



CENTRE FOR DEVELOPMENT AND ENTERPRISE
Informing South African Policy

FAITH ON THE MOVE

Pentecostalism and its potential
contribution to development



CDE Workshop Proceedings

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August 2008

This publication is based on a workshop held in March 2008. It was edited by
Dr Roger Southall and Dr Stephen Rule.

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About this publication

FROM 2005 TO 2008, CDE conducted a major study of the explosive growth of Pentecostal and Charismatic churches in South Africa. The results have been encapsulated in the CDE publication *Under the Radar: Pentecostalism in South Africa and its potential social and economic role* (March 2008), and a longer research report by Prof Lawrence Schlemmer.

To mark the launch of these publications, and the conclusion of the project, CDE brought three international experts to South Africa to give a public lecture and participate in a workshop on the growth of Pentecostalism and its potential developmental role. They were:

- Prof Peter L Berger, professor of sociology and theology at Boston University, and director of its Institute on Culture, Religion and World Affairs (CURA).
- Prof David Martin, professor emeritus of sociology at the London School of Economics; and
- Prof Matthews Ojo, head of the department of divinity of the Regent University College of Science and Technology in Accra, Ghana.

Prof Berger is CDE's international associate, and he also helped to guide its study of Pentecostalism.

On 10 March 2008, Prof Berger gave a public lecture at the University of the Witwatersrand, hosted by CDE and the Platform for Public Deliberation, entitled 'Faith and Development: A Global Perspective'. An edited version of his lecture and the subsequent discussion has appeared in a separate CDE publication with the same title.

On 11 March CDE held a workshop on the social and economic impact of Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity in South Africa. It was addressed by Prof Martin, Prof Ojo, and Prof Schlemmer. Prof Berger also participated in the subsequent discussion. The edited proceedings of the workshop appear in this publication.

Guest speakers

PETER BERGER is professor of sociology and theology at Boston University, and director of its Institute on Culture, Religion and World Affairs (CURA). He has written numerous books on sociological theory, the sociology of religion, modernity, and development, all of which have been widely translated. In 1992 the Austrian government presented him with the Mannes Sperber Prize for significant contributions to culture. CURA studies relationships between economic development and sociocultural change in different parts of the world. Prof Berger has been its founding director since 1985.

PROF DAVID MARTIN is a sociologist of religion known especially for his critique of secularisation as a theory of social process, and his pioneering work on Pentecostalism in Latin America. He taught at the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE) until his retirement in 1988, and was Elizabeth Scurlock Professor of Human Values at Southern Methodist University in Dallas, Texas, from 1986 until 1990. He is a visiting professor at King's College, London; Lancaster University; Boston University; and Princeton Theological Seminary. He is also professor emeritus of sociology at the LSE, and honorary professor of the sociology of religion at Lancaster University. He is an ordained priest in the Church of England, attached as a non-stipendiary assistant to Guildford Cathedral.

PROF MATTHEWS OJO heads the department of divinity of Regent University College of Science and Technology in Accra, Ghana; and formerly headed the department of religious studies of Obafemi Awolowo University in Ile-Ife, Nigeria. He pioneered the study of Pentecostalism in West Africa with a doctoral thesis presented to the University of London in 1986. Since then he has conducted extensive research in a number of African countries on a range of social issues. He has received fellowships from and served as a research fellow and/or visiting professor at the University of Edinburgh; Northwestern University; the School of Oriental & African Studies of the University of London; and Harvard University Divinity School. He has published extensively on religion and various other aspects of African society.

Another kind of cultural revolution?

David Martin

EUROPEANS DON'T KNOW much about the extraordinary advances of Christianity in the developing world, or even about the Orthodox revival in Eastern Europe and Russia. They may have vague suspicions about Catholic decline in Spain (though this is far less evident in Italy), and intuit the post-Christian spirituality or materialism of northern Europe. They are hardly likely to realise that since the 1960s Pentecostals in Latin America have increased by tens of millions, so that one person in four in Buenos Aires is a Pentecostal, or that since the 1970s there has been a similar movement in Africa, generating what is known in Ghana as 'Christianity fever'.¹ This Christian revival is as massive as the Islamic revival, but it stays beneath the radar of the media, because nobody has been killed, and in any case the people involved live in the wrong part of town. Until quite recently Christians in Africa were a small minority, but now number about 350 million, or one in six of the global Christian constituency.

What is Pentecostalism? Pentecost is the third great feast of the Christian Church. It celebrates a pouring of spiritual energy on to the primitive church so intense that it broke through the barriers of tribe and language symbolised by the Tower of Babel to create a transnational voluntary association. This association corresponded in its universal scope to what was then the global society of the Roman Empire. Today, Pentecostalism represents the third great force of Christianity, corresponding in its universal and transnational scope to our contemporary global reality, of which the United States is a major pivot. It is simultaneously global and local, and signals a radical rupture while displaying remarkable continuities with pre-existing traditions. It is everywhere recognisable while always shifting, adapting, and in fission, and it breaks up organic territorial networks, while re-forming them as voluntary communities of spiritual kin. It travels along the personal networks of people on the move while using all the resources of modern media. The Pentecostal movement, in all its multitudinous forms, offers masses on the move an individual and mobile identity, which cannot be undermined by an anonymous or contemptuous wider society because it is conferred by God. You know you have this identity because it is awakened and confirmed by gifts of spiritual power through what is known as a baptism in the spirit. Such gifts are validated and fostered in a disciplined community, which offers support and affirmation, as well as opportunities for participation and for learning new skills of persuasion and responsible leadership.

HISTORICALLY, CHRISTIANITY HAS broken up along socio-political fault lines. First there was the division between the European West and East, then at the Reformation between the European North and South, and then between the monopolistic and territorial churches of Europe and the competitive pluralism of North America. Pentecostalism emerged in this pluralistic and competitive vortex in the far south, and above all in the far west, of the United States. It then exploded globally like a starburst, in all directions. In *Spreading Fires* (2007), Allan Anderson shows how Pentecostalism spread with astonishing rapidity along the missionary networks already created by Evangelical and holiness movements to reach China, India, and southern Africa, and to infiltrate Latin America.² It also attempted, without much success, to make inroads in Europe and even the Islamic world. Europe and Islam remain the parts of the world most resistant to the Pentecostal message; Europe because religiously individualised, and Islam because territorial and organic. Insofar as Pentecostalism affects Europe, it does so in three forms: as an older layer of revivalist Protestantism; as ultramodern mega-churches in places such as London (where they cater mainly for migrants), Uppsala and Budapest; and as move-

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ments active in the south and south east of the continent, for example among gypsies, where conditions are similar to those in Latin America.³

The Pentecostal missionary enterprise was almost as costly in terms of disease, disappointment, and death as the early Methodist missions to West Africa, and, like most Christian missions, its success depended on indigenous catechists. Though Pentecostals mostly look back to the spiritual explosion in Los Angeles in 1906 as the movement's founding event, there were also earlier stirrings in other places as far apart as Wales and India. Contemporary Pentecostal interpretation moves between the pre-eminent role of the Los Angeles revival, led by the black evangelist William Seymour, and a more multicentred view stressing the variety of Pentecostal origins in different parts of the world. Pentecostalism is therefore a potent hybrid which, in its fusion of black and white, can cross any number of cultural species barriers to find and meet needs in the developing world. It combines a sense of the 'powers' of 'this world' under judgement with an optimistic sense that they can be defeated here and now, in this life, through divine empowerment. It is a movement of people on the move, the option *of* the poor rather than an option *for* the poor, an example of autonomous rather than sponsored mobility and mobilisation. At the same time, it also an option of the new middle and professional classes in countries such as Nigeria, Brazil, and Singapore, and in the Chinese diaspora.

Of course, the cultural empire of the United States is as pervasive in this as in everything else. No matter how much the United States is resented and resisted, it provides a benchmark of what it is to be modern. Pentecostals want to be modern. They are people who have been shaken out, – or, like vast numbers of young men and women, shake themselves out – of older worlds of elders and extended kin, to explore the wider modern world made available to them by the global media.⁴ The media come to them from the modern world, and they use the same media to establish their own presence as active agents in that world, and to create new imagined communities run by them and by nobody else.

NEVERTHELESS, MISSION GOES in all directions, including mission to faithless Europe. As a decentred hybrid with an extraordinary ability to indigenise, Pentecostalism marks the end of the missionary era, not a new chapter. From the beginning local religious entrepreneurs, personally seized by confidence in the power of the spirit, broke away to run their own organisations in whatever way seemed best to them. In Chile nearly a century ago the seeds were dropped by Americans, but only burgeoned when Chileans broke away and founded their own Methodist Pentecostal Church. In a similar way Americans dropped the seed in Sierra Leone, but these only burgeoned as they travelled inland and were fed and watered by the Mossi people of Burkina Faso. Thereafter the Mossi people themselves carried the message to surrounding countries. Seeds were dropped in Ethiopia by Americans and Scandinavians, but the effective agents have often been Ethiopian students. Sometimes the empire strikes back, as when the Brazilian Universal Church of the Kingdom of God spread to Portugal as well as to Portuguese-speaking Africa.

Korea is a special case. A long time ago Americans dropped the seed in Korea, and it burgeoned as nowhere else in the Far East through its association with Korean national self-consciousness and Korean modernisation. Today there are Korean missionaries of various charismatic kinds all over Asia and the Pacific. You find them in Afghanistan, in northern Kirghizstan, where there is now a flourishing Pentecostal presence, and by the thousands in the Philippines.⁵

There are two possible scenarios. The first comes from classic secularisation theory. Secularisation theory described and even prescribed changes in Europe, and framed them in a drama of *the* great transition from superstition and oppression to enlightenment, science, and liberation. From this standpoint Pentecostalism is just an unstable halfway house, part of the transition to a universal modernity, not one of many viable forms of modernity. It is just the lineal descendant in the developing world of the massive religious mobilisations accompanying the earlier stages of modernisation in Europe. Like them, this theory holds, Pentecostalism will tail off, perhaps converted into nationalist or reformist politics, or made redundant by prosperity, state welfare, and education.

Pentecostalism is also the lineal descendant in the Anglosphere of the religious mobilisations of emerging subordinate groups through enthusiastic and disciplined voluntary associations. Leaving aside some highly placed evangelicals, like the famous 'Cambridge Seven,' many of the recruits to the mission field were drawn from members of such voluntary associations of relatively marginal people. One might say that one marginal group went out to speak to another marginal group, though, of course, the marginal Europeans had more status and much greater resources, as well as seeing 'heathendom' as a realm of darkness. Today, in the view of secularisation theorists, the melancholy decline of British Methodism, and of the heirs of the revivalist movements that fractured the religious domain in Scotland and Wales, provides all the evidence you need of the secularisation in store for the parallel movements now sweeping the developing world.⁶

The alternative view, associated in particular with Peter Berger, is that Europe is exceptional.⁷ It is true that North America shows signs of secularisation in the younger generation. Yet it is different from Europe because early on the United States uncoupled the nexus between a dominant, hierarchical and territorial church and the state. Instead, a pluralistic system emerged based on competition between voluntary associations catering for different social groups and kinds of clientele. Latin America is different again because it has been characterised by a disorganised hierarchical church and by radical secular parties resembling those of Latin Europe. But these were no more able to affect the syncretistic spirituality of the masses than the church. Africa is different again, though there are shades of European monopoly, particularly in French-speaking Africa, which may explain why Pentecostalism expanded first in English-speaking Africa and had to wait for political and economic deregulation to take off in French-speaking countries.⁸

WHICHEVER SCENARIO TURNS out to be true, the European assumptions built into the first scenario easily prevent us from appreciating what is happening in contemporary Christianity. There is, first of all, the dramatic advance of Christianity in sub-Saharan Africa, so that its centre of gravity has shifted to the global south. That was not the expected turn of events with the end of colonialism. Then there is the advance of Pentecostalism in much of the developing world, in Africa, in Latin America, in China, and in the Pacific Rim. That too was not part of the anticipated script. Not for the first time the social sciences have waited on events to pick up the big story. Predicted revolutions have failed to materialise or simply failed, and forbidden revolutions have materialised and succeeded. This particular forbidden revolution has a good claim to be recognised as one of the great meta-narratives of modernity.

One of the main academic popularisers of the southward shift, above all in Africa, has been Philip Jenkins in such books as *The Next Christendom* (2002) and *The New Faces of Christianity* (2006).⁹ Jenkins has been a notable critic of the assumptions of western intel-

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lectual elites about what kind of religion the peoples of the global south should prefer, or are likely to prefer. He says what counts as authentic religion is in the eye of the beholder, and that Africans have always appropriated Christianity, and above all the text of an open Bible, with an eye to what makes sense to them. What works is more important than what is acceptable to elites either in Europe or in Africa.

