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African Christianity

Its Public Role

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AFRICAN CHURCHES: THEIR GLOBAL CONTEXT

The explicit involvement of Africa's churches in the public sphere was drawn to the world's attention in the late 1980s, when francophone countries began national conferences and Catholic bishops were appointed to chair them. In Benin, Mgr Isidore de Sousa, Archbishop of Cotonou, presided over the national conference, and then as president of the Haut Conseil de la République overseeing the transition process, was the highest authority in the land for the thirteen months leading up to elections. In Gabon it was Mgr Basile Mve Engone, Bishop of Oyem. In Togo, Mgr Sanouko Kpodzro, Bishop of Atakpame, presided over the process. In the Congo, Mgr Ernest Kombo, Bishop of Owando, presided over the three-month-long national conference and then the entire transitional process. In Zaïre, Mgr Laurent Monsengwo Pasinya, Archbishop of Kisangani, was elected in 1991 to preside over the national conference attempting to halt that country's decline into anarchy.[1]

In many other countries, the churches' involvement was equally salient. In Kenya the most articulate criticism of President Moi came from individual Anglican bishops, and later from the National Council of Churches of Kenya. In Malawi the process of terminating President Banda's rule was begun by the 1992 lenten pastoral of the Catholic bishops. In Madagascar the Council of Churches was the core of the *Forces Vives* that led to the ousting of President Ratsiraka in 1992. And in Zambia the churches were among the most prominent local bodies involved in the 1991 transfer of power – at particular times of crisis playing a decisive role in preventing deadlock.

That the churches played such a role is remarkable, since their involvement in Africa's liberation from colonialism was very minor. At independence it was commonly thought that Christianity in Africa would become ever less significant, because it was associated so closely with colonialism, and depended so strongly on its school systems, which would be taken over by the new African governments. This prediction has proved

[1] On these national conferences, see Fabien Eboussi Boulaga, *Les conférences nationales en Afrique noire: une affaire à suivre*, Paris: Karthala, 1993; and *Jeune Afrique*, 26, June-July 1991, 16-25. For the bishops as president, see Metena M'Nteba, 'Les Conférences Nationales Africaines et la figure politique de l'évêque-president', *Zaïre-Afrique*, 276, June-Aug. 1993, 361-72.

completely false. Although precise figures are hard to verify (not least because of different definitions of 'Christian'), there is no doubting the enormous increase in Christianity south of the Sahara.[2] It has reached the stage that, as Adrian Hastings has written, 'Black Africa today is totally inconceivable apart from the presence of Christianity, a presence which a couple of generations ago could still be not unreasonably dismissed as fundamentally marginal and a mere subsidiary aspect of colonialism.'[3] This public prominence has been assessed in different ways.

In his much-quoted *The Third Wave* the political theorist Samuel Huntington has studied the movement to democracy of about thirty countries between 1974 and 1990 (the first two waves of democratisation he lists as 1828-1926 and 1943-62). He finds five factors responsible for these Third Wave transitions to democracy: the declining legitimacy of authoritarian regimes; global economic growth; changes in the policies of external actors like the United States; the 'snowball' or demonstration effect of successful transitions; and, directly relevant for our purposes, the 'changes in the doctrine and activities of the Catholic Church'. A strong correlation had long been noted between Protestantism and democracy, stemming from Protestantism's emphasis on the individual, its democratic rather than hierarchical church structures, and its encouragement of economic enterprise. But between the 1960s and the 1980s the Catholic Church changed, both at the global level of pronouncements of the Popes and the Vatican Council, and at the level of popular involvement, giving rise to 'a new church that almost invariably came into opposition to authoritarian governments'.[4] In Latin America, Eastern Europe, the Philippines and Korea churches lent their resources to the struggle against authoritarianism – buildings, radio stations, newspapers and international influence. At crucial times church leaders directly intervened. 'In country after country the choice between democracy and authoritarianism became personified in the conflict between the cardinal and the dictator.' Cardinal Sin in the Philippines may have exerted a larger role in changing political leadership 'than any Catholic prelate since the seventeenth century'. Huntington concludes: 'Catholicism was second only to economic development as a pervasive force making for democratisation in the 1970s and 1980s.'[5] Huntington

2 The figure commonly bandied about is an increase of 16,400 Africans each day; see Bob Coote, 'The Numbers Game in World Evangelisation', *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* 27, 2 (1991), 118-27.

3 Adrian Hastings, 'Christianity in Africa' in Ursula King (ed.), *Turning Points in Religious Studies* , Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1990, 208.

4 Huntington, *Third Wave*, 79.

5 *Ibid.*, 85; he immediately continues: 'The logo of the third wave could well be a crucifix superimposed on a dollar sign.'

speculates whether democratisation will continue through the 1990s. He notes the spread of Christianity in Africa, and concludes: 'As the numbers of Christians multiply, presumably the activity of church leaders in support of democracy will not decline and their political power will increase.'[6] We will examine to what extent Huntington's optimism is warranted.

Huntington's study has little specific analysis of Africa. Other studies deal with Africa in the course of global presentations. The South African theologian John de Gruchy has studied the question of the relationship between Christianity and democracy across the world.[7] He distinguishes between the democratic *system*, or the principles and procedures, symbols and convictions that have developed over the centuries, and the democratic *vision*, or hope for a just and responsible society in which all people are equal and free. He argues that the democratic vision has its origins not so much in ancient Athens, the symbolic birthplace of the democratic system, as in the message of the Old Testament prophets. Above all – and this is his main interest – he outlines Christian theological concepts or ideals which should lead Christians to promote democracy. His richest contribution is his analysis of the themes, symbols and images preserved in various Christian traditions.[8] He is aware of how democratic rhetoric can be used to entrench power. He is also aware that much Northern concern is to promote a 'low-intensity democracy' whereby 'the United States in particular, and the North in general, seek to control the democratic process in the South in such a way that they retain their privileges.'[9] Some Christian involvement is of this sort: 'Much right-wing Christianity today equates its cause with the defence of Western interests under the ideological rubric of liberal democratic capitalism.'[10] But a large part of the book consists of case studies of the United States, Nicaragua, East Germany, South Africa (where 'there can be little doubt that the church played a key role in the ending of apartheid'[11]) and, of interest to us, sub-Saharan Africa. He is generally very positive in his assessment of the church's contribution to Africa's political transition.

6 *Ibid.*, 281.

7 John W. de Gruchy, *Christianity and Democracy*, Cambridge University Press, 1995. His African section depends heavily on a conference in Leeds in September 1993, published as Paul Gifford (ed.), *The Christian Churches and the Democratisation of Africa*, Leiden: E.J.Brill, 1995.

8 An accessible statement of this part is found in John de Gruchy, 'Theological Reflections on the Task of the Church in the Democratisation of Africa' in Gifford, *Christian Churches*, 47-60.

9 De Gruchy, *Christianity*, 162; see also 143, 247.

10 *Ibid.*, 127.

11 *Ibid.*, 211.

He elaborates different kinds of contri–bution: providing leaders of integrity and honesty; mediating between warring factions; facilitating national reconciliation and reconstruction; providing social cohesion; gathering international support; and linking élites with the people.[12] His argument is that the churches generally have been 'midwives of democratic transition and reconstruction'.[13]

A similarly positive assessment of the role of Christianity in global democratisation is offered by the Project on Christianity and Democracy of the Law and Religion programme of Emory University, Atlanta. Richard Joseph contributes the section on sub-Saharan Africa. He begins: 'At the center of most of [Africa's democratic] transformations and upheavals are religious leaders from a variety of Christian denominations.'[14] He makes his case from extended treatments of the churches in Cameroon and Zaïre, and briefer case studies of the churches in Benin, Togo, Kenya, Madagascar and Zambia. He traces a shift from churches as 'zones of liberty' to 'active agencies of political liberalisation',[15] and makes it clear that he is not referring merely to leaders: 'In most African countries, Christian groups have tended to provide general support for the contemporary democratic movement.'[16]

An even more positive assessment is found in John Mihevc's *The Market Tells Them So*, a wide-ranging analysis of the present state of Africa. He laments that academic studies do not pay sufficient attention to the contribution of the churches. For Mihevc 'Churches have been at the heart of the political upheavals sweeping through Africa.'[17] He writes of 'a rising number of church-supported and -inspired democratisation movements currently sweeping Africa.'[18] He states that the churches have 'in effect served to unleash the momentous political upheavals occurring in many African countries.'[19] They continue to have 'significant political impact.'[20]

However, if these surveys are, with qualifications, definitely positive about Christianity's current role, Jeff Haynes gives a different picture altogether. Haynes has written extensively on the role of religion, both

12 *Ibid.*, 181-7.

13 *Ibid.*, 193.

14 Richard Joseph, 'The Christian Churches and Democracy in Contemporary Africa', in John Witte Jr (ed.), *Christianity and Democracy in Global Context*, Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1993, 231.

15 Joseph, 'Christian Churches', 234.

16 *Ibid.*, 237.

17 Mihevc, *Market*, 225.

18 *Ibid.*, 229.

19 *Ibid.*, 235.

20 *Ibid.*, 242.

Christianity and Islam, in sub-Saharan African politics. As regards Christianity, he distinguishes two kinds, mainline and popular. These are respectively 'an ideology of attempted hegemonic control' and a 'vehicle for mobilising community organisation, often to help fend off that control'.[21] In assessing the role of the leaders of the mainline churches, Haynes is extremely negative. Using Gramsci's concept of hegemony, he argues that mainstream religious leaders and the state interact 'to seek to achieve a hegemonic ideology that stresses the desirability of stability rather than progressive change... Senior religious figures usually seek to defuse, reduce and, when necessary, strive to help eliminate serious political challenges to the status quo.'[22] Where church leaders (notably the Catholic bishops in the much-trumpeted national conferences) did feature in democratic changes, such instances are 'best understood as examples of successful "passive revolutions" – another Gramscian term to describe the way that a dominant socio-political group may have to change its way of wielding power if it wants to maintain it.[23] On the other hand, popular religion caters for the real needs of the people, since it arises from 'a realisation that the best way to achieve individual and collective benefits [is] by practising methods of self-help.'[24] Popular Christianity is a creative response on the part of ordinary people to the destabilising effects of modernisation. Haynes distinguishes different kinds of popular Christianity: 'New Religious Movements' (like AICs, which, he claims, tend equally to preserve the *status quo*, and another sub-group consisting of rural movements like Lenshina's in Zambia or the Mozambican Nparamas), and the new Pentecostal or charismatic churches which he calls 'fundamentalist Christianity' and considers the counterpart of Islamic fundamentalism. He is much more approving of these fundamentalist groups, and sees them as popular movements catering for popular needs.[25]

By the end of this study, after consideration of the complexity and

21 Jeff Haynes, *Religion and Politics in Africa*, London: Zed Books, 1996, 123. See also his earlier book and articles: *Religion in Third World Politics*, Buckingham: Open University Press, 1993; 'Popular Religion and Politics in Sub-Saharan Africa', *Third World Quarterly* 16, 1 (1995), 89-108; 'The Revenge of Society? Religious Responses to Political Disequilibrium in Africa', *Third World Quarterly* 16, 4 (1995), 728-37.

22 Haynes, *Religion and Politics*, 104.

23 *Ibid.*, 105. For an extended criticism of the role of the Catholic Church, see 114-22. Also 'Roman Catholic leaders tended to be ambivalent about the concept of fundamental political reform because they feared emphatic change every bit as much as did the entrenched political élites. Although on occasion they headed conferences, it was not at all clear that they wished actually to personally endorse the demands for change until the groundswell of public opinion was such that not to do so would emphatically link them with the secular political elites at a time when demands for change [threatened the political élites]' (*ibid.*, 132).

24 *Ibid.*, 133.

25 *Ibid.*, 138-47, 169-87.

variety of the churches' involvement, we will be in a position to evaluate such diverse assessments of the role of Christianity in Africa's recent changes.

Theology

Although analysing essentially the same reality as the preceding authors, we will highlight one aspect that they largely leave aside, that of theology (de Gruchy's interest in the subject is prescriptive, rather than descriptive of the theology actually promoted by the churches). So many social science studies of African religion almost ignore this aspect. Thus Haynes, in explaining his Gramscian approach through hegemony, says that it is the social and class positions of the leaders that are crucial: 'What such leaders believe their religious message to comprise in a spiritual sense is of interest, but primarily the concern of theologians; what they seek to gain from their personal position or for their religious institution in competition with others is, however, relevant to a study of African politics and religion.'[26] However, a church's teachings cannot be entirely left aside in any adequate treatment, as though churches were groups like a women's institute or farmers' union or agricultural cooperative. An adequate treatment must allow space for those ideas, symbols, images, motifs, myths and metaphors which we can glorify with the title 'theology' or 'belief', although these terms usually indicate something more cerebral or conscious than I intend here.

A religion provides definitions, principles of judgement and criteria of perception. It offers a reading of the world, of history, of society, of time, of space, of power, of authority, of justice and of ultimate truth. Religion limits or increases the conceptual tools available, restricts or enlarges emotional responses, or channels them, and withdraws certain issues from inquiry. It inculcates a particular way of perceiving, experiencing and responding to reality. Religion can legitimise new aspirations, new forms of organisation, new relations and a new social order. Every religion involves struggles to conquer, monopolise or transform the symbolic structures which order reality. All these are issues for political analysis, and issues that are missed if questions of the political role of religion are asked purely in terms of church versus state.

Theology usually connotes reflective paradigmatic thought, elaborated by leisured professionals. Of all religions, it is Christianity, and indeed Western Christianity, that has elevated philosophical reflection to such prominence. We cannot presume that it is so central to African religion, even Africa's mainline Christianity. Some of the churches we will be studying place nearly all their emphasis on experience, on ecstatic

[26] *Ibid.*, 233.

worship, visions, healing, dreams and joyous bodily movement; their members would perhaps not claim to have any 'theology'. Most will not have any written theology. It is through their songs and prayers, sermons and testimonies that we will get to their symbolic cosmos; it is these we will draw on to establish their 'belief' or 'theology'.[27] I will not presume that every 'Christian' in an African church consciously holds the same beliefs, or to the same degree, or holds them in the way that church leaders (especially missionaries) might hope, and much less that he/she acts in accordance with them. This area is even more complicated because 'Christianity' does not constitute just one symbolic universe. There are very different forms of Christianity. I will constantly be looking for the different ways in which different forms of Christianity name, structure and reveal the true, the possible, the proper and the real, and create a symbolic order which is as social and political as it is theological.[28] I will refer to different theologies, not to evaluate them or judge between them theologically (e.g. between Catholic devotion to the saints and the Pentecostal gifts of the spirit, or between a sacramental system and justification by faith, or between the episcopal and the presbyterian polity) but to try to establish the symbolic cosmos of churches under discussion, on the grounds that it can play a considerable social role, even leading to side-effects which may not be adverted to. This is tricky terrain, difficult to negotiate, but it is necessary to attempt the task.

The approach is, moreover, of impeccable pedigree. After all, this was what Weber was doing in his *Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism.*[29] He was tracing the socio-political effects of a belief or a religious idea. He argued that religious ideas had consequences, often independent of the motivation of those who held them. The early Puritans were interested merely in saving souls, but their particular form of belief had far-reaching socio-economic effects.[30] Moreover, Weber distinguished between the logical consequences of ideas and the psychological consequences.[31] He spent a great part of his work, and great erudition and subtlety, distinguishing between the religious ideas of Calvinists,

[27] Harvey Cox, *Fire from Heaven: the Rise of Pentecostal Spirituality and the Reshaping of Religion in the Twenty-First Century*, London: Cassell, 1996, 201; Michael Carrithers, *Why Humans have Cultures: Explaining Anthropology and Social Diversity*, Oxford University Press, 1992, 111-14; G. Lienhardt, *Divinity and Experience: the Religion of the Dinka*, Oxford University Press, 1961, 29-34.

[28] Achille Mbembe, *Afriques indociles. Christianisme, pouvoir et état en société postcoloniale*, Paris: Karthala, 1988. See especially 19-29.

[29] Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, London: Routledge, 1992 (German original 1904-5, rev. edn 1920-1).

[30] For his understanding of the elective affinity between economic development and religious ideas, see *Protestant Ethic*, 277, n. 84.

[31] *Ibid.*, 128.

Lutherans, Pietists, Methodists and Baptists; because their beliefs differed, they played different roles in the rise of capitalism. With considerable sensitivity he argued that Pietism developing along Reformed lines could lead to an even greater religious stress on the ethic of the 'calling', and thus out-puritan the Calvinists; on the other hand, Pietism developing from a Lutheran basis led away from the all-important doctrine of predestination.[32] Of course Weber was not totally successful. He has been criticised, for example, in his understanding of Lutheranism as inevitably leading to fatalism.[33] But he shows how belief must be factored in, even if it is not quantifiable in any strictly scientific way. It is Weber's approach we will be following here. We will give great play to the religious ideas and attitudes and emphases characteristic of various churches, and our emphasis will be on the natural consequences of the beliefs, irrespective of the motivation of the holders. We will not be focusing on 'calling', the notion which was central for Weber, but on religious ideas like miraculous as opposed to natural agency, rationality in its relation to faith, human as opposed to divine responsibility, even human dignity and divine wrath. At times we will also note how consequences can be psychological rather than those necessitated by strict logic. Like Weber, we will distinguish between the teachings of different strains of Christianity – in our case, not so much denominations, but strands like mainline, independent or charismatic.[34]

Another celebrated example of the same approach is provided by E.P. Thompson's *Making of the English Working Class.* Thompson focuses on the Methodist revival, which Weber dealt with only tangentially. In a robust denunciation of the role of Methodism in the industrialisation of England, Thompson also devoted considerable attention to the role of theology. Wesley's doctrine of the universality of grace was incompatible with the Calvinist notion of 'election', and for him Christ's ransom was only provisional. It became Methodist doctrine that forgiveness of sin lasted only so long as the penitent went and sinned no more; the saved were in a state of conditional, provisional election. How then to keep grace? There were three obvious means: first through service to the church; second, through the cultivation of one's own soul; and third, through a methodical discipline in every aspect of life – above all, in labour. God's curse over Adam, when expelled from the Garden of Eden, provided

32 *Ibid.*, 132-3.

33 More basically, he has been criticised for a certain circularity; there is always the danger of interpreting theological belief in the light of what its adherents actually do. See Ernest Gellner, 'Concepts and Society' in Bryan R. Wilson (ed.), *Rationality*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1974, 19.

34 Like Weber (*Protestant Ethic*, 152), we will lay more stress on the consequences of a denomination's beliefs than on the consequences of its form of organisation (such as hierarchical or 'democratic').

irrefutable doctrinal support to the blessedness of hard labour, poverty and sorrow 'all the days of thy life'.[35] Thompson also analysed the imagery of Methodist hymns where, since joy was associated with sin and guilt, and pain with goodness and love, it became natural to suppose (Thompson is strong on psychological consequences too) that man or child found grace in God's eyes only when performing painful, laborious or self-denying tasks. Thus, Thompson argued, Wesley's theology became the ideological underpinning of the working class's acceptance of their suffering in providing the labour for Britain's industrial revolution.[36] Thompson has been criticised as much as Weber – and indeed his almost blanket condemnation of Methodism seems a caricature of a complex reality – but we too will make a similar attempt to assess the public consequences of Africa's current theologies.

Weber and Thompson were drawing out the essentially unintended socio-political and economic consequences of particular theologies. But since the 1960s there has developed a theology which explicitly addresses the public sphere. This developed primarily in Germany, where it is associated with the names of Johann Baptist Metz and Jürgen Moltmann. It has come to be most often associated with Latin America, where it was first given full expression in Gutiérrez's *A Theology of Liberation.* Its basic focus is the relation of Christianity to the socio-economic structures and systems in which Christians find themselves. Simultaneously, there developed a similar kind of theology in South Africa, which attracted the attention of the world as the apartheid era crumbled. South Africa's liberation theology finds a succinct expression in the *Kairos Document* produced under the aegis of Johannesburg's Institute for Contextual Theology. According to this, Christianity's task under apartheid was not to support the state or to focus on intra-ecclesiastical issues like bringing in more souls to people heaven, but to confront and destroy the satanic structures of apartheid.[37]

The existence of such an explicitly political theology in Africa north of the Limpopo will concern us too. There is a debate whether such an

35 E.P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class*, London: Penguin, 1980 (orig. 1963), 398-401. Also: 'Since salvation was never assured, and temptations lurked on every side, there was a constant inner goading to "sober and industrious" behaviour – the visible sign of grace – every hour of the day and every day of the year. Not only "the sack" but also the flames of hell might be the consequence of indiscipline at work' (*ibid.*, 406).

36 For Thompson, Wesley 'dispensed with the best and selected unhesitatingly the worst elements of Puritanism' (*ibid.*, 398).

37 *Kairos Document: Challenge to the Church: a Theological Comment on the Political Crisis in South Africa*, Braamfontein: the Kairos Theologians [1985]. See also Peter Walshe, 'South Africa: Prophetic Christianity and the Liberation Movement', *JMAS* 29, 1 (1991), 27-60; Peter Walshe, 'Christianity and Democratisation in South Africa: the Prophetic Voice within Phlegmatic Churches' in Gifford, *Christian Churches*, 74-94.

animal exists. De Gruchy, for instance, argues that 'theologians outside of southern Africa have not generally developed a critical political theology able to help the churches resist tyranny, overcome ethnic tension, and establish a just democratic order.'[38] However, a study of African theology by the British academic John Parratt denies this: 'It is clearly not accurate to characterise Christian theology outside South Africa as concerned only with the relationship of the Bible and Christian dogma to African traditions, any more than it is correct to describe theology within the Republic [of South Africa] as concerned only with politics.'[39] We will see in the course of this study that only to a limited extent could Christianity in large parts of Africa be said to espouse an explicitly political theology.

The churches' attitude to cultures will be another area of focus. As just mentioned, enhancement of culture is often said (by, for example, de Gruchy, in the section just cited) to be the major preoccupation of theology in Black Africa. Even if Parratt refuses to separate this too sharply from and elevate it over political interests, much of his book is given to expounding the concern of African theologians to re-value African traditions, in reaction to their supposed denigration by missionary Christianity.[40] The positive appraisal of African culture was stressed very early after independence. The proceedings of a 1965 consultation of African theologians, in a key statement, proclaimed:

> We believe that God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Creator of Heaven and Earth, Lord of History, has been dealing with mankind at all times and in all parts of the world. It is with this conviction that we study the rich heritage of our African peoples, and we have evidence that they know him and worship him. We recognise the radical quality of God's self-revelation in Jesus Christ; and yet it is because of this revelation we can discern what is truly of God in our pre-Christian heritage; this knowledge of God is not totally discontinuous with our previous knowledge of him.[41]

This establishing of similarities or building bridges between the Bible and African traditional religions has considerable socio-political effects, too, since one's attitude to a culture determines how one assesses the

38 De Gruchy, *Christianity*, 191. He continues: 'The situation has been the reverse in South Africa where contemporary theologies have been honed in the struggle against apartheid and where, until more recently, theologians, wary of the abuse of ethnicity and culture by apartheid ideologists, have not engaged in the cultural task now incumbent on them'.

39 Parratt perceives 'an underlying unity in Christian theology throughout Africa'; John Parratt, *Reinventing Christianity: African Theology Today*, Grand Rapids, MI Eerdmans, 1995, 27.

