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Pentecostal Strategies of Public Engagement

Book of Abstracts

11th GloPent Conference
“Pentecostal Strategies of Public Engagement”

Book of Abstracts – Contents

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Panel I

Re-shaping Development – African Initiated Christianity’s Contribution to Decolonizing Development

Conveners: Philipp Öhlmann, Marie-Luise Frost, Juliane Stork

Panel description:

Recent literature has highlighted the role of African Initiated Christianity for sustainable development. African Pentecostal and Independent Churches are important development actors in many contexts and contribute to different dimensions of (sustainable) development in manifold ways. However, as de- and post-colonial religious movements, African Initiated Churches should not only be viewed in a functional approach as implementers of the agendas of international development policy. Instead, beyond merely contributing to dominant concepts such as the Sustainable Development Goals, they (re-)shape the very notions of development – based on their religious world views, situated knowledge and embeddedness in local contexts. For many African Initiated Churches “development is part of religion”, i.e. professional and academic experts’ notions of development represent only one dimension in the churches’ more comprehensive view human and social transformation that is informed by and interrelated with religious, situated and indigenous knowledge. This implies a fundamental critique of dominant concepts of (sustainable) development. This process of fundamentally challenging dominant (western, secular, linear) views of the concept, redefining its meaning and bringing different, religiously inspired concepts and practices to the table, essentially constitutes a process of decolonizing development. Against this background, it is the aim of the panel to elucidate precisely how African Independent and Pentecostal Churches re-shape notions of development and thereby contribute to decolonizing development. Moreover, at a conceptual level the panel seeks to discuss decolonizing development in light of the religion and development discourse and to address the question to what extent the different strands of African Initiated Christianity (Independent, Spiritual, Pentecostal) can be identified as de- and postcolonial movements.

The panel will consist of the following papers:

Revisiting Religion as an Antinomy of Development: African Christianities and the Public Sphere

AFE ADOGAME

Princeton Theological Seminary, USA

Development discourses, coupled with the assumptions that undergird the formulation of development policies in Africa, have often undermined the religious dimension thus domesticating its role within the private sphere. In some cases, religion is even perceived as a barrier or the obstacle to Africa’s development and modernization. Such a consideration is inherently skewed by its narrow definition of religion and development, but also one that fails to take cognizance of the ambivalence of religion. This paper critiques such skewed

perspectives and attempts to provide a more complex understanding of the role and place of religion in African public spheres. Drawing upon recent religious ethnography, the paper explores the resilience of religion in private/public spheres and its ambivalent role in Africa's development.

Development Cooperation and Independent Pentecostal Churches – Decolonial Perspectives

MANGALISO MATSHOBANE
University of Pretoria, South Africa

Development in Africa is not a new concept nor is cooperation with religious groups. Most developers have been involved with historic missional churches especially in Sub-Saharan Africa (Öhlmann, Frost and Gräb, 2016). Development with African Initiated Christianity, however, is a fairly new area of research and one which needs to be explored. It is the intention of this paper to give more insight on how development can be advanced with independent Pentecostal Churches. In achieving the latter, the historical background of development as driven by Aid is discussed, as well as the role of NGO's and independent Pentecostal Churches in advancing development. A decolonial perspective on African Pentecostalism and how such a perspective influences cooperation towards a sustainable development is also discussed. The article argues that the decolonial perspective, which is endorsed by most independent Pentecostal Churches, plays a major role in ensuring a fruitful cooperation for development in this sector.

Ghana's Pentecostal Churches – Between Hotspot of the Holy Spirit and Postcolonialism

THERESA MAYER
Universität Tübingen & Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, Germany

„To missionize is to colonize and to colonize is to missionize” (Rieger, 2004) This paper analyses the relationship between Christianity and colonial structures and their connection with the emergence of Pentecostal churches in Ghana. In addition, it will be asked to what extent, local cosmological ideas and cultural elements influence the emergence of these churches. The core question the paper addresses is whether Ghanaian Pentecostal churches can be considered post-colonial Christian movements. Three Ghanaian churches will be used as case studies: The Church of Pentecost (CoP), International Central Gospel Church and the Royalhouse Chapel International (RCI). These churches differ regarding their time of origin/founding, the number of members and their theological orientations. The question whether they can be described as post-colonial will be pursued on the basis of three post-colonial criteria, namely resistance/indigenization, decentralization/empowerment and the breaking-up of Eurocentric thought patterns such as rationality and binarity. Through the analysis with these criteria, which tie in with thoughts of post-colonial thinkers, on the one hand, Eurocentric thoughts are to be uncovered and on the other hand, de- and post-colonial theological points of contact are to be pointed out.

Possessing the Nations - “I am an Agent of Transformation”: The New Vision for a Holistic Mission of The Church of Pentecost

LORD ELORM DONKOR

Birmingham Christian College, UK

Activities of Pentecostal churches in the public domain is often seen as the churches’ response to certain social, economic and political needs in their contexts instead of being considered as the core mission of the churches. However, using the Church of Pentecost (CoP) as a case study, this presentation will argue that African Pentecostalism matures and is developing a holistic understanding of its mission in the world as involving every sphere of society.¹ CoP, has launched a five-year vision spanning the years 2019 to 2023. The theme of the vision is “possessing the nations: equipping the Church to transform every sphere of society with values and principles of the Kingdom of God”. The slogan associated with the vision is *I am an agent of transformation*. Through this vision the church is in partnership with the government of Ghana in providing new prisons, police stations and health posts for the communities. A massive environmental and sanitation campaign implemented under the vision is broadcasted throughout Ghana. In 2019, CoP’s scholarship scheme granted about 1000 scholarships to needy students to study at various Ghanaian universities. How does CoP’s concept of ‘possession nations’ differ from or similar to dominion theology? How does it address Pentecostal concerns such as spiritual warfare and poverty. How is the media used to shape this concept into a missiological paradigm for social transformation in Ghana?

¹ Oliver Davies, *Theology of transformation: faith, freedom and the Christian act* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013); Davies, *Transformation theology: a new paradigm for Christian living* (New York: T & T Clark, 2007), Paul Fromberg, *Art of transformation: three things churches do that change everything* (New York: Church Publishing, 2017).

Panel II

Theo-politics in Migration Contexts

Migration and Global Pentecostalism in the Greater Stockholm Area

TORBJÖRN ARONSON

Uppsala University, Sweden

Today, roughly 25% of the Swedish population have their immediate roots in a foreign country. In the largest metropolitan area of Sweden, Greater Stockholm, the figure is 33% and in the two other major cities, Gothenburg (35%) and Malmö (44%), even larger. This remarkable demographic change is necessarily also influencing the religious landscape. While one major part of the immigration to Sweden is Muslim, the greater number of the immigrants are of a nominal Christian background. Among these the Orthodox and Catholic immigrants from the Middle East has caught the greater attention, while the immigrants with a Pentecostal-Charismatic affiliation often have been overlooked. This is unwarranted, because the Pentecostal-Charismatic migrants churches are growing rapidly today, both in number and in adherents. This is especially the case in Greater Stockholm. The number of officially registered local churches with an immigrant background is today around one hundred, added to that are between 20 and 30 migrant worship groups within older Swedish-speaking Pentecostal churches and a substantial number of unregistered local migrant churches. In this article, this development is explored and an overview and analysis from different relevant aspects offered. These aspects are the chronological development of the number of migrant churches, the ethnic and cultural background of the migrant churches, the migrant churches and major historical categories of Pentecostalism, the sociological character of the migrant churches and the geographical location of the migrant churches. The article problematizes the concepts of “migrant churches” and “international churches” and addresses current stereotypes of Sweden as the epitome of secularization and the great urban centres as “tombs of religion”.

