religions

Current Trajectories in Global Pentecostalism

Culture, Social Engagement, and Change

Edited by

Roger G. Robins

Printed Edition of the Special Issue Published in *Religions*

www.mdpi.com/journal/religions

MDPI

Current Trajectories in Global Pentecostalism

Current Trajectories in Global Pentecostalism

Culture, Social Engagement, and Change

Special Issue Editor

Roger G. Robins

MDPI • Basel • Beijing • Wuhan • Barcelona • Belgrade

Special Issue Editor
Roger G. Robins
The University of Tokyo
Japan

Editorial Office
MDPI
St. Alban-Anlage 66
4052 Basel, Switzerland

This is a reprint of articles from the Special Issue published online in the open access journal *Religions* (ISSN 2077-1444) in 2018 (available at: https://www.mdpi.com/journal/religions/special_issues/Pentecostalism)

For citation purposes, cite each article independently as indicated on the article page online and as indicated below:

LastName, A.A.; LastName, B.B.; LastName, C.C. Article Title. *Journal Name* **Year**, *Article Number*, Page Range.

ISBN 978-3-03897-453-6 (Pbk)
ISBN 978-3-03897-454-3 (PDF)

Cover image courtesy of unsplash user Kayla Harris

© 2019 by the authors. Articles in this book are Open Access and distributed under the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license, which allows users to download, copy and build upon published articles, as long as the author and publisher are properly credited, which ensures maximum dissemination and a wider impact of our publications.
The book as a whole is distributed by MDPI under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons license CC BY-NC-ND.

Contents

About the Special Issue Editor . . . . **vii**

Preface to "Current Trajectories in Global Pentecostalism" . . . . **ix**

Roger G. Robins
Introduction to "Current Trajectories in Global Pentecostalism: Culture, Social Engagement, and Change"
Reprinted from: *Religions* **2018**, *9*, 368, doi:10.3390/rel9110368 . . . . **1**

William K. Kay
George Jeffreys: Pentecostal and Contemporary Implications
Reprinted from: *Religions* **2018**, *9*, 60, doi:10.3390/rel9020060 . . . . **11**

Wolfgang Vondey
Religion as Play: Pentecostalism as a Theological Type
Reprinted from: *Religions* **2018**, *9*, 80, doi:10.3390/rel9030080 . . . . **22**

Ibrahim Abraham
Sincere Performance in Pentecostal Megachurch Music
Reprinted from: *Religions* **2018**, *9*, 192, doi:10.3390/rel9060192 . . . . **38**

Tanya Riches
Acknowledgment of Country: Intersecting Australian Pentecostalisms Reembeding Spirit in Place
Reprinted from: *Religions* **2018**, *9*, 287, doi:10.3390/rel9100287 . . . . **59**

Marleen de Witte
Pentecostal Forms across Religious Divides: Media, Publicity, and the Limits of an Anthropology of Global Pentecostalism
Reprinted from: *Religions* **2018**, *9*, 217, doi:10.3390/rel9070217 . . . . **74**

Sara Gundersen
Will God Make Me Rich? An Investigation into the Relationship between Membership in Charismatic Churches, Wealth, and Women's Empowerment in Ghana
Reprinted from: *Religions* **2018**, *9*, 195, doi:10.3390/rel9060195 . . . . **87**

Maria Frahm-Arp
Pentecostalism, Politics, and Prosperity in South Africa
Reprinted from: *Religions* **2018**, *9*, 298, doi:10.3390/rel9100298 . . . . **99**

Henri Gooren
Pentecostalization and Politics in Paraguay and Chile
Reprinted from: *Religions* **2018**, *9*, 340, doi:10.3390/rel9110340 . . . . **115**

Chammah J. Kaunda
'The Altars Are Holding the Nation in Captivity': Zambian Pentecostalism, Nationality, and African Religio-Political Heritage
Reprinted from: *Religions* **2018**, *9*, 145, doi:10.3390/rel9050145 . . . . **130**

Chammah J. Kaunda and Mutale Mulenga Kaunda
Mobilising Religious Assets for Social Transformation: A Theology of Decolonial Reconstruction Perspective on the Ministry of National Guidance and Religious Affairs (MNGRA) in Zambia
Reprinted from: *Religions* **2018**, *9*, 176, doi:10.3390/rel9060176 . . . . **147**

Wilson Muñoz and M. Esther Fernández-Mostaza
Stigmatisation and Ritual: An Analysis of the Stigmatisation of Pentecostalism in Chile
Reprinted from: *Religions* **2018**, *9*, 246, doi:10.3390/rel9080246 . . . . **160**

Mark A. C. Jennings
Impossible Subjects: LGBTIQ Experiences in Australian Pentecostal-Charismatic Churches
Reprinted from: *Religions* **2018**, *9*, 53, doi:10.3390/rel9020053 . . . . **173**

About the Special Issue Editor

Roger G. Robins (PhD, Duke University, 1999) is a professor at the Komaba campus of the University of Tokyo, Tokyo, Japan, holding affiliation with the Center for Global Communication Strategies, the North America section of the Graduate Department of Area Studies, and the Department of English. From 2000–2003, he was the archivist of the David J. du Plessis Center for Christian Spirituality (Pasadena, California). A religious historian by training and temperament, his publications include *A. J. Tomlinson: Plainfolk Modernist* (Oxford, 2004) and *Pentecostalism in America* (Praeger, 2010). Dr. Robins's father was a minister in the East Texas District of the Pentecostal Church of God.

Preface to "Current Trajectories in Global Pentecostalism"

The present volume was more than a year and a half in the making. The germinal idea for the Special Issue of Religions on which it is based had already been formulated by Founding Editor-in-Chief Peter Iver Kaufman, together with Managing Editors Bingjin He and Jie Gu, before I was brought on board in the summer of 2017. The importance and relevance of what they had in mind were readily apparent, so we quickly began the process of refining the scope and objectives of the project. Eventually, we settled on something of a double vision, as the introduction spells out in greater detail. Center stage would stand the current moment in global Pentecostalism, with particular emphasis on the most salient trends reshaping the movement's habits of mind and heart and its patterns of social engagement. Alongside contributions of this nature, however, it was hoped that the volume could serve as something of a showcase for the impressive range, diversity, and interdisciplinary character of the scholarship now being devoted to global Pentecostalism.

As we began soliciting articles from leading scholars, it became clear that these aims would be met or exceeded. The articles returned were, without exception, methodologically innovative and interdisciplinary. Furthermore, the contributors were diverse in both core specializations and geographical provenance. Indeed, our final selections come from thirteen authors with affiliations in eight different nations on four continents. Quite naturally, their areas of interest are equally diverse, bringing us case studies from Ghana, Zambia, South Africa, Paraguay, Chile, Australia, and the UK. In terms of thematic or disciplinary emphasis, the articles, as arranged, could be said to move from history and theology to cultural performance and anthropology, then to economics, gender, and politics, and finally to sociology and sexual identity. In the end, however, we chose not to interrupt their flow with sectional headings of this or any other kind. Interdisciplinarity is simply too integral a feature of these articles to subject them to thematic segregation. The articles presented here, then, cast light in many directions. Readers will leave with a clearer vision of the transformational movement at center stage, certainly, but also with a new appreciation for the field of Pentecostal studies.

Guest editors inevitably rely on the kindness and competence of others. I would like to acknowledge that debt—though I cannot repay it—by expressing my deep gratitude to those who made this collection possible and shepherded it along the way. First, I would like to thank Peter Kaufman, whose germinal idea and personal encouragement brought the project into existence. It stayed on track, however, thanks only to the vigilant oversight and, when needed, gentle prodding of Bingjin He. The tireless assistant editors—notably Mamie Lu, Macy Zong, and Mildred Chen—worked with others on the Religions/MDPI editorial team to guide drafts through the arduous passage from revision to final publication. And speaking of drafts, there would be no volume without our authors. Their contributions are its substance and will form the true measure of its success. Finally, I would like to mention Grant Wacker, Gilbert T. Rowe Professor Emeritus of Christian History at Duke Divinity School—my doctoral advisor and a former colleague of Peter Kaufman—who served as a liaison of sorts between the editors and myself as the project got underway. Grant stands as the kindly éminence grise behind many who labor in the field of Pentecostal studies, and I am one of that number.

Roger G. Robins

Special Issue Editor

religions

MDPI

Editorial

Introduction to "Current Trajectories in Global Pentecostalism: Culture, Social Engagement, and Change"

Roger G. Robins [1,2]

[1] Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, Area Studies, North American Division, the University of Tokyo, Komaba, Tokyo 153-8092, Japan; rgrobins@g.ecc.u-tokyo.ac.jp

[2] Center for Global Communication Strategies, College of Arts and Sciences, the University of Tokyo, Komaba, Tokyo 153-8092, Japan

Received: 12 November 2018; Accepted: 14 November 2018; Published: 18 November 2018

Abstract: This special issue of *Religions* assembles a talented group of international scholars from a variety of regions and disciplines to address contemporary developments within global Pentecostalism, a burgeoning movement that is changing the face—and interface—of religion and society today. A total of twelve articles (representing the work of thirteen authors) speak to issues surfacing along one of three overlapping trajectories: cultural expression, social engagement, and institutional change. The introduction briefly sets a framework for each article and calls attention to its wider connections and notable contributions. As a body of scholarship, these articles constitute a set of strategic soundings that refine our understanding of the texture and topography of global Pentecostalism. In addition to their substantive contributions, the authors, viewed collectively, also put on display the central attributes of a new era in Pentecostal studies, one distinguished by its productivity, diversity, range, and interdisciplinary ken.

Keywords: Pentecostalism; Pentecostal studies; religious studies; cultural studies; religion and politics; religion and gender; religion and sexuality; religion in Africa; Latin American religion; social anthropology

---

The twenty-first century has witnessed the rise of a new era in the once lightly-attended field of Pentecostal studies. One measure of that development is the sheer quantity of scholarship now being directed at the subject. A review of scholarly databases shows that academic output in the field grew exponentially over the second half of the twentieth century but has, in fact, experienced its greatest aggregate surge in the two decades since.[1] This growing body of scholarship represents a somewhat belated response to the continuing expansion (and evolution) of Pentecostalism and its

[1] In searches conducted on 8 November 2018, using "pentecostal(s)" and "pentecostalism" as heuristic search terms (yielding fewer false positives than "charismatic"), and years 0 to 9 to mark a decade, Google Scholar returned 439 articles for the 1950s; 1100 for the 1960s; 2770 for the 1970s; 3840 for the 1980s; 10,900 for the 1990s; 27,500 for the 2000s; and 28,600 since 2010. The figures for scholarly articles returned through ProQuest were 100; 285; 879; 964; 2177; 3656; and 3356, respectively. ProQuest results for dissertations—a uniquely revealing measure of scholarly interest—even more closely matched the Google Scholar profile, with 144 dissertations in the 1950s; 353 in the 1960s; 915 in the 1970s; 1375 in the 1980s; 3719 in the 1990s; 7250 in the 2000s, and 7234 since 2010. A search of the OCLC WorldCat database (restricted for heuristic purposes to books, articles, journals and magazines, newspapers, and encyclopedia entries) returned 811 items for the 1950s; 1529 for the 1960s; 3133 for the 1970s; 3886 for the 1980s; 5802 for the 1990s; 10,383 for the 2000s; and 16,561 items since 2010. These databases all show exponential growth from the 1950s through the 1980s, with a further surge in the 1990s. All but ProQuest articles point to a major additional spike in the 2000s. Google Scholar and ProQuest indicate a leveling off at that peak after 2010, while WorldCat shows yet another leap in the present decade. Also of interest is the fact that, according to WorldCat, the share of materials published in English dropped steadily from over 80% in the 1950s and 1960s to less than 70% in the 2000s.

corollaries, whose impact is being felt in every quarter of the globe and every sector of society. Where scholars of Pentecostalism once felt obliged to preface their works with a battery of statistics justifying their choice of subject, they may now expect its magnitude and importance to be readily conceded. Indeed, developments within global Pentecostalism have conspired with the resurgence of religious actors generally to ensure that an informed observer, if not the average lay reader, will recognize the movement's relevance to subjects ranging from electoral politics and human security to economic development and the formation of social capital.

However, the marks of a new era in Pentecostal studies are visible not only in the rising volume of scholarly production or the growing public awareness of its object; they are visible as well in the profiles of those working in the field and the nature of the work they produce while there. Today, historians, theologians, and religious studies scholars are joined by colleagues representing the full panoply of the social sciences. Furthermore, regardless of home discipline, scholars are now more likely than ever to adopt a multidisciplinary orientation. In addition, they hail from wider geographical and cultural provenances and address a more comprehensive range of subjects than any prior cohort. Indeed, scholars on every inhabited continent are employing an impressive array of tools to examine structures and textures, collectivities and individuals, pulpit and pew, street corner and statehouse. The result is a dynamic arena of critical inquiry devoted to examining and comprehending the movement and its wider implications.

These are heartening trends, and they reflect precisely the qualities needed if scholars are to meet the challenges of the day. Pentecostalism is a complex, rapidly expanding phenomenon marked by hybridity and fracture, glocalization and paradox. And, as with Pentecostalism, our disciplines are themselves changing, offering new tools and new perspectives with the potential to sharpen and deepen our vision. Certainly, new approaches are called for if we wish to assemble a fair portrait of the coterie of entities we house under the name of global Pentecostalism.

This special issue of *Religions* is a response to the developments outlined above. It showcases the most promising attributes of the current scholarship and illustrates the kind of global, cross-disciplinary conversation that is increasingly possible within Pentecostal studies. As an organizing principle, our issue prioritizes contemporary trends within global Pentecostalism, and contributors submitted work that speaks to questions arising from three overlapping trajectories:

> Cultural Trajectories—How are Pentecostals construing or manifesting themselves via rhetoric and discourse, gender and sexual ethics, worship, music, spirituality, theology, or material culture?
>
> Trajectories of Social Engagement—Where are the leading points of engagement between Pentecostalism and contemporary societies, and what are the effects of such engagement? How is Pentecostalism enabling (or disabling) the faithful—individually or collectively—in their efforts to influence society or negotiate the realities of modern life?
>
> Trajectories of Change—What are the key dimensions of social or cultural change within Pentecostalism itself? How is Pentecostalism being transformed as it attempts to transform the world?

In demarcating the perimeter of our issue, we did not place emphasis on definition, and readers will find some variation in how the authors go about defining their subjects. In general, though, Pentecostalism was taken to encompass movements that place emphasis on baptism in the Holy Spirit; profess and practice "spiritual gifts" (including divine healing); endorse (and at least occasionally practice) glossolalia; adopt a "born again" view of salvation; and self-ascribe as Christian. All of the groups treated here would be considered "Pentecostal" both for these distinctive beliefs and practices and also for their direct or indirect relation to Pentecostalism as an organic historical movement.

The authors of this special issue, for their part, speak with voices that are diverse in their disciplines, points of origin, regions and topics of interest, and standing relative to the movement they study. Some address areas of manifest practical relevance, such as the impact of Pentecostalism on

political and economic structures, while others attend to its interior and interpretive dimensions—its belief structures and mindscapes, rituals and representation—or to the constructive dialectics at play in the movement's social embedment. What emerges is an exemplary conversation among leading scholars, one that yields profound insights while demonstrating the range and quality of contemporary scholarship on global Pentecostalism.

In "George Jeffreys: Pentecostal and Contemporary Implications," William K. Kay, Emeritus Professor of Theology at Wrexham Glyndwr University (Wales) and Honorary Professor of Pentecostal Studies, Theology and Religious Studies at the University of Chester (England), explores the life of early Pentecostal leader George Jeffreys and his fraught relationship with the denomination he founded and eventually broke from, the Elim Pentecostal Church. Throughout his distinguished career, Kay has embodied interdisciplinary inquiry, weaving methods and insights derived from history, theology, psychology, sociology, and education into his work. Here as well, what begins as an exercise in history ends up as much more. After narrating the events that eventually separated Jeffreys from his colleagues, Kay presses further, seeking to understand not just the schism that occurred but the particular form it took and the manner in which the precipitating dispute was conducted. Kay places his story in a double context comprised of, first, the institutional developments reshaping Elim and, second, the British social and legal culture within which those developments transpired. His account then extends Weberian and Troeltschian analysis into a reflection on the role that social embeddedness, including the pragmatic demands of institution-building and the environing context of legal structures and social norms, plays in setting the parameters of change. This is an important contribution. By turning our attention to the particulars—property, assets, contracts, social dictates regarding how decisions are to be made and conflicts handled—Kay reveals the paradoxical interplay of primitivism and pragmatism within Pentecostalism while also lending support to scholars who wish to move beyond generalities about institutionalization and routinization to a more precise understanding of how those processes work themselves out in specific situations.[2]

Our second article comes from Wolfgang Vondey, a theologian and scholar of Pentecostal studies at the University of Birmingham (England); in it, he interprets Pentecostal belief and practice through a theological lens keenly attuned to cultural performance. "Religion as Play: Pentecostalism as a Theological Type" builds a cogent argument for understanding Pentecostalism as a distinctive form of religion, but with religion interpreted through the frame of play. Vondey thus brings his subject into conversation with a long tradition of sociological and anthropological analysis that has elaborated on the ludic nature of religion and the concept of "deep play."[3] Certainly, Pentecostalism is particularly well-suited to such analysis. Many Pentecostal lives are inscribed, at the broadest level, in the gripping narrative of dispensational premillennialism, and daily events are often enacted mimetically on an earthly stage framed by the stories of the Bible and replete with unseen agents malevolent and benign. Surely, Pentecostalism has a unique ability to fuse metanarrative with the drama of everyday life.[4] Vondey, however, is not concerned merely with ritual analysis; he pushes toward a more fundamental level of interpretation in which gestures and their significations cohere within a defining frame of constitutive meaning. Building on the frame analysis of Erving Goffman, Vondey marks the distinction between literal act and assigned meaning and then charts their transcription as elements of a primary frame—play—whose efficacy and authenticity depend on its remaining unconscious of itself. Vondey's interpretation of Pentecostal theology as a type of play is sure to be provocative, but equally thought-provoking is the precondition of that argument—namely, his prior claim that

---

2 On pragmatism and primitivism, see (Wacker 2001, pp. 11–14). For a case study of how the evolution of mundane entanglements, civic and economic opportunities, and creeping involvement in local affairs led eventually to political engagement, see (Nelson 1987). The political career of John Ashcroft, ex-governor of Missouri and former attorney general of the United States, can be traced directly to these developments.

3 For "deep play," see (Geertz 1973). For dramaturgical play and religion, classic works include (Harrison 1977; Turner 1982; Turner 1974).

4 On the drama of everyday life, see (Goffman 1959).

Pentecostal theology is grounded not in abstract intellection but in praxis: the actions, affections, and experiences of Pentecostal spirituality.

If Wolfgang Vondey gives us Pentecostalism as play, Ibrahim Abraham, a social and cultural anthropologist at the University of Helsinki (Finland), asks if that play is "sincere." His article, "Sincere Performance in Pentecostal Megachurch Music," is situated at the crossroads of ethnography, ritual theory, and the anthropology of Christianity, and it draws on those fields to examine how the moral category of sincerity, broadly internalized among Pentecostals as a core value of communal practice and individual integrity, meets the challenges of mass-mediated, consumerist, market-driven performance within Hillsong, the Australia-based network of megachurches. Grounded on interviews conducted in South Africa, the United Kingdom, and Australia, Abraham's article illuminates precisely the kind of global, cross-cultural dynamics that are driving the growth of Pentecostalism and reshaping religious practice around the world. Along the way, he touches perceptively on topics ranging from architecture to cultural geography and offers a convincing demonstration of how "sincerity," as a category of analysis, can shed light on contested understandings of religion and identity.[5]

Performance and Hillsong Church also take center stage in "Acknowledgment of Country: Intersecting Australian Pentecostalisms Reembeding Spirit in Place," by Tanya Riches, an anthropologist and Pentecostal studies scholar at Hillsong College in Sydney, Australia. Her methodologically innovative study employs ethnography, ritual analysis, anthropology, and normative theology in a multi-layered analysis of a potent ritual event: a Christianized Indigenous ceremonial welcome enacted at the 2017 Hillsong Conference. Hillsong's aim was to incorporate Aboriginal Christians and their alternative conceptualizations of space and place into a shared Pentecostal community, and Riches mines that performance for intimations of transformational developments that may now be occurring within Pentecostalism. Applying a historical schema developed by theologian Nami Wariboko, Riches uses the Hillsong event to plot Australian Pentecostalism in relation to Wariboko's "Charismatic City," a decentralized communion, permeated by the divine presence, where social and psychological boundaries separating center and periphery, metropolis and heteropolis, have been dissolved. In addition to her perceptive analysis of the "Acknowledgement of Country" ceremony and its reception, Riches opens a window onto Pentecostal imaginaries in the twenty-first century, identifying potentialities unfolding within the global movement and revealing how many contemporary Pentecostals view their place in history.