40 For a more nuanced position on missionaries and African cultures, see Hastings, *Church*, 567.

41 Kwesi Dickson and Paul Ellingworth (eds), *Biblical Revelation and African Beliefs* Maryknoll: Orbis, 1969, 16.

actions determined or sanctioned by it. Pride in one's own culture can increase determination to preserve it and resist encroachment by another. Thus the attitude of the various strands of Christianity towards traditional African religion and culture will be another of our major interests.

Another theological emphasis that has political implications is a concentration on the joys of the next life as a compensation for misery in this one. Third World theologians meeting in Dar es Salaam in 1976 sharply criticised Western missionaries for their 'services to Western imperialism by legitimising it and accustoming their new adherents to accept compensatory expectations of an eternal reward for terrestrial misfortunes, including colonial exploitation.'[42] These theologians were protesting that Western Christianity was used to reconcile Africans to hardship in this life rather than to struggle against it. Whether or not this was so earlier, it will be another of our tasks to assess to what degree African Christianity today can be said to play such a role.

Finally, even worship can be considered to have socio-political effects. For Thompson the emotionalism of early Methodism was essentially a diversion from rational assessment of the changes occurring, and a deterrent to opposing them: 'Social energies denied outlet in public life ... were released in sanctified emotional onanism', and 'Energies were not so much inhibited as displaced from expression in personal and in social life, and confiscated for the service of the church.'[43] In considering the charismatic emotionalism in African Christianity today, we will try to establish whether it too could be considered as diverting attention from active social involvement.

A new Pentecostal wave

Much of what can be called Christianity's explicit public involvement (issuing political pastoral letters, highlighting social ills, chairing national conferences) applies almost exclusively to the mainline churches, but this is not the only kind of involvement possible. There are other forms of involvement often associated with other branches of Christianity. In his magisterial survey of literature on this topic up to 1986,[44] Terence Ranger argued that the powerless have often found in religion a means of altering their situation and even reversing their status in both symbolic

42 Sergio Torres and Virginia Fabella (eds), *The Emergent Gospel: Theology from the Developing World*, London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1978, 266.

43 Thompson, *Making*, 44 and 404 respectively. Also: 'These sabbath orgasms of feeling made more possible the single-minded weekday direction of these energies to the consummation of productive labour'(406) and 'Methodism [was] in these years a ritualised form of psychic masturbation' (405).

44 Terence O. Ranger, 'Religious Movements and Politics in Sub-Saharan Africa', *African Studies Review*, 29, 2 (1986), 1-69.

and social terms. Religions can therefore become ideological and symbolic aspects of resistance to power. He cites the Watchtower in Zambia and Zionism in South Africa as illustrations. Such rural resistance, cultural and therefore political, can be resistance even though it is not armed conflict. Here Ranger highlights a crucial distinction, that between the articulated theological religion of the educated élites, and the less articulated religion of the rural members of the same denomination. Since the urban élites dominate the institutional structures and produce literary deposits that are easy to handle, there is always the tendency for observers to focus on these, and thus to slew the picture of the organisation by privileging the urban élite. But Ranger's distinction should not be made into a separation, for the larger African denominations are made up of both. In these cases the two parts can be understood only in relation to one another. Catholic or Anglican archbishops, for example, may live in the cities, but they are sometimes thought to be able to mobilise vast numbers in the countryside – which indeed was exactly what happened with the 1992 pastoral letter of the Catholic bishops of Malawi. The popular-élite dichotomy is still valid, and there must be proper understanding of the creative cultural response of the marginalised; their imaginative resistance should be saved from the neglect or condescension of a radicalism focused on the urban proletariat.[45] But even here a sense of proportion must be maintained. We can talk of political resistance in a hard or an immediate sense, and this is the resistance commonly associated with the urban proletariat. They, for instance, were powerful enough to force Zambia's President Kaunda to abandon IMF structural adjustment. The responses of rural societies, creative and imaginative though they may be, are often not of that kind. Many African rulers have been forced to be actively concerned with dissent in cities, but they could not have cared less about dissatisfaction among the rural poor. In this study we will try to attend to both rural and urban Christianity; but we will not hide the fact that the unrest of an urban élite usually counts for a great deal more than any amount of rural discontent.

We will build upon many of the insights Ranger offers. He argues that religious movements may have such power, because they 'could draw on all the ambiguous power of myth and symbol and ritual; because they could mean many things at once and contain many potentialities.'[46] He insists that the symbolic, cultural, religious and creative elements, although not political in an immediate sense, cannot be too rigidly separated from the political. Ranger's clear distinction between the explicitly or narrowly political and the more generally cultural will be crucial in this study.

45 *Ibid.*, 22

46 *Ibid.*, 51

Ranger was writing in the mid-1980s before the second liberation struggle in the political sphere, and before, in the properly religious domain, a new wave of Pentecostalism had reached its peak. Pentecostalism is undoubtedly the salient sector of African Christianity today. Yet despite its salience, it is not particularly well understood. Thompson remarked of British Methodism: 'Too much writing on Methodism commences with the assumption that we all know what Methodism was, and gets on with discussing its growth-rates or its organisational structures.'[47] The same is true of Pentecostalism in contemporary Africa. Pentecostalism has been in Africa for most of this century – a good many of the classical AICs can rightly be called Pentecostal. But since the 1970s there has appeared a new variety of Pentecostalism which often sharply distinguishes itself from the earlier wave, and which is sometimes labelled 'charismatic' to distinguish it from earlier Pentecostal manifestations. These distinctions are sometimes not fully taken into account.

For example, in his perceptive study of the world-wide phenomenon, Cox tends to misrepresent Africa. He writes: 'The African Independent Churches constitute the African expression of the worldwide Pentecostal movement.'[48] He then gives as examples classical Independent churches like Zimbabwe's Apostolic Church of John Maranke, founded in 1932, and Bishop Samuel Mutendi's Zion Christian Church; Zambia's Lumpa Church, founded by Alice Lenshina in the 1950s; and the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ on Earth of the Prophet Simon Kimbangu, a movement originating in Zaïre about 1920. Cox writes of their use of drums and African instruments in worship; their rebellion against European expressions of the faith; and their incorporation of African elements like ancestor veneration.[49] While not disputing the application of the word 'Pentecostal' to these churches, we will see that by the 1990s African Pentecostalism was mushrooming in a different form and in a development which is incomprehensible if these older AICs are taken as paradigmatic. For example, the qualities cited above from Cox (use of African instruments, ancestor veneration, opposition to European expression) cannot today be presumed to be characteristic at all, as we shall see. The same misrepresentation is given by another book covering the same global phenomenon, even if it uses the word 'charismatic' in place of Pentecostal: *Charismatic Christianity as a Global Culture*. Its only sub-Saharan case study is of the Legio Maria Church in Kenya, which is likewise no longer typical of Africa's charismatic explosion.[50]

47 Thompson, *Making*, 918.

48 Cox, *Fire*, 246.

49 *Ibid.*, 146; see also 206, 247.

50 Karla Poewe (ed.), *Charismatic Christianity as a Global Culture*, Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1994. This contains many good things but is not quite

The public role of African Pentecostalism and its socio-political effects, are key concerns in this study. That this 'born-again' Christianity has political ramifications is undeniable. Striking confirmation of this came in March 1996 when Mathieu (or from 1980, Ahmed) Kerekou, the Marxist military strongman and archetypal kleptocrat who had bankrupted Benin in his seventeen years of brutal repression (1972-90) and been the first African dictator to fall in the second liberation struggle, was re-elected to power – this time not as a Marxist but as a born-again Christian. In 1996 there was no political mileage in Marxism, but a great deal in Pentecostalism. Even if in Africa these churches are relatively under-researched, there have been two influential general studies of this phenomenon in Latin America. These are David Martin's *Tongues of Fire: the Explosion of Pentecostalism in Latin America,* and David Stoll's *Is Latin America turning Protestant? The Politics of Evangelical Growth.*[51] Both of these can help focus our enquiry.

First, the general religious context. For Martin particularly the recent religious transformation of Latin America forms part of a long process of global religious history, or part of a global theory of secularisation.[52] He traces this process from its beginnings in Britain to its logical conclusion in the United States, and eventually in the late 1980s to its impact on Latin America. His theory covers other countries as well – Europe, the white Commonwealth countries of Australia, Canada and New Zealand, and even the Caribbean. But Africa is hardly part of this global process.[53] Africa's colonisation was too recent and too different from Latin America's, and so few African countries were settled by colonists. Martin expounds his theory in terms of liberalism, socialism, secularism, communism, nationalism and anticlericalism, always relating religion to the rise of industrialisation and the bourgeoisie. All these 'isms' that have played such a role in the religious and secular history of Britain, Europe, the United States and Latin America have minimal importance in Africa. Most significantly, the role of Catholicism was simply different. Europe's history since the sixteenth century is tied up with movements

so relevant for us. The article on Legio Maria is Nancy Schwartz, 'Christianity and the Construction of Global History: the Example of Legio Maria', 134-75. Also, the book is not focused on the public role of churches, or even their internal structuring (although W.J. Hollenweger, 'The Pentecostal Elites and the Pentecostal Poor', 200-16, is suggestive here).

51 David Martin, *Tongues of Fire; the Explosion of Protestantism in Latin America*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1990; David Stoll, *Is Latin America Turning Protestant? The Politics of Evangelical Growth*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1990.

52 Martin, *Tongues*, 43. This book can be seen as a sequel to his *A General Theory of Secularisation*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1978.

53 South Africa might have been, had it not been distorted by apartheid (Martin, *Tongues*, 157-60).

reacting to Catholicism. Their struggles have determined the societies of Europe and its dependencies, and equally the forces operative in them. In Africa, however, Catholicism was generally just one among many competing denominations, entering the continent about the same time and on roughly the same footing. In British colonies Catholicism was given a perhaps surprisingly free rein, but to the extent that one can talk of an establishment, it was Anglicanism. France, though even today often called 'Catholic', has been marked by great tension between the church and state since the Revolution, and they have been officially separated since 1905. France's African colonies were run by often anti-clerical metropolitan governments, in no way disposed to give Catholicism any preference.[54] The lesser colonising powers of Belgium and Portugal were different, and privileged the Catholic Church. But Zaïre, where the colonial Catholic Church was certainly privileged, was hardly independent when Mobutu set out to tame it, and the Portuguese did so little to develop their colonies that the church-state question hardly arose in any Latin American sense. So in Black Africa Catholicism simply was not what it was in Latin America, and could not play the same role. Generally, in Africa, Catholicism has been an example of voluntarism, in exactly the same way as the Baptist, Lutheran and Pentecostal churches.

Stoll, likewise, relates the rise of Pentecostalism to Catholicism, though in a different way. He relates it to the rise of Liberation Theology, which he calls Pentecostalism's 'great rival',[55] and which he understands as a function of the breakup of the Catholic 'sacred canopy'. He shows that Pentecostalism and Liberation Theology react to and influence each other; for instance, he argues that the latter has forced Pentecostals to confront social issues. He also shows that where Liberation Theology is an attempt to conscientise and mobilise to change structures in the face of authorities, Pentecostalism has a more magical worldview.[56] The extent to which the rise of African Pentecostalism is related to or is influenced by a more politicised form of Christianity is another question to be considered here.

Both Martin and Stoll serve to highlight an important difference between African and Latin American society. Stoll in particular describes the violence and oppression in these national security states. In Africa, by contrast – again leaving aside South Africa – the undeniable violence and oppression have not been perpetrated for geopolitical or ideological reasons of national security, with Christianity part of the rationale. Although the violence can be very real, it has normally been ethnic, even sometimes mindless (as in Uganda), or has stemmed from anarchy and

54 For Catholicism in France's African colonies, see Hastings, *Church*, 430-1.

55 *Is Latin America?*, xix, 308.

56 *Ibid.*, 111-14.

warlordism. Nor is it structural, as for example part of a struggle against landowners who have traditionally had the support of Christianity; in many places in Africa there is still the option to move or revert to the land. The undeniable and increasing hardship stems from poverty, economic collapse, corruption, chaos and deteriorating services and infrastructure.

Secondly, both Martin and Stoll distinguish clearly the political from the cultural. Martin's whole argument turns on this distinction. He argues that Pentecostal churches have an inherent cultural logic: we are dealing with 'a voluntary, lay, participatory and enthusiastic faith... The cultural logic of its forms [is] active, participatory, fissile, egalitarian and enthusiastic. In short, it represent[s] an autonomous mobilisation of mass-consciousness, transforming and energising individual persons, and bringing about myriads of competitive voluntary networks for sharing and for mutual support.'[57] In these new churches, people can reinvent themselves in an atmosphere of fraternal support. Qualities are experienced and learned in churches; from there, when the time is ripe, they may be transferred to the wider society. Martin highlights 'the latent capacity of cultural changes held in religious storage to emerge over time when circumstances are propitious', and 'the new potentials in the form of models and images and concepts of the person and of organisation stored in the religious capsule, and (maybe) later released into the mainstream of society.'[58] Again we meet this distinction between culture generally and politics proper which will be crucial to our discussion.

Of course, a debate turning on this distinction is not new in reference to Christianity in Africa. It recalls a similar debate about the public role of African Independent Churches (AICs). Some have emphasised the radical potential of the AICs. One author claims: 'Black pastors of the AIC were the ones who came forward in South Africa to advocate a broad African nationalism and used their church organisations as the first functional bases.'[59] This seems grossly overdrawn. Sundkler tells of Job Chiliza, the founder of the African Gospel Church, who having caught sight of the architect of apartheid in the corridor of a Pretoria government building could say: 'I shall die satisfied to have seen the face of Dr Verwoerd.'[60] And Edward Lekganyane, successor to his father as leader of South Africa's huge Zion Christian Church, on Good Friday 1965 fêted the Minister of Bantu

57 Martin, *Tongues*, 274.

58 *Ibid*, 44 and 286.

59 T.A. Mofokeng, 'The Evolution of the Black Struggle and the Role of Black Theology' in Itumeleng Mosala and Buti Tlhagale (eds), *The Unquestionable Right to be Free*, Maryknoll: Orbis, 1986, 115.

60 B.G.M. Sundkler, *Zulu Zion and some Swazi Zionists*, London: Oxford University Press, 1976, 89.

Affairs, hailing him as the new Moses who had led the African people and the Zion Christian Church out of bondage and into a land of freedom.[61] During the most repressive stage of apartheid, over 3 million members of the ZCC welcomed President P.W. Botha to their 1985 Easter gathering. These examples suggest far more accurately the directly political role of the AICs. But the AICs had a much more complex role, conveyed accurately by Thetele:

> The AICs in South Africa in many ways are both pre-revolutionary and actively revolutionary at the same time. They are pre-revolutionary in the sense that they do not operate according to a set plan or strategy in trying to move society towards a definite gaol. But they are revolutionary in their impact on the fabric of the society, creating a change that provides the dispossessed people with a sense of hope and a vision for the future. They offer a place in society where people can begin to sense their role as creators of their own histories, rejecting a passive acceptance of the status quo and beginning to work out alternatives to dehumanisation.[62]

Frostin suggests that this role 'defies to be subordinated to European categories.'[63] I would prefer to say that it is explicable in European categories, provided one distinguishes the properly political and the more generally cultural, and admits that one church can be doing different things in the two different spheres.[64]

It must immediately be said, however, that although both Martin and Stoll argue for the long-term radical influence of the Pentecostal churches at the cultural level, they are extremely tentative about it. Martin adds a subtle 'maybe' at crucial steps of his argument. Stoll is perhaps even more hesitant in his conclusions; he would like to think that Pentecostalism will be a force for social change,[65] but regrets that it probably will not. It

61 Adrian Hastings, *A History of African Christianity 1950-1975*, Cambridge University Press, 1979, 183.

62 C. B. Thetele, 'Women in South Africa: the WAAIC' in Kofi Appiah-Kubi and Sergio Torres (eds), *African Theology en Route*, Maryknoll: Orbis, 1979, 151. Hastings makes the same point of the ZCC: 'It was able to provide very poor people with some lasting sense of status, of belonging to a successful institution which they could publicly identify with and be proud of by the standards of this world' (*History*, 183).

63 Per Frostin, *Liberation Theology in Tanzania and South Africa: a First World Interpretation*, Lund University Press, 1988, 228.

64 A similar debate has centred on black churches in the USA. Martin writes: 'It is perfectly possible ... to view the movement for black civil rights in the mid-twentieth century as an extrapolation from what had already been achieved symbolically in the "free space" created by the black churches' (*Tongues*, 44). Others dispute this; see Paul Gifford, *Christianity and Politics in Does Liberia*, Cambridge University Press, 1993, 49; and for another position, see de Gruchy, *Christianity*, 135.

65 Stoll, *Is Latin America?*, 315. Also xvi, 10. Note the 'maybe' at critical stages of Martin's argument, *Tongues*, 134, 224, 232, 267-8, 274, 286, 287, 288. Martin's more recent writing may be even more tentative: 'They run their churches as entrepreneurs seeking

will be one of our tasks to assess the probability in Africa.

Thirdly, both are aware of the links with North American Pentecostalism – Stoll particularly. Dealing with Nicaragua and Guatemala especially, in the 1980s, he is very sensitive to American political interest in the region; this was the height of Reaganism. He is no conspiracy theorist, and thinks the local dynamics of Pentecostalism are far more important, but realises that Latin American Pentecostalism cannot be analysed without reference to North American missionaries or partners, and particularly the Religious Right, who were at least one strand among many. He shows real discernment here; the Religious Right cannot be ignored, but must not be allowed to dominate the picture.[66] The nature of external connections must be considered in Africa too. In this regard, Stoll indirectly serves to emphasise how different the context is in Africa. Only South Africa, and to a lesser extent her neighbours sucked into her orbit, was ever considered an essential part of some divine geopolitical dispensation. The rest of Africa, even in Cold War days, was never essential. Even Liberia, with its military airfield and port, its Omega tracking station and the miles of radio masts at the CIA's African communications system, was surprisingly dispensable. In 1990, at the very beginning of Liberia's unrest when even a small force might have been thought adequate to preserve order, the Americans were not prepared to intervene, and just walked away from all their plant, seemingly with few qualms.

Stoll too is very strong on the variations within Pentecostalism, their diverse social and political significance, and their shifting importance over time.[67] The 1980s were a time of important shifts; Pat Robertson, at that time a standard premillennialist, predicted the end of the world in 1982; by 1988 he was an exponent of Kingdom Theology and running for President to shape America for generations to come. Stoll detects

a market. In so doing they gain skills and capacities capable of redeployment in secular avocations, and they inculcate a discipline and priorities of consumption that could lead to modest advancement, at least in circumstances where inflation is under control.[...] Their combination of hard work and mutual aid probably gives them an edge in the search for survival. They are located at the social margin, where respectability and self-control and frugality assist survival and where aspirations can lead to small business ventures – or modest educational improvement. They could also be creating a new personality, with a novel sense of self and of responsibility, capable of being converted into initiative. All this, one has to say, is latent and implied rather than realised and documented' (David Martin, 'Evangelical and Charismatic Christianity in Latin America' in Poewe, *Charismatic Christianity*, 84-5). Cox ends his treatment of Pentecostalism in Latin America on a very negative note: 'The hopes that many people once held out that Pentecostalism would become a seed-bed of democracy in Latin America may prove to be a sad disappointment' (*Fire*, 183).

66 Stoll, *Is Latin America?*, 102, 156-7.

67 *Ibid.*, esp. 42-67.

equivalent differences within Pentecostalism in Latin America. We will attempt to be as alert to similar variations within African Pentecostalism.

The Faith Gospel

One factor neither Stoll nor Martin gives great attention to is the Faith Gospel, which characterises so many charismatic churches. Because it is so widespread in Africa, we will give a brief outline of it here. According to the Faith Gospel, God has met all the needs of human beings in the suffering and death of Christ, and every Christian should now share the victory of Christ over sin, sickness and poverty. A believer has a right to the blessings of health and wealth won by Christ, and he or she can obtain these blessings merely by a positive confession of faith. In its present form, several well-known names have helped create it: most notably, E.W. Kenyon, A.A. Allen, Oral Roberts, T.L. Osborn, Kenneth Hagin, Kenneth Copeland and John Avanzini. Each of these has made his own contribution. It was Allen, for example, who first made it an aid towards fundraising; he was the first to teach that God is a rich God, and that those who want to share in his prosperity must obey and support God's servant – the speaker himself. Roberts added the idea of seed faith: that you prosper by planting a seed in faith, the return on which will meet all your needs. The texts that are invariably utilised include Mk. 11: 23-23; Dt. 28-30; 3 Jn. 2; Mal. 3: 8-11; Mk. 10: 29-30; Phil. 4: 19; and for health in particular Ps. 91; Is. 53: 4-5 (=1 Pet. 2,24), Mt. 9: 27-31. This Faith Gospel has proved very functional among the religious entrepreneurs who constitute the media evangelists, for its 'seed faith' idea has brought in the enormous resources needed to sustain these extremely expensive ministries. Indeed, it developed in those circles precisely because it was so functional in this regard. Kenneth Copeland has admitted that only after committing himself to a TV series with no apparent capital did he come to understand the doctrine of 'biblical prosperity' properly.[68] Its widespread diffusion owes much to its pervasiveness in Christian broadcasting. However, it is not only its functionality but its general socio-

68 Kenneth Copeland, *The Laws of Prosperity*, Fort Worth, TX: Kenneth Copeland Ministries,1974, 74-6. Hagin claims he properly understood prosperity in January 1950 (Kenneth E. Hagin, *How God Taught Me about Prosperity*, Tulsa, OK: Kenneth Hagin Ministries, 1985, 15). The Copelands admit being influenced by Hagin, and started to think in terms of prosperity in 1967-8. See Gloria Copeland, *God's Will is Prosperity*, Fort Worth, TX: Kenneth Copeland Ministries, 1978, 32-3, and Kenneth Copeland, *The Laws of Prosperity*, 9. For the Faith Gospel, see Gifford, *Christianity and Politics*, 146-89. For an account of one of its main avenues into Africa, namely Bonnke's 1986 'Fire Conference' in Harare, see Paul Gifford, 'Prosperity: A New and Foreign Element in African Christianity', *Religion*, 20 (1990), 373-88. The best account of its origins and specifics is J.N. Horn, *From Rags to Riches: an Analysis of the Faith Movement and its Relation to the Classical Pentecostal Movement*, Pretoria: UNISA, 1989.

economic context that is significant. It appeared in the boom years of the 1960s and 1970s in the United States. These were the days when living standards were visibly increasing, opportunity was everywhere, and 'success through a positive mental attitude' was the rule. Indeed, the Faith Gospel's affinities to New Age thinking are obvious. We will meet this Faith Gospel, in varying degrees, across Africa. T.L.Osborn is well remembered for his crusades, and the literature of Hagin particularly was widely available throughout the 1980s. We will be interested specifically in the Faith Gospel's role in Africa's current socio-economic context.

Without some idea of the Faith Gospel, it is possible to misunderstand global developments within Christianity. Thus a recent article on Korean charismatic Christianity claims that 'Korean Christianity has become almost completely shamanised.' The author proves the 'shamanistic orientation' of the theology of Paul Yonggi Cho by expounding Cho's exegesis of 3 John 2 (not John 3: 2 as stated). Yet everything Cho understands by prospering has been taught in exactly that form by the Faith Gospel for years, and 3 John 2 has been one of its key texts. The emphasis on this-worldly blessing is too exclusively attributed to shamanism, with no reference to what is taught in a whole swathe of Christianity in America.[69] Cho and the Faith Gospel promoters generally cannot be understood in isolation from their American roots. Their symbols, hymns, denominational organisation, networks, rituals, technology, order of service, use of the Bible, instrumental music, literature and tapes on sale and theology – all of these characteristics and many more betray their origins.