The Lord Sent Me Here: Theo-Politics of Migration by Latin American Pentecostals in Europe

LEONARDO MARCONDES ALVES

VID Specialized University, Stavanger, Norway

Migration from Latin America has been increasing since the latter half of the twentieth century. Many of those migrants adhere to diverse forms of Pentecostal and Charismatic congregations, a trend shared from other migrants from the Global South. Often these migrants employ biblical idioms to justify their migrant presence in the continent. However, the increasing migration policy barriers and a general condition of marginality have elicited theological responses that range from the “reverse mission” discourse to the spiritual warfare rhetoric against the national churches or the secularized European societies. In contrast to the contemporary, sizeable, established scholarship on the African and Asian Pentecostalism in Europe or on the Latin migrant theology in North America, the research on the Latin American migrant Pentecostalism in Europe is an incipient, though growing, field. Still, it has already been able to offer theological insights on how the migrant experience might politically act in the novel land.

Drawing on a review of the literature and on preliminary findings from an ongoing ethnographic project this paper discusses the tensions resulting from the Pentecostal internal negotiation to conciliate otherworld and this-world orientations in life. After sketching a profile of Latin Pentecostals in the Nordic countries, the Bible hermeneutics that Pentecostals use may shed a light on how to negotiate such paradox and its political implications. In times when national leaders and opinion-makers in the receiving societies are also expressing migration policies (both for and against accepting migrants) with religious idioms, the migrants' political perspectives are relevant. This study is part of a research project with a focus on the biblical hermeneutics of Pentecostal (and Pentecostal-like Evangelical) churches in the Nordic nations from Spanish and Portuguese speaking countries. For that, I employ anthropological methods and theories combining with a cultural reception hermeneutics of the Bible.

Liberation Theology in Afro-Caribbean Pentecostals in the UK

SELINA STONE

University of Birmingham, UK

Afro-Caribbean Pentecostals in the UK belonged to one of the most significant waves of immigration during the 20th century, commencing with the Windrush era. These churches of the African diaspora emerged as hubs of social, economic and political cooperation as well as spiritual renewal, yet British Pentecostal history has often neglected their stories. By uncovering historic and contemporary models of Pentecostal organization and activism, I argue for a re-remembering of the British Pentecostal theo-political imagination.

My wider research project explores the ways in which Pentecostals in Britain are embodying a type of liberation theology through their engagement with issues of inequality and poverty. The case studies I have undertaken focus on examples and models of deep engagement that go beyond the short-term, surface level approaches that are common in too many faith-based contexts. Rather, the models of Pentecostal engagement I have seen engage in a critical analysis of the socio-economic and political realities they experience and witness to. Their work is underpinned by a theological rationale which is geared towards socio-economic and political transformation in the areas of education, housing, finance and rehabilitation.

In this paper therefore, I will present some of the stories of historic and contemporary Pentecostal social and political engagement in order to demonstrate the uniqueness and significance of their work in terms of liberation for the poor. I will show that Afro-Caribbean Pentecostals were, and remain proximate to, communities of deprivation in ways which enable them to engage at the grass roots level with the complexities of some of the most vulnerable and overlooked individuals and communities. I will demonstrate that they are simultaneously open to social and political analysis, having developed the skills and capacity to engage in conversations at a policy level and in this way are able to have systemic influence.

A New Kind of Pentecostalism: Introducing the Public Theology and Advocacy of Samuel Lee

HADJE CRESENCIO SADJE

Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, Netherlands

University of Bonn, Germany

It is often mistakenly thought that global Pentecostalism is all about emotionalism, fanaticism, narrow biblical literalism, and (Corten and Marshal-Frantani 2001). However, a recent study suggests that there has been a paradigm shift towards a more holistic understanding of mission, which includes social ministry and political action (Miller and Yamamori 2007; Schäfer 2009; Burgess 2009; van Wyk 2015; David Muir 2018; Davies 2018). For instance, Samuel Lee is a pentecostal pastor, human rights activist, director of Center for Theology of Migrant (CThM) VU Amsterdam, and the founder of the Foundation Academy Amsterdam (FAA) The Netherlands. As a pastor, Lee is committed to minister crossculturally. As a human rights activist, Lee is well-known for his advocacy of social justice for migrants/refugees, especially the undocumented (Lee 2019). In the Netherlands context, Lee is part of an international pentecostal rebellion against racial and economic system of exploitation. He challenges the vicious structures of racism, white supremacy, and moved progressively toward an uncompromising critique of capitalism and the demons of religious intolerance in the global community. Although domestic in his direct actions, Lee is global in his vision and analysis of religious, cultural, and economic developments. As a founder of the FAA, Lee is committed to empowering migrants, refugees, and stateless people through education, exclusively their rights (FAA 2019). In this paper, I am interested in bringing Lee's public theology and advocacy into dialogue with contemporary dialogue on the Pentecostal strategies of public engagement. First, I will discuss Lee's spiritual journey (orientation, disorientation, and reorientation). Second, I will explore Lee's concept of the "A New Kinds of Pentecostalism" that is actually rooted in the old Pentecostalism that is found in the book of Acts —far before we even coined the term Pentecostalism (Lee 2016). Finally, I will describe Lee's theology as a new form of Pentecostal strategies of public engagement.

Panel III

Prophetism and Public Theology

Prophetism and Politics in Ghana: Good Combination for Democracy?

GIDEON TETTEH

University of Eastern Finland

This paper presents the role/contribution of Pentecostal prophets in Ghana's new democracy. Its focus is prophecies concerning elections made by Pentecostal prophets. First, it uses "neoprophets" as a case study, to show how the engagement of Pentecostal prophets can influence the outcome of elections and the possible effects it can have on Ghana's democracy. Second, it will show how Pentecostal prophet's engagement in elections might be a challenge to the religious leaders who are helping to bring electoral peace and stabilization to Ghana's democracy. Third, it will show challenges this engagement can create for Pentecostals and the Christian community in general who are becoming key instruments in politics and development in Ghana, seeking to bring the nation under their ideologies of democracy.

Recently, Pentecostal prophets in Ghana claim it is important that politicians pay attention to the "spiritual aspect of elections" if they want to win. Electoral prophecies are therefore made by these prophets to express heaven's choice of the candidate who is best to lead and to bring about development in the nation. Meanwhile some religious leaders, both of Pentecostal and non-Pentecostal background, are constantly striving to bring about electoral peace and stability to Ghana's democracy. The issue of electoral prophecies from the Pentecostal prophets seems to thwart their efforts. Also, what might happen if these electoral predictions fail is uncertain. Or whether the candidate who is predicted to have fore won can really bring about the development that the prophets claim he will bring is another issue. This ethnographic study will present what Pentecostal prophets imply by "the spiritual aspects of elections" and the link between this and development in Ghana, and how this can affect or help reassemble democracy in Ghana.

"Thus Says the Lord!" Prophetism as a Pentecostal Strategy for Public Engagement in Kenya

E. OKELLOH OGERA

Catholic University of Eastern Africa & St. Paul's University, Kenya

Pentecostalism has often been accused of lacking proper public engagement ethos largely due to its preoccupation with other-worldly eschatology and emphasis on the spiritual rather than the temporal. As a result, Pentecostalism engages the public using spiritual means such as prayer, fasting, giving or tithing, divine healing and miracles, among others. This paper argues that from the turn of the millennium, Neo-Pentecostal and Charismatic (NPCs) movements in Kenya have tended to focus much more on the element of prophetism as a strategy for public engagement. Prophetism enables the NPCs to remain true to the Pentecostal ideology of focusing on the eschaton, but at the same time appreciating that it has begun. Therefore the eschaton is viewed as a present, experienced reality that will be culminated in the second

coming of Christ. Thus, prophetism engages the public for the here and now in preparation for the equally if not more significant, here-after. This strategy incorporates a three-fold approach of fore-telling, forth telling and revelation. Fore-telling has the twin benefits of authenticating the prophet and validating his/her message in the eyes of the public. Foretelling on the other hand is useful in the sense that it enables the prophets to not only speak to different contemporary socio-political and religious situations, but also about the eschaton. Revelation points to the fact that God is still active in speaking and engaging with people today, not just in the past. In utilizing the prophetic strategy, NPCs are able to engage the public in areas of spirituality, politics, socio-economics, as well as religio-cultural aspects of both private and public life.