A chief interest driving much of the current literature on Pentecostalism centers around its impact as an agent of change, and we frequently speak of the "Pentecostalization" of one or another sector of society or religion.[6] In "Pentecostal Forms across Religious Divides: Media, Publicity, and the Limits of an Anthropology of Global Pentecostalism," Marleen de Witte, a social and cultural anthropologist from the University of Amsterdam (the Netherlands), both applies and critiques this category of analysis. On the one hand, her ethnographic study of the interaction between Neo-Pentecostalism and the anti-Pentecostal Afrikania Mission demonstrates the profound effect of Neo-Pentecostalism in Ghana on the cultural parameters of mass mediation and self-representation, indeed, on the fundamental terms according to which a religious movement defines, positions, promotes, and represents itself. Yet she also demonstrates the constitutive role of conflict and antagonism in the processes of social construction and religious change in Ghana. Pentecostalism and its adversaries are mutually entangled in a shared and co-created cultural field, De Witte notes, and the movement's positionality—its modes of differentiation, identification, and representation—are only properly understood within that wider field. Ultimately, De Witte's article represents a trenchant call for scholars to more fully situate manifestations of Pentecostalism within the social matrices that frame them and to more fully appreciate the importance of conflict in the negotiations through which a given field is formed and

---

[5] Abraham's article nicely complements the work of Suma Ikeuchi. (Ikeuchi 2017) shows how Japanese Brazilian Pentecostals and secular Japanese each (de)value "religion" along an axis of relative sincerity, but in diametrically opposite ways.

[6] For recent examples, see (Williams 2015; Gladwin 2015).

reformed. In short, she shows that we have much to learn about Pentecostalism by studying those who do not embrace it—indeed, by studying those who directly oppose it.

The complex relationship between Pentecostalism and economics, broadly conceived—long a subtext for historians—has emerged as a primary concern for social scientists as well.[7] At the same time, scholars from a wide range of disciplines have pondered the equally complex relationship between Pentecostalism and gender.[8] Many researchers today, however, begin with the presupposition that these are not really separate questions. Rather, together with other expressions of power and social hierarchy, gender and economics are viewed as closely interwoven variables in the lived experience of any community. An interdisciplinary perspective of precisely this kind guides the case study brought to us by Sara Gundersen, a development economist at Valparaiso University (Valparaiso, IN, USA). "Will God Make Me Rich? An Investigation into the Relationship between Membership in Charismatic Churches, Wealth, and Women's Empowerment in Ghana" draws on social survey data to explore the named factors and examine the nexus between them. Divining the practical implications of Pentecostal affiliation as measured by indicators of economic prosperity and individual empowerment is a daunting proposition, particularly given the multitude of variables involved and the inertia of self-selecting social and demographic factors that correlate with religious identity. Yet Gundersen's careful study allows her to reach balanced, judicious conclusions that challenge certain expectations within the field and show that all is not as it seems. Her analysis, furthermore, is directly relevant to the hypothesis of a Pentecostal gender paradox, that is, a social modus operandi whereby the affirmation of selected elements of patriarchy serves—consciously or otherwise—as a strategy for expanding women's empowerment overall (and that with a concomitant restriction of male prerogatives).[9] Whatever the final assessment there may be, it is clear that Pentecostalism is having an effect on norms and behaviors surrounding gender. The precise nature of those effects remains elusive, but this article makes an important contribution to the mapping of that terrain.

For Pentecostals, too, Gundersen shows, "the personal is political," but the political in Pentecostalism today is increasingly structural as well.[10] Around the world, Pentecostals are defying stereotypes and shaking off old apolitical leanings to enter the public square, emerging in some regions as core constituencies within mainstream political parties. An impressive body of scholarship is springing up alongside this striking development, but the relationship between Pentecostalism and party politics is impishly complex. Globally, Pentecostals present great variation along the political axis, and the threads connecting the sources, modes, outcomes, and consequences of their politicization are far from unraveled.[11] Fortunately, several of our articles take up the challenge of this conundrum.

In her article "Pentecostalism, Politics, and Prosperity in South Africa," Maria Frahm-Arp, a religious studies scholar at the University of Johannesburg (South Africa), analyzes data from an extensive research project conducted in greater Johannesburg and discovers distinct patterns of social and political engagement that correlate with differences she observes among churches that, from a distance, appear quite similar. While Pentecostalism in general has played a notably salient role in South African politics, Frahm-Arp and her research group identified proponents of "prosperity gospel" teaching as uniquely politicized. However, they found that this brand of Pentecostalism is by no means monolithic. Close analysis of their data revealed distinctive models of theology and practice among these Pentecostals that could be linked to differing propensities for and modes of social and political engagement. These findings were further deepened by cross-referencing to social indicators. Among the article's many contributions, two stand out. First, it represents an important

---

7 For the economic angle in earlier historical works, see (Anderson 1979). Seminal works from the social sciences include (Martin 1990; Csordas 1992). See also (Mariz 1992).
8 For an early example from the social sciences, see (Gill 1990).
9 The key work here is (Martin 2001).
10 (Hanish 1970).
11 For a brief overview of historical trends in the United States, see (Robins 2010, pp. 50–51, 108–19). Representative studies on corresponding trends globally include (Freston 1993, pp. 66–110; Maxwell 2000; Gifford 2004; Miller and Yamamori 2007).

effort to determine if unique combinations of socioeconomic, demographic, and personal conditions may interact with particular forms of religious ideation and practice to yield identifiable profiles of social and political engagement. Second, it adds to the ongoing attempt within Pentecostal studies to gauge the practical effects—socially, politically, and economically—of prosperity teaching and the institutions that embody and disseminate it.

In a similar vein, Henri Gooren, an anthropologist at Oakland University (Rochester, MI, USA), also examines forms of socio-political engagement within Pentecostalism, but in a comparative context that emphasizes diachronic change. His "Pentecostalization and Politics in Paraguay and Chile" illumines a phenomenon of deep interest within Pentecostal studies: the transition over time, within many quarters of global Pentecostalism, from a largely apolitical posture to one that embraces political involvement as part of the church's social mission.[12] Here, Gooren moves beyond generic observations about upward mobility or sect-to-church evolution by identifying several discrete patterns of engagement, each with its own implications for the Pentecostal community in question. Moreover, this is a comparative study conducted within a set of asymmetrical contexts, and that methodology permits a number of intriguing insights. For example, the primary sites of data collection—Chile and Paraguay—share common traits but present a stark contrast in terms of the historical roots and growth trajectories of Pentecostalism in each. Furthermore, Gooren combines classical Pentecostal, Neo-Pentecostal, and Catholic Charismatic communities within a single purview, which allows him to spot modes of socio-political interface that might apply across the breadth of the "Renewalist" spectrum in South America.[13] Like Frahm-Arp, Gooren shows that political engagement among Pentecostals may emerge along multiple pathways and lead to a variety of outcomes. Both studies enhance our understanding of the patterns of political activity now emerging within global Pentecostalism, and both should inspire further research to gauge the degree to which their findings might apply cross-culturally to forms of Pentecostalism found in disparate societies elsewhere.

A fine complement to these studies is found in "'The Altars Are Holding the Nation in Captivity': Zambian Pentecostalism, Nationality, and African Religio-Political Heritage," which calls attention to the cultural and historical roots of such patterns of engagement and the often unexamined assumptions that shape them. Author Chammah J. Kaunda, a theologian jointly affiliated with the Human Sciences Research Council (Pretoria, South Africa) and the University of KwaZulu-Natal (Durban, South Africa), addresses these issues as they appear in the truly extraordinary situation unfolding in Zambia. With Christianity now constitutionally adopted as the state religion, Zambia stands as the only officially Christian nation in sub-Saharan Africa, and the prominent role played by Pentecostals in this development has left them with an outsized political standing unmatched anywhere in the world. Kaunda approaches his subject by contextualizing it, situating Zambian Pentecostalism within a broader cultural field that lies at the intersection of history, religion, ethnonationalism, and the state. This approach allows him to observe the continuities linking an emerging Pentecostal theology of nationality to traditional African ethnonationalism, whose ontocratic epistemology grounds political structures and assumptions in the foundational order of things. The result is a story rich in irony. Kaunda finds Pentecostalism perpetuating core elements of a pre-Christian culture that it intends to reject, and, in so doing, he sheds light on the complex reciprocity of Pentecostalism's interaction with indigenous cultures and cosmologies generally—a subject of intense interest in Pentecostal studies, particularly among anthropologists. We see Zambian Pentecostals simultaneously rejecting, transmuting, and perpetuating core elements of Bemba ethnonationalism, renouncing the old altars as demonic while

[12] Analyses of this and related transitions, such as those addressed by Kay, have often drawn on Weber and Troeltsch. See (Poloma 1989; Miller 2005).

[13] "Renewalist" is a widely adopted term coined by David Barrett to embrace the full sweep of Pentecostal and Charismatic Christians: (World Christian Database 2018, p. 18).

presupposing the power and centrality of the altar as such. In this case, at least, Kaunda reveals breaking and making, rupture and replication, to be flip sides of the coin of cultural change.[14]

This analysis is taken a step further in "Mobilising Religious Assets for Social Transformation: A Theology of Decolonial Reconstruction Perspective on the Ministry of National Guidance and Religious Affairs (MNGRA) in Zambia." Here, Kaunda and co-author Mutale Mulenga-Kaunda—a scholar of gender and religion also based at the University of KwaZulu-Natal—address a critical question: If Pentecostals are to be part of a religious establishment that allows them to put their political theology into practice, what should the nature of that theology be? Zambian Pentecostals overwhelmingly supported their country's adoption of Christian nationalism and have accepted a central role in Zambia's governance. Indeed, the situation there may allow us to speak, for the first time, of a "custodial" or "magisterial" Pentecostalism. Such a development beckons scholars from ivory-tower analysis into the applied sciences, demanding both evaluative and prescriptive assessments of the principles that might guide policy-making in a Pentecostalized regime. And that is precisely what the authors offer here. How will Pentecostals govern? Will they stand as impartial arbiters framing policy for a diverse society comprised of religious and nonreligious citizens alike? Or will they pursue narrow policies that seek to make society in their own image? These are among the core questions at the root of this article. The authors' immediate focus rests on policies issuing from Zambia's new, Pentecostal-led ministry of religious affairs (est. 2017), which they view with some concern, given that similar bodies in other countries have shown a tendency to promote, if not enforce, the norms, ideologies, and material interests of the religious establishment. Drawing on decolonial studies, political science, theology, and philosophy, Kaunda and Mulenga-Kaunda argue that insights derived from decolonial reconstruction would allow Zambia to arrive at policies that are at once authentically Christian, informed by Zambia's religious heritage, and supportive of democracy, social justice, and human rights for all Zambians, whether on the margins or at the center of their "Christian" nation.[15]

Our final two articles address understudied sociological phenomena pertaining to stigma, identity, and social boundary formation. In "Stigmatisation and Ritual: An Analysis of the Stigmatisation of Pentecostalism in Chile," Wilson Muñoz, a social anthropologist jointly affiliated with the Collège de France, École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales (Paris, France) and the research group ISOR, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (Spain), and sociologist M. Esther Fernández-Mostaza, also a member of ISOR-UAB, explore the social opprobrium attached to Pentecostals in Chile, which has persisted despite decades of conspicuous success and upward social mobility. The authors combine historical methodology with insights derived from sociology, ritual theory, and anthropology—Erving Goffman's work on stigma, in particular—to produce a penetrating analysis of the etiology and manifestations of this phenomenon. The authors argue that customary explanations for social stigmatization fail to fully account for the Pentecostal case in Chile, locating the true catalyst for stigmatization in the movement's ecstatic ritual practices. In so doing, they open up a particularly rich field of inquiry: the sociological functions and consequences—the costs and benefits—of religious ecstasy in Pentecostalism. Ecstasy is a potent and protean social symbol, deployed to multiple effects,

---

[14] Among the seminal works here are (Meyer 1999; Robbins 2004). Several studies have noted that local cosmologies and even specific agents within them are often incorporated and thus preserved in indigenous forms of Pentecostalism, though under a reassigned, "demonic" identity. See (Rio et al. 2017; Kim 2011; Bergunder 2011, chps. 13 and 14; Swanson 2013)—especially the articles on Korean shamanism.An intriguing question here is whether Pentecostalism in this guise, rather than disconfirming secularization theory, might be one of the forms that secularization is taking in the developing world. See (Togarasei 2015). In this view, Pentecostal cosmology—relative to preexisting traditional cosmologies—acts to simplify and partially compartmentalize the cosmos; shifts reliance away from technologies like shamanism and divination; unites adherents under a standardized cosmology shared by a global community; and promotes social values that comport with the pragmatic, individualistic norms that govern the secular global economy. At the very least, these qualities might be seen to advance what Rio, MacCarthy, and Blanes call the "metanarrative of modernity": (Rio et al. 2017, pp. 7–18).

[15] The validity of the authors' concerns, and the urgency of their proposals, is underlined by recent studies that highlight the ambivalence of Pentecostalism's political impulses, which appear to be simultaneously egalitarian and hierarchical, capable of promoting both democratic and authoritarian trends. See (Sperber and Hern 2018; Bampani and Valois 2018).

and the authors help us understand its role in the paradoxical dialectic of social demarcation in Chile. Ritual behaviors that transgressed Chilean social norms provoked disfavor, scorn, and exclusion, to be sure, but they also secured a form of social capital—or, perhaps better, "countersocial" capital—that proved central to the movement's identity, cohesion, and long-term success.[16]

Whereas Muñoz and Fernández-Mostaza explore issues of identity and stigma relative to the environing society, our final article unveils parallel forms of social marking and ostracism within the Pentecostal community itself. In "Impossible Subjects: LGBTIQ Experiences in Australian Pentecostal-Charismatic Churches," Mark Jennings, a religious studies scholar at Murdoch University and Wollaston Theological College (Perth, Australia), brings us compelling voices and moving life stories that represent what we can presume to be thousands of LGBTIQ Pentecostals in Australia. With a perspective tuned to the sociological, psychological, and theological dimensions of his topic, Jennings shows how LGBTIQ Pentecostals have negotiated matters of status, belonging, and role within a religious subculture that discountenances the essence of their identity and is wont to disfavor or exclude them. We hear from those who stayed and those who strayed, and learn of the vexing dilemmas, hard choices, and often painful consequences faced by all parties involved, but above all by Jennings' subjects. This is an article full of nuance and surprise; lived realities intersect with institutional and doctrinal norms in often unexpected ways, and apparently hard structures are sometimes softened or inflected by personal relationships and communal ties. Both the author and his subjects offer perceptive analyses of the circumstances LGBTIQ Pentecostals find themselves in, as well as the array of options they face when locating themselves relative to Pentecostalism. On the strength of these elements alone, Jennings' study would serve to challenge and inform theological reflection on the controversial issues that lie behind his subjects' predicament, but he deepens this contribution by contrasting the rigid manner in which normative biblical texts are often interpreted here with the hermeneutical flexibility that Pentecostalism has historically shown relative to women in ministry. Our final article, that is to say, like others in this special issue, reflects the tradition of engaged scholarship and hopes to have a say in that paramount question, "Whither Pentecostalism?"

As should by now be clear, the authors in this special issue represent an emerging style of Pentecostal scholarship, one that has imbibed the adaptive, free-flowing spirit of the movement it studies. They are, in their own way, "comeouters," forsaking disciplinary silos that have long constrained the historical and social sciences for mixed methodologies and hybrid perspectives that are diverse in their sources and expansive in their investigative reach. The results speak for themselves. The analyses presented here add precision and nuance to our understanding of global Pentecostalism, bringing into sharper relief the texture and topography of a movement that is altering the terms of what it means to be religious in the world today.

Funding: This research received no external funding.

Conflicts of Interest: The author declares no conflicts of interest.

References

Anderson, Robert Mapes. 1979. *Vision of the Disinherited: The Making of American Pentecostalism*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Bampani, Barbara, and Caroline Valois, eds. 2018. *Christian Citizens and the Moral Regeneration of the African State*. London: Routledge.

Bergunder, Michael. 2011. Miracle Healing and Exorcism in South Indian Pentecostalism. In *Global Pentecostal and Charismatic Healing*. Edited by Candy Gunther Brown. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

[16] Pentecostals globally have often been fierce provocateurs, flaunting norms and adopting a defiant posture of marginality vis-à-vis the mainstream. For social and class antagonism in early American Pentecostalism, see (Wacker 2001, pp. 184–202). For the role of religious ecstasy in boundary-marking and class-based oppositional identity among Radical Holiness precursors to Pentecostalism, see (Robins 2010, pp. 11–12; Robins 2004, pp. 33–34, 145–53).

Csordas, Thomas. 1992. Religion and the World System: The Pentecostal Ethic and the Spirit of Monopoly Capital. *Dialectical Anthropology* 17: 3–24. [CrossRef]

Freston, Paul. 1993. Brother Votes for Brother: The New Politics of Protestantism in Brazil. In *Rethinking Protestantism in Brazil*. Edited by Virginia Garrard-Burnett and David Stoll. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, pp. 66–110.

Geertz, Clifford. 1973. *The Interpretation of Cultures*. New York: Basic Books, p. 412.

Gifford, Paul. 2004. *Ghana's New Christianity: Pentecostalism in a Globalizing African Economy*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Gill, Lesley. 1990. 'Like a Veil to Cover Them': Women and the Pentecostal Movement in La Paz. *American Ethnologist* 17: 708–21. [CrossRef]

Gladwin, Ryan. 2015. Charismatic Music and the Pentecostalization of Latin American Evangelicalism. In *The Spirit of Praise: Music and Worship in Global Pentecostal-Charismatic Worship*. Edited by Monique Ingalls and Amos Yong. University Park: Penn State University Press, pp. 197–214.

Goffman, Erving. 1959. *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. New York: Anchor Books.

Hanish, Carol. 1970. The Personal is Political. In *Notes from the Second Year: Women's Liberation: Major Writings of the Radical Feminists*. Edited by Shulamith Firestone and Anne Koedt. New York: Radical Feminism.

Harrison, Paul. 1977. Toward a Dramaturgical Interpretation of Religion. *Sociology of Religion* 38: 389–96. [CrossRef]

Ikeuchi, Suma. 2017. Accompanied Self: Debating Pentecostal Individual and Japanese Relational Selves in Transnational Japan. *Ethos* 45: 3–23. [CrossRef]

Kim, Sean C. 2011. Reenchanted: Divine Healing in Korean Protestantism. In *Global Pentecostal and Charismatic Healing*. Edited by Candy Gunther Brown. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Mariz, Cecília. 1992. Religion and Poverty in Brazil: A Comparison of Catholic and Pentecostal Communities. *Sociological Analysis* 53: S63–S70. [CrossRef]

Martin, David. 1990. *Tongues of Fire: The Explosion of Protestantism in Latin America*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

Martin, Bernice. 2001. The Pentecostal Gender Paradox: A Cautionary Tale for the Sociology of Religion. In *The Blackwell Companion to Sociology of Religion*. Edited by Richard K. Fenn. Malden: Blackwell Publishing, pp. 52–66.

Maxwell, David. 2000. 'Catch the Cockerel Before Dawn': Pentecostalism and Politics in Post-Colonial Zimbabwe. *Africa* 70: 249–77. [CrossRef]

Meyer, Birgit. 1999. *Translating the Devil: Religion and Modernity among the Ewe in Ghana*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, Ltd.

Miller, Donald. 2005. Routinizing Charisma: The Vineyard Christian Fellowship in the Post-Wimber Era. In *Church, Identity, and Change: Theology and Denominational Structures in Unsettled Times*. Edited by David A. Roozen and James R. Nieman. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdman's Publishing Co., pp. 141–62.

Miller, Donald, and Tatsunao Yamamori. 2007. *Global Pentecostalism: The New Face of Christian Social Engagement*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Nelson, Lawrence J. 1987. O'Reilly General Hospital of Springfield, Missouri: The Demise of O'Reilly Hospital and the Beginning of Evangel College, 1946–1955. *Missouri Historical Review* 81: 417–46.