Aggressive macho men can come out and be respected as non-violent once they undergo Pentecostal conversion

Moreover, a very large and increasing proportion of these Bible readers, in Africa as elsewhere in the developing world, are Pentecostal. The Pentecostal constituency is increasingly a force to be reckoned with. Politicians are mostly realists, and they increasingly take note of a burgeoning minority that in many countries can number 10% or more. If European politicians are not up to speed, that is because there is no violent Pentecostal fringe to make headlines. Economists are also realists and may well be interested in people who refuse to be victims, organise for mutual assistance, and foster aspirations as a battalion of irregulars in the war on poverty. Pentecostals all over the globe believe they are empowered by the Holy Spirit to overcome the spirit of poverty. With hard work and personal discipline, especially in the family, being rich towards God translates into betterment all round. In his *African Gifts of the Spirit* (2006), David Maxwell, one of the most impressive scholars of Pentecostalism, says only a few make the big time but most achieve modest security.¹⁰

OF COURSE, PENTECOSTALISM is controversial, partly because its advance in Africa has been at the expense of mainstream Christianity and of Christian Independent African churches. In Latin America it is controversial partly because it competes successfully with base communities, spiritist cults, and historic Protestantism. All over the world Pentecostals worry cultural nationalists, because they are transnational and appeal to those who want to be modern more than they care about being authentic and traditional. They certainly do appeal to the cultural guardians in Russia or the Ukraine. Somehow you do not expect a mega-church founded by a Nigerian in Kiev, or to run into charismatic Christians in Tashkent. Writing of Latin America, David Lehmann, in his *Struggle for the Spirit* (1996), says Pentecostals stand out as people indifferent to the sponsorship and approval of the erudite.¹¹

Also controversial is the recent shift from earlier, more humble, and often apolitical, forms of Pentecostalism stressing holiness to more assertive, more confident, and sometimes more politically active forms. As new arrivals on the political scene Pentecostals can sometimes be naive, or succumb to temptations that undermine their claims. Pastors with clienteles in the religious sphere can opportunistically cosy up to powerful people with clienteles in the political sphere. David Maxwell, in his account of the Zimbabwean Assemblies of God Africa, shows how its leader, Ezekiel Guti, drew close to Mugabe at one stage and moved towards the MDC at another.¹² Transformations and purifications at the personal level the world over have always run into trouble in the complicated moral world of politics. David Maxwell also points out that when Pentecostalism emerges against a backdrop of political violence, as in Uganda, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, and South Africa, it reintroduces young men to peaceful manners and mores. The same has been said of Latin America, where women can grow very tired of the consequences of aggressive macho posturing, and where, according to John Burdick in *Looking for God in Brazil* (1993), men who privately share those feelings can come out and be respected as non-violent once they undergo Pentecostal conversion.¹³

Political scientists have reservations about the democratic potential of Pentecostalism, though one might ask just how long it took in Europe for viable democracy to emerge.¹⁴ On the other hand, anthropologists working on the ground recognise that when people prioritise spiritual reformation and rope themselves together for mutual discipline and safety on slippery moral and economic slopes, all-round aspirations to betterment are likely to follow. Pentecostalism makes the difference between chaotic dissipation and fragile security. It only needs men to renounce the chaos of drugs, alcohol, and promiscuity and to embrace the disciplines of work, home life and a closely knit faith community for prospects to improve, though the full effects may take a generation or so to emerge.

You can dismiss what goes on in a Pentecostal church as yet another noisy ecstasy of the poor without fully grasping the relation between ecstasy in the church and discipline and trust in the home and at work. Trust is, after all, one of the great economic virtues. Confidence is another great economic virtue, and faith in divine Providence gives Pentecostals confidence in spades. According to Maxwell they believe they have been delivered from the *spirit* of poverty in every sense of the word. In Latin America their watchwords are 'From the dirt floor to the sky,' and 'All things are possible.'

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IN LATIN AMERICA I have seen the myriad small churches that honeycomb the poorer slums of Latin American cities, sometimes attached to a small family business or run by workers in the informal economy. I have also seen them all over the centres of dense housing, much of it occupied by internal and external migrants, at the heart of Johannesburg. These churches are new, protective cells of intense moral energy, or what sociologists would call self-created social capital, and you find them among migrants to the mega-city anywhere from New York and Boston to Santiago, or from Lagos to Shanghai or Seoul. They are in Manila, they are in Havana, and according to my taxi driver they are in Teheran, though you can imagine why their presence in Cuba and Iran is not advertised.

In a three-part report for the *New York Times*, beginning on 14 January 2007, David Gonzalez describes a tiny church of about 60 people in a poor area of New York.¹⁵ It is called The Ark of Salvation for the New Millennium, and its members are mostly Dominican migrants. Among them are 'reformed drug dealers and womanisers, cafeteria workers who earn barely enough to pay the bills, and women whose sons or husbands are in prison.' They believe in miracles, they punch the air, sing lustily to the bouncy Latin American accompaniment of a teenage band, and dress plainly but respectably in a way that belies their workday attire. Their storefront church used to be a drug den, and this is where they matter and discover a joyful intimacy. These people are guided only by Scripture and by a pastor who by day is a factory worker. Such churches constantly spring up and also disappear all over Harlem, and those who attend them find a discipline that makes life liveable, and will probably end up nudging them into the middle class.

The Christian Science Monitor carried two articles on 18 and 19 December 2007 with the self-explanatory headlines 'Colombia: Pentecostal women assert equality', 'Colombia: women move beyond war', and 'Brazil: drug dealers give up their guns for Jesus, convert others.'¹⁶ Colombia is a very Catholic country, at least in some regions, but one has to imagine how women at the mercy of a macho lifestyle find in Pentecostalism a fresh source of spiritual power and confidence. This enables them to insist on shared roles and shared authority with their partners, and even to become pastors. In Colombia thousands people have been displaced from the countryside to shanty towns by the violence of the political left and their right-wing opponents. About half of all displaced families are headed by

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women. In contexts of this kind Pentecostalism is a movement of women to create decent domestic order, whether in small storefront churches or mega-churches. The church is the place where their pain and their protest is listened to; where they come together to create networks, including their own social service agencies, to help the destitute among them and halt the violence. Men and women alike refuse to regard themselves as victims but as agents, able in particular to bring partners together who would otherwise have separated, or to find more reliable new partners in the church.

In Rio the problem is not civil war but civil breakdown, above all organised drug-dealing and murderous turf wars in impoverished favelas. Somehow Pentecostals, for example a group called 'Fishermen of the Night', secure the respect of the gang members, and even turn some of them into pastors, by claiming direct spiritual authority. They have a kind of power the police and the military conspicuously lack. Of course, the pull of the street against the disciplines of the home is very strong, and one in three or four lapse, yet it is still the case that one in five of urban residents in Brazil is Pentecostal, and perhaps one in six overall. Proportions are perhaps not so different in South Africa.

DAVID LLOYD, A journalist with the *Financial Times* of London, writes about a different kind of Pentecostalism in Uganda.¹⁷ He reports on the growth of neo-Pentecostal mega-churches that look like large corporations. Classical Pentecostals sought a healing of body and soul that we can understand as a nexus of holiness and holism, and were wary of the perils of riches. Neo-Pentecostals propose a much more direct relation between spiritual empowerment and health and wealth. The righteous have their reward, as they are supposed to in the more up-beat parts of the Old Testament. In New Testament terms, if God became poor for our sakes, he did so that we might be enriched. Naturally this breeds media scepticism, because some of these churches, whether in Johannesburg, Accra, or Guatemala City, are very large, with auditoria holding many thousands, and with facilities to match. The controversial Brazilian denomination known as The Universal Church of the Kingdom of God boasts the largest auditorium in South Africa, situated in the extensive African township of Soweto. At the same time it may well be that the members who invest in such enterprises are not misled or stupid, and know perfectly well what return they are getting.

These mega-churches draw people away from the more staid (and from time to time more socially vital) mainstream bodies, and push these churches towards a more born-again style in order to compete. In the same way in Brazil the Catholic Church tries to pre-empt the Pentecostal appeal through the efforts of charismatic priests using all the resources of the modern media. Interestingly, David Lloyd cites the deputy editor of the largest pro-government daily in Uganda, who continues to attend Anglican services but sees the new charismatic Christians, with their singing and dancing, as more African and spiritually vital. These are precisely the churches that can be regarded, by the respected academic Paul Gifford, for example, as American-influenced, and by David Maxwell as echoing the ethos of neoliberalism. At the same time, a market in the gods based on which can deliver the goods is thoroughly traditional, in Africa and in Latin America, or indeed in the Pacific Rim.

In these Ugandan churches, just as in Latin America, conversion often begins with a psycho-drama in which spiritual forces of life and death battle it out for the sin-sick soul. The afflicted person makes a vow to choose life and salvation in return for deliverance. God tests the individual, and the individual then tests God, in a leap of faith that he will deliver

the good and the goods in a single package. This version of the relation between faith and what works not only appeals to the poor of Uganda but is also influential among the educated and business classes. No wonder, then, that politicians in East Africa, as in Latin America, begin to turn up at their meetings and learn their language.

Again, as in Latin America, the pastors at every level, from the storefront church to the faith-based corporation, are a stratum of religious entrepreneurs trained by experience rather than the seminary, and this means that they operate in a religiously unregulated economy. They preach in the demotic accents of the people; they preach morality, decency, respect for women, education for boys and girls, and non-violence; and they have remarkable authority in the eyes of their followers. Indeed, if they did not their services would dissolve in chaos, and their message would be ineffective. Rafts in stormy seas survive by tight discipline. But there is a price to be paid in terms of opportunities for exploitation and lavish life-styles among the more successful religious entrepreneurs. A chief pastor becomes an archbishop, and needs a Mercedes to match. And it is easier to prove you have cast off the spirit of poverty when the principle of investing in God to receive back a hundredfold is mediated by the prosperity of his chief executive officer.

According to Martin Lindhardt, there is more to neo-Pentecostalism than an urge to get rich quick or raise funds.¹⁸ Lindhardt writes about a charismatic group based in Iringa, Tanzania, known as 'New Life in Christ', which broke away from the Lutheran Church, even though its members still retain links with various mainstream denominations. He argues that its members have very varied reasons for joining, and are quite realistic about their future prosperity. What the so-called Faith Gospel offers is a way of dealing with the moral ambiguity attendant on sudden riches, particularly when these may be achieved by witchcraft, and a way of coping with the impersonality and short-term character of exchanges conducted in purely quantitative monetary terms. Ritual offerings made as part of a gift economy, in an atmosphere of shared joy and praise, carry meanings that belong to a personalised and moralised world.

Though the socioeconomic status of members is wide-ranging, most work in an informal sector much expanded by the structural adjustments required by the IMF. This sector provides fertile ground for an 'occult economy' variously operated by people engaged in traditional healing and witchcraft, and any gains, particularly sudden and inexplicable ones, achieved through their dubious offices are shot through with moral ambivalence and hidden costs. Recourse to the supreme power of Jesus explicitly provides an alternative to the 'occult economy', a power seen as truly beneficial and shorn of moral ambivalence, as well as able to offer protective cover through the 'shed blood' against occult forces. The exchange of money for divine blessings, which may come in spiritual as well as material forms, belongs to a long-term covenantal or gift economy rather than to a short-term contractual or utilitarian economy.

One makes a return to God, to whom all things ultimately belong, on account of his inestimable gifts, which includes the gift of oneself, in the patient hope that this seed will in God's good time reap a harvest. Any impurity in the giver, or impropriety in the means by which one acquired the gift, undermines the efficacy of the sacrifice. Patience through experience of frustration is efficacious, while a greedy anticipation of quick returns is not. Those 'New Life in Christ' members who prosper are living testimonies inspiring hope and emulation, and they may on occasion help those less blessed than they are. With some justification most members view themselves as less exposed than those outside their fellowship to domestic turbulence, family breakdown, alcoholism, and AIDS.