Radical Change of Course in Brazil: The Emergence of a Reformed Episcopal Pentecostalism

ROBERTO SCHULER

Catholic University of Pernambuco, Brazil & Universität Heidelberg

The rapid growth of religious movements that emphasize the action of the Holy Spirit in the life of the Christian is one of the most significant phenomena of contemporary Christianity. In the Brazilian context, the Pentecostal movement has been defined as a movement whose main characteristic is the belief in a present action of the Spirit in the life of the Christian. This experience happens through a baptism which enables the Christian to lead a life full of spiritual power: strange languages, visions, prophecies and healing. New definitions are arising in the Brazilian Pentecostal Movement by denominational identity changes and redefinitions. In this ongoing research, the main objective is to understand the dynamics that are driving so many changes in the Brazilian Pentecostal scenario. In particular, we will examine the Igreja Cristã Nova Vida (ICNV) as a case study. More specifically, we examined how they view the changes that have occurred; what roles they play in this new constellation; and finally, to characterize this new context and, whenever possible, to identify gaps and needs that are felt in relation to the current reality. Based on the proposed objectives, we have decided to conduct a qualitative study to gain a better understanding of the phenomena and its correlations. Participants in this study were ten leaders and church members of the ICNV, who were interviewed. The data collected by semi-structured interviews were analyzed according to the thematic content analysis technique. The data collected point out new positioning about main Pentecostal themes. The embrace of the reformed Theology and an episcopal government point to a new religious scene in Brazilian Pentecostalism.

Pentecostal and Baptist Public Theology in Sermons (Brazil)

RICARDO ARAKAKI

University of Basel, Switzerland

Since 2014 Brazil officially deal with economic and political crisis due corruption scandals involving private companies and some sectors of the government. This sparked a large number of popular manifestations around the country. The biggest result was the impeachment of the president Dilma Rousseff, in 31th August 2016. Around this time, some churches like the Pentecostal Church Assembleia de Deus and the Baptist Church commented on the current

public issues through sermons, public declarations of leaders and official documents. However, these criticisms were restricted to the pulpit by giving theological bases for public participation and engagement. This paper comparatively discusses sermons from Assembleia de Deus and Baptist Church by responding questions like: What are the modalities or strategies of engagement in public sphere and their theological bases communicated by sermons? The answers to these questions contribute to the current debate of Public Theology in Brazil. Furthermore, the paper explains the role and participation of churches in the public arena and its search for the development of citizenship in Brazil's democracy.

Panel IV

Social Media Politics

“Everything Christianity/the Bible Represents is being Attacked on the Internet!”: New Media, New Congregation, and New Radicalities

ABIMBOLA A. ADELAKUN
University of Texas at Austin, USA

This proposal explores the engagement by the Pentecostal establishment and the public sphere to argue that the mutual contestation between both can facilitate the entrenchment of democratic ideals. In this presentation, I will critically examine the aftermath of what was dubbed “The Great Tithe Debate,” a battle between Online Air Presenter, Ifedayo Olarinde, (aka Daddy Freeze) and most of the famous Pentecostal pastors over the issue of the payment of tithe. Nigerian pastors have given many sermons to insist on why their church members pay tithes (a 10 percent of their net income), and the sums they have made from the proceeds have gone a long way in financing ambitious church projects and even pastors’ glamorous lifestyles. So, when Daddy Freeze arose with his “Free the Sheeple” movement to interrogate pastors on the moral and theological bases of their demands on tithe payment, it propelled a major cultural war. My analysis of the Pentecostal engagement of the public uses the theoretical lens of social drama to understand the “Free the Sheeple” campaign from three angles: one, the role of the internet and social media in the disestablishment of charismatic power; two, the kind of mental and spiritual shifts a society makes to be able to take down the Lord’s “anointed” and demand an ethic of accountability and responsibility from them; and three, the new possibilities that are being birthed for the society from the ashes of the controversy.

“When Are You Going to Change Those Stones to Phones?” Social Media Appropriation by Pentecostal Church in Cape Town

HENRIETTA M. NYAMNJOH
University of Cape Town, South Africa

On May 15th 2016, the Southern Africa Zone 5 Pastor of Christ Embassy (CE), Pastor Rita, appeared on a live stream service that was broadcast to all the churches in the region to talk about the visit to the Holy Land in Jerusalem by Pastor Chris and his delegation. She later announced that the entire visit can be viewed on Love WorldSat Super User and King’s Chat and encouraged the use of the app to encourage viewership. Following the concept of mediatization and looking at Pastor Rita’s communiques, this paper explores the appropriation of Social Media (SM) by Pentecostal churches (PCs) in Cape Town, South Africa. It seeks to understand how and to what extent innovation and competition propels PCs’ appropriation of SM to disseminate information, position themselves to attract the desired audience and maintain relevance in the face of mounting competition. Acknowledging the premise that the church is fast eroding and peoples’ lives are increasingly on the move, PC understand that the success of church depends on how they stay connected with Christians and evolve with the times. SM thus

becomes the tool on the-get-go, a way for accessing the church, and for PCs to stay connected with Christians, given their accessibility on mobile phones.

Validating Prophethood: Prophecy, Religious Authority and Media in Kenya

NICOLE WAGNER

University of Cologne, Germany

Prophet Dr David Owuor is one of the leading religious voices in Kenya, who is significantly shaping the current religious landscape. “The End-Time-Prophet,” as his followers refer to him, preaches about eschatological themes such as the “Second Coming of the Messiah” and “The Rapture of the Chosen Church.” Based on a millennial-apocalyptic ideology, for the “Mighty Prophet” and his followers, natural and environmental catastrophes, as well as war and global terror, reflect the moral status quo of the world society, whose sinfulness and disobedience to God is articulated in a discourse of the approaching apocalypse. To spread his “godly message” to the broader Kenyan public and to validate his religious authority through end-time prophecies, Prophet Owuor uses diverse modern media technologies.

The paper is based on 16-month fieldwork in Kenya’s Great Rift Valley region and highlights the authorisation process of Prophet Owuor as a religious leader in the national context. Therefore, the paper sheds light on the gifts and qualities of Prophet Owuor’s religious authority and mediation through diverse communication technologies. The paper examines how the use of modern media technologies has been relevant for Prophet Owuor’s rapid rise in the public arena, and how it has helped him to validate and strengthen his presence in the embattled Pentecostal market.

Gender Bargains in a Pentecostal (Born-Again) Marriage

PETER ODERINDE

University of Basel, Switzerland

The rise of the Pentecostal movement in the last three decades is one of the most striking features in the global topography of contemporary religion. In Switzerland, the Pentecostal or charismatic movement is the most popular strand of migrant Christianity. This article is based on a three-year online ethnographic participant observation of different Nigerian-led online Pentecostal groups. The use of diverse interactive spaces seems to be of particular significance to both mega and non-mega Nigerian-led Pentecostal migrant churches in the country. By exploring the social practices of online communities such as the Glorious Vessels International WhatsApp chat group, the article shows how different forms of biblical patriarchy shape conversations that “recognise” or “repress” the rights and roles of women – their economic status and sexuality in born-again movements. The exchange of ideas that ensued on the issues of divorce among members of the Glorious Vessels International shows how bargaining in the physical (real) world is transferred into the online environment. I analyse this phenomenon by understanding the ideal online religious community as an assemblage that promotes a certain gendered image of the prosperous family.

Panel V

Global Pentecostalism and Lived Religion

The Devil You Know: Familiarity and Lived Religion among Urban Christians in Kenya

YONATAN N. GEZ & YVAN DROZ

Hebrew University, Israel & University of Geneva, Switzerland

Our talk will focus on the concept of familiarity and its application for the understanding of lived religion among Christians in Kenya and Pentecostals in particular. In Kenya's urban environment, a strong moralizing discourse and deep-seated concern with fellowshipping with the wrong crowd lead believers to tread with care. While mainstream Christian Kenyan discourse alerts against corrupt, exploitative, and hypocritical religious grouping, the true nature of a church—that is, the backstage behavior of its leaders—may be well hidden behind a veneer of legitimacy. At the same time, relative tolerance towards religious mobility allow for believers to develop wide religious exposures.