Poloma, Margaret. 1989. *The Assemblies of God at the Crossroads: Charisma and Institutional Dilemmas*. Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press.

Rio, Knut, Michelle MacCarthy, and Ruy Blanes, eds. 2017. *Pentecostalism and Witchcraft: Spiritual Warfare in Africa and Melanesia*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Robbins, Joel. 2004. The Globalization of Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 33: 117–43. [CrossRef]

Robins, Roger Glenn. 2004. *A. J. Tomlinson: Plainfolk Modernist*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Robins, Roger Glenn. 2010. *Pentecostalism in America*. Santa Barbara: Praeger.

Sperber, Elizabeth, and Erin Hern. 2018. Pentecostal Identity and Citizen Engagement in Sub-Saharan Africa: New Evidence from Zambia. *Politics and Religion* 11: 830–862. [CrossRef]

Swanson, Paul L., ed. 2013. *Pentecostalism and Shamanism in Asia*. Nagoya: Nanzan Institute for Religion and Culture.

Togarasei, Lovemore. 2015. Modern/Charismatic Pentecostalism as a Form of 'Religious' Secularisation in Africa. *Studia Historiae Ecclesiasticae* 41: 56–66. [CrossRef]

Turner, Victor. 1974. *Dramas, Fields, and Metaphors: Symbolic Action in Human Society*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Turner, Victor. 1982. *From Ritual to Theatre: The Human Seriousness of Play*. New York: PAJ Publications.

Wacker, Grant. 2001. *Heaven Below: Early Pentecostals and American Culture*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Williams, Joseph. 2015. The Pentecostalization of Christian Zionism. *Church History* 84: 159–94. [CrossRef]

World Christian Database. 2018. Methodology of the World Christian Database. World Christian Database: Center for the Study of Global Christianity. Available online: https://www.worldchristiandatabase.org/wcd/about/WCD_Methodology.pdf (accessed on 27 October 2018).

© 2018 by the author. Licensee MDPI, Basel, Switzerland. This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).

religions

MDPI

Article

George Jeffreys: Pentecostal and Contemporary Implications

William K. Kay

[1] Emeritus Professor of Theology, Wrexham Glyndwr University, Wrexham LL11 2AW, UK; williamkkay@gmail.com
[2] Honorary Professor of Pentecostal Studies, Theology and Religious Studies, Chester University, Parkgate Road, Chester, CH1 4BJ, UK

Received: 19 January 2018; Accepted: 2 February 2018; Published: 15 February 2018

Abstract: The life and work of the Welsh evangelist George Jeffreys resulted in the planting of two denominations in the UK between 1915 and 1962, when he died. The Elim churches continue to this day to be one of the larger classical Pentecostal denominations in the UK, while the Bible Pattern Fellowship dispersed on Jeffreys' death. The disputes that led to Jeffreys' departure from Elim were said to have arisen from his adherence to British Israel doctrine, though his supporters believed they arose from his championing of local church ownership and democracy. This paper considers sociological and other reasons for Jeffreys' remarkable success in the interwar years and his eventual departure from a denomination he founded. It concludes by reflecting on topics (such as the importance of debate and law) that have relevance for contemporary Pentecostalism.

Keywords: George Jeffreys; Elim; British Israel; schism; Pentecostalism; revivalism; 1930s

1. Introduction

George Jeffreys (1889–1962) has been called the greatest British evangelist since John Wesley and George Whitfield (Cartwright 2002, p. 808). Unlike the other two, he self-identified as a Pentecostal. He preached throughout the British Isles during his adult life and planted the Elim Pentecostal denomination, which continues to flourish to this day.

While the analysis of historical causation is fundamentally problematic, given the interaction between indeterminate human agency and social and cultural factors that can be theorised according to a variety of positions, this paper will outline the stages in the life of Jeffreys and end by adducing possible causes of his successes and failures, some of which utilise sociological theory.

While the 'great man' notion of history has been criticised (Butterfield 1949, p. 7), it is evident that, in the case of the creation of an organisation from nothing, the originator must be the chief cause of its existence. Without Jeffreys, there would have been no Elim, since it is impossible to believe a movement of its type would have arisen spontaneously or through the variable effects of culture. In speaking of Jeffreys, we have three main sources of information: his own statements, the statements of those who knew him, and what he did. We may be able to infer traces of his inner life with reference to his position within a particular social group at a particular point in time (e.g., in his attitude to debt), but, equally, we may be wrong in making these inferences, since Jeffreys was atypical, as is borne out by the remarkable achievements of his life.

2. First Strides

Born into a bilingual Welsh-English coal mining family in Wales in the Victorian era, Jeffreys began with the psychological advantage of a stable home coupled with economic sufficiency; his father and elder brothers were all employed at the upper level of wages earned by manual workers.

The independent chapel (one of many dotted all over Wales) was a fixed point in the family's existence, and they would regularly attend on a Sunday and would have heard preaching of a high standard (in Welsh) (Tudor Jones 2004, p. 188), as well as becoming musically attuned to the specialities of male voice choirs with or without an accompanying band.

Jeffreys' maternal grandfather had been a Baptist minister, and Jeffreys himself, as a boy, was taken by his father to see a phrenologist, an indication that his father considered him to be a promising or unusual child (Cartwright 1986, p. 2). His father died when Jeffreys was seven years old. If there is a steely earnestness about the young Jeffreys, this may be attributable to his father's early death.

He attended school until the age of 12, and was then sent to work down the coal mine. He therefore received no further education beyond what was offered at primary level and, from what we know of him later, took few steps to educate himself widely apart from devotional reading of Scripture and a few theological texts. As far as we know, he never attended a cinema or read novels or secular history. Lack of education should not be confused with lack of ability, since those who knew him as an adolescent testified to his capability (Boulton 1928, p. 11).

In 1904–1905, a religious revival swept through the Welsh valleys and mining towns, and Jeffreys himself, together with his older brother Stephen, attended these chaotic gatherings and, at one of them, made a lasting evangelical commitment to Christ. He and his brother threw their lives into their revived chapel, attended and testified at open-air meetings, and observed the excited crowds and religious fervour all around them. Shortly afterwards, Jeffreys received a Pentecostal baptism in the Spirit and spoke with other tongues (Kay 2017, p. 41). Through his preaching, he began to exchange a mining environment for the life of a nonconformist minister, but one, as he confessed, handicapped by a Pentecostal experience that closed doors to him within the Baptist and Congregationalist churches. Nevertheless, because he had earlier experienced healing from facial paralysis (Jeffreys 1932, p. 57), he began to pray for sick people within the network of chapels near his home and, by the time he was about 20, had established himself as a compelling evangelical preacher whose exercise of charismatic gifts of healing often filled the buildings where he spoke.

Around 1913, Jeffreys was invited to Ireland and sailed for Belfast, arriving with a vague plan to evangelise the whole island using a band of preachers possibly modelled on John Wesley's early Methodist circuits.[1] Tent meetings were held continuously in the summer months, and in the winter months he hired town halls. Irish culture was religious and nationalistic, and frequent church attendance sustained the Catholic/Protestant divide with its concomitant republicanism and unionism. After the declaration of war in the fateful summer of 1914, Jeffreys, now ordained, was exempt from military conscription and pressed forward with evangelism to the extent that he formed 15 new Irish Pentecostal congregations in the period from 1915 to 1920.[2] He was solving the problem of finding a denomination in which to minister by creating his own, and was solidifying his evangelical and Pentecostal theology around the person of Christ.

During his final years in Ireland, he was influenced by John Leech, a high-ranking lawyer, to adopt British Israel (or BI) doctrine. This averred that the 10 lost tribes of the house of Israel had somehow made their way across Europe to the British Isles, including Ireland, in the period after the fall of Samaria in 722 BC. The consequence of this doctrine was that the British people were descended from those Jewish exiles, and it was this which explained the extraordinary success of the British Empire and, indeed, of the economic prosperity of the United States. The promises of Scripture addressed to Israel had been divinely worked out in the lives of the British people and their American cousins. This doctrine made no impact upon Jeffreys' evangelical preaching (since he explicitly believed salvation was by grace, not race) but was to have later contentious consequences.

[1] *Confidence* 8.8 (August 1915), p. 156 suggests this.
[2] Conscription was not introduced until 1916 and, in any case, was enforced in Ireland less well than in the rest of the UK.

After a woman had left a property to Jeffreys to help fund his evangelistic work, the woman's family challenged the bequest, and the tussle that followed made Jeffreys realise he needed to set up a legally recognised vehicle that would allow for the receipt of gifts and other money (Cartwright 1986, p. 46). Here Leech, with his lawyer's brain, was invaluable. Quite quickly, Articles of Association or similar documents were drafted, and the Elim Evangelistic Band was formally created with its own council headed by Jeffreys (Kay 2017, p. 79). These developments, then, were prompted by Jeffreys by practical necessity.

While considering his future, it became evident that civil unrest in Ireland would prevent evangelisation of the republican and Roman Catholic south. Jeffreys dropped his plans for an all-Ireland denomination. Instead, he prepared to transfer from Belfast to London.

3. Systematic Growth

In Ireland, Jeffreys had learned how to build up a series of interconnected congregations within a single legal framework, which became the nucleus of a new denomination. He was to extend the same principles to the rest of the United Kingdom, starting in London. However, there was a further important theological incentive to his strategy. In 1917, the British army, under the command of General Allenby, had captured Jerusalem from the Ottoman Empire, with the result that the holy sites of the Bible were now free from Islamic control and, more than this, were included by international mandate within the care of the British Empire. Jeffreys believed this unexpected turn of events correlated with biblical eschatology in the sense that Jerusalem was no longer 'trodden down of the Gentiles' (Lk 21:24) and that 'this generation' (Lk 21:32) would live to see the return of Christ. Both British Israel teaching and Adventism were strengthened by the success of the British Army and, when the Balfour Declaration (1917) stating the British government's willingness to favour the Holy Land as a Jewish home was added to the picture, world events appeared to have been divinely engineered. Jeffreys certainly thought so.

In 1921, Jeffreys hired an almost redundant church building in the south of London for his opening manoeuvres and preached every day for several weeks, with evangelistic services in the evening and healing services on several afternoons. Starting with limited attendance, the momentum of the meetings rapidly built up once healings occurred. Word spread and, using the modernised London transport system with its underground trains and decommissioned military vehicles as buses, crowds could assemble from far and wide, which they did. By the end of the year, the rented building could be bought, and offices attached to the back for a headquarters for the substantial evangelistic work now in progress. Stephen Jeffreys assisted by holding his own healing campaigns, and for some years, the two brothers worked in tandem, with George as the visionary organiser and Stephen the frontline healing evangelist.

4. Reaching Across the Land (1920–1935)

So began about 15 years of consistent progress and Pentecostal expansion. Buying a car, Jeffreys would campaign regularly in large population centres, taking care to establish a base in Scotland similar to the one in London, and another in Wales. In each case, the method was the same, and in each case, the method was met with evangelistic and congregational success. Congregations were formed, buildings were bought, sometimes outright, and the crowds continued to attend even when he stayed for three weeks or more in the same city. Behind Jeffreys' preaching charisma stood E.J. Phillips, a man of extraordinary industriousness and organisational skill, who managed the finances and logistics of the various burgeoning projects: a bible school, the paying of pastoral salaries, the funding of a magazine, the logistics of transporting equipment around the country, advertising, and myriad other practicalities such as the completing of Jeffreys' tax return. Placed in front of the congregation, Jeffreys, with his lilting Welsh voice and dignified demeanour, could hold his listeners entranced for sermon after sermon. Almost invisible, and back at headquarters, Phillips took the administrative load.

Jeffreys began to follow an annual pattern of preaching in Belfast over Christmas, and then at the various large locations at the same time each year, including tent campaigns during the summer months on the south coast of England. In 1926, Aimee Semple McPherson was on the way to the Holy Land and stopped off in the UK. Jeffreys and Phillips decided to invite her to preach for them and, realising the magnetic power of her name, took the bold step of hiring the Royal Albert Hall in London for the event. This was one of the iconic London venues, with a seating capacity of 10,000 people, a great pipe organ, and easily within reach of numerous transport links. The step was bold, because the cost of hiring the hall was high, but Phillips sprang into action by organising transport from Wales, Scotland, Ireland and the Channel Islands so that discounted tickets could be purchased and even whole trains could be hired. In this way, and from every corner of the UK, Jeffreys assembled the fruits of his evangelistic ministry at a single location, thereby giving the denomination a natural unity as well as a focus. Thereafter, he hired the Royal Albert Hall at Whitsun from 1927 until 1939, and every year he preached and filled it.

5. A Turning of the Tide

In 1932 and 1933, Jeffreys started to broach the doctrine of British Israelism with the rest of Elim. He did so openly by holding discussions with ministers, and he must have assumed that these ministers, many of whom he had placed as pastors over congregations, would loyally follow him down the BI road. Yet this was not so. Jeffreys had always upheld the authority of the Bible. Consequently, although Elim was thoroughly and proudly Pentecostal, it derived its distinctiveness from a commitment to the Bible, and the pastors simply did not find BI in the Scriptures.

At almost exactly the same time, the basic legal and constitutional structure of Elim was under review, and was eventually settled by the drawing up and signing of a Deed Poll, a 36-page document setting out the governance of the denomination. An Executive of nine men were to be put in place. Of these, two were *ex officio*, Jeffreys and Phillips, and Jeffreys himself was given the right for life to nominate three other members of the council. This would have given him a total of four votes out of nine, so that he only needed to find one other person to agree with him to secure a majority on every decision. By the Deed Poll, nearly all the valuable property accumulated by Elim was legally placed into the Executive's hands and, over and above this, it exerted spiritual authority through its influence on the annual ministerial conference and its oversight of church policy.

The administrative structure of Elim defined by its constitution was gradually adapted in response to the movement's numerical growth and its accumulation of property. In this sense, structural development resulted from an interaction between endogenous (the call and gifting of Jeffreys) and exogenous (practical responses to success) factors. The internal mutation of the movement was also reflected in the separate legal categories of church that had come into being, partly as a result of competition with the Assemblies of God, which started to grow quickly after 1924 by its ability to attract autonomous congregations into a kind of loose federation without strong central control. So Elim now arranged itself into an inner ring of centrally controlled churches and an outer ring of churches permitted an element of autonomy.

As Jeffreys' energetic campaigning took him up and down the country, congregations were grouped into regions with their own superintendents. As Jeffreys spent less time in his London base, a weekly magazine was published to keep converts in touch with his latest successes. As more and more congregations were formed, more and more ministers were needed—a need met by residential training. Beyond this, missionaries were being sent overseas.

In essence, the administration of the movement complexified organically to cover its manifold activities and eventually settled into an annual cycle. Every year its unity was celebrated at the London gatherings in the Royal Albert Hall, and every year Jeffreys published a Christmas letter full of grateful reminiscences. Departments and regions were added without threatening stability.

At the 1934 annual ministerial conference, Jeffreys introduced a debate on British Israelism. He ensured that John Leech was present to speak in favour of the motion for BI, and he must have

assumed that the highly respected advocate would wipe the floor with any opposition brave enough to disagree with him. The Elim minister in charge of training was put up to present the anti-BI case but, at the last moment, withdrew, and this left the task to E.J. Phillips, who stayed up all night to prepare his address. The meeting was conducted as a formal debate with speakers on both sides who, after presentations for an hour or so, took questions from the floor. After this, the matter was decided by vote. Phillips, who was of Jewish extraction himself, considered BI to be 'an infatuation'—he did not even dignify the idea by calling it a theory. The Elim ministers voted resoundingly against BI and only those in the immediate Jeffreys circle supported it.[3] Courtesies were observed, Elim appeared to have overcome this doctrinal contest, and that should have been the end of the matter.

6. Travels and Crises

The BI issue appeared to have been resolved. Jeffreys continued his campaigning in 1935 with his eye upon coming-of-age celebrations in 1936 in the denomination's 21st year. Elim hired the Crystal Palace, an immense exhibition structure with a capacity for 20,000 people, for a vast London autumn event. During 1935, Jeffreys and his party took a five-week holiday to the Holy Land, starting at the pyramids in Egypt and then travelling northward. Jeffreys himself was stirred as he sat upon the Mount of Olives meditating upon the vicissitudes of the city over which Christ had wept. He was heartened at the same time by meeting citizens of Jerusalem who had been present in 1917 at Allenby's victorious entrance, and heard of the flowers being thrown over the soldiers and the grateful crowds kissing their hands. He foresaw British soldiers defending Jerusalem prior to the Battle of Armageddon, and his Adventist convictions deepened.

He returned to Britain, but with less focus on breaking new evangelistic ground. He now devoted much of his energy to raising money for a big Jubilee Fund intended to pay off all the debts on all the buildings as rapidly as possible.[4] He went privately to see Phillips to speak about his desire to lay down the burden of leading Elim and set up an alternative charity, the World Revival Crusade, as a vehicle for his future work. During regular summer trips to France and Switzerland, he had seen plentiful conversions, though without forming any new congregations there.

As part of his drive to pay off debt, he proposed dividing the Elim churches into two sections, the best and most prosperous led by experienced pastors in a 'Jubilee Concentration', and the rest in a 'Forward Movement'. This division alarmed the Executive, who saw in the proposal, and in the setting up of the World Revival Crusade, an ulterior motive. They believed Jeffreys was preparing to take churches out of Elim into a new denomination that would be open to British Israel teaching. Nothing Jeffreys did over the next two or three years disabused the Executive of this interpretation of his actions. Jeffreys himself, in a turn diametrically opposed to the assumptions of the Deed Poll, now thundered from the pulpit on the evils of centralisation and the merits of autonomous congregations owning their own buildings.

In December 1937, Jeffreys collapsed with diabetes while, extraordinarily, E.J. Phillips, with tuberculosis, was also confined to hospital. Jeffreys recovered faster and, seizing the administrative reins, called for radical reform.[5] He told the movement that he had received a divine command to 'set his house in order' and that this command entailed a dismantling of the central administration of property to enable congregations to become self-governing and free of what he came to denounce as 'Babylonish control'. Alarm in executive circles reached a new level, since Jeffreys had spent much time in 1936 touring the churches as part of the Jubilee year; he appeared to be strengthening his bonds with them in preparation for a call to secede.

[3] By 73 to 17 votes, with 41 neutrals.
[4] Working-class families like the one from which Jeffreys came had a horror of debt of any kind.
[5] By implication, Phillips had failed to manage the movement's finances competently. Phillips had no difficulty, once he returned to the office, in showing Jeffreys had failed to read the accounts properly.

7. A Parting of the Ways

The Executive attempted to contain their differences with Jeffreys and come to an amicable settlement. In speaking about the decision-making of the conference, Jeffreys demanded a place for lay members. This was presented as a democratising measure, although it may also be seen as introducing men and women who would be more susceptible than ministers to Jeffreys' charisma. The stand-off between Jeffreys and Elim continued at the 1938 conference, and then also in 1939. Each time, Jeffreys was pushing for further changes that gave opportunities for BI teaching to be introduced or for the central control exercised by the conference or Executive to be reduced. He wanted the locally governed churches to be open to a new emphasis. Multipage documents and lengthy discussions filled the conference agenda but, despite concessions over doctrinal safeguards and the democratic rights granted to the conference or to each individual congregation, Jeffreys was never satisfied.

He eventually resigned in 1939 and then, after strenuous attempts at reconciliation over the course of a year, re-joined and finally resigned permanently in 1940. The question of the ownership of the buildings was at the forefront of the fusillade of pamphlets that then were exchanged between the Executive and Jeffreys. He wrote about 20, and Elim a slightly lower number in reply. Jeffreys took the role of the champion of ecclesiastical liberty, while the Executive pointed out that the system of which Jeffreys was so critical was one he had himself shaped and signed into law only a few years earlier.

Jeffreys set up an entirely new organisation, separate from the World Revival Crusade, called the Bible Pattern Fellowship, with its own magazine, conference, constitution, congregations and mode of operation. It was founded almost exactly at the start of the Second World War, and although Jeffreys anticipated large numbers of Elim churches would cross the divide to join his new group, the actual number that went over was relatively small. During 1938, 1939 and 1940, Elim ministers had begun to realise what was happening. They had actually suffered considerably during the drive to reduce Elim's debt, since what effectively occurred was that money was taken away from ministers to pay off buildings. Until that point, churches with a surplus income found their money being redirected through headquarters to churches whose pastors were insufficiently paid; the centralised system ensured a uniform pay scale for pastors. However, once the big demand for the Jubilee clearance of debt was made, surplus money went to pay down mortgages, and many ministers suffered hardship. It was this, perhaps, as much as anything else, that hardened the ministers against the demands Jeffreys was making for reform.

