity is not necessarily Western; neither is it Brazilian nor Ghanaian. Instead, it forms an ongoing critical reflection and negotiation about cultural identity, shaped by cross-cultural contacts. Whereas the same interpretation could be claimed for Pentecostalism in the context of African migrant communities in the West, as being part of the migratory process from Africa to Europe (the South-North link of Pentecostalism), we intend to demonstrate a different *quality* in the cultural critical awareness being created through South-South transnational Pentecostalism.

Most studies on transnational religion in the South-North connection deal with the question of how religion plays a role in preserving a sense of cultural continuity in the contact between migrants and the new society, in which migrants are subjected to a forceful public agenda that usually emphasizes "integration" (for an overview see Vertovec 2004). It has been specifically argued that transnational Pentecostalism encourages stability in situations of mobility and provides for cultural continuity by offering migrants a "home away from home" (Adogame 1998, 2004; Sanneh 1993, Ter Haar 1998).[3] In this context most Pentecostal groups in their South-North movement address the problematic of integration and deal with the question of to what extent their relative "outsider" status and position can or must be exchanged for becoming integrated into the local society—a question they deal with also in spiritual and moral terms.

In the South-South situation, however, we are witnessing how mobile Pentecostal groups perceive themselves as being much more part of the local society already, thereby facing the problem of how Pentecostal

[2] Critical here is not used in a negative sense, but as an attitude of reflection. Pentecostals urge people to examine cultural issues.

[3] It is remarkable that the literature on global Pentecostal flows mainly concentrates on the South-North links. Lately, Kalu (2008: 271–291) again refers to the process of linking Pentecostalism with what he calls the "reverse flow."

morality and spirituality can remain unaffected or even "un-captured" by local circumstances, powers or cultural realities. A closer cultural "nearness" to the local society into which South-South Pentecostalism has moved is often addressed not as being beneficial but as being a critical issue. Moreover, even in situations where people have not crossed cultural and national boundaries, we can see a particular engagement with these issues, precisely because of a desire to become independent from locally binding forces—*i.e.*, to become more culturally mobile and to cross boundaries. This is because South-South Pentecostalism brings into sharper relief the importance of a critical cultural awareness and of the destabilizing of continuity in the pursuit of becoming something of an "outsider" instead of becoming an insider (as through integration). Crossing (cultural) boundaries is thereby not experienced as disconcerting or uprooting, and the church does not have to account for such feelings. Instead, in the South-South movement, the Pentecostal call for a break with cultural customs shows religion as a producer of boundary crossings. As such, the study of South-South movement enables us to understand the way in which Pentecostalism is not only a response and a reaction to globalization but is also contributing to its current shape in remarkable ways (Van Binsbergen *et al.* 2003).

The following cases in Mozambique and Botswana show how transnational Pentecostal churches in these countries create a critical awareness on various levels in the national domain by assuming a transnational position. Mozambicans are confronted with the negative impact of their cultural practices by Brazilian pastors, and Pentecostal pastors make Ghanaians critically aware of Botswana cultural practices and national identity policies. In the subsequent sections we will discuss how this raising of a critical awareness seems to be of special relevance in South-South Pentecostalism because of the greater necessity to engage in sociocultural "distancing" in a context where either: (1) many aspects of ordinary daily life are so similar and familiar, compared to the actors' places of origin, or (2) where people want to move away from these origins for a range of reasons. While not being transnational migrants, Mozambicans still cross cultural boundaries through their participation in Brazilian Pentecostalism. In Botswana, while being transnational migrants, Ghanaians are also attracted by the ways in which Pentecostalism fosters cultural boundary crossing. In a way, the sociocultural "nearness" in the South-South movements of transnational Pentecostal produces a stronger, perhaps even a more

aggressive mode in the production of critical cultural awareness among the local followers. In other words, in its project of creating a self-conscious modern believer, the faith's mode of producing awareness and cultural discontinuity appears to become a crucial factor for its local attractiveness.

Brazilian Pentecostalism in Mozambique

The Brazilian Universal Church of the Kingdom of God (Universal Church) established itself in the capital Maputo in the beginning of the 1990s, shortly after the end of a long civil war, when a loosening of regulations concerning religious expression took place after the socialist era (Cruz e Silva 2003, Freston 2005, Vines and Wilson 1995). Brazilian pastors began holding church services in the empty cinemas of Maputo and their performances became known rapidly.[4] People in the whole city heard that these Brazilians were very entertaining, exorcized spirits, healed diseases, presented solutions for problems, and could make one rich. Mozambicans, who at the time attended these services, emphasized how they were amazed to hear pastors openly talk about ancestor spirits and evil spirits. Yet, the urban center of Mozambique had always been dominated by policies focused on abandoning "backward beliefs," starting with the Portuguese colonizers who labeled local cultural customs and beliefs as "uncivilized." After Independence in 1975, the Frelimo government continued working on the abandonment of "superstitious beliefs" and "backward" cultural habits by proclaiming socialist modernization as the new faith. People were subsequently forbidden to engage with rituals dedicated to the ancestors and/or with local customs such as initiation rituals and local marriage ceremonies (e.g., *lobolo*).

In Maputo, the most nationalized place of the country (Abrahamsson and Nilson 1995: 83, Sumich 2010: 2–5), these policies have been especially influential. Urban Mozambicans distanced themselves from "tradition" or learned to act as if they were not involved with practices related to ancestor spirits (Lundin 2007: 105–108, 147–149, 168–173). Although the introduction of neo-liberal and democratic policies since

[4] After a gradual decline, in the early 1990s the national cinema collapsed after the liberalization of media with the introduction of "Structural Adjustment Programmes" (Power 2004). In other African countries Pentecostal churches have also taken over national cinemas (see, e.g., Meyer 2002).

the end of the 1980s brought a new openness toward Mozambique's cultural traditions, the role of spirits in daily life can still not easily be talked about.[5] Discussing spirits is not common and can fill people with fear, in part because this could provoke them to act. However, the Brazilians did not seem to be impressed by the politics of silencing and openly talked about influences of ancestor spirits and evil forces caused by witchcraft. For example, the pastors brought the material into church with which local healers worked, like the *tinhlolo* (a divination set [for an explanation see Granjo 2006]) that they got from healers who converted. By touching such things without any consequences, they were able to show that these things had no power over them. The pastors demonstrated that they knew the sources of local spiritual powers and that they could overrule them.

The Brazilian Pentecostal churches are well known for their demonization of "traditional" beliefs and customs.[6] They fulminate against any *macumba* by pointing at its occult powers. In Brazil, *macumba* is a pejorative term used to denominate those Afro-Brazilian practices and ritual objects that are held to involve witchcraft or black magic (Hayes 2007). Despite the variety of Afro-Brazilian religions and the differences with regard to African religions, many Brazilian pastors claim that in all these cases they are dealing with the same demonic powers. Since the religion of the African slaves shipped to Brazil forms the basis for a variety of Afro-Brazilian styles of worship, the Brazilian pastors believe the heart of evil lies in Africa (cf. Birman 2006: 65), and it is this evil they have come to fight. The *orixá*s, the spiritual entities worshiped in Afro-Brazilian religions originating from the Yoruba religions in West Africa, as well as the spirits active in Mozambique, are all declared demonic. The Brazilian pastors therefore indicate that the Mozambicans are to be made aware of the real nature of their cultural past, as they are not necessarily familiar with it. In order to lead successful lives, people must be aware of generational curses and break

[5] By using the word 'spirit', we borrow the literal translation of the Portuguese word *espírito*, which the informants used when talking about the influence of spiritual forces in their lives.

[6] Other Brazilian Pentecostal churches in Mozambique are *Deus é Amor* and *Igreja Mundial do Poder de Deus*. Furthermore, Brazilian missionaries work in several churches, like Assemblies of God churches. Pentecostalism, strongly influenced by Brazilians, is a recent phenomenon in Mozambique. Besides Roman Catholicism, Islam and various forms of Protestantism, African Independent Churches have been influential since the beginning of the twentieth century (see, e.g., Helgesson 1994).

them (cf. Meyer 1998, Van Dijk 1998). The Afro-Brazilian imagery of *macumba* is presented as a mirror to the Mozambicans, in order to generate a reflection on cultural issues by asking what is Mozambican culture all about? In which cultural practices is one partaking? By whom is one influenced?

By raising a critical awareness about cultural issues, the Pentecostals take a specific position in a public urban domain where "Mozambican culture" is a topic of debate and concern. Since the Frelimo government has departed from its socialist ideals, a process of revaluing "traditional Mozambican culture" has started. Today the message of Frelimo is that awareness and knowledge of Mozambique's cultural past will enrich all Mozambicans. It is an important instrument for prosperity and for the nation to develop further. As a consequence, changes occurred, for example in the way the position of traditional healing is now perceived as being part of the nation-state project, including through the establishment of the government-supported national association of traditional healers (AMETRAMO). State officials participate in local rituals dedicated to the ancestors when they open a new building or a bridge, or when they pay a visit to a local community. To many, the openness toward a mixture of cultural traditions is at the heart of Mozambican identity.

At the same time, especially in the city, many contradictory and ambivalent visions exist about what being Mozambican actually means and which aspects of "tradition" should be captured. This is reflected in discussions on the use of local languages at schools, on how customary law and civil law should be integrated, in debates about what can be labeled as Mozambican music, and varying opinions on how women should dress. Those discussions are being influenced by new sources that constantly enter the urban space, such as migrants, television, the internet, and NGOs. These sources include the transnational churches, of which the Pentecostals most clearly express their rejection of Mozambican "tradition." Interestingly, the mediating role of Brazilian Pentecostal pastors regarding cultural issues in the urban space is of particular relevance in the reproductive domain,as becomes clear in their *terapia do amor* (therapy of love).[7]

[7] Van de Kamp's ongoing PhD project focuses on the relevance of transnational Pentecostalism for women in Maputo in the light of gendered nation-state formation.

Pentecostal "Therapy of Love"

Every week the Brazilian Universal Church organizes a *terapia do amor*. This resembles a church service, but it explicitly targets issues of marriage, love and sexuality. The "therapy" is a public form of counseling, while individual counseling takes place before and after the therapeutic service, when visitors speak with the pastors. The fact that the pastors publicly talk about love and sexuality is an example of their project of raising critical awareness, because locally these issues can be discussed only in private. The examples from Brazil the pastors give during their sermons also encourage critical reflection. Once, while presenting the attitude of Brazilian men toward women, a pastor said that Mozambican men are very shy. "You have to step up to a woman when you like her. Make contact, talk with each other."[8] During the "therapy," evil spirits that prevent women and men from marrying are exorcized—sometimes spirits with Afro-Brazilian names. Moreover, pastors preach about why people are not succeeding in love and why they are unable to establish happy marriages.

The central message is that Mozambicans should free themselves from their bonds with their families, with ancestor spirits, and with evil powers like witchcraft. Through the therapy of love, the pastors introduce new relational forms. A couple should leave the extended family in order to construct a new, nuclear family without the interference of relatives. Practical advice is provided about how to do so: the couple should live as far as possible from the family, the woman should not follow the advice of her mother-in-law but of her husband, and husband and wife should spend quality-time together. Of importance is the view of marriage as a relation of two individuals with God.

This ideal involves a shift from the customary marriage practices of the *lobolo*, which every couple should undergo before the civil and church marriage can take place. The *lobolo* consists of various ceremonies and of gifts that the family of the bridegroom offers to the bride's family. In the process the two families and their ancestors become related, embedding the bride and bridegroom in a network of kinship, assuring a good marriage and procreation.[9] The Pentecostal pastors criticize the *lobolo* precisely for the dependence it creates between the

[8] Sermon on the "therapy of love," Maputo, July 26, 2008.

[9] For more information about the *lobolo* and its significance in urban society see Bagnol (2006) and Granjo (2005).

couple and the extended family, in their view hindering a healthy establishment of the nuclear family. Moreover, the pastors particularly express their disapproval of the important role of the ancestor spirits during the *lobolo* ceremony, inasmuch as the spirits have to "approve" of the marriage.

The majority of the followers of these Brazilian Pentecostal pastors are educated and (new) middle class women. They are concerned with questions of marriage and love. They ask how they can create a relationship of love with a man and how to deal with the exigencies of their families. Take the case of Marcia, 32, as an example of this group of women and of the tensions these women experience because of their new socioeconomic positions. Marcia attends a Brazilian Pentecostal church. Because of her age, she is questioned by her family about her single status. However, Marcia is afraid to live a married life similar to her mother. She said: "My life is very different compared to my mother's. I had the opportunity to study. I am less influenced by tradition than my mother is. My mother hasn't studied. The people she spends her time with are her sisters and aunts. I went to school. I know that there is more in the world than rearing children."[10]

Another example is Marta, 23, who lives and studies in Maputo, where she attends a Pentecostal church and the "therapy of love." She is very ambitious and working toward a professional career. Her boyfriend (*namorado)* and his family, however, are expecting her to marry, to bear children, and to be a proper housewife. For Marta, marrying and having children are for the future, as she wants to finish her studies. Even though her boyfriend supports her in her plans, he also wants to please his family. His family find Marta not the appropriate partner for him. Compared to the former generation, younger women, as Marta and Marcia, have achieved new economic positions that make them enter new sociocultural domains.

It has been stated that because in Mozambique's cities women increasingly had to generate their own income, family and gender relations have been changing (WLSAMOÇ 2001: 24, 31). During the civil war, the number of female-headed households rose, and women often could no longer rely on their family ties, but were forced to become financially more independent. The implementation of neo-liberal structures since the end of the 1980s also increased this development.

[10] Conversation January 11, 2007. All names of interviewees are fictive.

Because of economic difficulties, women had to work for an income more than in prior eras. Apart from the hardships they faced, some were able to benefit from this situation because of the new possibilities of physical and social mobility it offered. Simultaneously, the signing of the peace agreement in 1992, effectively ending the war, brought many donor organizations into the country. Mozambican society opened up to the larger world, receiving new sources of information such as television, new journals, and later the internet. The various NGOs that focus on women's education and women's legal rights have given women, especially of the higher socioeconomic classes, opportunities of new types of work and education. Thus, more and more women in the city do not depend on marriage for their economic survival, as former generations in the city did (Sheldon 2002). No longer is their role in biological reproduction decisive for their identity. This situation raises questions, conflicts and uncertainties as in the cases of Marta and Marcia.

Most of the women who in some way or another could benefit from new possibilities also feel uncertain about their new position, as do their boyfriends, husbands and families (cf. Durham 2002). Women raise concerns about the extent to which they can act autonomously. Can they make advances to men they like, or should they wait until men approach them? Does the *lobolo* not make them too dependent on their husbands and in-laws? What is more important for a woman: to give preference to her professional career or to her family? These women try to maneuver tactically in an urban space where various models of organizing their lives compete with each other, considered as "traditional," "Mozambican," "Western," "Brazilian," or "modern." One place where they go for insights and suggestions is the Brazilian Pentecostal church.

Marta, Marcia, and fellow women explore Brazilian Pentecostalism for its transforming capacities. Via Brazilian pastors, they are made conscious about their cultural past, about which they often know little—as a consequence of colonial and socialist cultural policies. They are encouraged to become active agents of their own lives and not to follow prescribed cultural routes passively. Both Marta and Marcia eventually married more or less according to their families' wishes, by first organizing the local marriage ceremony *lobolo*. But they negotiated the participation of a Pentecostal pastor. As such, they introduced a new ritual space during the *lobolo* event, which included not just the two families and their ancestors with the exchange of gifts, but also the pastor who secured a Christian marriage free of any spiritual

and familial bondage. Hence, the transnational Pentecostal space that produces a critical awareness of practices like *lobolo* is being appropriated by these upwardly mobile women to open up a certain cultural domain. They develop new views on *lobolo*, love and marriage, and they create new ritual practices. To the Pentecostal women, reshaping the *lobolo* is their way of positioning themselves as outsiders to an aspect of their culture. In the process, a new generation of urban, educated women navigates a transnational Pentecostal space in an effort to design a life of relative independence.

Ghanaian Pentecostalism in Botswana

Connections and intimate relationships with the local population were and are matters of unceasing concern for the community of Ghanaian migrants living in Botswana's capital Gaborone. Research among this small but relatively influential Ghanaian migrant population repeatedly called forth the image of "splendid isolation" in the way most of my interlocutors usually talked about their social environment. Most of the Ghanaian men had been recruited to serve in Botswana's rapidly expanding civic society, and many came to be employed as staff in governmental ministries, hospitals, schools, the university, or the judicial system after the country's independence (Oucho 2000). Their wives had often become self-employed business-owners, being active in the rapidly expanding middle-class market for clothes, beauty cosmetics, transport, and food. Some members of the Ghanaian community have lived in the country for 25 years or even longer, have reared their families there and pursued their careers, yet they have never managed to create a circle of "local" friends or intimate relations. Despite Botswana's economic boom since the 1970s (some say an "economic miracle," see Jefferis 1998), from which the commonly better-educated Ghanaian employees benefited, one important factor causing this relative isolation has been the HIV/AIDS crisis that began to affect the country roughly around the same period.

My informants would frequently answer the question why so few relationships seem to have been developing between first- or second-generation Ghanaian migrants and "locals" was: "You see, *they* have AIDS!" In this answer the word "they" is of great importance as it opens up a whole world of widely shared Ghanaian perceptions of social life in Botswana. Ghana and Ghanaian communities have been much less exposed to the AIDS pandemic and its high infection rates

(as in Botswana). Not only do they have less experience with the disease, but they also have a set of ideas concerning local public morality that are tied up with it. As I have shown elsewhere (see Van Dijk 2009), Ghanaians frequently defined their "character" in terms of an ability to maintain stable relationships. In other words, they constructed a clear difference between the likelihood of unstable relationships in the host-society's cultural fabric—largely held to be responsible for the high incidence of HIV/AIDS—and the stability of relations within the Ghanaian community. More specifically, Botswana women were often perceived as an important threat to "Ghanaian stability" and "character." In many interviews both Ghanaian men and women talked about the surprise of finding out about the relative "lack of" and "want for" men that they encountered on the part of Botswana women. "They are really after our men," Ghanaian women repeatedly told me, indicating a gender imbalance in Botswana society, which has fewer men than women, particularly in the marriageable and reproductive age group. This structural imbalance is generally attributed to the importance of labor migration to South Africa for men in this particular age group, which has been taking place since the 1930s (Comaroff and Roberts 1977, Brown 1983, Townsend 1997). Women did not leave, which also contributed to the significant rise in the number of so-called female-headed households in the country.

This produced a strong hesitation to become involved in too intimate or friendly relationships, particularly with local women, and an equally strong pattern of avoiding anything that would open-up Ghanaian private life to interaction with locals. I have witnessed second generation Ghanaians (children either born in Botswana from Ghanaian parents or children brought to Botswana from Ghana) discouraged, if not prohibited, from dating local friends of the opposite sex. Attending school in Botswana and learning to speak Setswana did not mean much in creating better chances for developing friendly relations with local peers. In most cases, this second generation closely followed patterns of "relative isolation," mirroring their parents' patterns of social relations.

In addition to AIDS, sexuality and relationships, this pursuit of relative isolation was further strengthened by the policies of "localization" that the Botswana government put in place beginning in the 1980s (Van Dijk 2003). These policies entailed a speeding-up process of transferring jobs held by foreigners into the hands of locals in a number of designated sectors. A product of decolonization, this policy was

designed to offer locals better chances on the labor market, by ousting foreigners and by inspecting the business initiatives of foreigners in Botswana's booming economy to ensure that such enterprises generate jobs for locals as well. Increasingly, Ghanaians felt that their jobs were becoming insecure, as their labor contracts ran the risk of not being renewed. For some, this was also a bitter experience, given the fact that they had been working in Botswana (for instance as teachers, civil engineers, doctors or judges) for many years, but still faced the possibility of being treated as any foreigner. "In this country, we will remain foreigners forever," some explained, indicating that though they were instrumental in building up the country's civil society, they felt they had never been welcomed to become part of it.

It was in this context that in the early 1990s Pentecostal churches from Ghana (or under Ghanaian leadership) were established in Gaborone (Van Dijk 2003, Nkomazana and Lanner 2007). The best known of the four churches that arrived (of which three remained after a number of years) was and is the Church of Pentecost, which has its headquarters in Labadi, an area on the outskirts of Accra, Ghana's capital. Pastors serving in the Gaborone-based church that operated as the headquarters of the Church of Pentecost and its expansion in Botswana were recruited from Ghana. After initially renting some classrooms in a Gaborone primary school, the church decided about 2005 to build its own premises on a piece of land it could buy in the Taun quarter of the city. Here, the hope and aspiration was, as the then-residing Pastor explained, to create a better outreach to the "locals." This was a matter of great concern as foreign churches, like businesses, are also under the moral obligation to "localize." Most foreign-led churches do this by putting in place church boards in which there is a fair representation of "locals" with decision-making powers. The Church of Pentecost ensured however, that the majority in leadership positions would be Ghanaian nationals throughout.

The religious landscape in Botswana is such that in addition to the mission and mainline Christian churches (Roman Catholic, United Congregational Church of Southern Africa, Anglican Church, and so forth) a large number of Setswana-speaking African Independent churches (AICs) exist, of which many originated from South Africa in the first half of the twentieth century (Amanze 1998, Nkomazana and Lanner 2007). This was largely related to the process of labor migration and to the constant flow of return-migrants, who introduced new cultural forms into what was then the protectorate of Bechuanaland.

In addition to these AICs, there are also Pentecostal and Evangelical churches originating from South Africa and England beginning in the 1950s, which in the 1980s and 1990s were joined by Pentecostal churches from other countries within the African continent (such as Nigeria, Ghana, Zimbabwe and Mozambique). While there is this religiously pluriform situation, the Ghanaian-led churches are linked closely with the Ghanaian community and the other way around. In other words, many Ghanaian nationals decided to become members of these Ghanaian Pentecostal churches. It is striking to note that particularly those Ghanaians who held highly educated positions, such as university professors, often decided not to join what they considered to be "noise-making" churches–a brand of Christianity they tend to look down upon because of its ecstatic manifestations.

Yet a large proportion of the middle-class Ghanaian community nevertheless did join, particularly those who were in a less secure position, in view of the labor market and the government's localization policies. For these groups, largely made-up of self-employed entrepreneurs, the specific matter of relationships was and still is of great importance. They made it clear that the Ghanaian Pentecostal churches were particularly attractive to them, not because of cultural continuity, but in fact because of their project of cultural discontinuity and critique. Being placed in a position where their business permits and employment permits could be withdrawn by the authorities at any moment, these Ghanaians had become increasingly dependent on locals to act on their behalf in acquiring these permits.

It is in this context that the Pentecostal churches and their leaders demonstrate the cultural competence to keep relations with the local society under control (and carefully watched). In some of their messages they focus on knowing "how to deal with the 'locals'," as a senior elder in the Church of Pentecost once told me. In addition, these leaders also assume a position whereby they (the Ghanaian leaders) have the moral authority "to teach them" (the locals). The ways in which the local society succumbs to spiritual forces and immorality—in Pentecostal speech often referred to as "their *muti*," "their *tokoloshi*" (demonic creatures), "their promiscuity and unfaithfulness"—allows the Ghanaian churches and leaders to place themselves on a higher moral ground. Members are therefore told to scrutinize carefully their relations with the locals: the local employees they hire, the local friends they make, or the reciprocities in which they engage. From the Pentecostal leaders' perspective the most difficult relation is that of

marriage because, as one pastor explained, the ritual style of the marriage-proceedings that the locals maintain are difficult to change or to "Christianize." At a deeper level, this discourse is a matter of keeping dependence at bay, of safeguarding independence, and of not being ensnared by local forces, strictures, requirements and conditions. The Pentecostal rhetoric about the need to be careful about one's relations with local society provides middle, entrepreneurial-class Ghanaians with a form of moral legitimation to remain non-integrated, in a way "footloose," and thus capable of moving elsewhere quickly if prospects are becoming bleak.

This feeds into another reason of why this Ghanaian middle class found the Ghanaian Pentecostal churches particularly attractive: the possibility that many kept open for a return to Ghana if the business opportunities there became better than those in Botswana. Of a group of around 30 Ghanaian businesswomen that I followed in Gaborone, around one-third sold their businesses (often hairdressing and fashion salons) with the hope and aspiration of starting a new business in Ghana—in Accra in particular. (A few went into the hotel business because of the booming tourist industry in Ghana. Very few remained in Gaborone after selling their shops.) While, on the one hand, too tight relations in Botswana would jeopardize or complicate such a move to Ghana, the Pentecostal ideology of maintaining a cultural critique also is helpful in the Ghanaian context itself. As I discovered during research among Pentecostals in Accra, the Pentecostal faith puts Ghanaian gift-relations, reciprocities, and family-obligations under careful moral scrutiny as well, hence providing an awareness of the extent to which a modern believer should be able to keep himself or herself free of such constraints.

Discussing all of this with the Ghanaian entrepreneurial class therefore made clear how much they expected from the Ghanaian Pentecostal churches, in particular in helping them maintain a social distance toward both local Botswana and Ghana society. And the Ghanaian Pentecostal churches responded to this demand for help in such matters by organizing such events as HIV/AIDS-awareness days or nationalities' celebration days—respectively dealing with Christian moral norms surrounding sex and the issues raised by being a multinational church residing in a multicultural society. This all has the effect of making clear what it means to be a Pentecostal believer living in Botswana society. So, the churches voice the problems of Botswana society—AIDS, multiculturalism, and rising xenophobia—but show

how these can be overcome by a superior Pentecostal ideology and praxis. The churches do make an effort to attract other nationalities, including Botswana too, as a sign of their effectiveness and relevance in reaching out to "all nations," as one pastor once called it. While including not only Ghanaians but also Zimbabweans, Zambians, Malawians and locals, they make sure that these ideological and moral imperatives concerning the necessary understanding of Botswana society are equally shared and exemplified. Emphasizing "faithfulness" in marriage and "abstinence" before marriage, and emphasizing as well the transnational character of a born-again identity ("we are all brothers and sisters in Christ") creates an imagery that can heighten a critical awareness of Botswana society and its predicament for anyone involved, irrespective of one's precise cultural background.

The result of this was and is that the Ghanaian Pentecostal churches contributed to the notion of "isolation" from local society that the Ghanaian migrant community had already long espoused. The serendipity of the Ghanaian Pentecostal arrival in Gaborone was that this Pentecostalism arrived precisely at a time when the Botswana government's toughening localization policies meant that Ghanaians had become even more unsure of how to perceive and shape their positioning in this society (a point that certainly also applied to the position of other foreign nationals in these churches). By focusing on the Ghanaian migrants, it became clear how the Pentecostal emphasis on "non-integration" in local traditions and circumstances furnished this community, and therein the middle class in particular, with a set of moral injunctions to produce a sharp and critical awareness of cultural difference. In other words, cultural nearness did not feature much in the churches' notions of how to reflect on their position in Botswana society.

Interpretation and Conclusion

On the basis of our respective fieldwork cases, we can explore three particular features of South-South transnational Pentecostalism that are relevant to the relationship between religion and culture:

The first point is that in South-South Pentecostalism, cultural awareness is being developed by *becoming transnational via Pentecostalism*. Whereas in the South-North context cultural awareness is almost automatically implied in how African Pentecostalism is being perceived—as having an outsider's position toward the host culture to which

migrants and this faith have to find ways to relate—in the South-South context the Pentecostals are more insiders in the sense of either a shared culture (Botswana) or being in one's place of origin (Mozambique), from which it is more difficult to generate an outsider's view. The first case of the South-North trajectory of transnational religion produces a reflection on the link between religion and culture (Vertovec 2004). The introduction into new cultural spaces, the redefinition of what is secular or sacred, and new ways of organizing daily life sharpens the connection between religion and culture in that trajectory. It often fosters a more conservative and defensive search for elements in the religious expression of identity that express cultural distinctiveness. (An example is the headscarf debate in Europe being produced as a distinctive of Muslim identity.)

The nature of cultural difference in the South-North context is not as clear in South-South relations from the onset. In Botswana and Mozambique, people are made aware of the problematic character of culture by transnational religious groups. In this situation it is of greater importance for these religious groups to make conscious efforts to problematize culture. A notion of "the cultural" does not emerge by itself, which means that efforts to produce an awareness of cultural traditions thus become the subject of explicit strategies. The transnational aspect of Pentecostalism in both cases is reshaped into a form of critical cultural mobility. While transnational Pentecostalism may discuss the relation between religion and culture in any context, the content of this relation and the ideological input and competence this requires differs, depending on the type of transnational links that are created.

Second, the South-South links of Pentecostalism made us realize the importance of this difference in the transnational trajectory and cultural mobility of its followers, because of the possibility of transcending national cultural boundaries. The opening up of the urban space in Maputo for all kinds of cultural influences has generated many discussions about what Mozambican culture is—and about what moral and decent behavior should look like. For upwardly mobile women whose socioeconomic position has drastically changed in the city, uncertainties about the new ways of living demand critical cultural reflection, especially in the area of relationships such as marriage. These women often experience the national context as limiting their independence, because of the failure of kin, husbands, and government to support them in their aspirations. Brazilian Pentecostalism becomes interesting for them to explore, as it offers a clear standpoint on these issues

and helps support women who want to develop their own plans. Moreover, the Brazilian pastors teach about how to develop a middle-class lifestyle in the city, in which they focus on issues of marriage, love, family and sexuality. It is this reflection on, critique of, and alternatives for the national cultural sphere that makes it possible for this kind of Pentecostalism to transcend national spaces, even if only temporarily or in the imagination. In the same line, the localization politics of the Botswana government can be overcome by a Ghanaian Pentecostalism that stresses its moral superiority over local conditions so as not to become too much embedded locally, and thus to stay mobile economically and culturally. Cultural awareness via transnational Pentecostalism offers one way for Ghanaians to position themselves in a society with xenophobic tendencies.

Third, these features of South-South Pentecostalism let us conclude that the role of Pentecostalism in shaping modern identities is less inscribed in aspirations of getting access to global flows or responding to the impact of processes of globalization, than in how to position oneself toward one's fellow citizens, relatives, governments, and national identity. Even though Pentecostals present themselves as "global" or "international," and though they also bring out these terms in the names of their churches, the varieties of cultural awareness and the discontinuities they produce are attractive for Pentecostalism's followers, precisely because of the transnational mobility the faith generates. Ghanaian and Botswana Pentecostals, and Mozambican and Brazilian Pentecostals, in their cultural exchanges, show that they do not automatically adopt a kind of global Western modern Pentecostal identity. Instead, they engage with the faith according to their own aspirations. As such, they contribute to a production of globality on their own terms.

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CHAPTER SEVEN

"WHEN YOU MAKE SACRIFICE, NO ONE IS A STRANGER": DIVINATION, SACRIFICE AND IDENTITY AMONG TRANSLOCALS IN THE WEST AFRICAN URBAN DIASPORA

Laura S. Grillo

For more than a decade, the "African Diaspora" has been conceived as an epistemological community, a shared consciousness activating a sense of transnational affiliation across political boundaries. I maintain that this consciousness, and the self-conscious communities it fosters, has its basis in an overarching religious worldview, and more particularly, in the principles and values encoded in and transmitted through the practice of divination and its culminating ritual sacrifice. In fact, the surge of interest in the concept of the African diaspora was aroused first by the increasing visibility of such burgeoning religious practices in metropolitan centers in the Americas.

Meanwhile, on the African continent itself, those foundational traditions were adapting to the shifting social realities of "modernity," especially multiple migrations. Under the pressure of globalization and the promise of development economics, Africans left villages and rural life for urban centers. More recently, in the wake of Africa's collapsing economies, civil wars, ethnic conflicts and genocidal assaults, African refugee populations have fled across national boundaries in every region. The critical upheaval and consequent waves of displacement on the continent lend new meaning to the term "African diaspora."

Today, African cities reflect the complex social dynamics resulting from "transnationalism," here understood not just as the influx of migrant populations across state borders, but also as the growth of a global economy and as the result of cultural homogenization. In the city, competition for allegiance to the "world religions" of Christianity and Islam becomes acute, and here the adaptation and innovation of religious institutions and traditions are in ready evidence. The notable plethora of Christian churches with a particular African inflection, targeting problems of "witchcraft" and focusing on healing, is one example (Newell 2007). But the shifting social landscape is also rapidly

changing the ways in which *indigenous* religions are being lived out. The situation is especially relevant to the study of African traditional religions, whose practices are synonymous with ethnicity. In the face of this increasing globalization and urbanization, studies of African traditional religions on the continent must shift from a characteristically narrow focus on the idiosyncratic customs of an ethnic group in its bounded local situation to a broader consideration of their innovation and vitality in today's heterogeneous world. We must account for the continued persuasive appeal of indigenous practices that have become loosed from the moorings of their cultural canons, yet continue to flourish in the cities, making their own unique contribution to the shape of and commentary on "modernity." One such practice is divination, which we will consider here, along with its visible correlate, sacrifice.