On this backdrop, we propose that the notion of familiarity—that is, the idea that a religious tradition or community is recognizable and somewhat predictable—serves a fundamental orientation. Drawing on our interlocutors' own discourse and actions, we bring to mind the etymological connection between 'familiar' and 'family': While a family may not only be a benevolent force, and may indeed harbor jealousy and even accusations of witchcraft, it is nonetheless a central locus of belonging used for navigating the stormy waters of life. Similarly, while familiarity—which may be grounded in firsthand experience or may be associated with inferences and with discourse and justifications—does not command particular actions, it does, on the backdrop of the risks of religious trickery, inform actions in non-deterministic ways. The development and application of the concept of familiarity can help to discuss lived religion beyond the binarism of de facto practice, dwelling in particular on such questions as: the force of habit and its limits, trust and search for pockets thereof, self-fashioned discourses of otherness, return mobility, and the recalling of past religious exposures as a resource.

Lived Migrant Pentecostalism in Norway: Spiritualities, Theologies and Practices

STIAN SØRLIE ERIKSEN

VID Specialized University, Norway

This paper looks at Pentecostal migrant congregations in Norway as contexts for lived religion, focusing on how migrant spiritualities, theologies and practices intereseect and engage with migratory trajectories, faith experiences, and life challenges. Lived or everyday perspectives on religion have often focused on how individuals' practices of faith may challenge mainstream denominational or congregational theologies and practices of faith. More generally, a lived religion perspective also challenge methodologies and perspectives employed for defining what to look for and how to study religion. Meredith McGuire (2008) admonishes, for instance, scholars of religion to «reexamine their assumptions of individuals' religious life» (p. 4), by e.g. distinguishing between 'church' and 'religion' and focusing on varieties of religious

practices. Nancy Ammerman (2013), however, also acknowledges that congregations may represent important arenas for lived religion.

Based on fieldwork in a cross-section of Pentecostal migrant churches in Norway, lived religion perspectives helped uncover how migrant Christian spiritualities challenge religious denominational boundaries as well as intersect with practically every aspect of ‘everyday’ life. These migrant spiritualities, theologies and practices also provide key loci for understanding migrant congregations’ and individuals’ engagement with wider society. The paper focuses, in particular, on Pentecostal notions of transformation and how congregations’ theologies and individuals’ experiences of spiritual transformation provided augmented frameworks for interpreting migratory and spiritual narratives and consequently the role of religion in personal as well as public life. Aided by transnational and translocal lenses, lived perspectives can reflect how such faith may equally relate to individual spirituality, congregational practice, and public engagement. Thus, individual and congregational spirituality intersected with devotional life, family and work, as well as mission. This involved issues related to how digitized forms of religion can challenge and broaden our understanding of how and where (migrant) religion is practiced today. More generally, since migrant churches are often ‘under the radar,’ these perspectives help nuance the scope and character of what constitutes Norwegian/European Pentecostalism/Christianity today.

“Dear all, wanted to share a prayer request for a little boy...” Lived Religion and WhatsApp in Two Middle Class Churches in India

JULIA KUHLIN

Uppsala University, Sweden

In the last decades, we have seen a significant change in the way communication technology influence how people practice religion. Smartphones, tablets, and computers are nowadays a natural part of millions of people’s religious lives, extending and altering the way people do religion. In this paper, I will explore how women in two middle class Pentecostal churches in India have integrated the communication app WhatsApp in their everyday religious lives. Among other things, the women used WhatsApp to reach out to their non-Christian family members and friends, to send and receive encouraging “faith memes”, and organize online prayer circles. The two churches had several WhatsApp groups that enable adherents to daily connect, as well as open up new ways for the women to be engaged in the work of the church. I will argue that in order to understand how people practice their religion today it is necessary for research to take “digital religion” seriously. Online and offline religious spheres have become increasingly blended and merged, influencing each other in a way that should not be ignored. The presentation is part of a PhD-project that focus on the lived religion of women in two middle class Pentecostal churches in the Indian city Gurugram. The study is based on a sixmonth long fieldwork, which among other things included participation observation (offline and online) and semi-structured interviews with 35 women.

Existential Anthropology and Everyday Pentecostalism: A Case Study from Mozambique

DEVAKA PREMAWARDHANA
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A recent theoretical move among ethnographers of religion has challenged the social scientific tendency to reduce people's beliefs and practices to one or another religious tradition, to a religious affiliation assumed to operate as a master identity. Scholars advancing this theoretical move often draw on the insights of existential anthropology to emphasize the complexities and ambiguities of everyday religious life. The aim of this paper is to argue for the relevance of this literature for the ethnographic study of Pentecostalism as an everyday religion. It will do so by drawing links between existentialism as a theological/philosophical movement and existential anthropology as a social scientific movement. In the former case, Christianity figured centrally. In the latter case, while many existential anthropologists do not address Christianity, or religion at all, a considerable number in fact do. Common to both existential philosophy and existential anthropology is the critique of totalizing abstractions and the validation of indeterminacy, uncertainty, and ambiguity. By drawing on the author's ethnographic research into the fluidity of religious practices among self-identifying Pentecostals in northern Mozambique, this paper will illustrate the relevance of existential anthropology for the ethnographic study of lived religion.

Panel VI

Politics Southern Africa

Zimbabwean Pentecostalism and Party-Politics in Post-Colonial Zimbabwe: A Comparative Narrative Old and New Pentecostal Preachers and Prophets' Approach to Party-Politics

PHILLIP MUSONI

University of South Africa, South Africa

Religion and politics continue to feature prominently in the Zimbabwean political play fields. The involvement of youthful Pastors Nelson Chamisa and Pastor Evans Mawarire into the Zimbabwean politics has brought a new face to Pentecostal churches and party politics in Zimbabwe. While previous scholars have criticized Zimbabwean Pentecostal Churches for turning a deaf ear on human abuses by Politicians, this study seeks to argue that the old criticism of Zimbabwean Pentecostal Churches taking back seats and failing to be the voice of the voiceless cannot be said today with such Pentecostal church leaders like Nelson Chamisa and Evans Mawarire leading from the front. However, though we see these young Pentecostal Pastors and Prophets engaging the Zimbabwean politics from the front, old Zimbabwean Pentecostal church leaders maintained their old approach to Zimbabwe party-politics. Thus, the question raised throughout this study is why the younger generation within Pentecostal church Pastors and Prophets seem to openly confront ZANU-PF from the front while the old Zimbabwean Pentecostal churches seems to uncritically support the ruling party ZANU-PF? Accordingly, Ezekiel Guti's approach to Zimbabwean party politics is compared to young Pentecostal pastors Nelson Chamisa and Evans Mawarire.

New Socio-Political Dynamics in African Initiated Christianity

PHILIPP ÖHLMANN

Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, Germany

Abstract Recent literature shows that African Pentecostal and Independent Churches are influential actors in politics and society in many African countries. While the earlier literature, particularly on African Independent Churches, argued these churches to be apolitical, there seems to be both a reevaluation of this thesis in the literature as well as an articulation of new political dynamics in the churches themselves. On the one hand, they advocate in the interest of their membership, e.g. related to issues of basic (local) government service delivery. On the other hand, however, they move beyond the immediate focus on their membership's interest. They are increasingly active in the advocacy for the provision and protection of public goods, such as ecological sustainability, democracy and good governance. Large parts of this public engagement can be considered conducive to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals as well as democracy and human rights. Nonetheless, there are also instances in which the churches' activity is directed towards conflicting aims. This paper traces the dynamics of socio-political engagement in African Initiated Christianity, drawing on case studies from different African countries. It highlights divergences between an often apolitical

self-understanding of the churches and, at the same time, an active engagement with society, as prominently illustrated by the example of the South African Zion Christian Church. Moreover, the paper analyses commonalities and differences of Pentecostal and Independent Churches regarding this engagement. Lastly, the paper highlights the need for further research on what causes religious communities to embark on different forms of socio-political engagement and what shapes their respective thematic priorities.