A more satisfactory approach to global developments, and one which attends to both external and local factors, is found in Coleman's writings on *Livets Ord* (Word of Life), a faith church in Sweden: 'The Word of Life is a cultural product that cannot be understood merely in terms of its local or even national context. It must also be seen as formed from and reacting to international influences, and specifically as a product of North American religious culture.' However, Coleman immediately adds the equally important corollary: 'Its doctrines and forms of worship take on new symbolic resonances as they are transferred almost wholesale from one country to another.'[70] The reinterpretation exemplified by *Livets*

[69] Mark R. Mullins, 'The Empire Strikes Back: Korean Pentecostal Missions to Japan' in Poewe, *Charismatic Christianity*, 92-3. The author also oversimplifies the complex origins of the Korean theology of illness, much of which is also standard Faith Gospel. It is more complicated than is suggested by his statement that 'Paul Yonggi Cho's theology might best be viewed as a synthesis of Korean shamanism, Robert Schuller's "Positive Thinking", and the pragmatism of the church-growth school of missiology associated with Fuller Theological Seminary's School of World Mission' (*ibid.*).

[70] Simon Coleman, ' "Faith which Conquers the World": Swedish Fundamentalism and the Globalisation of Culture', *Ethnos* 56, 1 (1991), 7; also Simon Coleman, 'Conservative Protestantism and the World Order: the Faith Movement in the United States and Sweden', *Sociology of Religion* 54 (1993), 353-73. Also: 'In all movements of religious conversion and change there is a dialectic of external influence and local adaptation' (Martin, *Tongues*, 282).

Ord turns especially on Christian Zionism. (There is no intrinsic reason why the Faith Gospel should be linked with Christian Zionism; the combination of the two is itself largely due to purely contingent factors of recent American history.) Christian Zionism, embodying support for Israel and opposition to Russia, often fosters a keen antipathy towards the European Union (EU), for the Antichrist of the last days is supposed to arise from a reconstituted Roman Empire, which in this thinking is understood to be the EU created by the 1958 Treaty of Rome. In the 1990s Sweden was seriously split on the issue of joining the EU, and its Christian Zionism enabled the Word of Life Church to adopt a very high profile in this debate, in the vanguard of the anti-EU forces. Thus in Sweden Christian Zionism has proved very functional. Another aspect of Christian Zionism (the belief that the Jews of the diaspora must return home to Israel to usher in the return of Christ) has proved invaluable to the church itself. Word of Life had laboured for some years in East Asia, with virtually no success at all. Its evangelistic outreach was in danger of collapse, but at just the right time for it, the Soviet Union disintegrated, enabling Word of Life to switch its missionary thrust to a much more responsive area. Its phenomenal success in opening churches and Bible colleges and running crusades in former Soviet lands has not only revitalised the church but enabled it to focus on 'repatriating' Russian Jews to Israel. This task has almost come to define the church; Word of Life has bought and refitted an oceangoing ship solely for the purpose of transporting Jews to Israel – a Christian 'duty' that anyone who does not share its Christian Zionism could hardly credit. Of course this, too, sharpens the local church's identity. Sweden generally has been consistently pro-Palestinian in foreign policy; this Zionist orientation is one more way of standing out in Sweden. Thus in Sweden an element of a total religious package, which itself is hardly comprehensible outside its American roots, has, because of its functionality both in the nation generally and within the church itself, helped to establish the church's particular identity.[71] In studying Africa's faith churches, we will, like Coleman in Sweden, look for both continuity and adaptation.

Before leaving the Pentecostal churches, we must consider one more aspect: the church growth movement. In itself this is not exclusively Pentecostal; indeed it is most closely associated with Fuller Theological

[71] For Word of Life's prosperity gospel, see Ulf Ekman, *Financial Freedom*, Uppsala: Word of Life, 2nd edn 1993; for its Zionism, see Ulf Ekman, *The Jews: People of the Future*, Uppsala: Word of Life, 1993, and especially the church's magazine, *Word of Life*, *passim*. Coleman perhaps underestimates the Zionism underlying the church's theology.

Seminary and the US Centre for World Mission, both of California, and with names like Donald McGavran and Ralph D. Winter.[72] As a distinct theory involving unreached people groups (*ethne*) it was first formulated by mission leaders of Billy Graham's Lausanne Congress on World Evangelisation in 1982. It is encountered most often in Africa in the form of the 'AD 2000 and Beyond' Movement, which was born out of the Lausanne Congress and has come to coordinate the efforts of many churches, denominations, mission agencies, parachurch bodies and Christian service groups. Its international chairman is Chinese and its director from Brazil, but behind AD 2000 are bodies like Campus Crusade, Concerts of Prayer, Discipling a Whole Nation (DAWN), Every Home for Christ, Generals of Intercession, Lausanne Global Prayer Strategy, March for Jesus, Mission Frontiers, Operation Mobilisation, Youth With A Mission (YWAM), Women's Aglow and others. AD 2000 has as its aim 'A Church for Every People and the Gospel for Every Person by the year 2000', and has a special focus on what it calls the '10/40 Window', that area from West Africa to East Asia between 10 and 40 degrees of latitude. The movement aims to have 200,000 new missionaries operating by the year 2000. It works through consultations, and 100 were held in preparation for its 1995 Global Consultation on World Evangelisation (GCOWE '95) in Seoul, Korea, which gathered 4,000 leaders from 186 nations in what some publicity called 'the most important global meeting in history'. The next such consultation will be in South Africa in 1997, followed by consultations in Hungary, India and (in AD 2000) Israel. The movement puts great stress on research and statistics. Its coordinating activity is increasingly evident in Africa, linked primarily to the Evangelical churches, but increasingly to all kinds of new churches, including Pentecostal mega-churches, and even mainline denominations.[73]

Two further issues require comment here; fundamentalism and sectarianism. In its classical Christian sense of denoting some belief in the Bible as inerrant,[74] almost all African Christianity is fundamentalist, for nearly all African Christians approach the Bible rather uncritically. In general, they love to quote it, refer to it and support any position by alluding to it. This is true also of Christians of the mainline churches, and is doubly true of the AICs. This was well expressed in a report on the history and theology of a group of Independent Churches, written by those churches themselves. After writing of how seriously they take the

72 A good introduction to church growth thinking is C. Peter Wagner, Win Arn and Elmer Towns, *Church Growth: State of the Art*, Wheaton, IL: Tyndale, 1989, esp. Wagner's article, 'The Church Growth Movement after Thirty Years', 21-39.

73 Information about AD 2000 and Beyond Movement is available from 2860 S Circle Dr., Suite 2112, Colorado Springs, CO 80906.

74 James Barr, *Explorations in Theology: the Scope and Authority of the Bible*, London: SCM, 1980, 65.

Bible, they continue: 'Some people will say that we are therefore "fundamentalists". We do not know whether that word applies to us or not.[...] We do not have the same problems about the Bible as White people have with their Western scientific mentality.'[75] But in recent years the word 'fundamentalist' has extended its meaning considerably, to cover all religions, and generally that sector of those religions with political involvement. Now the word carries considerable baggage, notably some element of political reaction, rejection of the modern world, return to the past.[76] A sizeable bloc of Christians described as fundamentalists in this sense are politically powerful in the United States. During the 1980s and '90s they have made missionary advances in Africa as great as those Stoll described in Latin America. They have established countless ministries, fellowships and churches of their own kind, and (through their workshops, literature and media involvement) have profoundly influenced already existing churches. So Africa now has a rapidly growing sector of Christianity which is closely related to US fundamentalism. However, when these US-influenced groups operate in Africa, they find themselves functioning in a context considerably different from that in the United States. In America there are particular issues that focus their energy and around which fundamentalists mobilise – issues like abortion, homosexuality, the equal rights amendment, 'welfare', the teaching of evolution in schools, New Age movements, and the alleged humanism of the supreme court, the media and the educational system. In Africa few of these are significant. In almost all African states, governments are strongly opposed to abortion, 'gay rights' are not an issue,[77] women are subordinate, welfare systems are inadequate, and the courts are usually subservient to the executive. Also, most of the electronic technology (cable TV, free-phone networks, computerised mailing) which has been an inseparable part of the emergence of the US fundamentalist coalition,

75 African Independent Churches, *Speaking for Ourselves: Members of African Independent Churches report on their Pilot Study of the History and Theology of their Churches*, Braamfontein: ICT, 1985, 26.

76 Martin E. Marty, 'Fundamentals of Fundamentalism' in Lawrence Kaplan (ed.), *Fundamentalism in Comparative Perspective*, Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 1992, 18-22. For the wide-ranging Fundamentalism Project of the University of Chicago (which covered every possible 'fundamentalism' except Christianity in Black Africa) see Martin E. Marty and R. Scott Appleby, *Fundamentalisms Observed*, University of Chicago Press, 1991; subsequent volumes from the same editors and publishers include *Fundamentalisms and Society: Reclaiming the Sciences, the Family and Education* (1993) and *Fundamentalisms and the State: Remaking Polities, Economies and Militance* (1993). See also David Westerlund (ed.), *Questioning the Secular State: the Worldwide Resurgence of Religion in Politics*, London: Hurst, 1996.

77 President Mugabe's anti-gay crusade in Zimbabwe 1995-7 was largely a political ploy to discredit human rights activists' criticisms of his government.

simply does not exist in Africa. Just as significant, the freedom of speech that enables US fundamentalists to denounce their government for all sorts of alleged inadequacies has not been widely honoured in Africa. Consequently, it is not clear what application the description 'fundamentalist' has in sub-Saharan Africa, or what debate is advanced by employing the term. The entire context is different. For this reason the term will be avoided here as much as possible.[78]

The second issue is that of sectarianism. 'Sect' is a label frequently used in Africa to describe the mushrooming new churches; in francophone countries '*les sectes*' is if anything more widely used. Mostly this is loosely used in something like Troeltsch's sense, as applying to groups distinct from the historic mainline churches.[79] There is a considerable body of literature on the religious sociology of 'sects'; for example, in the typology of Bryan Wilson a sect is described as manifesting qualities like exclusiveness or rejection.[80] I do not want to presume such qualities in the many African bodies to which the label is so readily applied; at the end of this study we will understand better how justifiable that presumption is.

Ecclesiastical externality

We have noted the importance given to external links in the analysis of sub-Saharan Africa. In the last decade Western governments wound down official links with Africa. To take their place there occurred one of the most remarkable developments of the 1980s, the NGO explosion. During the 1980s in Africa, as African governments collapsed and retreated from all kinds of areas, NGOs flooded in to take their place – in extreme cases such as Mozambique, to exert more power than the government.[81] Over the same period, in a similar way, missionaries have flooded into Africa, often with an effect on the Christian landscape just as substantial as that of the NGOs on the socio-political terrain. This missionary involvement is linked with the Pentecostal explosion, because so many of these new missionaries are part of the new Pentecostal wave. Already by the mid-1960s the mainline Protestant missionaries had been surpassed in numbers by those from non-ecumenical evangelical and 'unaffiliated' agencies. This trend has proceeded apace.[82]

78 Parratt is correct when he claims that Byang Kato, the first General Secretary of the Association of Evangelicals of Africa (AEA), by introducing the American debate, brought something quite foreign into African theology (*Reinventing*, 63).

79 Ernst Troeltsch, *The Social Teaching of the Christian Churches*, New York: Macmillan, 1931.

80 Bryan Wilson, *Religion in Sociological Perspective* , Oxford University Press, 1982, 89-120; Bryan Wilson, *Magic and the Millennium* , London: Heinemann, 1973, 11-30.

81 See, e.g., J. Hanlon, *Mozambique: Who Calls the Shots?* London: James Currey, 1991.

82 The two indispensable source books for mission statistics are John A Siewert and John

These missionaries are predominantly North American. It is not easy to plot trends in this matter. For one thing, statistics are not always collected on exactly the same basis.[83] It seems, however, that this American influence is, if anything, increasing. It is true that of all the Protestant missionaries around the world 65% in 1989 were North American, but by 1992 this percentage had fallen to 57%.[84] However, against this must be set other considerations. First, mission agencies have consciously adopted a new strategy of supporting locals rather than sending North Americans. Locals are both 'less expensive and less culturally intrusive'. In 1992 there were 24,213 locals fully supported and 17,737 partially supported by US agencies.[85] So the 'Americanness' of the modern missionary movement may not be in conflict with an apparently contradictory claim that by the year 2000 there will be a dominance of Third World missionaries around the world.[86]

Moreover, the missionary movement today includes various kinds of auxiliary forces. Many Evangelical Christian colleges in the United States now provide opportunities for students to spend at least some period of their summer vacation in mission fields; one estimate put the number of Americans in such short-term missions in 1989 at 120,000.[87] It must be said that much of this short-term work, even when it involves non-Americans, is on behalf of American multinational mission agencies like Youth With A Mission. Another important and novel feature of the contemporary missionary scene is the number of genuine 'independents': sent from independent charismatic churches in North America, they are not counted in statistics compiled according to mission agencies.

Comparing a representative number of African countries between 1989 and 1993, one finds that in general full-time American Protestant missionaries have increased: Ghana, for instance, had 158 American

A. Kenyon (eds), *Mission Handbook: USA/Canada Christian Ministries Overseas*, Monrovia, CA: Marc, 15th edn 1993 (13th edn 1986, 14th edn 1989); and Patrick Johnstone, *Operation World*, Carlisle: OM Publishing, 3rd edn 1978, 4th edn 1986 and 5th edn 1993.

83 For example, the 14th and 15th editions of *Mission Handbook* change the basic category from 'career' or 'life' missionary to missionary for 'more than four years'.

84 *Mission Handbook*, 14th edn, 576, and 15th edn, 76. Comparing the biggest agencies across these two categories between 1989 and 1993, the Southern Baptist Convention decreased from 3,839 to 3,660, the Wycliffe Bible Translators increased from 2,269 to 2,338, the New Tribes Mission increased from 1,807 to 1,837, the Christian Churches/ Churches of Christ decreased from 1,717 to 1,118, and the Assembles of God decreased from 1,530 to 1,485.

85 *Mission Handbook*, 15th edn, 59.

86 *Pulse*, 7 Feb 1992, 5.

87 *Mission Handbook*, 15th edn, 57. See Mark Robinson (ed.), *Summer Missions Handbook 1990*, La Mirada, CA: Biola University, 1989; of the ninety-nine mission agencies listed here, twenty-seven have summer activities in Africa.

Protestant missionaries in 1989 and 184 in 1993; in Kenya they increased from 1,225 to 1,337; in Malawi from 155 to 199; in Nigeria from 486 to 487; and in Zimbabwe from 239 to 309. However, over the same four-year period the US missionaries decreased in Cameroon (from 247 to 213) and in Zaïre (from 899 to 715, although this decline can easily be explained by the general flight of expatriates from the chaos engulfing the country since 1989). There were also in 1993 another 359 Protestant missionaries accredited to 'Africa' generally.[88] According to the successive editions of *Operation World*, the number of all expatriate Protestant missionaries (that is, not just American missionaries) in all these countries (except Nigeria) has steadily increased. For example, the figures for Ghana are 280 full-time Protestant missionaries in 1978, 380 in 1986 and 400 in 1993; for Kenya the corresponding figures are 1,150, 1,850 and 2,321; for Malawi 200, 220, and 366; for Zimbabwe 250, 600, 630; and for Zaïre 1,000, 1,300, 1406. Nigeria shows a decline: 1,300 in 1978, 950 in 1986, and 768 in 1993; the Nigerian authorities, in the light of increasing religious conflict, are reluctant to grant visas to missionaries. In this as in so many things Nigeria has a dynamic of its own.[89]

Within Protestantism, then, missionaries seem to be increasing in numbers, with the increase specially marked among non-mainline churches. Catholicism has its own dynamic. Even in the 1970s it was acknowledged that the changing balance between Africa's mainline Protestants and Catholics – decidedly to the advantage of the latter – 'depended to a very considerable extent upon a foreign force of priests and nuns.'[90] Twenty years on, Catholic missionaries still easily outnumber Protestant missionaries. In 1993 in Cameroon there were 1,640 Catholic missionaries to 689 Protestant; in Ghana 540 Catholic to 400 Protestant; in Kenya 3,210 to 2,321; in Malawi 578 to 366; in Nigeria 923 to 768; in Zimbabwe 905 to 630; and in Zaire 4,366 to 1,406.[91] Numbers of Catholic missionaries have fallen over the last fifteen years, although if those from the traditional sending countries have declined considerably, missionaries are increasing from places like India and Latin America. Only 7% of Catholic missionaries were North Americans in 1989.[92] American Catholic missionaries abroad[93] peaked at 9,655 in 1968 (in Africa at 1,184 in 1966);

88 *Mission Handbook*, 15th edn, *ad loc.* and 73.

89 Johnstone, *Operation World*, *ad loc.*

90 Hastings, *History*, 242; see all 239-42.

91 See Johnstone, *Operation World*, *ad loc.*

92 *Mission Handbook*, 14th edn, 576.

93 These missionaries are ageing and being replaced by lay missionaries; 90% of those under thirty are lay missionaries. See US Catholic Mission Association, *Annual Report on US Catholic Overseas Mission 1992-93*, Washington, DC: Catholic Mission Association, 1993.

in 1992 there were 5,467, a drop of 42 % since 1968, with 949 in Africa.

In our case studies, we will continually be alert to missionary influence – not only their numbers, but their resources, expertise and power. Africa's Christianity is both localised and part of a world religion. How this tension is resolved needs careful clarification and continual reassessment. In Africa, given the widespread and increasing dependence in so many fields, it is natural to ask whether the balance between the local and the external within Christianity is different from that in other less dependent parts of the world.

Method

Diverse claims are made about African Christianity, as we have already seen, and on all sorts of evidence and arguments. De Gruchy's *Christianity and Democracy* contains a selection of case studies. Obviously de Gruchy considers these case studies to support conclusions of a fairly hard kind. He writes that they 'broadly represent the global context, the varieties of Christian denomination, and the different ways in which churches have participated in the democratic process. They are also paradigmatic in illustrating the issues which are fundamental to the relationship between Christianity and democracy at the end of our century, and cumulative in their impact and significance.'[94] But a consideration of his chapter on sub-Saharan Africa shows how questionable this is. De Gruchy is concerned to show the 'role of the churches as midwives of democratic transition and reconstruction',[95] which leads him to choose his illustrations with that in mind. This leads him, for example, to write most positively of the Malawian Catholic bishops' 'opposition to one-party rule' which 'reached a climax in March 1992' with their pastoral letter which initiated Malawi's return to democracy.[96] But significant as this pastoral letter unquestionably was, it cannot be denied that the Catholic bishops' silent complicity for the previous twenty-seven years needs just as much explanation as the sudden decision to end it. De Gruchy is well aware that in Africa the churches' contribution has not been uniformly positive, and frequently alludes to their failure, silence, co-optation and excessive circumspection.[97] But he gives us no way of weighting the positive

94 De Gruchy, *Christianity*, 131.

95 *Ibid.*, 193.

96 *Ibid.*, 184.

97 See *ibid.*, 182, 183, 186. Similar qualifiers are expressed for Germany (196), South Africa (211), and American Black churches (135). Also, there is little differentiation within Christianity, with no references to evangelicals and very few to the Pentecostals and the new charismatics. Relatively, too much importance is placed on the AICs and their political significance, while the influence of Catholic bishops' pastoral letters and mainline Protestant symposia is taken for granted.

examples against the negative ones, or establishing a general pattern, or reaching an overall balance. We are left wondering whether de Gruchy is justified in his overall very positive assessment.

It is similar with Haynes, although he is arguing the opposite case. He analyses the mainline churches (or at least their leadership) through the concept of hegemony, arguing that their interests tend to coalesce with those of the ruling élite, and thus he views mainline churches as preserving élite privileges. This approach sheds considerable light in many instances. There are certainly countless examples of such hegemonic alliances. A clear example is Liberia. At the time of Doe's coup in 1980, the President, Tolbert, was also chairman of the Baptist Convention; Warner, his Vice-President, was the presiding Bishop of the Methodist Church; and Reginald Townsend, the National Chairman of the True Whig Party, in power since 1870, was the Moderator of the Presbyterian Church. So these three pillars of the political establishment were also the heads of Liberia's three oldest churches – an example of total fusion of church and political leadership. But even in Liberia it was not simple, for the Lutherans and Catholics had never been part of that system. The Lutherans had always worked among the tribal people inland, never with the Americo-Liberian élite. And anti-Catholicism was one of the principles on which Liberia had been established; it was only at its fourth attempt that Catholicism was even allowed into the country. Thus these two churches had some independence. The Catholic Archbishop of Monrovia spoke out courageously against corruption and abuses, and in favour of human rights; he could not be viewed as one of the local élite. The concept of hegemony fails to explain his role in the country.[98] Thus Haynes raises again the problem of procedure. One senses that he has adopted a position, and selected a number of examples to verify it. But in a continent as heterogeneous as Africa, examples are to hand to illustrate many different views. How many examples do you need to confirm an argument? Are there countervailing examples? How do you weight conflicting examples? Haynes's method is not as unproblematic as it may appear.[99]

To build up our picture we present below detailed case studies of the Christian churches in four African countries: Ghana, Uganda, Zambia and Cameroon. The selected countries are geographically spread and of roughly similar population and importance. All four are functioning countries – in a way that Zaïre, Liberia or Rwanda are not – and all have been prominently caught up in Africa's struggle to create new and more

[98] Gifford, *Christianity and Politics*, esp. 71-87.

[99] Cox's selection of material is also tendentious in places, e.g., his emphasis on ecology as a concern of African churches (*Fire*, 245, 258); above all his admittedly fascinating examples hardly prove Europe is undergoing a 'resurgence of primal spirituality' (*ibid.*, 211).

democratic societies. In addition to their similarities, they offer several important differences. Ghana and Uganda each enclose a great pre-colonial kingdom, respectively Ashanti and Buganda; Zambia and Cameroon have dominant ethnic blocs, but no equivalent of these kingdoms. Each one of four countries had a different experience of colonialism: the greater part of Cameroon was a German colony before becoming a French Mandated and then Trust Territory; Uganda was a British Protectorate; modern Ghana comprises three former British Protectorates; Zambia was a settler colony. Zambia and Cameroon have been remarkably stable since independence, Ghana has been plagued by coups and changes of regime, though with relatively little bloodshed, whereas Uganda suffered two regimes so savage that the country almost dissolved in the resulting welter of brutality (Amin 1971–9; Obote 1979-85). Zambia is extremely urbanised; the other countries are still predominantly rural. Zambia and Cameroon had a period of economic boom after independence, but in the mid-1990s both were on a sharp downward spiral; Uganda and Ghana both reached rock-bottom in the early 1980s, but at the time of writing, at least in the World Bank's view, they are perhaps the two glimmers of hope in Africa. A comparison of the four countries, with all their similarities and differences, will provide a better explanatory purchase on the phenomena, will buttress judgements with greater probability, and be more richly suggestive of general patterns and trends.