There is more to neo-Pentecostalism than an urge to get rich quick or raise funds

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SOcial reality is complicated and ambiguous. I said earlier that Pentecostalism is both rupture and continuity. David Maxwell has argued for continuity between the purification from the past offered by Pentecostalism and witch eradication cults. In a classic ethnography, *Translating the Devil* (1999), undertaken in Ghana, Birgit Meyer has argued that Holy Spirit Christianity is entirely familiar and continuous with the past because it takes inspirited worlds seriously even as it incorporates and demonises them.¹⁹ In her work on the virtuoso deployment of the modern media, she shows how the demonic snakes and saving ladders and the tussle of spiritual forces in Pentecostal soap operas draws heavily on the African imagination.²⁰ If one looks at the experiences of Swiss Free Church missionaries in the Calvinist tradition operating in south east Africa in the 1880s, as described by Patrick Harries in *Butterflies and Barbarians* (2007), it is quite obvious that pre-existing traditions of premonitory dreams and revelations are a Pentecostalism waiting to happen.²¹

Birgit Meyer also warns us against treating the new kind of Pentecostalism as strictly separate from an older Independency.²² That comes out in Azonseh Ukah's study of the startlingly successful Redeemed Christian Church of God in Nigeria.²³ This church had its roots in Aladura, an African Independent Church (or AIC), but its new leader, a university teacher of mathematics, converted it into a health and wealth gospel appealing to the up and coming, of whom there are very many in Nigeria. That does mean all or most AICs have completely lost their appeal; sometimes the change works in the reverse direction. The Friday Apostolics in Zimbabwe, a group numbered in six figures and studied by Matthew Engelke in *A Problem of Presence* (2006), stress the primacy of the spirit at the expense of the letter of the Bible.²⁴ This appeals precisely because it allows prophetism back. In her study of the displacement of both Afro-Brazilian cults and base communities by Pentecostals in north east Brazil, Miriam Cristina M Rabelo says gambling on the Holy Spirit echoes traditional vows to the Blessed Virgin.²⁵ Jane Soothill, in *Gender, Social Change and Spiritual Power* (2007), shows how the male and female pastors of the mega-churches of Accra resemble the Big Men and Big Women of so-called traditional society, and yet at the grass roots there is a genuine revision of gender roles taking place in a reformed and modern nuclear family.²⁶

Of course, Soothill is well aware of the controversy surrounding what Bernice Martin has called the Pentecostal gender paradox.²⁷ The same theme is picked up in Kristina Helgesson's study *Walking in the Spirit* (2007) of two Pentecostal churches, one coloured and Indian, the other mostly white, in different parts of Durban.²⁸ In both there is male headship in the family but an increasing emphasis on headship as service and responsibility; in both there are male pastors but opportunities for female leadership, and not only in parallel all-female organisations. Helgesson also brings out interesting differences between these two churches regarding the degree of support for Jews and for Israel; in general Pentecostals belong within the philo-Semitic (and anti-Catholic) traditions in Anglo-American Protestantism.

David Maxwell, in *African Gifts of the Spirit* (2006), reinforces the theme of paradox.²⁹ Thus, while the Zimbabwe Assemblies of God Africa seem like a hybrid of the structure of the corporation and the institution of the Big Man, it can also nurture a capsule of participation, offering hope and security in the face of the injurious society surrounding it. It can also combine charismatic authority with bureaucracy, and deploy its American contacts and financial sources not only to reinforce the power of patron-

age exercised by the leadership but to bolster the autonomy of the church, and propagate themes of black pride. ZAOGA originated in the same area of Harare that gave birth to Zimbabwean nationalism, but there is only modest evidence of a transition from religion to politics, or of what Europeans see as the divide between private religion and public politics. Perhaps Peter Berger is right: on the world scene, Europe is the odd one out.³⁰

In the past anthropologists often regretted the breaking of the web of local kin relations, and preferred either to study traditional society or African Independency. Now they are increasingly interested in how the Pentecostal or charismatic combination of continuity and rupture enables men and women, particularly those en route to the new urban agglomerations, to negotiate the transition. Nowadays in the developing world the expansion of some variant of Pentecostal or Evangelical charismatic Christianity is virtually unavoidable, whether in Nigeria, Brazil, Guatemala, New Guinea, Korea or China. Before the anthropologist Joel Robbins went to New Guinea he was told to avoid Christianity. That turned out to be rather difficult, and in the upshot he wrote a major ethnography, *Becoming Sinners* (2004).³¹ Even the Chinese government, always on the alert for autonomous cultural revolutions, implicitly recognises that sober and disciplined citizens, who deal with the break-up of extended kin relations by coming together in nuclear families and in the fictive brotherhoods and sisterhoods of faith communities, have a positive role to play.

Pentecostals of whatever kind seek respectability and avoid debt and extravagance

THE MOST RECENT research, bearing out the results just summarised, has been carried out from a purely secular and business viewpoint by CDE in Johannesburg.³² South Africa was one of the first regions to receive an injection of Pentecostal genes, not only in specifically Pentecostal churches, like the Apostolic Faith Mission, but also African initiated churches, notably the two or three million strong Zionists. Post-apartheid South Africa illustrates the capacity of the Pentecostal spirit to cross cultural species barriers, although that has not always been the case.

South Africa is 80 per cent Christian, and within the Christian community some 12 million (one in four of the total population) are outside the mainstream as well as beneath the media and intellectual radar. Their numbers are growing very rapidly. With regard to mega-churches, the suburban Rhema church has a huge building holding a congregation of some 8 000 at a sitting, which is now 80 per cent black where it was previously 80 per cent white, and with numerous mixed 'race' satellites. On a Sunday morning those who come to the successive services, which are rather like rock concerts, do so in anything from Mercedes cars to buses specially laid on for the less affluent. Among the other 'services' provided is a business school.

Pentecostals emphasise the family and obligations to fellow believers, and inculcate the business virtues. They are optimistic, and rightly so, according to the research, because they move up and on to a greater degree than most. Politically they are spread across the spectrum, though concerned by a stress on rights at the expense of obligations, and by a culture affected by AIDS, high infant mortality, pornography, and family breakdown. The researchers distinguish between an older kind of black Pentecostal, who seeks betterment, education and skills, and believes God helps those who help themselves, and a newer kind, less aspiring because now relatively comfortable, and concerned about crime and health provision. Pentecostals of whatever kind seek respectability and avoid debt and extravagance. The settled picture as set out, for example in David Martin's *Tongues of Fire* (1990) and *Pentecostalism: The World Their Parish* (2001).³³

IN CONCLUSION, ONE might ask whether the advance of Pentecostalism has been at the expense of other Christians, such as Catholics in Latin America and mainstream Protestants in Africa. That is only true in part because a Catholic revival can go on at the same time, as it has done in Guatemala and Korea, and also because other Christians emulate the most popular selling points of the Pentecostals, as Catholics do in Brazil and Mexico, and Lutherans in East Africa. In Korea, where Christians number 25 per cent of the population, there has been a parallel Buddhist revival, and that is also true in Singapore. In China, though Protestants are now more numerous than Catholics, an overall Christian community of (say) 80 million, amongst them many house church Pentecostals, derives from straight conversion. We are talking about a many-centred expansion of Christianity on an unprecedented scale, and one which suggests that western Europe is the exception rather than the rule.

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Modernity and social transformation in Nigerian Pentecostalism

Matthews A Ojo

PENTECOSTALISM, EITHER IN its old form as a sectarian religion or its contemporary form as a global one, has continued to attract the attention of scholars of religion. In Africa, new forms of Pentecostalism have been making substantial advances since the late 1970s. Indeed, the continuing spread of Pentecostal and Charismatic movements¹ has brought substantial religious and social change to African Christianity and African society. That there has been a paradigm shift in African Christianity from the mission Christianity of the 19th century to the African Independent Churches of the early 20th century and, since the 1970s, to contemporary Charismatic movements is obvious. This religious expansion calls for an evaluation of the dynamics of African Christianity as the new centre of gravity within world Christianity.²

Previous studies of African Pentecostal and Charismatic movements have largely been historical, and situated in specific countries. I have examined the growth of Charismatic movements in Nigeria,³ while Ruth Marshall has focused on the movement's socio-political involvement in the Nigerian public sphere.⁴ Gifford has presented various perspectives on the growth of Charismatic movements in many countries in an edited volume,⁵ and has further described the characteristics of major Charismatic organisations in Ghana.⁶ Some recent works are anthropological; for example, Birgit Meyer has examined the construction of a cosmology of power in modern Ghana.⁷ Her recent work has focused on the connection between Pentecostalism and popular media culture.⁸ Hackett has examined linkages in the appropriation of media and media technology by Pentecostal and Charismatic movements in Nigeria and Ghana.⁹ I have investigated cross-cultural missionary activities of the Pentecostal and Charismatic movements as an important part of the African initiative in Christian missions in the 20th century.¹⁰ Corten and Marshall-Fratani have examined Pentecostal movements in Africa in the context of transnationalism and globalisation.¹¹ More recent scholarly works that have evolved from substantial field work and doctoral theses include those of Anderson and Orwang,¹² Larbi,¹³ Omenyo,¹⁴ Ojo,¹⁵ Asamoah-Gyadu,¹⁶ Marshall-Fratani,⁷ and Gifford.^{18 19}

The Nigerian Protestant churches have played a significant role in this religious shift on the continent. For example, the Charismatic renewal in West Africa in the 1970s and 1980s was greatly facilitated by Nigerians as they interacted with other Africans at regional and international meetings, during trade and business activities, and via direct missionary activities.²⁰ In the mid-1970s the Nigerian movements became transnational as they forged linkages across the continent, and with Pentecostal organisations in North America and Europe. Increasing emigration from the mid-1980s onwards has facilitated constant networking with the African diaspora in the west. The growth by 2004 of the Embassy of God Church established in 1994 in Kiev in the Ukraine by the Nigerian Sunday Adelaja to about 25 000 members in the city itself, almost all white Europeans, and about 100 a satellite churches elsewhere in the region²¹ indicates how African Charismatic groups can transcend their African origins and enter new cultural milieus.

This paper reviews the development of the Pentecostal and Charismatic movements in Nigeria since their emergence in the early 1970s. Among other things, it discusses the growth, characteristics, and dynamics of these movements with an emphasis on aspects of the transformation they are bringing to African Christianity. It reflects on the responses of Pentecostal and Charismatic movements to religious and socio-political problems of contemporary Africa, as well as upon their spiritual and socio-political attempts to serve as social change agents in society. This examination of the internal characteristics of Pentecostalism will indicate that the change fostered by it involves both the structural transformation of society as well as self-transformation.

African Charismatic groups can transcend their African origins and enter new cultural milieus

The growth of Charismatic movements in Nigeria

Pentecostal and Charismatic movements interpret and offer a salvation that is culturally relevant, and easily obtained

Pentecostalism in Nigeria has grown tremendously from its beginnings as a fringe religion in the early 1970s, and has become a major religious phenomenon and social movement significantly affecting the lives of millions of Nigerians who are seeking solutions to existential needs confronting them in a dislocated society. As a channel to modernity, the symbols, texts, and nuances of the movements are becoming front page news, and the Nigerian movements have become significant actors within global Pentecostalism. Besides this, Pentecostals continue to dominate the electronic media with their activities: sermons, healing and miracle services, breakthrough programmes, and so on. I have previously shown how the religious discourse emanating from the Pentecostal constituency has come to dominate the Nigerian media, such that it is common to find full-length sermons appearing in the secular press.²² Rosalind Hackett and Marshall-Fratani have noted that the media have never played a more central role in the formation of religious consciousness and identity than they do at present.³ The media not only act as channels of information; they are increasingly becoming purveyors of ideology, taste, and consciousness. As a result, the mass media are bringing about a complex reordering of patterns of human interaction across space and time. Although other Christian groups also utilise the media, it is more characteristic of the Charismatic and Pentecostal movements.

Although the Pentecostal emphasis on spiritual empowerment tends to challenge the individual to join the bandwagon of those seeking hope and material empowerment against the background of the failed state, I submit that the Pentecostal/Charismatic successes in Africa have largely been due to their ability to simplify the complexities of modern life. They do this in such a way that everyone connected to these religions succeeds in negotiating and finding answers to problems caused by social dislocation and the failure of the centralised state. In other words, the transformative power of Pentecostalism in Africa is due to its presentation as an alternative centre of power for solving human needs. Pentecostal and Charismatic movements have pursued their transformations on various levels. First, their creation of transnational networks in West Africa has promoted structural transformation on a regional level. Second, their projection of Pentecostal spirituality into the political sphere has sought the transformation of the collective. They have also created a public piety that has become politically relevant across West Africa. Thirdly, certain doctrinal emphases and practices have stimulated self-transformation among their members. In short, the Pentecostal and Charismatic movements interpret and offer a salvation that is culturally relevant, and easily obtained.

I have argued elsewhere in opposition to some western scholars who have adopted a western anthropological approach, and view the growth and vibrancy of the Nigerian Pentecostal and Charismatic movements as an offshoot of American Pentecostalism, or a derivative of American capitalist and corporate culture.²⁴ Likewise, Ogbu Kalu has argued that Nigerian Pentecostalism 'is not an offshoot of Azusa Street revival or an extension of American electronic church or a creation of televangelists. It has a certain uniqueness which could best be understood from its fit in African primal world view. . . . Its problems and idioms are sourced from the interior of African spirituality.'²⁵ Therefore, to argue that religious influences flow only in one direction, west to east, is to ignore some pertinent factors about the dynamism of African religious movements going back to the rise of the Zionist/Aladura and Messianic churches of the early 20th century. Given that Christianity is a world religion, it necessarily shares certain common features and values across cultures and boundaries. While there have been growing interconnections and networking in the

contemporary world, and while Africans sometimes look to the west for material assistance, the indigenous origins of these movements and the role of African pioneers must not be neglected.