**African Initiated Churches (AICs) in Townships of South Africa: Social Entities
Forming Sustainable Development? A Case Study on the Gilgal Bible Church in South
Africa's Township Tembisa**

NORA MILENA VEHLING & THABANG RAMBOSHA

Humboldt Universität zu Berlin & Pretoria University

With two different kinds of services – one Zion-like and another one Pentecostal – the Gilgal Bible Church in Tembisa, one of South Africa's biggest townships, demonstrates the flexibility of a church according to the individual people of its community. Generally, African Initiated Churches² (AICs) in Sub-Saharan Africa have shown, that they are able to create safe social contexts for their church communities (Öhlmann et al. 03/2018 and 2019, Bompani 2010:315, Swart 2016, Pobee and Ositelu 1998, Woolcock and Narayan 2000) and a freedom of independent empowerment, that is potentially opening new spaces for development (Bompani 2010, Swart and Venter 2015:207, Galtung 1996, Öhlmann et al. 2019). Therefore, it occurs necessary to have a detailed look at development in social structures of heterogeneous contexts such as in Sub-Saharan Africa. The focus lies on two questions: How an AIC is functioning as social entity within the existing society and its structural dominations; And how socio-economic transformations by AICs are enabled to develop independently from dominating structures?

The research programme Religious Communities and Sustainable Development at the Theological Faculty of the Humboldt University in Berlin (Öhlmann et al. 2019) points out that AICs channelling actions in societies and furthermore possess transformative potential to shift dominant paradigms of society (Öhlmann et al. 03/2018:12). Hence transforming values shapes the dynamic and behaviour of human-beings towards norms and culture (Meireis and Rippl, 2019: 5), AICs might indicate a development of an Independent African Culture. Hereon we conducted a case study at the Gilgal Bible Church in Tembisa South Africa that exhibit highly diverse cultural features in a complex social structure in one of South Africa's biggest townships in the wealthy area of Gauteng between Johannesburg and Pretoria.

² The classification AIC-African Initiated Churches means all churches that origin in Africa and developed independently from the influence of missionary Churches. See a detailed definition in Öhlmann et al. 02/2018:2.

Panel VII

Conquering Spheres

Pentecostals and the Public Sphere

HANS GEIR ASMUNDSEN

In this presentation, I will discuss some ideas concerning the ways that Pentecostals are communicating their religious values and beliefs in public spheres, and how this communication is formed both on internal and external grounds.

As Pentecostalism has been growing in numbers worldwide, the Pentecostals have changed their modus operandi as far as public engagements are concerned. Growing in numbers is not enough to fulfill the so-called “Kingdom-purposes”. Influence and “horizontal” expansion (converting societies and cultures) is as important. This can be observed in the development of a “positive dualism” where the believers, including their organizations, spaces and institutions, represent the religiously anchored good and just values, whereas the non-believers, including their organizations, spaces and institutions, represent the bad and unjust values. The “positive” about this type of dualism, as opposed to a “negative” one, is that everything now is convertible. There is nothing to fear in a world where one is led by the greatest powers.

Exactly *how* this is implemented in public engagements, as ways and methods for “conquering every sphere of society”, will be reflected upon. The theoretical emphasis will be on the negotiation of a Pentecostal *communication* in non-Pentecostal spaces and places, whereas the empirical examples will mainly come from Argentina and Latin America as well as the Lausanne-Movement.

“Let the Cedi Rise”: Warfare Prayers as Strategy of Public Engagement in African Pentecostalism

J. KWABENA ASAMOAH-GYADU

Trinity Theological Seminary, Legon, Ghana

The Pentecostal eschatological approach to Christian spirituality underwent a seismic shift with the rise of prosperity preaching by neo-Pentecostal churches in the late 1970s. This presentation examines the fascinating ways in which economics, in terms of wealth, and supernaturalism are combined in contemporary theologies of prosperity. Spiritual warfare plays a critical role in the ways that contemporary Pentecostals understand and engage with issues of public interest in Africa. The presentation would be based on the interrogation of a public prayer offered during a period of decline of Ghana’s currency by Archbishop Nicholas Duncan-Williams of Action Chapel International in Ghana. In this public prayer, Archbishop Duncan-Williams prayed for evil powers to loosen their grip on Ghana’s currency reinforcing traditional Pentecostal views that misfortune is usually caused by principalities and powers in high places. In other words, although the prosperity theology with its ultimate agenda in human flourishing could be structured in terms of motivational messages that encourage people to work hard, the supernatural factor is still accounted for in the offer of practical solutions to economic problems. In these discourses and practices of motivation, the supernatural still has a role to play as the powers of the Spirit are deployed to decimate those of supernatural evil in order to pave the

way for prosperity to occur. This presentation proposes to tease out some of the major religious lessons that emanate from conscious efforts by neo-Pentecostal pastors to deal with issues of public economic interest within the context of the belief in the reality of the supernatural and how it affects human flourishing.

Spiritual Welfare or Abuse?: Towards Good Practices for Pentecostal Public Engagement

NOMATTER SANDE

Apostolic Faith Mission International Ministries UK

There is a recognition that the Pentecostal public engagement is increasingly transforming religious landscape. Spiritual warfare is one of the Pentecostal public engagement. The spiritual warfare theology configures exorcisms and ‘deliverance’ as an integral part for healing and wellbeing. The spiritual warfare therapy is skewed towards believing that all sickness is caused by demons and evil spirits regardless of some scientific medical evidence saying otherwise. Some exorcism and or deliverance activities present with manifestations physical restraining, that include: vomiting, rolling on the floor, screaming and various forms of violent physical manifestations. In some cases, people are physically restrained during deliverance sessions. The practice of exorcism and deliverance raise questions of psychological wellbeing, dignity and abuse on the part of the recipient. This article explores the aspect of spiritual abuse in the practice of exorcism and deliverance within African Pentecostalism. This article uses qualitative empirical data findings to recommend standard codes towards good practices.

Spiritual Warfare and Israel

ANNA KIRCHNER

University of Heidelberg, Germany

Research on spiritual warfare mainly focuses on the American (Latinamerica, native nations) or the African context. “Israel” and spiritual warfare has been barely dealt with. In recent scholarship, the main focus about “Israel” is evangelical dispensational premillennialism, as promoted by John Hagee and many other political influential actors. Meanwhile, the International House of Prayer in Kansas City (IHOPKC) and Watchmen for the Nations – both recently celebrated their “convergence” – prove to be two powerful networks emphasizing “Israel”, or rather “Judaism” and “Messianic Judaism”, in their concept of spiritual warfare and thus offering an alternative to the common evangelical understanding of Zionism. The Arabic-speaking House of Prayer and Exploits (HOPE) in Nazareth in Israel adopts such concepts of spiritual warfare, but, as my own research shows, re-interprets them in a subversive way. These interpretations mainly focus on an inner spirituality that can be seen as a critique of the eschatological, Zionist approach presented by IHOPKC and the Watchmen for the Nations. Thus, the supposedly universal notion of spiritual warfare as a tool to shape public spheres needs to be challenged considering the context of Arab Christianity in Israel.

Panel VIII

Politics of (Dis-)Continuity

Pentecostalism and Witchcraft in Africa: African Continuity Re-Visited

JUDITH BACHMANN

University of Heidelberg, Germany

The theory that ancient African witchcraft beliefs have survived in present African Pentecostalism is common sense, regardless of whether one looks at international media or Pentecostal research. Most recently, works such as Allan Anderson's "Spirit-Filled World" have discussed African Pentecostalism as a (re-)contextualization of global Pentecostal ideas within local African contexts, arguing that it is the reason for its immense and still growing popularity. Though African Pentecostalism might have discontinuous solutions, from this perspective, it still helped to preserve the traditionally 'spirit-filled world' of ancestors, witchcraft, evil spirits and so on. Yet current debates about witchcraft in Nigeria and Pentecostal interventions suggest a slightly more complicated picture of a politically, that is conflict-driven (re-)actualization of witchcraft. Against this background, it is only by privileging certain details in these debates, that one could draw a straight line back in time. By producing such genealogies, scholars themselves tend to become a political factor within the field they only want to describe. The paper analyzes the Nigerian dynamics between international aid, intellectuals' rejection, Pentecostal reaction and self-(re-)positioning as well as the usage of public polarization within Nigerian political institutions. Building on works such as Anderson's, yet taking the Nigerian situation seriously, the paper proposes a different reading: It argues to speak of witchcraft as a global discourse and Pentecostalism as well as its supposed Africanness as a position which is formed and forming within this discourse.