In comparing these countries, I have attempted to guard against slanting the material unduly, or against letting one case study determine what is looked for – and then probably found – in another. I have attempted to do justice to each country's particular dynamic. Thus there has been no presumption that what is important in one country is important in all or any of the others. The Catholic Church is treated in each country, because it is the biggest single church – by far – in all four, and therefore could not be omitted. Likewise, the new charismatic sector is of necessity covered in all four case studies. But the Anglican Church, though treated at length in Uganda, where it has traditionally formed a duopoly with the Catholic Church, scarcely deserves its single footnote in the discussion of the churches in Cameroon. Similarly, the Jehovah's Witnesses are very significant in Zambia, where their membership is proportionally greater (barring a few microstates) than in any other country in the world, but Witnesses have not warranted a mention in the other countries. From our case studies, then, some sort of direct comparison is possible across the four countries for the Catholic Church and the charismatics, but not for other churches. Obviously, deciding what constitutes the most significant features of the Christian dynamic in any country is to some degree subjective. However, many features select themselves. Statistics suggest a starting point. Other indications of relative importance are frequency of mention on news broadcasts, the number of column inches in

newspapers, and even the scale and frequency of denunciation by irate government officials. Other observers might have balanced things differently, but the selection here is not entirely arbitrary.

Our case studies are fairly detailed, since a fruitful comparison requires sufficient contextual background. One may select something that is no doubt perfectly true, but in its full context it may signify something far more nuanced than appears at first sight.[100] We have already mentioned the Catholic bishops in Malawi, and it is perfectly true that their 1992 pastoral letter began the whole transition from one-party rule. This was undoubtedly a very positive contribution but, situating it in a wider context, it seems that rather than the Catholic Church, or even the Catholic bishops, it was one individual who was primarily responsible for the letter – and he an expatriate. And when the government rounded on the Catholic bishops, the other bishops were quite content for the expatriate to be deported. Likewise, any account of the socio-political role of the churches in Africa since the mid-1970s would have to mention Zimbabwe's Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace. But, directed predominantly by whites, it functions independently of the hierarchy, which enables the hierarchy effectively to disown the Commission whenever it suits them. The Commission is well known on the continent for its public involvement in issues of justice; what it reveals about Christianity – or even Catholicism – in Zimbabwe is less clear.[101]

In a work such as this a crucial task is that of discriminating between kinds of Christianity. Too many studies talk of the Christian church (or the Christian churches) as though Christianity was a single recognisable entity, playing exactly the same role wherever it appears. To some degree, if we are to talk about Christianity at all in the space available, we must generalise, and to order our material we must use broad categories. This study, however, does not presume that Christianity is one in all its manifestations, and even within broad categories like Protestant or Pentecostal it tries not to force churches artificially into a uniformity they do not possess. For example, we will see that the charismatic churches manifest considerable diversity. The presumption of uniformity flaws many important studies. In a significant article comparing the democratisation process in Zambia and Kenya, Bratton compares what he calls the 'lead institutions' in the two countries, respectively the trade unions and the churches. In the course of his description of Kenya, he

[100] An historical example of some relevance is the celebrated fellowship of the early Methodists, where they allegedly learnt democratic virtues. Thompson complains: 'The picture of the fellowship of the Methodists which is commonly presented is too euphoric; it has been emphasised to the point where all other characteristics of the church have been forgotten' (*Making*, 416).

[101] Diana Auret, *Reaching for Justice: the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace 1972-1992*, Gweru: Mambo Press, 1992.

writes: 'The Protestant faiths are joined, along with the numerous independent African churches, in a countrywide umbrella body known as the National Council of Churches of Kenya (NCCK)', and proceeds to portray 'the church in Kenya [as] an informal, extraparliamentary opposition' to the Moi regime.[102] This is too simple. In Kenya, Protestant churches can be divided into many strands. First and most obviously there are the mainline Protestants, loosely grouped into the NCCK. Then there are the evangelicals, most prominently the Africa Inland Church, to which Moi belongs, which actually left the NCCK because of its perceived anti-Moi bias. Then there are the established Pentecostal churches, like the Gospel Redeemed Church, which has supported Moi at every turn. Then there are the Independents, which generally do not belong to the NCCK, and which could be said to be solidly behind Moi. In fact Archbishop Ondiek of the Legio Maria, one of the most significant Kenyan AICs, was till 1992 Moi's Minister of Employment – probably put there precisely to ensure the support of such a big independent church and those like it. Then there are the new charismatic US-type ministries, which were also solidly behind Moi. (One of them, World Intercessory Ministries, went on national TV the morning after the 1992 elections when the results were still being disputed, to counter the NCCK and urge opposition politicians to accept the results.) Thus to imply that the churches, as such, were 'lead institutions' in challenging the state is much too simple.

Nor do I presume here that any church or denomination is static. I am concerned with religion, an element within culture. Cultures are never static, for people pick and choose from their cultural pool, as they respond to new circumstances. I have stressed this incessant mutability and temporality, putting change and not permanence at the centre of vision. I try to view African Christianity less as an object, and more as an event or a series of events.[103] I seek to show that even a church like the Presbyterian can be in a process of considerable change, and in different countries can be changing in different ways. I readily admit that in Africa events are moving quickly, so some elements in the picture presented here may already be out of focus. I also try to be sensitive to different sectors within a church; urban or rural, élite or popular, official or less official. Throughout this study, even in dealing with the Catholic Church, often regarded as monolithic, I am open to finding change and differences. It is impossible to allow for every subtle distinction, but my presumption

[102] Michael Bratton, 'Civil Society and Political Transitions in Africa' in John W. Harbeson, Donald Rothchild and Naomi Chazan, *Civil Society and the State in Africa*, Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 1994, 66-7. Joseph generalises in exactly the same way about 'the Kenyan churches'; see 'Christian Churches', 242 and 245.

[103] For this perspective, see Carrithers, *Why Humans?*

throughout will be to favour diversity rather than uniformity.

This book, then, is both ambitious and modest. It is ambitious in that it attempts to shed light on factors operative across all sub-Saharan Africa. Also, it tries to cover all sections of Christianity – Catholic, mainline Protestant, Evangelical, Pentecostal, Independent, new Charismatic, even Orthodox (in Uganda) – always given the proviso just mentioned, namely reference to some scale of public importance. At the same time, the aims are relatively modest. This study attempts to shed light on what is happening to African Christianity by using a range of concepts not normally used in the study of Christianity; and conversely to shed light, through selected examples, on the role Christianity is currently playing in African politics and society. It is not claimed that the countries treated are paradigmatic in a hard sense, that the discussion of them will produce some ironplated model revealing the dynamics within every African country. There are no paradigmatic African countries in that sense, just as there are no paradigmatic European countries. It would be as well to mention immediately two important elements of African Christianity that have only slight significance in our particular case studies. The first of these is Christian-Muslim tension. This is alluded to in various places below, but it will be obvious that this element would have featured far more prominently if, say, the Sudan, Nigeria or Tanzania had been one of the countries selected; unfortunately, Christian-Muslim conflict is increasingly important in many countries in both East and West Africa. The other factor that does not feature here but which will be important in determining the future character of African Christianity is the success or failure of South Africa's transition. The role of the various Christian churches in the creation and then dismantling of apartheid was considerable. In the newly emerging South Africa some churchmen like Archbishop Desmond Tutu are playing a significant role in the process of reconciliation. Should the churches advance reconciliation and reconstruction successfully, it is to be expected, given South Africa's regional dominance in so many areas, that the Christianity of neighbouring countries will be profoundly influenced.

One other reason for modesty is the level of analysis. Bratton has admitted that it is still too early to address the grand picture, or to say whether African civil society contributes to democratisation; before we can know the public function of civil society in Africa we must look closely at micro-level questions.[104] Much of this study is concerned with the churches as social organisations. I look, in connection with the running of the churches, at governance and legitimacy, at accountability, transparency, predictability, openness, observance of the law. I focus on the churches as creating a culture characterised by democratic virtues

[104] Bratton, 'Beyond the State', 430.

like tolerance, respect, moderation and compromise. All the following questions need to be asked: Does the church have clear procedures? Does it have strict management standards? Is it marked by membership participation? How does it manage intra-organisational harmony, like that threatened by class and tribe? Are the churches democratic or authoritarian? How accountable are those in charge of the finances? How do they function at the periphery, as opposed to the urban centres? These are admittedly micro- or meso-level questions, but even to shed light in these areas would contribute greatly to our understanding of the wider social role of Africa's churches.

Situating this study

Aware of the link between social sciences and colonialism, and the attitudes of cultural superiority underlying much previous research, some scholars of Africa eschew any judgement of the phenomena they study. They take each culture as an entity to itself, not to be judged from outside. That approach is rejected here. Here we attempt not just to describe current expressions of Christianity, but also to judge their adequacy. Bourdillon has written of the 'obligation to make judgements about the political effects of certain types of religious knowledge.[...] While we must try to understand how and why people think the way they do, we cannot totally absolve ourselves from the question of whether they are right or wrong, no matter how complex this question may be in certain situations.'[105] Here we will try to address this complexity.

Two recent events constitute something of a watershed in the study of African Christianity, and have made this approach inevitable. These events were the implosion of Liberia and the genocide in Rwanda.

Liberia claimed to be built on Christianity. It prided itself on its Christian roots; indeed, its early Presidents gave one of their main reasons for the freed slaves returning to Africa as 'to convert the heathen', a motif repeated right up to the 1950s. Political rhetoric was saturated with Christian references and allusions. Political leaders were prominent in their churches – indeed, only with such Christian affiliation could they become political leaders. Evangelical and Pentecostal churches claimed to be apolitical, but were not: the omnipresent Faith Gospel and the almost exclusive stress on evangelisation not only left the regime totally unchallenged, but also offered nothing but support for any regime which promoted evangelisation. In 1990 came the civil war and Liberia's spiral to destruction. With hindsight it is plain to what degree Christianity had been part of the structures of oppression and was used to mask the

[105] M.F.C. Bourdillon, 'On the Theology of Anthropology', *Studies in World Christianity* 2, 1 (1996), 49-50. See also M.F.C. Bourdillon, 'Anthropological Approaches to the Study of African Religions', *Numen* 40 (1993), 217-39, esp. 229-37.

injustices that contributed so powerfully to the destruction of the country. Thus it is no longer adequate in a treatment of Liberia's Christianity to write: 'The civil war has unfortunately showed how little the spirit of the social gospel has penetrated the country.'[106] That misses the most crucial element of the dynamic.

Rwanda has proved even more destructive of any comfortable view of Christianity's public role in Africa. Statistically it was the most Christian country in Africa – overwhelmingly Catholic where Liberia was mainly Protestant. Here Christianity was an integral part of the 'genocidal culture' which collapsed under the weight of its own shortcomings in April 1994. Catholic missionaries had played an enormous role in creating the country under the Germans and then the Belgians; they had come with images of Constantine and Charlemagne, determined to replicate the Christian society of Europe's high Middle Ages. They had singled out the Tutsi as 'natural overlords', and had solidified the till then rather fluid categories of Tutsi and Hutu. Priest-anthropologists had played their part in providing the mythical understanding of the Tutsi as invaders, foreigners, Ethiopians – even Semites – which had buttressed Tutsi overlordship till the 1950s, and then after the rebellions in 1959 and through the period of independence had fuelled the Hutu repression of the Tutsi. In Rwanda everyone was 'wading in mythology', and the church was crucial in both creating the myths and preserving them. It was mythology which ensured that 'noble little Christian Rwanda' became the darling of the Christian Democrat International. 'Everything rested on a carefully controlled machinery of hypocrisy, with the church playing the role of Chief Engineer.'[107] Church leaders used Christian rhetoric to obfuscate and mystify, rather than to lay bare the structure of society. In the years of the Habyarimana regime (1973-94) the church turned a blind eye to the injustice of the system, in return for the prestige and influence that went with unchallenged control of education, health and development generally. Pastoral letters deliberately remained vague and non-specific, falling far short of denouncing those responsible for evils, even when they were widely known. Injustice was present even within the church – the Catholic bishops were predominantly Hutu, dominating a mainly Tutsi clergy. Church leaders were also personally linked to the regime; the Catholic Archbishop of Kigali was a member of the ruling party's central committee for fifteen years, and confessor to the President's wife. While Habyarimana delayed implementing reforms demanded by the international community, church leaders persisted in their evasions right till the end. Even when the genocide began, the bishops could claim that

[106] John Baur, *2000 Years of Christianity in Africa: an African History, 62-1992*, Nairobi: Paulines, 1994, 378.

[107] Gérard Prunier, *The Rwanda Crisis*, London: Hurst, 1995, 82.

what was happening was 'an invasion from Uganda' rather than something planned from within. A group of twenty-nine priests in the camps in Zaïre could even write to the Pope claiming that what had happened was slaughter by the invading Rwandan Patriotic Front, rather than genocide. In the genocide itself there is evidence that individual churchmen and women took part. Other mainline churches were also compromised in the structures of oppression.[108]

Both these cases have raised in a new way the question of the public role of Christianity in Africa. In the last twenty years, the stress has been (to use Ranger's words) on understanding the sense behind African religious responses. His survey showed that Africa's religious movements were eminently political, each making sense 'as a combined cultural-ideological-social-political response to its situation'.[109] Yet he continues: 'No one would say that such movements – or other manifestations of rural consciousness – made total sense, or enough sense, or the kind of sense that may be needed to transform [African society].'[110] And he adds a sentence that we will take up in this study: 'Maybe there has not been enough consideration of religious movements which have failed to make a creative response and which have constituted dangerous dead ends.'[111] When the Xhosa killed their cattle in 1857 at the urging of the prophetess, it made sense – in a way. But in the light of subsequent events, how adequate did that response prove to be? The belief of the followers of Patrice Lumumba or Alice Lakwena, or of the Nparamas of Mozambique, that their magic rendered them bulletproof made a kind of sense. But someone confronted with their bullet-ridden bodies is able to make a judgement of the validity of that belief.[112] Gellner has criticised anthropology 'which makes good sense of everything'. He has rejected the attitude *'tout comprendre c'est tout pardonner'*. 'In the social sciences at any rate, if we forgive too much we understand nothing.' Universal conceptual charity 'cannot deal with social change.[...] It precludes us from making sense of those social changes which arise at least in part

[108] Ian Linden, *Chuch and Revolution in Rwanda*, Manchester University Press, 1977; Hugh McCullum, *The Angels have left Us: the Rwanda Tragedy and the Churches* Geneva: WCC Publications [1995], esp. 63-94; Saskia Van Hoyweghen, 'The Disintegration of the Catholic Church of Rwanda', *African Affairs* 95 (1996), 379-401; Timothy Longman, 'Christianity and Democratisation in Rwanda: Assessing Church Responses to Political Crisis in the 1990s' in Gifford, *Christian Churches*, 188-204. Priests and nuns allegedly participated in the atrocities; see African Rights, *Witness to Genocide*, Oct 1995.

[109] Ranger, 'Religious Movements', 51.

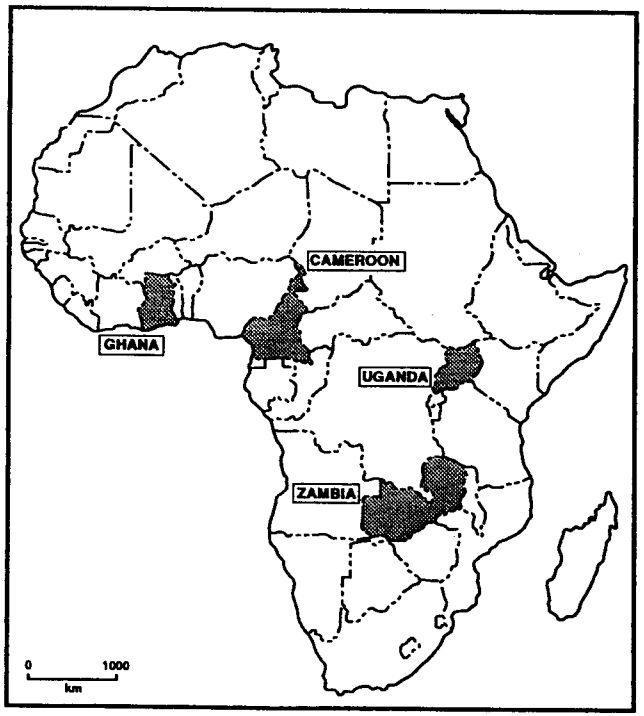
[110] *Ibid.*

[111] *Ibid.*, 32.

[112] M. Auge, *The Anthropological Circle*, Cambridge University Press, 1982, 4, quoted by Ranger, 'Religious Movements', 29.

from the fact that people sometimes notice the incoherences of doctrines and concepts and proceed to reform the institutions justified by them.'[113] The inadequacy of the all-charitable understanding has been highlighted by the events in Rwanda and Liberia. Christianity in both countries did make a certain sense, and even if it did not make total sense, or the only sense, that particular Christianity was understandable. But Rwandan and Liberian Christians themselves no longer deny the inadequacy of their responses. We cannot avoid a similar question: how adequate has been the churches' contribution in Africa's current crisis? In the 1990s the possibility of a negative answer has to be faced in a way it need not have been in the 1980s. It is only now, after Rwanda and Liberia, that scholars, African and non-African alike, have been forced to re-examine the adequacy or appropriateness of many of Africa's Christian responses. This study is written as a contribution to this reappraisal.

[113] Ernest Gellner, 'Concepts and Society', 46-8.



7

THE CHURCHES' PUBLIC ROLE

Although there is no intention to repeat the points made above, we will briefly recapitulate before proceding to some general conclusions. Of our four countries, the first, Ghana, was created in its modern form by the early Protestant missions, and this has given it a Christian ethos to this day. After independence, it suffered a catastrophic economic decline, reaching its nadir in the early 1980s, since when Rawlings has implemented IMF remedies. Throughout these years the mainline Protestant churches have attempted to exert moral influence, particularly through the Christian Council. The Catholic Church, now the biggest single denomination, has done the same, either through its own channels or in conjunction with the Christian Council. Both groups work well together, for church leaders are from the same class; it is basically those Western, liberal, middle-class values of order and rule of law that they have promoted, rather than any strict Liberation Theology. During these years, the nature of Ghanaian Christianity has subtly changed. Proportionately, Ghana's mainline churches, according to reliable surveys, are losing members. Spectacular real growth lies with newer Pentecostal churches; these must be distinguished from traditional AICs, which are themselves suffering a far greater decline than the mainline churches. The Pentecostal explosion has not only taken members from the mainline churches, but Pentecostalised these churches themselves. The new churches stand for a Faith Gospel focusing on this-worldly blessings, and increasingly for a deliverance theology which, though built on African traditional conceptions, is expressed strongly in terms of modern Western charismatic thinking. Some of the most educated and articulate new church leaders display considerable creativity, and are relating this Pentecosal Christianity to Ghana's particular circumstances.

Uganda in the 1970s spiralled to greater depths than Ghana. Since then it too has struggled to reform, achieving some success. Uganda has a totally different religious geography from Ghana, for the Anglican and Catholic Churches have historically constituted a duopoly. Both were present at the birth of modern Uganda, and have become part of the social fabric. The two churches have tended to define themselves over against one another, and this persisting opposition is evident, for example, in the lack of ecumenical cooperation. Other churches have had only limited

opportunity to establish themselves – in colonial times because of British restrictions, and since independence because of the chaos into which the country descended. Since the advent of Museveni in 1986, newer churches have proliferated, many because of new missionary links and what these can mean to Ugandans attempting to improve their situation. Museveni, to a degree which has brought him recognition as something new in Africa, seems genuinely to have the country's best interests at heart, which has led the churches to attempt less in the way of moral comment and to restrict themselves to cooperating through development work. Both historic churches are somewhat bewildered by the mushrooming of the newer churches.

Zambia constitutes yet another politico-religious mix. It cannot boast an élite like Ghana. Here there was white settlement, and the mines have effected considerable urbanisation. A leader of considerable legitimacy presided over economic success for some years after independence, only for the copper price to plummet after 1975. That began a decline which led to a widespread movement for change in the elections of 1991. The change has not proved adequate to halt Zambia's decline. Unlike in Uganda, there have traditionally been many churches in Zambia. In a remarkable experiment, some merged at independence into a United Church, a union brought about mainly through particularly far-seeing missionaries. The churches after independence had a particularly warm relationship with government because Kaunda, the son of a pastor, made Christianity a pillar of his dispensation. The Chiluba government has tried to raise these informal links on to a higher and structural plane, by declaring the country a Christian nation. Zambia's Pentecostal flowering assumes a higher profile because it is this sector of Christianity that is associated with the Chiluba government. Christianity has become an integral part of the political debate here, and not the least interesting part of the dynamic is the 'Christian' government's corruption and incompetence. The missionary influence is more evident in Zambia than in Ghana and Uganda.

Cameroon is the only (mainly) francophone country we are considering. Here the Catholic Church is the largest denomination, although French lay and statist administrations and then a Muslim President determined to eliminate all forms of civil society have curtailed its influence. Here there was nothing like the cosy church-state relationship of Zambia. Cameroon's governing élite have been particularly self-serving, and have beggared the country in pursuit of their own gain. These attitudes are at least partly shared by the church élite, and many churches, too, are characterised by *'la politique du ventre'*. Since civil society was till the early 1990s very circumscribed, Pentecostal churches have not had the opportunity to grow in the same way as in Ghana and Zambia.

They have appeared even more recently than in Uganda, but now they are emerging, particularly through the anglophone corner adjacent to Nigeria.

Amid all these differences several similarities stand out. We will focus on some of the more significant, of which the first is well summed up in Bayart's concept of extraversion.

Extraversion

For all the talk within African church circles of localisation, inculturation, Africanisation or indigenisation, external links have become more important than ever. Through these links the churches have become a major, if not the greatest single, source of development assistance, money, employment and opportunity in Africa. These links – bringing ideas, status, power, structures and resources – operate for different churches in different ways, at different levels. We will summarise our findings.

We have seen that these links are most obvious in the case of the Catholic Church. The church has a strongly universalist strand in its theology, and the local church is incomplete in isolation – so the links are by definition constitutive. In the realm of ideas they ensure at least some exposure to theologies like those of Latin America. Practically, they are enormously significant too and have all sorts of consequences. External links preserve the church from becoming locked too narrowly or too exclusively into the local dynamic.[1] International structures ensure that leaders follow standardised procedures – they must do so under threat, in the last resort, even of dismissal.

It is worth stressing that these international links do not operate by virtue of the fact that the Vatican is considered legally a sovereign state.[2] The Vatican does have diplomatic relations with all the countries we have studied, but it would be hard to argue that these have any great bearing on the functioning of the local Catholic Church or on the way the government treats it. What matters far more is that the same diplomat who (as papal nuncio or pro-nuncio) has links with the host government is also the link man (as apostolic delegate) between the local and the international church. How he uses his power as apostolic delegate varies considerably. We have seen the delegate to Cameroon take his job very seriously – even inviting himself to visit the Bishop of Nkongsamba, and personally handing him a resignation form to sign. By contrast, the

1 To the evidence adduced above one might add that in Rwanda, where the Catholic Church was locked totally into the structures of power, it was Rome that forced the Archbishop of Kigali, Mgr Vincent Nsengiyumva, to resign from the MRND central committee in December 1989, and then sidelined him in favour of his namesake Mgr Thaddée Nsengiyumva. The belated attempt to disengage from the Habyarimana regime was thus instigated not by local leaders but by Rome.