In the transnational and ethnically heterogeneous mix of the contemporary African city, identity is necessarily more fluid and encompassing than ethnic allegiance alone. Yet the traditional practices of divination, so pivotal to African traditional religions, are still very much in evidence in cities like Abidjan, the economic capital of Côte d'Ivoire. How do they address the new transnational dynamics of contemporary urban life, and how have these transnational dynamics shaped them in turn?

This chapter draws on original field research on divination and sacrifice in Côte d'Ivoire. It aims at more than a portrait of the phenomena in the complex postmodern situation; it shows these practices to be vital resources for Africans struggling to contend with the vicissitudes of life in the urban situation. Moreover, it argues that the ongoing practice of divination is influencing the emergent shape of social reality and is itself constitutive of modernity. Ultimately, it aims to show that the prominence of divination on the contemporary scene is a moral response to the very real structural inequalities generated by globalization. Together, divination and sacrifice foster a sense of community based on "Africanity," one that transcends the perilous appeal to citizenship but does not fall back on the divisive conceptions of ethnicity.

Religion Crossing Boundaries: Divination in Abidjan

In the modern West African metropolis of Abidjan, amidst skyscrapers and traffic jams, diviners practice their art. They operate in recessed

courtyards off bustling streets, out of apartments in city project buildings, or ensconced by wealthy patrons in luxury villas. Many diviners are Ivoirians who have come to the city from remote villages to make a better living, but most are immigrants and refugees from other countries.

From the time of independence in 1960 through the early 1980s, Côte d'Ivoire enjoyed relative political stability under the dictatorship of its first president, Félix Houphouët-Boigny. Its thriving economy attracted widespread immigration, but this remained unregulated by the state. Besides drawing traders and laborers from Mali, Burkina Faso, Senegal, Mauritania, and Niger, it opened its borders to refugees fleeing political unrest and economic deprivation in neighboring countries. Among other places, they came from Ghana after the coup that deposed Nkrumah, from Nigeria during the Biafra War, from Benin during Mathieu Kérékou's embrace of Marxism-Leninism, from Guinea under the brutal dictatorship of Sékou Touré, and from Liberia under the ruinous civil wars of Doe and Taylor. In 1997, I also encountered refugees fleeing the turmoil in the more distant francophone countries of Congo and Rwanda. By the 1990s, "foreigners" officially made up over 25 percent of the Ivoirian population (Collett 2006: 625). Meanwhile, continual internal migration reshaped the social landscape as well, as Ivoirian youth migrated from rural to urban areas to pursue educational opportunities and jobs. The proportion of Ivoirian citizens residing in cities increased from 32 percent in 1975 to 43 percent in 1998 (Bossart 2003: 343). As a result, Abidjan has become by far the country's largest urban center. One might argue that it is also one of the most heterogeneous urban populations on the continent.

Yet the mere fact that this urban population is so varied does not necessarily mean that it is a reflection of "globalism." Globalization implies not only migration and assimilation but usually also refers to an at least implicit subscription to Western cultural hegemony. Similarly, the fact that so many Africans have crossed borders to take up residence in other countries on the continent is not sufficient to consider this diaspora to be "transnational" in nature, to the extent that this term implies that they are culturally cosmopolitan—that is, that they are equally at home outside the parameters of their native situation as they are within it. Nor should the dispersed populations that make up the African continent's urban diaspora be defined in terms that suggest that their self-definitions were fixed by identification with nationality, or with the concerns of the states whose policies they are

often fleeing. I argue that immigrants and refugees as well as Ivoirians from other regions who have taken up residence in Abidjan are not transnationals, so much as *translocals*: displaced persons firmly rooted in the *habitus* of their culture of origin and more concerned with quotidian hardships and concrete predicaments. Yet translocals do not remain rigidly defined by or encapsulated in the circumscribed conventions of a local culture or its idiosyncratic beliefs. In the "relatively neutral context in which almost everyone is a foreigner" such as Abidjan, they obtain new kinds of cultural knowledge and forge social networks that redefine identity (Werbner 1999: 23).

The term translocal underscores the fact that even this emergent identity is anchored in more parochial concerns. For African translocals, their traditional "belief system and ritual practices remain a constitutive part, within the familial context, of their affects, habitual predispositions, unspoken injunctions to sociability and solidarity, corporeal expression and movement (*habitus* …), as well as of their mental structures, modes of perception, and value judgment" (Devisch 1995: 594). This is not to say that migrants on the continent are uninterested in assimilation within their respective host countries, nor that they are immune from adopting the artifices of Western conventions so prevalent in the city. Translocals are characterized here both by loyalties to non-national identity and by commitments to common African constructs that are deeply rooted in traditional local realities. While their allegiances may continue to be to local, indigenous values, their experiences in the city are necessarily multicultural, and the transnational dynamics of the metropolis and its marketplace are imposed nevertheless. The city itself is an active crossroad of intercultural communication, competition and convergence, and there is no avoiding the transformative impact of globalization. "We are all transnationals now, but some more than others, and certainly in different ways." (R. Grillo 2007: 205).

Appeal to the indigenous practices of divination and sacrifice, and adherence to beliefs inherent in them, are not abandoned in the "modern" metropolis, despite the fact that Africans are well aware of the modernist construal of such traditional practices as "backward" and at odds with development, progress and urbanity. As I have shown elsewhere (1995), divination and sacrifice are pivotal features of African traditional religions. I contend here that their ongoing practices in the city reflect a means by which "non-elite actors are responding to the same global and hegemonic forces" (Davies 2007: 68), and that they

serve to reconfigure communal identity among translocal residents and indigenous Ivoirians alike. Therefore, the ongoing practices of African traditional religions, usually seen as parochial in nature and scope of influence, continue to play a vital part in contemporary urban social dynamics.

Multiple Forms and Features of Divination in Abidjan

In the past 20 years, Abidjan has mushroomed to an alarming degree. Sprawling neighborhoods still under construction are springing up where once there was only "bush." The city is saturated with people, taxing the impossibly inadequate infrastructure. Buses are full to overflowing. Affordable housing is hard to come by. Poorly paved roads are lined with bustling street vendors, makeshift garages, tailor shops, mini-buses, and sheepherders. Every sector of Abidjan still retains its singular character, but all bear the signs of recent economic hardship and change. Plateau, for example, the once-stylish commercial center known as the "jewel of Africa," has lost its glitter; the mosaic facade of a government building is drab, the front windows broken, the stairway crumbled; the majestic sculpted doors of the national bank's headquarters are gray and feathered with neglect. But from the distance, its proud skyscrapers and flashing neon billboards still present an imposing testimony to the economic achievement of the 1970s and early '80s.

In Abidjan, diviners are found in every sector of the city, offering insight and solutions to the myriad problems that plague the daily lives of Abidjan's inhabitants. Treichville, a quarter notorious for its lively ambiance, is still among the most "African" of neighborhoods. Here the makeshift stalls of the marketplace distend into the streets' already busy traffic. This market bears witness to an active trade in ritual accoutrements sustained by diviners' prescriptions: herbal charms and "medicines" to ward off witches and their spells, cowries and kola nuts for sacrificial offerings. A tenement building in the adjacent quarter of Adjamé is home to a diviner who gazes into a calabash of water for his inspiration. In Koumassi, a neighborhood of comfortable villas, I visited an Abouré diviner-healer who consults her "fetish" when possessed by her personal genies to determine her diagnoses. Just across the bridge named for Charles de Gaulle lies Marcory, where the "cadres"—the few urban professionals—have comfortable apartments

above cafés. Here a cowrie thrower received me in her living room and consulted for me at her coffee table. Even in Cocody, an older enclave of the well-to-do, a hand-painted road sign advertising the famous talents of a great divining consultant who promises to solve all problems stands strategically between the entrance to the École de Gendarmes and the road leading to the University Hospital.

The names of the newest and most desolate neighborhoods betray a typically wry and humorous commentary on the bleak situation in which their residents find themselves: a quarter of Youpougon is known as *Mon-mari-m'a-laissée* ("My-husband-left-me"), while a provisional ghetto nestled between old highways and notoriously populated by brigands, was called "Washington." At the outskirts of one such slum, I was led to a geomancer from Burkina Faso, who consulted amidst the rubble of an unfinished building where he had installed himself as a squatter. Diviners are like other itinerant entrepreneurs and tradesmen in the city, all vigorously exercising their own brand of Ivoirian know-how and economic resourcefulness that the locals call the *système D* or *système débrouillard*, roughly translatable as "the make-do and manage-on-your-own system."

The techniques of urban divination are as varied as are the neighborhoods: tossing of cowries; sand-cutting (reading the marks the diviner spontaneously draws in sand); manipulation and random selection of leather cordelettes on which beads and other symbolic emblems are strung; casting of the classic Ifa okpele chain (strung with eight pieces of calabash whose random fall constructs a visual ideogram correlating with interpretive verses); interpretation of spontaneous cryptic writing on paper or a diviner's induced dreams; mirror-gazing (in which a solution to a client's concern "appears" in the diviner's reflection); reading of the gnawed grains left by a mouse enclosed in a diviner's carved vessel; use of Arabic writing in amulets and as palimpsests; and hand-clasping (in which the rise and fall of a client and diviner's linked arms indicate a spirit's yes/no response to a question posed). While traditional practices flourish, signs advertizing clairvoyants and "consultants" who use palmistry, numerology, astrology, and tarot also lure the urban clientele.

One can see in this depiction the facile commodification of divination, in keeping with the capitalist marketplace of the city and its "predatory economy of the street" (Devisch 1995: 609). The traditional practice in the urban context becomes a trade bartered in the marketplace as much as a "religious" expression. As a result, as the authors of

a sociological study of sacrifice in urban Côte d'Ivoire noted, "city dwellers are the first to recognize that diviners are not what they once were. The interrogators of the spirits prefer to count bank bills than dialogue with genies…. In the minds of a number of urban Africans, money and the quality of divination are irreconcilable" (Touré and Konaté 1990: 176, my translation).

Yet, diviners themselves reiterated that those who enjoy a strong reputation and most benefit from their craft neither advertize nor charge fees. "Reputable" diviners scorn obvious entrepreneurial tactics, such as billboards advertizing services, and insist that only incompetent amateurs or unscrupulous frauds resort to them. A diviner from Niger practicing in Abidjan, Karamongo Abdoulayé, categorically declared, "I don't advertize with road-signs. Those who do are swindlers. Even if I were to live in a hole, clients would find me."[1] Despite such admissions to the existence of mercenary impostors, diviners generally do not scorn other practitioners or their techniques and emphasize their own sincerity and reliability. As Cissé Amadou, a seer residing in Treicheville put it, "If I work well, [the client] will send someone else to me. If he isn't happy with my work, he won't return. I don't have to look for clients." Scrupulous diviners do not charge a fee, but follow the tradition that requires only that a symbolic sum be paid as an offering to the spirits at work in the consultation. If the diagnosis is correct, and the prescriptive sacrifice has its positive effect, the client returns with gifts of gratitude, and these constitute the diviner's wealth even as they establish a visible emblem of his or her prestige. Karamongo explained the dynamics of this moral economy simply: "If you are cheated at the market, you don't return there." In fact, this material attestation of power was very much in evidence in the tiny one-room apartment of Bâ Oumar, a "sand-caster" from Mali. His humble quarters shared with his wife and baby contained only a foam mattress, but the corner was piled high with valuable wares—a television, a VCR, bolts of ceremonial cloth. Bâ made it a point to say to me that these gifts were the signs of his efficacy.

The impressive array of alternative divinatory techniques also reinforces the impression of Abidjan as a kaleidoscope of cultural patterns in creative flux and recombination. The forms of divination multiply and change as cultures converge and divinatory types combine.

[1] Unless otherwise noted, quoted statements from diviners and other practitioners are extracted from personal interviews conducted by the author.

Some diviners have begun to incorporate Western divinatory techniques into their repertoire: the calling card of Torgbui Agbezoly Tay, a Togolese diviner of Fâ practicing in Abidjan reads, "Fâ divination – Specialist in African Pharmacopoeia – Numerology – Astrology." Other forms reflect an incorporation of Western ethnography into the canons of practice: Guédou's "sacred book of Fâ" turns out to be Bernard Maupoil's classic study, *La Géomancie à l'Ancienne Côte des Esclaves* (1943). Such divinatory bricolages exemplify the mutual gaze and self-consciousness that is characteristic of the contemporary moment. They are unpredictable permutations that, like the random cast of the diviner's accoutrements, challenge city dwellers to find coherence in complexity and fragmentation.

Despite—or perhaps especially because of—this kaleidoscopic mix, divination continues to operate as a meaningful strategy for urban Africans trying to navigate the contingencies of everyday existence. What clients of divination in Abidjan are seeking is not a systematically coherent doctrine to live by, but a pragmatic means of addressing the immediate contingencies of everyday life in meaningful ways.

Appeal Beyond Ethnicity

Many urban clients know and consult diviners from their own ethnic groups, whose populations tend to cluster in distinct neighborhoods within the city. However, the most important criterion in selecting a diviner is not ethnicity but a reputation for efficacy and integrity. Touré and Konaté (1990: 176) also noted that among urbanites in Côte d'Ivoire "one chooses [a diviner] according to his reputation and independent of his ethnic origin." The technique used and the ethnic background of the diviner matter little. Rather, clients elicit the help of practitioners who specialize in resolving the kinds of problems that concern them. For example, one client, a Catholic and Abouré (one of the matrilineal ethnic groups in the southern lagoon region surrounding Abidjan) consults Traoré Sidi, a Sénoufo (a major northern ethnic group whose population spans national borders) and a geomancer, (a diviner using a technique of marking or "cutting" sand), because he is reputedly effective in solving employment problems. For problems in his love life, this client consults a Senegalese cowrie thrower. This case also reflects the ease with which many Christians and Moslems move between their professed religion and the indigenous traditions

that, for them, seem to address more immediate concerns of life in more pragmatic ways. One informant told me, "There are witches who are only too happy to have people burn their fetishes and pray in Church instead. Without protection, they make easy prey. I'm a Christian, but I will always consult."

Another reason clients readily subscribe to diviners outside a particular tradition is that, in the pluralist cultural milieu of Abidjan, the population is increasingly of mixed ethnic identity. A young Ivoirian informant whose father is Guéré and Catholic and whose mother is a Moslem of Moroccan origin frequents an "animist" cowrie thrower to counsel her in her romantic affairs. Ultimately, clients' choices are personal and distinctly pragmatic, not merely ideological. In this respect alone, the support that divination proffers also allows Africans to assert the validity of an indigenous way of viewing the world and to assert a trans-ethnic identification with it.

It is remarkable that divination, whose practices are grounded in the founding cosmologies of particular indigenous traditions and serve as the critical means for asserting those traditions' authority, should so readily appeal to clients who do not know the myths or identify with the ethnicities whose traditions they affirm. I suggest that this is possible because the indigenous conception of reality that underlies divination transcends any one particular ethnic variant of its practice. That there is such underlying coherence across traditions is especially significant in Côte d'Ivoire whose ethnic makeup is far from homogeneous: there are 60 officially registered ethnic groups indigenous to the country. The many distinct identities and definitive labeling of these groups began during the colonial period, and in some cases they "lack some of the essentials of ethnic coherence such as shared ancestry, history or religion" (Collett 2006: 618). These many Ivoirian ethnicities are generally categorized into four principal groupings based on common linguistic origins and cultural similarities as well as geographic proximity: Akan, Krou, Voltaic, and Mande. The history of all four groups involved migration to Côte d'Ivoire: the Voltaic and Mande came from what is now Burkina Faso and Mali, and the Akan are traced to the Ashanti empire in Ghana with their arrival in Ivoirian territory dating to the eighteenth century. The Krou inhabiting the southwestern territory are comprised of several distinct groups (notably the Bété, Dida, Guéré, and Wobé) thought to have originally come from Liberia. Moreover, evidence suggests that while the term Bété designates an important contemporary ethnic group, this group is actually a

conglomeration of peoples whose identity as such crystallized under the influence of the French colonial administration (cf. Dozon 1985: 55–62). Therefore, even prior to the instantiation of Côte d'Ivoire as a country, ethnicity was constituted as a strategic identity, and the "boundaries of ethnic groups shifted to incorporate newcomers" (Collett 2006: 617).

Although journalistic accounts and academic reviews of the recent civil war in Côte d'Ivoire depict ethnicity as the leading factor in the crisis, the situation is far more complex. In fact, as Collett (2006: 619) observes, the coup in 2002 was not "a case of ethnic groups coming into conflict for economic and political reasons, but of economic, political and regional identities beginning to constitute a new notion of ethnicity." Collett lucidly analyses the ways in which political leaders manipulated the definition of Ivoirian citizenship to favor their own agendas and in the process created a xenophobia that divided the country. Even before independence in 1960, the fertile and more densely populated southern region was favored with rapid development, while the arid north was left without prospects for economic advancement. The Akan groups that dominate the southeastern region controlled the cocoa and coffee plantations that are the backbone of the economy. As the post-independence economy expanded, these plantations drew Mande and Voltaic migrant laborers from the north. Waves of migration and settlement were encouraged by a government policy that established that "land belongs to the one who cultivates it" (Dozon 1985: 73). Meanwhile, Baoulé agriculturalists seeking to expand their cocoa production acquired land in Bété country to the west and settled in the region. As a result, the ethnic landscape in the southwestern zone was entirely recomposed; in certain areas the Bété population slowly became a minority, and land disputes arose (Dozon 1985: 71). The government settled claims over land in the Bété-inhabited southwest "in favor of the Baoulé, Voltaic and Burkinabé migrant farmers, whose cocoa production contributed significantly to government revenue" and so pitted Baoulé against Bété. Then, as cocoa prices dropped, "the Baoulé turned against settlers of Voltaic and foreign origin" in a bid to retain exclusive control over the land and secure the income from its crops that the government guarantees (Collett 2006: 616). A further manipulation of identity in the interest of the state exacerbated the tensions between North and South. Changes to the Electoral and Nationality Code in 1994 initiated by the Baoulé president, Henri Konan Bédié, created a "radical ethnicization of

Ivoirian politics" known as '*Ivoirité*,' 'true Ivoirianness' (Sorokobi 1999: 2). The policy narrowly defined qualification for Ivoirian citizenship and seemed designed to eliminate a northern Voltaic-speaking Muslim, Alassane Dramane Ouattara, from a presidential election bid. The election was boycotted, and a coup sent Bédié into exile. The subsequent election of Laurent Gbagbo, a Christian Bété, did not result in a reversal of the policy of *Ivoirité*. Instead, the former Bété-Baoulé divisions were surmounted in the south in the interest of protecting the region's privileges and interests, while the northern ethnicities fused to forge a new alliance against them (Collett 2006: 623). That situation gave rise to civil war.

This history suggests that ethnic "identities are multi-layered, self imposed, as well as ascribed by others and as such require a critical analysis to avoid the essentialism that have bedeviled much of the discourse on African identity in the diaspora" (Korieh 2006: 91). So just as it is critical not to see ethnic identity in an essentialist way, as integral and fixed, it is equally important not to romanticize transnational identity or to hail all transcendence of traditional boundaries "as a way out of the quagmire of essentialism in which nationalism, multiculturalism, perhaps even anthropology itself, are stuck" (R. Grillo 2007: 212). Instead, especially as we explore African traditional religions and their practice in the urban diaspora, we must consider the real issues with which those border-crossers must contend.

The appeal to divination is one creative way by which Africans in the urban diaspora live out their commitment to their "local," indigenous ideologies, even within the globalized context of the ethnically heterogeneous city. I suggest that while national identity politics and economic compression have aggravated the opposition between various ethnic groups, between "citizens" and foreigners, and between urban and rural populations, the practices of divination and sacrifice do much to transcend these divisions, even as they respond to these same real and pressing problems.

Giving Shape to an Inchoate Situation

Even in the traditional sphere, divination is unique among ritual types in that it is the only ritual that can be instigated by the individual rather than either being fixed by a ritual calendar or mandated by the community. In this respect, its practice is well suited to the urban situation where people are necessarily more autonomous. Clients in the city

frequent diviners for a variety of reasons, but for the most part their reasons reflect the particular preoccupations of individuals struggling to negotiate the demands of contemporary city life alone. In Abidjan, schooling is not free and scholarships are hard to secure. A woefully inadequate health care system makes every illness a crisis, especially in the city where social support for managing illness is weak and sporadic (cf. Bossart 2003). Every bureaucratic exchange entails navigating a labyrinth of favors, greased palms, and nepotism. Often the most compelling interest is to find a job; employment is uncertain, and paychecks are erratic. Appeal to divination is a pragmatic effort to contend with these new kinds of problems that plague the urban dweller.

Beyond such banal aims, clients also perceive a need for protection and release from the tyranny of invisible forces. Diviners reveal the traps of witches that waste clients' health and corrupt their fortunes, and they identify the snares of jealousy and ill will that obstruct a client's success. Misfortune can also be ascribed to the nagging demands of personal genies, who provoke problems in order to draw attention to their desires. By reasserting such common etiologies of misfortune and suffering in the globalized space of the city, divination transcribes the dynamics of power into idioms that have currency across West Africa. It recasts the "misery and incoherence of life in the urban centers" (Devisch 1995: 595), and allows them to be seen in more familiar terms even as it renders them more coherent. Urban divination offers an opportunity to confront the inchoate situation of contemporary life and recast it into meaningful form with cultural significance. In so doing, it provides clients with a critical alternative to Western, materialist interpretations of the problems of modernity that plague them.

Moreover, by effectively shifting the locus of power from the human political arena to the supernatural realm, divination allows clients to wrest some measure of control over the otherwise bewildering forces that thwart them. In many ways, the invisible powers of witches and genies are more easily negotiated than equally overbearing and invisible forces like 'underdevelopment' or 'globalization'. In the words of another observer of urban divination, the "process confronts the irresolvable problems of the modern, inimical world by declaring them irrelevant or secondary" (Van Binsbergen 1995: 125). The pragmatic response to the urgent matters of living makes divination compelling, while its presentation of a permeable world of spiritual influence makes it persuasive.

This is not to say, however, that divination should be understood as a naïve "problem-solving process" (Masquelier 1993: 3). Urban Africans are well aware of the denigration of such practices as antithetical to rational scientific thought and an obstacle to 'development' and therefore, as Touré and Konaté note, "the sacrificer fears being seen as being backwards, a savage." Nevertheless, according to their survey conducted in urban Côte d'Ivoire, Touré and Konaté found that "the majority [82.8%] of those who perform sacrifice in the city felt no embarrassment or discomfort in its execution" (1990: 170). Moreover, their research indicated that someone with a degree in higher education was just as likely to perform sacrifice as was an illiterate (1990: 195). Consulting diviners and performing sacrifice therefore must provide for a more edifying engagement than the mere enactment of a kind of magical remedy. As I have demonstrated elsewhere (L. Grillo 1995, 2005), the ritual of divination is not just the unthinking repetition of a traditional custom or mandate. As a solitary undertaking, divination is first and foremost a deliberate and strategic act. It is designed to foster reflection about possibilities and to provide leverage over circumstance. In seeking out a consultation, the client is a self-conscious actor, not just an unconscious player in a pre-scripted routine. As fully engaged agents, clients are interested in effecting real change.

The ability to effect change is the very definition of power. In African traditions, ritual is the means to harness power and press it into the service of community and individual alike. The role of the diviner as diagnostician and prescriber of remedy through sacrifice is to channel and manipulate the forces that threaten both the individual and the social body. The efficacy of divination and its ongoing appeal in the city rely on ritual as a persuasive rhetorical medium.

Rhetoric is usually thought of as the art of speaking or writing persuasively; however, even complex and abstract ideas can be articulated forcefully though other media. Oral traditions carry and transmit their philosophies through ritual. In African traditional religions, critical discourse about the nature of divinity, the dynamics of cosmos and the place of the person in it is embodied in the plastic arts and ritual practices such as masking, initiation, and divination. The inscriptions of divination, especially, constitute the "visual canon" of African traditional religions (L. Grillo 1995); its signs and patterns are the delimiting markers for all that holds significance. Divination reveals the forces

at work affecting the client even as it empowers that client as a moral agent.

In what follows, I will explore how the rhetoric of divination is essentially a "discourse about power" (Masquelier 1993: 3), expressed not in terms of a vociferous ideology, but as a mute yet eloquent assertion of the moral roots of identity. Its culmination in sacrifice extends that discourse into the public sphere. This powerful performative discourse reconfigures cultural identity in the urban diaspora.

The Rhetoric of Sacrifice and the Discourses of Power

Sacrifice is an integral aspect of divination. There is no divination without an opening sacrifice (in the form of a symbolic payment) and every divinatory consultation culminates with a prescription for sacrifice (which the client is free to perform or not). These often small, symbolic gestures and token alms are deceptively insignificant: cowrie shells, a few coins, a handful of kola nuts, a small measure of cloth. Determining the proper sacrificial prescription is so fundamental to the divinatory purpose that in Sierra Leone the Kuranko diviner "defines his task as one of 'seeing a sacrifice'" (Jackson 1989: 59–60). But sacrifice is also meant to be seen. Its very efficacy relies on the participatory witness of a recipient and the acknowledgement of the intention behind the act. A sacrificial offering is "a gift … given in the name of a spirit category" (Jackson 1977: 124). As a gift it must be accepted and its symbolic value recognized by the recipient in order for it to bestow the blessings that it is meant to elicit.

Sacrifice is ubiquitous in Abidjan. "The presence of sacrifice in the urban milieu is apparent by the common congestion of crossroads with cakes, millet grain, kola nuts, palm wine, etc. It is confirmed by the extended hands of beggars at tri-colored stoplights, in the streets and along the mosques" (Touré and Konaté 1990: 169). In the city, sacrifices can take a decidedly "modernist" appearance: offerings of candles are prescribed, and "canned concentrated milk supplants fresh milk, … coins substitute for cowries" (Touré and Konaté 1990: 177). In whatever form it takes, the gesture is readily recognized for what it is.

Urban divinatory prescriptions are usually more individual and therapeutic than the public and political sacrifices still performed in the traditional context of the rural village, where the ancestors and often the family are implicated in the act. In the city, rituals aim less at

propitiating the social body and more at enhancing personal agency. Guédou Joseph, a practitioner of Fâ divination from Benin living in Abidjan, puts it this way: "God says, 'get up and lift up your burden and I will help you load it onto your head' [where it can be carried]. When you make sacrifice, you lift your burden, and God places it on your head."

Urban diviners repeatedly assert that clients make sacrifices not to appease guardian spirits or the ancestors, but rather to empower themselves, their own souls, or their spiritual doubles. As the diviner from Niger, Karamongo Abdoulayé, said, "God doesn't need sacrifice. It is your own soul that demands it. It is to protect you, to give you long life, to guard against illness and anyone who would harm you. It is the key to happiness!" In the city, sacrifice is as individualistic as its milieu; there are "no more collective sacrifices. Each for himself and diviners for all. … It no longer in any way involves a collectivity but individuals isolated in the face of their problems" (Touré and Konaté 1990: 177–178). These shifts reflect an adaptation to the more anonymous urban situation, where moral precepts can no longer be sustained by adherence to traditional roles, and where an individual must fend for himself or herself. Nevertheless, sacrifice turns the individual back onto the community, ultimately situating the solution to one's plight back in the collective realm.

Sacrifice in the Marketplace: A "Figurative Struggle over Domains"

Sacrifice usually takes place in the marketplace, clearly the locus of negotiation, economic and social exchange, but also the field in which the invisible forces are at play. In Côte d'Ivoire as elsewhere in West Africa, the marketplace is imagined as the crossroads of human and spiritual domains: "Spirits are thought to enjoy attending people's markets…. Spirits are attracted by fragrant smells and beauty, and they are said to be curious, envious, and sometimes greedy, just like humans…. Since the market is so full of spirits … it is a potentially dangerous place" (Masquelier 1993: 17–18). The marketplace is a liminal space, where sacrifice can reach the spiritual realm it targets.

Traditionally, in sacrifice "protection is sought against forces with which there can be no reciprocity, no pact: … witches, sorcerers, and the more intractable of the bush spirits" (Jackson 1977: 125). Sacrifice seeks to "tame or exorcise" the forces at work afflicting victims of misfortune. In the city, the abstractions of underdevelopment and the

economic climate (*la conjoncture*) are constantly invoked as the source of common misery, sometimes with wry humor. For example, in Abidjan in the late 1990s, in the wake of an abrupt and catastrophic devaluation of the national currency, the refrain of a popular song that regularly blared over the radios of *waro-waro* (renegade city taxis) wailed, "the CFA has been devalued-o; I am devalued-o." These economic forces deploy a "form of power [that] is opaque, diffuse, and multidirectional. It cannot be translated as a concrete quantum of agency or domination. Elusive, yet effective, it is not easily located and circumscribed in time or space" (Masquelier 1993: 4). Through what Fernandez (1986) calls an "argument of images," sacrifice in the urban marketplace associates these "intractable" forces of increasing impoverishment and social alienation with those more familiar sources.

The public performance of sacrifice also involves what Durham and Fernandez (1991) call the "figurative struggle over domains." By deploying the traditional hermeneutics of ritual, sacrifice symbolically reworks the imagery of the marketplace, turning it upside-down. While capitalism is driven by individual competition, sacrifice is a gift freely given, and the designated human recipient is always one more socially vulnerable—babies, the elderly, the infirm, the desperately poor. In sacrifice, goods are not about acquisition but are the material of offering of blessing and an expression of hope for reciprocity. With sacrifice, "monetary law [operates] according to a totally different logic than that of *homo economicus*: … [M]oney is no longer a medium of purchase, but rather a compensation or indemnification not for things, but for a gift of life" (Devisch 1995: 624). Sacrifice turns the each-for-oneself dynamics of the market and the rough-and-tumble life on the streets into offerings that honor reciprocity and elicit blessing. In this way, it inverts the order of the economic world, transforming the dynamics of the market economy into a moral economy. So, while the act is overtly a literal appeal for relief from distress, sacrifice also bears "inflections of irony and indirect discourse" (Jules-Rosette 2000: 46) about market forces in the city.

In the words of anthropologist James Fernandez, phenomena such as the persistence of divination in the city are, "strong responses to human malaise…. They are revelatory, though they may not be necessarily revolutionary in the political sense—determined to seek redistribution in the material goods and powers of this world. They are strong responses because … they seek basic transformations in worldview: symbolic transformations of experience" (in Jules-Rosette

1979: xviii). While it would be too much to assert that active urban divinatory practices represent a protest or overt resistance to Western hegemony, their commentary shapes consciousness, and this is not to be underestimated as a social force in its own right. Symbolic acts have effective power to reshape conceptual reality, which is just as significant a driving social force. They "enter the domain of public discourse and shape political action" nevertheless (Jules-Rosette 2000: 40).

Divination, Sacrifice and the Negotiation of Communal Identity

Under a drizzle of rain, a woman makes her way through the muddy alleys between market stalls and approaches another with a baby strapped to her back. She asks if she may offer the baby a coin: "It's a sacrificial offering." Without a word, the mother lowers her pagne to free the baby's hand that grasps for it with plump fingers. "Ah, she took it. That's good," the mother says, "May your desire be fulfilled." On another occasion, a sacrificer approaches an old woman and hands the elder four kola nuts loosely wrapped in a banana leaf. The elder receives the package in her upturned palms and then, placing the package in her lap, she props her elbows on her knees, opens her palms, closes her eyes and prays, "May you be blessed." Such quiet exchanges are the stuff of daily sacrifice that I witnessed in Abidjan. They illustrate the unquestioning acknowledgement of the gestures as sacrifice and the ready willingness with which urbanites regularly participate in the ritual. The sacrificial act demands the sympathetic response of the witnessing community; it is orchestrated to arouse feelings of compassion and mutual regard. Extending sacrificial offerings, having them recognized and received as such by others in turn, is a negotiation of communal identity based not only on a mutual acknowledgement of need, but also on the affirmation of indigenous appraisals of it.

Describing life in Kinshasa, René Devisch refers to the disillusionment of Africans who emigrated to the city only to "discover that they have become foreigners to their original culture, family group, and traditional mode of life, education, and solidarity." He characterizes them as "displaced and nomadic persons, participating in urban life characterized by dislocation." Without any cultural referents to provide orientation and meaning, they become like the witch, conceived by African traditions as the antithesis of the human being, a nocturnal creature who frequents infernal domains. Cut loose from social structure and cultural standards, urban dwellers drift in the anonymous

currents of putative globalization, seeking camaraderie in "the bars and night clubs [that] obliterate all reference to the public and ethical order" (Devisch 1995: 602, 614). In Côte d'Ivoire, Sasha Newell observes a similar phenomenon among unemployed youth who cling to an illusory identification with the spectacle of urban chimera and the trappings of sophistication and wealth. They "practice *le bluff*, an ostentatious display of material success that they do not have … [T]hey are performing for their peers, no one is fooled, as the very term to describe it implies" (Newell 2007: 464). However, even amidst such empty posturing, which is intended to mirror the opulence that the modern metropolis represents, Abidjan is not bereft of community or a sense of moral order. "Even though Abidjan youth described the city as a kind of jungle in which no one could be trusted and everyone must act in his or her own interest, their own social networks operated through a form of *moral economy* in which exchange and mutual support were necessary to survival" (Newell 2007: 464, emphasis mine). This moral economy is, at least in part, fostered by the visible presence of sacrifice in the city.