Pentecostal Charismatic Constructions of Femininity in Alexandra Township

TUMI MAMPANE

University of Johannesburg, South Africa

This presentation investigates the role of religion in legitimating social constructs and ideologies. I aim to analyse the constructions of femininity by Pentecostal Charismatic Churches in Alexandra, Johannesburg, and relate this to the gender identities of women. Sermons from four churches, will be analysed to find what aspects of womanhood are discussed by pastors, and through post-sermon discussions how the women in the audience respond to the sermons and relate them to wider societal settings.

The Pentecostal Charismatic movement has been termed a modernising instrument for the adaptation of the Global South to the fast and furious economic, social, and cultural changes imposed on them. For women Charismatic Christianity becomes a haven as they grapple with what it means to be modern and learn middle-class behaviour. The church is also seen to provide a space for women to articulate their domestic issues and convert men to be more accommodating to domestic roles or—more boldly—as a feminist movement which aims to domesticate men. I have found constructs of Christian femininity to be on two opposing ends. On the one hand is a traditional woman, who waits for a man to initiate and for God to stand up

to the injustices against her. The other, however, insists that women take their stand as leaders in the home, church and society. An ethnography of the women, gives insight into which construct they choose to subscribe to and for what reasons. Using Critical Discourse Analysis and ethnography within the Africana Womanist and Bosadi Theology framework, I examine the roles, attitudes and stereotypes within charismatic discourse that build the gender identity of female congregants. I observe and converse with Charismatic Christian women to come to an understanding of their performativity, desire and interaction with the discourse of their specific churches. I also plan to gain insight into their personal perceptions of power and agency within the church and the wider societal spaces they occupy.

A Comparative Study of *duabɔ* (Grievance Imprecation) and Prayers by Pentecostal Denominations in Ghana

GRACE OPARE

University of Ghana, Ghana

The principle of invoking a supernatural power to bring harm upon another is prevalent in several African cultures and religions, especially Christianity. In certain public spaces (radio, television, and pulpit) for instance in Ghana, Pentecostal pastors and believers largely rely on some biblical quotations in the Old and New Testaments to invoke God to let misfortunes befall people who may have wronged them. They employ it as a medium to punish their offenders and accusers, as well as seek justice and vengeance from God. Biblical stories also reveal that the Israelites and Jewish religion employed imprecation to punish individuals and communities who did not seek them well. In spite of the prevalence of this practice in Christianity, Pentecostal converts consider *duabɔ*, an Akan phenomenon which involves “the invocation of magical and supernatural powers to inflict harm or cause some form of misfortunes or adversities to befall another” (Agyekum, 2010) as a devilish, primitive and wicked practice. Interestingly, patrons of *duabɔ* come from several religious and cultural backgrounds, including Christianity.

This paper argues that the practice of *duabɔ* is similar to certain types of prayers offered by Pentecostal believers and biblical texts invoked to bring harm or curse unto others. It will therefore offer a comparative study between *duabɔ* and certain types of prayers offered by Pentecostals in Ghana; and highlight the places of convergence and divergence between them. As a qualitative study, the Bible will be one of the main mediums for data collection. Formal and informal interviews, book and article reviews will also be sourced to complement the biblical quotations.

Finding Ubuntu in the Bible. How does the Zion Christian Church relate to African Traditional Religions with regard to the Environment?

JULIANE STORK

Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, Germany

The Zion Christian Church (ZCC) as an indigenous Pentecostal-type church according to Allen Anderson (Anderson 1992, p.11.), is the biggest African Independent Church (AIC) in South Africa with approx. 15 Mio. members. Its repeated official rejections of any affiliation with African Traditional Religions (ATRs) seem to stand in contrast to its often-proclaimed ‘African roots’. This paper investigates the relationship between the ZCC and ATRs further. Led by the

hypothesis that the ZCC creates a safe space for its members inside its realm of worship against any threats from traditional spirits, the research shows how traditional beliefs are reinterpreted in the ZCC. Decoding the latest speech on the environment by the ZCC's Bishop B.E. Lekganyane, the paper analysis how the ZCC is reinterpreting environmental categories that were formerly filled by ATRs. The category of the natural environment works here as a magnifying glass for new insights into the relationship between AICs and ATRs as ecology plays an (increasingly) important role in both religious streams. In addition, literature claims that African traditional perspectives on ecology should be included into African Christianity to protect the environment in a contextually embedded and thus more accessible way for believers. Assessing these claims, the work shows how categories as e.g. the sacredness of land or water and the category ubuntu are reinterpreted by the ZCC's leadership, resulting in new insights into the embeddedness of AICs in traditional belief systems.

Panel IX

Presidential Republics

The Strains of “Pente” Politics: Evangelicals and the Post-Orthodox State in Ethiopia

JÖRG HAUSTEIN,

University of Cambridge, UK & Dereje Feyissa, Life & Peace Institute, Ethiopia

The rise of Evangelicalism in demographics, public presence, and Ethiopian politics has been one of the defining features of post-Derg religion in Ethiopia. Labelled “Pente” (shorthand for Pentecostals) in vernacular discourse, Evangelicals have risen from a suppressed sect to a maligned disrupter and finally to an accepted presence in Ethiopia’s socio-political fabric. The political consequences of this shift are still in the making and marked by noticeable tensions. Ethiopia’s constitutional framework of religious tolerance has served Evangelicals best of all and their modernist aspirations chime with the developmental rhetoric of the state, and yet “Pentes” seek a state that looks remarkably different from the EPRDF’s project of secular modernity. Political suppression by the Derg has left “Pentes” with a wariness toward “worldly” politics, while a new generation of Pastors and their followers have inched towards political participation and representation. There are long-standing platforms and initiatives to find a common political voice for all Ethiopian Evangelicals, but disparate fragmentation is perhaps their most recognisable characteristic.

The paper traces these tensions and contradictions in an analysis of the Pentecostal public presence and its surrounding politics, with a special focus on the new PM Abiy Ahmed, who, as a devout Pentecostal embodies the renegotiation between Pentecostalism and politics like no Ethiopian PM before him. The religious conviction and sensibility of the new national political leadership has openly challenged EPRDF’s ideology of revolutionary democracy that underpins the party’s assertively secularism and relegation of religion to the private domain.

A Pentecostal Vision of Prosperous Ethiopia: the Comparative Analysis of Thoughts of Rev. Dr. Tolesa Gudina, Rev. Belina Sarka, and Pastor Bekele W/Kidan

AFEWORK HAILU BEYENE

Ethiopian Graduate School of Theology

Pentecostal (*Pente*) public engagement in present-day Ethiopia is very evident in connection in the impact of powerful political figures, not least as the country’s Premiership has been held by two different Pentecostals in the past nine years. In addition, through their ever-growing usage of mass-media and private TV stations, *Pentes*, who are a numerical minority (at about 20% of the population), are striving to show that they are no marginal group in the public sphere and the religious landscape of the country. Even though their ambition to control (and then dominate) the public sphere is no doubt backed by an (unconscious) adoption of some Dominion theological elements, this paper attempts to analyse the teachings of some Evangelical leaders in order to stimulate an understanding of current Ethiopian Pentecostal’s public engagement and visions. To this end, the paper tries to present a comparative study of the thoughts of three influential Evangelical church leaders and preachers, Rev. Dr. Tolesa Gudina, Rev. Belina Sarka, and Pastor Bekele W/Kidan (presented in their books *yeBereket*

Demena Ayehu, yeKefeta Zemen leEthiopia, and Revival, Ethiopia, enna Yemechereshawu Mecheresha, respectively) – that envisioned Ethiopia’s eminent importance in religious and economical spheres. In an attempt to illustrate the facets of an emerging Public Theology among the *Pente*’s – emphasises the interconnectedness of spiritual revival and economic growth among others, the paper aims to show how such visions indubitably played a significant role in fostering new aspirations among ‘Pente’ community for an intensive public engagement.