As an indigenous religious phenomenon in Nigeria, the movement took its roots in about 1968 among young people in the Scripture Union, an interdenominational evangelical organisation in war-devastated Biafra (Eastern Nigeria). In the early 1970s the revival surfaced in a new form on the campuses of Nigeria's universities, and by 1972 it was promoting Pentecostal spirituality as a new Christian experience. The revivalists encountered strong opposition from the existing mainline Protestant denominations, whose members they accused of being 'bench-warmers' or 'dead believers'. As a result, many of these young religious enthusiasts were expelled, which helped to stimulate the independent existence of the emerging movements.

By the mid-1990s university campuses were the main centres of the Charismatic renewal, to such an extent that, in 1974, some members of the Evangelical Christian Union at the University of Ife (later renamed Obafemi Awolowo University), located in Ile-Ife, Western Nigeria, erected a big banner at the university gate bearing the inscription 'Welcome to Jesus University'. These students had strong millennialist beliefs; a few abandoned their studies to prepare for the 'Rapture' that would mark the end of the world, and others became evangelists upon their graduation. Starting with para-church and evangelistic associations, the revival routinised in the early 1980s into independent Charismatic churches.

The rise of denominationalism was a major development within the Charismatic Renewal. In this way, the revival consolidated into stable religious organisations with bureaucratic structures. Thereafter, Pentecostal and Charismatic organisations adopted various strategies to maintain their denominational tendencies. The major features of this development include holding Sunday services instead of meetings during the week, as was the case in their early years; erecting their own church buildings instead of using rented spaces; and creating a structure of paid and full-time clergy instead of their earlier democratic leadership. The messages shifted from personal evangelism and baptism in the Holy Spirit to healing, miracles, and prosperity, all as paradigms for personal empowerment. To a large extent, these changes were conditioned by socioeconomic changes. Denominationalism also brought some internal changes that affected Pentecostals' and Charismatics' orientation to worldly values. Instead of a total rejection of secular values, some began to involve themselves in social and political issues.

The growth of the Pentecostal and Charismatic movements in Nigeria has been remarkable. From about ten Charismatic organisations in the early 1970s, the number grew to about a hundred by 1983, and leaped to thousands as para-church organisations metamorphosed into new, independent denominations. In 2000 Nigeria's population was 115 million, of whom 52,63 million were Christians.²⁶ About 50 per cent of all Christians are Protestants, while Roman Catholics constitute 25 per cent; members of the Indigenous African Churches about 10 per cent, and Pentecostals and Charismatics about 14 per cent. Therefore, Pentecostals and Charismatics number just more than seven million people. About 70 per cent of these are in the independent Pentecostal and Charismatic churches, while the rest are still in the Protestant churches. Though small in number compared to the Catholics or mainline Protestant churches, the vigour of their activities, the intensity of the experiences to which they lay claim, and their wider appropriation of media and media technologies as part of the globalising options have ensured that these movements

Denominationalism brought some internal changes that affected Pentecostals' and Charismatics' orientation to worldly values

have achieved significant social visibility. They are also more influential than their numbers suggest because they are sustained by the educated elite and have an enviable status in Nigerian society.

Pentecostal and Charismatic movements developed in a milieu of political instability, economic recession, and social tension. In the midst of these uncertainties and deteriorating living conditions, many Nigerians turned to the religious sphere to find answers to their problems. The reality of the supernatural is ever present in and central to the world view of Africans. Therefore, the successes of the movements rest on their ability to respond to the felt needs of millions of Nigerians. Certainly, the discourse of change and the solution it has articulated have provided a message of great relevance to many Nigerians against the failure of the centralised state.⁷

The reality of the supernatural is ever present in and central to the world view of Africans

Varieties and characteristics of Nigerian Charismatic movements

Charismatic organisations in Nigeria vary considerably.²⁸ Some are large, while others are small. One of the largest and most widely known is the Deeper Life Bible Church established in April 1973 by William Kumuyi, then a mathematics lecturer at the University of Lagos. It grew rapidly in the late 1970s through its evangelistic outreaches. Deeper Life can be regarded as a world-rejecting or holiness sect, as it strongly emphasises the doctrine of sanctification. It preaches against the possession and viewing of television as unchristian; condemns the wearing of earrings and wedding rings; and rigidly specifies what dress to wear in order to retain the sanctification experience. Despite such strictures, Deeper Life has spread widely in Africa as well as to the western world. By 2000 it had about 400 000 members in Nigeria, and about 100 branches in other African and some western countries.²⁹

In late 1983 David Oyedepo, an architecture graduate, established the Living Faith Church in Ilorin. From 1985 onwards the church grew rapidly, and by 2000 it had about 300 000 members in Nigeria. In 1995 it began to expand to other African countries, and by 1997 branches had been established in 30 other African countries. Living Faith Church is well known for its faith and prosperity gospel. Oyedepo teaches that Christians are destined to experience abundance and material wealth in the present world. Therefore, they should aspire to be prosperous, and should be known for their prosperity by, for instance, driving expensive cars and wearing costly dresses.³⁰ The emphasis on success and prosperity has appealed to young, mobile, well-educated people seeking a modernising milieu for self-expression.

Nigerian Pentecostal and Charismatic movements can be classified into six categories, according to their perception of how the world and individuals will be redeemed from malevolent forces, and consequently how Christ will come to have dominion over the world. I have constructed a typology based on the paradigm of power and piety.

The **Faith-seekers** are conversionists, and manifest this attitude with vigorous evangelistic activities directed at the individual. They insist that the individual has to undergo certain experiences that will transform his or her egotistic outlook to one that acknowledges a creator God and His plan of redemption for the world. In terms of social and economic characteristics, they are generally ascetic, and often distance themselves from the values of secular society.

The **Faith-builders** emphasise the realisation of individual human potential to overcome the contemporary difficulties of life. These groups tend to prosper in urban areas, and among the educated middle class. Members of these groups seek rapid social mobility through the acquisition of material comforts or social recognition. Faith-builders rely on harnessing the potential of the individual, which is regarded as a divine favour. They believe that Christians must live in wealth and abundance and not in poverty and deprivation, and must be empowered to transform society. They also believe that material success such as expensive cars, smart clothing, and large bank balances are the marks of true spirituality. They tend to accept the social and economic values of secular society, but also regulate 'ethical' ways of acquiring wealth and achieving success.

The **Faith Transformers** resemble the conversionists, but are concerned with seeking the conversion of large and isolated ethnic groups rather than individuals. They are traditionally the mission-sending agencies which send full-time missionaries to work among 'tribal' peoples. They are ascetic, if only by force of circumstances, and if only because they lack any viable economic base for the demanding task of mission work. Certain feelings of heroism keep them going.

The **Reformists** are those who have been influenced by Pentecostal spirituality, are found within the mainline Protestant denominations, and want to remain members, but are seeking the renewal of these churches in line with their own self-defined religious values. They are literalists who see their denominations as their religious inheritance, which must be improved. They also regard their activities in their churches as God-ordained. During the past two decades, their activities in the Anglican churches have been noticed in the Evangelical Fellowship in the Anglican Communion (EFAC) or the Anglican Youth Fellowship; in the Baptist denomination as the Baptist Student Fellowship; in the Methodist Church as the Methodist Evangelical Movement, in the Roman Catholic Church as the Catholic Charismatic Renewal, and similarly in other denominations. Socially, they tend to be second- or third-generation Christians in these churches; they are middle class, well-educated, and have participated in the Charismatic Renewal on university campuses.

The **Deliverance churches** are a recent trend in Nigerian Pentecostalism. Their members are like 'forensic experts' who view the past cultural lives of Africans as being having responsible for the contemporary dislocation of Africans and African insociety as a whole. They prescribe an almost total break with past ancestral rites, often associate evil with some traditional names, and seek 'genealogical curses.' Their prescriptions are ritualistic, including certain kinds of prayers; a disconnection with cultural roots, including the changing of names; and so on. The Mountain of Fire and Miracles Ministries, which are now spreading to many African countries where Nigerians are found, are perhaps the best examples.

Lastly, the **Modernists** are members of the old Aladura (African Independent) churches who believe that they have to present their faith in a more modern and acceptable form for a more enlightened society. Some are sympathetic to Pentecostal spirituality, or have shared in Pentecostal activities, and try to use these experiences to renew the Aladura churches, which have been strongly criticised and demonised by other Protestant churches.

This typology helps us to avoid the generalisations in current literature on African Pentecostalism.

Modernists believe that they have to present their faith in a more modern and acceptable form for a more enlightened society

The influence of religion has continued to grow as it presents itself as politically relevant, and an alternative social institution

By the 1990s the Charismatic movements had achieved considerable social respectability, as the political elite began to identify themselves with Pentecostal and Charismatic churches. In fact, it became politically expedient for some African leaders to proclaim their evangelical conversion and Pentecostal experience. Frederick Chiluba of Zambia, who succeeded Kenneth Kaunda as president, of that country, was the first to do this in December 1991 when he proclaimed Zambia a Christian nation and gave Pentecostals and Charismatics a moral platform for penetrating the country's political sphere. In the 1990s the Ghanaian president, J J Rawlings, moved closer to the Charismatics, who in turn provided the government with religious and moral legitimacy. In the Republic of Benin, Mathieu Kerekou's conversion from Marxism to Pentecostalism formed part of the platform for his second entry into politics in 1996. In Nigeria, Olusegun Obasanjo consistently favoured the Pentecostal constituency during his presidency from 1999 to 2007. Charismatics and Pentecostals held an all-night prayer meeting to usher in Obasanjo's inauguration on 29 May 1999. Similarly, in June 2003, Pentecostal and Charismatic leaders organised a thanksgiving service to mark Obasanjo's second term. Obasanjo consistently appealed to Christian religious sentiments, and attended or sent representations to major events organised by Pentecostals. In December 2003 he made a much-advertised visit to the Holy Ghost Festival of the Redeemed Christian Church of God, a leading Nigerian Pentecostal church in Lagos.

Therefore, in the context of the failure of the centralised state, the influence of religion – particularly Pentecostalism – has continued to grow as it presents itself as politically relevant, and an alternative social institution. It is therefore pertinent to examine the reasons for the wide appeal of Pentecostalism in Africa, and its manifestations in the political sphere.

Pentecostalism in Africa has been a purveyor of modernity. Leaders and members are college and university students and graduates who are exposed to the challenges of the western world. One manifestation of this is the use of modern musical instruments during services instead of traditional African ones. As noted earlier, Pentecostal groupings actively use the media to advertise themselves and enlist members. Videos, cassettes, satellite broadcasting, and the internet have become means of expansion to an urban population.

Moreover, the movements are entirely urban, and are using modern marketing techniques to gain access to public space. The use of English is a dominant characteristic, allowing them to share values across ethnic and national boundaries. In fact, the published works of the founders are invariably conveyed in English.

Doctrinal emphases

The doctrinal emphases of the Pentecostal churches are interesting as well. In the 1970s evangelism and sanctification were greatly emphasised, but in the early 1980s healing was added. The emphasis on healing and personal empowerment for success and upward social mobility have continued to attract large numbers of socially impoverished Nigerians. Indeed, the rapid expansion of Pentecostalism in Nigeria and perhaps across Africa can be linked first to its modernising tendencies, then to a pragmatic approach to social and religious issues affecting the lives of millions, and then to its doctrine of supernatural empowerment, which holds out the promise of empowering and protecting its members

in disruptive socio-economic and political situations.³¹ For example, in March 2008 I saw a billboard put up by the Mountain of Fire and Miracles Ministries of Lagos which read:

‘Jesus is the answer to all problems. So keep asking.’

Not only have millions of Nigerians been asking, they have also been searching for solutions for their daily needs and problems. While policy-makers at the World Bank and International Monetary Fund will not subscribe to this perspective, it is interesting to note the large-scale grass roots mobilisation that has been achieved through such religious claims.

The healing message is too broad to focus on a specific physical illness, social dislocation, the failure of the centralised state, of the general frustration among Nigerians. Consequently, in their messages, pastors continually emphasise the name of Jesus and the power of Jesus to address daily existential needs. The following extracts from Pentecostal publications illustrate some of the ways in which these needs of members are being addressed:

‘Every failure in life is not written in pen, but in pencil. You have both the power and the energy to either erase it or live it the way it is. ... I want you to know that you have what it takes to erase every failure in your life and when you do, all your mockers will bow in shame at your success ...’³²

‘Your faith ... is a mighty tool God has given you to repair everything in your life which the witches and wizards might have damaged. Once you are still alive, and you have faith in the name of Jesus, you can still reclaim all that they have stolen from your life.’³³

‘If sickness comes upon your body, don’t go complaining to doctors and nurses that you are sick. Just get to a corner and let the Spirit of God talk within you.’³⁴

A handbill and poster announcing a ‘crusade’ is reproduced below:

EJIGBO MIRACLE THUNDER CRUSADE

For deliverance from: Sickness, Emotional Disturbance, Madness, Depression, Stress, Anxiety, Bad dreams, Deafness, Barrenness, Miscarriage, Dumbness or Lameness.