2 Haynes, *Religion and Politics*, 63.

resignation of Uganda's Bishop of Kabale seems to have been engineered by the other Ugandan bishops acting in concert, and thus more a local than an external initiative, although admittedly the two are not mutually exclusive. Certainly appointing a foreign missionary to replace local African bishops in both Uganda and Zambia would have involved the apostolic delegate.[3]

A more significant form of external linking is the presence of Catholic missionaries. Nearly all Africa's Catholic bishops are African, but the level of middle management is often still dominated by missionaries. Missionary links do not all work in exactly the same way. We noted the differences due to the different religious orders; in Zambia alone there is a considerable difference between the areas of the Jesuits, with their stress on school education schools, and of the White Fathers with their linguistic skills, closeness to village life and commitment to Africanisation. But the recent change in the general ethos of the Catholic missionaries in Africa has been enormous; from a most ultramontane influence right up to the 1960s, they have become overwhelmingly exponents of an 'enlightened form of Christianity'.[4] Catholic missionaries will oppose deliverance thinking, not because it is anti-Christianity (they are well aware that historically much European Christianity was intimately associated with such thinking), but because they consider such thinking a block to development. It is largely through its missionaries that the Catholic Church promotes its modernising agenda; for example, the Africa Faith and Justice Network, a lobbying organisation with permanent offices in Washington and Brussels, is not strictly a body of the African church, or even promoted by the African bishops, but more properly an operation of the various Catholic missionary orders which operate in Africa.[5]

Where the Catholic modernising agenda goes so far but no further is in the question of population growth. Africa, in the opinion of many, will have a very precarious future unless some effort is made to check it. Without such an effort, any meagre economic growth will be more than

3 International links also provide Catholic bishops with relative immunity from outraged Presidents. Here, too, it was not anything the supposedly sovereign Vatican state could do that kept, for example, the Archbishop of Monrovia immune from Doe's anger; it was the threat that if anything happened to the archbishop, American bishops would pressurise Washington to cut crucial aid to Liberia (Gifford, *Christianity and Politics*). Likewise, within hours of the leak that a meeting of Malawi's cabinet had discussed murdering the Catholic Bishops, the British bishops (in concert with other European church leaders) were mobilising in support and hinting of pressure on the European Union regarding aid to Malawi.

4 'Nowhere did the [Vatican] Council have a more startling effect than in the African missionary field' (Hastings, *Church*, 569).

5 It was obvious that the petition for debt relief circulated at the 1994 Synod of Bishops in Rome was largely a missionary initiative (see Africa Faith and Justice Network, *African Synod: Documents, Reflections, Perspectives*, Maryknoll: Orbis, 1996, 114-16).

neutralised, and the present collapse will continue. The Catholic bishops refuse to address this, but it must be said that this seems to arise from their Africanness just as much as from papal teaching. At the Synod of Bishops in Rome in 1994, it was obvious that the African bishops were instinctively supportive of the papal decision to oppose the consensus at the forthcoming UN Cairo conference; they saw this as the West imposing itself on Africa just as much as they saw it in religious terms.

External links also provide the Catholic Church with a network of regional and international associations and fora. It has a continent-wide organisation SECAM (the Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar) with its headquarters in Accra, Ghana. By comparison with, say, its Latin American counterpart CELAM, it is remarkably ineffectual. It attempts very little, and keeps a remarkably low profile; its first foray into the explicitly political realm was a March 1993 letter, signed by its president, Cameroon's Cardinal Tumi, 'To the Heads of State of Africa and Madagascar'. A comparison with CELAM is instructive. The fact that CELAM has been so prominent and thus brought itself into conflict with the Vatican was one of the key factors that caused SECAM to be so unambitious; the bishops of Africa have no desire for conflict with Rome. Another factor, the bane of so many African regional bodies, is that to sit on such boards is often seen more as a reward than as a challenge; the people so appointed are also on other boards, and thus cannot do much for any particular one.[6] Africa's Catholic Church held a Synod of Bishops for Africa in Rome in 1994. This was the first time that the bishops – anglophone, francophone and lusophone – had ever met together. Although little of moment came immediately out of the synod itself, it stimulated considerable grassroots preparation in some areas, and has led to various follow-up programmes. It may yet prove to be something of a milestone.

Africa's Catholic Church is divided into nine regional bodies. These vary in importance, the most effective being the Nairobi-based AMECEA (the Association of Member Episcopal Conferences of East Africa), to which Zambia and Uganda both belong. This meets regularly for long and well-planned meetings and is a genuine market-place of resources and ideas. AMECEA must take a good deal of the credit for the Malawi bishops' pastoral letter in 1992, and it then kept encouraging the bishops when they lost their nerve somewhat due to the furore it provoked. AMECEA's analysis of the church's role in Rwanda was sobering, self-critical and instructive.[7] AMECEA has also cooperated with the Protestant

[6] Clapham writes of Africa's regional boards: 'Virtually every commentary on them, indeed, consists in little more than a recital of the failure of the institution concerned to work in the way that was ostensibly intended' (*International System*, 118).

[7] Wolfgang Schonecke, *What does the Rwanda Tragedy Say to AMECEA Churches?* Nairobi: AMECEA Documentation Service, 1995.

All African Conference of Churches (AACC) – also based in Nairobi – in providing workshops for church leaders on democratisation.[8]

Overseas links, as we have stressed, bring resources,[9] and the Catholic Church has enormous resources available to it, so much so that it always seems to be presumed that money will come from external sources; it is rare in Africa to hear Catholic appeals for money. It is worth emphasising that most of the money comes not from Rome, but from foundations or agencies (often German or American) or from personal contacts. Here again the missionary element is crucial, for it is often through these contacts and networks that funds materialise. Such external links play a part in promoting the church's modernising aims. Many of the Western agencies have set their priorities in recent years; thoroughly Western and liberal ones like human rights education, education for democracy, election monitoring and grassroots empowerment, particularly of women. Even if the local church left to itself would not have given these priority, it is encouraged to do so by financial considerations.

The availability of funds is connected, too, to the relative discipline and unity in the Catholic Church (the phenomenon of two churches, 'progressive' and 'conservative', so evident in some Latin American countries, is much less significant in Africa). Resources help discipline in two ways. The first is that foreign donor funds must normally be accounted for, especially if one intends to obtain more. This encourages accountability, which brings its own reward. We have noted that those who have earned the complete trust of donor agencies by accounting for every cent can ask for a great deal more. Other places where the plant lies deteriorating are proof that nothing turns the taps off more certainly than failure to account for previous grants. The second consideration is perhaps more important. As resources have dried up in recent years, many African neo-patrimonial and clientelistic institutions, not least governments themselves, have fallen apart, for there is not enough benefit flowing down the system to keep the clients on board or in line. Inasmuch as the churches (taking their nature from surrounding culture) are clientelistic institutions, the Catholic Church is one that still attracts sufficient resources for it to function with some degree of cohesion. One other effect relevant to our concerns is that as Africa's economic collapse has continued, Catholic Church leaders have become less prone to

[8] The proceedings of one is published as Hizkias Assefa and George Wachira, *Peacemaking and Democratisation in Africa: Theoretical Perspectives and Church Initiatives*, Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers, 1996.

[9] Martin identifies this as an important area requiring more research in Latin America, *Tongues*, 292.

co-option by governments; there is more to be gained from foreign church networks than from local African governments.

An obvious disadvantage of the access to resources is that the Catholic clergy are in danger of becoming a caste of functionaries whose privileged status marks them off from the people they theoretically claim to serve. Africa's economic situation has made of the church a road to status and professional or economic advancement. Of course this situation is no different from that prevailing in Ireland or certain of America's ethnic enclaves until quite recently, but in the West since the Second World War economic growth has caused the status and remuneration of the clergy to drop far below those of most other professions; in Africa, by contrast, the deteriorating conditions have meant the reverse by a large factor.[10] This question is not unrelated to the obligations of celibacy. Allowing for significant regional variations, it is commonly assumed that these are widely flouted.[11] There have been cases of clergy using their power to demand sex from those in no position to refuse. This has been a problem in areas where AIDS is prevalent, and particularly affects nuns in local sisterhoods. Only in the mid-1990s is this issue being openly addressed, and it still requires courage; as in one East African country where a superior general, protesting to an archbishop about the treatment of her sisters by his clergy, was summarily dismissed. There is general dissatisfaction in Africa with the entire selection and training of clergy. This was a major preoccupation of the 1994 Synod of Bishops for Africa, although little immediately came of it. In Kenya in 1992 an open letter was published by young Kenyans criticising the African clergy on some of these points, and comparing their commitment most unflatteringly with the dedication of the missionary clergy. This letter was subsequently reprinted in both Ghana and Zambia.[12]

The mainline Protestant churches are also, by definition, international organisations. All the questions just raised in regard to the Catholic Church arise here as well. However, in most of the points we have just considered, Protestant connections function less fruitfully than the Catholic ones. Structurally, many Protestants place their focus on the local congregation;

[10] For the commercial interests of Africa's Catholic clergy, see J.F. Bayart, 'Les Eglises chrétiennes et la politique du ventre', *Politique Africaine* 35 (1989), 3-26; Mbembe, *Afriques indociles*, 92-4. It is claimed that in part of Tanzania the Catholic Church is primarily perceived as a business, inextricably dependent on foreign donors: see Maia Green, 'Why Christianity is the "Religion of Business": Perceptions of the Church among Pogoro Catholics in Southern Tanzania', *JRA* 25,1 (1995), 25-47.

[11] In a background article on the 1994 African Synod, *Time* stated simply: 'Up to three-fourths of African priests are in effect married and raising children' (*Time*, 25 April 1994, 68). The *Independent* was even more sweeping: 'All African priests expect to have wives, or at least concubines, when they are ordained' (*Independent*, 19 Sept 1995, 2).

[12] Printed in *Impact*, Aug 1993, 19-20.

they are not geared to coordinate themselves to speak or act as a unit or as a cohesive denomination. They do not have an internationally recognised supervisory body – Lambeth, for example, is not Rome, the Archbishop of Canterbury is not an Anglican Pope – and other mainline churches are even less structured. Also, this is the sector of Christianity that has come to talk of 'partnership', so the founding churches in Europe or America, ever conscious of charges of racism or paternalism or colonialism, are generally reluctant to interfere with their daughter churches. We saw how in Uganda both the Catholic and Anglican Churches have recently had spectacularly malfunctioning dioceses. The Catholic bishop was eventually moved out, but the Anglicans have no mechanism to do this, and the Anglican problem has continued, much to the detriment of the church's moral authority.[13]

The mainline Protestants have today relatively few missionaries. Africa's mainline Protestants called for a moratorium on missionaries in the 1970s, but even by then their flow of missionaries had contracted to a trickle. In finances, too, they are hard pressed. As economies have collapsed, the churches have been seriously affected. Those churches able to find external funds have sometimes found a genuine independence from local pressures, but those unable to do so have sometimes become even more dependent on the largesse of a President for their operation, or on their rich members, who tend by the nature of things to be linked to government.

The Protestant churches have their supra-denominational and supra-national associations too. We have seen the Christian Council in Ghana – one of the most effective on the continent – and in Zambia, where it finds it much harder to function effectively. In Cameroon ecumenical relations are so undeveloped that the Protestant churches cannot create so much as a council for themselves. (In Uganda, the largely symbolic council is a different body, uniting Catholics and Anglicans.)

These Councils associate in regions; Zambia's is a member of FOCCESA (Fellowship of Christian Councils of Eastern and Southern Africa), which functions intermittently. Ghana's is a member of FECCIWA (Fellowship of Christian Councils in West Africa). These groupings, funded by German and Scandinavian agencies, are still rather embryonic. Africa's Protestants also have the All Africa Conference of Churches.

[13] In fact the Anglican Church in Kenya was in the early 1990s, by the admission of one of its own bishops, tearing itself apart (*Daily Nation*, 24 Sept 1994), with two, maybe three, messy lawsuits before the supreme court. This means that the Church of the Province of Kenya is seen to have little authority to challenge the government over tribalism, spoils politics, unaccountability, lack of transparency - so much so that some have suggested that its troubles have been fomented by security services precisely for this reason; see Njoya, *Option*, June 1995, 28.

The AACC has departments for development, refugees, women and external affairs, and has conducted seminars and workshops for its member churches on democratisation, peace and reconciliation. After the Rwandan crisis of 1994, the AACC went through a difficult time, for the tragedy split it profoundly. Its president during the first part of the 1990s was Archbishop Desmond Tutu, and indeed its leadership represents his kind of liberal, socially-involved, structurally-aware Christianity.

There is another continent-wide organisation, the Association of Evangelicals of Africa (AEA), based like the AACC in Nairobi, which was founded in 1966 as a conscious opposition to the 'liberal' churches of the AACC. This continental body is made up of national associations of Evangelicals. In Zambia the Fellowship of Evangelicals functions, but in Ghana it does not; in Uganda the sorts of churches that might belong barely exist as a conscious group. The Evangelical sector of Christianity shades into the Pentecostal, and by the late 1980s was losing out heavily to the burgeoning charismatic sector and its nascent structures, as we saw in Ghana. The Association of African Independent (or now, Instituted) Churches (AAIC), likewise based in Nairobi, functions fitfully.

Externality is not a feature only of the mainline churches. Of the Pentecostal churches we have considered, some have constitutional links in the same way as the mainline churches – the major Pentecostal churches in Zambia and Uganda, for example, are both daughter churches of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada. In Africa's current situation all churches see the range of benefits that come from overseas links.[14] The Ugandan Assemblies of God, for instance, when the American AOG could no longer support them, turned to the Calvary Charismatic Centre. Turning to overseas protectors is not new. However, such is the disparity of resources now that it is hard to maintain the pretence of equality or 'partnership'; as we noted, a single church in New Zealand or Canada can now create or sponsor an entire denomination in Uganda. To be sure, one can often hear from African churchmen a rhetoric of self-reliance, a call to stand on one's own feet and not to sell out to foreigners; indeed some such appeal seems obligatory at conferences and conventions. On his visit to Zambia described above, Otabil recounted (to great applause) his reply to an insistent American: 'If you must give me something, give me a printing press, and then go home.' Otabil is perhaps one of those who means what he says; he and his church are in a league where they can relate to overseas bodies from a position of some strength. But most seek some form of link, whatever the rhetoric. An observer of the African NGO scene has written: 'Many African NGOs, like the modern African Christian churches ... exist only to the extent that there is a donor

[14] Discussed in Gifford, *Christianity and Politics*, 199-210.

somewhere prepared to fund their activities.'[15] This is a crucial element of Africa's contemporary NGO and church scene, and to neglect it is to give an incomplete picture of contemporary African Christianity. There is far more than a Pentecostal explosion occuring in Africa; the Ghana surveys of church attendance showed the other growth area was in what they called 'mission-related' churches. Growth in the latter arises from the assistance missions provide, as we suggested in discussing the amazing growth of the New Apostolic Church in Zambia.

In drawing attention to the fact that most, though not all, of these links are with American churches, we imply nothing sinister – we are *not* making the point that Africa's Christian growth is directed by the CIA as part of an imperialist plot to keep the continent subservient. It is true, as we have seen, that there is an increasing army of American missionaries on the continent, and it is probably true that a good many of them would broadly sympathise with what is known in the United States as the Religious Right. But in sub-Saharan Africa, especially after the Cold War, it is church growth thinking rather than the new economic realism which drives them. We have stressed throughout that Christian missions are now very important for Africa; perhaps the biggest single industry in Africa. But missions are an enormous industry in the United States as well. Colleges and seminaries offer courses in missions. Special ministries translate scriptures and provide resources, back-up, expertise and literature. Even where they are not planting churches, such transnational ministries help to establish the local Christian agenda and define what Christian commitment means – often enough with computer software. We have observed how even quite small American churches have their own mission outreach to plant or adopt daughter churches. For them, especially, part of the involvement is not specifically about Africa at all; it is the commitment to Africa that drives and focuses church activity back home. Here too the churches display the dynamic observable in the international aid community; the aid industry 'needs' Africa, as does the mission industry.[16]

As an illustration of the processes involved here, consider the organisation AD 2000 and Beyond, which in the 1990s has become very active in the Third World, with Africa divided into five regions (we encountered this body in Ghana, Zambia and Cameroon). AD 2000 does not set up new structures, but coordinates existing ones. Thus local churches, groups and people do not lose any obvious autonomy, but are

[15] S. Jamela, quoted in Matthias Schmale, *The Role of Local Organisations in Third World Development*, Aldershot: Avebury, 1993, 2. This tendency to be subsumed into North-South partnerships is one of the major themes discussed at a 1990 seminar of the University of Edinburgh's Centre of African Studies, *Critical Choices for the NGO Community: African Development in the 1990s*, Edinburgh: Centre of African Studies, 1990.

[16] Clapham, *International System*, 256-66.

nevertheless subjected to forces tending to homogenise them or make them part of a concerted strategy. AD 2000 would claim to be a network of partners, but by the nature of things it is more complicated than that. The key players are all American.[17] The entire ethos is also American; its stress on quantification, sophisticated software, programmes, planning, networks, reports, publicity, assessment – all are unthinkable outside its origins in the United States. It brings with it a discourse, a set of images (in our terms, a theology), diffused through workshops, conferences and literature. Here we must give full weight to the 'paradigm-enforcing power' we referred to earlier. The focus is totally on evangelism – and in one sense Christianity here is reduced to numbers, planning and marketing. This is the sector of Christianity with the crusading missionary thrust. It has given rise to a vast army of missionaries (at the Global Consultation on World Evangelism in Seoul in 1995, 60,000 students committed themselves to some form of missionary activity; the South African meeting in 1997 planned to send out a similar number). This Christianity, though not socially involved and not even particularly politically aware, necessarily plays a socio-political role in contemporary Africa, most notably through its targeting Muslims in what is traditionally considered Muslim territory. There is nothing strange in this. On one understanding of Christianity, zeal to convert the unbeliever is the most natural thing in the world, but it must be stressed that this is only on one understanding of Christianity. AD 2000 involves (perhaps 'operates through' catches it better) the Association of Evangelicals of Africa, but it is so dominant that it draws in as well the mainline churches, which many observers might think represent another form of Christianity altogether. We saw the Presbyterians involved in AD 2000 in Ghana. An unsuspecting observer might assume that this is a WCC church with a WCC theology, but increasingly this cannot be presumed. This parachurch movement, because of its 'paradigm-enforcing power', has had an enormous effect on Africa's mainline sector as well.

Although the Christian evangelistic thrust is undertaken on purely religious grounds, its effects can be viewed in another light. In 1993 Samuel Huntington wrote a celebrated article entitled 'The Clash of Civilisations?' in which he argued that after the end of the Cold War the fundamental source of conflict in the new world order would be not ideological or economic but cultural; conflict will arise from the clash of whole civilisations, which he lists as 'Western, Confucian, Japanese, Islamic, Hindu, Slavic-Orthodox, Latin American and possibly African'. In what follows he totally ignores Africa, and in essence focuses on conflict between the West and Islam. He argues that to protect its interests

[17] This is not to say that all these are identical - there is often tension between them, evident in a place like Nairobi where so many have their African headquarters.

the West must 'support in other civilisations groups sympathetic to Western values and interests'. A visitor from Mars, observing the forces that function to foster Western values and lock sub-Saharan Africa into Western networks, would very quickly fasten on Christianity. Of course, not Christianity alone; other forces are just as obvious, like aid, immigration, education systems, even national languages, but Christianity is perhaps as significant as any. The observer might further note that much of the Christianity spreading in Africa today has built into it a combative anti-Islamic stance (when he considers Zambia, he might also note how pro-Israeli the same Christianity is). We do not argue that this is a conscious US policy; indeed Huntington's article serves to emphasise, if emphasis is needed, just how marginal Africa is to US global thinking. Nor is it argued that missionaries are consciously engaged in any such role; the number of American missionaries subscribing to *Foreign Affairs* must be negligible. Nevertheless, no student of international relations could fail to observe how the enormous evangelistic thrust in Africa serves to hold sub-Saharan Africa in the Western embrace.[18]

From the African side, external links are the most natural thing in the world. The material benefits to African churches are obvious, but this is not the only consideration. In the post-Cold War world the United States is the only superpower. The status of superpower signifies far more than military might – it indicates a cultural appeal. Over much of Africa, the young listen to Michael Jackson tapes, watch Rambo videos, smoke Marlboro, drink Coca Cola, and wear Levis, NY Giants baseball caps and Nike trainers (or imitations thereof). Even where the baseball caps and T-shirts are made in China or Korea, they will be printed with NY Giants or Chicago Bulls logos because that is a large part of their appeal – Deng Xiaoping or Kim Il Sung T-shirts would not sell, while Michael Jordan or Magic Johnson shirts do. In Kisangani, in the wasteland that is central Zaïre, the only businesses still functioning in 1995 were diamond trading houses with names like Captain Bob, American Ninja and Delta Force. In this very obvious sense, President Bush was correct when he claimed in his acceptance speech at the 1988 Republican convention: 'We have whipped the world with our culture.'[19]

America is seen as the land of opportunity, the lodestone and cynosure. As the opportunities in Africa have continued to contract throughout the 1980s and 1990s, the attraction has increased. Here, no doubt, America's

[18] Samuel Huntington, 'The Clash of Civilisations?', *Foreign Affairs* 72, 3 (1993), 23-49; quotations are from pp. 25 and 49 respectively. Of course, in the Europe of late antiquity missionary outreach (e.g. of the Franks to the Frisians and the Saxons) was often demanded by regional security. Huntington subsequently developed his argument in *The Clash of Civilisations and the Remaking of World Order*, New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996.

[19] Cited in Martin, *Tongues*, 272.

black élite is of great symbolic importance. There is little popular anti-American sentiment on the continent. America was not included in the tirades against colonialism. In Africa, American economic involvement has never been the obtrusive factor that it is in Latin America – or as even French involvement is in Cameroon. Those suffering from the harsh medicine of the IMF and the World Bank do not see them as particularly American policy instruments.[20]

The cultural appeal of the English language is linked to America's appeal. The ambitious youth who masters English can dream of an American education – the ultimate goal of the young African. (In Equatorial Guinea, the only Spanish-speaking enclave on the continent and one totally lacking opportunities, some youths enrol in the American Pentecostal Bible school just to learn English. Pentecostalism, learning English and enhancing opportunity may not be very distinct in their minds.)

In this context we cannot ignore the image of America as Christian.[21] Indeed, it would be hard to ignore it, because for many American missionaries the essence of America is its Christianity. It is worth putting this in context, since so many Europeans find this easy identification of Christianity with America somewhat bizarre. For Eusebius, Christianity and the Roman empire were made for each other; Constantine's dispensation was providentially established by God for the spread of Christianity. Much nearer in time, the British Protestant in the Victorian age was convinced that his country was the apogee of human achievement, and that the reason was its Protestant faith. Even Queen Victoria had written to the chiefs of Abeokuta in Yorubaland that the greatness of England depended upon knowledge of the Bible.[22] This is another important parallel between what happened in the nineteenth century as local structures succumbed under Western impact, and what is happening today in a possibly greater collapse. The larger cultural package of the world's superpower is not to be ignored in assessing Christianity's appeal and increase.