“BRAZIL ABOVE EVERYTHING, GOD ABOVE EVERYONE.”

The Engagement of Pentecostals in the 2018 Brazilian General Election

LEANDRO LUIS BEDIN FONTANA

Institute for Global Church and Mission, Frankfurt am Main, Germany

In 2018, six Latin-American countries chose their presidents. In all of these countries, one could observe a highly active engagement on the part of Evangelical and Pentecostal Christians, which, in varied intensity and dependent on the context, colored the political discourse religiously. Among these countries, Brazil stands out, partly because of its geopolitical relevance, and partly because of the high percentage of the population that Pentecostal Christianity meanwhile has there. It has been demonstrated that, without the active involvement of these groups, Jair M. Bolsonaro would hardly have been elected. This engagement consisted, among other things, in the nomination of own candidates, the demonization of political opponents, the public, explicit support for Bolsonaro on the part of prominent pastors and, particularly, in the use of religious motives in the political discourse.

Methodically, Bolsonaro’s government program and a few statements by prominent Pentecostal pastors will be examined in the light of the question as to whether, and to what extent, such religiously colored rhetoric attempted to exert influence on the deeply rooted religiousness of Brazilians, especially among the lower strata of the population, where the majority of votes are concentrated.

One of the hypotheses put forward is that this strategy has enabled these actors to shift the focus of political debates in the run-up to the elections from (rather complex) social, economic, and political questions to moral, polemical issues. While this rhetoric mobilized the broad masses of the country, especially through social media, it impoverished political discourse, pushed socially and politically relevant issues into the background, and deeply divided society.

The ‘Miracle Man’ – How Pentecostalism is Shaping Australia’s Political Sphere

DENISE AUSTIN & STEPHEN FOGARTY

Alphacrucis College, Australia

Through a contentious leadership spill, in 2018, Scott Morrison (cleverly marketed as #ScoMo) became Australia’s first Pentecostal Prime Minister. Defying punters, he then won a resounding victory, in 2019, and was dubbed by journalists as the “Miracle Man,” after his acceptance speech referred to divine intervention in the electoral results. Australian ‘secular’ society has never excluded religion from public discussion and decision making. Rather, the nation’s constitution was designed to limit the powers of sectarianism, meaning a government’s excessive attachment to a particular dogma or exclusive doctrinal religion. Therefore, Australia as a nation has been carefully crafted to embody an expression of freedom which is grounded in a diversity of worldviews, with faith perspectives being a core part of the development of democratic ideals. However, Morrison’s rise to power has shone a spotlight on Pentecostalism and sparked a new ‘war of religions,’ where political figures are forced to provide public confessions of doctrinal allegiance in order to maintain credibility.

Considering Pentecostalism is now Australia's second largest religious movement in terms of attendance (behind Catholics), it is attracting increased academic and media attention. In fact, over the last decade, Pentecostalism has grown in Australia by 30% despite the overall average of the Christian population dropping 4%. Furthermore, Pentecostal growth is predominantly in the under 25 years old sector. The key question for many Australians in light of the election of Morrison is: What implications does the PM’s faith have for the nation? Through qualitative analysis of primary and secondary sources, as well as using surveys and oral interviews among religious and political networks, we argue that Morrison’s Pentecostal faith is shaping the public sphere through: leading by example; exuding optimism; supporting the marginalised; and promoting peacemakers.

Panel X

Transforming Values

Neo-Pentecostal/Charismatic Churches as Agents of Social Transformation through Harnessing of Social and Spiritual Capital

PHILOMENA NJERI MWAURA
Kenyatta University, Kenya

This paper analyses Pentecostals/Charismatic churches' contribution to the generation of social and spiritual capital. It begins by providing a conceptual clarification of Key terms; social and spiritual capital and ritual. It is demonstrated from the work of James Coleman (1987) and Robert Putnam (2000) that social capital connotes relational networks and norms of trust and cooperation that are accumulated in private associations which nonetheless can be leveraged to advance public goods such as economic development and effective governance. Spiritual capital is taken as a set of resources stemming from religion (beliefs, values, norms and practices) and available for use in the society for economic and political development. In this connection, spiritual capital is a particular form of social capital that is associated with religious membership and the internalization of certain religious mores (Boettke 2010, 33). Ritual as defined by Victor Turner (1967, 19) is prescribed formal behavior for specific occasions and having reference to beliefs in mystical beings and powers. A symbol is the smallest unit of ritual which still retains the specific properties of ritual behavior. Symbols can be objects, activities, words, events, gestures among others. In Pentecostals/Charismatics, prayers, baptism ceremonies, deliverance/healing services, among others are significant ritual practices. The paper also discusses Pentecostal/Charismatic beliefs and practices which are reservoir of social and spiritual capital. These include the centrality of the Bible, the doctrines of salvation, Holy Spirit baptism, prophecy, prayer, miracles and faith healing/deliverance. Finally, the paper explicates the appropriation of social and spiritual capital by assessing the gospel of prosperity and the social ministries of selected Pentecostal/Charismatic churches in Kenya. It is concluded that Pentecostal/Charismatic churches create social and spiritual capital among their members. The churches have enhanced the building of social trust and religious networks among their members and beyond. These have bolstered intensity of spiritual life, social and economic transformation and empowerment.

Gospel and Pentecostal Public Engagement - The Nigerian Examples

AUGUSTINE CHIKEZIE ASOGWA

The role that Pentecostal Christianity plays in the public space is gradually becoming an academic concern. In an increasingly materialistic and pragmatic world, various religions and sects, Pentecostal Christianity included, are being called upon to justify their existence through their contributions in the public sphere. In Nigeria, the activities of Prosperity Gospel preachers have diffused and metamorphosized. From its advent in the 1980s, when it preached abundant wealth and health through one of its founding fathers Benson Idahosa, the Prosperity Gospel is gradually securing a place in the public space as a major player in the socio-economic and

political life of the people. This is in so far as it plays a significant role in the material empowerment of Christians in Nigeria.

This study is intended to be a review of the activities of some well-known Prosperity Gospel preaching Pentecostal pastors in Nigeria. It will demonstrate how the major tenets of Prosperity Gospel, which find a resounding resonance in the primal religious sensibilities of the people, are exploited by the preachers to gain easy access and implant the message in the hearts of the people. While operating in a densely religious environment, the preachers successfully influence and determine to a reasonable extent the goings on in the social, economic and political lives of the people. It will study three Prosperity Gospel preachers in Nigeria, namely; David Oyedepo, Enoch Adeboye and Ejike Mbaka, with a view to discovering how their activities ultimately empower their followers. This study is intended to point out some of the theological pitfalls of Prosperity Gospel and the unscrupulous means through which funds are extracted from unsuspecting Christians. It will conclude by emphasising that Prosperity Gospel, when well intended and harnessed, can better the life of the people since it entails Faith being transformed into praxis as a tool for public empowerment and engagement.

A Theological Reflection of Pentecostal Public Engagement: Missional Mandate or Social Responsibility?

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The practice and discourse of Pentecostal Public Engagement (PPE) has intensified in recent years. This presents opportunities for and demands ongoing theological reflections of PPE in order to enrich both PPE theory and practice. The discipline of practical theology offers a viable framework for PPE theological reflection. Practical theology is “*a place where religious belief, tradition and practice meets contemporary experiences, questions and actions and conducts dialogue that is mutually enriching, intellectually critical and practically transforming*” (Woodward and Pattison, 1994: 6). In this paper, I present a theological reflection of PPE through the lens of practical theology and a framework, which incorporates dialogue between public theology and stakeholder theory. I conclude by suggesting that the Pentecostal Christian Movement as a contemporary organ has both a missional mandate and a social responsibility for public engagement.