Jesus will roll away your problem as these anointed men of God ministers.

Evangelist and Mrs A Adekeye.

Bro P Aworanti (Host Minister)

... Courtesy of the Aroma of Christ Evangelical Ministry Nigeria.³⁵

Besides physical healing, there is an emphasis on deliverance from past ancestral curses and demonic attacks. For example, in an advertisement inviting the public to a deliverance crusade in 1988, Steve Onoja, a medical doctor and founder of Faith Deliverance Ministries, listed demonic attacks to include the following:

- History of consistently unproductive financial investments.
- Unexplainable [sic] loss of earrings, bangles, necklaces, etc.
- Sexual relationships in dreams causing a lack of such interest in physical husbands or wives.
- Nightmares e.g. seeing corpses in dreams.

‘Jesus is the answer to all problems. So keep asking.’

- History of incurable wounds/illness.
- Constant ill-luck, misfortune and bad luck.
- Constant illnesses especially after marriage.
- Incessant car accidents both when driving and when being driven.
- Easy forgetfulness and generalized confusion.
- Explainable or unexplainable [sic] fertility.³⁶

The emphases on healing, success, prosperity, and deliverance are all rooted in the appropriation of power in its traditional and modern forms

There is also an emphasis on success and prosperity. The late Benson Idahosa, founder of the Church of God Mission Incorporated, was one of the first pastors to embark on a flamboyant lifestyle, and emphasise material prosperity. By the 1990s, many other Pentecostal pastors had begun to emulate his approach. 'How to Turn Your Austerity to Prosperity,' 'Understanding Financial Prosperity,' 'The Art of Working Hard,' 'If Your Faith Says Yes, God will Not Say No,' 'The Use of Time,' 'Rehoboth Welcome to Prosperity,' 'Facing Life Problems,' 'Success Buttons,' are among the titles of scores of popular confessional literature over the past two decades, in addition to untold hours of Bible studies and sermons. Generally, the messages offered by the founders and leaders of Charismatic movements are motivational, and personally re-assuring. More importantly, testimonies or personal stories of spectacular individual successes are publicly advertised to strengthen the validity of their doctrinal emphasis on healing.

The capacity of the Charismatic movements to respond to their social milieu is remarkable. Nothing is more important to Charismatics and Pentecostals than for the individual to be in good health, and for society to experience peace. Charismatics and Pentecostals are adopting an ethical approach to the evils in their society. It is this comprehensive definition of healing that has set the Charismatics apart from other denominations. Healings practiced by Charismatics are more 'expansive' than those of the Aladuras, and different in other ways as well.

Although the Bible has broadened the outlook of Pentecostals and Charismatics, their basic traditional African cosmology has been little affected; hence they continue to grapple with power in its various manifestations. The emphases on healing, success, prosperity, and deliverance are all rooted in the appropriation of power in its traditional and modern forms. As noted by Birgit Meyer,³⁷ the increasing popularity of the Charismatic and Pentecostal movements,⁸ stems from the fact that it ties into historically generated local understandings of Christianity, despite a dislike of African traditional religion.

Development praxis of Nigerian Pentecostal and Charismatic movements

The seminal work of Max Weber on the relationship of Calvinism, the rigorous and ascetic form of 16th century Protestantism, to the rise of western capitalism frames the extensive debate on the relationship of religious ideas to economic activities. Flowing from Weber's thesis, there was a renewed interest in the 1980s in the connection between religion and development. Part of this interest resulted in the inclusion of human and social factors in to indices for measuring development.

It is in this context that brief reference can usefully be made to one particularly significant transformation fostered by Pentecostalism. This can be summarised as the doctrinal emphases that have enhanced family values by challenging the values of the permissive society. Pentecostals and Charismatics have influenced the basis of the family formation

by depicting the family as part of their religious agenda. The church and the home are central to Pentecostal religious ideals. While the Church is considered a safe haven for troubled souls, the home is regarded as a challenge to believers because it is believed that the Christian family is becoming the target of satanic attacks aimed at causing disunity in the church. In fact, most Pentecostal groups believe that the continuing spiritual vigour of their members is intricately linked to their marriages and family lives. Hence, regulations for sexual behaviour, marriage, and the home are an important concern for these groups.

For the conservative evangelicals and fundamentalists, the ideal Christian home is monogamous and headed by a husband who is expected to assume responsibility for the spiritual, financial, and social needs of the household. He is expected constantly to express his love for his wife, lead the family in daily devotion, and encourage it to participate in church activities. Moreover, it is expected that parents rather than society will exert the greatest influence over children as they grow up. Parents share the responsibility of bringing up and caring for children under God's guidance. In fact, children are to be brought up to relate closely to the Bible, and the telling of Bible stories is a major way in which parents are expected to impart the Christian ideal to them. Divorce is discouraged; believers who have divorced their partners are regarded as lacking commitment, and may be expelled from their groups. Polygamy is outlawed, and is viewed as a great sin. Generally, the picture of an ideal home is that of parents and children sitting together to pray or read the Bible, or, with Bible in hand, going to church. Pentecostals promote the maintenance of a joint bank account for a family, a significant value not previously accommodated by Nigerian society.

Parents share the responsibility of bringing up and caring for children under God's guidance

Methods for enforcing compliance with these prescriptions for marriage and home life include a regular emphasis on the church's message through teaching sessions, sermons, Bible studies, and the reading of selected devotional books written by church leaders. The emphases on marriage and the home are also taught as aspects of the doctrine of holiness, or as one's responsibility to God.

The emphasis on the ideal Christian home and the prescriptions pertaining to it are aimed at testing fidelity to church doctrines, demonstrating the distance of the religious organisation involved from broader society, and subordinating members to leaders – all this as a means of transforming the individual and, ultimately, society.

Generally, by trying to maintain fidelity and strict moral standards in marriage, Pentecostals have indirectly lifted the status of women in African society by affording them equality and respect. Wives are not subordinates but partners, and household chores are meant to be shared between husbands and wives. Women's roles and duties as wives and mothers are generally better appreciated in the families of Pentecostals than among other groups. Invariably, women in Pentecostal families enjoy a much higher sense of worth and self-esteem than others. Thus the progressive and modern orientation of Pentecostal organisations has, on the whole, been beneficial to women. Therefore, Pentecostalism, with its emphasis on the Spirit and equality before Christ rather than on tradition, is succeeding in lowering barriers for African women.

In reflecting on faith and development as they relate to the Charismatic movements several conclusions emerge. First, the doctrinal emphases and practices of the Pentecostal and Charismatic movements motivate individuals towards self-discipline, hard work, and self-improvement, and thereby indirectly foster personal and societal development in contemporary Nigeria. Emphases on prosperity and success, which form a significant part of the motivational theology of the Pentecostal and Charismatic movements,

Pentecostal
spirituality is providing
philosophical
and pragmatic
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the individual

provide an impetus towards development. By helping people to discover their potential and interests, and relating these to practical issues; influencing productivity by emphasising hard work and motivating members to achieve higher standards of living; as well as upholding high ethical standards in a society burdened by persistent moral failures, Pentecostal spirituality has become a crucial factor for a new class of Nigerians trying to define, initiate, and promote development that touches on the personal lives of members. Indeed, development has become a religious discourse as Pentecostal spirituality continues to consolidate attitudes, values, and skills oriented towards the future, and grounded in the possibility of change and progress. Moreover, the Pentecostal and Charismatic movements have sought the transformation of the collective by undertaking various socio-political activities in their attempt to impact on their society.

Secondly, Pentecostal and Charismatic movements, through their sermons and Bible studies, have tried to create a new theological and ideological discourse of development by placing the concepts of change and power on the social agenda, thus consolidating new forms of religious expression and socio-political understanding. Whether this perspective could have substantial impact on Nigerian society should be considered by policy makers and others.

In all, Pentecostal spirituality is promoting a significant appreciation of the need for progress among members, and providing philosophical and pragmatic encouragement to the individual. Consequently, Pentecostalism could be seen as a cultural matrix that is positive, progressive, and which could be harnessed for development. However, what is not so clear is how to link development at the domestic level, which is the main emphasis of the Pentecostal and Charismatic movements, to development at the institutional level, which is so desirable in modern Africa.

In conclusion, it is appropriate to reflect upon the following issues. First, what are the models of development being promoted by Pentecostal and Charismatic movements in Africa? Second, what has the impact been of the institutional development projects undertaken and being undertaken by Pentecostal and Charismatic movements? In Nigeria, these have included rural health clinics, agricultural services, the establishment of educational institutions (mostly universities), micro-financing facilities, legal aid, HIV/AIDS awareness programmes, and so on. Third, how should we understand and seek to address the tensions caused by modern professionals, such as medical doctors and scientists, who, after being trained at receiving training in some of the best universities of the world, return to Africa to become pastors and founders of Charismatic churches, despite the shortages of personnel in their professions?

It is only by further study of Pentecostalism that we can hope to provide some answers to these questions.

Endnotes

- 1 It is possible to distinguish the classical Pentecostal churches such as Assemblies of God and the Foursquare Gospel Church, which were introduced to Africa by western missionaries in the 1930s and 1940s, from the newer 'independent Pentecostal and Charismatic movements,' a contemporary indigenous phenomenon.
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- 20 Ojo, The Dynamics of Indigenous Charismatic Missionary Enterprises.
- 21 See <http://www.godembassy.org/en/embassy.php> for more about this church.
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Pentecostalism in South Africa

Prof Lawrence Schlemmer

CDE's in-depth study of Pentecostalism in South Africa is encapsulated in the CDE publication *Under the Radar: Pentecostalism in South Africa and its potential social and economic role* (March 2008), and a longer research report written by Prof Lawrence Schlemmer, entitled *Dormant Capital: Pentecostalism in South Africa and its potential social and economic role* (March 2008). Both publications are available from CDE. Prof Schlemmer presented the main findings of the CDE study to the workshop. A summary of his presentation follows.

PENTECOSTALISM IN SOUTH AFRICA has its origins in the early 20th century, with the arrival of churches such as the Assemblies of God and the Apostolic Faith Mission. A second wave, under the influence of neo-Pentecostals from the United States, arrived after World War Two. We are now experiencing a third wave, entering the country from Africa, borne by African migrants.

The CDE study focused on how the experience of faith intersects with social, economic and political processes; how the Pentecostal mindset influences the lifestyles of both pastors and congregants; and what implications this has for social policy. This is important because we have one of the highest recorded rates of unemployment in the world. Hidden in that unemployment is a massive informal sector which is living below starvation level, and has no realistic prospect of being absorbed into the formal economy over the next ten to 20 years. The hope, if there is hope, lies with the people themselves rather than with the machinery of government. So CDE was interested in aspects such as confidence, initiative, and self-help, and the role that religion can play in promoting them.

Among religious groupings in South Africa, it is the Pentecostal and Charismatic churches in both their classical and newer versions that are growing most rapidly, challenged only by the Muslim revival. CDE was drawn to the Pentecostal and Charismatic churches by their known ability to imbue followers with a great intensity of motivation, and their organisational flexibility. Starting off with a sample survey in Hout Bay, and then proceeding to a sample survey in Gauteng, we conducted intensive focused interviews with pastors, congregants in various communities, Pentecostal businessmen, and political role players.

Religious organisations in South Africa have always been highly plural, and mainline churches have competed with one another from colonial times. At times the Anglicans have been more powerful than the Dutch Reformed Church, at times the Dutch Reformed Church has been more powerful than the Anglicans. So there are great overlaps and commonalities. Furthermore, the Pentecostal churches are themselves varied, with wide differences in styles, culture, size, and formalisation of worship. So when it comes to surveys among those churches, it is very difficult to identify specific trends. However, we ended up with a classification of the new Charismatic Pentecostal churches, mega churches, community-based churches, classical Pentecostal churches, and African Independent Churches.

Politics are very powerful in South Africa. However, politics are more superficial among all churchgoers, and do not invade religious commitment to the extent that it seems to invade attitudes among non-churchgoers. Religious commitment in general imparts a buoyant mood, and creates spiritual capital, which seems to correlate with networks;

Among religious groupings in South Africa the Pentecostal and Charismatic churches are growing most rapidly

trust; confidence, patience, and fortitude; to insulate people from political and economic stress; and to encourage self-reliance rather than dependence or entitlement.

Among the pastors we interviewed the theology of encounter was essential to the Pentecostal message. They also displayed an entrepreneurial quality, flexibility, and openness to church development, along with a refusal to conform to the structures of the established churches. However, there is uncertainty within the Pentecostal movement about how to undertake wider outreach and socio-political involvement. By contrast, the Catholics, the Anglicans, and even the Dutch Reformed Church demonstrate greater skills and sensitivities in dealing with politics.