When Jeffreys left, Elim's shock and sadness was added to the trauma of a new war: young men donned military uniform and left home and the bombing of London began. Crusades could hardly be held, and travel was hampered by blackouts and the bombing of railway lines. The loss of their star preacher hurt, while, as the stream of pamphlets showed, Jeffreys remained for several years fixated on the minutiae of the rift. He made matters worse by periodically mailing Elim church officers with letters that had the effect of unsettling the pastors. Jeffreys eventually built up the Bible Pattern Fellowship to about 60 congregations, while Elim, after a few bare years, held steady and eventually found a new national evangelist in Percy Brewster and fresh hope.

When the war ended, Jeffreys could resume extensive travel and continued to attract crowds, but was unable to sustain long campaigns, with the result that he hardly formed any fresh congregations. He remained on the fringes of the British and European Pentecostal movements and complained of the formation of a World Pentecostal Conference after 1947. When he died in 1962, the Bible Pattern Fellowship largely dispersed; some congregations returned to Elim, and others migrated to the Assemblies of God.

8. Analysis

While it is impossible to conduct a precise empirical analysis of historical events, it is possible to review the growth of the Elim denomination (206 churches in 1942)[6] and the departure of Jeffreys from it by making use of theological or sociological ideas. It is also possible to classify these ideas according to their exogenous or endogenous nature.

8.1. Growth of Elim

(A) Worldview: The most common explanation for the growth of Pentecostalism, and one that is consonant with secularisation theory, is that Pentecostalism is most readily appreciated in those cultures that best match the Pentecostal worldview. Since that worldview contains angels, spirits and an interventionist God, the notion here is that any culture that has not been subjected to the critique of the Enlightenment is likely to be hospitable to Pentecostalism. Given that secularisation theory assumes religion declines as the world becomes less 'enchanted', the idea that Pentecostal churches grow when there is a match between their worldview and the prevalent culture is effectively another way of expressing secularisation theory (Weber 1918 (1946)).

Thus, in the case of Jeffreys, the view would be expressed that he appealed to latent folk religion or unsophisticated and uneducated working people who would be prone to accepting his proclamation of a supernaturalist worldview. There are, however, difficulties with accepting this conclusion, not least that many of the people who accepted Jeffreys' preaching (like John Leech) were by no means simple people. In addition, Jeffreys was absolutely insistent that the gospel message he preached was supernatural from start to finish. He viewed Christianity as an entirely supernatural religion, all the way from the virgin birth to the resurrection, and with plentiful miracles in all the years of the ministry of Christ. So for Jeffreys, the gospel he preached was countercultural, or at least countercultural in respect of the main orientation of the larger churches, Anglican and Roman Catholic (Hastings 1986). Indeed, Jeffreys fought his battle on two fronts by berating the 'liberals', who denied the miraculous nature of Christianity, and the 'dispensationalists', who accepted the authority of Scripture but relegated miracles to the age of the Apostles.

Yet it is reasonable to argue for consonance between Jeffreys' preaching and the political culture of the day. In Ireland before 1920, his message resonated with a strongly anti-Catholic and pro-Protestant culture, whereas in England, his message resonated with the sense of morbidity and crisis that lay behind the thought of the cultural elite. Winston Churchill had written a book entitled *The World Crisis* (published in 1923) and, in an era where most families had been horribly bereaved by the mass slaughter of the First World War, there was morbidity in the air to the extent that one writer spoke of a 'morbid age' (Overy 2009). War appeared to be a concomitant of modern life, an inescapable blight on the human race brought about by the repressions of civilisation. This was a Freudian view (Freud 1930). Accompanying it was the shocked recognition that an ancient Christian monarchy in Russia had fallen prey to an atheistic and communist coup. Thus, when Jeffreys spoke about crisis, tragedy and end times, he was tapping into the unconscious fears of many people and, when he added on top of these fears a biblical layer of interpretation speaking of Antichrist, Armageddon and persecution, he was striking yet another unseen chord.

(B) Preaching: It has been argued that evangelical preaching is attractive to an audience confused by current events or moral dilemmas. Such preaching, it is said, oversimplifies complex issues and, in doing so, gains a spurious authority (Kelley 1972; Innaccone et al. 1995). The notion here is that evangelical preaching, as opposed to more liberal preaching, is forceful, definite and demanding. Its clarity provokes a response, whereas liberal preaching, which is exploratory, tentative and questioning, has no such effect.

---

[6] According to Wilson (1961, p. 57), Elim had reached 152 churches in England, 8 in Scotland, 26 in Ireland, 17 in Wales and 3 in the Channel Islands by 1942.

This argument applies to the preaching of Jeffreys in that he undoubtedly achieved clarity and force in his sermons. Whether it is valid to argue that Jeffreys' success entirely stems from the definiteness of his preaching is questionable. After all, there were other preachers in the conservative camp—some evangelical and others Pentecostal—who could equally be said to have thumped their pulpits and simplified the moral and spiritual choices in front of their listeners but without anything like the national success achieved by Jeffreys. Therefore, although the theory is attractive and may be partially correct, it falls short.

(C) Healing and miracles: In the first part of the 20th century, medical science was barely out of the Victorian age. It was primitive by today's standards, without antibiotics or much of the technology that assists contemporary diagnosis and treatment. Britain itself had no National Health Service (or health care system funded out of taxation), an innovation only brought in after 1945. Moreover, understanding of diet was undeveloped. As a consequence, the population was relatively unhealthy—there were also cases of tuberculosis as a consequence of poorly ventilated and unheated houses, and there were industrial accidents and disabled service members discharged from the Armed Forces. When a powerful preacher announced that Jesus is as much present today as he had been in times of the Bible, men and women were willing to believe and to receive prayer: healings undoubtedly occurred, as is confirmed by reports in the secular press. Jeffreys took these healings as a vindication of the supernaturalistic stance he had adopted. This combination of preaching that addressed the deep-seated fears of a population haunted by unemployment or war and miracles of healing was potent and attractive. It was, to use a term popularised fifty years later, 'power evangelism' (Wimber and Springer 1992), since it caused changes in the worldview of many listeners, and regular testimonies to this effect were published in the *Evangel*.

(D) Charisma: Max Weber offered an analysis and description of the rise of religious movements by postulating the presence of charisma in a new leader. He took the term from the New Testament but applied it beyond the sphere of religion. It described an individual endowed with particular gifts and skills that followers attributed to supernatural sources. The charismatic prophet offered a unified worldview for believers to hold and pursue (Schnepel 1987). Once the ground-breaking charismatic leader had established a new faith or a new spiritual path, the second generation of religious leaders would rapidly bureaucratise the cohort of followers and, by this means, build up religious institutions. This two-generation process of religious innovation could be observed in multiple locations and over several religious traditions. Illuminating though it was, it hardly constituted an explanation of the development of Elim. While some writers attempted to show the connection between charisma and institutionalisation, Weber's theory had no answer either psychological or sociological for the sudden and unexpected emergence of a charismatic personality (Eisenstadt 1968, chps. 19 and 20). In this respect, Weber discerned an observable pattern of events, rather than a causative theory. To say that Jeffreys was a charismatic individual is, in many respects, to state the obvious.

Where Weber's theory appears suspect in Jeffreys' case, however, is over the role of Phillips. Bryan Wilson, writing in the Weberian tradition about Elim, considered the disagreement between Jeffreys and Phillips as a classic example of the breakdown of relationships between the charismatic leader and a bureaucratic follower (Wilson 1961, p. 45). However, as the voluminous correspondence between Jeffreys and Phillips shows, the situation was not nearly so clear-cut or simple as this. Jeffreys was also a highly practical individual with the ability to function bureaucratically and administratively, while Phillips was a capable speaker (as his refutation of John Leech showed). The charismatic leader was an institution builder as well as a theologically driven and persuasive speaker.

8.2. The Schism

Sociological theory has also been concerned with religious groupings and the emergence of sects and their evolution into churches or denominations (Troeltsch 1912 (1931)). It is possible to see the departure of Jeffreys from Elim and his establishment of the Bible Pattern Fellowship as the formation of a new sect. One might view the successful Elim churches of the late 1930s as a wider religious

culture from which the sub-group schismatically escapes towards greater doctrinal purity; this would be in keeping with classical formulations offered by Weber and Troeltsch. Yet, such an interpretation of events is problematic because both groups, Elim and the Pattern Fellowship, accepted the same doctrine of salvation and the same holiness codes. This was not by any stretch of the imagination a replay of the emergence of early Pentecostal groups from their staid Baptist or Wesleyan parent bodies. Nor did it follow a call to embrace a new and truer message of salvation. The split occurred ostensibly over the matter of church government and the rights of a congregation to direct its own affairs and possess the building for which it has paid. British Israelism hangs like a shadow over the whole affair. Jeffreys' loyal followers maintained its irrelevance while those who remained in Elim disagreed.

There appear to be two main alternatives for understanding the split. First, it occurred because a respected leader performed a U-turn that the majority of his followers would not accept. In 1934, Jeffreys was offering a centralised future, but by 1938 or 39, he had swung round to a decentralised future, a decentralisation intended to permeate the denomination and all its local churches. Second, it occurred because Jeffreys had become obsessed by British Israel doctrine as the international situation darkened, and Elim members and ministers, together with other evangelical churches, believed the doctrine was foolish and untrue.

It is reasonable to ask why Jeffreys ratcheted up his support for BI. He presented it to the Elim conference as a legitimate eschatological variant at a time when Pentecostal eschatology accepted a range of positions on the rapture of the church and the 'great tribulation' (Mt 24:21). He affirmed that the book of Revelation's seven churches could be interpreted as prophetically figurative of the centuries of church history or merely limited to the early second century. In his defence of BI, Jeffreys demanded the right to preach whichever eschatological scheme he wished and he, for his part, accepted others would preach other schemes. However, this still does not answer the question of why Jeffreys found it so important to preach BI doctrine when he knew it to be controversial and had already discovered its unacceptability to the great majority of Elim pastors. There appears to be no obvious sociological reason for this, and there is little support for the notion that BI became more attractive as dictatorships in European countries in the 1930s ramped up their political and military power. It is true that the Pattern magazine in the early 1940s carried articles written by members of the British Israel Federation who dogmatically asserted that Britain could not and would not lose the war and would never be invaded by a foreign power. British Israelism offered an ideology that helped its followers cope with the dangers of bombing and the threat of Nazi occupation. Yet, in the years from 1934 to 1939, Jeffreys could not be sure war would break out. Indeed, his answer to the military escalation in Europe was to stress the need for revival in Britain: if revival occurred, God would save his people (Kay 2017, p. 307). So why did BI become so increasingly important to Jeffreys? Two explanations remain: first, that Jeffreys was excessively influenced by John Leech and, second, that Jeffreys, lacking secondary education, was unable to critique BI doctrine. Both these explanations, however, are speculative, and it seems one can hardly blame Jeffreys' lack of education since many of the pastors whom he appointed, and who rejected BI, were similarly short of formal schooling.

9. A Conclusion Pointing Forward

From 1934, when the Deed Poll was signed until the faltering end of the dispute between Jeffreys and Elim, constitutional and legal realities shaped events. The law of the land and the denomination's constitutional documents dominated the way the protagonists fought. Gone were the easy fraternal days in 1915 in Ireland or the lively scenes of revival. Instead, because property was involved, but also as a result of the mindset of Jeffreys and Phillips, the debate became rational-legal rather than spiritual-expressive. Here is a conundrum for successful property-owning denominations which began in a flurry of evangelical enthusiasm. Valuable assets (usually buildings) are protected by contracts and insurances that in a liberal democracy cannot be set aside. Modern Pentecostal movements in nations that allow freehold ownership of property and settle disputes in courts of law are bound to rely on these rights—and so they should—for nothing comparable exists in feudal societies or under

communistic totalitarian regimes. The question for Pentecostals to answer is how they can best express their biblical ideals in a Western legal environment. Their basic attitude towards civil government is quiescent and compliant. They take the position advocated in Romans 13 that government is instituted by God, and for this reason they pay their taxes and exercise their democratic rights. Where they find themselves in disagreement with democratically endorsed law, they have typically campaigned for change—usually unsuccessfully.

Although the protracted dispute between Jeffreys and Elim was hard-fought, it was carried out rationally and with restraint. Open conferences were held to resolve disagreements, and decisions were made after debate and secret ballots. The debates were minuted, with the result that later historians can follow the twists and turns of discussion and the proportion of people who backed one position or another. Despite the personal charisma of Jeffreys and the genuine affection felt for him by many members of Elim, he did not act in a way that was above the law or without honour. Modern Pentecostal movements need to be aware of the problem-solving benefits of democratic debate and of the value of refraining from personal abuse, something both Jeffreys and Elim attempted to do. Although the character of Jeffreys came under the spotlight when matters reached a critical stage, there were no slanderous accusations against him or his followers. If the years from 1934 to 1962 are treated as an aberration, the progress of the Elim church continued after the dispute had subsided. Contemporary Pentecostals need to take 'the long view' when their disagreements escalate.

One further lesson can be taken from the Jeffreys story. Almost certainly, his eschatology predisposed him to misreading world events. Indeed, at one point in about 1950, he began a second Bible school, but then abandoned the plan once the Korean War (1950–1953) broke out; he thought the war indicated a final theological signal of the end of the age (Kay 2017, p. 411). World events in the 1930s were genuinely chilling and, once the atomic age was entered on the other side of Hiroshima in 1945, the Cold War and the potential annihilation of the human race were enough to set the pulses of even the calmest student of the Bible racing. The question for the contemporary Pentecostal movement is to decide how to approach eschatology without panic or complacency.

Conflicts of Interest: The author declares no conflict of interest.

References

Boulton, Ernest C. W. 1928. *George Jeffreys: A Ministry of the Miraculous*. London: Elim Publishing House.

Butterfield, Herbert. 1949. *Christianity and History*. London: G. Bell and Sons, p. 7.

Cartwright, Desmond. 1986. *The Great Evangelists*. Basingstoke: Marshall Pickering.

Cartwright, Desmond. 2002. George Jeffreys. In *The New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*. Edited by Stanley M. Burgess and Eduard M. van der Maas. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, p. 808.

Eisenstadt, Shmuel Noah. 1968. *On Charisma and Institution Building: Selected Papers*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, chps. 19 and 20.

Freud, Sigmund. 1930. *Civilisation and its Discontents*. London: Hogarth Press.

Hastings, Adrian. 1986. *A History of English Christianity: 1920–1985*. London: Collins.

Innaccone, Laurence R., Daniel V. A. Olson, and Rodney Stark. 1995. Religious resources and church growth. *Social Forces* 74: 705–31. [CrossRef]

Jeffreys, George. 1932. *Healing Rays*. London: Elim.

Kay, William K. 2017. *George Jeffreys: Pentecostal Apostle and Revivalist*. Cleveland: CPT Press.

Kelley, Dean M. 1972. *Why Conservative Churches Are Growing*. New York: Harper & Row.

Overy, Richard. 2009. *The Morbid Age: Britain between the Wars*. London: Allen Lane.

Troeltsch, Ernst. 1912. *The Social Teaching of the Christian Churches*. English translation 1931. Louisville: Westminster; Kentucky: John Knox Press.

Tudor Jones, R. 2004. *Faith and the Crisis of a Nation: Wales 1890–1914*. Cardiff: University of Wales Press.

Weber, Max. 1918. "Science as a Vocation". English translation 1946. Lecture presented at *Wissenschaft als Beruf*, Munich, Germany, given in German in September 1918.

Webber, Max. 1921. *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology*. English translation 1968. Translated and Edited by Guenther Roth and Claus Wittich. New York: Bedminster Press, p. 450. Quoted in Schnepel, Burkhard. 1987. Max Weber's Theory of Charisma and Its Applicability to Anthropological Research. *Journal of the Anthropological Society of Oxford* 18: 26–48. Available online: https://www.anthro.ox.ac.uk/sites/default/files/anthro/documents/media/jaso18_1_1987_26_48.pdf (accessed on 12 February 2018).

Wilson, Bryan R. 1961. *Sects and Society: A Study of Three Religious Groups in Britain*. London: Heinemann, p. 45 and passim.

Wimber, John, and Kevin Springer. 1992. *Power Evangelism*. London: Hodder and Stoughton.

© 2018 by the author. Licensee MDPI, Basel, Switzerland. This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).

MDPI

Article

Religion as Play: Pentecostalism as a Theological Type

Wolfgang Vondey

Centre for Pentecostal and Charismatic Studies, Department of Theology and Religion, University of Birmingham, Birmingham B15 2TT, UK; w.vondey@bham.ac.uk

Received: 12 February 2018; Accepted: 9 March 2018; Published: 13 March 2018

Abstract: This article suggests that Pentecostalism constitutes a genuine type of religion we can label as play. In order to identify the particular elements of this type, the article makes use of Erving Goffman's frame analysis to organize Pentecostal theological activity. This methodological starting point is followed by an overview of existing interpretations of Pentecostalism as a form of play. The main portion of this essay then constructs from an analysis of everyday experiences visible in Pentecostalism a primary framework of activities oriented around the transformative encounter with the Holy Spirit. The sequence of activity involves a primary and overlapping pattern of Pentecostal spirituality, experience, narrative, affections, practices, and embodiment. Demonstrating that play is not exclusive to Pentecostalism, but that Pentecostals manifest a particularly visible form, demands that greater attention is paid both to Pentecostalism as a religious tradition and to play as a theological model.

Keywords: Pentecostalism; play; theology; frame analysis; typology

---

Pentecostalism is frequently identified as one of the fastest growing religious movements of the twentieth century, and interest in Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity has grown dramatically over the last decades, but little agreement exists about the exact nature of what we label with the term "Pentecostal." The adolescence of Pentecostalism may offer helpful insights into the development of young religious movements, yet the question can be asked if the Pentecostal movement indeed possesses a distinctive religious character and how its theology relates to the established Christian traditions and to religion as a whole.[1] It is the argument of this essay that the religious identity of Pentecostalism is rooted in its particular character as a genuine theological type held together by an enigmatic theological method: the mode of play. The difficulty of identifying Pentecostalism stems from a lack of apprehending the particular activities that together comprise religion as play. In order to identify the particular elements of Pentecostalism as play, I make use of Erving Goffman's social theory of conceptual frames to organize Pentecostal religious activity. This methodological starting point is followed by a brief overview of existing proposals that relate Pentecostalism and play. The main portion of this essay then conducts a frame analysis of the core elements characteristic of Pentecostal theology. I conclude with a proposal outlining why play can function as a model for the study of Pentecostalism and how it can be used to organize Pentecostal theology going forward. The essay ends with a discussion of the potential impact of play on the study of religion.

1. Religion and Play: Identifying a Type

The notion of play is thoroughly embedded in psychology, sociology, education, art, literature, and even mathematics and the natural sciences (See Pellegrini 2011). Religious scholars have made use

---

[1] A typology of Pentecostal theology is offered by Stephenson (2013).

of the idea of play in observations of religious rituals and practices or to assess the religious nature of social activities (See Droogers 2014; Bellah 2011; Baker 2007; van Harskamp 2006). Methodological considerations for studying play often assume the existence of play in such religious contexts, even if methods cannot be generalized and different environments can yield contrasting observations. However, comparatively little attention has been paid to Christianity as a context for play, and hardly any concern is given to an understanding of how Christian theology may unfold in the terms of play (See Johnston 1983; Schall 1976; Moltmann 1972; Miller 1970). In the particular contexts of worldwide Pentecostalism, this essay assumes that the identity of this religious movement is situated in the theological activity and persuasion, or imagination, of its diverse contexts. It is therefore necessary to identify the signals that mark off these contexts as play and to organize the corresponding theological activities in order to arrive at a genuine starting point for subsequent observation.