At least until very recently, when the Ivoirian government deployed its forces in the city and for a brief period allowed a youth militia to arouse xenophobia in the population (Human Rights Watch 2006), Abidjan was unlike the Kinshasa of the late 1990s, where Devisch (1995: 613) described a community that had lost its moral compass: "The economic crisis and the harsh struggle to survive force upon the individual a *disenchantment* with one's circumstances, *the loss of* one's militant or entrepreneurial spirit, and ultimately the sense of *any ethical responsibility for the public good*. Streets and public spaces become increasingly *mute*" (emphasis mine). So long as sacrifice remains a visible feature of daily life, the streets and marketplaces of Abidjan are neither mute nor devoid of ethical affirmation. Rather they furnish a vital discursive space in which a moral community is forged. The concrete act of sacrifice makes such a community visible and therefore serves as a means of "social figuration and re-figuration" (Fernandez 2008: 655). While it certainly cannot redress the inequities of capitalism or counter the spell of modernity, sacrifice does enjoin Africans to reconfigure identity along moral lines.

In Abidjan, diviners and clients alike repeatedly made the disconcerting assertion that "there is no difference" among various West African indigenous beliefs and that West Africans from Senegal to Benin "are the same." Kabou Mbow, a Senegalese trader residing in

Côte d'Ivoire, who accompanied me to visit Muslim marabout and indigenous practitioners alike, once put it most succinctly: "We're all the same, we West Africans. We all believe the same. Like when you make sacrifice; no one is a stranger when it comes to that." When pressed, informants qualified this "sameness" as a common commitment to the same fundamental tenets and values that underlie African traditional religions: belief in God and the spirits, a reliance on the blessings of the invisible forces that guide destiny, and the mutual recognition of human frailty and dependence on reciprocal relations. These are what constitute the "local" component of the term "translocal" as it applies to Africans in the continental diaspora. "Local" does not refer to geography but to rootedness in the values that binds the individual to the community. By making a tangible appeal to fundamental values through public acts of sacrifice in the city, transmigrants and Ivoirian nationals alike are called to assert a kind of common "Africanity."

I would differentiate this emergent kind of identity, however, from "hybridity," a concept introduced by the contemporary critical theorist Homi Bhabha, who means it to indicate "a celebration of polyphony and creativity, of 'mongrelisation', and appeals to a social, cultural and physical postmodernist melting pot, as it were, from which would emerge new forms, and new persons." The critical difference between displaced Africans in the post-colonial urban mix and cosmopolitan hybrids is the degree to which they operate within "the global ecumene," the organization of the world in which connections are primarily economic and technological (R. Grillo 2007: 203). It is also one of class. The migration of Africans across borders on the continent is comprised of laborers and refugees, ordinary people concerned with basic matters of immediate survival.

In this respect, the African diaspora communities on the continent are also often quite different from those configured by African intellectuals in expatriate communities in the West. An early instance of identity discourse in the African diaspora was the *Négritude* movement, an intellectual and aesthetic activism that renewed pride in Black Africa's cultural values. The African and Antillean students in Paris in the 1930s and 1940s who generated the movement were operating at the epicenter of a trans-national space, the European metropolis, and they in turn embraced metropolitan ideals. Their discourse on identity was philosophical and literary, and its interest was to "create a space for difference within a dominant culture without turning away from, or

completely rejecting, Europe." Even while seeming to throw off the clothing of assimilation and affirm a transnational African identity, *Négritude* aimed at providing "a wedge of entry for marginalized populations into the panoply of world civilizations" (Jules-Rosette 2000: 42–43).

One might argue that the very concept of the "African Diaspora" is indebted to the *Négritude* movement, with its essentializing of African culture. "Certain diasporic constituencies have disconnected entirely from any notion of a formal diasporic grouping, but remain connected to a subjective understanding of 'Africanness'" (Davies 2007: 69). While *Négritude* was critiqued for its romantic appeal to an idealized conception of Africa, contemporary intellectuals still hope to "recuperate Africa as a model and emblem for transnational diasporic communities" (Jules-Rosette 2000: 46). However, in important respects, the discourse of identity that I am suggesting is taking place within translocal African communities on the continent is quite different in form and substance. It is not informed by a top-down ideology articulated from the privileged vantage point of an elite. Instead, the poetic discourse of sacrifice is inscribed in the concrete practices of those at the bottom as well as the margins of society. Its argument is made in the discrete gesture of sacrifice in the marketplace and at crossroads. It does not invoke nostalgia for tradition, nor does it seek recognition from the West; instead, it draws its authority from the vital indigenous practices that, by virtue of their ongoing presence and appeal on the urban scene, must themselves be understood as an integral feature of globalization.

Sacrifice is often a mute enactment but is nevertheless an eloquent and powerful rhetorical device, and it is wrought just as self-consciously and deliberately as the artistic expressions of the fashioners of *Négritude*. Both are persuasive articulations of resistance to dominant appraisals of experience. Both make appeal to an indigenous world of meaning and acknowledge its values as orienting markers of communal identity. But sacrifice has persuasive appeal among African translocals; its rituals have currency—both literal and figurative—among many who have been displaced in the urban diaspora.

Together, divination and sacrifice constitute a powerful vehicle of this "new amalgam identity" that some have postulated must necessarily emerge in light of contemporary social and political upheavals in Africa (Jules-Rosette 1978). In the contemporary Ivoirian situation, where the interests of the state have manipulated the definitions of

both ethnicity and citizenship, participation in sacrifice may allow participants to rise above rival interests, cross social boundaries, and affirm a transcendent transnational identity, one fixed in 'local' values. Such an identity does not fall back on the dangerously exclusivist understanding of ethnicity or the largely bankrupt but nevertheless perilous notion of citizenship. Neither does it efface the distinct features of local African realities in the face of globalization.

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CHAPTER EIGHT

THE BOUNDARY-CROSSING INFLUENCE OF AFRICAN INITIATED CHURCHES (AICS) ON YOUTH IN EMUHAYA DISTRICT, WESTERN KENYA

Susan M. Kilonzo

The initials AIC, as the designation of a genre of African expressions of Christian faith of great variety, are themselves understood in different ways. Interpreting the acronym as "African Independent Churches" signifies that they are independent in their origin and organization. On the other hand, using the acronym to mean "African Instituted Churches" signifies that they came into being by the initiative of Africans and may or may not be independent (see Pobee, 2002). Other groups of scholars have referred to these churches as "African Indigenous Churches" (see Hayes, 1992); this last terminology connotes that such churches retain an African ethos and that their theology has developed a distinctive local flavor. Hayes points out that these three categories—African independent churches, African instituted churches, and African indigenous churches—may overlap to some extent but not completely. The official term for these churches when they emerged, as Bengt Sundkler (1961:18) insightfully argues, was "native separatist churches," to imply that they were splinter groups from the mainstream missionary churches. This term, as he observes, was widely unacceptable, especially to South Africans, because the term "native" was offensive to blacks during the period of apartheid. It also implied that these churches resulted from schisms in the mainstream churches, which was not always the case.

In this study, I use the term AIC to mean African *instituted* churches. The churches described here were started as a result of African church initiatives in African countries, but some are also affiliated with wider bodies that include non-African members. They therefore attract membership from diverse cultural as well as geographical contexts.

No matter what 'I' stands for, AICs represent to their members "a place to feel at home," to borrow Welbourn and Ogot's (1966) phrase. The negative attitude of Western missionaries toward African culture dictated that the Africans were dressed in European garb, both literally

and theologically. Pobee (2002) explains that AICs in effect protest the verbal and cerebral mode that puts Western Christianity beyond the reach of ordinary people's comprehension and experience. Instead, they offer a celebrative religion, making considerable use of symbols, music, and dance. Thus, they represent an African cultural renaissance, in reaction to the cultural imperialism of the mission work of the historic churches. Pobee further argues that the churches of the West and their daughter churches in Africa are stamped with individualism, which characterized Western society after the industrial revolution. This goes against the ethos of African society, which proverbially views life in communitarian terms. Missionary Christian religiosity thus drew forth a counterforce from Africans, leading to the formation of AICs, which respect the culture of African communities.

It is significant at this point to note that the African instituted churches have been described as open to collaboration with churches within and outside Africa (see Hayes, 1992). In studying the role of African instituted churches, there is a tendency to focus on the leadership structures and the dynamics of their development and spread. Scholars have paid less attention to the importance of AICs for African youth. It is this lacuna that the present chapter intends to fill, using three case studies.

An Overview of AICs and Youth in Africa

The emergence of AICs is complex. As just noted, these movements can be seen as reactions against colonialism or as renewals of African religious beliefs and practices. They can also be seen as splinter groups, in that many originated through splits from mainstream denominations. In any case, they began in the colonial period and continued to expand, especially after independence—despite official efforts against them. In 1969, for example, the Kenyan government refused to register new breakaway churches (Nandi 2001: 2). Some of the leaders of AICs, for example Elijah Masinde of *Dini ya Msambwa* and Otieno Dunde of *Mumboism*, were arrested on allegations that their movements were subversive. The insistence of these movements on the renewal of African ways of worship—indeed the whole notion of a specifically African religiosity—was seen as a distraction to proper Christian evangelization. This did not, however, deter formation of more AICs, and the state's decision not to register new religious groups

besides the mainstream churches was later reversed. Almost ten years after national independence in Kenya, Mbiti (1973: 145) lamented: "Christianity in Kenya has mushroomed denominationally and has turned into a messy soup." This lamentation underscored the fact that that religious expansion is not something to be curtailed by law. Religion has power to grow and expand widely irrespective of the circumstances.

The vibrancy with which AICs have emerged and spread in Africa poses a number of pertinent issues. Prior studies indicate that the proliferation of AICs in Africa has not only been a matter of concern for the mainstream churches, but also for ecumenical bodies including the All African Conference of Churches (AACC) and World Council of Churches (WCC). At the local level, the National Council of Churches in Kenya (NCCK) has raised concerns as well. It has been argued that youth are among the groups most targeted by the AICs, in part because many young people are poor and lack a sense of direction in life. This is similar to Western worries about the growth of youth-oriented New Religious Movements (NRMs) during the 1970s and 1980s.

A 1986 Vatican report on "Sects and New Religious Movements," including new churches based in Africa, writes: "When they [youth] are 'footloose,' unemployed, not active in parish life, or voluntary parish work, or come from unstable family backgrounds, or belong to the ethnic minority, or live in places which are rather far from the church's reach, they are the most likely target of NRMs" (Vatican Secretariat for Non-Christians 1986).[1] The report identifies the possible causes of these groups' attractiveness by observing that they answer youths' needs for belonging, for answers, for wholeness (holism) and cultural identity, for transcendence, for vision and participation, for involvement and leadership, and for prayer and worship. The report hastens to indicate, however, that the NRMs are leading the youth in the wrong direction and, because they are "unchristian," says that the mainstream churches should reach out to youth with Christian love. Further, the report suggests that saving youth from such NRMs requires putting those youth on guard against deception. It also suggests enlisting professional help for counseling and for their legal protection. This report, however, fails to identify the unchristian practices of such NRMs and

[1] The report was not focused specifically on Africa, but instead collected information from dioceses worldwide. It did comment at several points on Africans' specific concerns.

overlooks the specific struggles of youth in most African countries. The report specifically notes that African respondents emphasized the importance for mainstream churches of being open to acculturate to African beliefs and practices, especially those that benefit youth in their church programs.

Ironically, it is the AICs, for reasons discussed later in this chapter, that have proved to be most open to aiding African youth. This should not be surprising. Many religions are well-adapted to the society where they were founded and thereby provide structures that support people's social needs. Religion can become a way to integrate society: among other things, by providing a system of authoritative beliefs about the world and a force that energizes cultural symbols. In many African societies, religion has supported a people's way of life. It has in certain circumstances approved specific cultural practices. This is especially evident in some AICs (Nyaundi 2003), members of which have argued, theologically, for placing Christ within culture and not against culture (Niebuhr 1951). Where this occurs, it means that religion has been integrated into the society's social and cultural activities and has been used to address the needs of individuals by providing answers to the puzzles of their lives. The result is often greater religious diversity. For example, a study carried out in Western Kenya in 2006 indicated that the founders of AICs found themselves to be "misfits" in the mainstream churches and therefore formed their own religious groups with an aim of accommodating others who were similarly dissatisfied with or even excommunicated from the mainstream denominations (Kilonzo 2008). Surprisingly, these break-away churches have found acceptance especially by the youth, not only in the regions where they were first founded but also elsewhere in both the country and the African continent at large.

More often than not, the youth in the mainstream churches have found themselves at loggerheads with the church leadership. The main reason for this is the mainstream church leaders' condemnation of youth for their aping of a "Western" way of life, including their concern with keeping up with ever-changing technology. Mainstream forms of worship and lifestyle tend to be "traditional" and inflexible, as dictated by their mother churches abroad. Subsequently, young people have been faced with a predicament of either conforming to the demands of their inherited mainstream denominations or choosing from the wide range of AICs that are a characteristic of the modern Kenyan society. This chapter examines the reasons why such youth can easily be

accommodated in AICs in Western Kenya. Secondly, the chapter probes the ways in which selected AICs have crossed national boundaries to find acceptance in other regions, especially in Eastern Africa and other parts of the continent.

Setting, Methods and Conceptual Orientation

The primary data for this chapter come from an investigation of one of the most religiously endowed areas in Kenya, Emuhaya District. Kenya is divided into eight provinces, and each province is sub-divided further into districts. The districts are further divided into divisions. Emuhaya District is in Western Province, a province with the highest number of AICs and African New Religious Movements (ANRMs) in the country (see Barrett, 1968, 1973; Adogame 2003). There are over thirty different Christian denominations in Emuhaya District, with different branches in every division of the district. This particular chapter is informed by data from the African Divine Church (ADC), the African Israel Nineve Church (AINC), and the Redeemed Gospel Church (RGC). These three denominations were chosen for their active presence in the lives of the youth in the region.

The data support Harold Turner's theory of AICs—the idea that independent churches have been founded especially to serve the needs of the people and to ensure that they have a contextually appropriate gospel that serves their spiritual needs. Turner (1967) observes that the independent movements are community owned, and though the faithful accord a lot of respect to the founders, the denominations serve to fulfill the followers' immediate needs. This is why Turner writes that these churches are founded by Africans, in Africa, for Africans.[2] These churches have, however, found acceptance on other continents and across diverse geographical and sociocultural milieus (see Adogame, 2008). Youth choose AICs over the mainstream churches due to the variety of activities made available to them by these groups to suit their lifestyles. The churches on their part seem to be actively trying to capture young people's attention. The larger point is that these movements appear to be oriented to take care of people's needs (Turner 1962,

[2] See also Pobee and Ositelu (1998). The two observe that AICs were founded to serve interests of Africans and provide for both cultural and spiritual needs of their target groups.

Hastings 1989). From such a contextual approach to life, these groups have not only found acceptance locally, but also across the borders of the district first, then the nation, and in other nations of the African continent.

The People of Emuhaya

Emuhaya District is mainly occupied by the Luhya, which is the second largest ethnic group in Kenya. There are over fifteen Luhya dialects, but Emuhaya is mainly occupied by the Banyore, though there are other minor dialects (Were 1967, Were and Wilson 1968). Emuhaya District has a high equatorial climate with well-distributed rainfall throughout the year and an annual precipitation of 1,900 mm. Life revolves around agriculture and trade for farm produce (Ministry of Finance and Planning 2002–2008: 4). Despite the availability of rains and fertile soils, however, over fifty percent of the people living in the rural parts of the district are poor, and most of these cannot afford the daily minimum required amount of calories (Ministry of Finance and Planning 2001). The heightened levels of poverty are due to high population density, small pieces of land per household, a high dependency ratio (a population characterized by high percentages of youth), and high percentages of unemployment (Kilonzo 2008). The religious denominations and movements in the district are therefore challenged by the need for holistic development.

In earlier days, many of the Luhya inhabited somewhat larger communities than they do today. The village *(litala)* was the focus of daily life. A larger community unit was *Olukongo*, an association of several villages of the same clan. The *Omwami* (chief leader) was the leader of each *Olukongo*, where leadership was based upon influence (Fedders and Salvadori 1989: 100). This dictated the kinds of religious attachments for the people. Traditional religion was upheld, and the heads of families or clans mostly officiated at the religious rituals. There were also community religious leaders who offered sacrifices on behalf of the community. More recently, the elementary family unit of husband, wife and unmarried children has constituted the basic social group, a miniature community inhabiting its individual homestead and situated within its own piece of land. Naturally, the size of the family determines the number of houses. According to Nyamweno, a physical planner in the district, most households have an average of 10–16 persons living in a 0.25 ha of land or even less. The high population

compresses the space between houses and homesteads.[3] The divisions in the family have also had a great impact on the people's religiosity. There are great divisions among the clans and the families in religious affiliations. The following section discusses the diverse nature of Christianity in Emuhaya District, and gives an overview of how the three AICS discussed in this chapter were started.

Christian Diversity in Emuhaya District

Christianity in Emuhaya District began to take root in 1905 when the Church of God (COG)—then referred to as South African Compounds and Interior Mission (SACIM)—was started by Robert Wilson from South Africa. He had been sent by A.W. Baker, an English businessman who was the pioneer of SACIM (Kasiera, 1981:108). Baker later decided to sell the church to the Church Missionary Society (CMS). COG was formally established in 1926 at Kima in Emuhaya District, which now harbors the East African Headquarters. This church worked in Bunyore, Kisa, Butsotso, and Idakho before spreading to other parts of the country and across the East African region. The first major church split occurred in 1920s, when a church referred to as COG Interior Ministries was founded. In 1990 another splinter group led by Thomas Imende emerged. He declined a transfer from the Mariakani COG in Mombasa and instead founded New Hope Outreach Ministries (NHOM), which has four of its branches in Emuhaya District. In 1997, Obed Ochwayi, who had been posted from Western Kenya to pastor the Buruburu COG, Nairobi, turned down the appointment and formed COG Reformation. Most of the founders of these split churches defected due to leadership disagreements.

The Pentecostal Assemblies of God (PAG) was started in a neighboring district (Vihiga) in 1924 and spread to other districts including Emuhaya. PAG spread very rapidly because it was the first major "spiritual" church in the district. It is notable that PAG and COG acted as the sources of most current AICS, as well as the Pentecostal and charismatic movements in Vihiga and Emuhaya Districts.

PAG's first split was in 1932, when the presiding missionary priest appointed Zacharia Kivuli as a church elder. His step-brother, David Zakayo Kivuli, felt that Zacharia should not lead him because he was

[3] Unless otherwise indicated interview data from the Emuhaya District were collected by the author in 2007 (see Kilonzo 2008).

the younger brother, and younger-brother leadership was culturally taboo. Zakayo Kivuli therefore quit the PAG and founded Africa Israel Nineve Church (AINC). Later, in 1948, another split occurred at PAG when Saul Lazaro Chabuga decided to start a church with an African outlook and founded African Divine Church (ADC). When these two churches were started, they encouraged a revival of African religious beliefs and practices as well as spiritual healing as part of their gospel.

According to my interviewees, the history of these two churches shows that the leaders were called by God to start churches that would befit African lifestyles and would allow African ritual ceremonies and ritual healings. For instance, the followers of AINC believe that when Zakayo Kivuli was called by God, he was first taken to a particular hill in Nandi land, and as he fasted, God gave him powers to cleanse people's sicknesses using divine waters of the stream springing from that hill. The followers said that many years after the death of Zakayo Kivuli, people still visit the stream to have their diseases healed. To the followers, this kind of healing is especially borrowed from the Old Testament—the Jewish tradition—as opposed to the white-man's medicine introduced by the missionaries in the mission stations. Nhtamburi (1995: 17) notes that for AINC, spiritual healing is common, and dreams are regarded as an important source of revelation to the followers. The two churches also accept indigenous beliefs and practices that have been condemned by mainstream churches, including polygamy and initiation rites, though lately AINC has been highlighting the need for monogamous marriages due to the threat of HIV/AIDS and the economic challenges of big extended families. They do accommodate polygamous people and especially those excommunicated from mainstream churches. These two churches have their headquarters in Jebrok and Boyani, respectively, in Vihiga District, of which Emuhaya District was a part before the 2007 administrative divisions. These are not only the Kenyan headquarters but also the East African headquarters, as the churches have several branches in Uganda and Tanzania.

Though the founders of these AICs were originally members of PAG, their breaking away and founding churches with an African outlook does not imply that these are merely separatist churches. Separatist churches in most cases tend to have similar beliefs and practices to those of the church from which they broke away. AINC's and ADC's beliefs and practices are quite different from PAG's. Each of these two churches has its own dress code, which is not the case in PAG. Women

in AINC wear white dresses and white head scarves marked with a red cross, and the name AINC inscribed on them. Men wear white robes and caps with the same inscriptions. ADC members wear purple garb and white headgear with the inscription ADC. Members of both churches pray by invoking the power of the Holy Spirit and are inclined to their community's traditional beliefs and practices, including traditional initiation ceremonies and sometimes polygamy, which do not characterize PAG.

The Redeemed Gospel Church (RGC) on the other hand was founded in Kima in Emuhaya District in 1990. It is among the recent churches in the district but not in the Province. It is a daughter church of Redeemed Gospel Churches in Kenya, a ministry started by Arthur Gitonga in the early 1970s in Nairobi. The ministry spread to other regions including Kisumu in Western Kenya, whence the Kima church was born. It was "planted" by Bishop Mark Kegohi, the presiding Bishop of Kisumu RGC. The church has affiliations in Uganda, Tanzania, and Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). The Church claims to air her messages to the whole of Eastern and Southern Africa region, parts of Asia and Europe.

Christianity Crossing Boundaries: Youth's Benefit

The diversity of these different Christian religious groups proves interesting because of their impact on the lives of the youth, who form the greatest percentage of Africa's population. The question of whether AICS contribute positively or negatively to youth's lives in Emuhaya District is relevant to this research. Some scholars like Mbiti (1973) are of the opinion that the diverse nature of Christianity in Africa is like a messy soup. For youth, the question of whether AICS contribute negatively or positively is a different question altogether. As Mwaura (2007) observes, the rapid growth of Christianity has occurred in a context of pauperization of the continent due to a myriad of factors. The question that Mwaura poses is about the role of religion in such a society. Can it be a catalyst of economic transformation? These churches—being churches of the poor and of the needy members of their communities—have a role to play in the lives of youth, who form the majority of the poor in most African communities due to unemployment and inadequate industrial skills. In Emuhaya District, it was noted that most of the youth are unemployed and semi-educated, with little skills

for self-sustenance. They lack resources to sustain their livelihoods meaningfully. Drug abuse in Emuhaya District has also negatively affected the youth. It has been widely used as an escape from the frustrations the youth face. It is in this perspective that the AICS promise to fulfill young people's material needs. A notable way of dealing with the challenges faced by youth in these churches is the effort of the leaders to get young people involved in interchurch training. This is geared toward empowering youth either for employment in the churches or for self-sufficiency. Interviews at the AINC indicated that Archbishop Joseph Kivuli (a grandson of the founder Zakayo Kivuli) has been undertaking studies in theology in the United States for over five years. He has made connections in the US and has been sending a few youth leaders to churches overseas to gain experience on various aspects of life, including pastoral training.

At Ebuhando RGC, pastors have taken the initiative to let young people learn from other churches in the country. There are youth seminars that allow young people to interact with and learn from each other. In the same vein, international conferences in which the youth meet with their peers from Uganda, Tanzania, and DRC for both spiritual and socioeconomic interchange are organized in various regions. The pastor of RGC pointed out that the church has involved the youth in the sale of satellite dishes through their parent church in Kisumu District, a development project that they acquired from friends of the church in South Africa. The satellite dishes are acquired and sold for relatively lower prices than normal market prices. This is a business venture that indicates cooperation between RGC in Kenya and similar churches in South Africa. The preachers, besides being invited for evangelism, also engage in business activities for the benefit of their respective churches. It was noted that through such kind of projects, youth are able to improve their livelihoods; they then encourage their peers to join in church activities. Fifty-two percent of the churches studied attested to having youth development activities to help the youth become economically self-reliant.

Youth have also engaged in other activities that are believed to have helped them a great deal economically. For example, they have engaged in the production of gospel music. They note that music crosses geographical boundaries with ease. A youth at RGC explained: "All along I knew I had a talent of music. I was not able to pursue it from my PAG background and therefore I decided to move to RGC, though against my parents' wish. I have now together with my Tanzanian counterparts

from RGC church recorded the first gospel album. We are working on the second one." This is a sign of cooperation between youth in Kenya and other countries through gospel music. Despite condemnations from the mainstream churches that the kind of music produced by some AICs is secular, the expansion of the Gospel music industry in the AICs has definitely had a negative effect on the growth of mainstream churches. They have lost quite a large number of youth to the AICs. Some are therefore realizing the need to change their forms of worship to capture young people's attention.

To the AICs, mission Christianity was not well connected to the everyday structures of African society (Shorter 1973: 49). In effect, AICs are transposing African social problems to a mythical plane, helping the Africans "to feel at home" on the changed plane (Welbourne and Ogot 1966). Music and dance are tools through which African churches have partly liberated themselves from the structures of cultural hegemony from the North. RGC has amplified music systems, guitars, sets of drums, pianos, tambourines, cymbals, triangles, among other instruments. Most of these churches fuse both modern and traditional music, but whichever the style, it is accompanied by a wide range of both modern and indigenous musical instruments. The dance styles are likewise both modern and traditional. To the church leaders, this kind of music and dance makes the services livelier, unlike the traditional missionary churches where worship is formal, as directed by their mother churches. The AICs allow the youth to explore their talent in music. Currently there is a wave of hip-hop, rap and reggae tunes in African gospel music. This is not only found in Kenya, but also in the neighboring nations including Uganda and Tanzania.

In Kenya, the past ten years have seen the mushrooming of television production and concomitant airing of gospel messages. Most charismatic and evangelical churches have acquired their own studios, which are fully equipped to enable shooting and production of video messages. As Thode and Thode (1996) observe, desktop video production has become much less expensive, even in Third World countries, and this has enhanced video production, editing and special effects. It has become more efficient and effective for various churches to own their own media production studios than to hire outside workers. The youth in the churches are employed to do these jobs. In an endeavor to learn, some volunteer their services to the churches' media departments. To the leaders, this is global evangelism. It not only targets

a particular denomination or movement's faithful, but also those of different faiths, especially youth who identify with modernity.

DVDs, VCDs, and CDs, as well as videotapes and radio cassettes, are now available at affordable costs in the market. The most frequent customers for these products are young people. This is one area in which the gospel propagated by AIC has moved very rapidly. There are noted channels through which artists and gospel messages are sold. Artists from Tanzania have identified specific shops in Kenya that distribute their music. The same thing applies to Kenyan gospel artists. This has been realized through interviews held in different radio and television stations in which preachers and musicians reveal where their DVDs, CDs, and messages can be obtained. The exchange programs, where preachers in these churches are sent to preach in their sister churches, also provide opportune times for them to market their digital productions. They come with posters to advertize their media products in the churches where they are sent to preach. Youth seminars have also been useful places in which to market their talents. The videotapes, VCDs and DVDs are sold to the faithful at affordable prices of approximately US$1.50. Many radio stations have been established by individuals who have realized the potential of evangelization as a source of income, either through music or gospel messages, to meet the high demand from the various religious groups. They employ young people, and most of the programmers are from AICs. Two dominant examples in Western Kenya given during the field research were *Sauti ya Rehema (SaYaRe)*—the Swahili equivalent for "Voice of Hope"—and "*Mulembe* FM." The latter airs both secular and religious messages in local languages; *SaYaRe* broadcasts in Swahili and English languages—both of which are spoken in Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, and DRC. The station transmits some of its gospel messages to all these countries. The founder of this particular station, Reuben Kigame, is a gospel singer and gospel music producer.

The RGC, together with its counterparts, airs messages by satellite. They have so far been able to reach the whole of Southern and Eastern Africa. This has encouraged cooperation between the pastors and the youth of these churches. Once a year, a number of youth selected from the churches are sent on practical educational trips to South Africa and the DRC. This has also been an opportunity for leaders to get funding from more financially stable churches. They also establish business links and help the youth to learn about means of survival.

AICs can be termed training grounds because they encourage youth to participate in both preaching and in church counseling services. This prepares them for wider responsibilities. Some have, after a time of this informal training, founded their own churches, though this has received great criticism from the leaders of the mainstream churches. The search for status and the sweet taste of power and prestige, among other reasons, have resulted in breakaways and even completely new movements being formed by such informally trained youth. AIC leaders are identified by numerous lofty titles such as archbishop, bishop, high priest, prophet, his lordship, his highness, and the right reverend—among others. These leaders clearly play an important role in the life of the flock and earn both a livelihood and recognition from the roles they play. This has encouraged the formation of new AICs by the youth in search of status.

It is alleged that quite a number of the AICs are led by either informally trained or untrained pastors below the age of forty. This is in contrast to the mission-founded churches' leadership, most of whose leaders are elderly formally-trained clergy. Some leaders from mainstream churches referred me to 1 Timothy 3:5, thus; "If a man does not know how to rule his own house, how will he take care of the Church of God?" They said that most of the AICs are founded by younger people, who do not have enough experience in leadership. They gave Bible quotations to the effect that for youth to become leaders, they must first of all be tested, then help by serving as deacons (1 Timothy 3:10). Field data, however, indicated that training in the AICs can be acquired through church experience and not necessarily through theory-based formal education in Bible schools. The leaders of the AINC and ADC explained that their pastors are trained through the theological programs established by their own churches, in partnership with the Organization of African Instituted Churches (OAIC). ADC noted that they have sister churches in Uganda and Tanzania, to which they send some of the trainees on assignment. Their sister churches also send their trainees to Kenya. The headquarters of ADC are at Boyani in Western Kenya, and most of the sister churches in Uganda and Tanzania send their pastors on exchange to this site.

AICs have also established guidance and counseling departments to take care of the needs of youth. Most of these departments have trained youth pastors who understand the situations and problems of the youth in the church well. These pastors, as noted by RGC, are sent to

both national and international seminars to gain experience and share knowledge with other church leaders in their capacities as counselors. Mary Wamukoya is one such beneficiary, who says that the church sent her to South Africa in November 2008 for one month to learn from the youth of their "friend" church. This, to her, was meant to be an exchange program, where she learned about the activities of the youth in South Africa and in return shared her experiences of the youth groups in her church in Kenya.

Most of the mainstream churches have standardized forms of worship and message delivery that are "inflexible," and with which youth are not particularly comfortable. The AICs in Emuhaya have come in to fill this lacuna. Young people interviewed at RGC in Emuhaya division affirmed that AICs fulfill both their spiritual and psychological needs, because their approaches to evangelism are flexible and can be contextualized to fit their own life situations. To most youth therefore, AICs are helpful religions that adopt new ways and contents to contextualize their gospel. This is true also in other countries. Leadership of AINC observed that due to their holistic approach to life, their churches have been accepted without much problem in Tanzania and Uganda. However, at ADC we learned that their cultural approach to life issues—plus the fact that they advocate a renewal of African traditional culture—has been a challenge in other countries due to various cultural conflicts. They therefore have to modify their approach in order to match the cultural norms of the foreign nations.

The leadership of ADC and AINC argued that though they are concerned with the people's cultural and situational contexts, they cannot ignore the advent of modernity in issues like artistic representations. The use of church buildings as a tool of evangelism was shown by the number of churches that exist in the various denominations in the district. The churches claimed to be using buildings as a way of attracting youth to their services. The church buildings in the different regions where these churches are established therefore vary from the such traditional constructions as simple huts to rather complicated modern churches. The AINC, for instance, has an elaborate structure that can accommodate up to two thousand people at their headquarters in Jebrok in a Vihiga District, which borders Emuhaya. They get competition from ADC, however, who claim that big buildings may not mean expansive membership. The availability of simple buildings and pastors within people's reach is more important, to ADC.

They claim to have over 120 church buildings in Emuhaya District alone.

On the other hand, dress codes in these churches vary greatly from one denomination to the next. Most mainstream churches like the Roman Catholic Church, Anglican, and PAG in the district insist on conservative forms of dress, especially for women. Women must cover their heads and wear long, loosely fitting skirts and blouses, or dresses. Some of the AICs also insist on this style of dress, and moreover have uniforms to ensure that their members are visible and recognizable in public. This, they explained, has helped them identify themselves not only in Emuhaya, but also in other countries where they have branches. In other AICs, the youths' dress code is "modern." Many youth would choose some of the AICs that allow them to dress as they desire, rather than attending the mainstream churches that restrict and rebuke them for indecent dressing.