Panel XI

Print and Visual Media Politics

The Influence of Pentecostal Practices on News Reporting and Commentary in Post-Colonial South Africa

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News reporting and commentary in different forms of media like Television, Radio and newspaper in South Africa has been dominated by sports news, weather updates, politics, political-economy and so forth. However in the last five years (2014-2019) news reporting and commentary in South Africa has been dominated by religious news especially the practices of religion by some pastors in new Pentecostal churches. In the years between 2014 and 2019, some Pentecostal pastors engaged in outrageous acts like the eating of snakes, eating of dog-meat, drinking of petrol, taking selfies in heaven, spraying of doom, walking on air, body walking, body-resurrecting and others. These acts sparked a public debate on religion and shaped the discussions on media. One talk show host after the other hosted programs to discuss the abuse of religion in South Africa. This paper is interested on how these Pentecostal practices influenced news reporting and commentary in South Africa not only on reporting but also on the inclusion of religion in public debates. The paper is also interested on how media exposure benefit in one way or the other the pastors of new Pentecostal churches in South Africa. The aim of the paper is to explore the role of media in shaping public debates on religion.

Dreams, Visions, and the African Melodrama: A Commentary on the Interface Between Cinematography and Pentecostal Epistemology

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This paper provides a response to humanitarians Roxane Richter and Thomas Flowers and Cameroonian scholar Elias Bongmba who locate the dehumanizing treatment of alleged witches in Ghana. They suggest, "The Ghanaian government should first focus its ambition and resources on censoring the national media's fascination and (hence general public's) preoccupation with witchcraft."³ Here it is argued that the likelihood of dismantling witchcraft beliefs is slim and the censorship of this brand of filmmaking problematic. Rather, the humanitarians have located a social issue which is not easily disentangled from the production of Pentecostal narratives found at the interface of cinematography and Pentecostal epistemology. This article brings an alternative perspective by pointing to the value of examining the African melodrama for how it serves as an epistemological technique for articulating spiritual knowledge. A *hermeneutic of narratives* drawn from Jean-Daniel Plüss will help to mine the work of Katrien Pype in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Birgit Meyer in Ghana for understanding the impact of Pentecostal films, and the dreams and visions that fund them, in the public sphere.

³ Roxane Richter, Thomas Flowers, and Elias K. Bongmba, *Witchcraft as a Social Diagnosis: Traditional Ghanaian Beliefs and Global Health* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2017), 124.

Battling the Enemy: Pentecostalism, Print Media and Spiritual Warfare in Ghana's Public Sphere

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The visible and invisible nature of the African world as reflected in the cosmological views of the people makes the world not safe enough. It is dangerous with supernatural forces at work for evil. This symmetrical view of the universe raises the penchant and existential need for one to search for security. To some extent, the search for security is the basic motivation for religious devotion. Evidently, the mass media especially the TV, radio and the print media has become one of the avenues through which this enchanted imagination is being emphasized and are used to engage the public. This paper gives an extended example of an African Pentecostal and/or charismatic church (Pure Fire Miracle Ministries) illustrating this enchanted religious imagination in the print media, the *Daily Graphic* in Ghana. The *Daily Graphic* is Ghana's largest and oldest national newspaper in terms of its capacity and coverage. In Ghana, Enock Aminu's publications in the *Daily Graphic* captioned 'SPIRITUAL WARFARE' are mostly published on Monday editions of the *Daily Graphic*. Arguably, it is one of many popular publications on spiritual warfare in contemporary Ghanaian public sphere. The publication mostly includes forms and militarization strategies that the Christian can use to engage the enemy in warfare and destroy their schemes. The analysis made in this paper emanate from a close study and examination of his publication within a period of one year from August 2015 to August 2016. It shows an example of how the media is used as a channel by Pentecostals to engage the public in spiritual warfare and transformation of the public sphere in Ghana.

Panel XII

Civil Activism – Social Inequality

LiveFree -- #BlackLivesMatter and #Pentecostalism

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The proposed paper will explore the broad implications of participation of Pentecostal-type clergy in the #BlackLivesMatter movement generally, and during the two-year, on-the-ground-protests in Ferguson, Missouri, after the police killing of Michael Brown in particular. The paper will discuss the secularization thesis of black radical politics, and critiques of sacred/secular in black culture, religion and politics. This paper asks what space is opened by reading #BLM pneumatologically and reading theology exoterically, and how this challenges racialization at the heart of these division?. There are implications for political theology of the imbrication of charismatic spirituality and black queer activism as central components of #BlackLivesMatter. Given the secularization thesis of black radical politics and #BlackLivesMatter, what does it mean that some of the earliest Christian presences in formation and solidarity with #BlackLivesMatter were Pentecostal-type clergy? Specifically, the paper examines three clergypersons, all of whom have roots in Pentecostal traditions who participated in Ferguson. For these clergypersons, their Pentecostal formation specifically informed their participation in the #BlackLivesMatter movement, and the implications of the secularization thesis. Further, some scholars have argued against a sacred/secular split in religious formations of black culture, and cultural formations of black religion. Examining the work of these activist clergy will help explore the binary, and to probe what it may mean to claim to be Pentecostal on the ground in Ferguson and in participation in and through the #BlackLivesMatter movement. Are clergy engaged in something they inherently understand as a movement of the Holy Spirit? What are the genealogical resources these clergy may be retrieving to understand their work as inherently Christian and in some way Pentecostal? Ultimately does the queer and black activism on #BlackLivesMatter rupture theological understandings of Pentecostalism itself?

Spiritual Growth and the Nation--Pentecostalism and Civic Subjectivities in Latin America

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After several more or less shocking electoral victories by presidential candidates supported by evangelical actors, faith-based identity politics has emerged across the Americas as a core theme in the political analysis offered by media and the social sciences. In Latin America, the analysis tends to focus on the dominionist projects promoted by some Pentecostal pastors, who may also lead the conservative reaction to progressive lawmaking on reproductive and marriage rights. But how does the political activity of public leaders of the evangelical sphere translate into civic attitudes and behaviors among those who attend their churches?

A considerable social divide tends to exist between successful megachurch pastors and their often less well-to-do flock. In most Latin American countries, large numbers of small and medium-size congregations cater to the urban and rural poor. Given this heterogeneity, the alignment of interests and styles of political action across the evangelical sphere can by no means be taken for granted. Aiming to provide a counterweight to the prevalent focus on evangelical identity politics, this paper addresses the question how Pentecostal techniques of the self interact with the ways that congregants conceive of their roles as citizens of their nations. Drawing on ethnographic material from fieldwork in Guatemala, Bolivia and Argentina, the paper explores the weight of local circumstances in determining how universal theological concepts—such as holiness, spiritual growth and discipleship—are translated into concrete citizenship practices.

Engaging religious congregations as communities of practice that rely on verbal interaction and the use of stories to establish shared notions of personhood and propriety, this paper ventures some theoretical and methodological considerations at the intersection of Pentecostalism and the formation of civic subjectivities.

Social Inequality and Pentecostalism: From the Life Improvement Hypothesis to the Internal Fabric of Inequalities

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From its beginnings, scholarship on Pentecostalism has addressed the movement through the lenses of social inequality. Given its massive expansion among lower classes in the Global South, researchers have studied why Pentecostalism has attracted particularly those affected by poverty. Many have argued that it offers life improvement strategies that may help to better socio-economic living conditions and facilitate social upward mobility (Chesnut 1997; Mariz 1994). In this context, Pentecostal churches have been portrayed as development actors, generating stronger development impacts than NGOs (Freeman 2012). Scholars have argued that Pentecostal churches facilitate socio-economic transitions not only through social services (e.g. internal labour markets and help networks) but also by transforming the subjectivities of their followers, converting them into industrious, capitalistic market agents (Maxwell 1998). In this perspective, Pentecostalism appears as a life-transforming machine for those that have, so far, not enjoyed the promises of global capitalism. However, this perspective has two shortcomings. First, it tends to uncritically embrace Pentecostal narratives of conversion, thereby overstating the impact of conversion on the everyday life-styles of Pentecostals. Second, it disregards the internal fabric of inequalities within Pentecostalism. Despite agreeing on its internal plurality, studies on Pentecostalism frequently treat the movement as rather homogenous when it comes to social inequality and its development impacts. Contrasting this perspective, the paper presents an alternative reading of Pentecostalism that highlights the continuity of everyday life-styles in the context of conversion and the reproduction of social inequalities within the movement.