A definition of play is notoriously difficult and conditioned by the dual tendencies of scholars to avoid play altogether or to apply criteria too restrictive to recognize behavior as play (See Burgardt 2011). Following Johan Huizinga's seminal study of the play-element in culture (1949), we can define play with caution in this essay as a primordial pattern of individual action and interaction, distinguished by its qualities of transformation and consummation as well as its unpredictable outcomes.[2] Celebrating the diversity of existing proposals, we can identify play by its free and voluntary activity observing different functions of rules, time, space, and equipment than ordinary life and banding participants together in a transformative and unpredictable fashion (Huizinga 1949, pp. 8–27). Yet, we cannot simply apply existing theories and methods of the study of play directly to religion until we have first recognized the potential environment or set of behavioral categories in which religion as play might be found. The focus in the context of religion is placed on identifying what Huizinga termed the primordial or primary elements of play. I suggest that a useful methodology for this exercise is provided by sociologist Erving Goffman's notion of frame analysis.

The notion of frames, originally introduced by Gregory Bateson as a mental construct to describe "what is going on" in interactive situations, was applied to sociological theory by Goffman as a way to organize meanings and to guide and interpret everyday social activities (Goffman 1974; Bateson 1972). Primary frameworks constitute the central elements of a particular social group, culture, and belief system, and as such they "vary in degree of organization" (Goffman 1974, p. 21). Goffman highlights that we are typically unaware of such primary frameworks, yet it is possible to appraise social action by mapping and interpreting the actions, rules, movements, elements, and processes of the activity (Goffman 1974, pp. 28–37). An initial appraisal of such activities can provide access to understanding the primary frameworks active in Pentecostalism, even if the individual activities are not deliberatively intended or interpreted as play. Observations of Pentecostal theological activities and conventions have been subject to increasing study, leading to significant attempts at "scripting" the everyday theology of Pentecostal congregations (Cartledge 2010). Further attempts have been made to "rescript" this ordinary theology into a broader understanding of the beliefs and practices of Pentecostals (Cartledge 2008a; Martin 2006). However, what is missing is a way to transcribe the literal activities in a way that reveals the primary frameworks of meaning operative in Pentecostalism and to do so in a manner that identifies the framework of frameworks as a genuine theological type. The hypothesis of this article is that this archetype of Pentecostal activity can be labeled as play.

Goffman applies the notion of primary frames immediately to playful actions and suggests that the complex behavior of play can be organized into a strip of activity (Goffman 1974, pp. 40–47). His resulting presentation indicates that primary frames of play conceal their ordinary function, often exaggerating acts, following few patterns, frequently starting, stopping and mixing activities and roles, independent of external needs, yet inviting sociable playfulness. The key to primary frames of play are "the set of conventions by which a given activity, one already meaningful in terms of some primary

[2] See also (Henricks 2008).

framework, is transformed into something patterned on this activity but seen by the participants to be something quite else" (Goffman 1974, pp. 43–44). In other words, while the scripting of ordinary Pentecostal theology may reveal the activities of praying, shouting, jumping, dancing, or prophesying among diverse Pentecostal groups (Albrecht 1999), these actions must be further interpreted in order to stand as expressions of play. Goffman describes the process of transcribing the transformation of these primary activities as "keying."

Keying is the essential act of interpreting what is going on in a certain activity and identifying its transformed meaning for the participants. Goffman emphasizes that the resulting analysis is based on actions that are literally occurring, whereas the keying of these actions reveals nonliteral activity (Goffman 1974, p. 47). There is, in principle, no literal activity we can call play—the identification of playful behavior always depends on the interpretation of literal performances we label more immediately as jumping, running, or kicking a ball. That a strip of activity is considered play is already the result of a keying of original activities which may by themselves not be seen as playful. Identifying Pentecostal theology as play thus depends on the interpretation of literal activities which project the framing of meaning that serves as a model for understanding and reinterpreting Pentecostalism as a whole (Goffman 1974, p. 52). The chief interest of this article is a keying of the non-literal activities in Pentecostal theology in order to reveal the set of conventions active in Pentecostalism that is otherwise concealed by the primary function of literal activities. In other words, the identification of Pentecostalism depends on a transformation of actual, untransformed activities into a rekeying of their core religious expression. The chief objective of this article is to interpret these theological activities as a genuine expression of religion labeled as play.

2. Pentecostalism as Play: Existing Proposals

The Dutch scholar Jean-Jacques Suurmond can be seen as the first to identify Pentecostalism with a form of play (See Suurmond 1994, 1992). He understands the world itself and the sociocultural domain as structures in which the religious and theological life is played out. Amidst these structures, "the essential contribution of Pentecostal spirituality lies in its playful character" (Suurmond 1994, p. 220) evident above all in the charismatic manifestations and practices of the movement. For Suurmond, play resides between order and chaos directed by the Word of God, providing the necessity and structure of play, and the Spirit of God, supplying the dynamism and chance (Suurmond 1994, p. 29; 1992, pp. 248–50). Play is carried out in tension between the Pentecostal identity and the confrontation of that identity with new and different contexts and environments. Pentecostalism is the play of Word and Spirit which "sets us free from our goal-oriented, play-corrupting attitude" (Suurmond 1992, p. 252) and "puts people in a position to surpass themselves to a degree that normally lies outside their reach" (Suurmond 1994, p. 180). Pentecostalism manifests this process in what is essentially a charismatic event. "Word" and "Spirit" arise as the primary frames which govern Pentecostal activity. Still, Suurmond does not offer a definition of play as a religious activity or an explanation of how Word and Spirit function in the keying of literal activities among Pentecostals. Neither is it evident what structures exactly exhibit play and how these differ from other theological activities and religious traditions.

The cultural anthropologist André Droogers has considered Pentecostalism more broadly as representative of religion at play, focusing primarily on the paradoxical character of the movement (Droogers 2014, 1999, 1996; See also Knibbe and Droogers 2011). Droogers views "Pentecostalism" as a social scientific construct that offers a universal framework for the study of religion by stressing the highly adaptive nature of the movement to sociocultural demands that identify Pentecostalism as a rather ambivalent form of religion (Droogers 2014, pp. 258–61). He proposes that the nature of Pentecostalism as play is evident in "the capacity to deal simultaneously and subjunctively with two or more ways of classifying reality" (Droogers 1996, p. 53). Pentecostalism represents a particularly forceful example of how religion (as play) allows the human being to engage the idea of the sacred as an alternative reality amidst the diverse and concrete cultural demands of a globalizing world.

Play becomes a form of methodological ludism in the character of religion that is evident primarily in Pentecostal ritual practices (Droogers 2012, pp. 105–40). Droogers' work is crucial for understanding the religious character of Pentecostals, especially for the consideration of rituals which have risen to a central focus in defining Pentecostalism. Yet, his observations do not offer a theological definition of play, and the idea of a methodological ludism, conceived as a general intellectual capacity to classify reality, stands in tension to his idea of play as primarily a form of religious practices. Droogers' conceptualization of play as creating and dissolving borders is akin to the use of frames (Droogers 2014, p. 125); nonetheless, it is play as such that is here seen as a primary frame, and the literal elements of play that transform ordinary activity have yet to be applied to theological activity and to Pentecostal theology.

In my own work, I have made further attempts at identifying Pentecostal theology as play by proposing that play marks a transitional activity within Pentecostalism that distinguishes Pentecostal theology in kind from established theological traditions (Vondey 2010). In the language of Goffman, play represents a primary framework for structuring and restructuring the global theological agenda by offering a "logic" that holds together Pentecostal theology (Vondey 2010, pp. 16–170). Yet, I conclude, even play itself is in crisis—its function as a primary frame is challenged by the formalization, routinization, and institutionalization of theological traditions (Vondey 2010, pp. 171–201). Classical Pentecostalism is in the process of going beyond itself by exhibiting its playfulness in the terms of a consistent emphasis on the renewal of its original structures. Thus, play serves as a metaphor which unites Pentecostal theology in its historical development. Even so, I was able to explain the elements of Pentecostal theology only in distinction from other traditions and not as a primary framework of meaning. While play is viewed as a method of living and interpreting the logic of reality by transforming and transcending its existing structures and demands towards the realm of alternative expectations, my earlier proposal does not detail the primary theological activities of Pentecostals or the process of transcribing the transformation of these activities into a primary framework of meaning.

The most recent interpretation comes from the Nigerian Pentecostal scholar Nimi Wariboko, who engages the preceding studies with an eye towards identifying play as a core principle of Pentecostalism (Wariboko 2012). Wariboko resists the idea of play as an end in itself and instead classifies play as pure means and unended action. Wariboko criticizes Suurmond for neglecting to identify play as the distinctive essence of Pentecostalism and appraises my own work as wishing to integrate play in the theological vocabulary but failing to engage "play as a proper image for human existence and for the divine-human relationship" (Wariboko 2012, p. 165). Instead, Wariboko suggests that play finds expression in Pentecostalism as pure self-presentation actualized in concrete actions of the community and in their participation in the transcendent (Wariboko 2012, pp. 169–70). Pentecostalism traces the socio-ontological contours that characterize play as a free and non-instrumentalized environment of unended potentiality (Wariboko 2012, p. 186). Yet, despite offering new conceptual tools for interpreting Pentecostalism as play and suggesting that it is indeed everyday literal activity which constitutes Pentecostal theology as play (Wariboko 2016), Wariboko speaks primarily to the operative principle and rarely to the mechanisms that enable the keying of Pentecostal activities. If play is operative not immediately as a fundamental principle, we must look first for a primary framework of everyday activities that allow Pentecostal theology to unfold as play.

Existing proposals relating play and Pentecostalism have consistently argued that play is evident in the distinctive assumptions, principles, and methods operative in the Pentecostal movement. However, the results have neither identified the primary framework of play active in Pentecostalism (what activities actually constitute play) nor attempted a keying of the central elements that make up this framework (how these activities can be understood as play). In the following pages, I therefore begin the necessary work of appraising Pentecostal theology by interpreting the actions, rules, movements, elements, and processes of Pentecostal theological activity a posteriori. Since my primary intention is methodological (rather than sociocultural, anthropological or ethnographic) analysis, the emphasis of the following proposal is on the keying of the different frames as a single theological type

(Pentecostal). At the same time, in order to distinguish this type from other dominant frameworks, the following interpretation also engages in an effort to show how Pentecostals participate in rekeying and reinterpreting existing theological identities. In this manner, the article aims at revealing both play as a universally accessible type and Pentecostalism as a particular expression of religion.

3. Religion as Play: A Primary Framework

Goffman's frame analysis suggests that an identification of Pentecostal theology depends on the activities of literal performances. Recognizing these performances as play depends on the keying of these activities and experiences and organizing them into a strip of activity that can account for Pentecostal theology as a whole. That the keying of primary frames reveals nonliteral activity (i.e., activity that is itself based on literal activity) allows us to highlight the conventions active in Pentecostalism that are otherwise hidden by the primary functions of those activities and to identify their transformed meaning for Pentecostals. In order to accentuate the particular character of this type, I will situate it amidst the two extreme ends of perceiving theology, on the one hand, as "mere" doctrine (as, for example, in contemporary philosophical and analytical theology) and, on the other, theology as "pure" experience (as, for example, in Christian mysticism as traditionally understood).[3] Although Pentecostals show a frequent exaggerating, overlapping, and breaking of exact patterns of activity, I suggest that the following set of interpreted conventions identifies the foundational contours of Pentecostal religious behavior.

3.1. Frame 1: Pentecostal Spirituality or the Origin of Play

Pentecostal spirituality arises with Pentecost as the event where God's "Spirit poured out on all flesh" (Acts 2:17) touches the human spirit with a passion for the kingdom of God (See Land 1993). In light of the day of Pentecost, Pentecostal spirituality is not simply any form of exuberant experience or revival but the expression of a personal participation of the individual and the community in the biblical story of God actualized in Jesus Christ and made possible by the Holy Spirit (Land 1993, pp. 71–82). Chief to Pentecostal spirituality is a core belief in Jesus as the center of the gospel filtered through a heavy emphasis on the cross and the resurrection (See Studebaker 2012). This Christocentric spirituality is clearly accentuated in Pentecostalism by the work of the Holy Spirit evident in the life of Christ and taken as the most essential component of living a Christ-like life (Albrecht and Howard 2014). The move to theological reflection is born from this emphasis on the Spirit of Christ, and the development of Pentecostal doctrine always passes through a personal encounter with Christ through the Holy Spirit. In this Christo-pneumatological sense, Pentecostal theological activity begins as spirituality. The character of Pentecostalism as play is rooted in the ordinary practices of this spirituality, or to put it theologically: play is an expression of the activity of the Holy Spirit who consummates and transforms ordinary practices and creates new communities of spiritual behavior. Of course, spirituality itself is not identical with play. Rather, Pentecostal spiritual practices mark only the starting point for the transformation of primordial patterns we identify as playful. The practices shaping Pentecostal spirituality tend to lead to a rather "thick description" (See Yong 1997) that needs to stay on the ground of experience even when reaching to the height of speculative abstraction: prayer, testimony, shouting, praise, and charismatic manifestations ranging from short or extended utterances to falling under the power of the Spirit form the repertoire of primary religious activities.

Pentecostal spirituality, as play of the Holy Spirit, makes theology as a purely intellectual or theoretical endeavor impossible. Theological expression among Pentecostals can be speculative and systematic albeit only if that means an integration of spirituality in terms of the cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions of the human being. The primary frames of Pentecostal theology emerge from, identify, preserve, and return to the foundational experience of the Holy Spirit. In this sense,

[3] For proposals that Pentecostalism fits either type (See Castelo 2017; Stephenson 2014).

Pentecostal theology is not strictly dogmatic; it does not seek articulation of doctrine as the primary task of doing theology (See Vondey 2013, 2010, pp. 98–108). Instead, Pentecostalism (as play) seeks a relationship between spirituality and doctrine so that theology becomes a constant and reciprocal back and forth movement between beliefs, affections, and actions, on the one hand, and the articulation of doctrine, on the other (See Stephenson 2014, pp. 114–19; Chan 2000). This movement should not be construed as a bias of overemphasizing spirituality or as an inability of Pentecostals to explain themselves (although both may be present); it is rather the result of not having learned consistently how to form a reciprocal bond between theology and spirituality—a problem inherited from modern Christian theology and accentuated by the unexpected experiences of the Holy Spirit. As a result, Pentecostal spirituality emerges as play, to use Huizinga's terms, in an often abrupt, spontaneous and improvised fashion.

The centrality of spirituality has several immediate consequences for identifying Pentecostalism as a genuine theological type. First, the process of engaging faith through spirituality is always submitted to the experience of the Holy Spirit, or put differently, Pentecostal spirituality is always experiential. Second, the road of spirituality depends upon the articulation of the experience underlying the encounter with the Spirit, that is, Pentecostal spirituality always leads to narrative and testimony. Third, the relationship of Pentecostal experience and Pentecostal story is integrated by the affections, in other words, Pentecostal spirituality is fundamentally affective. Fourth, the affections are living expressions of Pentecostal spirituality that always lead to practices. And, fifth, Pentecostal practices are directly dependent on the rituals, rites, and liturgies of Pentecostal spirituality; in short, Pentecostal spirituality is always embodied. The current of Pentecostal spirituality moves from experience to testimony to affections to practices to embodiment and returns to experiences in an ongoing dynamic that captures what might be termed the development of doctrine in Pentecostalism (See Chandler 2016). Spirituality defines Pentecostalism as play not first and foremost by its outcome as a product of the encounter with God but as the potential for and expectation of the continuing experience of God in the world.

3.2. Frame 2: The Experience of the Holy Spirit or the Playground of Pentecostalism

The heartbeat of Pentecostal spirituality is the experience of the Holy Spirit, and religious activities derive from the actuality (not merely the possibility) of the experience of the Holy Spirit as an immediate revelation of God that seeks mediation in the life of the human person and the community (Cartledge 2015). On the level of contemplation, the Pentecostal imagination therefore begins with the Spirit and from there submits to the current of spirituality and theology. Oral narrative and testimony, proclamation, prayer, song and dance, prophecy, and speaking in tongues are some of the native expressions of the wonder of that experience.[4] Scripture contains these ludic expressions in a normative but second-order fashion that allows Pentecostals to reflect on and discern their own experiences. Doctrine is in this process a third-order moment of an implicit theological method that emerges from and aims at the experience of worship rather than systematization, abstraction, and formalization.[5] Pentecostals certainly participate in doctrinal discussion without always possessing a confessional experience, but any teaching not subjected to the primacy of the experience of the Holy Spirit cannot be attributed to Pentecostal origins. Put differently, Pentecostals can maintain any Christian doctrine without claiming that they are uniquely Pentecostal in origin or character. However, for such a teaching to be called "Pentecostal" it must pass through the inevitable and foundational moment of experience. In other words, authentic experience is the ground for Pentecostal spirituality to unfold as play.

---

4 For contrasting views (See Ellington 2011; Camery-Hogatt 2005).

5 Even when the reading of Scripture leads to that experience, Pentecostals attribute primacy to the experience of the experience.

As playful action, what exactly Pentecostals mean by "experience" is (often intentionally) ambiguous—at least to the outside observer (Neumann 2012, pp. 100–61). In principle, for Pentecostals, experience refers to the encounter with the Holy Spirit as recorded in the Scriptures and manifested on the day of Pentecost in charismatic signs and wonders (Neumann 2012, p. 7). The appeal to experience, Pentecostals have emphasized repeatedly, "demands more than *belief* in an experience—it demands the *experience of the experience* itself (Clark and Lederle 1989)." In other words, for the Pentecostal it is a particular kind of experience—not the idea of experience as such—that forms the foundational moment for the emergence as a religious movement. More precisely, it is the particular set of experiences surrounding the immediate encounter with the Holy Spirit that forms the foundation for Pentecostal spirituality to continue theologically: conversion, sanctification, Spirit baptism, divine healing, and a sense of commissioning are among the primary experiences. Pentecostals can use the notion of experience, in full awareness of its ambiguity, broadly as representing an epistemological appeal to a transformative encounter with the immanence of God mediated by the Holy Spirit through the whole spectrum of created existence. Nonetheless, Pentecostals shy away from this kind of conceptualization in fear of losing the playful dynamism of the actual experience and of turning the encounter with God into a mere object of theological reflection distanced from a personal and communal transformation (Chan 2000, p. 24). The continuation of spirituality as play remains tied to the biographies and ethnographies that testify to the concrete contexts of the Pentecostal life: theological generalizations and formulations of doctrine are shaped and reshaped by personal experiences, practices, and rituals in the religious life of the churches (See Marina 2013; Versteeg 2011; Cartledge 2010; Poloma and Hood 2008). A single and isolated experience may not exhibit the character of play. However, from the shared experiences of the transformed community emerges a central theological narrative for articulating the Pentecostal imagination, even if the underlying experiences are not bound strictly to this narrative.

3.3. Frame 3: The Pentecostal Full Gospel or the Narrative of the Pentecostal Imagination

Narrative is widely considered the native expression of Pentecostal spirituality.[6] The most widely-known framework for narrating the set of Pentecostal experiences is the so-called full gospel, which emerged historically as a four- or five-fold pattern.[7] The larger, five-fold pattern proclaims, usually in kerygmatic form, the good news that Jesus Christ brings (1) salvation, (2) sanctification, (3) baptism in the Spirit, (4) divine healing, and (5) the coming kingdom of God (See Dayton 1987). These elements identify the themes of a theological narrative cast in the image of the biblical story of Pentecost. Rather than representing elements of propositional doctrine or a system of doctrines, identifying the full gospel as a narrative for articulating meaningful experiences and spirituality suggests that these theological accents build the core motivation for Pentecostal self-presentation but not the exclusive rules or structures for articulating Pentecostal doctrine (See Cartledge 2008b; Thomas 1998; Land 1993, p. 183; Dayton 1987, pp. 21–23). Narrating the full gospel in testimony and story is a primary frame insofar as it functions as a narrative to the unsolicited encounter with the Holy Spirit (Richie 2011; Ellington 2001; Kroll-Smith 1980). The goal of the full gospel is to tell the story of the Pentecostal experiences of the Spirit and to preserve the availability and validity of those experiences and their perpetuation as a model. In other words, the full gospel is not a performative structure for explicating Pentecostal doctrine; its playful character lies not in the narrative itself but in the activity of narrating; the testimony to the experience of the encounter with God defines the Pentecostal identity. Play unfolds "before" and "while" the theological narrative is articulated, from within the experiences that shape Pentecostal spirituality, and with disinterest in exclusively functional or regulatory concerns of doctrine.

---

[6] The notion of the Pentecostal story was developed by Archer (2010b, 2009, 2004).
[7] Preceding the Pentecostal narrative is Simpson (1890); repr. 1925.