On the issue of cultural identity, RGC condemns traditional practices such as polygamy, death commemorations (*makumbusho*), wife inheritance, and traditional circumcision, among other indigenous practices. These have attracted youth who mostly identify with "modern" rather than indigenous practices, especially traditional circumcision. From another perspective, there are a few youth who have been brought up in indigenous families that uphold African culture. The diverse nature of AICs, with some supporting modern practices while condemning conventional practices and *vice versa*, gives the youth a variety of choices. Extreme but relevant examples are the ADC and the RGC, the former of which accommodates those who wish to practice African customs, which the latter opposes. The leadership of ADC did not, however, hesitate to point out that despite their ability to accommodate traditional practices, they sensitize their youth and other church members to practices that are harmful, such as wife inheritance and traditional circumcision, both of which encourage the spread of HIV. This is a form of advocacy done at the international level in various countries, in collaboration with the OIAC.

Networks Built by AICs

AICs have made efforts to create their own ecumenical networks. They are open to religious cooperation with other groups, though they maintain an African outlook wherever they find reception. While

examining how African new religious movements forge intrareligious networks, Adogame (2008: 313) observes that the significance of local and global networks among African churches in Africa and in Europe cannot be overemphasized. He explains the relevance of "home" (Africa) cooperation and "host" (European) networks, which has been of increasing importance to the African immigrants.

AICs in Africa have had a wide range of networks that have helped them overcome challenges to their operations. One example will suffice. In 1978, the Organization of African Instituted Churches (OAIC) was founded in Cairo and registered in Kenya as an international organization. The OAIC works through seven regions, with its headquarters in Nairobi. The regions are represented in the governing body, the general assembly. OAIC is an associate member of All African Conference of Churches (AACC) and is in working relationship with World Council of Churches (WCC). The programs of the body include distance theological education, participatory development, women's issues (among them HIV/AIDS), and research and communication services (Pobee 2002). This is done through what they call "building community support systems." Wambugu and Padwick (2006) observe that the OAIC enhances these activities by improving and facilitating intergroup networking, increasing the advocacy abilities of churches and leaders, and giving the latter professional skills where appropriate.

There is a wide acceptance of the activities initiated and streamlined by OAIC at the local church level. This was affirmed at AINC and ADC headquarters. The two churches are actively involved in HIV/AIDS awareness campaigns. For example, AINC has a mother's union in every branch that takes care of mothers and children living with HIV. This has ensured that the infected get medical attention from relevant hospitals. The leadership of AINC noted that there has been significant cooperation by mothers' union groups in the Kenya and Uganda churches, and this has enabled them exchange ideas about how best to prevent the spread of HIV. They also educate the youth in the church who are at risk of contracting HIV. They are able to achieve their objectives through the help of OAIC.

It is from such activities and from the networks discussed above that we may conclude that AICs are relevant to contemporary society and have to a great extent aided youth. Though this study does not provide a count of the youth who have benefited from AICs, the religious, economic, social and cultural indicators are enough reasons to draw this conclusion.

Challenges Faced by AICs

Nevertheless, the AICs in Emuhaya face a wide range of challenges in their efforts to involve youth in their activities, and also in their efforts to replicate these activities in their sister churches in other nations. From the sampled churches, we learned that the methods used by the different AICs to cater to young people's spiritual and material needs have always met with criticisms from the mainstream churches. The argument against them is that the AICs have made too many compromises at the expense of the Gospel of Christ. An example in point is the argument about decency. The youth dress codes condoned by some of the AICs are, to the mainstream churches, "worldly." The kind of music in some of the AICs is assumed to be "secular." These accusations are always a challenge to the leadership of the AICs.

Another challenge comes from leadership wrangles in AICs. I already noted that the AICs are avenues for the youth to learn about leadership in spiritual matters. Once they learn, they can start demanding leadership positions in the churches that match the "competence" they have acquired from their training. This results in squabbles and sometimes in church schisms. Leaders also suffer disagreements among themselves, and once this happens there can be a lot of confusion, especially for youth, who are eager to try out for leadership positions.

There is also competition among the sampled churches in their quest to win as many members as possible. This competition is manifested especially in numerous crusades and other spiritual meetings in the region. Maintaining order in these churches becomes a challenge because each is out to propagate its own "gospel" and to attract as many followers as possible, especially among the young. It is also a challenge for these Christian groups to come together to handle issues that affect the whole community, like underdevelopment and HIV. The challenges posed both to the churches and to the OIAC include financial limitations and a limited number of people willing to participate in such activities.

Field data indicate that some of these denominations and movements have convinced needy youth—often without warrant—that the churches can satisfy the youths' material needs; such promises are a way of attracting as many jobless and needy youth as possible. Once these promises are not met, churches start losing members. This taints the name of the church, and it becomes difficult for the church to gain back the trust of the community, especially the young. Such challenges, among others, characterize the services of AICs as they endeavor to

bring up responsible youth in the community. Despite such the challenges and periodic accusations of wrongdoing, their role in Kenyan society cannot be ignored.

Youth involvement in social, economic, and religious activities of AICs have great implications for the future of these religious groups. First, the fact that after gaining experience the youth can establish their own churches implies that Christian diversity is bound to persist in the district. There will likely be an assortment of denominations and movements in the district in the near future. Some even fear that the youth might use these opportunities as avenues of "liberty" to abuse the societal mores. This is because AICs present the youth with autonomy to exercise their talents, some of which may in the long run obstruct society's order. Some also fear that this autonomy might disrupt the family, as is already being seen in many African communities. AICs embolden the young to choose their own religious affiliations. This divides the family's religious unity, yet the African value of communalism remains pertinent to our communities.

From another perspective, it can be argued that the continued loss of members from the mainstream churches, in favor of the AICs, means that the mainstream churches may either become extinct, or may completely change their tactics and approaches to religious and community activities, so as to attract youth to their denominations. For now, the mainstream churches have already lost most of the youth to AICs. To avoid this in future, they may be forced to rework their traditional approaches to evangelism to appeal to youth.

Politically, some worry that these denominations/movements could be used by politicians to achieve political ambitions, especially in exchange for monetary gain. This is especially true because they are already centers for aiding young people economically. Some fear that they could be convinced to marshal the community masses for articulation of political interests. To some of our interviewees, this has already taken root in some parts of the country.

Conclusion

Many scholars have labeled the current Christian diversity in Africa as a "spiritual supermarket," where AICs are brought into the shelves while customers chose and pick at their own pleasure. Others have thought that the situation must be baffling and perplexing to youth

(Ndung'u 2002). In neither case has the positive side of these denominations been acknowledged. This chapter has identified the contributions of AICs to Emuhaya District youth. It has attempted to map out how these contributions have been produced here and in other countries where the three sampled AICs have been established. It concludes that the AICs have been useful religions for young people. AICs have helped these youth economically and have been "places to feel at home" for those youth who feel dissatisfied with the Christianity offered by the mainstream churches. Often those who feel rejected by the mainstream churches fit with ease in the AICs. These churches have been a haven for youth to explore their talents and, indeed, have become a source of livelihood to some. Youth have used these churches as bases of cooperation in both social and economic ventures with their counterparts in countries where similar denominations are established. To this end, AICs have crossed geographical boundaries.

This growth and transformation has had a negative impact on the mainstream churches, which are losing members to the AICs. For their sustained existence, mainstream missionary Christian churches in Africa will need to revisit their approaches to Christian doctrines and will need to embrace African culture as a way of contextualizing their gospel, just as the AICs. The AICs have, however, evolved in most African countries amidst challenges, and their persistence suggests that Christian diversity will remain a central part of many African societies. The fact that these religious groups can attract youth, as shown here, suggests that they will speak to the needs of different groups of people in Africa, both young and old.

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CHAPTER NINE

GOSPEL WITHOUT BORDERS: GENDER DYNAMICS OF TRANSNATIONAL RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS IN KENYA AND THE KENYAN DIASPORA

Damaris Seleina Parsitau and Philomena Njeri Mwaura

Voluntary migration of African people to Western countries especially to the United States and the United Kingdom has increased throughout the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, marking an unprecedented phase in African migration. Based on recent surveys, we may estimate the number of migrants to be about 150 million (see Howell and della Fuente 2008). The causes of migration are varied and complex, having social, economic and political dimensions. They include: political conflicts, human rights violations, poverty, lack of work incentives, population pressure, environmental degradation, and desires for personal improvement or reunion with families (Ter Haar 1998: 24, Kalu 2007: 65, Tettey 2007: 238). Migration and extensive movement of people across borders are also linked to complex social networks that have evolved along with globalization and transnationalism (Zeleza 2002). Transnational connections characterized by an increased flow of people, information, goods, and other resources across national boundaries is altering social contexts in ways that impact significantly on religious practices and the spread of religious ideas (Wuthnow and Offut 2002: 209).

The growing phenomenon of African churches in this new Diaspora has received massive scholar attention. Following Andrew Walls's insightful observations about the shift of global Christianity to the southern hemisphere (1998, 2002: 31–34, 47) and Philip Jenkins' seminal study on the same topic (2002), a large body of literature emerged about the level of religious vitality in the global South and what this shift implies for the churches in the global North. Olupona and Gemignani (2007) mapped out the religious dimensions of new immigrants in America, contributing to the understanding of the complex American religious landscape (Adogame 2008b). Adogame (2008c) and Terr Haar (1998) have contributed immensely to our understanding of African immigrant religions in Germany and the Netherlands.

Adogame, for example, points out (2008c: 306) the remarkable changes in the host countries that have been occasioned by religious diversity and pluralism. This is because wherever they go and settle African peoples are known to travel with their religions and cultures.

The complex dynamism of contemporary migration within and beyond Africa is partly reflected in its increasing feminization, which largely challenges traditionally perceived male-dominated migration patterns (Adogame 2008a; cf. Cross *et al.* 2006). Gender is a critical aspect of global migration and transnationalism, yet it was not until recently that scholars began to examine its dynamics. Gemignani (2007), Adogame (2008a), and Crumbley and Clyne-Smith (2008) have explored how gender is intricately woven into the entire migration process. They demonstrate how gender relations, roles and hierarchies differently shape the migratory behavior and experiences of women and men. Olupona and Gemignani (2007: 133) further argue that religious communities among migrants offer women opportunities to develop autonomy through their leadership experiences.

Despite receiving little scholarly attention, Kenyan religious movements have become transnational and feminized, just like others from Africa. This chapter examines some of these transnational religious movements in Kenya and the Kenyan Diaspora. It situates gender within the processes of globalization, migration, and transnationalism. Using three case studies, we demonstrate how women in Kenya and in other geo-cultural spaces are engendering and reshaping new religious movements. Exploring how women's new religious leadership and the emerging patterns of transnationalism intersect, influence and reshape one another, it concludes by arguing that religious networks provide African women with opportunities to exercise autonomy through religious leadership both locally and globally.

The selected churches are: Faith Evangelistic Ministries (FEM) and the Teresia Wairimu Evangelistic Ministries (TWEM) USA chapter; Jesus Is Alive Ministries (JIAM) and JIAM International; and Single Ladies Interdenominational Ministries (SLIM).[1] These three churches/ministries are based in Kenya but have transnational networks, missions, offices and media ministries abroad.

[1] This ministry was formerly known by the name, "Single Ladies Interdenominational Fellowship" (SLIF). According to Elizabeth Wahome, its founder, the name change was occasioned by the group's desire to engage in evangelism outside Kenya. The Kenyan government would allow it to do so only as a ministry, not as a fellowship. Elizabeth Wahome, "Interview" with Richard Kagoe on K24 Television, December 29, 2008.

The study draws on data from a variety of primary and secondary sources gathered in Kenya, the UK and the US from 2006–2008.[2] These data include interviews with Kenyans living in these countries, internet resources, correspondence such as letters and emails, newspaper reports and magazines, conference proceedings, research reports, and related literature. The chapter begins with a historical mapping of the Kenyan Diaspora, its churches and activities locally and abroad, and the transnational networks that have been established since the 1980s. It then explores the interaction of religion, gender, and transnationalism in Kenya and the Kenyan Diaspora.

Mapping the Kenyan Diaspora in Historical Perspective

Kenyans, like other Africans, have migrated in large numbers to western countries such as the US, the UK, Australia, Canada, the Scandinavian countries, India, and some African countries like Botswana, Lesotho, and South Africa. Kenneth Okoth (2003) observes that migration from Kenya has often been linked with the pursuit of higher education abroad. Throughout the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s, Kenyans were engaged in circular migration in search of education and advanced training, which was then later applied to nation-building through employment in Kenya.[3] The mid-1980s saw further migration trends resulting from the stagnation of the Kenyan economy occasioned by the collapse of key economic sectors like tourism and textile manufacturing due to corruption, tribalism, nepotism, and inefficient government policies. This led to massive unemployment, underemployment, low morale, and sheer frustration among the educated populace. The unsuccessful military coup against President Moi's autocratic regime and subsequent crushing of all dissent forced more Kenyans into exile.

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[2] Between 2006–2008, the authors both spent study and sabbatical leaves in the United Kingdom, at the universities of Edinburgh, Cambridge, and Birmingham, though at different times. While there, we visited several Kenyan Diaspora churches and Ministries. In 2008 Damaris Parsitau also had the opportunity to visit some Kenyan-led Diaspora churches in Boston (USA) and conduct interviews there.

[3] According to Okoth, beneficiaries of this first migratory trend included the first generation of Kenyan scholars and politicians—such figures as Prof. Wangari Maathai, the late Tom J. Mboya, Prime Minister Raila Odinga, and Barrack Obama, Sr., the father of the current US President.

The 1980s and 1990s witnessed a shift in the migratory pattern, with massive exodus to politically and economically stable foreign lands. Again, the economic hopelessness of the late 1980s and 1990s, coupled with the violent, politically motivated ethnic conflicts of the 1992 and 1997 general elections, catalyzed the massive departure of doctors, lawyers, university lecturers, nurses, and other skilled professionals to Western Europe and countries such as South Africa, Botswana, Lesotho, Australia, Canada, and the US.[4] The migrants also included political exiles, laborers, and students in search of better education.

Many Kenyans studying and working abroad sent remittances to their relatives back home, which supplemented dwindling incomes or supported new business initiatives. These remittances significantly boosted the shaky Kenyan economy throughout the 1990s, when most bilateral donors withheld aid to protest the slow pace of the Moi government's economic and political reforms.[5] Judging by the annual remittances from the Kenyan diaspora, the US, Canada and the UK are the most favored destinations with the highest concentration of Kenyans (Copeland-Carson 2007: 12; cf. *Daily Nation* 2009). Reliable data on the number of Kenyans living in diaspora are scanty. Local media reports have nevertheless highlighted the impact of the brain drain on the country. For example, in 2006, it was estimated that about two million Kenyans were living and working abroad. Of this figure, approximately 60,000 to 70,000 skilled Kenyan professionals are in the US alone. Reports further indicate that only about 10,000 of the 30,000 Kenyans who seek further studies abroad return home after their studies (*The Standard* 2006).[6]

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[4] According to the National Nurses Association of Kenya, more than 500 nurses leave the country yearly (*The Standard* 2008).

[5] Remittances by the Kenyan diaspora have been a major source of Kenya's foreign exchange. According to Copeland-Carson (2007: 12), World Bank figures for 2005 indicate that migrants remit $494.3 million annually. The Central Bank of Kenya also confirms that in 2008 Kenyans sent home $611 million—an increase of over $35 million from 2007.

[6] The most prominent of these migrants in the US have formed collaborative networks, which include; The Kenya Community Abroad (KCA), the Kenya Development Network Consortium (KDNC), and the Kenya Professional Association (KPA). There are also a variety of university-based student associations and religious organizations. The KCA is an international association with local chapters in ten US cities as well as five other countries. Each US region with a sizeable Kenyan population also has a number of regional, ethnic or religious-based organizations that provide support and connections to Kenyans abroad.

Kenyans favor the US partly due to the US Diversity Visa Program (Green Card), which was introduced as part of the 1990 Immigration Act. The common perception that one can work and study in the US has led to thousands of Kenyans migrating there. Kalu (2007: 65) points out that "this desire to migrate to the US is a syndrome largely determined by generations of ideological and contextual shifts." The United Kingdom has a high concentration of Kenyans and is also a major source of remittances (Copeland-Carson 2007: 12). While many emigrant Kenyans are students or professionals such as nurses, doctors, and university lecturers, even semi-skilled workers have found greener pastures in these countries and in the Middle East. Many Kenyans now work in such low-skilled positions as bus drivers, domestic servants, cruise ship attendants, and security guards in Gulf countries like Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and Bahrain.

Kenyan Churches in Diaspora

Africans who migrate to the western world often travel with their religion in a manner that reinforces their identity. The increasing emigration of Africans in the 1980s and 1990s has occasioned a concomitant proliferation of new religious communities in diaspora. Reverse missions have also developed, through which African mother churches pursue conscious strategies for missionary expansion to the global North and elsewhere. Scholars of African Christianity observe that the Pentecostal and charismatic churches have diversified widely, both geographically and in variety and type (Adogame 2005: 502). This is true of Kenyan charismatic Christianity, whose influence, as we shall see, has spread to other African countries and even to the global North. Although this chapter focuses on three women-led charismatic churches/ministries, we shall nevertheless provide a general overview of some Kenyan Diaspora churches in order to map the terrain in which the three case studies are situated.

Following Adogame's typology of African Christian groups in Europe (2000, cf. Tettey 2007), we identify three broad categories of the Kenyan diaspora churches, namely: those that are formed in the diaspora and may or may not have branches in Kenya; those that are branches of or are affiliated to existing churches in Kenya and operate under the authority of the mother church; and lastly, para-church organizations—*i.e.*, informal groups of individuals who come together

for prayer meetings and fellowship. The subject of this chapter constitutes an additional category—one that cuts across the aforementioned types: churches and ministries that were founded and led by women, both in Kenya and abroad (Adogame 2008a).

In the first category, Kenyan neo-Pentecostal and charismatic churches have been established among Kenyan communities in the US, the UK, Botswana, and South Africa. These groups maintain ties with local Kenyan churches, and representatives return to Kenya occasionally to preach or support development initiatives. The website *ministerseed.com* lists some twenty Kenyan churches and religious organizations scattered in major cities across the US.[7] In Atlanta, for example, Kenyans have established Christ Harvesters International Ministry under the leadership of Pastor David Karanja. This church, started in 2004 by just seven people, has grown to a membership of over six hundred and has become a place where Kenyans feel at home and create identity in a strange land. The Gikuyu language (often translated into English) is the medium of worship.[8] Other churches include: the Kenya Christian Fellowship in America (KCFA) based in Alabama and led by Pastor Evan Maingi, and All Nations Gospel Outreach in Baltimore led by the Rev. Patrick Kibui, which claims to be the fastest growing church of Kenyan origin on the East Coast.[9]

The same phenomenon is observed in UK cities such as London, Birmingham, Luton, Coventry, Oxford, Manchester, Edinburgh and Glasgow. We shall give just two examples. The controversial Archbishop Gilbert Deya and his son Amos Deya have established Gilbert Deya Ministries—a charismatic church—in London and in Perry Barr, Birmingham. It attracts Kenyans, other Africans and Afro-Caribbeans. The World Conquerors Christian Centre, headquartered in Edinburgh, was founded by Bishop Climate Irungu and his wife, Pastor Dr. Jennifer Irungu, in 2000 (Adogame 2008a: 135).

The second category includes a church like Maximum Miracles Centre, founded by Bishop Pius Muiru in Nairobi, which has established branches in Nottingham in the UK. Similarly, Deliverance Church, one of the largest Pentecostal churches in Kenya, has branch

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[7] "Kenyans Churches and Ministries in USA." *http://www.misterseed.com/link%20pages/usachurches.htm*. Accessed October 13, 2008.

[8] As reported by Alex Chamwanda, Kenya Television Network (KTN), September 24, 2006, 1 p.m. News.

[9] According to its website *(http://www.ango.us)*.

churches in the US, the UK, South Africa, Botswana, and Mozambique. As we shall see later, The Jesus Is Alive Ministries International, Faith Evangelistic Ministries, and Single Ladies Interdenominational Fellowship have branches in the US, UK, Canada, Europe, and other parts of Africa. Evangelist Mama Mwai of Charismatic Ministries has networks in South Africa and the US, while Rev Judith Mbugua of Ladies Homecare Fellowship has branches in Zimbabwe and is the continental director of Pan African Christian Women Alliance (PACWA), which draws membership from 30 countries including the US (with headquarters in Colorado Springs) and the Netherlands. The phenomenon of African churches, both mainline and neo-Pentecostal, engaging in mission endeavors to the global North has been increasing in the last twenty years (Hanciles 2002; Adogame 2005; Kalu 2008).[10]

The third category is represented by groups that do not have links to Kenyan groups, yet provide pastoral care to the migrants. They include interdenominational prayer/fellowship groups and other para-church organizations. One of the most notable groups is the Kenya Nurses Fellowship, which was started by Kenyan nurses in the UK around 2000, to promote mutual aid among immigrant Christians. They organize visits to their sick members in hospitals, mourn the departed among them, and collect contributions for such things as the repatriation of the dead to their homes and members' weddings. The fellowship meets every month, rotating between the UK cities where Kenyans reside. It has grown to include migrants from Uganda and Tanzania.[11]

Individual initiatives and those of small groups like these have resulted in the founding of African churches. The churches in Kenya and the diaspora label themselves international or global, which expresses their desire to transcend their local boundaries. At the podiums of some of these churches—Deliverance Church and JIAM are two—hang flags of the various nations where the churches expect to go as missionaries, establish branches, or find collaborative affiliates. Conversely, some of the neo-Pentecostal and charismatic churches that

[10] It has been argued that African efforts at re-evangelising the North is an indication of a "reverse flow" in mission. However, those engaged in this endeavor, such as Lukas Njenga, are aware of the challenges that stem from the secularized worldview that prevails there. Njenga believes that African evangelists must understand contemporary Western culture, if they are to avoid the pitfalls that bedevilled the Western missionary enterprise in Africa, based on its erroneous assumptions about Africa, its people and their cultures (Oral interview [Mwaura], Glasgow, July 2007).

[11] Mwaura participated in some of these fellowships between May and July 2007.

were founded in the Kenyan Diaspora, especially in Europe and the US, have found their way back to Kenya. Ladies on Fire for Jesus International based in Scotland and Amazing Grace Ministries, based in the state of Virginia, are of this type.

Local and Global Networks in Kenya and the Kenyan Diaspora

Transnational flows and linkages between local churches and churches abroad are increasingly growing, though the natures of the linkages and networks vary considerably. Adogame and Wilkinson enumerate these networks as being manifested in the form of intrareligious networks, pastoral exchanges, special events and conferences, prayer networks, internet sites, international ministries, publications, video, televangelism, global pastoral searches, and theological trainings on the internet (Wilkinson 2000: 222; Adogame 2005). Transnational links between neo-Pentecostals congregations and ministries take place in a variety of ways.

First, there are global events and conferences that pastors from all over the world attend. For example, the Pentecostal World Conference that took place in Korea in 1998 was attended by Pentecostals from around the world, including Africa. These events are increasingly significant.

Second, prominent Pentecostal and charismatic televangelists from other parts of the world—but especially North America and Europe—frequently visit Kenya to hold crusades and revival gatherings. In 2006, Bishop T.D. Jakes for example drew nearly one million people to a crusade at Uhuru Park in Nairobi (*The Standard* 2007; Pew Forum n.d.). Similarly, Juanita Bynum, an African-American televangelist and prophetess, is also a frequent visitor to Kenyan Pentecostal and charismatic churches. Other prominent televangelists include Reinhardt Bonkke Morris Cerullo, Loren Davis, Cecil Stewart Obe, and Pastor Peter Youngren. This pulpit sharing not only strengthens evangelistic networks but also gives Kenyan churches an international outlook. Kenyan churches, and especially JIAM and FEM, are equally involved in intra-networks and organize conferences, symposia and even international crusades that draw worldwide participants.[12]

[12] Margaret Wanjiru of JIAM holds an international conference every August in which international evangelists share pulpits with her. Notable among these has been Joyce Meyer of the US and others from South Africa.

Third, in addition to these international preachers, there are Christian motivational speakers who conduct pastoral, Chief Executive Officer (CEO), and leadership training workshops. These have included workshops run by such famous figures Dean Radtke of Living Faith International and Rick Warren of Saddleback Church, whose "Purpose-Driven Church" conferences are very popular. The magazine *Revival Springs* (2005) estimated that 3,000 pastors attended a conference that Warren held on November 8–11, 2005, at the Nairobi Pentecostal Church, Valley Road. Such conferences and workshops are important, for they link the local Kenyan churches with other churches globally.

Fourth, there are denominational affiliations both formal and informal: "… [T]hese new global Pentecostal networks have organizational implications for Pentecostalism as new affiliations challenge old paradigms of doing Pentecostalism." Pentecostal churches have, "therefore developed connection with international Pentecostal circles through modern means of transport and communication and are creating an extensive exchange of people and material both to and from" (Wilkinson 2000: 223).

Fifth, an emergent but significant feature within Kenyan churches locally and in the diaspora is the proliferation of parachurch, supportive, or interdenominational ministries. Free-lance evangelists and short-term missionaries from Africa embark on frequent visits to a network of churches overseas (Adogame 2008c: 312–313). A classic example is that of Pastor Samuel Kimotho of New Beginnings Centre, a small virtually unknown ministry in the outskirts of Nakuru Town. He travels to the US three times a year, where he preaches in several churches.[13] In return, he invites short-term visitors from America to preach in his church; some of them hold free medical camps, which attract media attention. As Adogame (2005: 512) has argued, such freelancing is carried out within and between African and other Pentecostal/charismatic church circles under the rubric of evangelism and intrareligious networks.

Sixth, there are also linkages and networks in the area of gospel music. Contemporary gospel artists from Kenya frequently visit countries such as the US, the UK, Canada, Australia and South Africa to promote their music. Sometimes they are invited by Kenyan churches

[13] Informal interview (Parsitau) with Pastor Samuel Kimotho, Nairobi, October 20, 2008. (cf. Paul 2007, for more information on the nature and effects of these transnational missionary linkages.)

in the diaspora, or they chart their own networks and travel abroad. Similarly, gospel artistes from other parts of the globe, but especially America, visit Kenya to sing and perform at the invitation of local gospel artists or local Pentecostal or other mainline churches.

Kenyan neo-Pentecostal/charismatic televangelists bring back gospel music tapes from their many international travels, stocking them in their bookstores together with other religious literature. Their church choirs are therefore constantly familiar with new trends in gospel music from the rest of the world. Gospel music from internationally renowned artists such as Ron Kenoly, Alvin Slaughter, Don Moen, Lenny Leblanc, Kirk Franklin, Cece Winans, and many others are sung by Pentecostal/charismatic church choirs (Parsitau 2006, 2008). Religious music tapes, CDs, as well as tape-recorded sermons from Kenya and the diaspora, provide a transnational link at the level of popular culture. As Tettey notes of the Ghanaian diaspora, these media technologies are a "means for the Diaspora to influence the home communities through the homeward flow of information, thereby creating mediascapes that are circulatory and not unidirectional" (2007: 250).

The transnationalization of churches and the "diasporization" of their membership provide a means for diaspora churches to participate in and influence the mother church—themselves in turn being influenced by her (Tettey 2007: 248). Reciprocal relationships between the migrant and mother churches and ministries through sharing in each others' events, posting of pastors to various mission posts in the diaspora, both within and outside Africa, enhances sociocultural changes in the "home" churches. Euro-American cultural influences are evident in the theology, liturgy, and approaches to preaching, practices, and performance acts of the home churches. Through these linkages, Kenyans in the diaspora are also able to feel part of the home community and thereby bridge the dissonance created by living in between two worlds. What roles do Kenyan churches in the diaspora play in the lives of their members? It is to this that we shall now turn.

Kenyan churches in diaspora, both those led by men and by women, play critical roles in the lives of immigrants. In many cities in the US, but also in Europe, Australia, and Asia, these new churches have been established to cater for the spiritual and pastoral needs of Kenyan migrants. They are often the first links as newcomers adapt into a foreign culture and therefore provide immigrants with "a place to feel at home."

The churches also feature prominently as philanthropic institutions. They not only give migrants skills and provide needed pastoral care,

but they also facilitate their adaptation to a strange and sometimes hostile environment. The women-led churches and ministries provide a space for addressing family issues and other matters that are distressing to immigrants. The African migrants strive to redefine themselves, to create distinct identities, to maintain contacts with their kin in Africa, and to perpetuate their cultural values.

For example, Lukas Njenga of Glasgow International Church reports that some of his church's pastoral care and social support to migrants involves providing legal support in asylum-seeking cases, providing leadership and entrepreneur development training, as well as help with housing, formal education, and employment. It also involves creating public awareness about human trafficking, of which many Kenyans have become victims. A great challenge he encounters is instilling hope and confidence in people who are traumatized by various experiences. One initiative is the "Heart for the City," a project that was established to create economic empowerment opportunities for the urban poor. This initiative has also been established in other countries such as India, the US, Kenya, and Egypt. This North-South and South-South Christian collaboration is essential to addressing migrant issues at a broader level, not just within the host countries. According to Njenga, there is an increasing awareness among African church leaders in the diaspora that Africa needs to be economically developed to stem the tide of migration. Those in the diaspora therefore feel that they have a responsibility to plow back the resources they have accumulated to uplift their home countries. The idea is also to help assuage conditions that create the necessity for migration.[14]

An interesting phenomenon in the South-South collaboration is the substantial presence of Korean, Nigerian, and Ghanaian churches in Kenyan religious partnerships.[15] These groups collaborate with neo-Pentecostal Kenyan churches through affiliations, sharing pulpits, and providing financial support and theological education in their bible

[14] Oral interview (Parsitau), Glasgow, July 7, 2007.

[15] There are several Korean Pentecostal missionaries in Kenya, the most prominent being David Yongi Cho's Yoidoo Mission, with about 10 missionaries; Jaerpcl Lee's Manmin Church, with about 11 missionaries (in Nairobi alone); and Ock Soo Park's Good News Mission, with 15 churches. The Nigerian and Ghanaian presence in Kenya is also inescapable. The churches represented here include Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG) with about 29 branches and about 3000 members; Winner's Chapel International, with over 25,000 members; Deeper Life Church, Christ Embassy, and Victorious Faith Assembly. The prominent Ghanaian churches are Church of Pentecost, Lighthouse Church International, and International Central Gospel Church. See Gifford (2007: 18).

schools (Gifford 2007: 17–18). The South-South religious transactions within Africa have far-reaching theological, social and economic implications. Sub-Saharan Africa shares a common enchanted worldview, alongside the contextual realities of poverty, debilitating disease, poor governance and ethnic strife. The forged inter-religious networks provide space for reflecting on these social, economic, religious, political and cultural experiences from a common perspective that affirms Africa's dignity.[16]

Women, Religion, and Transnationalism

The migration of women has become a key component of global migration. Scholars observe that the traditional pattern of migration in Sub-Saharan Africa, which was male-dominated and in which women were involved solely as dependents, is fast changing (Cross *et al*. 2006: 262). We are now witnessing a feminization of migration, where women are involved in international labor migration and flows, a process that is challenging and altering gender roles and relations both positively and negatively. Women's autonomy and self-determination is being enhanced, their status elevated and their role in decision making in the family strengthened at home or in the migrant community (Olupona and Gemignani 2007: 12). Besides economic factors, women are involved in global migration and transnational networks as church founders, leaders and functionaries in the diaspora. We have already identified categories of churches and ministries at home and in the diaspora, noting that some of them are women's initiatives. The question arises, what are the dynamics of women and religion within the context of migration? We shall discuss the three case studies alluded to earlier in this chapter, before we address this question.

Faith Evangelistic Ministries

Evangelist Teresia Wairimu is the charismatic founder and head of Faith Evangelistic Ministries (FEM) and Teresia Wairimu Evangelistic

[16] Church leaders like Enoch Adeboye of RCCG, David Oyedepo of Winner's Chapel and Mensah Otabil of ICGC have become role models and opinion shapers on a variety of issues, spiritual, social and economic. Otabil is especially renowned for his motivational sermons, which counteract Afro-pessimism. Their messages are accessible through the media and pastoral exchange visits.

Ministries (TWEM) International. She also heads the Four Square Gospel Church, a thriving Pentecostal congregation in Nairobi with more than 250,000 attendees (Manana 2000). Born in 1956, Wairimu married Nielsen, a Swedish national and relocated to Sweden in the 1970s. Her marriage ended in divorce, however, and to date she is a single mother of two and a grandmother of one. Wairimu claimed to have converted to Christianity while in Sweden in 1977 after the renowned German Evangelist Reinhard Bonnke prayed for her.[17] She was filled with the Holy Spirit and received God's anointing. This experience transformed her life totally, and around 1980 she began preaching. God apparently called her to evangelism in 1985. Bonnke ordained her in 1986.