Indeed, history indicates that the growth of Christianity in Africa was never unrelated to its relations with the wider world; externality has always been a factor in African Christianity. Much of the dynamic we are trying to analyse now is glimpsed in these remarks of Adrian Hastings on the end of the nineteenth century:

> The organisation of large states, symbolised by government houses whose grandeur must have been quite astonishing to many who saw them, the railways, the newspapers, the cathedrals, the sense of now falling beneath the authority of some remote potentate of seemingly infinite resource, the King of England or the Emperor of Germany, the sheer enlargement of scale, power and knowledge within a space of twenty years, and the very numerous possibilities of participation within this new system of things, inevitably precipitated a pursuit of new systems of meaning, truth, philosophy, and religion. The religions of tradition were not unchanging. They were not incapable of incorporating new elements and experience. But they were closely tied to relatively small-scale communities, and very often to authorities which had now been deeply discredited. They had been appealed to and had failed to halt the white invasion. The new school learning ignored or mocked them.
>
> Despite all this, most people would for a time turn all the more fervently to the invisible powers they were familiar with, but a more reflective, modern-minded minority was no less bound to seek for spiritual and moral alternatives. All the conquerors claimed to be Christian, and at the end of the nineteenth century it seemed overwhelmingly obvious that power, riches, and knowledge belonged to Christian nations. It would have been very strange if Africans did not, in the situation of conquest, seek to share in the beliefs of their conquerors. If the process of Christianisation was now to be greatly accelerated, it was not just that there were vastly more missionaries about, with plenty of privileged opportunities for proselytism, it was because Africans themselves had been placed in a situation of objective intellectual unsettlement and were thoughtful enough to seek appropriate positive answers of a religious as well as a technical kind to their current dilemmas.[23]

African Christianity and its growth were thus always tied to relations to the wider world. Initially Christianity was a religion of ex-slaves and outcasts and refugees; only in the urban society along the West African coast and the ever-growing colonised areas of South Africa did Christianity make headway, and here the dynamics of traditional Africa had already broken down under Western impact by the mid-nineteenth century. By the end of the century the increasing impact of the West created an entirely new situation across much of the continent. 'It was the context of modernisation in latter-day colonialism which proved, in African circumstances, so enormously favourable to the spread of Christianity.'[24] Above all it was literacy that the missions brought: 'Master this and you could become teacher, clerk, or new-style farmer. The sky was the limit. And it went with lots of other quite secular things: elementary mathematics, hygiene, bicycles, things clearly linked with the still-greater mysteries of train, car, electric power.'[25] All the skills that Christians learned were by then becoming politically and economically valuable; they brought an automatic adjustment of status. The end of the twentieth century sees Africa in a crisis as great as that at the end of the nineteenth century.

20 Clapham, *International System*, 141.

21 Coleman concludes a comparison of the faith movement in Sweden and America: 'It is as though the symbolic significance of the United States is so powerful that it rivals even Israel in its exemplary implications' (Coleman, 'Conservative Protestantism', 364).

22 Hastings, *Church*, 274. For the importance of Protestantism in creating the United Kingdom, see Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation 1707-1837*, London: Pimlico, 1992, esp. 20-31.

23 Hastings, *Church*, 404-5. See also Mbembe, *Afriques indociles*, 80-91.

24 Hastings, *Church*, 550.

25 *Ibid.*, 458.

One method of surviving it is through 'extraversion'. External relations can create and sustain domestic African groups, not only churches, although churches furnish the most obvious examples. Realisation of this is crucial for any analysis of African society today.[26]

In Chapter 2 reference was made to Martin's study of the rise of Pentecostalism in Latin America. Martin's explanation is in terms of a shift in global forces, the triumph of the Anglo over the Hispanic. Pentecostalism is 'the third and latest wave in the successive socio-religious mobilisations which have affected the "Anglo" world, especially America.[...] Pentecostalism is also the first wave to cross the border from the Anglo to the Hispanic worlds on a large scale.'[27] His book is a celebration of the cultural creativity of the Latin Americans, but also an explanation of the cultural pull of the United States generally.

> The religious influence is only one aspect of a broader influence, economic, political and cultural. The religious traffic moves alongside the economic traffic, sometimes with the religious slightly ahead of the economic, and sometimes vice versa; sometimes in cooperation, occasionally in antagonism. The two kinds of traffic will have a family likeness; perhaps similar economic and political assumptions, certainly similar ideas, ideals, language, techniques, know-how and forms of communication and self-presentation. Yet none of this flow from North to South in any way depends on the specifically religious bridge, even though the religious bridge provides a definite reinforcement. The sign and symbol of this reinforcement may be the US-style supermarket at one end of the boulevard and the US-style church at the other end.[28]

The mechanics of the process of globalisation are evident here. On one level, religious networks function in the same way as the new global industries like banking, law, health, sport, technology and science, or higher education. We have considered African Christianity as a means of

26 The West has reacted to recent events in Africa with all sorts of structural adjustment, democratisation, development and aid programmes, and even armed intervention. 'All of these measures, while regarded externally as attempts to resolve the problems of African statehood (or to ease the sufferings of African peoples), may more accurately be treated internally as providing resources through which, following the processes of extraversion made familiar by Bayart, local actors can find some means to keep themselves going. The US intervention in Somalia, for instance, created a set of tactical opportunities through which each of the local factions could seek to increase its access to money, weapons or food. The concern of Western aid agencies to find counterpart African NGOs through which to manage their relief programmes immediately spawns a set of NGOs designed to meet the purpose. External actors readily find their presence perpetuating the very conditions which prompted their intervention in the first place' (Clapham, 'International Relations'). Before the Mozambican elections in 1995, the UN was offering considerable funds to political parties to help them compete, and many set up such parties (called 'Kombi' parties, because of the Volkswagen vans that came with registration) merely to collect the money.

27 *Tongues*, 26.

28 *Ibid.*, 280-1. For similar statements of powerful US influence, see Cox, *Fire*, 157, 225.

plugging into such global religious networks, all the more important since Africa tends to be bypassed by many of the others. The emerging global system both corrodes inherited or constructed cultural and personal identities, yet at the same time also encourages the creation and revitalisation of particular identities as a way of gaining more power or influence in this new global order. Religion has been and continues to be an important resource for such revitalisation movements. Thus Beyer explains the rise of Islamic fundamentalism – but also religious movements in places as diverse as Ireland, Israel, Iran, India and Japan. But the dynamics of Africa's burgeoning Christianity are somewhat different. Africa is not reacting to globalisation by revitalising African traditional religion; we saw that movements like Afrikania in Ghana (and Nigeria's Godianism) have very little appeal. Africa is responding to globalisation by opting into exotic religions. So much of Africa's mushrooming Christianity is closely linked with a particular religious expression in the United States. Africa's newest Christianity, while in many ways reinforcing traditional beliefs, also serves, as we have seen, as one of Africa's best remaining ways of opting *into* the global order.[29]

We have drawn attention to Western links as a significant factor within all branches of African Christianity. It must be stressed that such links are quite compatible with a considerable creativity on the part of African Christians. Indeed, for Bayart creativity is of the essence of extraversion; the central idea is that Africans consciously turn links to their own ends and purposes. Peel writes of Africa's 'active engagement' with external influences,[30] but it is widely acknowledged today that Africa's Christianity was always the creation of Africans rather than of missionaries.[31] The creativity is even greater with Africa's newer charismatic forms. Cox offers a suggestive image in his discussion of the parallels between Pentecostalism and jazz. These two elements share 'the near abolition of the standard distinction between the composer and the performer, the creator and the interpreter'.[32] We have argued that Africans in their current

29 Peter Beyer, *Religion and Globalisation*, London: Sage Publications, 1994. It is another sign of the marginalisation of Africa that Beyer elaborates his globalisation theory without reference to the particularities of Africa. It is noteworthy too that Paul Kennedy's 1996 BBC Analysis Lecture 'Globalisation and its Discontents' (30 May 1996) was in reality elaborated in reference to all the globe except Africa; the lecture was really about incorporating Middle Eastern and Asian (and to a lesser degree Latin American) countries into the formerly overwhelmingly Western networks. The only mention of Africa was a passing reference to the 'hopeless countries of Africa'.

30 J.D.Y. Peel, 'Poverty and Sacrifice in Nineteenth-Century Yorubaland: a Critique of Iliffe's Thesis', *Journal of African History*, 31 (1990), 484; see 482-4.

31 'The fate of Christianity depended upon its ability to be reread in terms and with implications for the most part unimagined by its propagators' (Hastings, *Church*, 306; see also 591).

32 Cox, *Fire*, 157.

plight are being even more creative with Christianity – it is a sign of how deeply-rooted Christianity now is in Africa that it can be put to such myriad uses.

But this creativity should not be so emphasised that it glosses over the West's cultural significance. In Africa's current decline, one only has to visit the United States Information Service in Accra, the British Council in Kampala and Lusaka, or the Alliance Française and indeed even the Goethe Institut in Yaoundé to sense the cultural impact of such institutions. As bookshops fold and libraries deteriorate, these institutions assume incalculable importance as conduits of ideas and images. Their periodicals, films, educational documentaries and news summaries assume an importance they could not possibly have in the West, where other divergent voices obtrude. The same process is observable in Africa's cash-strapped universities. When, for example, the agricultural faculty of an African university forms a link with (say) Michigan State University, which then provides teachers, texts, resources and exchanges, it is unrealistic to ignore the 'paradigm-enforcing power' of the latter. Michigan State has fairly clear ideas on what constitutes the study of agriculture, and these are likely to cover things like free markets, private (as opposed to common) ownership of land, cash crops and exports. It is not 'agriculture' in some abstract or pure form that is being imparted. One might object to this, but to some degree that is the way of the world. To misquote Gellner, the shocking inequality of cultural forces is simply a fact of our time. It is surely valid to approach Christian institutions in the same light. Whatever else it is, Christianity is a cultural product, honed in the West over centuries. The format of Africa's crusades and services, the music, the use of the Bible and even the selection of texts continually suggest particular origins and betray particular roots. This is specially true of American Pentecostal literature, which has been abundant in Africa at least since the 1980s. In many places this abundance was matched by an equal dearth of any mainline Christian literature. As a result, one cannot uncritically speak of the 'orality' of Africa's Pentecostalism; even among illiterates the discourse is often derived from this ubiquitous literature, through the medium of more literate pastors. The formal effects of cultural links need to be studied in each particular case.

Islam, equally, is an African religion with cultural, economic and political baggage. Although not so obtrusively in the cases studied here, in many sub-Saharan countries it is a serious competitor, and where it competes it also does so not just as a religion but as part of a cultural, economic and political network. Peel describes the competition between Islam and Christianity for Yoruba favour in the mid-nineteenth century – an instance of some importance, for this part of Nigeria was one of the few arenas where the two new world religions competed on a relatively

equal footing and with almost equal success. He outlines the special appeal of each. Islam's was its magico-spiritual techniques through prayers and charms; the prestige of its international networks and its political-military clout; and the social openness of Yoruba Muslims towards non-Muslims, which facilitated Africans' identification with the Muslim body. For Christianity the attraction was the appeal of Christ as mediator, and its association with the technological power of its European bearers, later to be diffused through the colonial order. (Peel highlights the resulting paradox. Christianity, which claimed to offer moral renewal and eternal salvation, was most respected by its rival for its accompanying material culture, which in its own eyes was purely secondary. The relative success of Islam was due to two things which missionary Christianity could not yet emulate: its magico-spiritual techniques and its social affability. Thus Islam was led to invoke in its own defence, in the face of superior European technology, an other-worldly dimension that was probably of little concern to its new Yoruba converts.)[33] A century later, the situation is no less complex and paradoxical, and the international cultural, political and economic links have not lost their significance.[34] International networks and political-military clout, as well as technology, now operate distinctly in favour of Christianity. And it is the particular contribution of the new Pentecostal Christianity that it offers magico-spiritual techniques equal to any in Islam.

The competition between the two religions can sometimes be driven by international links. In the particular countries studied here, the balance is one-sided; it is so obviously Christianity that links with the successful and profitable networks. However, the Sudan is a case where the geopolitical aspect of Christianity is plain. Thus African Rights, in attempting to account for the staggering rush to Christianity in the Southern Sudan since about 1992, suggest that as the Muslim Brotherhood in the North has increased its references to 'the Arab world', the Southerners have been 'invited to internationalise their ideology of resistance in a similar way' – that is, by opting into the Christian West.[35]

This is not to suggest that establishing external links is the only

33 J.D.Y. Peel, *The Encounter of Religions in Yorubaland, 1845-1912*, forthcoming.

34 Of course, links can work against a religion too, as has often been the case in the past. Becoming a Catholic or a Muslim in British Africa was a way of combining conversion to a world religion with distancing oneself from the colonising power. Becoming a Baptist or even more a Kimbanguist served the same purpose in the Catholic Belgian Congo. See Hastings, *Church*, 462. Hastings immediately goes on: 'The success of Harris or Oppong may be related to quite the same sort of logic. While the old gods which had failed were rejected, it was at the command not of a colonialist but of an African who was manifestly uncolonial. A" world religion" was accepted, but by no means in the form the conquerors provided.'

35 African Rights, *Great Expectations*, 7.

significant activity in this religious area, or that such links are locking Africa into two hermetically-sealed blocks. This is obviously not the case, and other factors can counteract this tendency. For example, just after the execution of Ken Saro Wiwa in 1995, when Nigeria was being made the pariah of the international community, who should arrive in London as part of the charm offensive of the Muslim Abacha regime but Archbishop Benson Idahosa. Here other factors had obviously proved more important, and the Nigerian journalists attending Idahosa's press conference were fairly certain what these were; in their terms, Idahosa had been 'settled'.[36]

We have argued that the drive for overseas links has been greatly accelerated by the recent sociopolitical and economic collapse of Africa. Sometimes the stress on African creativity obscures the reality that in large parts of black Africa there is a mood of Afropessimism, not in the normal sense that foreigners are inclined to wash their hands of Africa as hopeless, but in the more important sense that Africans themselves have lost self-confidence. Some can still blame the current situation on the colonising powers, but far more are too young to have personally experienced discrimination at the hands of European imperialists. All they have known is oppression at the hands of their own élite. Many look at their own leaders and despair of African competence and integrity.[37] For many, self-esteem and self-confidence have been the first casualties of Africa's decline. We heard Otabil begin his preaching in Zambia: 'When you look at yourself as an African, it is easy to think that God has cursed you.[...] We are a people who feel inferior and wallow in our own inferiority.' It was this that led him to develop his theology of black pride.[38] If in Ghana and particularly Uganda there are signs of hope amid the grinding poverty – at least by taking the IMF medicine they are being integrated back into the world community – in Zambia and Cameroon, where the élites seem to have no idea how to arrest the steep decline (indeed no idea except enriching themselves), one can sense growing despair.

This mood has to be factored into discussions of developments within Africa's Christianity. After independence, in the euphoria of the 1960s and 1970s, many African theologians spent much of their time re-valuing African traditions. Now the growth areas of Christianity are those that demonise African traditions and culture. Around the time of independence

36 *Guardian*, 16 Dec 1995, 6. 'Settled' is a term that developed in the Babangida era (1985-93) to refer to the co-option of political opponents and others by threats, bribes and other inducements.

37 The crisis such leadership engenders is greater because traditionally a leader is not just a functionary, but a representative in a fuller sense; see John V. Taylor, *The Primal Vision: Christian Presence amid African Religion*, London: SCM, 1963, 135-53.

38 This is not just an African issue; Edward Said has written of the 'self-hatred' of the Arabs, confronted with their powerlessness before Israel (*Guardian*, 25 April 1996, 15).

was the golden era of the AICs, the churches where African traditions were preserved and valued. But these are the churches, according to the Ghana surveys, whose appeal and membership are plummeting – in some other countries, apparently, the same thing is happening. It may be that the great exception to this is South Africa, where the latest figures indicate a flowering of independent churches.[39] This would seem to reinforce our thesis that the 1980s and 1990s have been for South Africa what the 1950s and 1960s were for Black Africa – years of increasing resistance, struggle, victory and elation. In the mid-1990s, under Mandela, the pride of South Africans is palpable, like the euphoria in Ghana in the first days of Nkrumah. But in Black Africa the euphoria has long gone.

Different Christianities

Our study has emphasised the diversity of Christianity. So much comment on Christianity in Africa makes the assumption that Christianity is Christianity, or that it is a single easily identifiable entity. We have not proceeded on this understanding, and have distinguished a wide range of Christianities, functioning differently.

One of the most significant issues here is well conveyed by this remark of Adrian Hastings, writing of the early Portuguese evangelisation of the Congo. He notes the similarities in worldview at that time of both the missionaries and the evangelised: belief in local powers, protective objects, holy places, an expectation of miracles and prodigies, an acceptance of spiritual causality. 'The religious sensibilities of 16th-century Iberians as much as of pagan Africans were absolutely pre-Enlightenment, and close cousins to one another.[...] The missionary and the African often understood each other better than most of us can understand either.'[40] Hastings is drawing attention to a change that has occured in mental framework that separates modern Europeans not only from many other cultures, but even from Europeans of two or three centuries ago.

Scholars have analysed what has happened to religion in the West as a result of the Enlightenment. Keith Thomas, in tracing the decline of magic in England between the Reformation and about 1700, notes that the link between misfortune and guilt was broken.[41] The hardships of life came to be attributed to impersonal social causes rather than to one's personal failings or those of other people. Theologians became quite ready to accept the frequency of unmerited suffering. Stoicism became the basic

39 This may not be so: it is not clear exactly how the new type of charismatic churches are distributed between categories like 'AICs' and 'Other Pentecostal Churches'; see J.J. Kritzinger, 'The Religious Scene in Present-day South Africa', in J. Killian (ed.), *Religious Freedom in South Africa*, Pretoria: UNISA, 1993, 2-4.

40 Hastings, *Church*, 75.

41 Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic*, London: Penguin, 1973, 713.

religious message for those in misfortune, and 'the prospect of material relief by divine means was only intermittently upheld outside sectarian circles after the seventeenth century.'[42] The 'animistic conception of the universe which had constituted the basic rationale for magical thinking' simply fell away, in the process of 'disenchantment' made famous by Weber, and was replaced by a conception of an orderly and rational universe in which effect follows cause in a predictable manner.[43] Accusations of witchcraft 'were thus rejected not because they had been closely scrutinised and found defective in some particular respect, but because they implied a conception of nature which now appeared inherently absurd.'[44] As the result, by the end of this period the nature of religion had changed. A distinction could be made between religion and magic, which would not have been possible two centuries earlier. As Thomas notes, 'religion which survived the decline of magic was not the religion of Tudor England.[...] The official religion of industrial England was one from which the primitive "magical" elements had been very largely shorn.'[45]

There are important differences in the roles religion plays in European countries, depending on whether Catholicism or Protestantism has been the dominant religion, and the way that either one allied with national élites in addressing the rise of liberalism and socialism. Further differences arise if religion has been called on to play a part in cultural defence (as traditionally Catholicism in Ireland) or cultural transition (as Afro-Caribbean Pentecostalism in Britain). But in all European countries, there has been a significant decline in the social importance of Christianity. Specialised roles and institutions have developed to handle various functions previously carried out by one institution. For example, specialist institutions have arisen to provide education, health care, welfare and social control, all of which were once in the domain of religious institutions. With economic growth there emerged an ever-greater range of occupation and life experience, which decreased the plausibility of a single moral universe or grand design. Besides this factor of 'social differentiation', close-knit, integrated small-scale communities were replaced by large-scale

42 *Ibid.*, 766.

43 *Ibid.*, 771 and 786.

44 *Ibid.*, 690.

45 *Ibid.*, 765-66. As Hugh Trevor-Roper concludes his *European Witch Craze*, the whole 'intellectual and social structure' which underpinned belief in witches had to be broken. 'In the mid-seventeenth century this was done. Then the medieval synthesis, which Reformation and Counter-Reformation had artificially prolonged, was at last broken.[...] Thereafter society might persecute its dissidents as Huguenots or as Jews. It might discover a new stereotype, the 'Jacobin', the 'Red'. But the stereotype of witch had gone' (H.R. Trevor Roper, *The European Witch-Craze of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, London: Penguin 1969, 122).

industrial and commercial enterprises, modern states co-ordinated through massive impersonal bureaucracies, and anonymous urban agglomerations. Society rather than the community has become the locus of the individual's life, and society now depends less on the inculcation of a shared religious or moral order than on the utilisation of efficient technical means and appropriate behaviour. In these circumstances changes are evident in the way people think. It is not just that the media and education diffuse an Enlightenment culture, or that the worlds of transport, medicine and business are increasingly dependent on high technology. In every sphere of life bureaucratisation, planning and regularisation are evident, which inevitably affects our understanding of causation, and of what constitutes an argument for a position or a reason for a course of action.[46] Some would claim that Christianity itself played a large part in this process, arguing that by its very nature it tends to desacralise. Thus Wilson can even refer to 'such a vigorously exclusivist and anti-magical religion as Christianity'.[47]

It is the internal transformation within Western Christianity rather than numerical decrease or decline in social importance that is significant.[48] The supernaturalistic has largely disappeared (we will use this term to distinguish the realm of demons, spirits, witches and so on from the supernatural – God, heaven, prayer, the resurrection of Christ, sacraments – which has largely persisted in Western churches).[49] In the West the worldview underpinning deliverance thinking has ceased to be culturally significant. Reality is generally not experienced in terms of witches,

46 'For every social problem, whether of economy, polity, law, education, family relations, or recreation, the solutions proposed are not only non-religious, but solutions that depend on technical expertise and bureaucratic organisation. Planning, not revelation; rational order, not inspiration; systematic routine, not charismatic or traditional action, are the imperatives in ever-widening arenas of public life' (Wilson, *Religion*, 176-7). See also Steve Bruce, *Religion in the Modern World: from Cathedrals to Cults*, Oxford University Press, 1996.

47 Wilson, *Religion*, 28.

48 What had been seen as a gradual numerical decline seems to be turning in the mid-1990s into a major cultural shift. By 1996 the Anglicans in Britain were losing 26,000 members a year and the Catholics 29,000; the yearly loss from all denominations was 74,300. The Methodists were losing twenty-six members a day, and admitting that they could be extinct in forty to seventy years. The fall-off among youth may be even more significant: Anglicans lost 34% of their fourteen- to seventeen-year-olds in the nine years between 1987 and 1996. See *Guardian*, 6 April 1996, 24; *Guardian* 11 April 1996, 9. Cox is at his weakest in detecting a religious renaissance in Europe (*Fire*, 185-211).

49 It is risky here to over-generalise. One cannot be too definite about what modern or Western man or woman can or cannot believe; as late as the 1950s it seems that a geography student at London University obtained a first-class honours degree without at any point in her exams being false to her conviction, held on religious grounds, that the earth is flat (Denis Nineham, *The Use and Abuse of the Bible*, London: Macmillan, 1976, 32). Rebecca Brown, a key figure in deliverance thinking, claims to be a medical doctor.

demons and personalised spiritual powers, and Christianity has changed to take account of this. Even in America, where church attendance remains high, the supernaturalistic has largely receded. America has seen a fundamentalist reaction, which would claim to be reversing the Enlightenment. However, much of this movement has its own particular agenda, and even the espousal of creationism appears 'to have no impact whatsoever on the assumptions on which the social system operates'.[50] We do not have to pursue this further here, and distinguish or justify 'enlightened versions of Christianity'.[51] The foregoing can be admitted, without in any way accepting the Enlightenment uncritically, or disguising the tremendous problems facing Western 'Enlightenment' societies at the end of the twentieth century.[52]

In Africa the religious situation is very different. For one thing, as African states collapse or withdraw, the churches are being forced to involve themselves in all sorts of activities from which they have long been displaced in Europe, and which even in Africa were being taken from them in the years immediately after independence. But far more important is the question of religious vision. In Africa most Christians operate from a background little affected by the European Enlightenment; for most Africans, witchcraft, spirits and ancestors, spells and charms are primary and immediate and natural categories of interpretation. For them religion 'is concerned with the explanation, prediction and control of space-time events';[53] it is primarily about power, or obtaining the good offices of supernatural forces – which, of course, as Thomas reminds us, was the primary concern of English religion too until the seventeenth century.[54] Most Africans have an 'enchanted' worldview. Yet most African Christians are members of mainline mission churches which 'officially' embrace a theology affected by the Enlightenment. African churches have Western missionaries, many of whom embody this Enlightenment and non-supernaturalistic theology. Many African church leaders have

And Derek Prince, the guru of Ghana's deliverance movement, was educated at Eton and Cambridge, and claims to have been a philosophy fellow of Kings College, Cambridge, between 1940 and 1949. There are still plenty of individuals who can live, or affect to live, in another world as well. Stephen King's novels reach the bestseller lists, and all the British tabloid newspapers have daily horoscopes. And out-and-out Faith Gospellers like Morris Cerullo or Kenneth Copeland conduct conventions in Britain (it is in the West that they earn their living), but one only has to attend these occasions to realise how 'counter-cultural' in a really hard sense they are, and how dependent on the immigrant population.