The narrating of the full gospel varies historically and geographically, since the pattern is not the result of systematic theological reflection but a descriptive mechanism of Pentecostal spirituality shaped by a range of personal and communal experiences. Some Pentecostals may not readily use the phrase "full gospel" or its relatives to identify their theology even though the elements of the narrative are clearly seen. Pentecostal groups employ the elements of the full gospel "in a creative and not always in a constant way" (Kärkkäinen 2007). At times, the patterns emerge only individually and not as a whole. The full gospel should therefore not be understood as a definitive formula for the content of Pentecostal doctrine (See Archer 2010a). Literal Pentecostal testimony unfolds as an activity not bound to a strict order, rules, or regulations.

As playful action, testimony is shaped by a correspondence between the freedom of experiences and practices, on the one hand, and the demands of theological reflection and doctrinal articulation, on the other. Therein lies the greatest challenge of actualizing the Pentecostal imagination as play in activities carried out amidst the tension between an idealized "pure" experience and its counterpart as the strict dogmatic adherence to doctrine. Pentecostal testimony is not merely making explicit what is implicit in Pentecostal spirituality and worship, but the encounter with the Spirit acts as a unique hermeneutic in its own right (Cf. Oliverio 2014). Hence, the experiences narrated by the full gospel cannot simply be dissolved into other sources of theology or other religious activities (Vondey 2010, pp. 78–108). Telling the full gospel therefore represents a kind of instrument of play that allows Pentecostal spirituality to proceed from experience to the articulation of doctrine. Yet, the focus is not on the narrative itself, as on a set of rules for play, but on the act of narrating as a form of reliving and communicating the original experiences. The carrier of this form of participatory communication are the affections.

3.4. Frame 4: Pentecostal Affections or the Energy of Religion as Play

The Pentecostal imagination, identified by the spirituality of an immediate experience of God that seeks mediation, does not and cannot proceed directly as intellectual knowledge: rules transform play into a game, its competitive and performative counterpart. Instead, Pentecostal theology proceeds as play along a different dynamic of maintaining and interpreting the foundational experiences. The testimony of the full gospel is a consequence of the demands of a variety of such interpreted experiences (See Thomas 2010). Communicating the narrative of these experiences theologically proceeds not directly through doctrine or narrative but through the affections associated with the original encounter (Smith 2010). Affections mediate God's involvement in the world through manifested expressions of the passion of God's being revealed in Jesus Christ and communicated by the Holy Spirit (Cf. Solivan 1998). Passion is the bridge between Pentecostal experience and doctrine, since the encounter with God occurs in the human being in a manner reflecting God's eternal being and thus characterizing the human person in its disposition toward God's passion for the world (Land 1993, pp. 131–64). The jubilant manifestations of the affections, including love, gratitude, compassion, courage, and joy, often raw and unexpected, but also in their learned and reflective use, provide the energy for the Pentecostal imagination to unfold as play.

The manifestations of the experiences of God proceed primarily by way of the affections rather than intellect, reason, and knowledge, and often bring Pentecostal theology (along with its spirituality, experience, and narrative) to the limits of speech, concepts, theory, and systematization (Smith 2010, pp. 123–50). Reflection on the affections proceeds by way of an imagination nurtured by the actual encounter with the Holy Spirit that seeks to interpret all reality in terms of the worldview generated by that experience (Yong 2005, pp. 27–30; 2002, pp. 110–217). Image, symbol, song, poetry, prophecy, vision, dreams, and glossolalia are the media of religious play carried by the affections (Vondey 2010, pp. 26–46; Yong 2005, p. 28). The goal of this articulation is worship—Pentecostal theology as affective theology emerges from spirituality as worship and with the intention to return to worship. The importance of the affections shows that the ordinary practices of play are theological because they are fundamentally doxological. Consequently, limiting the theological articulation of the Pentecostal

experience to particular affections would also limit the scope of Pentecostal doxology to only particular forms or patterns of play or dissolve the activity immediately into doctrine. Although the concern of Pentecostal spirituality is clearly for the sanctified passions, the spectrum of the affections cannot be defined by dogmatic systems but depends on the direction given by the affections on individuals and in corporate discernment (Land 1993, p. 135). Pentecostal theology is not concentrated in a single passion but dispersed among a variety of affections along a core commitment to the experience of God, understood as the transforming and renewing encounter with Christ through the Holy Spirit (Coulter 2016). Unfolding as play, the affective proclamation of the full gospel emphasizes the importance of any experience of the Spirit as one moment towards the potential "fullness" of the redemptive and transformative work of God. Pentecostal theology is in this sense an affective embodiment of the universal promise of Pentecost that the outpouring of the Spirit transcends all theological structures, norms, and prejudices. Pentecostalism can therefore not be governed either by the authority of revelation or dogmatic systems and theological narratives alone but proceeds always as unpredictable expression of an imaginative praxis oriented toward the full realization of the encounter with God.

3.5. Frame 5: Pentecostal Praxis or the Manifestation of Religion as Play

The activities of spirituality, experience, narrative, and affections characterize Pentecostal theology inherently as praxis. With praxis, I refer to the activities which engage in the analyzing, exercising, realizing, and applying of ideas, on the one hand, and which lead to the production of knowledge and contemplation, on the other (See Arendt 1998). This emphasis should not be misunderstood, as if Pentecostals rejected, ignored, or neglected rational, theoretical, or speculative theology. Instead, the insistence on practicing theology is a particular orientation toward the task of theology and, as such, a pattern of doing theology (See Volf and Bass 2002). The main significance of this primary frame is that theology cannot exist as play without being practiced. In its focus on praxis, Pentecostal spirituality, experience, narrative, and affections turn from the private and individual realm to the public, social, political, and productive life.[8] In other words, it is with the transition to theological practices that Pentecostalism emerges most clearly as a genuine theological type.

Identifying Pentecostalism as the praxis of play is challenged by the potentially unlimited modes of expression of the experience of the Spirit made possible by an affective spirituality. The chief consequence of this challenge is that Pentecostal spirituality cannot proceed immediately in the forms and customs of traditional Christian theology, when conceived as doctrine, creeds, propositions, or wisdom. The affective dimension contrasts with the often performative, functionalistic, rationalistic, utilitarian, and competitive character of these perspectives (Vondey 2010, pp. 13–15; Suurmond 1992, pp. 250–52). Simply put, the actualization of theological practices is not the same across the religious landscape. The practical dimension in theology as play expresses the experience of the Holy Spirit at the root of Pentecostal spirituality and demands the continuous association of Pentecostal doctrine with the original experience (Stephenson 2006). Identifying the play in Pentecostalism is affected by the insight that theology *cannot* proceed without being practiced but *can* proceed without being articulated as doctrine.

Although praxis alone is not the fullness of play, it is clear that play (and hence Pentecostalism and its practices) does not easily fit the mold of established theological traditions and Christian religious identity. The long-term challenge of play is that playing does not want to become conscious of itself as play. Pentecostal praxis cannot be "performed" in purely prescriptive and instrumentalized ways without dismantling the affections by threatening to objectify the experience of God underlying them and dispersing the human response to the passion of God into fragments of dogmatic propositions.[9] As play, this kind of theology wants to remain within the realm of experience and practices, or at least

---

[8] See, for example, (Haynes 2017; Brown 2011; Yong 2010; Miller and Yamamori 2007).
[9] This is the question of Stephenson (2014, pp. 246–64); (Archer 2007; Cross 2000).

return to them. Pentecostal theology does not want to be understood; it wants to be practiced and lived (as a form of understanding, yet sometimes in pre-cognitive or irrational ways). Pentecostalism exists more in the realm of possibilities and wonder than in the realm of already actualized and objectified projections of reality. Amidst this tension, play is worship, the joy of God's grace, the exuberance of life, the freedom of creation finding itself lost in God (See Ingalls and Yong 2015). Play collapses when this tension is resolved prematurely, either by an overrealized confidence in doctrine or an escapist appeal to a pure experience of God (Land 1993, p. 15). Although both are possible in Pentecostalism, neither defines the methodology of the movement. Both extremes are, so to speak, embedded and implicit in the unlimited potentiality of Pentecostal spirituality, experiences, narrative, and affections. Play does not eschew the extremes—it requires them in order to remain in the realm of possibilities. Hence, Pentecostal theology cannot be an end in itself, for that would resolve the play (Wariboko 2012, pp. 63–64). Instead, Pentecostal praxis is a form of overaccepting at all cost the superfluous potential of wonder. For this potential to be actualized in play, literal practices rely on the constant demand for embodiment: jumping, dancing, shouting, prophesying, speaking in tongues, anointing, laying on of hands, praying and potentially all practices of the Christian life. Embodiment is the most outward expression of Pentecostal spirituality and therefore the most readily observable manifestation of religion as play.

3.6. Frame 6: Pentecostal Embodiment or the Traditioning of the Pentecostal Imagination

Embodiment refers to the materiality and physicality of practices that form and are informed by Pentecostal spirituality, experiences, narrative, and affections. Not all theological praxis is embodied, yet the embodiment of dominant practices allows for the most immediate observation of its primary frames. Embodiment is the physical and material expression of meaning-making through the human body that embraces the habitual and ritual forms of the communal body.[10] Undoubtedly, the worship service forms the wellspring of embodied practices among Pentecostals. Rituals, rites and liturgy, once foreign terms to many Pentecostals, have become increasingly the focus of theological attention (Cartledge and Swoboda 2016; Lindhardt 2011; Albrecht 1999; Alexander 1991). Among these practices, the altar call and response stand out as the climax of traditional Pentecostal worship (Vondey 2016; Tomberlin 2010). Contemporary ritual, historical and phenomenological studies of worldwide Pentecostalism affirm certain foundational rites oriented around the altar as the consistent practices and traditions of the Pentecostal movement (Cartledge 2010; Vondey 2012; Miller and Yamamori 2007, pp. 129–59; Arweck and Keenan 2006). Although theology cannot be defined absolutely by any particular ritual, doxological practices are closest to the ground of Pentecostal origins and the way Pentecostalism is embodied across the world. The summit and source of Pentecostal worship, rituals, and practices, from which Pentecostalism can be grasped in its embodied form, is undoubtedly the altar service, and other practices (and their doctrinal reflections) are readily integrated in a central ritual of the altar call and response (Vondey 2016, pp. 99–106). We might say that Pentecostal theology functions on the basis of an "altar hermeneutics"[11] which expresses Pentecostal spirituality, experience, narrative, and affections in palpable practices and experiences. Play unfolds at the altar in several native, adopted, and enculturated rites that also show the challenges of embodiment.

On the one hand, the playfulness of the altar resists "ritual" as a strict ecclesiastical performance of a liturgical script within a fixed semiotic system of sacerdotal or sacramental regulations (Alexander 1997, 1989). Instead, Pentecostal rituals are playful because they are often improvised and unstructured (Vondey 2010, pp. 109–40). Since the most widely accepted Pentecostal doctrines have emerged from Pentecostal practices at the altar, Pentecostals are most prepared to engage other doctrines as doxology and liturgy. In turn, conceptualized doctrines and philosophical considerations have to be brought

---

[10] See the essays in Wilkinson and Althouse (2017).
[11] For this term (See Moore 2016).

into play in the embodied world of the rituals, sacraments, and practices surrounding the altar. From this embodied environment of worship, Pentecostal theology can expand into a constructive and systematic framework for the traditioning of the Pentecostal type. On the other hand, Pentecostals have also struggled with the question of whether their embodied theology can (or should) be ordered doctrinally and systematically (Archer 2007; Cross 2000; Yong 1998; Bundy 1993). Part of the difficulty is concentrated in the need for a rational and coherent method that would allow for the transposition of Pentecostal liturgy into formulations of doctrine without threatening the integrity of its theology (Vondey 2001). Another concern is that systematic theology is dominated by western ideas and constructs that are not always readily shared by the Pentecostal experiences in the East and the global South (See Anderson 2013a, 2013b). If we identify Pentecostalism with the embodied spirituality, experiences, stories, affections, and practices of play, then a systematic account of Pentecostal theology may threaten to institutionalize, theorize, disimpassion or disembody the demand for the immediacy of the human encounter with God. Embodiment holds Pentecostal theology accountable to engaging the world not exclusively through doctrine but also materially, physically, spiritually, aesthetically, morally and socially (Cf. Volf 1989). At the intersection of individual and public embodiment, Pentecostal liturgy is often the loudest and most expressive manifestation of play.

The continuing challenge of identifying Pentecostal theology as play is a reduction of its core elements to one such frame at the cost of neglecting the entire strip of activity. What is lost in any reductionism is the dynamic of experience, reflection, practice and transformation at the core of each element and of Pentecostal theology as a whole. What is tempting is to label Pentecostal theology not as seeking embodiment (and thus a hospitable invitation to participate) but as already fully embodied (and thus requiring no further transformation).[12] At stake is the temptation to let Pentecostal theology merely perform in front of us so as to observe its various qualities as an object of scrutiny. Reduced to a bystander and observer, we may overlook that the underlying intention of Pentecostal theology is not merely to dis-play itself as an expressively embodied form of Christianity but to invite others to participate in the play. The embodied life of Pentecostals is not the end of Pentecostal theology; it is a necessary climax in its manifestation of the encounter with God's Spirit. Yet, Pentecostalism unfolds as play only along the entirety of its theological activities. Participation in the embodied habits and rituals draws theology back into the spirituality, experiences, narratives, affections, and practices that together form the primary framework of this religious expression of play.

4. Pentecostalism as a Religious Model

The preceding analysis of the primary framework operative in Pentecostalism yields a strip of literal activities that together comprise the heartbeat of the Pentecostal imagination. The frame analysis attempted here on the most general level reveals a sequence of behaviours involving an overlapping pattern of spirituality, experience, narrative, affections, practices, and embodiment rather than a central doctrine or a constructive system or organizing theological principle. At the same time, it would be misleading to label this pattern as simply an example of "ordinary" or "everyday" religious behaviour in contrast to "organized" religion or "systematic" theology. The challenge of this literal framework is precisely its insistence on abandoning the preference for constructive and analytical theology over self-identifying everyday activities. The importance of identifying the primary frames of Pentecostalism is both the making visible of the elementary activities that would otherwise be seen as insignificant and the interpretation of these literal performances as a coherent model for a (young) religious movement. It is therefore important to assert that Pentecostal theology is found primarily in the literal activities of Pentecostal spirituality, experience, narrative, affections, practices, and embodiment, and that any theological conversation about the identity of Pentecostalism

[12] The trend to speak of Pentecostalism in broader terms as "renewal Christianity" expresses the continuing transformation of the movement from its historical origins at the beginning of the twentieth century.

as a religious movement outside of this framework is secondary. The admittedly rather general identification of many of these activities in this essay reflects the difficulties Pentecostals (and those observing Pentecostalism) have had with precise theological definitions—a problem typical for any young religious movement. The immediate way forward therefore must be a closer occupation with these elemental frames if we wish to understand more deeply the religious nature of Pentecostalism. Nonetheless, this task must also remember that these literal performances are not an end in themselves; they are the building blocks of what has been labelled here as play. It is precisely because there is no single activity we can label literally as "play" that the theological task ahead requires the interpretation of all literal performances to identify their genuine theological and religious identity.

Play is an appropriate model for Pentecostal theology because it holds the literal activities of the religious movement in tension, not in a strict order or within a tight structure, but with a light hand, following few patterns, regularly starting, stopping and overlapping activities, allowing each element to call forth the others yet without a firm template. When these elements are performed subject to a system of thought, a ruling principle or a determinative meaning, rather than played and improvised, they often exhibit a forced framework in which we can still find all the activities of the expected religious identity. Yet, the mere performance of these activities is not the core of Pentecostalism; its religious identity is not defined by the literal activities as such: any religion can (and does) employ spirituality, experience, narrative, affections, practices, and embodiment. Rather, the mode or imagination by which these activities are held together is found only in Pentecostalism. Play can be used to organize Pentecostal theology without the risk of copying the patterns and convictions of other religious or theological traditions, a frequent choice that has immobilized Pentecostal theology (Cf. Dabney 2001). When adopted as a model for Pentecostal theology, play alerts us to the large realm of still unscripted behaviours at the root of everyday Pentecostalism worldwide and to the importance of keying these activities as a particular religious identity. When adopted as a model for religious identity, in general, play directs the attention of method and theory in religious studies to the primary framework of literal activities and the religious imagination holding them together. Pentecostalism can be seen as a model for exhibiting religion as play and therefore as offering an important (and still largely unexplored) contribution to the understanding of religion.

Religion as play exists in Pentecostalism, as it were, through and beyond the performance of each literal act. Whereas many established theological traditions are rather uncomfortable with such unpredictable flexibility and indeterminate freedom, it is precisely this playfulness which can help characterize Pentecostalism going forward. The strip of activities described here as Pentecostalism's primary framework cannot be generalized; they are characteristic only of the kind of play we find among Pentecostals. However, this conclusion still allows for the possibility that different primary activities can characterize different forms of play (and thus different religious traditions). The question arises also as to whether play represents a permanent religious identity or is perhaps part of the character of any young religious movement, such as Pentecostalism. Yet, Pentecostals are on their way to socializing, routinizing, and institutionalizing their religious identity (Poloma 1989; Roelofs 1994). If these developments affect the Pentecostal imagination, they will most certainly have a dramatic impact on the primary activities detailed in this study.

5. Conclusions

The chief conclusion of this article is that play constitutes a generic type of religious activity of which Pentecostalism is a consistent but special manifestation. This insight implies that, at least in principle, play is not exclusive to Pentecostal theology, but that Pentecostals manifest a particularly visible form of religion that we can designate as play. What is possible with the notion of play is not only a critical comparison of Pentecostalism with other types of religion, but the elevation of religious discourse to the level of a principal taxonomic category. Consequently, the designation of religion with such a broad phenomenon as play draws not merely from theological motivations but also embraces the concerns of anthropology, culture, psychology, sociology, history, pedagogy, and

scientific methodology. That Pentecostalism exhibits this theological type with particular force may provide insight into the reasons for the exceptional growth and persistence of Pentecostalism as a movement worldwide. The transformational power of play is seen in the way Pentecostals both evoke and break out of the primary frames, and this resistance may indicate that play, although a generic type, is not normative for Christian theology or religion as a whole. Further study of the method and theory of play in religion must therefore depend on individual frame analysis as well as on the mode of play visible in the fullness of theological activities worldwide.

Pentecostalism represents an important opportunity for the endeavour to understand play as a genuine religious identity. However, a type does not readily function also as a model, and the results of this study cannot simply be reversed as if to turn play into a sequence of primary but disconnected activities subject to imitation and repetition. Religion as play cannot be fabricated by following the pattern of spirituality, experience, narrative, affections, practices, and embodiment. Pentecostalism as a theological type labelled play is highly participatory and dependent on the unending potentiality to transcend (and to conceal) its ordinary activities towards the expanded possibilities that all who participate are "lost" in play aimed at the encounter with the transforming presence of God. In this goal, we find perhaps the core motivation for Pentecostalism and thus the key for understanding religion as play. Nonetheless, if play is an element of any young religious movement, then a "mature" religion may indeed exhibit a very different character from its playful origins, which could explain the differences observed already in diverse geographical locations, sociocultural contexts, and historical stages of Pentecostalism. Religion at play may then be found only as a temporal phenomenon in the history of religion. If, on the other hand, Pentecostals are able to maintain their playful imagination, then we may have found in Pentecostalism a genuine type of religious identity which deserves further attention.

Conflicts of Interest: The author declares no conflict of interest.

References

Albrecht, Daniel E. 1999. *Rites in the Spirit: A Ritual Approach to Pentecostal/Charismatic Spirituality*. JPT Supplement 17. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, pp. 254–59.

Albrecht, Daniel E., and Evan B. Howard. 2014. Pentecostal Spirituality. In *The Cambridge Companion to Pentecostalism*. Edited by Cecil M. Robeck Jr. and Amos Yong. New York: Cambridge University Press, pp. 235–53.

Alexander, Bobby C. 1989. Pentecostal Ritual Reconsidered: Anti-Structural Dimensions of Possession. *Journal of Religious Studies* 3: 109–28.

Alexander, Bobby C. 1991. *Victor Turner Revisited: Ritual as Social Change*. AARA 74. Atlanta: Scholars.

Alexander, Estrelda Y. 1997. Liturgy in Non-Liturgical Holiness-Pentecostalism. *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 32: 158–93.