FEM, which is one of Nairobi's best-known Christian Ministries, was founded by Wairimu and a group of 16 mostly single women. Initially, FEM began as a prayer group, meeting in Nairobi's Huruma Estate between 1978 and 1985. Soon the house became too small, and it became clear to Wairimu in 1989 that she needed to reorganize her ministry. She thus founded FEM, and since then, the ministry has grown so fast that there has been a constant search for adequate facilities.

In the 1990s, Wairimu became the first woman preacher to hold monthly revival crusades consistently at Uhuru National Park grounds in Nairobi—crusades that today attract over 300,000 people. She claims that God revealed to her in a vision that her ministry would experience greater growth and blessings in the future (Manana 2000). This vision was to transform her Christian life tremendously. She acquired spiritual gifts and began to perform miracles, such as healing the sick.

FEM has become a household name in Kenya, particularly because of its monthly crusades at Uhuru Park and because of Wairimu's ministry to single ladies. Every month, this ministry holds open-air crusades and preaching in schools and colleges. There are also monthly ladies' seminars and conferences in major towns such as Nairobi, Nakuru, Mombassa, and Eldoret. These meetings focus on concerns that affect women such as economic, social, legal and spiritual empowerment. She owns *Ebenezer Magazine*, an annual production that highlights the activities of her ministry. She also has a ministry to youth and a

[17] Reinhard Bonnke is a Pentecostal preacher who was born in Konisgberg, Germany, April 19, 1940. He is the founder of Christ for All Nations Ministries, which has organized evangelism crusades all over Africa including Kenya, Nigeria and Zimbabwe (cf. Kurschner-Pelkmann 2004, and the following chapter in this volume).

"Mercy" ministry to those living in slums, like Nairobi's Korogocho area. The ministry has social welfare projects such as prison outreach and also runs a children's home in Eastlands.

Wairimu is a role model to many single women and to other female preachers. She has equally empowered and trained a significant number of women for ministry. Female leaders such as Cathy Kiuna of Jubilee Christian Centre, Elizabeth Wahome (SLIM), Nancy Gitau of Deborah Arise Africa, and Alice Mugure of Zion Prayer Mountain have all been mentored by her. Most of them served as ushers and organizers in her ministry before founding their own churches or ministries. Because of her integrity and her political prophecies, she is considered and respected as a prophet to the nation in Pentecostal church circles. Wairimu is a dignified woman who shuns controversy and avoids the public limelight—a trait that elicits respect. She is regarded as credible and—unlike Margaret Wanjiru who is "loved and equally loathed"—her ministry is perceived to be gender inclusive.[18] She seems to have attained the status of a "ritual male," for her gender is not regarded as significant in her charismatic functions.[19] She is an active and founding member of the Africa House of Prayer and the Kenya House of Prayer, both interdenominational groups whose sole purpose is to pray for the nations of the world.

Together with her mentor, Evangelist Reinhard Bonnke, Wairimu has undertaken a mission to evangelize Africa, from Cape Town to Cairo and to the rest of the world. Under the banner of Bonnke's mission, "Africa shall be saved," the two have evangelized many parts of Africa, including Ethiopia, Uganda, Nigeria, and South Africa. This dual partnership provides an international platform for Wairimu and legitimizes her ministry, as Bonnke is highly respected in Pentecostal circles in Kenya. She has also preached in India, Austria, Canada, Jamaica, Denmark, Norway, Germany, Poland, and Portugal. They have held conferences together—for example, the Euro-Fire Conference in Birmingham and in Germany at the dawn of the new millennium. Her European Ministry office is based in London, and she also

[18] Oral Interview, Eileen Njeri Mathia by Mwaura, Nairobi, March 2009.

[19] Benneta Jules-Rosette (1985: 93) describes the status of female leadership in AICS in Zimbabwe as "ritual malehood" for they seem to possess only charismatic power, not administrative authority, which is usually in the hands of men. Wairimu does have both charismatic power and administrative authority but also seems to maintain her femininity. This may explain the respect she commands from both men and women.

has a US-FEM chapter called Teresia Wairimu Evangelistic Ministry (TWEM), based in Dallas. TWEM was founded in 1998 and coordinates her transnational networks in Europe, the US and other locations. The objective of the ministry, according to her website, is to reach out to people in the United States "by facilitating conferences in various cities throughout the USA [and to] provide outreach to our partners throughout the United States through our office in Dallas, Texas."[20]

Jesus Is Alive Ministries (JIAM) Kenya and JIAM International

Jesus Is Alive Ministries (*JIAM*) was founded in September 1993 by the Hon. Dr. Bishop Margaret Wanjiru. This single mother of three, who is one of the first women to be ordained a Pentecostal Bishop in Kenya, was born in 1961 in Central Kenya. She claims to have been "saved" at an international crusade in Nairobi in 1990, and thereafter started her ministry as a street preacher in Nairobi's Central Business District (Mwaura 2002; *Daily Nation* 2007, 2008). From her humble beginnings at the Aga Khan Walk in Nairobi, she moved to her current, strategically located premises on Haile Selasie Avenue, whence she began her Christian televised program "The Glory is Here" in 1998. Today, her ministry boasts of more than 20,000 members locally and internationally, with branches in Uganda, London, Massachusetts, and Johannesburg.

Bishop Arthur Kitonga of the Redeemed Gospel Church ordained Wanjiru as Pastor in June 1997 and as Bishop in October 2002. Her church, which can seat three thousand people, conducts at least three services on Sundays and a host of others during the week. This woman leader combines various roles: preacher, televangelist, single mother, entrepreneur, and now a legislator, having been elected a Member of Parliament for Starehe Constituency, Nairobi in December 2007.[21] Bishop Wanjiru is a public figure who has contributed immensely to issues of public life and who has empowered thousands of women spiritually and economically. Wanjiru's ministry is multifaceted, as it encompasses ministries for spiritual deliverance, for evangelism, for

[20] Faith Evangelistic Ministry website: *www.evangelistwairimu.org*. Accessed April 8, 2008; cf. Teresia Wairimu Evangelistic Ministry (USA) website: *http://www.twem-usa.org*. Accessed April 8, 2008.

[21] She was also appointed an Assistant Minister for Housing and Shelter.

social welfare and outreach to prisoners, ministries and fellowship for children, youth, men, and women. Her organization also provides business, leadership, and self-affirmation training.

Her preoccupation with healing and deliverance may be attributed to her personal encounter with and experience of witchcraft practices before her conversion. She claims that she used witchcraft to prosper in her business ventures and to frustrate the efforts of her business rivals (Mwaura 2008: 286).[22] Every year in August, she holds deliverance conferences at the church—Nairobi Miracle Centre. Many of her sermons address this theme. This is one of the factors that contribute to her church's appeal, since many of her adherents similarly see witchcraft as a cause of illness, suffering and misfortune. This belief is common within the African worldview.

Following a 2006 prophecy by visiting US preacher and prophetess Brenda Todd, Wanjiru announced her decision to plunge into the political arena to thousands of church members who thronged the church auditorium. The announcement was met with loud applause from the congregation. Prophetess Todd appealed to the Bible to legitimize her claim about Wanjiru's career in politics. She compared Wanjiru to Esther who was used by God to redeem her nation from the wickedness and malice of Haman. Since her election to Parliament, her vision for her Starehe Constituency is to promote development and empowerment. She plans to bring prosperity to her constituents by reaching out to them economically, socially and spiritually. Wanjiru believes that for women to contribute to their own development and that of their communities they need to be empowered holistically. She hopes to harness women's strength through supporting local groups and through networking—tapping women's collective energy to improve everyone's lives. She plans to engage international organizations that will share in her vision for Starehe women, helping her form a consortium to support economic development.[23]

Wanjiru arduously prepares her sermons and is an eloquent speaker and a good communicator. Her charismatic personality and courage even in the face of adversity and controversy endears her to many.

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[22] See also *Miracle Magazine*, December 2002, p. 18. In this magazine, Wanjiru reflects on her past involvement in witchcraft in a sermon entitled, "Three Levels of Witchcraft."

[23] This is Wanjiru's strategic plan for her Starehe Constituency as their Member of Parliament. It is yet to be fully realized. However, she is still spearheading development activities like sanitation, small-scale businesses and advocacy for the human rights of her constituents.

JIAM International is a branch of JIAM Kenya, meant to bring all international locations together under the vision of "Africa Shall Be Saved."[24] Wanjiru's concern for cross-border evangelization can be traced to her inaugural vision in the mid-1990s, when God revealed to her His plan for the salvation of Africa and the world, and her role in that work (Mwaura 2008: 209). Her vision for global evangelism is based on Matthew 24:14, "All the gospel shall be preached in the entire world for a witness unto the nations and then shall come the end." During the celebrations of JIAM's tenth anniversary in 2003, Wanjiru rolled out a plan for the evangelization of Africa and the world, and even launched special buses for this endeavor.

Just like many other neo-Pentecostal and charismatic leaders, Wanjiru is aware of the importance of media communication technologies. Indeed, she is one of the first Kenyan evangelists to take full advantage of the media as an evangelistic tool.[25] Her weekly religious program "The Glory is Here" is broadcast on radio and TV locally five times a week both in English and Swahili on Kenya Broadcasting Corporation (KBC) and on Family TV and Radio 316.[26] She is also currently on Kenya Television Network (KTN) where her 30-minute program is aired every Sunday at 9.45 PM.

According to Mwaura (2002), Wanjiru claims that the impact of the television broadcast—with its different message on various themes such as deliverance, success, healing, spirituality, prayer, and bible study—was so great that she had to increase the number of programs due to public demand. JIAM now owns a studio that records and edits her messages, whether they are sermons, talk shows, or Bible study specially prepared for broadcasting. The same edited messages can be purchased from her tape booths or from the church bookshop. JIAM also spreads its message through audio- and videocassettes that are sold, distributed, or loaned from the church library. It is, however, her various media ministries that have made an impact internationally. "The Glory is Here" is televised in Uganda on Lighthouse Television, in Europe on Inspirational Channel, and in the US on Christian Television

[24] Jesus is Alive Ministries (JIAM) website: *http://www.jiam.org/internationa/lindex.htm* (accessed April 8, 2009).

[25] Prior to Wanjiru's televised program, "The Glory is Here," there were religious broadcasts by evangelists such as Apostle Harry Das of Chrisco Fellowship International (on KBC), but none held as much appeal as Wanjiru. It can be said that she changed the prevailing perception about media religion.

[26] Family TV is a religious broadcasting service, sourced from Trinity Broadcasting Network (TBN) and Christian Broadcasting Network (CBN), both from the US.

Network (CTN) every Monday to Friday. She is also on YouTube.[27] Besides television, Wanjiru equally appropriates other mass media communications such as books, tracts, magazines, fax messages, short text messages, websites, posters, direct mail, electronic mails, video, CDs, DVDs, and audio tapes. She has authored several books and oversees JIAM's quarterly magazine, *Faith Digest*.

Single Ladies Interdenominational Ministry (SLIM)

Single Ladies Interdenominational Ministry (*SLIM*) is an interdenominational Charismatic ministry committed to the empowerment of single women in Kenya and beyond. It was jointly founded in 2004 by the Rev. Dr. Elizabeth Muthoni Wahome and seventeen single women, who usually met for prayer, fellowship and mutual support. The organization has grown to become a large transnational Christian organization with branches in Uganda, Tanzania, Congo DRC, Ethiopia, Seychelles, and the US. Wahome claims that she got the vision from God to start SLIM (initially Single Ladies Interdenominational Fellowship – SLIF) to give lonely single women a space for fellowship, after realizing that most Christian churches do not cater for the needs of this growing cadre of women (Single Ladies Conference 2005). After holding weekly fellowship meetings and listening to the needs of these women, and consulting her husband and friends about her vision, she raised enough money to help these women establish small businesses to earn a livelihood. The prayer group soon grew into a large organization with a membership of over a thousand single women.

Through a college she founded in Zimmerman Estate, Nairobi, she provides economic, spiritual and social empowerment to single women. They receive training in HIV/AIDS management, business, counseling and legal services, reconciliation of broken families, marriage guidance, reproductive health services, and campaigns against female genital mutilation and early marriages (Kwayera 2008). The ministry attracts various categories of single women: spinsters, women who are separated or divorced, widows, and single mothers. The women are categorized and given roles according to the nature of their singleness, using biblical female heroines.

According to Wahome, the first category—Separated and Divorced women—are represented by Hagar, the maid of Sarah (whom Sarah

[27] For details, see JIAM's website, *www.jiam.org*. Accessed April 9, 2009.

had given to her husband, Abraham, for the conception of an heir, as Sarah herself had failed to conceive) in Genesis 21: 13–14. In this story, Abraham sent away Hagar and her son Ishmael, at Sarah's behest, after Sarah ultimately did conceive. They wandered in the wilderness and suffered hunger and thirst. Hagar endured the pain of seeing her son faced with imminent death. In her pain and despair, she cried to God who heard her cry and responded. Wahome draws parallels between Hagar's plight and that of many separated and divorced women, who are left with the responsibility for rearing their children single-handedly.

The second category is that of Single Mothers—women who have never been married but have children. This category of women is often despised, stigmatized, and accused of wrecking "stable families" by luring husbands away with their loose morals. Wahome argues that most single mothers are shunned even in churches. She knows the pain of rejection, for her church shunned her after she got pregnant out of wedlock, despite being a committed member (Kwayera 2008). Women in this category are consoled by being assured that their status has been transformed, for they are living in the newness of Christ, according to 2 Corinthians 2: 1.

The third category is that of Spinsters. The story of Mary the mother of Jesus in Matthew 1: 21–23 is used as model. Just like Mary, these women have been patiently and hopefully waiting for husbands to marry them. Mary is depicted in the Bible as faithful and subject to God's will. This category is encouraged to live holy lives. Wahome exhorts them "to occupy till he comes"—in other words, to get busy serving God until a husband shows up.

The last category is that of Widows, who are represented by prophetess Hannah, a widow in Luke 2: 36–38. According to Wahome, widows have a special place in God's heart. In Psalms 68:5, God is depicted as a "husband" to the widows and a "father" to their children. All five categories of single women are encouraged to rise above victimhood and value themselves as God's children. They are often exhorted that they are not alone, because Jesus is their husband, provider, counselor, friend and helper. Women of valor, courage and great piety in the Bible such as Hagar, Deborah, Ruth, Mary, Elizabeth and Mary Magdalene are declared as women of excellence and models to be emulated. They are metaphors of inspiration to women facing difficult situations. The ministry has invented powerful metaphors for survival, with a central theme of personal and social rebirth. In other words, the

use of the language of transformation becomes the first tool for perceiving the hopeless situation differently.

To sensitize people about SLIM, Wahome uses luncheons, video shows, posters, photos, brochures, Single Ladies Conferences, and *Single Ladies Moments Magazine*. Professional forums, monthly plenary sessions, exchange programmers, and SLIM exhibitions are other ways used to disseminate information about the organization. SLIM literature emphasizes the mission of the ministry, which is seen as bringing women hope, healing, and reconciliation. Annual conferences are specifically organized and tailored to meet the needs of single women. During the launch, in January 2005, of a SLIM documentary entitled *Raising the Princess out of the Dunghill*, Wahome challenged single ladies to arise from living the downtrodden life, which is given to them by what she called a "cultural mind frame"—that single ladies are incomplete without husbands. In the documentary, the director of Ladies Homecare Fellowship, Rev. Judith Mbugua (who is also SLIM's mentor), encouraged single women to rise above cultural inhibitions and gender-based discrimination.

Whether gathered for their annual conferences, or joined in "sister keeper fellowships," cell group meetings, or Bible study groups, these women share their stories of suffering and restoration through confessional testimonies. The meetings allow them to disclose their inner life among generally supportive women. They learn to speak and build confidence and self-esteem. These meetings can be powerfully therapeutic, as women narrate their sufferings and pain at the hands of abusive spouses, or the loneliness they felt when deserted by a spouse, or just their struggles and pain as they fend for their children. The issues that bind them in these fellowships are sadness, loneliness, sorrow, pain, neglect, despair, poverty, domestic violence, sin, sufferings and diseases.

As a crusader for vulnerable women, Wahome has been recognized and honored for selfless service to scores of women from broken homes or marriages. In December 2008, the Latin University of Theology in the US conferred on her an honorary degree in theology, to commemorate more than 40 years of her fight against the gender stereotypes and prejudices so common in Kenyan patriarchal cultures. In its commendation, the University cited her "personal struggle to overcome cultural inhibitions and selfless service to scores of women from broken homes or marriages whose shattered dreams have been restored by her efforts" (Kwayera 2008).

Just like JIAM and FEM, Wahome's SLIM organization has also established branches and transnational networks in various parts of Africa and in the US. It has also established branches in Australia and the UK. SLIM has invited international guests to the annual Single Ladies Conference. For example in the 2005–2006 Single Ladies' Conference, the key guests were Pastor Mary Whelchel, the director of Christian Working Women Ministry USA, and Pastor Olive Feebry and Sue Khiroya, both of Hill Song Australia (Single Ladies Conference 2005, Kwayera 2008). These interactions have helped to connect the ministry with global religious networks and to give Wahome an opportunity for global leadership.

Conclusion

In this chapter, we have attempted to demonstrate that Kenyan neo-Pentecostal/charismatic Christianity is becoming a transnational phenomenon and is securing itself a place in the global religious marketplace. It is also adapting itself to the realities of global migration, whose local and global character is constantly changing. We have mapped the Kenyan neo-Pentecostal/charismatic religious landscape both locally and in the diaspora, especially in the UK and US, and have shown how the process of globalization has occasioned the presence of Kenyan Christian communities there. Local groups have also embarked on missionary endeavors to propagate their religious message to the wider world. The intra-religious networks between local churches and the churches abroad vary, but they are sustained by participating in global events like conferences, joint hosting of crusade programmers by African diasporic clergy and foreign evangelists, short-term mission/pastoral exchanges, transnational theological training, prayer networks, and the exchange of media, such as religious music tapes, CDs, tape-recorded sermons, and home videos. These exchanges provide cultural ties that help migrants to reproduce their cultures abroad, while simultaneously helping those in the diaspora to "influence home communities through the homeward flow of information, thereby creating mediascapes that are circulatory and not unidirectional" (Tettey 2007: 250).

A significant characteristic of Kenyan Neo-Pentecostalism is the number of women who are increasingly assuming roles as founders of ministries and churches both locally and in the diaspora. In doing so,

they are redefining and feminizing the religious landscape in both places. The case studies have shown how religious communities and personal religious commitment offer women opportunities for self-determination as well as leadership experience—both of which help them become agents of change. Wairimu, Wanjiru and Wahome have risen to prominence as leaders in the neo-Pentecostal movement, despite the stigma typically attached to single or divorced women.[28] Acclaimed as role models, these leaders have encouraged single women, indeed all women, to rise above cultural inhibitions and overcome gender-based discrimination in church and society. The egalitarian theology implicit within Pentecostalism provides space in the church and in ministries where women can exercise their spiritual gifts.

Women are also playing critical roles in creating transnational linkages and networks, through their innovative use of mass media technologies. As Adogame (2008a: 142) has succinctly observed, there "is no total disconnect between women's religious experiences and expressions in the New African Diaspora and on the continent itself." Communication through various media between home and the Diaspora, ensures that links are maintained and or strengthened. Sermons by Wanjiru of JIAM, Wairimu of FEM and Wahome of SLIM are, as we have seen, broadcast on both local and 'host' television channels. The diasporic branches of these women-led churches and ministries provide a space for addressing family issues, the concerns and challenges of finance, health, politics and other matters that are distressing to immigrants in their new homes. The congregations also provide migrants with ethnic, cultural, and linguistic reinforcement and refuge.

Scholars working on issues of gender, religion and migration argue that while women may acquire autonomy due to their economic and

[28] All Kenyan communities are patriarchal. Despite the changes brought about by modernization, the Christian missionary enterprise and formal education, which have all influenced and altered gender roles considerably, the attitude still prevails that women's ultimate function in society is marriage and procreation. Single women are still perceived as incomplete and are often shunned, despite rhetorical proclamations to the contrary. Women-founded and women-led ministries and churches accord women more prominence and more leadership opportunities. Nevertheless, men still patronize these churches, though not necessarily in equal numbers as women, and they do not feel out of place. Judy Mbugua, the founder of Women Homecare Fellowship—a ministry with local roots and connections in the diaspora—attests to this fact. (Oral Interview, Nairobi, May 28, 2009).

spiritual empowerment, this does not necessarily translate into altered gender relations. In some cases, in fact, gender divisions are reinforced, promoting men as household heads and women as homemakers (Olupona and Gemingani 2007: 12). A similar pattern obtains in the home churches (Soothill 2007).

These three case studies, however, present a different leadership pattern, where women are the dominant heads of the churches, and not mere adjuncts to dominant males. All three of these women present another pattern, at least in part because Wanjiru and Wairimu are single and Wahome married only much later in life. While these women may not be described as gender activists out to alter traditional gender relations, they do challenge the gender stereotypes and prejudices in Kenyan patriarchal cultures. They exhort women to circumvent such limitations through the power of the gospel, using their spiritual gifts to rise to their full potential. This message is powerful and empowering, especially in Kenya where women form 52 percent of the population, head one-third of the households,[29] and bear the brunt of migration when men leave in search of greener pastures and women are left to take charge of families. We conclude that women are becoming more visible in neo-Pentecostal Christianity in Africa and the diaspora, a trend that is facilitated by globalization—not only feminizing the religious leadership but the migration process as well through the increasing numbers of female migrants.

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CHAPTER TEN

THE BONNKE EFFECT: ENCOUNTERS WITH TRANSNATIONAL EVANGELISM IN SOUTHEASTERN NIGERIA

Edlyne E. Anugwom

Transnational evangelism is no longer a novel thing in the developing world, particularly in Nigeria, where some of the "new Pentecostal' groups owe a part of their credibility to their associations with religious personalities and churches from the West.[1] Even if founded independently, their leaders' search for authority has brought about an unusual collaboration between Christians of the global North and South. This association is more often than not mutually beneficial and reinforcing. Perhaps nothing has helped build this linkage more than the evangelical or pastoral visits of known "religious icons": powerful men of God from the West.

Such visits have become big events; besides reinforcing the position of the local churches and improving their visibility, they also improve the international status and religious legitimacy of the Western visitors. On both sides, they are seen as occasions where Christianity can respond to the living needs of the worshippers, especially since the visitors usually come with promises of liberation and freedom from all types of mundane and spiritual problems. The German evangelist Reinhard Bonnke is one such "religious icon." With his Christ for All Nations (CFAN) group, he has become a regular feature in the religious landscape of Africa—especially Nigeria. Even after three decades of evangelism, Bonnke continues to "electrify" Nigerian crowds during and after his visits, and to generate continued evangelistic conversations long after he leaves.

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[1] I use the term "new Pentecostal" to refer to what Ojo (2004) labels "newer charismatic churches," which emerged in Nigeria in the 1970s. Examples of such churches include the Redeemed Christian Church of God (under Enoch Adeboye), Christ Embassy, and the late Benson Idahosa's Church of God Mission International. Not all such churches forge such associations with outsiders. The Later Day Rain Assembly, Deeper Life Bible Church, and Synagogue of all Nations, for example, remain wholly local.

Bonnke began his evangelism in Africa with a crusade in 1975 in Botswana (Gifford 1987). From a humble beginning preaching to a few people, his crusades have grown to become sell-out events. This chapter arises from some critical reflections on one such recent crusade in Nigeria's southeast. I use this crusade as an example of Pentecostal transnational evangelism,[2] seen from a Nigerian perspective, even though it differs in some respects from the pattern of Bonnke crusades elsewhere (as we shall also see below).

The effects of this transnational evangelism run both ways. The Nigerian model of Pentecostalism, which contains some significant modifications in worship style and a differently contextualized religious message, has encroached upon Euro-America Pentecostalism's geographical space. In this light, the assertion that "Christianity in Africa is of global significance" (Isichei 1995:1) is apt indeed.

A God Who Acts

The idea that Pentecostalism has thrived in Nigeria because it seems to address in a practical way people's existential realities is not just a reflection of the African sociocultural definition of the relationship between people and the supernatural. It also has historical antecedents in the reception of early Christianity on the continent. Elizabeth Isichei (1995) narrates how, in 1733, a local chief in Warri (South-South Nigeria) reverted to indigenous religion with his people because the new religion could not end a spell of drought, and thus was seen as having no practical benefit. In this light, one of the early derisive comments made by Christians against indigenous deities—that they are carved wooden, metal, or stone figures that are perpetually deaf and dumb—doubly misses the point. Not only does this show a lack of understanding of the symbolism behind such wooden figures; it more crucially challenges Christianity to produce a "talking" and "acting God." In fact, many Pentecostal churches in Nigeria have marketed themselves by saying that they worship an active God: a God who is responsive to the practical needs of believers.

Indeed, many explain the growth of Pentecostalism in Africa by its emphasis on "prosperity theology"—a concern for believers' health

[2] I use this term interchangeably here with "global evangelism" or "the globalisation of Pentecostalism." For more on the globalization of Pentecostalism, see Dempster *et al.* (1999) and Coleman (2000, 2006).

and wealth. This touches on a genuine African social reality, one that resonates with traditional African worldviews. In many African traditional societies, health and wealth are seen as bestowed on the individual by his personal god. This also operates at the level of popular culture, as in the Nigerian novelist Chinua Achebe's (1958) image of one's palm kernel being cracked by a benevolent personal god (*chi*). Many Pentecostals seem to have transferred this traditional linkage between the gods and people's destinies into the modern religious realm, seeing prosperity as a good indicator of one's standing in God's sight. As Daneel (1987:46) puts it, in Africa "wealth and success are naturally signs of the blessing of God." This makes life complicated for African Christians who, while aspiring to heaven, are confronted with enormous socioeconomic challenges on a daily basis.

We shall certainly see this in the results of my sixty in-depth interviews with participants in Bonnke's October 2008 crusade in Nsukka, southeastern Nigeria.[3] My study seeks to understand the social motives and contexts behind the obvious popularity of the kind of transnational evangelism that Bonnke represents. It examines how the discourse of miracles and the web of expectations of the followers in such crusades reflect the dire social context of daily experience, while simultaneously transcending denominational differences. It also shows how transnational evangelism reinforces both the credibility and the relevance of the local churches associated with it.

I chose to examine Bonnke's crusade not because of Reinhard Bonnke himself, but for two other reasons. First, the crusade generated unprecedented hype in Nsukka, a university town in Enugu state, southern Nigeria, which is itself worth examining; second, it produced an amazing turnout of people from different socioeconomic spheres, far more than do other, non-crusade events. As a local Pentecostal leader, one of the organizers, told me, "this crusade has attracted a large number of people that is far greater than the population of urban Nsukka itself."[4] He said that people had come to the crusade from neighboring towns, even neighboring states. The crusade's great attractiveness to so many people provides fertile ground for exploring Nigerians' social imagining of such transnational crusades in general.

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[3] The sixty interviews were apportioned 50:50 between Pentecostals and people from other denominations at the crusade.

[4] Unless noted otherwise, all of the interviews reported in this chapter were conducted by the author, October 12–18, 2008.

Nsukka is a town in northernmost Enugu state, in the southeast geopolitical zone of present-day Nigeria. It is about sixty kilometers from the "coal city" of Enugu, the state capital. Nsukka is a slow-growing, sleepy, semi-urban town, with a population of about 120,000 people (Geonames 2007). It is the hub of about five local government areas in the Enugu North senatorial zone, and is the site of the first indigenous university in Nigeria, the University of Nigeria, Nsukka (UNN). Local socioeconomic activities are responsive to, determined and influenced by its needs. While a majority of the inhabitants of the town are Catholic and mainstream Protestant, the Pentecostal churches are becoming increasingly popular and visible in the town's religious landscape. There are over 15 different Pentecostal churches, the two main ones being the Redeemed Christian Church of God and the Winners Chapel. Other prominent churches in the town include Grace of God Mission, Mountain of Fire and Miracles Ministries, Divine Grace Assembly, House of Glory International, Reo Ministries, Shekinah Glory Ministries, Living Christ Mission, and the Prevailing Word Assembly. Altogether, by my estimate these churches account for about 20 percent of Christians in Nsukka town.

Going Global: Pentecostalism as Transnational Discourse

Many scholars have noted that Pentecostalism has been a global growth sector among Christian churches in the last few decades. Barrett and Johnson (2004) estimate that there are over 533 million Pentecostal/charismatic Christians in the world. As early as 1994, Gary McGee (1994) saw Pentecostals making up 26 percent of world Christianity and still growing. At that point, it was second only to Roman Catholicism among Christian tendencies. Without doubt, Africa has been one of the sites of this robust growth. Nigeria, with a population currently estimated at over 140 million, has contributed greatly. While some of the growth here, as in other developing countries, can be rightly ascribed to the work of white missions and missionaries, the increase in members seems to have something to do with the consistency between the Pentecostal message and the day-to-day experiences of the people.

In explaining the success of the Pentecostal movement in Nigeria, Fakoya sees its consistency with traditional beliefs and practices as key. He argues that Pentecostalism simply accepted the traditional thinking about witchcraft and sorcery but replaced the means and methods of

confronting these evils—in effect replacing charms and amulets with fervent prayers, use of holy oil and holy water. In effect,

> Africans remain Africans with traditional beliefs substituted with pseudo-Christian formulas amply provided by the mostly educated and suave American-influenced Pentecostal pastors. This is perhaps the secret behind the monumental success of Pentecostalism as compared to missionary Christianity which came to Africa with contempt for traditional African beliefs and customs (Fakoya 2008: 2).

Ostensibly, the remarks above may be speculative and too generalized in some respects. However, whether or not all of them actually did so, it makes sense that the Pentecostal evangelists would note the strong attachments of Africans to their beliefs and consequently explore this tendency, but in ways deemed consistent with, or at least not radically contradictory to, the Scriptures.

Pentecostalism has certainly made similar adaptations elsewhere. Klaus (1991) has noted Pentecostalism's ability to adapt readily to a variety of cultures. Anderson (2000) remarks on the creative innovations and selective transformations of foreign symbols that, in the case of Asia, actually produce "an indigenous oriental Christianity." Why should Africa be any different? In particular, scholars have noted that Nigerian Pentecostalism differs from what obtains in the West, especially in its core social message (Ojo 1995, 2006). In any case, the Pentecostal message of a God interested in the worldly human affairs today resonates with African believers. In this manner, Pentecostalism has created a discourse of salvation that is not only sited in the bliss after life on earth, but also in the bliss that one can experience even while alive on earth.

A second possible source of the amazing popularity of the Pentecostal movement in Nigeria is the dominant discourse of "change" and "solution" in these churches (see Marshall 1991, Gifford 1993, Anderson 2001, Kalu, 2008, Ojo 1995, 2006). While mainstream Christianity preached a gospel of personal piety and earthly denial that was totally discordant with the lives of the faithful, Pentecostal churches followed the example of the earlier African Initiated Churches (AICS) and adopted the imagery of God as an ever-present and problem-solving supernatural being. Not all newer Pentecostal churches place prosperity over piety, but enough do to produce a trend.[5]

[5] For example, the Deeper Life Bible Church and Tunde Bakare's Latter Day Rain Assembly preach personal piety extensively.

This imagery, too, is consistent with a traditional African religious worldview, in which the supernatural is an ever-present and potent force ready to intervene actively in people's affairs (Meyer 1992). All Pentecostals preach that there is a direct and personal relationship between the faithful and God, Jesus, the Holy Spirit. Their God is no far away, impersonal force, but a powerful being who encourages a personal relationship with each believer.

Still, there exists a good degree of similarity between African Pentecostalism and the Euro-American brands.[6] In the case of Nigeria, the linkage is maintained by the exchange of visits, collaboration in crusades, and more crucially the penchant of Nigerian Pentecostals toward seeing their links with Europe or America as a charter for their own credibility and legitimacy.

Feeding on Social Reality

Nigerian Pentecostal growth has occurred within a particular social setting. The emergence of the newer Pentecostal Churches since the 1970s, coincided with a period of socioeconomic disorganization and deprivation. Ukah (2007) argues that this was a period characterized by post-civil war deprivations and by an increased spiritual quest both for salvation and for solutions to social and personal problems. In this view, the simultaneous expansion of formal educational infrastructures facilitated the emergence of an elite eager to appropriate what they considered to be "the goods of modernity." Basically, the downturn in the economic situation and the obvious inability of the orthodox churches to offer a counter-narrative with a practical edge fuelled a spirit of frustration with the prevailing situation and a desire for something new and more attuned to the practical needs of the day. This opened up a new religious space, which was eagerly appropriated by the emergent educated religious elites, who were radically different from the AIC religious leaders before them. They often exploited the precarious economic situation by offering the people a new channel for salvation.