50 Wilson, *Religion*, 38; see also 43-4.

51 Martin, *Tongues*, 23.

52 Wilson, *Religion*, 88, Hobsbawm, *Age*, 562.

53 Robin Horton, 'African Conversion', *Africa* 41, 2 (1971), 85-108, and authors there cited.

54 Thomas, *Religion*, 27.

completed degrees in the 'internally secularised' theology faculties of the West. This gives Africa's mainline churches a rather ambiguous character. Their official theology and activity and public pronouncements tend to be of the Westernised kind, but most of their members have a very different understanding and widely divergent expectations.

The two strands have until recently coexisted reasonably successfully. For the most part, church authorities, at least publicly, discounted the popular or primal conceptions. There was faith in the modernisation or Westernisation process, and these mainline churches were agents of modernisation; they understood themselves in that way. But since the 1970s the modernising project has visibly run out of steam, and often been positively repudiated by the peoples who were supposed to be its beneficiaries. At the same time the Pentecostal churches have taken root. When a Pentecostal Christianity is preached that stresses the reality of demons or witchcraft, it has quite naturally evoked a powerful response from people with an 'enchanted' worldview. Pentecostal Christianity is answering needs left entirely unaddressed by mainline Christianity. For this reason, countless thousands are leaving the mainline to join new Pentecostal churches. This drift is not sinister; it is quite natural. Its rationale is detected in the reasons given for leaving the mission churches and joining the new churches. Mainline Christians are allegedly 'not biblical' because they do not take seriously divine and demonic interventions and apparitions that fill the Old Testament. They 'do not believe in miracles' because they regard the stories of Elijah, Elisha and Jonah as unhistorical, and do not seriously expect to replicate New Testament miracles today. Mainline Christians 'deny the supernatural' because they insist on explaining a cchild's death in terms of bacteria or microbes rather than witches or spirits. They are merely 'political', because they explain the state of the nation in terms of falling commodity prices, unequal trade flows or government mismanagement or corruption, rather than spiritual forces.

This drift from the mainline to the Pentecostal churches constitutes a significant realignment within African Christianity, and highlights what is surely a crucial point of the division between 'élite' and 'popular' Christianity. It was not that the church leaders addressed only their own needs (most of all their status and remuneration) and ignored the people. Though admittedly there has been much of this, in some cases leaders were assiduously addressing what they thought should have been the real needs of the people. It was the people who decided that their needs were totally different. Africa's mainline churches since the 1920s have been increasingly promoting a modernising agenda, with the stress on schools, clinics and, more recently, development projects. They tended to presume that this process would continue inexorably, to the glory of God and the

betterment of everyone. The reaction against mainline Christianity or, better, opting when the opportunity presented itself for a Christianity that caters for completely other needs has left many mainline churchmen bewildered. The churches that seem best able to surmount this challenge are those (like the Presbyterians and Catholics in Ghana) that have actually developed institutions to contain both tendencies.

The tension between the two Christianities, one expressed in terms of a primal vision, the other affected by the Enlightenment, is highlighted by Zambia's Archbishop Milingo now he is forced to operate in Europe. In 1996 Milingo was banned from holding services in the Archdiocese of Milan, precisely because of fears that he might have encouraged a 'credulity which explains all psycho-physical ills as due to the influence of the devil, and leads people to expect exorcisms, healings and miracles'.[55] Here the contrast is marked up boldly. Cardinal Martini of Milan, one of the Catholic Church's foremost biblical scholars, is simply not prepared to have Milingo's Christianity promoted in his diocese. For some, especially those influenced by cultural relativism, an 'African' theology such as Milingo's is to be encouraged. In Cox's perspective, the flowering of primal spirituality is a sign of hope, because Western liberal Christianity has run into the sand. Bediako for his part wants to desacralise without despiritualising. By this he appears to mean that he wants Weber's 'disenchantment', which would bring Africa technological and scientific advance, but that the primal mentality – awareness in daily life of ubiquitous spiritual forces working in the universe – should persist.[56] How these might be combined is arguably the biggest question facing Christianity in Africa; Bediako does not offer a solution.[57]

Others argue that the world as we have it is set up by the West; the West has laid down the principles by which it operates, and these are summed up in the one word, rationality.[58] If religion is to play any public role in this dispensation, it must take account of that. 'Only a religion which has incorporated as its own the central aspects of the Enlightenment critique of religion is in a position today to play a positive role in furthering processes of practical rationalisation ... [and] contribute to the revitalisation of the modern public sphere.'[59] This view involves an

55 *Tablet*, 20 April 1996, 525.

56 Bediako, *Christianity*, 212.

57 For insights here, see Richard Gray, 'Christianity and Concepts of Evil in Sub-Saharan Africa' in his *Black Christians and White Missionaries*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991, 99-117.

58 David S. Landes, *The Unbound Prometheus: Technological Change and Industrial Development in Western Europe from 1750 to the Present*, Cambridge University Press, 1969.

59 José Casanova, *Public Religions in the Modern World*, University of Chicago Press, 1995, 233.

unashamed value judgement that the Enlightenment was a watershed.

> You cannot understand the human condition if you ignore or deny its total transformation by the success of the scientific revolution. [...] [This] has totally transformed the terms of reference in which human societies operate. To pretend that the scientific revolution of the seventeenth century, and its eventual application in the later stage of the industrial revolution have not transformed the world but are merely changes from one culture to another, is simply an irresponsible affectation.[60]

According to this view, all societies have had to make their peace with the Enlightenment; in doing so, some have retained more, some less, of their previous culture.[61] Bediako has not addressed this viewpoint.

Mihevc has written a combative rebuttal of the World Bank's activities in Africa, and the harm they are doing in Africa through the enforcement of structural adjustment. His is a liberation perspective, focusing on the political and particularly economic structures that cause such harm in Africa. However, he goes on to claim that what he describes is common in African churches, indeed almost representative of African Christianity today. Mihevc writes of a 'fundamental theological reorientation on the part of churches in Africa [evident in] the re-affirmation of liberation theology rooted in prophetic discourse condemning corrupt leaders and calling for elections. A key constitutive element in this re-orientation has been the churches' response to the effects of the debt and SAP crisis.'[62] He sees 'increasing attention being accorded to economic concerns, especially those related to the international financial system', and points to an 'explicit integration of a political economy analysis within a theological framework'.[63] This 'focus on the economy marks a significant theological movement.'[64] He claims that at various levels 'popular [theological] education materials are being produced which provide a comprehensive analysis of the root causes of the debt crisis.'[65] His examples, taken mainly from officials and activities of the All Africa Conference of Churches, are no doubt correct, but they are so unrepresentative as to give an overall impression that is quite misleading. From our case studies one would maintain that what Mihevc describes is precisely what African Christianity is *not* about. We have seen that in Cameroon and in Uganda there is little concern with structural matters. In Zambia some of these concerns are voiced by the churches, but the

60 Ernest Gellner, 'Anything Goes', *Times Literary Supplement*, 16 June 1995, 8.

61 Ernest Gellner, *Postmodernism, Reason and Religion*, London: Routledge, 1992, 61.

62 Mihevc, *Market*, 225.

63 *Ibid.*, 226.

64 *Ibid.*, 264.

65 *Ibid.*, 241.

source of this theology is mainly the Jesuit Centre for Theological Reflection, and cannot be said to be a preoccupation of the churches generally. The Christian Council of Ghana operated an extensive 'democratisation' programme, but even that was built on concerns quite different from Mihevc's; it addressed issues of a far more basic kind, such as whether a Christian should vote and, as we noted, its thrust was more gently Evangelical, claiming that a life of personal Christian integrity will lead to change in the nation. Mihevc's abstracting from personal activities and focusing on structural forces like the World Bank and IMF belongs to another level of discourse.

Most varieties of Christianity in Africa, judging from their preaching or literature, are not partners in Mihevc's discourse. African Christians ask the same questions as Mihevc: Why are Africans suffering? Where does evil come from? What might redemption or salvation mean in these circumstances? But their answers only very infrequently consider African political structures or Western influences like the international banking industry. Their principal answers are expressed in terms of lack of faith or blockages caused by demons. That this is understandable cannot be denied, and it makes 'a certain sense'. Most Africans manifest a 'primal' mentality, and we have shown that churches meeting these primal needs are understandably flourishing. Mihevc may be right in suggesting that African theology needs a stronger base in the Enlightenment; but he is surely incorrect in implying that such a theology is already flowering.

A strength of Mihevc's analysis is his understanding of power. He shows how the World Bank controls the discourse of development in Africa. In his words, the World Bank 'owns' the agenda for Africa's development in the 1990s.[66] Its resources ensure that its theorists provide the paradigm which determines how things are interpreted, and the narrative into which data are woven. With such 'paradigm-enforcing power' it is not surprising that they can neutralise or coopt any alternative discourse or agenda.[67] Africa's theological agenda is no longer immune from non-theological determinants. A primal discourse leads naturally to a theology of deliverance from demons. It is not quite so natural that it should lead to some of African Christianity's other dominant motifs. For example, the primal imagination would not lead automatically to evangelisation, or church growth, or 'taking the nation for Jesus' – emphases that come from organisations like AD 2000 and Beyond, which as we have seen are so dominant in this field that their paradigm is widely accepted, to the extent that any alternative is almost impossible. This paradigm has considerable socio-political effects, for it privileges

[66] *Ibid.*, 132.

[67] Clapham, *International System*, 168; Leys, *Rise and Fall*, 64.

evangelism almost to exclusivity. If evangelism is effectively all there is to Christianity, then Chiluba is a good President; and if promoting evangelism is all that is needed, Christians must fight to keep him in office. That is a far cry from Mihevc's discourse.

What we have said has a bearing on much writing on African theology. We noted this in the case of Bediako, whose analysis ignores much of what is happening in African Christianity today. It is even more evident in Parratt's survey of African theology. Parratt argues (against those who would say that South Africa's theology is largely political and that Black Africa's is largely cultural) that 'Theology throughout Africa finds its common ground in three basic elements – in the Bible and Christian tradition, in African culture and religion, and in the contemporary sociopolitical situation.'[68] If we alter his punctuation and consider the three elements as five, we see that only one is of marked significance in much of African Christianity today, and that is the Bible, treated in a very non-critical way. One forms the impression that at the level of church life Christian tradition is largely ignored and, where adverted to, probably dismissed as a distortion; African culture is generally very suspect, and African religion positively demonised; and the contemporary sociopolitical situation is dismissed as theologically irrelevant. This does not invalidate much of Parratt's fine overview of African academic theology; it merely serves to illustrate the gulf between élite academic theology and Christian developments in Africa today, and to show how marginal mainline academic theology is. It is done by Western-trained professionals, largely for Western consumption (the criticism often made of Ela's Liberation Theology in Cameroon) and seems sometimes quite unrelated to the significant developments afoot.

Africa's new Christianity

Cox makes a distinction between 'fundamentalism' and 'experientialism' in an effort to catch the essence of so many new religious movements without conveying the negative connotations of 'fundamentalism'.[69] For the same reason we have avoided the word 'fundamentalism' in this discussion. Emphasising a reactionary element, though it may capture a key aspect of partner churches in America, does not capture the key dynamics of Black Africa's new churches. In Africa the appeal is to a primal imagination, but this does not involve a positive repudiation of Enlightenment rationality in the way that is required in the West. Also, in much of the discussion of Western religion, fundamentalism connotes some stress on doctrine. This is not required in Africa, nor is there any

[68] Parratt, *Reinventing Christianity*, 27.

[69] Cox, *Fire*, 300-20.

idea of 'nationalism' – indeed, in a sense, there is nothing more transnational in Africa than the born-again movement. Nor is there any idea of repudiating the secular state; in much of the born-again movement there is little political awareness at all.

Similarly with the word 'sect'. Even though the word is so frequently applied to newer churches in Africa, the idea of turning one's back on the world is, as we have seen, rarely involved at all. Far from fulfilling any command to be separate (Lev 20: 24) these churches are one of the best available means of linking into the outside world. For this reason, too, we have not stressed the idea of 'exit option' or 'walkout', which might have been perfectly appropriate in analysing the role of groups like the Jehovah's Witnesses in Zambia in, say, the 1940s. Today, in Uganda and Zambia, becoming born-again actually brings one close to power; elsewhere, though it may indicate some turning against the political élite, it can be a way of linking into other material benefits.

We have felt justified in distinguishing between AICs and the newer churches. This is not to argue that all the new churches are identical, but they do appear to possess a set of family resemblances. We would further argue that these are tending to supplant the family resemblances formerly adduced to identify AICs. The newer churches, though they depend on primal conceptions like deliverance, do not represent a return to the past, or a bridge to traditional culture, in the way the AICs did. They are harshly negative concerning much of Africa's traditional culture – not just polygamy and (in Zambia) practices like the 'cleansing' of widows. They repudiate the veneration of ancestors. We have seen these new churches attacking 'spiritual' churches for precisely such things. The new churches reject all the ritual – candles, blessed water, white cloths, drumming, sacrifices – that has been associated with the AICs.[70] (An interesting boundary shift is observable here: many AICs began by denouncing the mainline churches as not Christian, but now the same accusation is being made against them.) Sacral robes are nowhere in evidence. Their worship is exuberant, but it is less and less characterised by the trances and possessions characteristic of the AICs (possessing 'the gift of tongues' is not 'possession' in the earlier sense). Dreams have given way to a much more direct form of divine communication. The new churches maintain a preoccupation with spirits, but in a markedly different way from the AICs. Miracles are performed without instrumentality. All their props are modern and sophisticated. Their language tends to be English or French and their music Western. They emphasise their links with the wider world. Culturally they play a role different from that played by the AICs.

The formal theology of the new born-again churches is essentially the

[70] Monica Wilson, *Religion and the Transformation of Society: a Study in Social Change in Africa*, Cambridge University Press, 1971, 73, 127.

Faith Gospel as outlined in Chapter 2. As an elaborated Christian vision this is an American development, linked in its origins to positive thinking. We have noted how well suited this was to the United States in the 1960s and early 1970s, when the economy was booming and there were countless opportunities to be grasped. It was also extremely functional for the televangelists who developed it; its stress on seed-faith or giving ensured the revenues they needed to build their media empires.

We have seen how widespread this prosperity theology has become in Africa. It is preached at length in the newer churches, and these beliefs are ritually enacted, with collections and offerings. They are reinforced by countless testimonies. Freston argues that the prosperity gospel is characteristic only of the third wave of Pentecostalism in Brazil (that is, of the churches of the 1980s); we have argued that in Africa it has spread even to earlier churches, like Ghana's Church of Pentecost, and even into the mainline churches. It has spread by various means: through the wide diffusion of literature, through organisations like the FGBMFI, through the burgeoning Bible schools and through the rise of 'pastors' conferences' that have increasingly become a feature of crusades (where formal training is so limited the impact of these conferences is considerable.) Above all it has spread through the paradigmatic ministries of such high-profile exponents as Ghana's Duncan-Williams, Zambia's Nevers Mumba, Uganda's Handel Leslie, and – the most high-profile of all – Nigeria's Benson Idahosa. Of course these are all middle-class religious entrepreneurs of the major cities, but the Faith Gospel is increasingly at home in rural areas. For church leaders this faith teaching is obviously very functional, for it brings in revenues that enable them to survive and flourish in a very competitive field. First and foremost, the teaching suits them, the pastors. That it should have won such a general acceptance in Africa's current situation is both quite natural and rather surprising. This calls for some comment.

It is natural that the Faith Gospel should be so prevalent, because Africa's traditional religions were focused on material realities. In the nineteenth century, Crowther wrote of the Yoruba religious search for 'peace, health, children and money'.[71] This preoccupation has been noted several times since.[72] Westernised mainline Christianity does not cater for this, so it is perfectly natural that the Pentecostal Christianity which

[71] Cited in J.D.Y. Peel, 'An Africanist Revisits Magic and the Millennium' in Eileen Barker, James A. Beckford and Karel Dobbelaere (eds), *Secularization, Rationalism and Sectarianism: Essays in Honour of Bryan R. Wilson*, Oxford University Press, 1993, 98, n. 15.

[72] Inus Daneel, *Quest for Belonging: Introduction to a Study of African Independent Churches*, Gweru: Mambo Press, 1987, 46; Monica Wilson, *Religion*, 37; Okot P'Bitek, *African Religions*, 62.

does should fare so well. It is also to be noted that the classical AICs, though focusing on well-being, did not place the emphasis precisely as it is placed now. Their preoccupation was predominantly health – understandable particularly in rural life, where sickness was the most obvious and recurrent trial. But the newer generations in the cities have slightly different needs; sickness has not lost its importance, but these are wage-earners (or would-be wage earners) whose concerns centre on employment, promotion, cash, accommodation, transport – which in rural areas, involved in agriculture within the extended family or kinship group, do not arise in quite the same way. We noted that in many of the churches under consideration, wealth has become far more important than health, though not entirely displacing it. If this prosperity message is most understandable in cities, it has moved deep into rural areas. Churches that began in capital cities began to plant churches in regional centres, and then district centres. Their dynamism, resources and techniques have spread the prosperity message, so appropriate for them, into areas where it is much less natural. This is not an entirely new phenomenon. As Peel demonstrated in relation to the Aladura, beliefs which started as dependent variables of a particular social situation have gone on to acquire an institutional framework transforming them into independent variables with their own power to bring about ideological and social change.[73]

But the prevalence of the prosperity gospel is also remarkable in view of the continent's state of visible collapse, in which the vast majority are inescapably caught up. It is sometimes assumed that these new churches will play the role some attribute to the Methodists in eighteenth-century England.[74] This is often said without adverting to the fact that their theology is so very different. For one thing, the world of witches, spells, curses and sorcery had already receded before Methodism made its contribution to the increasing rationality of English economic life. That is clearly not the context of the new churches in Africa. Yet there is an even more important difference between the theology of early Methodists and these new churches. The early Methodists preached hard work: Thompson argues that Wesley's teaching of conversion, conviction and grace meant that 'man or child only found grace in God's eyes when performing painful, laborious or self-denying tasks', that workers must endure their working conditions and be prepared to suffer; that was their vocation.[75] The theology fostered asceticism, abstemiousness, deferral

73 J.D.Y. Peel, *Aladura: a Religious Movement among the Yoruba*, London: Oxford University Press, 1968; R. Horton, 'African Conversion', 95.

74 This is the thesis of Martin, *Tongues*, where Methodism provides both the model and problematic for Latin American Pentecostalism (27-46). Peter Berger in his foreword seems to go further than Martin (9).

75 Thompson, *Making*, 409.

of gratification, all of which which led to investment. However, according to the Faith Gospel, one only needs belief, or belief and giving money, or belief and the special gifts of the pastor and God will do everything. Much of the Faith Gospel is well captured in this letter from a Zambian printed in Kenneth Copeland's magazine:

> 'I am writing to thank you for the two issues of the magazine you sent. Honestly, they have been revolutionary to me. I used to be a very negative person, but the articles in the magazines have had such an impact on me that the negativity is disappearing. I have a totally new vocabulary and it is affecting all those around me. Being raised in a poor family caused me to accept poverty as part of the 'package deal'. Now that has completely changed.[...] I now look at things differently as the mountain of lack has been commanded to be removed and cast into the sea, and I do not doubt in my heart. I believe the things I say will come to pass and they do. Just the other day a friend who did not know I had asked God for some money walked up and gave me K4,500. Praise the Lord – my needs are being met. The vibrancy and joy of living that eluded me so long have finally come to me. Thank you and God richly bless you.[76]

Here we find (besides the new paradigm or 'totally new vocabulary' encountered through foreign literature) the idea that faith will ensure that God intervenes to enrich the individual Christian. These new churches are not reinvigorating the Protestant ethic. On the contrary, Freston is surely correct when he writes: 'Prosperity theology represents an advanced stage of the decline of the Protestant ethic.'[77] Members of these churches may work very hard, but this is not the message they hear incessantly preached. Eighteenth-century Methodist theology led to investment, but the Faith Gospel places no emphasis on investment. The riches that it insists are the right of every Christian are not for investment but for evangelism. This is not to say that the proponents of the Faith Gospel do not become entrepreneurs – regarded from any social scientific perspective, this is exactly what its preachers are – but this is certainly not the message that is everywhere inculcated.

We return again to the question of wider networks. The faith theology that is heard so widely in Africa was not devised in Africa. (We have just said that it coalesces very well with the central preoccupations of much traditional African religious thought; but that, we maintain, is something slightly different.) It might be thought that Africa's circumstances might give rise to a theology that, for example, stresses redemption through suffering.[78] But this concept has almost been lost. Suffering has no place

76 *Believers' Voice of Victory*, Oct 1996, 13.

77 Paul Freston, 'Pentecostalism in Brazil: a Brief History', *Religion* 25 (1995), 131-32. He continues: 'It separates wealth and salvation, thus lacking the psychological mechanism (anguish about eternal destiny) which supposedly impelled the puritan in his rational search for prosperity.'

78 Mbembe, *Afriques indociles*, 105.

within the Faith Gospel, according to which the Christian should be healthy, rich and successful.[79] The Faith Gospel seems to be in conflict with the immediate experience of innumerable Africans. In that sense, it is difficult to see it as something developed in relation to African religious experience.

Compare this, for example with a genuinely (albeit now discredited) African theology, that of South Africa's Afrikaners. The Afrikaners drew on their Puritan emphases of election and ordination, and then added the motif of the Exodus from the experience of their own Great Trek in the 1830s, and the motif of the Covenant from their vow before the battle of Blood River (1838). A people largely illiterate, though steeped in the Bible, and cut off from other civilisations, developed these images into their foundational narrative or national myth. Later, to justify their relations with the Black population, they grafted on motifs allegedly drawn from the biblical texts of Genesis 1: 28 and 11: 1-9; Deuteronomy 32: 8-9; and Acts 2: 5-11 and 17: 26.[80] That is an example of theologising out of experience, in the light of particular needs and preoccupations. Yet from Zambia to Ghana, Cameroon to Uganda, the flourishing new born-again churches cite Deuteronomy 28-30; Malachi 3: 8-11; Mark 10: 29-30 and 11: 23-24; 3 John 2; and Philippians 4: 19. It is difficult to see this prosperity motif as reflecting common experience in any of these countries. Obviously the Faith Gospel's element of 'seed faith' has proved more functional for entrepreneur pastors than the theology has proved dysfunctional for their followers. It has thus made 'a certain sense' (to use Ranger's phrase again), but we have argued that because that sense has proved inadequate, at least in West Africa, there is now an evident move to transcend it.

We have argued that this is an area in which African creativity is most visible. It was precisely because in Africa's current circumstances, with people visibly getting poorer by the day, the emphasis is perceptibly shifting. We noted that some important voices, though coming from the faith stable, have left it far behind. Otabil, without an actual public denunciation, effectively denies it. He talks in terms of structures, for an individual cannot succeed if his surroundings do not permit. He has developed his own theology of entrepreneurship.[81] He is one taking this message across the continent – we witnessed its advent to Zambia. More

[79] In this regard, Freston describes prosperity theology as 'a religious discourse which rejects traditional Christian theodicy' ('Pentecostalism in Brazil', 132). Cf African Rights, *Great Expectations*, 7.