Religious commitment and engagement generates a resource that is highly relevant to coping with the stresses and strains of life

In addition to the in-depth interviews with pastors, activists and congregants, a sample survey was conducted amongst 350 Pentecostal and other Christians, as well as members of other religions or of no religion in the townships and suburbs of Gauteng. A preliminary conclusion that can be drawn is that religion has achieved far more in improving lives and morale than have political programmes and promises in the past few years. Among both black Africans as well as whites, coloureds and Indians, religion has imparted a buoyant mood among the faithful that contrasts significantly with a relatively hesitant mood among non-churchgoers. There is a widespread feeling of oppression by crime, the opportunism of politicians and leaders, unemployment and the lack of delivery by government. Nevertheless, personal spheres of life seem to be insulated from these harsher realities. The insulation offered by faith is thinner in the poorer areas than in the wealthier suburbs but it is effective in ensuring overall well being nevertheless, a point which South Africa's over-politicised and quite myopically rationalist media miss almost completely.

Religion often stands accused of being 'other worldly' and somehow less than relevant in assessing the state of society. The CDE study shows that religious commitment and engagement generates a resource that is highly relevant to coping with the stresses and strains of life. Various aspects of the results show that, if nothing else, the solidarity and support of religious congregations and the emotional resilience and confidence in the future that faith seems to impart are in themselves empowering for people. Furthermore, for significant minorities in all the religious categories, this mindset is at least associated with greater determination, financial savings and better human relations in the workplace or businesses. While the focus on the Pentecostal movement has yielded valuable insights, the more general evidence is that any committed form of faith and collective worship is the key variable. The largest contrasts in the findings reviewed are between people who are religiously active and those who are not, implying that religion is an under-exploited resource.

In the black township areas, the most promising findings emerged not among new Pentecostals but among the long-established classical churches. These old Pentecostals, despite material and occupational setbacks in their own lives, show above average or meaningful tendencies like the following:

- A propensity to save money, despite being among the poorest respondents
- An above average commitment to children's education
- Large numbers of close friends within the church community
- A relaxed, trusting and positive attitude to new acquaintances
- A determination to shape their own lives
- A balanced conception of what business success requires
- Despite deep faith, no over-reliance on divine guidance but a clear concept that God helps those who help themselves
- An above average tendency to translate faith into discipline and hard work

- An above average interest in studying and improving themselves.
- An understanding that education is not only about hard skills, but also wisdom and judgement

In many respects they are old-fashioned, have a tendency to integrate ancestors into their religious commitments, and believe in discipline for children. They have intense family commitments. They are not 'progressives' probably because their standards of education are slightly lower than average. They are slightly poorer than the other religious categories, but they have the lowest rate of unemployment of all the categories in the black sample. They are among the happiest of the research respondents, and have the most optimistic beliefs that life will get better. From rather humble stations in life – this category has most poor people, they believe in economic growth, science and technology and self-reliance as routes to success for South Africa. They tend rather less than others to endorse affirmative action and engineered progress for blacks. They also have a keen interest in politics. One would hope that they could be more influential in shaping our political values.

New Pentecostals are more interested in politics than any other denomination

The new Pentecostals are highest in spiritual capital. Their religious experience is the most intense of all. They are also more altruistic than average and most inclined to believe in good works. They are generally more encapsulated within their religious activity than old Pentecostals and do not have the same level of commitment to shaping their own lives. They tend to hand over to a spiritual agency more than the old Pentecostals, and also emphasise spirituality most in the upbringing of children. Almost inadvertently, their faith gives them self-confidence.

Their social capital and networks are rather weak, however, having less close personal friends than, but similar low levels of involvement in voluntary organisations to Old Pentecostals. Although they are most dissatisfied with policies and politicians they are also very patient and accepting in their work and lives generally. They enjoy high levels of personal happiness. They do not seem to have the same level of challenge as old Pentecostals, and may tend to be rather too 'other worldly', sheltered by their faith.

The Separatists-Zionists have many of the orientations of the old Pentecostals but have a handicap in that the attraction of their religion is its promise of working miracles and curing illness. Their background in African traditional values and rituals takes them a little too much out of the mainstream of development. What their faith does give them is confidence that they can succeed – in other words abundant spiritual capital. On the other hand, their faith comes a little too close to being a crutch in life.

Analysing the suburban (in contrast to the township) congregations requires a change of gear. Although some 50% of their households have incomes of less than R17 000 a month and are therefore fairly financially constrained, they are worlds apart from the material conditions in the township areas. Hence the issue of socio-economic development is much less pressing. The new Pentecostals are positioned midway between the old Pentecostals and the mainline denominations as regards socio-economic level. They do have more university degrees, however – although not at the rate of the upper middle classes among non-churchgoers.

New Pentecostals are more interested in politics than any other denomination, although they have a tendency not to vote. The new Pentecostals would vote if religiously oriented candidates were to stand. They are however the group most satisfied with trends in the country. This is despite high levels of dissatisfaction with crime, health policies, public morality and government performance generally. Hence their satisfactions tend to derive

Direct Pentecostal
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remain limited

largely from the economy. This suggests that they are much more materialistic than their overt commitments would suggest. They are also happier than the mainline church members in their personal situations.

As regards the criteria they would adopt in judging progress and a better life for all in South Africa, the new Pentecostals are progressive in that they endorse better education, more generous welfare provision, anti-poverty strategies and affirmative action for previously disadvantaged people. They are inclined to support charity and are cautious about state involvement in social affairs.

They have many friends in their congregations and luxuriate in the warmth of the religious community, but tend to be less trusting of people and cautious with strangers than are the old Pentecostals. Although they value education and express an interest in further education for themselves, they are not exactly burning with ambition to make personal progress. This is because they are so thoroughly captivated by their spiritual rewards. Of all categories in the sample the new Pentecostals are most enmeshed in their relationship to God, which to them is immediate and joyous. Nearly 90% of them have been saved and reborn. The spiritual rewards of their faith tend to dominate their answers to how their lives have been changed by the church. They seem to live in a constant state of spiritual arousal. At the same time, this immersion in the experience of the Spirit seems to impart a confidence and even a determination in their working lives. Similarly to the Hout Bay study, it is almost as if their spiritual lives release their energy and performance in material things because these things mean so little. The new Pentecostals have experienced material progress, which they attribute to their faith. Hence in their choices about spending money they include quite a lot of consumer durables and adult 'toys'. They are not ascetics by any stretch of the imagination.

But there are some fairly large contradictions in their lives. Amidst all the warmth, the solidarity within the religious community and their concerns about poverty, inequality and with racial reconciliation, they erect some very hard barriers. Some 70% of them regard inter-race marriage as a form of sin, their relative caution with strangers is another barrier. The moral fortress that they build is the most impregnable barrier of all, and this is a dubious side of the dynamic of intense religious experience among all the religious categories. The new Pentecostals are significantly more puritanical on moral questions than any other denomination, however. Although South Africa desperately needs more moral sanctions on a whole range of behaviours, the new Pentecostals are reminiscent of the morally and socially conservative 'blourokies' of several decades ago. It is possible that the 'progressive veneer and the expressions of concern about poverty and race relations' amongst New Pentecostals is 'a front to disguise some very hard and judgmental people.'

The research concludes that direct Pentecostal influence in public affairs is likely to remain limited. The likely influence will be indirect and will be associated with the growth of the movement and the interpersonal influence of Pentecostals in everyday community life. In this respect the Pentecostals have 'social capital' in their side. Their friendship and religious networks are dense, and this would make for influence beyond the scope of their numbers. Their self-confidence will also assist in spreading their influence. It may just be realistic to assume that as the influence of liberation politics and the politics of transformation subsides in South Africa, the currently overshadowed influence of the attitudes and values of rank and file Christians and other religious people in South Africa will come to the fore, but from the bottom-up as it were. South African democracy and strategies for development will benefit greatly when this occurs, for example in education, with school

governing bodies leading the way. The pronounced interest of new Pentecostals in education suggests that their involvement in this sphere may happen rather sooner than later.

A possible counter-productive tendency might be that religious solidarity becomes the basis for social enclaves, sealed off from the wider society, and with social support within congregations 'deteriorating' into a social crutch, a retreat from the unseemly behaviour of society at large.

Religion often stands accused of being 'other worldly' and somehow less than relevant in assessing the state of society. There is always an understandable fear among many intellectuals and decision makers that everyday religion is not sufficiently analytic and strategic to be effective in public life and development in society. This is probably true. This survey provides scant evidence of tough strategic involvement by Pentecostals in their wider communities. What it does show, however, is that religious commitment and engagement generates a resource that is probably more relevant than anything else to coping with the considerable stresses and strains of life in South Africa today. Numerous aspects of the results show that, if nothing else, the solidarity and support within religious congregations and the emotional resilience and confidence in the future that faith seems to impart, are in themselves empowering for people. Furthermore, for significant minorities in all the religious categories, this mindset is at least associated with greater determination, financial savings and better human relations in the workplace or businesses. A cohesive religious movement, therefore, must surely rise in influence, albeit slowly and imperceptibly.

A key feature of the Pentecostal movement is the intensity of spiritual engagement. The effects of faith in boosting self-confidence, self-esteem, personal agency, and determination were proven beyond doubt in CDE's research. For instance, the empowerment of women and the feminisation of male machismo can do revolutionary things for the coherence and integrity, both material and non-material, of families. Nonetheless, key resources need to be pumped in at strategic points to assist this positive process. This cannot be left to individual churches, and it would be constructive to explore whether – across the Pentecostal movement or even across different denominations – it would be possible to launch a development club movement to help promote small businesses. This one important area of failure in South Africa, notably because of a widespread sense of entitlement. The Pentecostal churches provide an effective answer to this problem.

The solidarity and support within religious congregations and the emotional resilience and confidence in the future that faith seems to impart, are empowering for people

Discussion

Pentecostalism and personal empowerment

Participants noted that Pentecostalism was founded upon what Pentecostals described as a profound encounter with God, what one termed 'a ground zero experience' of 'before and after Christ'. This experience provided an enormous sense of personal agency: everything was new, one was starting afresh, and one could achieve things because God was on one's side. Especially for people with little money or resources, this trust in God could lead to their lives changing for the better, and dramatically so.

Participants noted that this was reflected in the enterprising way in which many Pentecostal churches, and especially the new, Charismatic ones, set up shop. Whereas people from big denominations could count on the support of a huge network of churches with long histories, Charismatic Pentecostal churches started from scratch. The way in which they did this communicated itself to people who beforehand did not believe in themselves, and the possibility of bringing about change at both a personal and a community level. So there was much to be said in favour of building institutions such as these, particularly in South Africa's black community. There was an unfulfilled need for institutions, whether political or cultural, in poor communities, and enterprising churches could provide a space in which poor people could flourish. The very simple way in which they communicated the basics of the Bible, and got people to read it, obey it, and spread the gospel to others, helped people to achieve a sense of personhood, a sense that God loved them and cared for them, and a sense that they could move out of the situation in which they found themselves.

Enterprising churches could provide a space in which poor people could flourish

Peter Berger observed that while the CDE study demonstrated how complex the phenomenon of Pentecostalism was in many ways, for Pentecostals themselves it was very easy: you were either for God or against; you were either saved or not saved. However, while this simplicity and certainty was profoundly energising, it could also be a profound weakness in relation to Pentecostals thinking about how to relate to wider society, for there was a tendency to slip into a simplistic black/white and right/wrong mode of thinking, which in practice usually led to an unthinking endorsement of the prevailing spirit of the time. This was one reason why Pentecostals tended to have relatively little time for politics: God was very big, and this became an obsession.

Pentecostals and the poor

Participants focused on the experience of self-empowerment associated with Pentecostalism, and its consequent pointing to a way out of poverty. Prof Schlemmer, whose presentation had indicated an encouraging link between Pentecostalism and upward social mobility, stressed that while Pentecostals clearly did not have an answer to all society's ills, they nonetheless demonstrated a remarkable ability to successfully transform the morale of their congregants. However, this did not automatically translate into the ability to promote human development. For instance, there were often tensions between different community churches, such as the African Independent Churches and the Pentecostals, and this could consume a lot of energy. These churches often did not have the time, resources, or expertise to translate their messages into development programmes.

This led to a discussion about the role and impact of the 'prosperity churches'. It was argued that the prosperity gospel was a problem particularly for progressive Christians and progressive secular intellectuals. However, research showed that the prosperity gospel was

Pentecostal churches fulfilled poor people's felt need to possess and run their own autonomous organisations

by no means uniform, and was rarely promoted in an unqualified, crude, or alienating way. In any case, especially in the smaller community churches as opposed to the mega churches, the prosperity message was immediately countered by the need to address the crisis of disease, as well as other forms of trauma. Against that, if such churches were giving a message of hope and faith, then that in itself was an important form of investment in people. As one discussant noted from her own research on professionals in Pentecostal churches, the latter might not help people to get jobs, but did help them to cope with the stresses and strains of jobs once they had obtained them. How did one speak out in the boardroom? How did one dress appropriately, or cope with the anger of one's boss? Such basics were very important for people whose parents might have been domestic workers. In other words, these churches imparted a high level of cultural capital.