At the same time, the coincidence between the spread of education and the triumph of neo-liberal market ideology helped create a

[6] An example we shall not pursue further here is the case of Christ Embassy, where the mimicking of American oratorical mannerisms is a prominent feature of pastors' sermons and television programs.

population easily swayed by promises both of immediate earthly salvation (prosperity, healing, and dominion over the occult) and of ultimate heavenly salvation. This called for a faith radically different from what was on offer in the orthodox churches. The new Pentecostalism had to mark itself out from the throng of other churches, as something special and unique, while also marking its adherents as equally special. Hence came the appeal of the Pentecostal message, of a God who cared only for them as His special people, the saved, while all others are doomed to eternal hardship. These special people are blessed with the baptism of the Holy Spirit and of speaking in tongues, which is an external manifestation of their state of grace (see Anderson 2004). The picture painted by Ukah is not as simple, as illiterates and semi-illiterates took religious 'centerstage' side-by-side with other educated religious elites. Besides, the reasons adduced for the emergence of these churches are multifarious, complex and far outweigh what Ukah suggested here. Nevertheless, Nigeria Pentecostalism has been able to sell itself to a good number of Nigerians as a religious group that truly reflects their lived experiences. This affinity is obvious in the overwhelming interest of the Pentecostal churches in the social conditions of its members. The church seeks active participation in the socio-economic life of its members and makes it almost mandatory that the well-off members of the church take active roles in helping the less privileged.

Worshippers have responded to a God who is active in one's daily struggles: a God who can send thunder, Holy Ghost fire and brimstone, who can immediately open the doors of riches and heal diseases and infirmities. In a situation of poverty and lack, this Pentecostal God becomes more attractive than the orthodox God, who is perceived to be slow to anger and often functional and active only in the afterlife or on the day of judgment.

The Nsukka Crusade

The 2008 Bonnke crusade operated like many other crusades organized by the CFAN, combining both an evening open-air or tent crusade and an early morning fire conference. However, instead of targeting mainly church leaders or ministers, as was the case with some of the crusades that Gifford (1987) describes, the Nsukka event was meant for all worshippers. The crusade posters advertized that it was especially

aimed at for those in search of Holy Spirit anointing and the power of speaking in tongues. While not boldly proclaiming a gospel of prosperity, Bonnke projected a beacon of hope for people challenged by all manner of difficulties. The range of those difficulties is clearly illustrated by scheduled activities, as found in the crusade program:

- Day 1 – October 8th: Casting out of witchcraft and spirit of the devil; healing of the sick especially those blind and crippled;
- Day 2 – October 9th: Destruction of charms kept in so many places by people; people should bring out such charms to the crusade ground for destruction and burning since there is no power in charms; healing of the sick especially those who are HIV positive will become HIV negative;
- Day 3 – October 10th: Healing of those suffering from stroke, cancer; waist pain; women with breast cancer;
- Day 4 – October 11th: Prayer for those who could not come to the crusade venue because of ill health or other bad conditions; prayer for the poor in the country;
- Day 5 – October12th: Prayer for everybody in the crusade to receive healing from every sickness in their bodies.

This is, as Ojo (1998: 25) has argued of Pentecostalism generally, one way of "responding to the needs and aspirations of Nigerians amid the uncertainty of their political life and the pain of their constant and unending economic adjustment." The this-worldly emphasis of Bonnke crusade, at least in the program above, seems clear.

Besides these interesting events, one needs to mention that the setting or context of the crusade also exerts some psychological impact on those in attendance. Gifford (1987) noted the ritualism of venue and proceedings in an earlier Bonnke crusade, which helped to generate both a desired response and a willing spirit among those in attendance. Thus, the stage as an elevated platform, the play of lights which focus on the speaker and other men of God on the platform, the incredibly loud audio system, and even the usual use of songs, clapping, and body gyrations are all tailored to create a conducive atmosphere for the crusade and its message. Taken together these are intended to create a spiritually malleable audience.

Leaving this aside, what do indigenous Nigerian Pentecostal pastors gain from Bonnke's efforts? Why do even enterprising and innovative Pentecostal leaders in Nigeria still seek the stamp of credibility or approval offered by association or collaboration with Western Pentecostal leaders? Besides some natural inclination to join with others, what are the benefits of participation in such international

religious and ecumenical networks?[7] I do not here suggest that all Nigerian Pentecostal or other Christian leaders who collaborate with Bonnke do so in search of credibility or approval. Such a conclusion would be very limiting. In fact Bonnke himself needs this collaboration to gain some credence and approval for his projects in Africa. However, part of the explanation for the questions I raise lies in a belief among Africans wherein Western superiority is often erroneously taken for granted. This perception was implanted through the colonial experience, but it has been reinforced by the continued failure of Africans to manage their affairs well, especially in the economic and political spheres.

Like other Pentecostal preachers, Bonnke seems to have exploited Nigerian Pentecostals' belief in his healing and miraculous powers. In fact, in the Nsukka crusade this belief was taken to new heights when a corpse of a man believed to be dead for over five days was brought to the crusade ground, in hopes of Bonnke being able to raise him from the dead. Even though the corpse was not revived to life by the end of the event, such expectations of spiritual power over death was not just a product of the imagination of over-zealous believers. Days before Bonnke's crusade, several promotional leaflets highlighting his miracles and healing powers had been widely distributed. In one of the leaflets, there were stories (with pictures!) that Bonnke had recently awakened someone from the dead. Such promotional materials advertized the crusade, and helped build an unprecedented popular hype about Bonnke's spiritual invincibility and power. In the midst of crumbling public health institutions, the widespread ravage of diseases, as well as general sicknesses, this was an easy sell.

The Nsukka crusade was organized by local Pentecostals, who understandably made up much of its audience. There were, however, also Catholics and non-Pentecostal Protestants in attendance. Perhaps up to 80 percent of those present at the Bonnke crusade were either non-Pentecostals or Pentecostals from outside the Nsukka area.[8]

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[7] Examples of Nigerian pastors who have participated in visits by Bonnke and other Euro-American charismatic Pentecostal leaders include the late Benson Idahosa, Pastor Paul Nwachukwu of the Grace of God Mission, David Ogbueli of the Covenant Family, Pastor Chris of Christ Embassy, among others.

[8] Given that the population of Nsukka is under 120,000 (of which less than a quarter are Pentecostal) and the crusade recorded population of over 400,000 (see van den Berg 2009), it stands to reason that people from other religious backgrounds and outside Nsukka attended.

Hence, I interviewed some of those who attended from these other churches, in order to find out their reasons and attractions to the event.

Most of my informants contend that while the orthodox churches satisfied their spiritual needs, they were generally far away from assisting with their existential needs. One respondent, a young female employed graduate, averred bluntly, "though I am Catholic, the reality of today's world is that once in a while one confronts situations that demand spiritual warfare to achieve a breakthrough, and our church is not good in this." Another respondent, a mother and also a fervent Catholic, argued that she simply went because of the spiritual enrichment one derives from such crusades and the fact that she knows Bonnke to be a wonderful orator. A good number of informants were also quick to point out that they went simply to see if the miraculous powers attributed to Bonnke by the media and public were true. A good number of people, including James, a middle-aged blind beggar whom I interviewed, came with expectations of having Bonnke heal their ailments. In incoherent vernacular, James told me that a man of God living close to his quarters encouraged him to attend and to expect healing.

Without doubt, a lot of those who, like James, went to the crusade in search of miracles left disappointed. However, a number of our respondents, including those from the orthodox churches, affirmed that they actually witnessed some miracles or healings. One told of how a young man paralyzed by stroke for over seven years was able to get up and walk on one of the nights of the crusade. Some also told of how a mentally deranged man was healed by the prayers of the evangelist. A popular story in town during and immediately after the crusade was how a woman with three blind offspring, who were believed to have been made blind through witchcraft, went home on the second day of the crusade to find out that her three children had regained their sight. This happened in the night, during the same period that the woman—acting on the behest of the evangelist to all those gathered for the crusade—prayed fervently for her blind children. Some of my respondents confirmed knowing the woman in question and her children's story.

Although none of these was personally confirmed during my research, it would appear that the ability of the Pentecostal churches to confront all manner of ailments usually attributed to witchcraft and

occultism has been one of their main attractions for Nigerians. These churches claim to possess the power of delivering people from all sorts of affliction (physical and spiritual) and from the forces of darkness (witchcraft, ancestral curses, occultism etc.). In this way, the new Pentecostals have come to terms with the various local cultural powers, such as witches and ancestral curses, which the Protestant churches had earlier ignored (see Ojo 2004). Doing so has been a great advantage for them in terms of their general public appeal. As a matter of fact, among the Igbo of Southeastern Nigeria there is the derisive saying, *adighi eji anya oma eje uka mkpa-mkpa aka*, meaning that "one does not just ordinarily become a member of a spirit-filled church," implying that it is usually problems or difficulties in life that take people to such churches. This saying was originally invoked to explain the increasing membership of the African Initiated Churches (AICS) like Aladura, a perception that is now extended to the Pentecostals as well.

Therefore, the appeal of the Bonnke crusade for a predominant number of my respondents was its promise to meet practical and everyday needs, its emphasis on miracles, cures, and its claim to release people from demonic powers and from hardship. This echoes Gifford's (1987:78) finding that what makes the CFAN crusades distinct are their "particularly heavy stress on healings and demonology and [their] neglect of eschatology and social concern." Invariably the crusade related all people's problems to the handiwork of demons or the occult. In a context where fear of the occult is rife, this strand of Bonnke's teaching was quite relevant.

Bonnke's repeated journeys to Nigeria critically underline the global factors influencing the growth of Pentecostalism. There has not, however, been a mere toppling of the local by the external. Even institutionally, the recent flow has been two-way. Some of the more prominent Pentecostal churches in Nigeria, such as the Redeemed Christian Church of God, Deeper Life Bible Church, and Pastor Chris's Christ Embassy have become dominant global forces in their own right. With access to satellite communication, missionary outreach, and networking, these churches have brought Africa prominently into the international religious arena. Perhaps the success of these churches will be useful lessons for political and economic elites, who are still amazed that Africa can function effectively as a locus of global influences permeating other areas or regions of the world.

Bonnke and the Discourse of Pentecostalism in Nigeria

While the American influence on both the emergence and growth of the "new" (or charismatic) Pentecostalism in Africa, including Nigeria, cannot be denied or ignored (see Brouwer, Clifford and Rose 1996, Gifford 1990), Reinhard Bonnke, as a German, is another interesting case. Given his German nationality and the location of his ministry headquarters in the US, he may be seen as manifesting both European and American influence on the Nigerian Pentecostal movement.

In his crusades, Bonnke is touted as a man of God who is not interested in money or earthly possessions. The back cover of one of his recent books *Evangelism by Fire* makes a rather succinct claim: "The evangelist is a man with a driving urgency, not a man with two minds. The Gospel and nothing else on earth matters: neither fame, money, earthly pleasures nor life itself. Jesus had a total attraction for the wretched. It led him to the Cross. He would bring his salvation and healing touch to broken lives no matter what." (Bonnke nd). Perhaps Bonnke's appeal lies not in the exaggerated miracle powers but an uncanny ability to appeal to all manner of individuals across Christian divides in Nigeria. Bonnke appropriates the hope-inspiring and ownership-inducing Pentecostalism, in which everybody has capacity to access spirituality, blessings and hope in a fulfilled existence, both now and in the afterlife. In other words, instead of purveying Pentecostalism as a divisive force separating the righteous and pious from the unfaithful, Bonnke promotes Pentecostalism as a response to everybody's needs and aspirations. He relates it in clear terms to people's lived realities and to their experiences of the world around them.[9] It is this call to relate religion to real life that leads Matthews Ojo to contend that Nigerian Pentecostalism "is also important because as a new cultural product it is not imposed upon us. Rather, this new religious phenomenon is being generated in response to our individual and societal needs" (2004: 3).

In fact, a worshipper in the Bonnke crusade who claimed to be a Catholic told me that Bonnke is not about churches and denominations but about spiritual guidance in a world full of evils and trials.

[9] Some other contemporary preachers like Kenneth Hagin, T.D Jakes, and Kenneth Copeland, and in Nigeria people like Pastor Chris, Enoch Adeboye and even T.B Joshua, among others, also exhibit this tendency.

Asked about his faith once the crusade ends and Bonnke leaves, he retorted, "I'm still a Catholic. Bonnke, like I said before, did not preach any church. He came for us to be able to see God as our own and a being that cares all the time." In this case, one great attribute of Bonnke's evangelistic style is his insistence that people should stick to their own churches or denominations, but should seek redemption all the same. According to another interviewee, "the man of God does not preach church like the others. He tells you to believe in Christ and [to] worship him in truth and spirit no matter [what] your denomination." This may actually explain why many people from orthodox mission churches like Catholics and Protestants attended Bonnke's crusade.

Bonnke does have considerable interdenominational appeal. One of the local organizers of the Nsukka crusade and a leader of one of the local Pentecostal churches said, "As you can see, here there are over 80,000 people in attendance and the most generous estimate of Pentecostal members in this town is less than 15,000. So where did the rest come from? My brother, God knows no boundaries and the spirit works in mysterious ways." Interestingly, a story circulating before Bonnke's crusade began claimed that the town's Catholic bishop had threatened to excommunicate any Catholic who attended the crusade. While this story was purely rumored, a few zealous Catholic priests actually gave strikingly similar warnings to their members.

But the surging crowd at the five-day Bonnke crusade included a large number of Catholics. There was even one man who wore the uniform of Saint Anthony's Guild (Catholic) while actively promoting the crusade and selling Bonnke memorabilia. This, plus the sentiments expressed by my interviewees, shows that social realities can obliterate clear lines of separation between the churches. Therefore, differences between denominations are largely matters for the leadership to worry about—and perhaps to reinforce with parochial spiritual doctrines that caution followers against involvement with other religious groups.

How can we square this with Gifford's (1987) account, which documents Bonnke's attacks on mainstream non-Pentecostal churches? Perhaps Bonnke has changed his style. Perhaps the deep involvement of the local Anglican Church in the organization of the crusade may have made him take up a new tone. Clearly, Bonnke was aware that a good number of those who came for the crusade were from the mainstream non-Pentecostal churches. Good preachers reach people where they are.

Concluding Remarks

I shall conclude with four remarks on the context of transnational evangelization within contemporary Nigerian Pentecostalism.

First, in spite of its critics (e.g., Fakoya 2008), on average the Pentecostal movement in Nigeria and elsewhere in Africa, in contrast with mission-related churches, shares a certain affinity with indigenous religions—especially in terms of recognition of the reality of the power of the occult (magic, witchcraft etc.). Most indigenous Pentecostal churches are led by home-grown personalities and not expatriate missionaries, as was the case with Catholicism and other Protestant churches until recently. As Ukah (2007) put it, missionary Christianity was and is still perceived as the religion of the "white man." It came with Euro-American cultural baggage and has not separated the gospel from these Western cultural practices and idiosyncrasies. However, while Ukah's assertions may capture realities in the early years and to some extent the situation in the Catholic Church, some remarkable changes have occurred elsewhere over the years, especially in the Anglican Church. This latter church has been a thorn in the flesh of English and American Anglicanism in recent times especially over their refusal to accept gay priests. In fact it is now called the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion), to differentiate it from the Euro-American Anglicans. In addition, its liturgical and organizational system has been largely indigenized. In several respects, it now approximates those of the Pentecostal church.

Second, the rapid growth of Pentecostalism has been a source of concern to some members of the Nigerian public. While some have misgivings about the immediacy of both spiritualism and concept of God imbued in it, others have derided it as nothing but a guise for the acquisition of wealth (see Fakoya 2008). To explain the phenomenal growth of Nigerian Pentecostalism on the basis of deprivation may be too hasty. While these churches do preach about prosperity and see spiritual favor as a source of economic benefit, they have equally stressed the spiritual essence of beliefs, including the overarching need to make it to heaven. And the fact that this message comes in culturally sensitive, Nigerian-run packaging makes it all the more appealing.

Oddly, transnational evangelism has often had the unintended effect of presenting Nigerian Pentecostal leaders as mere caricatures of their

Euro-American models. Nowhere is this more obvious than in the case of those Nigerian church leaders who have attempted to achieve more cosmopolitan speech and dress than the Euro-American Pentecostal leaders they are emulating. Some even speak with an American accent, use make-up to look better under lights, and even weave their hair to achieve the desired Euro-American look. Such practices cast public doubt on the genuineness of these churches and their messages.

Third, the influence of the relatively newer Pentecostal churches has not been limited to the less privileged members of the population, nor even to those challenged by physical and social ailments. Instead, it has permeated all classes of the Nigerian society. For instance, former President Olusegun Obasanjo is alleged to be a self-identified Pentecostal, and highly mobile, educated Nigerians in urban centers often identify themselves as Pentecostals. Pentecostalism has a social constitution, one that is malleable enough to accommodate the needs of various kinds of people. Such a cultural product can be mediated at various points by different members of Nigerian society. In this sense, Pentecostalism has become so influential that leaders have seen identifying with Pentecostalism as critical in winning sociopolitical acceptance and shoring up their credibility. This phenomenon, which can also be seen in other African nations, such as Zambia under Frederick Chiluba and Ghana under Jerry Rawlings, was replicated in Nigeria during the tenure of former President Obasanjo for instance.

Fourth, realities and challenges of social life—ranging from economic deprivation to diseases to social instability—have been potent forces driving transnational Pentecostal evangelism, especially in developing countries such as Nigeria.

Still, the Bonnke crusade's avoidance of preaching the superiority of Pentecostal beliefs over others (such as those of the missionary Christian churches) in this particular case, its publicized power over sickness and death, seem to have made it very attractive in Nigeria—enough to overcome the traditional boundaries between different religious denominations. In a situation of economic, social, and personal uncertainty and popular expectations, people give scant thought to Bonnke's ancestry and to his early personal history. The combination of ordinary people's expectations and Bonnke's downplaying of sectarian discourses in the Nsukka event have created religious solidarity among the people.

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WIDER IMPLICATIONS OF TRANSNATIONAL AFRICAN RELIGIONS

CHAPTER ELEVEN

THE PAN-AFRICAN CHURCH: NATION, SELF, AND SPIRIT IN WINNERS' CHAPEL, NIGERIA

Samuel Krinsky

What you believe determines what you become. Not your society that determines your destiny—your faith." – Bishop David Oyedepo

"Shiloh" is the name given to the Winners' Chapel's year-end revival, held in early December each year at the church's 530-acre campus and international headquarters (*aka* "Canaanland') in Ota, Ogun State, on the far outskirts of metropolitan Lagos. The church typically claims 300,000 participants at the weeklong event.[1]

Among the many large Pentecostal revivals in Nigeria, Shiloh stands out in that the principal activities of the week are all hosted within a cavernous, 50,000-seat building known as "Faith Tabernacle," reputedly the largest church building in the world. While most revivals take place in largely unadorned pavilions sheltered by acres of metal sheeting, Faith Tabernacle, by contrast, is constructed as an enclosure somewhat in the style of an American evangelical megachurch. The impression is of something altogether different from the norm: it is without a doubt the most opulent and well-maintained publicly accessible space I have ever encountered in sub-Saharan Africa—by far. It is as if three well-constructed modern churches were conjoined at the center, with all the dimensions simply blown up to an extraordinary scale.

The Spectacle of the Global: Shiloh 2006

When I attended Shiloh for six days in 2006, it became abundantly clear that Shiloh was intended to be a grand spectacle in every sense of

[1] David Oyedepo Ministries International, Inc website: *http://davidoyedepominis tries.org/about/journey* and *http://www.davidoyedepoministries.org/about/impact*.

the word, staged for maximum symbolic effect with the utmost planning and expertise. It was easily the most breathtaking, ambitious, and smoothly executed performance of any type that I have ever witnessed. It stands as an extraordinary testimony to the high standards for professionalism and presentation that are ceaselessly exhorted as a privileged ethic within the church.

Although a packed schedule of sermons, meetings, performances, and other programs ran constantly throughout the week, the most important were clearly the extended nightly services. Each night, the founder of the church and its "Presiding Bishop," David Oyedepo, along with other Nigerian and visiting pastors, addressed the 50,000 participants within the Tabernacle, as well as the tens or hundreds of thousands assembled around the church. The audience was further extended by a large audio-video setup and live internet web casts, reaching a national and international audience of unknown size. Audio and video recordings in a variety of formats were also sold widely across the campus only a very short time following the close of services.

Every night, for five nights, the evening began with a high-energy, high-volume performance of popular Nigerian gospel songs, sung by what appeared to be a 100-plus member choir backed by an Afrobeat band. Some of the songs were apparently unique to the denomination itself, and most were sung in English.[2] However, a fair number of the songs switched back and forth among lyrics in English, Pidgin English, Yoruba, Igbo, Hausa and French. The talking drum, the traditional drum of the Yoruba, was occasionally featured. The mostly young crowd sang along enthusiastically throughout, throwing their hands in the air, dancing excitedly in the aisles, stairwells, window sills, on top of the benches, and everywhere else, exhibiting few reservations about how or where to move.

In terms of dress, most participants—a critical mass of them students or recent graduates or school-leavers—attended Shiloh in essentially the same styles as are common on campuses across the southern half of the country: some in "native dress" (loose-fitting, colorfully patterned matching shirt and pants for men and similarly patterned

[2] Although English was the predominant language of most services, sermons were often accompanied by simultaneous Yoruba and French translation to audiences assembled in special sections within the main building or else in neighboring buildings on the campus.

blouses and wraps for women), others in "corporate dress" (mostly this means second-hand western clothing such as dress shirts and slacks for men and relatively plain skirts and blouses for women). It was also not at all uncommon for participants to sport fashionable jeans, t-shirts, and sneakers, closely mimicking the current styles of black Londoners or New Yorkers. In the case of younger women, especially, the attire was often revealing to an extent that would be considered blasphemy in many of the "mainline" churches that these participants, along with most others in attendance, almost surely attended as children (*i.e.*, Anglican, Catholic, Lutheran, Baptist, and the like).

Throughout the hour or so of this opening dance-party/gospel performance, several dozen delegations, representing various national contingents from Winners' branches across Africa and beyond, would weave quickly and circuitously throughout the crowd, each group led by a flag-bearer swirling that delegation's national flag high over the audience. The combined presence of so many delegations effectively created a canopy of African flags dense enough to obscure nearly all else from view in some sections.

The foreign delegations were positioned to be as close to the stage as possible in each of the three naves that converge on the central pulpit, and the image created was of an immense rush of people and nations converging toward the transcendent point at the epicenter of the church's global network—the stage where the Bishop would address the church, where scripture would be read, and where visiting pastors from around the world, of Nigerian and non-Nigerian birth alike, would come to praise the workings of the Holy Spirit in the congregation, in the church, in Nigeria, and in Africa. On this stage, too, testimony to miracles would be shared, revelations and prophecies uttered, Winners-branded products introduced and promoted, and monetary contributions to the church solicited, stuffed into envelopes along with written prayers.

After the high point of the music began to fade each evening, Bishop Oyedepo would briefly take the stage, to an enormous chorus of cheers, and give the crowd some statistics about the progressive arrival of foreign delegations. Day 1: delegates from 28 foreign nations already had arrived, including Ethiopia, Belgium, United States, Gambia, Guinea-Conakry, Guinea-Bissau, Madagascar, United Kingdom, South Africa, Uganda, Tanzania, Malawi, Botswana, Kenya, Zambia, Ghana, Benin, Sierra Leone, Togo, Swaziland, Liberia, Senegal, Congo-Brazzaville, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mali, Zimbabwe, Burkina Faso,

Gabon. Day 2: Chad, Switzerland, Cameroon, Germany, Canada, Saudi Arabia, Cape Verde, Ivory Coast, and Spain were added to the list. Day 3: it was announced that 40 nations had arrived, comprising 6,112 foreign delegates in total. Day 4 even saw the arrival of delegates from Cuba, Angola, and Equatorial Guinea. The final tally by the end of the week, as announced by Oyedepo, was 10,455 foreign delegates.[3]

Throughout the week, whenever the fever-pitch of activity within the Tabernacle would get simply too much for me to endure, I would catch some fresh air by stepping out to visit with my friend and sometime research assistant who was volunteering for the week and every Sunday throughout the year at one of the campus' busiest restrooms, a few steps from the main building. Along with a team of twelve or so other young men, his unpaid job was to maintain this extraordinarily high-volume restroom at a standard of cleanliness commensurate with the ethic of professionalism and presentation so foundational to the church's vision. This group of volunteers—the "Sanctuary Keepers"—were all Nigerians in their twenties or early thirties, and all had determined plans to move up in life, either through a small business (i.e., dry cleaning/laundry), or through the application of some skill or trade they felt was in demand (e.g., photography, IT consulting). As a rule, they were committed to creating possibilities for themselves in the places where they lived and were eager to apply themselves to the development of their nation.

Given that these talking points are among the most salient features of the church's message, to hear them echoed back from these devoted members was certainly to be expected—as was the superlative cleanliness of the restrooms. But what I was not expecting to hear from three out of the twelve was that each had previously been deported from foreign countries (United States, Malta, the Seychelles). At least two of these three emigrations were undertaken in a more or less desperate fashion, and at tremendous expense to the would-be migrants and their families: Malta and the Seychelles, for instance, were each chosen simply because they do not require a pre-approved visa for short trips. But without a place to stay or any firm plan for how they would earn a living or evade deportation, the would-be migrants were arrested within weeks and sent back to Nigeria. Subsequently, all three were "born again" at the Winners' Chapel, had their faith in their nation

[3] Unless otherwise noted, observations and interviews were done by the author at Canaanland, December 5–9, 2006.

restored, and added their labor to the tremendous flood of voluntarism that has played such a critical role in propelling the rapid growth and success of this newer generation of Pentecostal and "born-again" churches in Africa over the course of the past three decades.[4]

Although Africa's immense class of upwardly-aspiring urban youth exists very much within an environment deeply enmeshed in a transnational flow of images, goods, and ideas, it is also a world in which the individual's own physical mobility remains greatly circumscribed by a an enormous set of both political and economic inequalities.

(Trans)Nationalism, Reconsidered

Existing studies on the growth of Pentecostal and born-again Christianity in Nigeria—as well as in much of sub-Saharan Africa and the New Diaspora—display a marked tendency toward a depiction of the movement as a type of transnational expression, in which connections are forged between peoples and communities in ways that transcend the confines of national spaces. Within this literature, the predominant analytic strategy has been to juxtapose the rise of "born-again" identification to the contemporaneous decline in the legitimacy of the postcolonial state, suggesting that national and transnational commitments represent intrinsically opposed or competing forces.[5]

However, one of the principal findings of the fieldwork that I conducted in southwestern Nigeria in 2006–2007 is that, although the widely-recognized tendency toward transnational Christian identification is still largely intact within the movement, it is increasingly complemented by a parallel tendency, in which the idea of the postcolonial nation is actually strengthened and defended as a source of community and identity. Intriguingly, and in contrast to the received wisdom, these two streams of thought seem to be more complementary at present than opposite. In fact, within Pentecostal churches such as Winners' Chapel, the idea of the nation is made more meaningful

[4] I use the word "newer" in this context to distinguish the predominant tendencies within Nigerian Pentecostalism currently from the older form of more ascetic Pentecostalism present within the country since the early twentieth century. (For more on the typology of Christianities in Nigeria, see Ayegboyin and Asonzeh 2002).

[5] Notable works in the study of transnationalism within African Pentecostalism including the following: Bastian (1993); Corten and Marshall-Fratani (2001); Cox (1995); Gifford (2004); Kalu (2003, 2008); Meyer (1998); Ukah (2003).

precisely because of its contextualization within global frameworks of spiritual interaction.

Stemming from this observation, the present chapter seeks to address the following questions: How it is that both national and transnational sentiments could develop and intensify simultaneously within the very same set of discourses and practices? What social or conceptual developments within Nigerian and African culture might be fuelling the rise of this now ascendant perspective?

Though touched on in previous studies, I believe one of the most underexplored aspects of Pentecostal and born-again Christianity in Africa is what could be considered the radical idealism embedded within the churches' praxis. By emphasizing an ontology in which the born-again Christian is defined by a spiritual essence largely independent of its immediate surroundings, the movement's adherents have effectively challenged and undermined generations-old ideas about locality and lineage as they relate to notions of identity and community. One of the many critical implications of this process is that it enables the born-again Christian to gain a closer identification with a set of spiritual/cultural flows that transcend locality and are usually transmitted in the form of media commodities. As it turns out, these translocal flows are as likely to be national as transnational in character, the more significant distinction being that between the local and translocal. The following discussion first traces this transition in Pentecostal praxis from a more culturally extroverted transnationalism to a perspective that is considerably more nationalistic in character. Subsequently, the particular form of strongly spiritual ("idealist") philosophy as practiced within the movement is considered in terms of the mediating function it plays in fostering this ideological mix. Winners' Chapel provides the primary empirical substance of this examination throughout, in part because it is a relatively influential denomination in Nigeria and across the continent, but also because it tends to articulate many of these themes with a greater emphasis than is often found in otherwise similar churches.

Resources of Externality

It is somewhat surprising that the existing literature should exhibit such a strong focus on the movement's "transnational" character and particularly on the propensity of adherents to contextualize their practice within a global framework of Christian revival. Not only is this

transnational character not necessarily the movement's most salient characteristic in the eyes of its adherents, but as Marshall-Fratani (2001) points out, the presence of a transnational "imagined community" is—by definition—a feature of all "world religions." When considered in this context, there does not appear to be anything all that astounding about the fact that Christianity as practiced among peoples of African descent, whether on the continent or in the New Diaspora, would tend toward the formation of communities that span national, cultural, geographic, or other boundaries.

Rather, what distinguishes the transnationalism of the newer generation of churches most pointedly is not so much the fact that notions of religious community have taken shape within an arena exceeding the bounds of any single nation, but that the very nature of the bonds linking individuals across all types of boundaries contrasts so markedly with the paradigm established by the mainline denominations. As several studies already have noted, the growth of the newer Pentecostal and charismatic movement in Africa has taken place largely through circulation of new media products (Hackett 1998, Marshall-Fratani 2001) and has also been characterized by the formation of massive congregations, allowing for a degree of anonymity not usually obtainable when religious practice is set in more intimate contexts. In effect, the locus of religious practice and identification has steadily migrated both outward toward ever larger publics, but also inward toward the interior consciousness of each believer, posing a stark contrast to the adamantly local character of most mainline as well as *Aladura*[6] churches in Africa historically. Also of significance in this respect is the fact that adherents tend to declare their identity prominently as born-again Christians over and above all other identifications, including that of the nation or ethnic group, and to do so with a stridency not found in other Christian expressions on the continent (Ojo 1998).

Although adherents of mainline churches do traditionally affirm their membership in the "mystical body of Christ" that transcends all other human divisions, ecclesiastical authority in the mainline denominations is nonetheless still highly structured along explicitly national lines. By contrast, one of the most striking consequences of

[6] *Aladura* is used here to refer generically to the "Spiritual," African-Initiated, or "White-Garment" churches that predate the development of newer Pentecostalism in Africa (see Ayegboyin and Ukah 2002).

the importance placed on the circulation of new media and other informal networking techniques within the Pentecostal movement is that the "imagined community" that develops is not so much stitched together through regulated channels for international exchange, but actually appears to transcend the very space of the nation altogether, giving rise to the term "transnational" instead. This transnational orientation also is illustrated in that adherents typically shun many aspects of what they consider the corrupting influence of indigenous culture in favor of the heavily Americanized tropes of a transnational born-again model of behavior as disseminated through videos, books, and cassettes. Olubi Johnson's once-influential *Scripture Pasture* church in Ibadan provides only one example of what is popularly understood in Nigeria as a distinct type or category of Pentecostal church in which African-born pastors preach to African congregations in affected American accents.

Marshall-Fratani has referred to these practices as attempts to mobilize the "resources of externality," applying Bayart's general statement of this principle to the particularities of Pentecostalism in Nigeria. In this analysis, part of the attraction of the newer churches is the promise to their participants, implicit or explicit, that via their religious practice they can establish "important material and symbolic connections with global networks." Accordingly, "[p]art of Pentecostalism's success in Nigeria," she notes, "is related to the community's ability… to give regular people access to these global repertoires…. [The] new forms of social behavior express new kinds of prestige, new models for social interaction which draw their social power … from global images of wealth and success." (2001: 282, 294).