[80] W. de Clerk, *The Puritans in Africa*, London: Penguin, 1976; Douglas Bax, 'The Bible and Apartheid' in John W. de Gruchy and Charles Villa-Vicencio (eds), *Apartheid is a Heresy*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983, 112-43.

[81] For similar ideas in Brazil, see Freston, 'Pentecostalism in Brazil', 132.

often, though, particularly in West Africa, the shift has been to stress deliverance. This theology attempts to explain that faith does not always bring its reward; sometimes one is blocked, but with deliverance one can obtain everything that faith promises. This second element, the deliverance that must be superimposed on faith, was also to be found in traditional African religions. Okot P'Bitek writes: 'African religions ... are concerned with the good life here and now, with health and prosperity, with success in life, happy and productive marriage etc. They deal with the causes of diseases, with failures and other obstacles in the path of self-realisation and fulfilment.'[82] But once again, this (implied) stress on demons is also an important strand in American Pentecostalism. We have argued that authors like Peter Wagner, Derek Prince and the Hammonds cannot be ignored in any discussion of the contemporary formulation and legitimation of Africa's contemporary deliverance theology.[83]

The prominence of the Faith Gospel and deliverance serves to emphasise how little millennialism there is in contemporary African Christianity. 'Millennialism' covers the ideas associated with the book of Revelation: dualism, the corruption of the present order, its inevitable destruction, the suffering of the elect in this order, and an imminent divine intervention to establish a totally new dispensation. Cox puts millennialism at the very centre of Pentecostalism, which he effectively defines as a 'millennial sensibility'.[84] Africa has had its millennialists: preachers like John Chilembwe and Elliot Kamwana in Central Africa, William Wade Harris and Garrick Braide in West Africa. It has also been exposed to the pre-millennial dispensationalism of John Nelson Darby which has been so important in American fundamentalism and which reached its apogee with Hal Lindsey's popular *Late Great Planet Earth*, which in the 1980s was America's best-selling non-fiction book (if such it can be called).[85] This book illustrated and catered for the American preoccupation with Russia and Israel. We have occasionally seen these ideas surface in Africa: Chiluba's preoccupation with establishing diplomatic links with Israel stems from this theology, and we heard echoes of it in Leslie's preaching in Uganda. Visiting speakers lecture on this in Africa, and the framework is widely known – when Barry Smith gave his seminars in Uganda, his assumptions and methods came as no surprise to his listeners. But this approach is not widely picked up. The popular Christianity we encountered was personalised, not cosmic. It was not concerned with a renewed order or any 'new Jerusalem', but with a job, a husband, a

[82] Okot P'Bitek, *African Religions*, 62; Also Monica Wilson, *Religion*, 37.

[83] Cox regards this Western deliverance strand as extremely dubious; *Fire*, 281-87.

[84] Cox, *Fire*, 116.

[85] Hal Lindsey with C.C. Carlson, *The Late Great Planet Earth*, New York, NY: Bantam, 1970.

child, a car, an education, a visa to the West. It was about succeeding in this realm, through faith or (increasingly, at least in West Africa) through faith and deliverance from satanic blockages. We saw in many cases that success has become more central than healing. On the face of it, it might be thought that there are millennial images that could resonate powerfully with Africa's truly apocalyptic plight – most obviously, the scourges of war, famine and disease (Revelation 6: 1-8), or (at least in the optimistic interlude of 1989-93) the imminent dethroning of evil powers and the dawning of a new order. But these images have not been widely developed. Daniel and Revelation have posed no threat to Deuteronomy, Kings and Malachi.[86]

Nor is there much stress on an otherworldly order, or much expectation of a reward in an afterlife. London's *Economist* has written of what it calls South America's 'sects': 'Mostly they offer political quietism, promising a reward in the next world for the miseries of this one.'[87] It is to be stressed that this is *not* the message of Africa's new churches, which is mainly one of fullness in this life, through faith or through faith and deliverance. We remarked that missionaries have been criticised for teaching Africans to endure hardship in this life in exchange for happiness hereafter. If the criticism was once valid, the missionary legacy has vanished with scarcely a trace, for it is terrestrial rewards that feature so prominently in African Christianity now.

Civil society

Having clarified the varieties of Christianity in Africa, we are better placed to address their multifarious public roles. The churches' public involvement has been glimpsed at many levels. We discovered little political theology, in a Latin American sense, except in Cameroon where it was totally marginalised.[88] This theology and its associated structures, the Small Christian Communities, have not taken deep root in Africa.[89] But, in a gently embryonic way, this kind of thinking is expressed in the Catholic pastoral letters and the statements of Christian Councils. Their ethos is roughly that of the Church of England's 1986 *Faith in the City*, or the American Catholic bishops' 1986 pastoral letter *Economic Justice for All: Catholic Social Teaching and the US Economy*, or the 1996 letter

86 Mihevc, *Market*, 236-42, gives a rather different impression.

87 *Economist*, 10 Feb 1996, 70.

88 Parratt, *Reinventing*, 26-7, 124, 193-94, gives a somewhat misleading impression of the salience of socio-political issues within theology in Black Africa.

89 Anne Hope and Sally Timmel, *Training for Transformation: a Handbook for Community Workers*, Gweru: Mambo Press, 1984, was developed in a church programme beginning in Kenya in 1974; training in the programme is conducted by the Christian Council in Zimbabwe and Catholics in Nigeria.

of the Catholic bishops of England and Wales, *The Common Good*. Such documents are normally drafted by committees which include academic sociologists and economists as well as theologians, and they embody rationality in advocating legislation or increased efficiency, control and supervision. The pronouncements of Africa's mainline churches approximate to this genre, although they can have a more Evangelical spin as well. As we saw in the case of Ghana, the Christian Council produces public statements, but its theological content is gently Evangelical, suggesting that if an individual adopts a life of personal integrity the country must follow.

The question of direct political involvement of the newer churches is more complex. Bayart is most unsatisfactory on this point – not least because times have moved so quickly that his 'contemporary sects' are really yesterday's, having been replaced by new born-again churches. Bayart generalises that 'the independent church fragments on the periphery and feeds social dissidence', and describes the Lumpa Church as setting itself up as 'a peasant counter-society'.[90] Bayart is describing a previous generation of churches. He claims that new churches, in an exercise of the 'exit option ... ignore rather than contest the state', as if these were the only two options. At least Zambia and Uganda offer a third option to the born-agains, which is to get as close to the state as possible. Africa's new churches have a rather different agenda, one element of which is to walk the corridors of power.

When the new churches do enter the political arena, although they certainly insist that corruption should cease, they hardly have a conscious social agenda.[91] In describing the situation in Brazil, where the born-agains have secured a sizeable representation in parliament, Freston notes that far from purifying a corrupt political culture, 'Pentecostalism has assimilated the political culture at all levels.' He argues that Brazil's Christian politicians are not so much corrupt as 'time-serving', which he defines as 'the art of keeping oneself close to power, regardless of ideology or principle, in order to receive benefits' – often for the church.[92] This is roughly the political agenda of the born-agains in Zambia, where the benefits that the pastors seek from their born-again President are that

90 Bayart, *State*, 256-7.

91 This qualification is missed in Haynes' remark (*Religion and Politics*, 199) that these churches seek 'social justice'.

92 Freston cites a leading Pentecostal deputy as saying, at a time of debate about limiting the President's terms of office: 'If President Sarney offered me 100 radio stations in exchange for a term of office of 100 years, as long as the radios were for preaching the gospel, I would accept.' In other words, when compared with unrestricted evangelism, constitutional checks and balances count for little. See Freston, 'Popular Protestants in Brazilian Politics: a Novel Turn in Sect-State Relations', *Social Compass* 41 (1994) 563.

Zambia should be declared a Christian nation, that legislation be enacted against Islam, that churches be given government land, that they be chaplains to President Chiluba, that they have unlimited access to State House, that they be on national commissions, and that there be more evangelistic crusades. The thinking is essentially that pastors be given more recognition and a greater slice of the cake – for the purposes of evangelisation. Meanwhile, corruption and mismanagement bring Zambia to its knees.

Sometimes a misleading impression is given in discussions of the revival of political religion in the Third World, by lumping together Christian and Islamic fundamentalism. It is true that the latter has increased enormously in North African states at the same time as these new 'fundamentalist' Christian churches have proliferated to the south. Both may have similar causes, but in important respects it can be very misleading to treat them as parallel movements. Islamic fundamentalism of its very nature has a political agenda. It has a social blueprint – *Sharia* law – which it seeks to impose. In corrupt and incompetent North African states, this movement is obviously one of protest and destabilisation. What is called 'Christian fundamentalism', on the other hand, is a force for political stability in all the countries we have studied. This Christianity has no blueprint for society in any explicitly political sense.[93] At an indirectly political level, its effect is stabilising as well: they may refuse to pay bribes, but they inculcate prayer for leaders, obedience to laws and payment of taxes.

This question of the political role of churches is more often posed indirectly, in terms of civil society. In Chapter 1 we discussed this as one of the main concepts used in analysing Africa today – in political science, economics and development studies alike – and we accepted this as a useful concept in a study of the political impact of Africa's churches. But two remarks are in order. First, even though in Latin America it is normally the newer churches that are researched for their transformative internal dynamics, in Africa this approach has application to all. We have noted the importance of choirs in Protestant churches, even the most hierarchical. Choirs are dependent on rehearsals, voluntary cooperation and readiness to collaborate and pull together; they largely determine their own programmes, and organise festivals and competitions with other choirs.[94] In the Catholic Church the myriad sodalities function in the same

[93] Africa's new churches are hardly characterised by kingdom or dominion theology, much less reconstructionism. For these, see Gifford, *Christianity and Politics*, 252-7; Cox traces the change from pre-millennialism to a rather questionable post-millennialism in *Fire*, 287-97; see also Cox, 'The Warring Visions of the Religious Right', *Atlantic Monthly*, Nov 1985, 59-69. A failure to grasp the importance of this shift is evident in Boone, *Bible*, 53-8.

[94] See Martin on the virtues of choirs; for him, discussing the Latin American scene, they are primarily a Pentecostal phenomenon (*Tongues*, 167).

way, and need local, diocesan, regional and national coordination, often effected with only minimal reference to church professionals. The second observation is just as important. It is sometimes implied, from the Latin American scene, that membership of charismatic churches is voluntary while that of mainline churches is the result of birth; that attendance at charismatic churches denotes commitment, but at mainline churches is merely perfunctory; that charismatic churches change personal behaviour, but mainline churches have no effect on life. In Africa none of these assumptions is necessarily true. One has only to attend the Anglican or Catholic shrines on Uganda Martyrs' Day to see what Anglicanism or Catholicism means to vast multitudes. Conversely, there has been in the 1990s a change of status in the born-again churches. They are no longer necessarily countercultural. Only in Cameroon are they new enough to be still some distance from full acceptance. Elsewhere they have undergone considerable change of status in the space of less than a decade. In the late 1980s, newspapers in Uganda would not carry their advertisements; now the President's wife is likely to attend. In Zambia, as we have seen, the born-again churches form something of a new establishment. All sorts of factors can influence membership or attendance in these churches – in Ghana, for example, it is the superb music as much as personal commitment.

We can distinguish three areas in which churches could contribute to strengthening civil society: the political, the economic and the cultural. Where the properly political is concerned, we have focused on (in examining 'the deep politics of the churches' associational life') certain microquestions. How is power exercised? How accountable is the leadership? How transparent is the decision-making? Are constitutions observed? What subsidiarity is given to subordinate organisations? How equal are the opportunities for internal advancement?

With the mainline churches, we noted in Ghana the changing of constitutions to enable leaders to remain in office, and the flouting of constitutional regulations. In Uganda we noted the public struggle for power in Busoga and how the election of the latest Archbishop of Uganda turned on ethnic considerations. In Cameroon we saw had the PCC changed its constitution to allow the moderator to remain, and the EPC continually flouts its own constitution. We noted how a church's legal decisions cannot command much respect, since committees are often thought to be stacked beforehand, or patronage dispensed to predetermine the decision. Thus there seems little significant difference between the exercise of leadership in the churches and in national life generally; indeed, in some places it may sometimes be more autocratic and self-seeking. It is probably unrealistic to expect the churches to value legal or procedural niceties more highly than they are valued in the surrounding culture.

It is often claimed that the born-again churches function as schools of democracy, since they are groups of brothers and sisters promoting equality. Many of those we considered were personal fiefdoms, held together by the personal gifts of their leaders. We noted the tendency to authoritarianism – in Uganda one pastor would not even allow members to call him Brother, and insisted on his own views being sacrosanct and unquestioned, unlike those of his followers.[95] Some see this authoritarianism as something African, which these churches may come to modify. It is true that a traditional chief had considerable power, but it was not absolute – there were often checks, usually he had no standing army, and in places where small populations were spread thinly, it was easy for disaffected dependants simply to move elsewhere. However, in principle a chief was the representative of the ancestors, whose blessings he could bring to his people. There could be no challenge to his position, or even public criticism. A good chief had to be a strong chief, and to be able to provide help to his dependants he had to be wealthy. The people's wealth was his. In many cases he was not bound by the same rules as his subjects. Some have argued that many of the dysfunctional elements of Africa's despotisms stem from the attempts to replicate the rule of chiefs in the more complex role of leader of a modern nation state. However, Africa's new churches, far from modernising the understanding of and attitude to authority (Bayart's 'governmentalities'), or making authority more transparent and accountable, may work the other way. There is possibly a crucial dynamic within these churches that militates against democracy. Boone has well analysed the exercise of authority within fundamentalist churches. Using Foucault, she shows that a fundamentalist pastor is heir to a tradition, a participant in a discourse of which he is not the master, of which *no one* is the master. The churches we have been considering are different, appealing quite as much to the Holy Spirit as to the Bible. But authority functions in the same way, through a particular discourse. 'One stands a far better chance of challenging a [transparent] authority than a hidden one, and one stands hardly any chance at all when that hidden authority is parading in the guise of Holy Scripture' – or, in our case, the Holy Spirit.[96] Of its very nature, authority in so many of our churches cannot be transparent.

[95] For authoritarianism in a recent Brazilian mega-church, similar to this one in Uganda, see Freston, 'Pentecostalism in Brazil', 129-32. He notes the church's strategies to increase centralisation and minimise dependence on lay demands: '1) by diversifying its income; 2) by eliminating all congregational participation in decision-making and de-emphasising strong horizontal ties among members; 3) by frequent transfers of pastors; and 4) by economising expenses through the use of many young pastors who are single and have low financial expectations because they have recently come off drugs or other disorganised lifestyles' (131).

[96] Boone, *Bible*, 111; see also James Barr's review of Boone in *Theology Today*, Jan 1990, 422-5.

Let us move from the political to the economic area. In our case studies we have argued that in all sorts of areas there is undoubtedly a close link between Africa's economic plight and the life of the churches. As economic circumstances have deteriorated, many are led to a life in the church, as one of the few opportunities available. Rev. Timothy Njoya, the outspoken Kenyan Presbyterian, has expressed this bluntly: 'Over 90% of the clergy in Kenya today have no call at all. They come to the ministry because they could not have achieved a better career.'[97] For the same reasons, the pressure to obtain and preserve the top jobs has increased, which has led to some particularly unedifying cases of clinging to power, in churches as much as in government.[98]

The fact that many capable and talented people are led to enter church leadership has a further bearing on Africa's economic development. In Chapter 1 we noted that class analysis is not particularly helpful in Africa. The bourgeoisie has tended to be linked to government, utilising government concessions, loopholes and protection, even government money. Such businessmen are not the classic wealth-creating risk-takers, but are essentially parasitic. From an economic viewpoint, the churches can appear part of this same scene. As the economic situation has collapsed, many who in the 1960s and 1970s would have gone into government jobs have moved into church or NGO employment, not creating wealth but essentially redistributing or channelling aid funds, almost as a comprador class of pastors and development officers.

Do the churches foster the middle-class virtues and skills regarded as a prerequisite for a modern economy? Cox has written at length of the way in which Korea's new Pentecostal churches inculcate economic skills. Members learn from the 'absolutely dazzling organisational genius that these churches demonstrate'. In their evangelistic campaigns and other activities, hundreds of thousands of people whose parental culture, if not their own, had been rural and traditional learned the bottom-line skills of a modern market economy. They learned to communicate a simple

[97] *Option*, June 1995, 28; for the same phenomenon within Islam, see Jibrin Ibrahim, 'Religion and Political Turbulence in Nigeria', *JMAS* 29, 1 (1991), 121-5.

[98] In 1995 the Anglican bishop of Harare in Zimbabwe refused to retire at sixty-five, because he could not see how he would live if he ceased to be bishop. He not only split the church, but ensured that the Anglican church was in no position to challenge President Robert Mugabe for personalising his office, clinging to power, or flouting the constitution. In a particularly messy lawsuit involving one of Kenya's 'retired' Anglican bishops, a lawyer argued that 'this is not about vocation. It is a question of a house, a career, and a car' (*APS Bulletin*, 8 July 1996, 6).

message: to organise promotional efforts, make lists, use telephones; to solve personality clashes in task-oriented groups; to coordinate efforts both horizontally and vertically; to set goals and reach them; and to come to meetings on time, run them efficiently, and then to implement the decisions made there. This training constitutes a 'concentrated crash course in what millions of others who fill the lower and middle echelons of modern corporations learn at business schools and sales institutes'. Their results-oriented and pragmatic spiritual life spills over to make their work life results-oriented and pragmatic too. Cox draws on the view of Peter Drucker, often regarded as the father of modern management science, that the most successful profit-making enterprises are those that do not focus primarily on making a profit, but on something he refers to as the corporate 'mission'. It is this sense of mission that Korean Pentecostals bring to everything they do, and which helps to explain Korea's economic success. Cox concludes that 'to understand the link between religion and economics in Korea... Peter Drucker is more pertinent than Max Weber.'[99] This has obviously some application in Africa. In their churches we have seen Africans learning new skills like planning and marketing, and related ones like debating and advocacy. The importance for women is particularly great.

Many of these churches tithe, and with the money they embark on projects of which they can feel a sense of pride and achievement. But sometimes the people have had no say in what their money goes into. They own a project in the sense that it was built with their money; not in the sense that it was chosen and planned and operated by them, for their benefit. The church-run bakery we met in Kampala was established with church money, but this effectively became a business of the pastor and his wife, who then employed church members (among others) in distribution. This certainly created jobs that would not have existed otherwise, but was not in any hard sense an activity owned by the church.

Let us now turn to the more cultural role of the churches. We have seen that 'inculturation' has become a key word in the Catholic lexicon. In the field of liturgy, this had already borne some fruit, particularly in a diocese like Kumasi in Ghana. Much attention is currently being focused here, even if the results to date are not especially significant. The cultural role of the new born-again churches is not that of the traditional AICs – time has moved on, and needs are different now. It must be repeated that these churches may be doing many things, even apparently conflicting things, at once. Traditional cultures can be reinforced by external links. This is exactly the process we observed in Ghana, where it was only after the visit of Derek Prince that deliverance thinking acquired public

[99] Cox, *Fire*, 234-36.

legitimacy in certain circles. We have stressed the ambiguous cultural role of deliverance churches and theology. They preserve traditional thought forms and spiritual realities, but primarily to demonise them, and thus in many ways denigrate African culture, usually to the credit of the European.

We have noted several cultural shifts brought about by Pentecostalism. The emphasis on personal decision certainly serves to develop the notion of individualism, without which it is impossible for a middle class to emerge. It is almost the same thing to say that these churches tend to break down the notion of the extended family. They provide alternative structures to oversee courtship and arrange marriage, taking these tasks away from traditional agents. We have observed how they often provide scope for youth, in a culture traditionally dominated by elders; it can be said that they re-order society for the benefit of youth.[100] The position of women too has been altered by these churches; they can assume leadership roles, determine policies as equals on committees, meet new people in institutions totally unrelated to kinship.[101] Another important cultural shift is evident in the area of competition, or accumulation of wealth. In many traditional African societies, to acquire resources noticeably beyond those of one's neighbours was profoundly threatening, often leading to accusations of witchcraft. The Faith Gospel serves to legitimise the accumulation of wealth as something willed by God. In new churches deliverance easily restores to the community those who in other conditions may have been subjected to witch-finding ordeals. Pentecostalism can even open up or revitalise whole areas of cultural expression, as we saw in Ghana in the area of gospel music.

Churches can play a role in breaking down ethnic barriers, since the intensity of conversion bestows a new identity which transcends other identities. The born-again identity creates a bond with many who previously would have been regarded as different. This is most obvious in the bigger urban churches where English or French rather than a particular local language is spoken. This can help foster democratic virtues like tolerance, respect, moderation, cooperation and compromise. But at the same time the 'born-again' label sometimes carries with it the need to distinguish others who are not born-again, and so many of these churches, under the influence of church growth thinking, demonise Islam, thus reinforcing other social divisions. It is thus hard to generalise; these churches can be doing different things at once, on different levels and among different people.

It is often assumed, as noted above, that Pentecostal churches will

[100] R.A. van Dijk, 'Young Puritan Preachers in Post-Independence Malawi', *Africa* 62 (1992), 160-81.

[101] The impact on birth control in Africa is not so evident; cf Cox, *Fire*, 137.

play the role that Methodists played in eighteenth-century England. As we have seen, one reason for caution here is that they tend to have a very different theology. But we must also make full allowance for the different contexts. The economic growth in eighteenth-century England was considerable, as the country moved to establish itself as the world's superpower. Any movement that emphasised thrift, sobriety, discipline and education was in a position to help transform its adherents, by enabling them to take full advantage of the opportunities on offer. According to the Halévy thesis, Methodism helped England to avoid violent revolution so that gradually everyone could benefit from the general amelioration of living standards; that was Methodism's contribution.[102]

And this is how Pentecostalism has functioned in the United States for most of the twentieth century. Particularly in the decades after the Second World War, there was an expanding economy, near full employment, a climate of business confidence, and low inflation to encourage savings. There was peace and stability, a judicial system increasingly enforcing equal opportunity even for Blacks, availability of good elementary schools, and expansion in higher education. This context is crucial. Churches that fostered ambition, sobriety, goals, application and education, and provided a support group for personal striving, saw their adherents advance themselves out of all recognition in the space of one or two generations. This is obviously the situation that has developed in Korea, but it is hardly Africa's current situation. Africa is undergoing a catastrophic decline. Any transformation possible through purely personal effort must be extremely limited. Africa certainly does not need violent revolution, and any institutions militating against it deserve support. But African socio-political systems just as certainly need radical restructuring, and it is not self-evident that these churches will contribute much in this direction.

Many observers of Christianity today, like Martin in Latin America, put their emphasis on the cultural.[103] He writes of the Pentecostals that their contribution depends on 'the long-term dynamics of culture. Thus whether or not you take seriously their impact on a society as a whole depends on your estimate of the power of culture.'[104] Even someone with a high estimate of the power of culture might feel that the current plight of Africa demands something structural, and something immediate.

[102] E. Halévy, *A History of the English People in the Nineteenth Century*, London: Fisher Unwin, 1938.

[103] Martin laments the domination of the political and economic over the cultural and religious; see 'Evangelical and Charismatic', 73-74.

[104] Martin *Tongues*, 22; see also 288.

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