Prof Berger remarked that while the prosperity gospel might be criticised, it was important to recognise that while voluntary poverty was one thing, poverty for the overwhelming mass of people was unchosen. In that context there was nothing particularly objectionable about people wanting material good to go alongside the pursuit of moral good. What Pentecostals did was to give people the confidence to say that poverty was not something that God wanted for them, and that the righteous should not have to beg for bread.

One discussant, noting that prosperity gospel was propagated particularly by the mega-churches, expressed concern about its negative aspects. Besides its tendency to promote consumerism, it could demotivate people rather than give them a sense of agency; it could create dependence as much as it could create a desire to be self-reliant.

Pentecostal churches and the poor

Participants noted that Pentecostal churches ministered to South Africans who, on the whole, worked in the unregulated economy. Thus there was a certain synergy between their self-directed efforts and voluntarism within the state, and it was true to say that the Pentecostal churches – alongside NGOs and mainstream churches – filled the gaps that the state would not or could not fill. However, Pentecostal churches tended to work among the very lowest strata of society; in fact, they often operated among people who felt that the NGO level was way above them. Pentecostal churches therefore fulfilled poor people's felt need to possess and run their own autonomous organisations. In other words, it seemed that there was indeed a symbolic and elected affinity between Pentecostalism and an unregulated market.

Pentecostalism, entrepreneurship, and choice

Prof Berger agreed with Prof Schlemmer that progressive Christians and secular intellectuals had major qualms about the prosperity churches, and found them distasteful. However, he chose to differ, for if pastors asked for money, the interesting question was not why they asked, but what the congregants got for their money. His view was that they tended to get a lot – notably the transformation in the way they now viewed the world, and their capacity for changing it. This was a product worth paying for, so it was wise not to be too sceptical about it. In any case, Pentecostal churches could be regarded as operating in a religious market, and if people did not want to buy what those churches were selling, they did not have to.

Another participant said her own research has shown that there was considerable mobility within and among churches, with around 25 per cent of joiners leaving particular churches within three years. Another warned against thinking about the Pentecostal movement in Africa in rigid denominational terms. Pentecostalism was happening to all churches, and even in some ways to Islam, which was picking up some of the tactics and strategies of Christian Evangelism to try and counter it.

Pentecostals, healing, and health

One contributor raised the issue of how Pentecostal theology dealt with death. This was very important, because – given the pervasive impact of HIV/AIDS, particularly among the very poor, who were likely to belong to Pentecostal churches – people in South Africa had to process death on a very large scale. She asked how death was mediated in Pentecostal churches.

Prof David Martin disowned any expertise around the AIDS question, yet felt that the Pentecostal message about the family was important. Continuous promiscuity hugely increased the mathematical chances of AIDS; serial monogamy, less so; while steady monogamy was even less likely to result in AIDS. So it followed that if one restored the family, restored the role of men in the family, and devalued machismo, so that men understood that they had obligations towards their families, and that respect was not due to them simply because they were men, the prospects for combating the disease improved immensely.

This led to a more general point about how to deal with the wider range of ills that occurred in a society where medical resources were inadequate. From this perspective, the healing practice of the churches was a sign of economic realism on a continent where a very small percentage of people had access to formal medical care. In Latin America, there was a similar lack of access to medical resources, and a huge amount of misdiagnosis. However, Pentecostalism provided a kind of community medicine, a holistic approach in terms of which the community supported individual members, and optimism entered in. Of course, there was a need for care with regard to this particular aspect because it could lead to the suggestion that if only one believed, one could be cured from cancer, or other potentially fatal diseases. Nonetheless, it had to be recognised that the communal way of supporting sick people associated with the Pentecostal churches was positively associated with the treatment of many psychic ills. Indeed, one of the writers on this issue noted that in Latin America the *visitadora*, or the woman who came to see one, was the single most potent evangelist for the Pentecostal Church.

Pentecostalism provided a kind of community medicine in terms of which the community supported individual members

Pentecostals and modernity

Prof Martin had pointed out in his presentation that Pentecostalism was a modern phenomenon. Peter Berger amplified this by noting that one way of describing modernity was as an enormous change in the human condition from fate to choice. Throughout much of human history, the conditions of life under which people had to exist were destined – that is, they could not choose their economic position, the political system they lived under, or the way in which they could live their personal lives. But modernity opened up realms of choice, beginning with technology. Whereas primitive man might have spent 1 000 years working with one kind of tool, today the choice was not between tools but systems of tech-

In South Africa there was a marked clash between Pentecostalism and the Bill of Rights on issues of reproductive rights and sexual identity

nology, and that extended to the market and to democracy. Life today was full of choices; in fact, choice was a key aspect of modernisation. It was scarcely surprising that different religious groups reacted to this in different ways. As David Martin had pointed out, the voluntary association was the most modern form of religious association. Protestantism, and Pentecostalism in particular, was based on choice, for the decision by an individual to be born again was one of the most modern things that could happen.

This could be related to the history of Europe. The churches in Europe were fundamentally related to the social order in a very direct way, that is to say, the Senator stood opposite to the Bishop: political and spiritual power were interlocked. Consequently, forces of change had to press through both of them simultaneously, as occurred during the French Revolution, under whose rubric religion was cast as backward, superstitious, and anti-equality. This was to become the basis of enlightenment views about religion which spread through the local intelligentsia to other intelligentsias around the world. Nonetheless, the French pattern was not a universal one, and there were other forms of enlightenment, with the American enlightenment, for instance, seeing religion as part of the making of equality.

So there were several possible paths. It followed that it was not necessary for the world to follow the French path; choices included the American path, and several others. Yet such choices also led to complexities. For instance, Pentecostals – especially neo-Pentecostals in the mega churches – might be described as embracing modernity in a rather guarded manner. Hence in South Africa there was a marked clash between Pentecostalism and the Bill of Rights on issues of reproductive rights and sexual identity. Against that, there was a highly uncritical embrace of consumerism, which surely needed to be contested. So, on the one hand, one had an acceptance of modernity centred on consumerist, capitalist society. On the other, while the Pentecostal sense of agency could only be applauded, this could only happen in terms of the dubious values of the prevailing society.

One participant argued that the Pentecostal concept of time was not modern. He was not sure whether it was pre-modern or post-modern, but he was convinced it did not stand in the modernist tradition of rationality and scientific analysis of the present in terms of its location in a history of events. Pentecostalism had an understanding of the world that was fundamentally ahistorical. History for Pentecostals was Jesus, his death, his resurrection, and waiting for the Second Coming. So there was an ahistorical approach to the world and the economy of salvation that actually negated the ability or impetus to analyse one's position historically. This could be contrasted with the World Council of Churches or the Methodist Church, or perhaps even with the Orthodox churches, where awareness of a 2000-year-old theological history and institutional development was paramount. This rootedness developed a sense of place in the present which was not ahistorical but deeply located in history, and a recognition that history was political. That was what political engagement required; it was not something that could be conceptualised outside a historical analysis.

Another participant countered that the so-called historical churches did not have the same sense of urgency that the Pentecostals had. Paradoxically, therefore, it was very much the Pentecostals who were making history.

Pentecostals, gender, race, and ethnicity

The question of agency brought the discussion round to the issue of gender, and the fact that, in a number of African countries, female pastors were playing an important role. One

speaker referred to this as an aspect of a wider gender reformation. Indeed, a 'Pentecostal gender paradox' could be said to be involved, for whereas in western families of the American kind it was the women who wanted to get out of the home, in Africa it was often a matter of getting the men back in, something that was crucial to restoring the family. But it also gave women a sense of dignity and importance, as recorded by the Pentecostal saying: 'The man may be the head, but the woman is the neck, and it's the neck that does the basic work of holding the head together.' That saying came from a New Testament Church of God in Birmingham. Thus at one level one might refer to Pentecostalism as a women's trade union movement, although an important difference was that it was not rights-based as such, because religiously the responsibilities had to go along with the rights. Indeed, this had now become part of the current political agenda in Britain: if one had a solely rights-based agenda without responsibilities relative to it, then one had a lopsided society: one that did not have any sense of what it owed society as distinct from what society owed it.

While acknowledging that this might be so, another participant aired his concern that Pentecostalism did not seem to provide a framework for racial integration. So were there any problems of racism? It seemed, for example, that even groups which started off with a very strong cross-racial element tended to divide along racial lines. Consequently, while Pentecostalism's mixture of black and white revivalism had the power to cross cultural species barriers, in South Africa the racial element tended to recur. Indeed, this tendency was most pronounced in the voluntary churches, for the hierarchical churches had more capacity to deal with this kind of racialism. Even so, the degree of mixing in Pentecostal Churches was greater than in many other churches. Furthermore, it had to be recognised that Pentecostalism worldwide was overwhelmingly a non-white church; indeed, it could be depicted as a church of black, Asian, and Latin American women.

There were some encouraging indications. For instance, in South Africa the Rhema Church, which was a neo-Pentecostal or mega church, might be 80 per cent black, but was also 20 per cent white, so there was substantial mixing. Against that, there were growing multi-ethnic problems within the black Charismatic churches. So even black people had to take it beyond black and white, and look at how to accommodate the minorities among themselves.

Pentecostals, democracy, and politics

The relationship between Pentecostals and politics was intensively discussed. Participants acknowledged that the apolitical nature of contemporary Pentecostalism in South Africa flowed partly from the tendency of Pentecostal churches under apartheid to discourage black members from talking about politics. If they – or anyone else – did talk politics, they were often labelled as communists. Indeed, one contributor recorded how, when he decided as a Pentecostal pastor to join the struggle against apartheid, he was quickly given 'the left boot of fellowship', and was unable to continue his ministry. Pentecostals did not understand or support what he intended to do. So while Pentecostalism was a profoundly powerful movement, it did not help people to think through integration with society in a serious way. Indeed, it carried within it two negative possibilities in particular. First, it did not raise questions about the excesses of consumerism, which really needed to be denounced. Second, it did not seek to confront the issue of pluralism. This was an inevitable aspect of modernisation, and involved the recognition of a multiplicity of faiths. Pentecostals tended to be more explicit than other Christians about the one outcome for

Even groups which started off with a very strong cross-racial element tended to divide along racial lines

those who were not in Christ, and that was to go to hell. So there was really a need for Pentecostals to think about the compromises required to live in a pluralist society.

Another participant said any discussion of the reluctance of Pentecostalism to become involved in socio-political economic life might usefully draw on David Bosch's book *Transforming Mission* in which he distinguished between the Hebrew and Greek understandings of salvation – the Greek from Soteria, and the Hebrew from Yeshua. Bosch argued that many Pentecostals had inherited the understanding of salvation from the Greeks that all spirit was pure, and all matter was dirty. Perhaps many Pentecostal and born-again people were not getting involved in society because they were saved *from*, the Greek concept, instead of being saved *for*, the Hebrew concept. Many Pentecostals did not want to get involved in politics or the running of the economy because they had an escapist mentality of going somewhere else. Their attitude was that they did not care about the world. Indeed, it was very much a fact of Pentecostalism that people had come to die in the churches, rather than to live in them. Instead of using their empowerment to transform society, they were committed to simply saving souls.

Instead of using their empowerment to transform society, they were committed to simply saving souls

Prof Berger cautioned that one should not be too eager to condemn the allegedly apolitical nature of Pentecostalism. For a start, when people complained that someone was apolitical, they often really meant that the person concerned did not want to back their particular agenda. This was relevant to South Africa. It was necessary to distinguish between churches or religious communities in situations where there was an overwhelming evil, and situations where there was not. South Africa under apartheid was manifestly in the grips of such an evil, and therefore the necessity to engage in political action of one sort or another to combat it could be seen as a moral imperative. By contrast, one of the benefits of democracy was that people could go fishing, and did not have to be totally engaged politically. This was because there was no overwhelming evil, but lots of little evils. Indeed, most issues in the polity could not be easily distinguished as clearly good or bad, so there were grey areas, and people could have different opinions.

Prof Schlemmer referred to Achille Mbembe's notion of the necessity in many parts of Africa of a politics of connivance or deceit. When employed as a social worker many years ago, he had worked closely with Bishop Lekganyane of the Zionist Independent Church in the Polokwane area. The Zionist Church had been condemned in many quarters for collaborating with apartheid. However, in talking to the bishop at the time, he had concluded that, although Lekganyane justified the Church's position in scriptural terms, it had made a collective decision that to connive with the apartheid government would ultimately be better for their people than to oppose it. In the event, that connivance had certain manifest advantages, and the proposition turned out to be true. In fact, all sorts of trade opportunities were opened up through this connivance. Yet the Zionist Church never said it would love and support these white overlords. In Mbembe's terms, this was a connivance that protected the autonomy and dignity of victims of apartheid.