Resources of Nationality

Despite the persistence of this transnational dynamic, the parallel development of an increasingly strident postcolonial nationalism within the movement seriously calls into question such appellations as "transnational" or "post-national," as they have been previously applied (Marshall-Fratani 2001: 311, Apter 2005: 278). Although the interdenominational circulation of media continues to represent an important vehicle for the formation of an "imagined community" that seemingly transcends the space of the nation, it also is accompanied by the expanding reach of large and increasingly institutionalized churches that would better be characterized as inter- or multi- rather

than trans- national. In fact, the tendency at Winners' Chapel is actually to *subsume* national categories under the church's umbrella, emphasizing rather than obscuring them. The staging of the foreign delegations at Shiloh speaks volumes to this effect, as does the fact that the church network is divided administratively into home missions and foreign missions, with the foreign missions being all those outside the territorial boundaries of Nigeria. Although Winners' Chapel initially was established in 1983 as a single congregation in northern Nigeria, the church now claims congregations "in 300 cities, towns and villages in Nigeria, [and] about 65 cities and towns spread over 32 nations in Africa, Britain and the US."[7] A brief search of the church's online directory provides the visitor with address, email and telephone contact information for a considerably wider range of branch sites.[8]

One small example of the tendency to incorporate ideas of national belonging into the broader imagining of an international born-again community is the way in which the Winners' website for the United States is branded with a bald eagle and American flag, while the Canadian website displays a maple leaf.[9] A more striking example is the following message, posted on the official website of Winners' Chapel Ghana:

> Ghana week is an annual week-long event set aside to fast and pray for our motherland, Ghana. When God wanted to create the first human species (Adam and Eve), He first created a garden (in contemporary times a nation-state) and afterwards created and put them in the garden and *charged them with the responsibility of dressing and keeping it*.
>
> God has placed Christians in all countries of the world to intercede for the country (land) God has given to them. Scripture makes us to understand that the land where we dwell is fundamental when it comes to the blessings of God upon us as individuals. Your prosperity in life hinges on the prosperity and serenity of the land in which you dwell per time.
>
> It is in this light that we take particular interest in our country Ghana; the land that God has given to us (2 Chronicles 7: 14). Join us in

[7] "Making Global Impact," David Oyedepo Ministries International, Inc., *http://www.davidoyedepoministries.org/about/impact*.

[8] David Oyedepo Ministries International, Inc., *http://www.davidoyedepoministries.org/index*.

[9] Winners Chapel USA, *http://www.winnerschapelusa.org/winners/index.php?flag=winners&bctid=1*; Winners Chapel Canada, *http://www.winnerschapelcanada.org/*.

> this year's event and God will beautify your country as well [emphasis in original].[10]

Of particular note here is the call for the visitor to come pray for Ghana regardless of his or her nationality, and also the promise that by praying for Ghana, the visitor will receive blessings indirectly through God's smiling on his or her nation as a whole. In effect, the message is not only a celebration of one's own nation, but also a celebration of the very principle of nations in general.

In interpreting this message, it is important to keep in mind that the African Pentecostal discourse on nation (or on community, more broadly) and its relationship to the individual is not structured by the same philosophical materialism within which most modern discussions of nation and nationality ordinarily takes place. Rather, most African born-agains affirm an ontology that could be described as strongly, even radically, idealist. As Evans-Pritchard first demonstrated in his study of the Azande, attempts to alter circumstances in the material world through appeal to spiritual agents only make sense when we fully appreciate the notion that all materiality is supported in its existence by an immaterial substratum. By praying "for Ghana," "for Nigeria," or for any other nation, and by combating the satanic "ancestral" curses, demons, and inheritances that are said to frustrate African nations' "destinies"—as is commonly the practice across Pentecostal churches in Nigeria—the newer churches actually naturalize and reinforce the political abstraction of "nation" through inscription into a widely shared spiritual worldview. Within this perspective, nations are even endowed with sacred meaning and purpose—by no means an easy feat given the famously weak foundations of postcolonial nationalism in Africa historically. Ultimately, this means that African nations are not creations of colonialism but rather creations of God. When considered against this now ascendant body of thought, the great

[10] "Ghana Week," Winners Chapel Ghana, *http://www.winnersghana.com/pgs/ghanawk.php*. This emphasis on national themes is partly explained by the fact that Winners' Chapel Ghana is the product of a split within Winners' Ghanaian operations, where a significant portion of the membership seceded from Oyedepo's international ministry, though still retaining the name "Winners." Presently, both Winners co-exist in Ghana, with one independent of Oyedepo, the other still under his authority. Although the quotation cited here is from the faction that operates independent of the international ministry, the text cited is in no way inconsistent with Oyedepo's teachings on the role of nations in God's plan. The fact of the schism itself also strongly reflects the pull of national ideologies within the church.

Nigerian nationalist Obafemi Awolowo's famous declaration that Nigeria is "a mere geographic expression" seems not only anachronistic, but also alien, and strangely materialist by comparison.[11]

One of the most critical implications of this spiritual reformulation of the idea of the nation is its utility in aiding Winners' efforts to establish the principle, at least conceptually, of the basic commensurability of all nations—a position that would not otherwise strike most Nigerian or African observers as plausible if articulated using sociohistorical criteria alone. For instance, Oyedepo frequently employs phrases such as "every condition is conducive for the covenant" (2005: 36–37) and "we are a people of equal destiny" (2006b: 52). Or, as he remarked during a trip in the United States, " 'This is God; but it can happen anywhere else.' That is the kind of mentality that brings about a recovery: '*But it can happen anywhere else*!' " (2006a: 13). In effect, because the covenant (with the Holy Spirit) is thought to determine the nation's destiny over and above any other environmental factors (condition), the nation is valued more in terms of a prophesied future of spirit-fuelled prosperity than in terms of the social, political and economic disappointments of the present. Although Afro-pessimism still provides the predominant discursive framework within which most secular discussions on or about contemporary Africa take place (and certainly this applies to the bulk of academic and journalistic production), such pessimism exists within Winners' Chapel only to the extent that it is decried as a false and self-fulfilling mentality propagated by the devil in cooperation with Africa's indigenous spirits. In short, it exists only as a foil against which the righteous optimism of the true Christian is set. It is not for nothing that Shiloh 2006 was even tagged "Destined to Win."

The Self as Spirit, the Self as Destiny

This idealism is perhaps even more pronounced when applied to the individual than when applied to "the nation" in the abstract. As with the nation, it is spirit that is thought to determine a person's essential character, consciousness and destiny. It is in this sense that Oyedepo

[11] Awolowo was, from the 1950s until his death in 1987, one of the most prominent Yoruba politicians. He is broadly considered one of the "fathers" of Nigerian independence.

(2006b: 9) declares that "Christianity is neither a religion nor a philosophy. It is not belonging to an organization or a church; it is the release of the life of God into a human vessel." Very often, adherents even refer disparagingly to the supposedly non-born-again members of mainline denominations as those "who are Christians, but not *Christians*." The first meaning is sociological, the second spiritual.

In many respects, the Pentecostal notion of the self as spiritually determined can be understood largely as an extension of the Yoruba concept of *ori*, which translates both as "personality-soul" and "destiny." In Yoruba thought, the *ori* is a spiritual essence present inside the individual's head, the most important determinant of an individual's disposition, subjectivity, and destiny (Idowu 1962: 170–171, Awolalu 1979: 9). But whereas one's *ori* is said to be directly inherited from one's ancestors in a process of partial reincarnation (and therefore closely related to principles of biological lineage and geographic locality), the Pentecostal notion of Christian subjectivity as something anchored exclusively in the perfect and undifferentiated universality of the Holy Spirit represents, by contrast, a radical decontextualization of the subject. Essentially, the act of becoming "born-again" is represented within Pentecostal praxis as an event that extricates the subject from the social and biological moorings that are otherwise thought to influence and even define it.

Oyedepo is keenly aware of this principle of local spiritual inheritance, and much of Winners' praxis is oriented toward using the decidedly transnational power of the Holy Spirit to break with the witches, ancestors, and other spiritual forces thought to obstruct the development of both individuals and the nation.[12] Oyedepo's *Possessing your Possessions* even comprises something of an extended treatise on this topic. It begins as follows:

> Every redeemed child of God has an enviable heritage in Him, possessions of great value…
>
> Heritage as defined in the dictionary is that which can be inherited such as virtues, possessions, characters etc. Heritages are usually passed down a particular lineage, family, etc.…
>
> When you accept Jesus as your Lord and Saviour, you become born again; something significant happens to you, you consciously step out of Satan's fold into God's fold. God comes into your heart and gives you His own life. Your old nature gives way and a new nature of Christ is born in

[12] For an excellent description of this phenomenon in Ghana, see Meyer (1998).

> you (2 Cor. 5: 17). You are, therefore, referred to as a new creature, and are now connected to the divine nature of God. You are empowered to stop living a mere human life where you were helplessly subjected to situations and circumstance…
>
> When you come to Jesus, a spiritual re-birth, which necessitates a spiritual transfer, takes place, and a new growth (in the spiritual realm) starts off in you. New birth is not a religion; it is a translation, an initiation into a new realm of life. (Oyedepo 2006b: 5–13)

In effect, Oyedepo implores his followers to replace their socially, historically, and even tribally and racially specific identities (i.e., heritages, nature, situations and circumstances, family, lineage, Satan's fold) with a new spiritual heritage rooted in Christ. Whereas a merely human life is associated with the limitations imposed by that human's particular lineage and environment (and also with the physical temptations to sin), life in the spiritual realm is bound by nothing other than a Christian's own ambition.

Of crucial importance in this respect is the widespread understanding of the self as a fairly open entity that is in constant interaction with its surroundings via both metaphysical and psychosocial processes. Within this ontology, the mind's perceptions are said to be caused by external forces acting on it (i.e., witchcraft, revelation, media), but also are thought to exhibit a significant power to manifest in the seen world the images and narratives of private consciousness.

> You are where you are because of how far you can see. God says as far as your eyes can see, it shall be given unto you. But all you have seen is poverty, no wonder you are wearing it as a cloak. You have seen sickness, so it becomes your companion. That's why you are where you are….
>
> By virtue of your new birth, old things are passed away, behold all things have become new. So, you have a new brain, a new mentality, and new perspective….

Until you change the way you think, you cannot change the way you live. The cause of poverty is more of the mind than it is of the hand. It is more of mentality than it is of activity. As a man thinks in his heart so is he. Likewise, until your mentality is healed, your recovery is not in view. It is your mental picture that determines your actual future. The mind has to be repositioned before a recovery can be experienced. Therefore, it takes possessing a possibility mentality to recover your economic dignity. (Oyedepo 2006b: 52, 37, 68).

In these passages, Oyedepo asserts that Christians have the power to overcome the poverty of their surroundings largely by refusing to

see it. In this imagining, whereas the non-born-again person remains a slave to his or her environment via the perceptions he or she takes in, the "new birth" enables the Christian to overcome this essentially sociological dynamic simply through the power of projection.

Although the Pentecostal embrace of this determining power of spirit over and against other explanatory frameworks (i.e., sociological, biological, historical, etc.) is broadly consistent with the idealism of African philosophy in many of its forms (Henry 2000: 5), what imparts to the movement its genuinely radical character is the relative absence of non-spiritual points of reference within the episteme. This absence effectively allows adherents a greater freedom in the use and interpretation of spirit than has historically been the case in most other settings in the country, Christian or otherwise.

In part, this development is a function of the absence of any overarching ecclesiastical authority capable of validating either specific practices or specific leaders, as is the case in the mainline denominations. But perhaps more critically, the expert practices of dissimulation and fraud (e.g., "419" scams), which are increasingly pursued as strategies for the accumulation of wealth and power in many arenas, have created an extraordinary level of social mistrust across all levels of society.[13] In essence, this means that people no longer have faith in the appearance of things and find few reliable authorities to whom to turn in evaluating the truth or falsity of any representation. For instance, in seeking spiritual advice, Nigerian Pentecostals must choose from a seemingly infinite marketplace of pastors and churches locked in intense competition for new adherents, and also must take into account the consensus opinion among born-agains that many pastors are, in fact, witches who falsely attribute to God their miraculous powers in a bid for ever greater audiences. One would think that scripture might offer a stable point of reference, but even in this respect the faithful are left with relatively little guidance: Pentecostal theology classically asserts that the Bible can be properly interpreted only by the active involvement of the Holy Spirit, placing on the individual what is essentially the full burden of discerning what portion of his or her own thoughts are, in fact, genuine messages from God, rather than being merely the product of one's "Adamic" or "natural" mind. Add to this a

[13] Cf. Apter 2005; Mbembe 2001. The title of this chapter comes in part from Apter's work, *The Pan-African Nation*, which, though it does not address religious practice directly, analyses many of the same themes as those covered here.

pervasive sense of insecurity fed by high levels of crime, road accidents, political violence, economic volatility and illness, and the end result is one in which believers have a relatively meager portion of incontrovertible and/or stable "reality" against which to check their experiences.

One prominent consequence of this absence of a stable reference is an explosion of testimonies to miraculous encounters, revelation foremost among them. Once understood as a rare event, revelation is now spoken of as a general way of life, a continuous partnering with God in all of one's thoughts and decisions. To a fair extent, the word has come to take on a meaning more akin to meditation, brain-storming, reflection, planning, or strategic thinking as employed in contemporary American usage, significantly blurring the line between human and divine sources of consciousness. In the lives of many adherents, it appears that what is understood as the spiritual aspects of the self have progressively displaced what in other times was thought of more mundanely as the ordinary functioning of the mind in interaction with its surroundings.

The Spirit of Pan-Africanism

Marshall-Fratani (2001) has previously described the formation of such "delocalized" subjects in Nigeria as intimately related to the Pentecostal movement's intensive use of widely circulated media products in the formation of both individual and collective identities. Echoing this analysis, I argue that the Pentecostal embrace of the Holy Spirit as the sole anchor of subjectivity is the primary theological expression of such demoralized selves. Throughout the 1970s, '80s and '90s, the growth of this theology, occurring in tandem with the broadly perceived decline in national feeling across much of sub-Saharan Africa, created the impression among many observers that the growth of trans*local* religious practice was intrinsically linked with the intensification of trans*national* identification. However, the rising nationalism of churches such as Winners' Chapel conflicts sharply with this hypothesis.

Rather, the media-fuelled growth of such 'demoralized' subjects appears to have acted as an essential precondition for the reconstitution of both national and transnational identifications. Within a nation characterized by extraordinary heterogeneity and with shallow historical foundations, this redefinition of identity and its determinants,

at the very least, creates the conceptual space within which projects of common purpose, national or transnational, can take shape. This ascendant nationalism, built on the spiritual ontology described above, is expressed perhaps most strikingly in Oyedepo's surprising pleas to his congregation to resist the temptation to migrate to First World economic centers. In his 382-page tome, *Understanding Financial Prosperity*, Oyedepo includes the following:

> Hear this: Africans, Europeans, Americans or whoever, may be offering themselves for sale, but under the covenant, I will always prevail! Every condition is conducive for the covenant. I am saying this so you can possess a tireless spirit, a tireless approach to what the Lord is taking us into. Oh it's amazing!
>
> Many have escaped to Europe or America because things are hard at home, only to become slaves there. Just for money! There is no nation on the earth where there is no poverty, and there is no nation on the earth where there is no wealth. There is no nation on the earth where there are no wealthy people and at the same time homeless people.
>
> Brace up, friend! If it won't work for you where you are, it may never work for you anywhere else. Brace up! I see a new day for you!
>
> Yes, God can send you to any nation of the earth. Why not? He is the Lord of all the earth. But there is no escape in any nation. *Without a covenant covering, you remain a victim wherever you go*. The covenant is it! (2005: 36–37; emphasis added).

Within Winners' Chapel, if there is any one ideal position for the African to assume with respect to the various national and transnational identifications competing for one's attention in life, it is that a 'Winner' should be able to perform at a First World level of professional excellence, but still recognize that his or her mission in God's plan is to uplift Africa through Christian work, both spiritual and economic. The revelation Oyedepo received on August 27, 1987, while traveling "in the United States of America for a meeting," bears this out. According to his testimony (2006a: 94), it was then that the Lord said to Oyedepo, "Arise, get down home and make My people rich," an injunction not only patterned on God's command to Moses ("Go and set my people free" [cf. Gifford 2004]), but also one that figures as an inversion and even fulfillment of Exodus: salvation and liberation is brought about not by a flight from Africa, but as a return to it.

These short examples are just a few of the many ways in which Oyedepo effectively mobilizes the idealist and, in fact, teleological conception of the human being to negate popular arguments about the intrinsic value or worth of different nations or nationalities. One of the

more intriguing questions raised by this perspective—and one which, to the best of my knowledge, has not been addressed in the existing literature—is what its implications might be for the changing nature of ideas about race both on the continent and in the New Diaspora. For instance, in Oyedepo's revelation, what did God mean by "My people"? It is not a question easily resolved.

Whereas words like "origins," "heritage," "tribe," and "race" provided the dominant motifs for the African nationalisms of the early postcolonial era, the newer born-again model focuses far more on "destiny" and "spirit"' in its formation of a layered postcolonial nationalist and Pan-Africanist public. Without this model, I find it doubtful that the movement could have succeeded in walking the fine tightrope it navigates between the desire to identify with a non-racial transnational community, and at the same time espouse an Afro-centric orientation as a source of pride and empowerment for its membership. As Appiah so brilliantly demonstrates in his studies of Pan-Africanist thought, notions of community anchored on an ideal of common character or origin lead ultimately to a dead end in Africa, as elsewhere. Appiah argues that because sameness and difference are everywhere part of the same continuum, efforts to categories or to distinguish one group from another on this basis alone are always arbitrary, and contain within them a logic tending toward ever narrower and narrower identifications (i.e., race, continent, region, nation, ethnic group, village, clan, family, etc.). To highlight the solidarity of the ethnic group within this paradigm is, in effect, also to draw attention to the difference between ethnic groups, undermining the very significance of the category of nation all together—a logic that can be repeated at very stage along the continuum. As an antidote to this, Appiah suggests that commitments to the postcolonial nation in sub-Saharan Africa are at their strongest when linked to a vision that transcends the boundaries of any one set of origins or essential characteristics. Recalling his youth in newly independent Ghana, Appiah succinctly articulates this idea as follows: "Being proud to be Ghanaian, for many of us, was tied up with what Nkrumah was doing not for Ghana but for Africa" (Appiah 1992: 163).

It seems that the current upsurge in Nigerian nationalism as witnessed at Winners' Chapel and other Pentecostal denominations follows a similar formula: pride in the nation is reinforced by the leading role it plays in spreading the gospel to other (usually less-well-oiled) African nations, as well as to the spiritually deficient societies of

the West. Oyedepo's 2006 independence-day homily to the nation illustrates this point well, both with the claim that "wherever Nigeria goes, there Africa goes" and also with a prayer that the Nigerian-based church "should take her place of authority among nations."[14] Of particular note also is the way in which Oyedepo frequently refers to "us" or "we" without specifying the parameters of the community he is addressing. At one level, the "us" is all members of the mystical body of Christ. At other times, however, the message seems to appeal more directly to an explicitly black audience, ambiguously Nigerian, African, and Diasporic. Perhaps the best example of this practice is found in his *Winning the War Against Poverty*, one of the Bishop's many titles dealing with questions of financial striving. In it, Oyedepo directly contextualizes the struggle for individual gain within a broader Pan-African history of struggle against slavery and colonialism:

> Though Africa's input in America's sugarcane plantation as labourers was part of what helped in re-vitalizing the economy of America, the African is still not considered as any creation of relevance, because the voice of a poor man is not heard, and his wisdom is despised. So, no matter what we know as Africans, until we recover our economic dignity, we will remain the foot mat of the world. That is why economic recovery is a must. Our human dignity as a people must be recovered….
>
> I know that in my lifetime, Africa will start causing the same positive concern that China is causing the world today. No longer should Africans rush abroad to continue the slavery of our forefathers; we should all remain at home, and with our individual vision and mission begin to make contributions that will move the continent towards economic recovery. With all of us polling our resources together, very soon we will cause an eruption that the world cannot ignore. Very soon, it will be Africa's turn for an industrial revolution!
>
> The economic dignity of this continent will be recovered. You may choose to be a part of it or be somewhere else on a slave trade trip and be hearing of what is happening back home. It is a choice you must make. (2006a: 7–14)

A generation ago, when the pre-eminent voices within Pentecostalism internationally were still a set of white, politically conservative Americans such as Oral Roberts, Kenneth Hagin, and Kenneth Copland, a sermon such as this would certainly have struck a discordant note against much of the material then fuelling the growth of the movement in Africa. By contrast, the most influential foreign pastors

[14] Observation/Cassette, Canaan Land, Ota, Nigeria. October 1, 2006.

within the Nigerian marketplace at present are the Bahamian Myles Munroe and black American T.D. Jakes, both of whom address their messages largely, though not exclusively, to a transcontinental black audience. When Munroe came to Shiloh in 2006 to address the crowd, he won huge cheers for prefacing one portion of his sermon with the phrase, "we in this continent—yes, 'we.' I used to be here." He went on to proclaim that he was "convinced every nation was created by God to follow a divine path," that "the value of a nation is found in its destiny," and that "destiny is the source of personal and national discipline." He even opened his sermon with the statement: "I love Nigeria. God is blessing Nigeria through Bishop Oyedepo."

But while the sense of both Pan-African and national solidarity is reinforced through such discourse, at the same time it also gives voice to a decidedly non-racial vision. The basic premise of the church is, after all, the insistence that one's character and fortunes in life are a result exclusively of interaction with the Holy Spirit—the same the world over—and definitely not determined by one's lineage or any social factors. Slavery to situations and circumstances is the unfortunate condition of the not-yet saved, but it is never true of the genuine Christian. It is in this sense that the movement deviates sharply from the predominant stream within Pan-Africanist thought historically, within which notions of community and identity have been constructed largely on the basis of biologized conceptions of intrinsic racial qualities (Appiah 1992). Even the profound spiritualism of *Negritude* never fully overcame this essentialism, premised as it was on the transhistorical linkage between a biological lineage and a common spiritual source.

If anything, Oyedepo's discursive construction of a transnational black audience most closely parallels the Marxist tradition in Pan-Africanist thought, in that the basis of community is predicated on a common historical predicament imposed by slavery, colonialism, and underdevelopment. For instance, when Oyedepo writes, in one of his occasional sweeping Eden-Fall-Redemption narratives of African history, that "up until 1400, the whole world was said to be at the same level of civilization and development. So, what happened to us?" it is not too difficult to hear the echoes of Walter Rodney (1974) reverberating palpably within the movement. The key point to emphasize here is that although the Holy Spirit is spoken of as uniquely concentrated and having a historically contingent function within this variously Nigerian, African, and Pan-African imagined community,

nonetheless the Holy Spirit is also the common property of all people worldwide, provided that they choose salvation. And it is for this reason that identities such as Nigerian, African, Black, Christian, Pentecostal can complement rather than conflict with one another. The focus is always on complementing roles within a common providential plan, rather than on the distinctions and similarities by which each category might be defined.

In his treatment of Pan-Africanist philosophy, Appiah argues against the very existence of such a thing as race at all, and does so on the basis of a careful consideration of recent findings in genetics, sociology, anthropology, cognitive science, evolutionary biology, and mathematics. To an extraordinary extent, it seems as if Pentecostal theology, by going in the opposite direction toward a nearly complete rejection of the materialist paradigm, may have wound up in a very similar place. Though it is hardly plausible to suggest that notions of race are fading away, it is also far from clear what this concept might signify in the absence of even a nominally materialist worldview.

Conclusion: The (Trans)Nationalism of Africa's Middle Class

Oyedepo's reference to Africans living abroad as those on a "slave trade trip" does not sit easily with the church's stated intent of spreading the gospel to Europe and other continents, its frequent praise of born-again African businessmen who have realized financial success in the First World, or the pride the membership takes in the fact that the London congregation is now more than 3000 strong.[15] A plain contradiction on the face of it, this is one of many such internal tensions within the church's praxis that is not easily resolved through textual analysis alone. Part of the challenge in making sense of such often-conflicting statements is that the Pentecostal strategy for church growth is heavily dependent on the use of succinct sound bytes for the communication of its message, and particularly those of a type can be inscribed comfortably within the space of a bumper sticker. No matter how many different ways you say it, phrases such as "from zero to hero!" can communicate only so much subtlety.

[15] "About Living Faith Church." David Abioye. *http://www.davidabioye.org/aboutlfc.php*.

Though it is my experience that most adherents of born-again churches in Nigeria reflect rather substantively on their beliefs, a comparable level of nuance is not always reflected in these rhetorical devices. At the same time, both lay adherents and church leaders do directly contradict themselves on many issues. Though these contradictions lead many would be participants to dismiss the movement's claims outright, it is also true that the internal tensions within Pentecostal thought strongly reflect the precarious social positions occupied by those who make up the bulk of its membership—the vast, mostly young, upwardly aspiring middle class of Africa's cities and towns. For those who have a little education, but whose financial or social accomplishments in life still fall far short of the outsize expectations placed on them by their parents or kinship networks—which are further stimulated by the commercial media and even the churches themselves—the movement's teachings about wealth, status, and also nation speak not only to the pride felt in the relative privilege of this demographic, but also to the pervasive sense of frustration in not accomplishing more.

Though the membership varies somewhat between churches, Winners' Chapel members are a cohort which, by and large, has achieved substantial fluency in English, feels comfortable using computers and the internet, and has received at least some level of postsecondary education. But the same membership also is characterized by many who struggle to find steady sources of income, who live as long-term guests in the homes of older relatives or benefactors, and whose main goal during their involuntarily extended youth is achieving the financial security and independence understood as a prerequisite for marriage and adulthood. It is a group with a lot of hope, a lot of access, but which also spends a great deal of time crammed into public buses, pinching every penny, and sitting at home in the dark, because the cost of running a generator is too prohibitive for daily use.

The mix of pride and shame with which Winners' members view their nation and continent is reflective of this highly ambiguous social position. Largely shut out of real opportunities to participate in the transnational mobility of Africa's true cosmopolitan elite, adherents also have access to and, indeed, genuinely participate in trans-local cultural and economic flows, to the envy of many in their society and own social support networks. Ultimately, the churches' message both validates members' desires to participate in a global community and all the attendant prestige it confers, but that message also reconciles the

membership to lives in which political and economic boundaries do indeed exist in the physical world. The trick, it seems, is for members to carve out for themselves strategies for success within the spaces that will accommodate them, but also to refuse to allow one's horizons and ambitions in life to be too closely circumscribed by the relative underdevelopment of those spaces.

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CHAPTER TWELVE

TRANSNATIONAL TRADITION: THE GLOBAL DYNAMICS OF "AFRICAN TRADITIONAL RELIGION"

Marleen de Witte

In 1982, a former Roman Catholic priest in Ghana named Kwabena Damuah held a press conference in Accra to announce the founding of the Afrikania Mission—a religious organization dedicated to reviving and reforming Afrikan Traditional Religion (ATR) as a source of inspiration and emancipation for Africans in Africa and the African Diaspora.[1] According to Afrikania's founding story, the need for such an organization had first occurred to Damuah while he was attending a World Religions Conference as the Ghanaian representative for the Catholic Church.[2] There, he was struck by the fact that each of the world's regions had sent representatives for its own religion—Islam, Christianity, Judaism, Buddhism, Hinduism, Confucianism—but all the African attendees represented Christianity or Islam. Nobody represented African indigenous religions. The idea of forming the Afrikania Mission to represent Afrikan Traditional Religion as a "world religion" was born.

The Afrikania Mission is a religious organization in Africa that is strongly transnational in its origins, ideologies, forms, and ambitions. Just as at the conference, however, African traditional religions hardly figure in the literature on religious transnationalism. African Christianity, and especially charismatic Pentecostalism, forcefully present themselves as exemplars of African religion going global, aided by

[1] Afrikania often spells Afrikan Traditional Religion with "k" as a protest against being misrepresented by outsiders' terms and as a claim to the right of self-representation. The phrase is capitalized, as are other world religions. In this chapter I will use the spelling "Afrikan Traditional Religion" to refer to Afrikania's reformulation of the various indigenous religious traditions in Africa, and "African traditional religion" to refer to other parties'—including academics'—understanding of it.

[2] The World Religions Conference is a multifaith conference initiated by the worldwide Ahmadiyya Muslim Jama'at over a century ago and regularly organized throughout many countries of the world. It is not known in which year and country Damuah attended the conference.

their strong global and diasporic presence and their widely publicized transnational connections. When it comes to African indigenous religions, most scholarly attention to transnationalism goes to the transatlantic movement of, for example, Yoruba religion (Clarke 2004), Vodun, or Maami Wata spirits (Drewal 2008). A growing number of scholars have explored the transnational histories and transformations of New World African religions, such as Brazilian Candomblé and Umbanda, Cuban Santería, and Haitian Vodou, which emerged out of transnational dialogues involving African, New World, and European actors (Matory 2005, Clarke 1998). However, the transnational dimensions of traditional religion in Africa itself, and especially the transnational dynamics of its revival by groups such as the Afrikania Mission, have received much less attention.

This neglect stems from the pervasive framing of African traditional religion as a local phenomenon, in opposition to the global field on which other religions recognizably play. A distinction is often made between "indigenous" or "community religions" and "transnational" or "world religions" (Platvoet 1993, cf. Cox 2007). Indigenous religions are seen as particular to a single society and as strongly localized; world religions, such as Christianity, have spread across geographical space and are seen as transnational or global. This distinction, however, has a history that is itself thoroughly global and carries a political load, which has far-reaching consequences for contemporary formulations of ATR. Taking as an ethnographic case study the Ghanaian Afrikania Mission's representation of traditional African religion as a world religion of the same stature as Christianity or Islam, this chapter argues against treating neo-traditional African religion and new African Christianity as mutually opposed and distinct religious phenomena. Instead, it proposes to see them as part of one religious field with a shared and strongly transnational history, in which they influence each other and define themselves *vis-à-vis* each other. While the point is by now well established that African Christianity, as part of a global religion, cannot be studied without reference to the local religious contexts in which it manifests, the point to be made here is that African traditional religion should equally be studied as part of the historical globalization of religion. This globalization involves both the global spread of world religions such as Christianity and the globalization of the concept of religion itself. This chapter shows that neo-traditional African religion is inextricably linked with both.

The chapter's first section traces the transnational genealogy of the notion of African traditional religion, which gained prominence when the first Christian missionaries arrived on the West African coast. Throughout history, missionaries, travelers, ethnographers, colonial officials, Pan-Africanist intellectuals, African theologians, cultural revolutionaries, post-colonial state officials, educators, media producers, chiefs, shrine priests, and Pentecostal pastors—as well as current scholars of religion and social scientists—have all produced their versions of African traditional religion. The chapter's second section will explore Afrikania's history, to show how its reformulation of ATR speaks to all of these, while continuing this "long conversation"—to use Comaroff and Comaroff's (1991) phrase—between global and local actors. The third section discusses how Afrikania's reformation and representation of ATR as a world religion involved the adoption of globally circulating Christian forms and ideas. While explicitly posited as an authentically African alternative to the presumed foreignness of Christianity, Afrikania took up a Protestant concept of religion and a Catholic format for worship service. Increasingly, one can see the influence of charismatic Pentecostalism on Afrikania, especially in the way that the group presents itself publicly and in the group's renewed emphasis on spirit powers.

In short, this chapter explores how transnational dynamics have shaped and transformed the Afrikania Mission in Ghana and its revival of Afrikan Traditional Religion in national and transnational spaces.

Conceptualizing "African Traditional Religion"

Dominant modes of representing African traditional religion in present-day Ghana, both those of the Africanists, who favor these traditions, and those of the Pentecostals, who oppose them, place traditional religion in direct opposition to Christianity. In doing so, they frame traditional religion in a dualism of local tradition and global modernity that is as old as the encounter between Africa and Europe. The point here is not to deconstruct the imaginary and thus misleading category of African traditional religion and to unmask it as a historical and politically charged construction. That argument has been well established by others (e.g. Chidester 1996; Meyer 1999; Peel 1990, 1994; Ranger 1988; Shaw 1990). Instead, I wish to show how this historical and thoroughly globalized construction has influenced

contemporary Ghanaian imaginations of African traditional religion and that presented by the Afrikania Mission in particular.

Intersecting historical discourses and practices contributed to the construction of ATR as a species of the globalized category of religion. Early travelers, Christian missions and African indigenous churches, anthropologists, the colonial and postcolonial state, Pan-Africanism, and, more recently, global and local media all participated in the "long conversation" (Comaroff and Comaroff 1991) between Africa and Europe that shaped notions of "Africa," "tradition," and "religion" (Ludwig and Adogame 2004). Directly or indirectly, these influenced Afrikania's project of reforming and promoting ATR.

Many Africanists today hold that Africa does not exist, that it is an invention (Mudimbe 1988; Appiah 1992), an idea (Mudimbe 1994), a construction that does not exist outside the discourses that produce(d) it (Mbembe 2002). Clearly, the notion of "Africa" makes sense only in a global context. From their first arrival on the African continent, Europeans produced essentialist notions of Africa that have profoundly influenced contemporary ideas, including Afrikania's, about Africanness and what it means to be African. Eighteenth century traders, nineteenth century missionaries, and late nineteenth to early twentieth century colonial officials all produced accounts of Africa as a "dark continent" and the African as "savage," "barbaric," "primitive," or "child-like." These legitimized the superiority of white people over black people, and they justified such actors' respective projects of slave trade, conversion to Christianity, and colonial domination. In contrast, many early anthropologists' and travelers' accounts conveyed a romantic idea of Africa and the African, who were seen as still possessing an authenticity that the civilized, modern Westerner had lost. What the negative, denigrating and the positive, romantic discourses had in common, however, was that both constructed the African as the fundamental Other to the European. Both posited an *essential difference* between Africa and Europe (Fabian 1983, 2000).