Anderson, Allan H. 2013a. *An Introduction to Pentecostalism: Global Charismatic Christianity*, 2nd ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Anderson, Allan H. 2013b. *To the Ends of the Earth: Pentecostalism and the Transformation of World Christianity*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Archer, Kenneth J. 2004. Pentecostal Story: The Hermeneutical Filter for the Making of Meaning. *Pneuma: The Journal of the Society for Pentecostal Studies* 26: 36–59. [CrossRef]

Archer, Kenneth J. 2007. A Pentecostal Way of Doing Theology: Method and Manner. *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 9: 301–14. [CrossRef]

Archer, Kenneth J. 2009. *A Pentecostal Hermeneutic: Spirit, Scripture and Community*. Cleveland: CPT Press, pp. 128–70.

Archer, Kenneth J. 2010a. The Fivefold Gospel and the Mission of the Church: Ecclesiastical Implications and Opportunities. In *Toward a Pentecostal Ecclesiology: The Church and the Fivefold Gospel*. Edited by John Christopher Thomas. Cleveland: CPT Press, pp. 7–43.

Archer, Kenneth J. 2010b. *The Gospel Revisited: Towards a Pentecostal Theology of Worship and Witness*. Eugene: Pickwick, pp. 18–42.

Arendt, Hannah. 1998. *The Human Condition*, 2nd ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
Arweck, Elisabeth, and William Keenan, eds. 2006. *Materializing Religion: Expression, Performance and Ritual*. Aldershot: Ashgate, pp. 74–88, 138–60.
Baker, William J. 2007. *Playing with God: Religion and Modern Sport*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
Bateson, Gregory. 1972. *Steps to an Ecology of Mind: Collected Essays in Anthropology, Psychiatry, Evolution, and Epistemology*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
Bellah, Robert N. 2011. *Religion in Human Evolution: From the Paleolithic to the Axial Age*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
Brown, Candy Gunther. 2011. *Global Pentecostal and Charismatic Healing*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Bundy, David. 1993. The Genre of Systematic Theology in Pentecostalism. *Pneuma: The Journal of the Society for Pentecostal Studies* 15: 89–107. [CrossRef]
Burgardt, Gordon M. 2011. Defining and Recognizing Play. In *The Oxford Handbook of the Development of Play*. Maratea: Pellegrini, pp. 9–18.
Camery-Hogatt, Jerry. 2005. The Word of God from Living Voices: Orality and Literacy in the Pentecostal Tradition. *Pneuma: The Journal of the Society for Pentecostal Studies* 27: 225–55. [CrossRef]
Cartledge, Mark J. 2008a. Pentecostal Experience: An Example of Practical-Theological Rescripting. *Journal of the European Pentecostal Theological Association* 28: 21–23. [CrossRef]
Cartledge, Mark J. 2008b. The Early Pentecostal Theology of Confidence Magazine (1908–1926): A Version of the Five-Fold Gospel? *The Journal of the European Pentecostal Theological Association* 28: 117–30. [CrossRef]
Cartledge, Mark J. 2010. *Testimony in the Spirit: Rescripting Ordinary Pentecostal Theology*. Surrey: Ashgate.
Cartledge, Mark J. 2015. *The Mediation of the Spirit: Interventions in Practical Theology*. Pentecostal Manifestos. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.
Castelo, Daniel. 2017. *Pentecostalism as a Christian Mystical Tradition*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.
Chan, Simon. 2000. *Pentecostal Theology and the Christian Spiritual Tradition*. JPT Supplement 21. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, p. 10.
Chandler, Diane J., ed. 2016. *The Holy Spirit and Christian Formation*. Christianity and Renewal-Interdisciplinary Studies. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
Clark, Mathew S., and Henry I. Lederle. 1989. *What is Distinctive about Pentecostal Theology?* Pretoria: University of South Africa, p. 40.
Coulter, Dale M. 2016. The Language of Affectivity and the Christian Life. In *The Spirit, the Affections and the Christian Traditions*. Edited by Dale M. Coulter and Amos Yong. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, pp. 1–28.
Cross, Terry. 2000. The Rich Feast of Theology: Can Pentecostals Bring the Main Course or Only the Relish? *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 8: 27–47. [CrossRef]
Dabney, D. Lyle. 2001. Saul's Armor: The Problem and the Promise of Pentecostal Theology Today. *Pneuma: The Journal of the Society for Pentecostal Studies* 23: 115–46. [CrossRef]
Dayton, Donald W. 1987. *Theological Roots of Pentecostalism*. Peabody: Hendrickson, pp. 15–23.
Droogers, André. 1996. Methodological Ludism beyond Religionism and Reductionism. In *Conflicts in Social Science*. Edited by Anton van Harskamp. London and New York: Routledge, pp. 44–67.
Droogers, André. 1999. The Third Bank of the River: Play, Methodological Ludism and the Definition of Religion. In *The Pragmatics of Defining Religion: Contexts, Concepts and Contents*. Edited by Jan G. Platvoet and Arie Leendert Molendijk. Leiden: Brill, pp. 285–313.
Droogers, André. 2012. *Play and Power in Religion: Collected Essays*. Berlin: Walter De Gruyter.
Droogers, André. 2014. *Religion at Play: A Manifesto*. Eugene: Cascade.
Ellington, Scott A. 2001. History, Story, and Testimony: Locating Truth in a Pentecostal Hermeneutic. *Pneuma: The Journal of the Society for Pentecostal Studies* 23: 245–63. [CrossRef]
Ellington, Scott. 2011. 'Can I Get a Witness': The Myth of Pentecostal Orality and the Process of Traditioning in the Psalms. *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 20: 54–67. [CrossRef]
Goffman, Erving. 1974. *Frame Analysis: An Essay on the Organization of Experience*. London: Harper and Row.
Haynes, Naomi. 2017. *Moving by the Spirit: Pentecostal Social Life on the Zambian Copperbelt*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
Henricks, Thomas. 2008. The Nature of Play: An Overview. *The American Journal of Play* 1: 157–80.
Huizinga, Johan. 1949. *Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play-Element in Culture*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Ingalls, Monique M., and Amos Yong, eds. 2015. *The Spirit of Praise: Music and Worship in Global Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity*. University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press.

Johnston, Robert K. 1983. *The Christian at Play*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.

Kärkkäinen, Veli-Matti. 2007. 'Encountering Christ in the Full Gospel Way': An Incarnational Pentecostal Spirituality. *Journal of the European Theological Association* 27: 5–19. [CrossRef]

Knibbe, Kim, and André Droogers. 2011. Methodological Ludism and the Academic Study of Religion. *Method and Theory in the Study of Religion* 23: 283–303. [CrossRef]

Kroll-Smith, J. Stephen. 1980. The Testimony as Performance: The Relationship of an Expressive Event to the Belief System of a Holiness Sect. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 19: 16–25. [CrossRef]

Land, Steven Jack. 1993. *Pentecostal Spirituality: A Passion for the Kingdom*. JPT Supplement 1. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press.

Lindhardt, Martin, ed. 2011. *Practicing the Faith: The Ritual Life of Pentecostal-Charismatic Christians*. Oxford: Berghahn.

Marina, Peter. 2013. *Getting the Holy Ghost: Urban Ethnography in a Brooklyn Pentecostal Tongue-Speaking Church*. Lanham: Lexington Books.

Martin, David. 2006. Undermining Old Paradigms: Rescripting Pentecostal Accounts. *PentecoStudies* 5: 18–38.

Miller, David L. 1970. *Gods and Games: Toward a Theology of Play*. New York: World.

Miller, Donald E., and Tetsunao Yamamori. 2007. *Global Pentecostalism: The New Face of Christian Social Engagement*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Moltmann, Jürgen. 1972. *Theology of Play*. Translated by Reinhard Ulrich. New York: Harper and Row.

Moore, Rickie D. 2016. Altar Hermeneutics: Reflections on Pentecostal Biblical Interpretation. *Pneuma: The Journal of the Society for Pentecostal Studies* 38: 148–59. [CrossRef]

Neumann, Peter D. 2012. *Pentecostal Experience: An Ecumenical Encounter*. Eugene: Pickwick.

Oliverio, L. William, Jr. 2014. *Theological Hermeneutics in the Classical Pentecostal Tradition: A Typological Account*. Global Pentecostal and Charismatic Studies. Leiden: Brill.

Pellegrini, Anthony D., ed. 2011. *The Oxford Handbook of the Development of Play*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Poloma, Margaret M. 1989. *The Assemblies of God at the Crossroads: Charisma and Institutional Dilemmas*. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press.

Poloma, Margaret M., and Ralph J. Hood. 2008. *Blood and Fire: Godly Love in a Pentecostal Emerging Church*. New York: NYU Press.

Richie, Tony. 2011. Translating Pentecostal Testimony into Interreligious Dialogue. *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 20: 155–83. [CrossRef]

Roelofs, Gerard. 1994. Charismatic Christian Thought: Experience, Metonymy, and Routinization. In *Charismatic Christianity as a Global Culture*. Edited by Karla O. Poewe. Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, pp. 217–33.

Schall, James V. 1976. *Far Too Easily Pleased: A Theology of Play, Contemplation, and Festivity*. Beverly Hills: Benziger.

Simpson, A. B. 1890. *The Four-Fold Gospel*. Harrisburg: Christian Alliance Publishing Co.

Smith, James K. A. 2010. *Thinking in Tongues: Pentecostal Contributions to Christian Philosophy*. Pentecostal Manifestos 1. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, pp. 78–79, 80–81.

Solivan, Samuel. 1998. *The Spirit, Pathos and Liberation: Toward an Hispanic Pentecostal Theology*. JPT Supplement 14. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, pp. 59–60.

Stephenson, Christopher. 2006. The Rule of Spirituality and the Rule of Doctrine: A Necessary Relationship in Theological Method. *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 15: 83–105. [CrossRef]

Stephenson, Christopher A. 2013. *Types of Pentecostal Theology: Method, System, Spirit*. AAR Academy Series. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Stephenson, Christopher A. 2014. Should Pentecostal Theology be Analytic Theology? *Pneuma: The Journal of the Society for Pentecostal Studies* 36: 246–64. [CrossRef]

Studebaker, Steven M. 2012. *From Pentecost to the Triune God: A Pentecostal Trinitarian Theology*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, pp. 78–94.

Suurmond, Jean-Jacques. 1992. The Church at Play: The Pentecostal/Charismatic Renewal of the Liturgy as Renewal of the World. In *Pentecost, Mission, and Ecumenism: Essays on Intercultural Theology; Festschrift in Honour of Professor Walter Hollenweger*. Edited by Jan A. B. Jongeneel. Studien zur Interkulturellen Geschichte des Christentums 75. Frankfurt: Peter Lang, pp. 247–59.

Suurmond, Jean-Jacques. 1994. *Word and Spirit at Play: Towards a Charismatic Theology*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.

Thomas, John Christopher. 1998. Pentecostal Theology in the Twenty-First Century. *Pneuma: The Journal of the Society for Pentecostal Studies* 20: 3–19. [CrossRef]

Thomas, John Christopher. 2010. *Toward a Pentecostal Ecclesiology: The Church and the Fivefold Gospel*. Cleveland: CPT Press.

Tomberlin, Daniel. 2010. *Pentecostal Sacraments: Encountering God at the Altar*. Cleveland: Center for Pentecostal Leadership and Care.

van Harskamp, Anton. 2006. *Playful Religion: Challenges for the Study of Religion*. Delft: Eburon.

Versteeg, Peter G. A. 2011. *The Ethnography of a Dutch Pentecostal Church: Vineyard Utrecht and the International Charismatic Movement*. New York: Edwin Mellen Press.

Volf, Miroslav. 1989. Materiality of Salvation: An Investigation in the Soteriologies of Liberation and Pentecostal Theologies. *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 26: 447–67.

Volf, Miroslav, and Dorothy C. Bass, eds. 2002. *Practicing Theology: Beliefs and Practices in Christian Life*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.

Vondey, Wolfgang. 2001. The Symbolic Turn: A Symbolic Conception of the Liturgy of Pentecostalism. *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 36: 223–47.

Vondey, Wolfgang. 2010. *Beyond Pentecostalism: The Crisis of Global Christianity and the Renewal of the Theological Agenda*. Pentecostal Manifestos 3. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.

Vondey, Wolfgang. 2012. The Making of a Black Liturgy: Pentecostal Worship and Spirituality from African Slave Narratives to Urban City Scapes. *Black Theology* 10: 147–68. [CrossRef]

Vondey, Wolfgang. 2013. *Pentecostalism: A Guide for the Perplexed*. London: Bloomsbury, pp. 82–84.

Vondey, Wolfgang. 2016. The Theology of the Altar and Pentecostal Sacramentality. In *Scripting Pentecost: A Study of Pentecostals, Worship and Liturgy*. Edited by Mark J. Cartledge and A. J. Swoboda. Aldershot: Ashgate, pp. 94–107.

Wariboko, Nimi. 2012. *The Pentecostal Principle: Ethical Methodology in New Spirit*. Pentecostal Manifestos 5. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.

Wariboko, Nimi. 2016. West African Pentecostalism: A Survey of Everyday Theology. In *Global Renewal Christianity: Spirit-Empowered Movements, Past, Present and Future, Africa and Diaspora*. Edited by Vinson Synan, Amos Yong and Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu. Lake Mary: Charisma House Publishers, vol. 3, pp. 1–18.

Wilkinson, Michael, and Peter Althouse, eds. 2017. *Annual Review of the Sociology of Religion, Pentecostals and the Body*. Leiden: Brill, vol. 8.

Yong, Amos. 1997. 'Tongues', Theology and the Social Sciences: A Pentecostal-Theological Reading of Geertz's Interpretive Theory of Religion. *Cyberjournal for Pentecostal-Charismatic Research*. Available online: http://www.cyberj/cyberjl/yong.html (accessed on 12 March 2018).

Yong, Amos. 1998. Whither Systematic Theology? A Systematician Chimes in on a Scandalous Conversation. *Pneuma: The Journal of the Society for Pentecostal Studies* 20: 85–93. [CrossRef]

Yong, Amos. 2002. *Spirit-Word-Community: Theological Hermeneutics in Trinitarian Perspective*. Aldershot: Ashgate.

Yong, Amos. 2005. *The Spirit Poured Out on All Flesh: Pentecostalism and the Possibility of Global Theology*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic.

Yong, Amos. 2010. *In the Days of Caesar: Pentecostalism and Political Theology*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.

© 2018 by the author. Licensee MDPI, Basel, Switzerland. This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).

MDPI

Article

Sincere Performance in Pentecostal Megachurch Music

Ibrahim Abraham

Social and Cultural Anthropology, University of Helsinki, PO Box 18, 00014 Helsinki, Finland; ibrahim.abraham@helsinki.fi

Received: 12 May 2018; Accepted: 11 June 2018; Published: 15 June 2018

Abstract: Drawing on the work of Webb Keane and Joel Robbins in the anthropology of Christianity, furnished with the influential work of Charles Hirschkind in the anthropology of Islam, and the ethnographic studies of Tom Wagner and Mark Jennings on Pentecostal worship music, this article critically examines ideas of sincerity in the musical practices of Pentecostal megachurches. Making use of ethnographic data from research on congregational music in South Africa, including interviews with a variety of Pentecostal musicians, this article argues that the question of Protestant sincerity, understood following Keane as emphasizing individual moral autonomy and suspicion of external material religious forms for expressing one's inner state, is particularly acute in the case of the Hillsong megachurch. Employing the full array of spectacular possibilities made available by the contemporary culture industry, Hillsong churches centralize cultural production and standardize musical performance whilst simultaneously emphasizing individual religious experience. It is argued that Pentecostal megachurches seek to realize a form of sincere mimicry grounded in learned and embodied practices.

Keywords: Hillsong; megachurch; Pentecostalism; South Africa; worship music

---

1. Introduction

Music is a key medium through which Pentecostalism has grown; Pentecostal worship music circulates in physical and digital formats through formal and informal networks, laying down the cultural and theological infrastructure for new churches and new individual experiences. Drawing on ethnographic research on music in broadly evangelical churches in Cape Town, South Africa, in 2014 and 2015, this article focuses on the particular tension that exists between the intensely subjective nature of Pentecostal experience and the increasingly standardized nature of some of the Pentecostal worship music and worship services designed to facilitate these personal Pentecostal experiences. In studying this tension between subjective religious experiences and standardized musical practices in Pentecostal megachurches, this article makes particular use of the work of Webb Keane and Joel Robbins in the anthropology of Christianity, specifically, Keane's (2007) work on the importance of sincerity in Protestant practice, which he argues emphasizes individual moral autonomy, over and above reference or recourse to external material religious forms, to understand and express one's inner state. Restated by Robbins (2012), the sincere Protestant speaker should not become caught up in politeness, flattery, deference to cultural standards, or mimicry of someone else's beliefs.

In focusing on sincerity, as conceptualized within the anthropology of Christianity, this article refines an ongoing discussion that has predominantly used the language of "authenticity", such as in Adnams' (2013) study of authentic congregational singing. We can think of sincerity as a particular form of authenticity that is prominent, but not exclusive, within modern forms of religiosity in which the autonomous individual subject is conspicuous. Sincerity is further specifiable insofar as the focus is on individual communicative action; the individual speaking subject is the key concern here,

rather than certain aspects of culture which can be collectively judged to be authentic or not, in keeping with generic norms, which has been the focus of work on authenticity in the study of popular culture (Moore 2002; Abraham 2017, pp. 37–60). A good illustration comes from the discussion of the evangelical vernacular called "Christianese" by Berggren (2009, p. 196), an evangelical pastor, and former vocalist in the "Spirit-filled hardcore" punk band Strongarm. Berggren describes Christianese as an example of evangelicals being "sincere without being authentic". When evangelical youth, in particular, use words like "blessed", they are expressing their own beliefs, hence their sincerity, but they are expressing themselves in a theological language circulating within their particular subculture that is not comprehensible within broader secular or apatheistic youth culture, and not appreciable as a sincere individual belief, because of the conception of evangelicalism as inherited groupthink, hence, their lack of authenticity.

The case study for exploring the question of sincerity in Pentecostal worship music is Hillsong, an Australian-led network of megachurches well known among evangelicals for their well-produced pop-rock worship music, and the spectacular nature of their youth-focused church services, where the full array of technical possibilities made available by the contemporary culture industry are utilized to facilitate the ecstatic personal experiences of the awareness of God foundational to Pentecostal belief and practice.

Hillsong began in suburban Sydney in 1983 as Hills Christian Life Centre, before expanding around the world, largely on the back of its successful brand of worship music (Riches and Wagner 2017). Its network of churches now includes several "campuses" in Cape Town, centered on the Century City campus: a "megachurch" attracting several thousand worshippers to its multiple Sunday services, housed in what was once Africa's largest nightclub. Hillsong is very much a "growth church" (Maddox 2012), with a clear corporate-style vision of expansion (Sanders 2016), but since Pentecostals are promiscuous worshippers, especially in the African context this article is focused on, conventional measures of the size of a Hillsong congregation are not necessarily accurate, as Hillsong may not be the primary denominational affiliation of many, or even most, who attend a given service.

As Martí's (2017) analysis explains, Hillsong is "part of an ongoing elaboration of evangelicalism" in multiple ways, beginning with the blurring of the boundaries around "evangelicalism" and "Pentecostalism", in part because of the circulation of Pentecostal worship music. Hillsong represents, above all, a particular kind of worship, which is, at once, highly subjective and highly standardized. The services certainly seek to create and inspire born-again evangelical Christians, Spirit-filled individuals living Godly lives, and in order to do this, the church engages with and even seeks to exceed the secular culture industry for "excellence" in pop culture production. The music-focused worship services cannot necessarily be divorced from the other aspects of the Hillsong phenomenon, as Martí outlines them, for Hillsong is also a "worldwide commercial enterprise", a "philosophy of ministry", a particular model of networked religious organization, and a style of spirituality, underlabored by a prosperity theology, emphasizing personal success, in which "spiritual empowerment overcomes just about anything" (ibid., p. 379).

The original research data this article draws upon emerges from interviews and ethnographic observations with musicians from broadly evangelical and largely Pentecostal churches in Cape Town, South Africa, and its hinterland, known as the Cape Winelands. This data was obtained on two ethnographic research visits in the summer and autumn of 2014, and the autumn and winter of 2015. This article is also furnished with data from interviews with evangelical musicians in Australia and the United Kingdom in 2010. All research participants are referred to by pseudonyms, even though this has never been the desire of any of the dozens of Christian musicians I have interviewed (Abraham 2017, p. 11).