David Maxwell had made a similar argument in respect of East Africa, referring to a politics of deliberate withdrawal by Pentecostals in a system where everyone else was expected to fall in line and support a dominant party. Pentecostals, in short, were saying that they would not play this game. Whether this was defeatism or a kind of constructive passivity was open to interpretation, yet it did indicate that sometimes the decision not to vote or participate in politics was actually as political as anything else. Nonetheless, in the present situation in South Africa, not voting was not helpful, so there was a need for non-voting Pentecostals to take one step further. One could not say one was being brave and

radical by not voting, which many people in the Pentecostal churches were doing. While churches' involvement in the struggle against apartheid was part of an important tradition of defection at a time when it was necessary to strengthen a certain historical process, current politics were a 'lot of sound and fury signifying nothing,' going neither backwards nor forwards. People were being fundamentally disempowered.

Prof Berger said the complaint that a particular group of people, whether religious or not, was apolitical, or was inappropriately engaged in politics, should not be taken too seriously. When one was passionate about God, it was quite possible to justify non-interest in other obsessions – in South Africa's case, the national obsession with politics. However, it did mean that Pentecostals could not be politically mobilised to the extent needed to bring about some of the changes necessary in the country.

This presented a difficulty to someone like Rev Kenneth Meshoe, head of the African Christian Democratic Party, that drew a lot of its support from this kind of constituency. The growing numbers of Pentecostals and Pentecostal churches suggested that there should be more political mobilisation, but this was not occurring. This required more analysis. For example, could it be said that the prosperity gospel was simply an embrace of capitalist tendencies, or did Pentecostal churches adapt to any system one put them in? For example, Pentecostals in communist countries would be communist because they did not have a deep analysis of society – something that might flow from Pentecostalism being a religion of the poor. They did not have the necessary analytical tools – they just believed in God.

In response, Rev Meshoe said there were no easy answers, but he felt the gist of the matter lay in the teaching that everything spirit was good and everything material was evil. Yet his position was that God was not only involved with the spirit; He was involved with the total person, the material as well as the spiritual. As a result, he had to agree to disagree with many of his Pentecostal friends, but hoped that the insulation of religious people from politics would eventually be removed. Religious people were themselves both taxpayers and citizens, and as such they should be concerned about what was happening in their surroundings. Before one arrived in heaven, one had to be useful where one was. If God never intended one to be useful on earth, what was one doing here? One could not just hang around and consume oxygen; one had to be useful in one way or the other. That is why he had become involved in politics.

One participant working with Pentecostal churches in Soweto observed that whether or not people chose to vote was scarcely the issue that concerned the poor. It was much more important to deal with the pressing issue of how to put food on the table. There was also the matter of security, and it was notable that the churches she was working with had become very involved in things like the police force. So one needed to be aware of various definitions of politics, and to recognise its content as it mattered to people at the grass roots. One of the virtues of Pentecostalism was precisely that it dealt with the needs of people where they were.

A participant noted that Pentecostal churches in Latin America had become involved in politics across the spectrum. In Brazil, for example, the Pentecostal churches and the Brazilian workers' party got on quite well. The example of Cuba had initially created a lot of conflict and mutual suspicion, but that had moderated hugely, and today there was no necessary conflict between Pentecostals and 'social progress'. In Venezuela there were Pentecostal churches that supported Hugo Chavez. Even so, the tendency was not to think through issues too deeply. The belief was that the Holy Spirit could get you further than

God was not only involved with the spirit; He was involved with the total person, the material as well as the spiritual

thinking, so the tendency was to affirm the spirit of the time. Obviously, this might be problematic.

Prof Berger cautioned that, from the Lutheran perspective, the Kingdom of Grace was different from the Kingdom of Law. Whatever one's denomination, Christianity was a message about the universe and the human condition. It had to do with God, salvation, the incarnation, and the work of Jesus. That's what it was all about; not politics. To be sure, in certain situations, because of one's obligations to one's neighbour, because one wanted to have a more just society, one might be impelled to act politically. However, to turn Christianity into a political agenda was a fundamental distortion of the Gospel.

Religious traditions were at their best when they challenged people to find realistic ways of engaging the world in their daily experiences

Responding, a participant said Prof Berger seemed to be implying that there were only particular times, when earthly situations were particularly bad, when Christians should engage politically. Yet it was precisely the clarity of sight of those termed prophets which made them rage against the evils of society, and it was important to recognise that as an essential pillar of religion. One should not shuffle off this mortal coil without raging at corruption or poverty or whatever other evil was still rife in society.

Pentecostals and public policy

An important part of the discussion revolved around how the state and Pentecostal churches might interact constructively to address social problems.

Rev Meshoe argued that faith institutions and development agencies across the world shared one innermost focus, namely the general welfare of people. They had a good moral foundation, and therefore had to increase their contributions, involvement, and participation. They had to participate in policy formulation to ensure that good governance did take place. The fact was that policy-making in South Africa was dominated by people who were not necessarily Christian, and who did not necessarily think that faith and religion should influence public policy. It was therefore important for the churches, and for the Pentecostal churches in particular, to become involved.

Isaiah 33:22 stated: 'For the Lord is our Judge. The Lord is our law giver, the Lord is our King, it is He who will save us.' If the Lord was the lawmaker, what made it wrong for Pentecostals to also become lawmakers? Didn't Jesus himself say: 'I can only do what I see my father doing,' because whatever the father did, the son did also? Religious traditions were at their best when they challenged people to find realistic ways of engaging the world in their daily experiences.

A participant endorsed Meshoe's position from a Catholic perspective: this held that, because God had become man, the church had to involve itself in the human condition. Despite its various failings, the church was very concerned about such issues as human dignity, the common good, and basic solidarity with others. However, if Pentecostal and other churches believed they had answers to some social problems, what was inhibiting them from presenting these to government?

A policy practitioner posed three questions. First, could the economic impact of the Pentecostal churches be quantified? Second, did Pentecostal churches subvert the status quo, or were they empowering and constructive? Third, how could Pentecostal churches make their own inputs into processes of policy formulation and implementation? Overall, the government had found that faith-based movements or organisations were playing a big role in respect of poverty alleviation. In 1994 there was an idealised conception that NGOs

and CBOs would play a major role in implementing policy, but this had not happened, as many of them had collapsed. In contrast, the government had come to rely far more on faith-based movements to take forward the issue of poverty eradication and public policy.

A speaker with long experience in the Rhema Church and the Apostolic Faith Mission said Pentecostal people were involved in numerous good works at the grass roots, not only police forums but also adult and other education, HIV/AIDS programmes, and orphanages. Therefore, a country that was facing multiple social challenges and a definite moral decline, as evidenced by widespread crime, could not do without churches, particularly the Pentecostal church and its emphasis on family values. This presented a real opportunity to influence public policy in a much stronger way. It also indicated the need to co-operate more closely with politicians. However, for the Pentecostal denominations to have a greater social influence, they might need to join organisations such as the South African Council of Churches and the Evangelical Alliance.

Prof Martin conceded that these questions were difficult to answer. It was very difficult to prove that if people were honest and trustworthy and worked hard, and gave up alcohol and a chaotic lifestyle, things would get better. Yet at one level there was no great need to prove this, for it was just common sense. Furthermore, Pentecostalism provided a learning experience on many levels; for instance, how to speak in public. Similarly, Pentecostalism placed an important emphasis upon literacy, for that came with having to read the Bible. The cumulative effect of such experiences was almost certainly constructive, not least because evident success was emulated by other groups in society. However, these processes took generations, a span of time that was beyond the immediate purview of most governments.

The difficulty of quantifying religion and religious outcomes was also stressed by a researcher who had been working on community-based health issues. Too much of the discussion hinged on urban areas; things could be very different in rural areas. For example, a small village in a remote highlands area of Lesotho had two or three churches, yet one of the most trusted instruments in the community was an indigenous self-support group that was working with people suffering from HIV/AIDS. Research had uncovered several of these support groups in villages across Lesotho. Most of them were not denominational, but identified themselves as practising religion in very concrete ways, and as such they constituted a religious asset of their communities.

Public health practitioners had been unaware of these groups; therefore, the research had made something visible that had previously been invisible. However, the moment these groups were made visible to public health practitioners, the latter wanted to intervene. Such interventions generally came with resources, but this introduced competition for those resources, and so one began a process of destabilising something that actually worked very well at a local level. Many of the support groups expressed an explicit desire for some form of support. But the issue was how public policy could intervene without destroying them.

Another participant said the problem was that few churches had a theology of development. Yet without a theology that appealed to ordinary people, development became very difficult. The biggest challenge was not to organise activists, who were already converted and were a minority, but to organise the mass. From this perspective, the organisation that succeeded in organising the conservative masses would change the world.

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If one were to take account of the values of believers, whether Muslims or Christians, all public activities would be based on the values of the family or of faith. One would be looking at hunger, education, and safety – these were the things that were important to ordinary men and women, rather than the concerns of a sophisticated middle class.

Another issue was the tendency to say that the money for development had to come from elsewhere. But the Pentecostal churches seemed to have dealt with that problem because they were able to build their own churches with their own money, and had made giving part of worship. That money could be used for development.

Prof Berger said the churches needed to avoid two extremes. One was passive religion, which engaged in worship without regard to evils taking place around them. The other was to misinterpret Christianity as a purely political agenda. Consequently, when one turned to how public policy, especially in a democracy, should relate to faith and institutions based on faith, there were two guiding principles.

One was the first sentence of the Hippocratic Oath, which stated that, above all, physicians should ‘do no harm.’ Governments tended to meddle in anything they could, but this was often destructive. As some speakers had indicated, perhaps the best thing one should do with regard to Pentecostalism and its engagements in society was to leave it alone. Governments, even if unintentionally, could do a lot of harm. Indeed, one of the virtues of religious faith was that it induced modesty in a world where people in charge of governments were absolutely certain that what they were doing was correct.

The other principle was a more proactive one: to utilise faith-based initiatives. This could be done by government, although there was need for great care so that government assistance did not destroy the very basis on which faith-based institutions operated.

Concluding comments

Bobby Godsell

THERE ARE THREE things in particular that I will take away from today's proceedings, which have been enormously rich. The first is a greater understanding of the magnitude of Pentecostalism as a social phenomenon in South Africa, Africa, Latin America, and the rest of the world. I love the evidence of things moving south; whatever else I am, the only 'ism' I am is a southism. I'm tired of being patronised by our colleagues from the northern hemisphere and put into northern hemisphere packaging, and it's very nice that we are taking hold of this particular religious movement.

Equally fascinating are some of the features of Pentecostalism that seem very important for South Africa and South Africans as we attempt to construct a new society. Prominent among these is its nature as a voluntary association, and – as David Martin was suggesting – the fact that it is the most modern form of religious organisation, because it is chosen and constructed by people on the ground, church by church.

Pentecostalism is highly fortunate in that it has not yet had the blessing and curse of state patronage. For individuals, this too requires them to be agents in the most fundamental sense of making decisions about what they believe, how they believe, and the nature of encounter; the nature of a deep personal experience that can't be conferred by parenthood, station and class, but has to be assumed by the individual. If you want a society of self-starting citizens, not a miserable collection of victims or beggars, then this is the stuff of which that society should be made.

Speaking to the Pentecostalists present, I expect more of you, and I think South Africa needs more of you. The debate we've had so far about our nation has been about who leads; it hasn't really been about how we are led, and, crucially, on what value basis we are led. What does good governance mean, and how do we judge political success? Are we going to be left with comparatively empty phrases like 'a good life for all', or are we going to default to a '96-point plan' placed on a website?

The issue of national values is vital, because I don't think values exist only in people's hearts, homes, or churches – they exist in communities, cities and nations. We urgently need a debate about those values. And I have to say that the churches have generally been rather disappointing since 1994. They displayed great courage in the fight against apartheid, but since then they've gone fishing in an inadmissible way.

There is one last thought I want to put on the table, and here I'm selfishly speaking to the South Africans present. Nelson Mandela did South Africa a huge disservice when he came out of jail: he was gracious beyond any expectation, and for this alone I'm sure his place in paradise is assured. The problem for the rest of us was that he let us think the rainbow nation had been established, apartheid had been put back in its box, and we were done with the conflicts, terrors, fears, prejudices and stereotypes associated with that regime.

However, I now sense that race is once again coming to the fore in respect of almost every issue. I can't open a newspaper, whether it's about theatre awards or students in Bloemfontein doing appalling things, without the debate turning towards race.

I do think – and Peter Berger educated me on this – that racial conflict is probably preferable to religious conflict, but it's still very problematic in our society, and very deep-seated. I recently came across a book written by Galpin in 1941 entitled *There are no South Africans*. The title remains challenging; in fact, it can be argued that we still have no South Africans. If you look to people who can appeal to a set of values, beliefs and experiences that are wider than skin colour, it's a pretty small group. What we now need is an honest debate about race, and again it seems to me the faith-based organisations are best placed to facilitate this.



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