The a-historical and often racial notion of Africa that characterized European discourses about Africa was taken up by Pan-Africanism, despite the latter's positive valuation of the black race. African-American Pan-Africanists such as Crummel, Blyden, and Du Bois continued the essential distinction between the black and the white race that had been used to justify the colonization of Africa. This distinction in turn set the tone for the debate on African identity in Africa itself. As Appiah (1992) and Mbembe (2002) critically argued, African

intellectuals, in thinking about Africanity, instead of radically criticizing colonial assumptions, reappropriated the fundamental categories of the Western discourse that they claimed to oppose, reproducing their dichotomies, foremost that of "blacks" *versus* "whites." Anti-colonial and nationalist movements in many parts of Africa drew upon the transnational ideology of Pan-Africanism. In Ghana, Kwame Nkrumah spoke of African personality. Much later, Jerry Rawlings' 1981 military coup called for a cultural revolution, a return to the nation's cultural roots. Such political quests for Africanness had a religious counterpart in, for example, the rise of so-called African Independent Churches (Fernandez 1978, Meyer 2004b) or the move toward enculturation or "Africanization" in the Catholic Church in Africa (Pobee 1988). These were reactions against the foreignness of missionary Christianity and as such cannot be understood outside the context of globalization. The Afrikania Mission can be placed in this tradition. As the next section will show, African-American Pan-Africanist thinking, Rawlings' emphasis on Africanness, and the Africanization movement within the Catholic Church all had a direct bearing on Damuah's foundation of the Afrikania Mission.

This imagination of 'Africa' has been closely linked to the notion of tradition. The idea that African societies are dominated by tradition whereas Western societies are dominated by rational modernity has long characterized the study of African culture, religion, and ritual in particular (Comaroff and Comaroff 1993: xv; see also Steegstra 2004). 'Tradition,' then, has come to be inseparable from 'modernity,' with tradition generally thought of as essentially local and modernity as a globalizing force. The "self-sustaining antinomy" (Comaroff and Comaroff 1993: xii) between "local, traditional" societies in Africa and "modern European civilization" underpins the long-standing European myth of modernization as linear progress that denies Europe's Others their part in a shared global history. Since Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger's (1983) pioneering work on the invention of tradition, anthropological and historical research has come to focus instead on how "traditions" ' are constructed as part of modernist and Globalizing projects of mission, colonialism, and post-colonial nationalism. Also, the pervasive imagination of Africa as traditional has stimulated a long line of African scholarly thinking about African identity and modernity that attempted to bridge the perceptual gap between being African and being modern. However, the discursive framework that parallels an opposition of global to local with that of modernity to tradition

proves hard to eradicate. This modernist dichotomy often fails to notice that "traditional religion" is constructed as modernity-*cum*-Christianity's Other in the historical dialogue between The West and The Rest.

In Ghana, as in many parts of Africa, the essentialist notion of tradition (and its sister notion of culture), which was developed by missionaries, anthropologists and colonizers, has been appropriated by the postcolonial state for the project of building an independent nation. In its search for an African national identity, the Ghanaian state promoted a cultural ideology of *Sankofa*—literally "going back to fetch," returning to cultural roots in order to move forward—and stimulated the celebration of traditional festivals, media productions about culture and tradition, research on Ghanaian traditions in the African Studies departments of national universities, and education about culture and tradition at public schools (Coe 2005). In its efforts to forge a national culture, the Ghanaian state thus transformed, objectified and nationalized local cultural traditions. Afrikana's struggle for African tradition can be traced directly to the state's cultural ideology and to the intellectualist, symbolic approach to African tradition that dominates African scholarship and the educational curriculum. At first sight, its reformulation of Afrikan Traditional Religion as a modern world religion seems to defy the age-old local-African-tradition-*versus*-globalizing-Western-modernity paradigm by presenting ATR as authentically African and modern at the same time. Yet, as I will argue below, it remains trapped in this Western framework that has shaped the construction of "African" and "tradition" as local Otherness in the history of the encounter between Africa and Europe and still determines the "limits of the discursive space" (Steegstra 2004) within which Ghanaians make sense of the world.

Like the concepts of Africa and tradition, the notions of religion and religions also emerged out of the encounter between Christianity and other religions on colonial frontiers, and can therefore not be taken for granted (Asad 1993, Chidester 1996, Comaroff and Comaroff 1991, Meyer 1999, Peel 1990). Failure to recognize this would blind us not only to the unequal relations of power that some scholars find inherent in the very concept of religion (Asad 1993, Chidester 1996), but also to the contemporary consequences of this history for representations of African traditional religion such as those discussed here. As David Chidester (1996: 10–11) points out in his brilliant study of the emergence of the conceptual categories of "religion" and "religions" on

colonial South African frontiers, throughout the past centuries travelers, Christian missionaries, ethnographers, and colonial officials all generated knowledge about religion and religions—and thus participated in practices of comparative religion on the front lines of intercultural contact. "They practiced comparisons that mediated between the familiar and the strange, producing knowledge about the definition and nature, the taxonomy, genealogy, and morphology of the human phenomenon of religion." Thereby they not only interpreted the practices of the African people they encountered within the known framework of Christianity, but in this process of 'discovering' indigenous religions also reinvented all the religions of the world. I put discovering between inverted commas, because, as Chidester argues, "we cannot assume that some 'real' religion waited to be discovered, since the very terms *religion* and *religions* were products of the colonial situation" (1996: 16; cf. Van de Veer 2001).

Similar practices of religious comparison and translation between indigenous religious practices and Christianity took place in West Africa, as Birgit Meyer has shown in the case of the Peki Ewe (1999) and John Peel has in the case of the Yoruba (1990, 2000). In the former case, Meyer argues that the historical encounter between Pietist missionaries and Ewe people involved both the diabolization of indigenous religious practice and the translation of the Pietist message into its language. This equated Ewe concepts with their (supposed) Christian counterparts, while at the same time drawing a strict boundary between Christianity and Ewe religion. In his analysis of the encounter between missionaries and Yoruba *Ifa* diviners in the nineteenth century, Peel observes that missionary agendas similarly depended upon the construction of homologies between Christianity and Yoruba "heathendom."

From the arrival of early missionaries, travelers, and ethnographers, throughout the colonial era and beyond, African religious practice has been historically constructed as fetishist, primitive, animistic, magical or traditional in opposition to modern and Christian, and shrine priests have had to defend their practices by referring to Christianity. At the same time, through comparison, taxonomy and the construction of homologies, indigenous religious practices were presented in accordance with Christian understandings of the "essential features" of religion, a system of representations with regard to God that was shared by believers (Meyer 1999: 62). The reification of what ultimately came to be known as African traditional religion was largely the product of "the paradigmatic status accorded in religious studies to the

Judeo-Christian tradition and of the associated view of 'religion as text' " (Shaw 1990: 339), within both Western and African universities (see also Ranger 1988). Rosalind Shaw argues that while Geoffrey Parrinder (1954) gave the term "African traditional religion" its hegemony within African religious studies, it was the African scholars of African religions in the pan-African movement of cultural nationalism during the 1950s and 1960s who had the most enduring impact (cf. Ludwig and Adogame 2004). Works such as those by the Nigerian scholar E. Bolaji Idowu (1962, 1973) and the Kenyan theologian John Mbiti (1969, 1970) constructed African traditional religion as a single, pan-African belief system comparable and equivalent to Christianity. In Ghana, the works of J.B. Danquah (1944) and Kofi Asare Opoku (1978) are significant in this respect.

In *African Religions in Western Scholarship* the Ugandan writer and anthropologist Okot p'Bitek (1971) launched a vehement critique of the scholarship on African traditional religion, with the assertion that scholars, both European and African who had been trained in Christian traditions centered their analyses on European concerns. Their Christianization of African religious deities and concepts, he argued, led to a concentration on matters distant from the actual concerns of Africans (see also Westerlund 1985; Platvoet *et al.* 1996; Ludwig and Adogame 2004). In particular, such scholars gave priority to belief and cosmology over action and practice. They especially emphasized African concepts of a High God and some made claims to monotheism (Idowu 1973). African religious studies authorized a cosmology-oriented representation of indigenous religions as African traditional religion that is still strongly hegemonic and transmitted through school textbooks, the media, and other public channels. More than a century after missionaries started constructing homologies between Christianity and African religions, this version is still characterized by very similar practices of selection and translation.

The genealogy of African traditional religion sketched here has created a paradox of otherness and sameness. On the one hand, the parallel dualisms of African versus Western, traditional versus modern, local versus global, and traditional religion versus Christianity still shape the discursive frame and terminology in which debates on tradition, culture and Africanness are cast, both in Ghana and throughout Africa (even though these dualisms have been deconstructed by Africanist scholars). Even today, any talk about traditional religion in Ghana, both popular and intellectual, both pro- and contra-tradition,

seems to be stuck in this modernist framework. This debate relegates African tradition to a distant localized past "before the white man came," and presents it as a conceptual opposite to global, Western, modern, and Christian thinking. On the other hand, Africanist theology created an authoritative version of African traditional religion that depends on a root similarity with Western Christian religious forms, hence values African religion only by the grace of such sameness. This paradox of presenting African religious practices as both opposed to and similar to Christianity is also central to Afrikania's reconstruction of ATR as a world religion.

The Afrikania Mission: Afrikan Traditional Religion in the World

In its struggle for an African religious and cultural identity, the Afrikania Mission has engaged in this "long conversation," which constructed indigenous religious practices in Africa as "traditional religion." In response to the historical Christianization of Africa and the current (charismatic) Christian dominance in Ghana, the Afrikania Mission, founded in 1982, aims at reconstructing Afrikan Traditional Religion as a modern pan-African religion to serve as a source of African pride and strength—and also as a religious base for political nationalism and pan-Africanism (Damuah 1982, 1984, 1990; see also Gyanfosu 2002).

Two aspects of the biography of the movement's founder, Kwabena Damuah, are crucial to appreciating the Afrikania Mission's transnational and cross-religious dimensions: his Catholic priestly career and his educational stay in the United States.[3] After seven years working as a Roman Catholic priest in Ghana, in 1964 Damuah went to the United States to further his studies, earning a Ph.D. in theology at Howard University. During this twelve-year study and teaching stay in the US, he was inspired by the African-American emancipation movement and by issues of Black experience, Black Power, identity, and dignity. When he returned to Ghana in 1976, many saw him as a controversial revolutionary and a rebel, and his efforts to "Africanize" the Catholic mass—for example through incorporating local drumming—brought him into conflict with his bishop (Gyanfosu 1995). Nevertheless, he

[3] For more biographical details, see Asare Opoku 1993, Boogaard 1993, De Witte 2008, Gyanfosu 1995, Schirripa 2000.

was sent to the World Religions Conference as the Ghanaian representative for the Catholic Church. It was here that the lack of representatives for African religion convinced him of the need to represent Afrikan Traditional Religion as a world religion in itself.

After Jerry Rawlings took power in 1981, he invited Damuah to take part in his revolutionary Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC). Damuah accepted, against the wish of the Catholic bishops, but left the government not long afterward to concentrate on the spiritual, cultural, religious and moral aspects of nation building. On December 22, 1982, he left the Roman Catholic Church and inaugurated the Afrikania Mission with a press conference at the Arts Centre in downtown Accra.[4] Thus conceived on a global religious platform, the Afrikania Mission was finally born at a national press conference.

Damuah was to lead the Afrikania Mission until his death in 1992, when he was succeeded by Kofi Ameve, a building contractor by profession. Like Damuah, Ameve was an ex-Catholic and a global traveler, and this profoundly influenced his ideas. Around 1980, he went to study in Cairo for some time. It was in Egypt that Ameve became particularly interested in the problems of Africa, of the Black man, in Black Egyptian history and civilization, and in its links with Black Africa. He told me, "It was there at the pyramids and other things that I realized that our history has to be rewritten. When I came back I discovered that Damuah was doing this and I joined him." Ameve was among the first nine Afrikania priests whom Damuah ordained in 1982 and became his deputy soon after.

What we have in the Afrikania Mission, then, is a religious movement that was conceived, founded and led by people whose biographies show strong transnational connections. Their stays abroad and their encounters with transnational ideologies such as Pan-Africanism have been fundamental to their ideas about the necessity to revive African traditional religion. Indeed, they have informed their very concept of this religion. It was in global contexts that the notions of Africa and tradition gained a special and religious urgency for them.

[4] Although in the Afrikania founding myth that circulates among members and leaders, Damuah's visit to the World Religions Conference is always stressed as the reason for his leaving the Roman Church, his decision should be understood against the broader biographical background of the conflict with his superiors over his Africanization of worship and his dedication to African selfhood and Pan-Africanism. These matters were not allowed enough space within the Church's power structure.

As appears from Afrikania publications by Damuah (1982, 1984, 1990) and Ameve (2002, n.d.), Afrikania was an explicitly nationalist movement with a strong political vision of African identity and national development (see also Asare Opoku 1993; De Witte 2008); Gyanfosu 2002; Schirripa 2000). Established as the religious branch of Rawlings's Revolution, it shared Rawlings's radical anti-Western and anti-Christian ideology. Rawlings also supported Damuah's initiative with a public address system, a van, airtime on state radio, and frequent visits to Afrikania meetings. In turn, Afrikania was highly uncritical of Rawlings's military regime, in contrast to the Christian churches which were far more critical. But Damuah did not concentrate only on the Ghanaian nation. Just as Ghana's first President, Kwame Nkrumah, actively devoted himself to the liberation of other African colonies after Ghana had reached independence, it was Damuah's ambition to create in Afrikania a spiritual basis for the liberation of the whole of Africa and for the Pan-African movement in general. Afrikania thus clearly has transnational aspirations and inspirational connections with transnational political movements, especially with Pan-Africanism and Black American emancipation. Among Afrikania's main sources of inspiration were Pan-Africanist and Black emancipatory literature and figures like Edward Blyden, Marcus Garvey, W.E.B. Dubois, Louis Farrakhan, Kwame Nkrumah, Sheick Anta Diop, and Jomo Kenyatta (Boogaard 1993: 321). During Sunday services, Damuah and other leaders would speak about them and quote from their works. Afrikania's weekly radio broadcast sometimes even featured (taped) speeches by Louis Farrakhan.

Under Damuah's leadership, the Afrikania Mission was briefly affiliated to Godianism, a very similar organization of African traditional religion that was started much earlier, in 1948, in Nigeria. Founded by Chief K.O.K Onyioha, it incorporated the earlier National Church of Nigeria and Arousa. Like the Afrikania Mission, it was an attempt to found a modern inter-ethnic Pan-African religion. It attracted considerable publicity in the 1970s. Despite the overlaps between Afrikania and Godianism that initially drew the leaders together, the differences in vision between them turned out to be too difficult to overcome, and the ties were broken.

Afrikania remains a pilgrim-site and a source of inspiration for visiting African-Americans, several of whom have been ordained into the Afrikania priesthood. Yet, after such foreign adherents—and sponsors—have left for the US, they seem to maintain little connection with

the Ghanaian group, instead organizing and directing their own activities. Contact remains limited to an occasional visit to Accra. Other overseas Afrikania branches have been established by Ghanaian Afrikania members who traveled abroad. Of the official branches in the UK, Canada, Washington, and New York, the Afrikania group in Montréal seems to be the most active with a once-a-month service and other activities. This group also has established quite an elaborate Afrikania website, containing much information about Afrikania's doctrine and belief system.[5] When I talked to Ameve about this in 2002, he remarkably did not know about this presence of Afrikania on the internet.

Apart from the founder's death, several developments in Ghanaian society during the 1990s had great implications for Afrikania's link to national politics and for the new directions Afrikania took over the subsequent decade. First, the return to democracy in 1992 implied the break of Afrikania's ties with the government. Although the democratic elections kept Rawlings in power, relations between the state and Afrikania became weaker, as the government from now on depended more on other powerful (religious) groups in society. In the competition for votes and popular support, it especially could not do without the increasingly popular Pentecostal and charismatic churches, which gained a strong public influence as the 1990s progressed (De Witte 2008, Gifford 2004, Meyer 2004b). These churches' negative attitude toward traditional culture and religion pushed the state's cultural policy of supporting tradition to the background. Afrikania came to face increasing competition from other religious groups, such that public self-presentation became more and more important. But whereas Afrikania had in the past enjoyed free airtime on state radio (as the only religious group to do so), it now lacked any form of government backing. With the liberalization and commercialization of the media, the airwaves became accessible to those who could pay for airtime. The new public sphere came to be dominated by the rich and media-conscious Pentecostal/charismatic churches, at the expense of less resourceful groups like Afrikania (De Witte 2008). Charismatic Pentecostalism became Afrikania's most powerful interlocutor and this had important consequences for the latter's representation of ATR (De Witte 2004, 2005a).

[5] *http://members.tripod.com/afrikania*. Accessed April 7, 2009.

Afrikan Traditional Religion in a Christian Format

Afrikania's promotion of ATR as a modern world religion implied an outspoken rejection of Christianity on the grounds that it is foreign, oppressive of African values, and mentally enslaving. Christianity can never sustain the development of the Ghanaian nation and the African continent, Afrikania leaders teach, because "the man that has come to the coast of Afrika to exploit the Afrikan can never give the Afrikan a god that can save him" (Ameve n.d.: 14). Despite this explicit non-Christian stance, it has, from its foundation to the present, drawn on Christian religious formats for the new African world religion. First, it was conceived in a global context that sees the various world religions as different from each other, but also as structurally comparable—most importantly, as varieties of "religion," a concept built on largely Western grounds. It may thus not be surprizing that Afrikania's reformation of ATR implied the adoption of a universalized, yet originally Protestant, concept of religion. Talal Asad (1993) has critiqued the long-taken-for-granted definition of religion as a system of belief, by pointing out its historical production. Interpretative or symbolic approaches to religion cannot be taken to be universal, because, he argued, they tend to reproduce a specifically modern, Protestant understanding, which is based on a view of religion as private and as a matter of belief. This view, he writes, fails to capture the actual content and politics of religious practices in other places and times (see also Meyer 2004a). What is important to stress here is that this Protestant definition of religion was globalized through missionization and through the discipline of religious studies. It still sets the parameters within which non-Christian groups such as the Afrikania Mission present themselves.

To create a systematic and coherent doctrine for Ghanaians and Africans in the diaspora as an alternative to Christianity, Afrikania has picked elements from traditional African religious belief, such as belief in multiple gods and spirits, in the power of ancestors manifested in dreams, and in possession, then has reformed and brought these together in an intellectualistic belief system. The result includes Holy Scriptures (*The Divine Acts*, Ameve n.d.), prophets, a list of commandments, and a standardized liturgy, prayers, and slogans. Other Afrikania terminology also indicates a Christian model of religion: church, conversion, liturgy, preaching, communion, offertory, and evangelization. These are not terms commonly used by traditional shrine priests to describe their practices. By recasting traditional religion in terms of

belief, teaching, and symbols, Afrikania subscribes to a universalist, modern definition of religion that has its roots in Protestantism (cf. Gombrich and Obeyesekere 1988). One of the instructions Ameve gave to prospective Afrikania priests, then, was to "remind people all the time what we believe in."[6] The reading out of Afrikania's seven "Proclamations," starting with "There is only one Supreme God" is a standard element of every Sunday service. One of the senior priests explained:

> The thing had to be intellectualized, otherwise you don't have a form and if you don't have a form, nobody can pick it and say this is what I believe in. You have to have a code of things that people believe in. Like you have the Apostles' creed of the Roman Catholic Church: "I believe in God Almighty, creator of the heaven and earth….", that you know you have something to believe in. You have to come up with a code of things, like this is what we believe, this is what we believe.[7]

Here we can discern the legacy of the long intellectual tradition of conceptualizing ATR in Christian terms.

In many respects, however, local religious traditions contradict modern ideas of religion. They are rather organized around practices of communicating with and influencing spirits as they are entangled with social, political and economic life. One way in which the tension between religion as belief and religion as access to spirits plays out in Afrikania is that while the movement professes to believe in the phenomenon of spirit possession, it is in practice very ambivalent about it because the wild and unruly behavior of some spirits as they appear in their mediums contradicts the image of respectability Afrikania seeks to portray.[8]

Another problem for Afrikania is that the ethnic and territorial specificity of local religious traditions hardly fits the formation of a common, Pan-African religious ideology and form. Interestingly, to solve this problem Afrikania has made recourse to ancient Egyptian religion and civilization. As the various local deities and their cults are often incompatible and even competing with each other, Afrikania had to look for a common, universal object of worship elsewhere. This was found in the supposed common religious source of all these cults,

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[6] Kofi Ameve, lecture to Afrikania students, August 20, 2001.

[7] Yaw Osono, lecture to Afrikania students, August 22, 2001.

[8] For an extensive analysis of this and related tensions in Afrikania, see De Witte (2008).

ancient Egypt.[9] Damuah, influenced by the popularity of ancient Egyptian spirituality among American Pan-Africanists, appropriated the Sun God Amen-Ra or Ra into Afrikania's doctrine as "our supreme Creator and universal almighty God." During Sunday service, this divine creator is endlessly addressed with the phrase "Amen-Ra!—Amen!" and called upon as "Father" in prayers and formulas (just as the Christian God). When I talked about Ra with some Afrikanians, however, it appeared that Ra had very little personal significance for them. In contrast to various local deities and spirits, Ra was generally not felt to have any impact on one's life.

Likewise, the Egyptian Book of Life and Death is appropriated as one of the written Revelations on which ATR is built. King Mena of Ethiopia, King Akhnaton of Egypt and his wife Queen Nfretiti, feature together with the famous Asante priest Akomfo Anokye, King Shaka Zulu, Marcus Garvey, W.E.B. DuBois, and Kwame Nkrumah as its prophets. In creating an ideological instrument to free Africans of their inferiority complex, Afrikania thus identifies with the achievements of the "high civilizations" of ancient Egypt and Greece (Ameve 2002), rather than practically drawing upon and taking pride in local religious traditions. Ironically, the movement has remained far removed from the practices and knowledge of the local religious practitioners that it claims to represent. This is a source of both internal tension as well as criticism from non-member traditionalists, who see Afrikania as Christianity in disguise.

Second, Afrikania's form of Sunday worship and organizational structure are modeled on the Catholic Church that Damuah knew so well. All ingredients—the symbols, the texts, the rituals, the songs, the sequence of events—are carefully selected or created and arranged in a way that follows the structure of a Catholic mass. This is very different

[9] Afrikania's Africanist discourse included a radical rewriting of the history of civilization, inspired by Black emancipatory literature (e.g. James 1992[1954]; Williams 1992[1971]). This version of history, taught by Ameve to Afrikania students in August 2001 (see also Ameve 2002, n.d.) posits that civilization was born and developed in ancient Egypt, which was, contrary to what the colonialists have made Africans to believe, inhabited and ruled by blacks. This ancient black civilization forms the basis of all African culture and religions, but it was stolen by the foreigners that came to Egypt at the height of its civilization, and so became the basis also for Christianity and for the Greek and Roman cultures on which Western civilization is founded. When the Romans invaded Egypt, plundered the libraries and killed the priests, the blacks moved away, spread across the continent in small groups and settled in West Africa and other parts.

from worship practices in rural (and urban) traditional religious shrines. In Africania structural elements such as prayers, greetings, creeds, bible reading, preaching, communion, offertory, and benediction are given "African traditional" content and symbolism, including magical substances such as clay, herbs, and holy water and ritual objects such as whisks.

Upon arrival, for example, members dip their thumb in a bowl of water and herbs standing at the entrance of the building and make a circle on their forehead—the *puduo*, symbol of God's infinity. They sit down facing the altar: a wooden table covered with an Afrikania print cloth and decorated with a Ghanaian flag, bronze statues of King Akhnaton and Queen Nfertiti of Egypt, and two colorful plastic plants. The mission leader blesses them with sacred water from a calabash, to which they react with the *puduo* sign again. The service includes various types of traditional drumming, singing and dancing, a sermon—usually on the importance and strength of Afrikan Traditional Religion—and, once a month, the practice of sprinkling and eating "ancestral food," ' also called "communion." Depending on the location of the particular branch, *eto* (an Akan sacred food), *kpekple* (a Ga sacred food), or other ritual foods can be used, but one of the priests explained, "in [the] future all communion should come from one source, the headquarters here [in Accra], like all Catholic communion comes from the Vatican."[10] The ancestral food prepared and used in Accra is *edza*, made of corn dough and honey and baked like biscuit. In Afrikania's usage, such substances become symbols vaguely referring to traditional spiritual power in general, but they are detached from their spiritual function in specific traditions. This turned out to be problematic in the case of the *edza*, as corn is taboo to certain divinities in some areas, and their servants should therefore refrain from eating it.

When I discussed Afrikania's remarkable pastiche with Ameve, his response was that if someone wants to bring together all traditional religions, which include a great variety of practices and ways of worship, there has to be a way to "find a form where everybody can feel at home." In creating a common form of worship out of ancient Egyptian gods and prophets, local traditional practices, and Christian forms, then, Afrikania tries to find a balance between uniformity and neutrality,

[10] Yaw Osono, lecture to Afrikania students, August 20, 2001.

on the one hand, and cultural significance on the other. But there is more to it than finding a common form, as Ameve explained when I expressed my surprise at the Christian worship and prayer formats.

> Some people say it is modeled after Christianity. But that seems to be what people want. That they can also say "we are going to that and that church." Coming together every Sunday for the purpose of worship and mutual inspiration is crucial. If you don't form the habit of coming together every Sunday, your people will be diverted into various churches, because the group spirit and the drumming attracts.[11]

For many people in Ghana an important aspect of confirming one's religious identity is to dress up and go to church on Sundays to sing and dance together and listen to preaching, which is usually visible and especially audible to the whole neighborhood. Many traditionalists, even if deliberately not choosing a Christian church, still want a church to which to go—and in which to be seen—in order to be recognized as belonging to a legitimate "religion" and not some secretive "cult." Afrikania has thus adopted many symbols of being established as a "church." These include not only coherent doctrine and a worship service on Sundays, but also official registration as a religious group, a constitution, a membership bureaucracy, and an organizational structure comprizing branches both in Ghana and abroad.

With the rapid rise and public appearance of charismatic/Pentecostal churches, there has been a shift in the markers of what counts as religious establishment and what counts as church success. With its conspicuous public presence in the Ghanaian religious landscape (Asamoah-Gyadu 2005, De Witte 2008, Gifford 2004, Meyer 2004b), Pentecostal Christianity exerts a powerful influence on other religions and on popular ideas about what religion is and should look like. It thus provides a model for religion as such and also for Afrikania's public representation and discourse. Even if Pentecostalism's explicit rejection of traditional religion as demonic has provoked a more anti-Christian attitude in Afrikania, it also takes over many practices and symbols. It now also organizes public conventions, evangelization, and Pentecostalism's camp meetings. More generally, the movement displays a strong preoccupation with public visibility and audibility, manifest in its huge new building, housing its head offices. These include a copious office for the leader, a conspicuous signboard

[11] Kofi Ameve, interview, July 16, 2001.

indicating times of worship and healing, and a public address system used during services. In its use of mass media, the organization has become increasingly concerned with public image and actively seeks to attract television coverage (De Witte 2005b). It continues its production and sales of printed cloth, handkerchiefs, calendars, and the like, with portraits of the leader or the logo of the mission—prominently featuring the symbol of the globe.

More interesting perhaps, Pentecostalism's incessant confirmation that African spirits are real and to be dealt with stimulates Afrikania to also take spirit powers more seriously, and to allow more room for ways of dealing with them—though these differ from Pentecostal ways.[12] Afrikania now also organizes "all night prayers" and provides "spiritual consultation," in direct competition with the various forms of spiritual healing offered by these other churches. This spiritual consultation service attracts mainly Christians and reflects the more general interest in the spiritual causes of life's problems—and in spiritual solutions—that the strong public presence of charismatic/Pentecostal Christianity in Ghanaian religiosity stimulated. A yet more recent development is the increasing acceptance of spirit possession during worship services. Until recently spirit possession was strongly frowned upon by Afrikania leaders and in the past even made them reluctant to involve shrine priests at all (Boogaard 1993: 246). In 2007, however, a colleague researcher of Afrikania, Kwame Zulu Shabazz, observed that "'frenzied' possession is not an unusual occurrence during the Sunday meetings."[13] I would argue that Afrikania's recent move toward accommodating practices like divination, spiritual healing and spirit possession cannot be seen as separate from the current hegemony of charismatic Pentecostalism in Ghana's public sphere that has authorized embodied, experiential modes of relating to spirit powers as acceptable parts of religion.

Conclusion

This chapter has investigated attempts by the Afrikania Mission in Ghana to elevate local religious traditions to the status of a world

[12] See De Witte (2008) for a more substantial argumentation of this point than can be provided here.

[13] Kwame Zulu Shabazz, personal correspondence, July 16, 2007.

religion that is different from, but has the same rating with, Christianity. In uniting and reforming indigenous traditions as Afrikan Traditional Religion, the leaders of the movement have borrowed heavily from a Christian, but now universalized, approach to religion, focused on belief. In the past, former mission churches provided the major points of reference for Afrikania's belief system and expressive form. In line with the Rawlings Revolution and with its Pan-Africanist inspirational sources, the Afrikania Mission developed a radical anti-Western cultural-religious discourse, including a turn to ancient Egypt. This was directed against cultural and mental domination by the West and aspired to unite people of African descent across the globe around a self-consciously African religion. In so doing, however, it subscribed to the very terms and conditions of Western religious thought and expression. At the current historical moment, the power balance in Ghana's religious playing field has shifted from the old mission churches to the new independent charismatic/Pentecostal churches. In response to this rise to public dominance of an exclusionist and militant form of Christianity—embodied by Africans themselves who publicly denigrate African traditional religion—Afrikania's struggle is now primarily directed at "our own brothers and sisters" in the charismatic/Pentecostal churches.[14] At the same time, however, its self-representations increasingly borrow from these churches. In conversation and competition with the new type of globalized Christianity, Afrikania simultaneously adopts both a more anti-Christian attitude and many Pentecostal forms.

Transnationalism also played a major role in the foundation and development of the movement in much more concrete ways. The global travels and studies abroad of the first two leaders of the mission were the *sine qua non* of their founding and leading the movement in the first place. The influence of Pan-Africanism and American Black emancipation cannot be underestimated. Throughout its more than twenty-five years of history, African-American interest in, visits to, and ties with the movement have had a great impact on its politics of public self-presentation, even if its actual transnational network is a far cry from the ways in which Pentecostal churches connect the globe. Afrikania does not go as far in its transnationalism as Godianism, that now presents itself as Global Faith Ministries of Chiism, thus strongly

[14] Ameve, sermon, March 17, 2002.

echoing Pentecostal transnationalism.[15] However, the shared aim of both movements to fulfill the need for a Pan-African mission that will transcend national borders and connect people of African ancestry across the world is clearly summarized in the logo of the Afrikania Mission, which integrates the contours of Africa with the symbol of the globe.

In placing Afrikan Traditional Religion on the global stage of world religions, the Afrikania Mission challenges the hegemonic thinking (in the media, in state policies, in the educational curriculum) about traditional religion. This thinking posits "tradition" as the local antipode of globalized Christianity and Western civilization. However, Afrikania Mission can hardly escape the very framework that it tries to fight. For example, it is very difficult, if not impossible, to present ATR as a modern and civilized world religion, yet counter the (equally globalized) Christian-derived stereotypes of such African religious practices as juju and fetish, while at the same time fully incorporating the local shrines that they claim to represent. Shrine practices for dealing with spirits—such as divination, healing, and possession—hardly fit Afrikania's concern for its public image and its representation of ATR in universalized formats. Such practices are either too ethnically specific or they look too "uncivilized" to the audience Afrikania hopes to reach. Conversely, many shrine priests and priestesses have little, if any, affinity with Afrikania's Pan-Africanist belief system, nor for the politico-religious appeal to ancient Egypt or Afrikania's global aspirations. This hard-to-bridge gap between Afrikania leaders and shrine priests causes a major tension within the movement. Ironically, it is the global Pentecostal movement, with its emphasis on the power of spirits and its embodied ways of relating to them, that now seems to drive Afrikania closer to local religious traditions. Pentecostalism's strong resonance with—some would even argue, roots in—indigenous African modes of religious experience and expression has at least restored public legitimacy to the practical concern with spirits. This makes it easier for neo-traditionalist movements like Afrikania to return to spirit practices without compromising on their claims to universality or public acceptability. This conclusion, however tentative, still prompts us to rethink the relationship between the globalization and localization of African religion.[16]

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[15] See *www.godianism.org*

[16] This chapter is based on ethnographic fieldwork with the Afrikania Mission from July to September 2001, from March 2002 to March 2003, and in July 2005. Research

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