This article will begin with an overview of theories of Protestant sincerity and language ideology, also recognizing the imprecise fit between theories of speech and song. This article will then begin to apply these theories to the megachurch as a space, making use of a number of critical empirical studies of Hillsong and proximate churches. The central case study of the standardization of worship

music within megachurches follows, focusing on observations of Hillsong's Cape Town campus and making use of the prior studies of Hillsong by Tom Wagner. It will then be argued, through reference to the work of Charles Hirschkind in the anthropology of Islam, that a particular form of embodied practice that we can think of as sincere mimicry is developed in Pentecostal megachurches, a practice which, in the final substantive section, will be shown to be unsatisfactory from the perspective of some Pentecostal musicians.

2. Pentecostalism and Protestant Sincerity

In setting out his basic argument around Protestant language ideology and the concomitant importance of individual sincerity in Protestantism, Keane (2007) suggests that there is a shared Protestant and (nominally secular) modern approach to the construction of human subjectivity that emphasizes individual moral autonomy and a conspicuous rejection of reliance upon reference or recourse to material forms to express subjective moral states. The sincere religious subject experiences a basic tension, therefore, around immaterial beliefs designed to transcend worldly existence, which can only be expressed in a worldly, material form (ibid., pp. 197–98; Wagner 2017b, p. 90). Keane's specific case study is Dutch Calvinist missionary Christianity in Indonesia, particularly the interactions between European missionary ideology and local culture, and he acknowledges that "some of the most popular forms of evangelical Christianity today, such as Pentecostalism, various televangelisms, and the prosperity gospel, may be seen in part as reactions against earlier more austere doctrines" (ibid., p. 200). And yet, the general outline of Keane's arguments apply, and have been applied, to Protestantism in general, as well as religion in modernity in general.

The ideal of a religious subject whose outward character reflects inward conviction is a familiar and foundational presence, as is scrutiny and suspicion around the question of this sincerity (ibid., p. 201). For example, although he does not cite Keane's study, the same dynamic around the ideology of personal sincerity is evident in Martí's (2018, pp. 21–22) analysis of Pentecostal worship as personally "strategic":

> Unlike Lourdes, France (a destination for pilgrims founded on apparitions of the Blessed Virgin Mary), Pentecostal worship authorizes a spiritually dynamic ritual space defined as an assembly of similarly motivated people. Believers take personal responsibility in a gathered, public space to orient their private selves as vessels prepared for the filling of the Spirit. Pentecostal worship moves toward a goal and takes on the quality of an achievement.

Martí acknowledges the possibility that this agentive approach is not uniquely Pentecostal, but argues that what is particularly Pentecostal is, upon my reading of his analysis in light of Keane's work, the tension between the legitimate reliance upon the "promise" of personal ecstatic experience through worship, and the problematic assumption or certainty of such an experience.

Similar concerns can be located in Robbins' (2012, p. 18) analysis and application of Keane's study. He suggests Pentecostal practice differs from the Calvinism Keane is concerned with, insofar as:

> On the one hand, it is not difficult to find Pentecostals expressing the need for subjects to speak sincerely. The value they place on spontaneous, heartfelt expression as the only kind worth producing attests to this. Yet on the other hand, their claims that the Holy Spirit sometimes speaks through them in tongues, prophecy, and other forms of charismatic expression also indicate an openness to divine immanence and a willingness to let it override the highly controlled verbal production of the sincere speaker.

What is significant in Robbins' comparison is that in these second kinds of practices, the Pentecostal "openness to divine immanence", spontaneity, and subjective expression are still vital concerns, as in Martí's (2018) assessment of Pentecostal practice. We will see that standardizing of Pentecostal expression through highly technically demanding and regimented worship services, and even a recognition of the foundational "instrumental" or "catalytic" nature of Pentecostal worship music

(Jennings 2014, p. 25; Wagner 2017b, p. 90), aimed at producing religious affect in a reasonably reliable manner, runs the risk of undermining sincere experience and expression.

If we look more carefully at the question of sincerity in modern religious music, compared with sincerity in modern religious speech, one can identify quite similar arguments even in studies of secular music, and secular creative self-expression more generally, passed down through the generations since the Romantic era. Taylor's (1989, 2007) most significant volumes on modern subjectivity touch upon the similarities and differences in these fields at various points, for example. The value of sincerity in secular creative self-expression is often articulated through the rhetoric of "authenticity", most recognizably expressed in some variant of the Romantic formula of the politically, commercially, and otherwise institutionally unencumbered artist expressing their own unmediated subjective truth (Moore 2002). This article treats music, specifically contemporary congregational song, as akin to speech, but recognizes a shift in communication ideology. Song may well be a relative of speech, but as Moore (2015, pp. 184–85) observes, "even if speech were direct, song would not be. Song, per se, requires interpretation to a far greater extent than mere speech, for song is not the first choice for communication, and sung words are moreover accompanied by music that also requires interpretation". The imprecision of song underlies Jennings' (2008) observation that within a Pentecostal church context, if charismatic musical experience is not going to become untethered from Christian tradition and slip into subjective experiences of transcendence, or undifferentiable Durkheimian effervescence, then songs require the interpretation provided by the framework of orthodoxy in a sermon and, more broadly I think, the framework of orthopraxy in quotidian congregational life.

In the missionary context that Keane is concerned with, scrutiny over the sincerity of local believers is particularly intense, given the fear that the colonized and evangelized people are merely engaging in "mimicry".[1] "The nature of iterability means one can never be sure", Keane (2007, p. 288) argues, as even "the most earnest deeds and protestations of faith are in themselves but acting, mere words". On the other hand, even mere words, "uttered by rote" or in a "talismanic" manner may come to be understood and believed by individuals (ibid.). Such a discourse of religious sincerity emphasizes the importance of one's thoughts and beliefs, with a distinct focus on ideas as propositions, and a focus on internal mental states over and above material conditions or acts (ibid., p. 210). This runs counter to a certain trend in the contemporary study of religion that seeks to move the focus away from sets of propositions intellectually adhered to by nominally autonomous subjects, in no small part because such ideas of religion are so conspicuously Protestant.

In the Pentecostal context this article is concerned with, this idea of the autonomous, believing individual is of central importance; it is the foundation for the very proposition-based and experiential evangelicalism integral to Pentecostal worship and daily living. The importance of sincere beliefs as demonstrably free from any coercion, or dishonesty, or even well-meaning mimicry, is, therefore, foundational as well, since sincere words cannot be mere "quotation" or "parroting the words of someone else" (ibid., p. 211). Agreement is not a problem, of course, nor even repetition, which is perhaps one clear point of departure between Protestant and Romantic sensibilities. Two individuals thinking alike, experiencing the same objective truths, can say the same things. The problem is if I am speaking words I do not subjectively believe to be true—and, vital in Pentecostalism, *experience* to be true—and thereby misrepresent myself, whether intentionally or unintentionally.

At the heart of this ideology of sincerity is a basic fear of the deceitfulness of words and actions, which can conceal as well as reveal one's true moral state (ibid., pp. 210–11). Counterintuitive as it may seem in contexts in which conservative Christianity is analogous with good mannered social conventionality, or cheerfulness and self-restraint, politeness is the very antithesis of Protestant

[1] There is a broader debate beyond the scope of this article, challengingly articulated by Robbins (2003), around the tendency towards "continuity thinking" in the study of Christian communities in colonial and post-colonial contexts, not least in South Africa, favouring a political reading of conversion as an act of what Keane (2007, p. 288) calls, after Homi Bhabha, "sly civility".

sincerity.[2] In Robbins' (2012, p. 16) analysis of Keane's study, Protestant language ideology amounts to a "moral demand" to speak always and only honestly about one's beliefs, and to pay a concomitant lack of concern to conventions of decorative speech. There is something insurgent about this approach to language that looks down upon the idea of flowery language or flattery. It finds a parallel in Barr's (1977) observation of evangelicalism's self-belief in the inherent scandal of its message and that a sinful society should always find gospel values uncomfortable. As Robbins' (2012, p. 16) interprets Keane's account, "Protestant language ideology strongly promotes the need for people to emancipate themselves from the snares of the material and social worlds that surround them in order to realize true Christian personhood and express it through sincere speech".

The challenge for the youth-focused Pentecostal music ministry this article is focused on is that the possibility of attracting and engaging with contemporary audiences rests upon adherence to the norms of contemporary creative self-expression. This has been foundational to the development of contemporary evangelicalism, in particular (Bergler 2012), and is a notable feature of church life more broadly in secularizing societies in which cultural value is principally determined in secular spheres which churches must then adopt or accommodate (Ostwalt 2012). Even in the most "seeker-sensitive" church, this still requires honesty about a church's basic beliefs and practices, and in the case of Hillsong, every service features the opportunity for non-Christians—or, strictly speaking, non-evangelical Christians—to identify themselves and begin the process of conversion. But, honesty and outreach are not coterminous with the kind of direct speech theorized above. A good assessment of this comes from Niz, a South African Hillsong vocalist with experience of hardcore and heavy metal performance as well, who explained that people who enjoy a musician's performance grant them "permission to speak into their lives", but that such permission is predicated on being "good at your craft". The challenge in this approach to communication within Pentecostal music and related forms of contemporary, often youth-focused ministry, is that the kind of sincerity that Keane presents as fundamental to Protestant belief and identity is undermined as "people will find themselves captured by these material forms—the sounds, routines and conventions of speech—and will thus fall short of speaking sincerely" (Robbins 2012, p. 16).

The source of insincerity in the Protestant context is material culture external to the individual, which, giving direction to the individual, undermines the possibility of authentic speech, which must "originate within the speaker" (Keane 2007, p. 187). Hence, the thin line in Keane's Indonesian context between religious practices conceived of as merely ritualized—such as an externally-imposed liturgy, or a creedal recitation, or the routinization of Islamic prayer—and a physical manifestation of idolatrous practice, such as an indigenous fetish object. And, hence the problem in this article's cultural context for evangelical musicians, who are obliged to precisely replicate a worship song during a religious service with as much technical proficiency as possible. It is not that replication or repetition itself is necessarily problematic, so long as what is being reproduced has first been subjectively assimilated such that its repetition is a true reflection of one's internal state. In the language of purely secular music performance, this might be thought of as the boundary between the "cover band", producing their own subjectively refashioned versions of someone else's song, and a "tribute band", attempting a "faithful reproduction in order to recover the reality of originary performances" (Moore 2002, p. 217).

This article therefore focuses in on the worship music produced but also performed by Hillsong's megachurches, recognizing that there are certain challenges around sincere performance that are particular to the way in which the music is reproduced within Hillsong's own services, rather than in the countless other churches that make use of the music in different ways, from pre-recorded CDs and MP3s, to simplified, solo acoustic guitar-led performances. If a song is sufficiently demanding technically, then one's concentration and emotional energy are focused on the technical replication

[2] Think, for example, of the comical cheerfulness of Ned Flanders from *The Simpsons*, who has become "cultural shorthand for 'evangelical stereotype'" (Feltmate 2013, p. 223).

of the sound, either through intense concentration, technical direction, or repetitive practice and performance, such that it undermines the possibility for the replication of the emotions that ought to accompany the sound. Evans' (2015, p. 183) description of the Hillsong sound gives an indication of the challenges that its reproduction poses for church musicians:

> Hillsong releases tightly produced, polished albums that are more reminiscent of the brightness and perfection often associated with Nashville production than rock and pop from Australia. Live congregational albums are meticulously overdubbed to create perfect performance and arrangement. Part of the "victorious" nature of the sound can be attributed to its density of texture. Congregational albums feature standard pop instrumentation, but often with multiple keyboard players, multiple guitarists, and a brass section. Lead vocalists are backed by a team of backing vocalists as well as a full choir. As a result, Hillsong music is marked by a "wall of sound" aesthetic, particularly in the climactic sections, which listeners find rousing and anthemic.

We will see that the challenge of attempting to reproduce this sound live, service after service, to trigger particular effects in the congregation, places worshippers and worship musicians alike squarely within the Protestant problematic of sincere speech and polite accommodation.

3. Pentecostal Megachurches as Sincere Spaces

A service at Hillsong church's Century City campus in the northern suburbs of Cape Town may, at first, seem like a chaotic or even profane event. Secular pop music blasts from the sound system before the service begins, and dozens of excited adolescents rush to the front of the stage as soon as the light show begins, welcoming the worship band, which features around a dozen musicians. As the music begins, they imitate the onstage action; not merely clapping and singing along to lyrics of the Hillsong worship songs they have learned by heart, but dancing and jumping in unison with church musicians who approximate pop stars in their dress, and the devotion they can attract from young congregants.

Once the musical worship is over, prayers have been offered, the collection has been taken, and the Stormers rugby team has been celebrated or commiserated, what comes next? An approximation of a sermon, most likely, but one can never be certain if a different kind of religious "edutainment" will be on offer in Hillsong's sermon space instead (Wade 2016, p. 670). Perhaps the sermon will be a pre-recorded video from Sydney, with Hillsong's co-senior pastor Brian Houston dispensing sensible financial advice. Perhaps a visiting faith healer will make an appearance. Perhaps the sermon will be an amusing homily on the importance of giving Jesus "refrigerator privileges" in your life. Perhaps a young rapper in a silver suit will appear, shrouded in a halo of artificial fog, to promote an upcoming youth conference. And, perhaps the sermon will be replaced altogether by a television-chat-show-style panel, featuring minor local celebrities sitting on a couch and dispensing relationship advice, one example of Hillsong's desire to "mirror the surrounding media-savvy popular culture" in their church services (Klaver 2015b, p. 423).[3] Hillsong services may seem chaotic, or at least unpredictable, but they are carefully considered and meticulously planned events, relying upon multiple layers of standardization and replication of both sacred and secular tropes.

Perhaps the most commented upon feature of Hillsong churches' youth-focused services and ministries the world over is their replication of contemporary musical, fashion, and design aesthetics. In Britain's *Daily Telegraph*, for example, Hillsong is presented as a "hipster megachurch" courting secular pop stars (White 2017). The typical Hillsong sound, as Evans (2015) explained, is highly

[3] This is a sample from services witnessed in 2014 and 2015. The Century City campus hosts five services on Sundays, and while each welcomes the core Hillsong demographic of young people and young families in particular, including people bused in from impoverished townships, each service is branded slightly differently. The 08:30 service is orientated towards more affluent adults who might then "head to one of our beautiful city's brunch spots with friends", while the evening services focus on youth, especially the 17:00 "Power Hour" service, implicitly aimed at exhausting children through song and dance (Hillsong South Africa 2018).

produced, studio-reliant, and guitar-driven pop-rock. It closely resembles the sumptuous and accessible sounds of bands such as Coldplay. The church's related public style is a familiar "hipster" aesthetic distanciated from its subcultural origins, and recognizable in global youth fashion, built around skinny jeans and skate shoes.[4] We can surely extend Klaver's (Klaver 2015a, pp. 155–56) argument that successful Pentecostal pastors are "performers who embody their message and posit a resemblance between message content and material body image" to worship leaders and worship musicians as well. Hillsong co-senior pastor Brian Houston may be well known among Pentecostals for his prosperity preaching and ecclesial entrepreneurship, but it is his son, Joel Houston, the "face" of Hillsong's worship music, whose Instagramable lifestyle sets the tone for the Hillsong brand around the world by modelling (quite literally) an image of what Klaver calls a "divinely touched human body" (ibid.).

The church's aesthetic focus is often articulated (sometimes defensively) within the church's discourse of "excellence" (Rocha 2017, p. 134), a belief that churches can and must compete with secular institutions in the cultural sphere. This can be seen as an extension of a belief foundational to youth ministry as it developed in the post-WII era of global western affluence and secularization, in which churches came to compete with secular youth culture for young people's attention and commitment (Bergler 2012). Within the church services themselves, Hillsong worship teams the world over seek to replicate songs which are themselves replications of popular secular trends, written, "field tested", and recorded in Sydney before being distributed globally (Wagner 2014, pp. 64–65). Further, while the constitutive features of Hillsong churches' worship performances are based upon standardized pop-rock tropes, the aesthetic of the megachurches, themselves, is in keeping with contemporary secular commercial architecture, deliberately not signaling themselves as traditional places of worship (Sanders 2016).

Hillsong's Century City campus very closely resembles Sanders' description of the corporate megachurch as a "non-place", replicating contemporary corporate aesthetic and commercial norms by the absence of obvious indicators of affiliation to Christian tradition or assignment as a place of worship (ibid.). Sanders' description of an archetypal North American corporate megachurch applies to its South African analogue as well:

> One is not apt to find wooden pews, pulpits, stained-glass windows, statues of saints, or even crosses or crucifixes in corporate megachurches. And from the outside corporate megachurches can frequently appear nondescript. Parking lots connected by shuttle buses surround buildings that could easily be mistaken for medical office complexes. There are typically no steeples, no bell towers, and no lofty crosses. . . . Corporate megachurches, on the surface anyway, have been pasteurized—purged of their historical associations and, for all intents and purposes, uprooted from their local, physical communities. (ibid., p. 72)

In keeping with Maddox (2012) and Klaver's (2015b) recognition of the uniformity of such megachurches around the world, this main Cape Town campus is located in one of the city's commercial entertainment and tourist centers, the upmarket Century City mixed-use development. It sits opposite Africa's second largest shopping mall, Canal Walk, and several midrange and luxury hotels, and between a Virgin mega-gym and the Ratanga Junction amusement park.

The church itself is a former wellness center and, before that, nightclub. Dockside, as the club was called, opened in 1999, but fell into financial difficulty just a few years later, due to the cost of building what was, at the time, Africa's largest nightclub: a three-level venue with multiple bars and restaurants, with capacity for 5000 patrons (Williams 2001; News 24 2002). The building matches Hillsong's culture and Sanders' notion of the megachurch "non-place" sensibility so well that, had I not been told of the building's history by a taxi driver (who attended the venue when it was a nightclub, as well as a

[4] A minor church controversy developed around this hipster aesthetic approximately five years ago, when male skinny jeans fashion was at its crotch-hugging tightest.

church, and was eager to share the "testimony" of his born-again transformation), I doubt that I would have given the origins of the building a second thought. The only hint of the building's profane origins are the restrooms, which are covered in black tiles on the floor and the walls—an unusual choice for a church.

In Miller and Yamamori's (Miller and Yamamori 2007, pp. 135–36) study of global Pentecostalism, they encounter many similarly "functional" church buildings with a "plain appearance", stripped of most religious art, but featuring "excellent sound systems"—no former nightclubs, admittedly, but certainly repurposed shopping malls and sports stadiums. They put this down to the fact that "[w]orship is an internal experience for Pentecostals. It does not require a lot of external props" (ibid., p. 137). This could well express the architectural logic of the Protestant sincerity Keane (2007, p. 187) is concerned with, as sentiments must not be external to the individual, deriving from religious material objects such as icons, since that would undermine the expression of sincere sentiments, which must "originate within the speaker". Spaces that appear "purged of their historical associations and, for all intents and purposes, uprooted from their local, physical communities" (Sanders 2016, p. 72) might also be understood as expressing Protestantism's familiar sense of itself as an agent of historical rupture, something Pentecostalism takes especially seriously if not entirely literally (Keane 2007, p. 129). Robbins (2003, p. 223) articulates a prominent position when he states that "Pentecostalism is at once extremely open to localization and utterly opposed to local culture".

However, Sanders (2016, p. 72) would argue that the "plain appearance" and absence of recognizable religious decorations in these megachurches follows a different logic. The negation of traditional Christian material culture is not a total negation of religious material culture, so as to facilitate some direct encounter between the Holy Spirit and the sincere souls of the congregants. Rather, the choice of a "plain appearance", or as Wade and Hynes (2013, pp. 176–77) characterize it, the choice to build an "empty shell" where a church would normally be, is a deliberate choice to mimic contemporary secular sensibilities. Sanders' (2016, p. 76) argument that the corporate megachurch is "homologous with sites commonly recognized as sources of consumptive amusement and entertainment" is almost too obvious in the case of a church that sits opposite a shopping mall, between a gymnasium and an amusement park, and occupies a building designed to be the largest nightclub on the continent.

The deeper logic of the megachurch non-place also seems to apply here, beginning with the fact that, while the non-place may be stripped of obviously identifiable cultural referents, one is a cultural participant nevertheless. A foundational concern in Keane's (2007) study, echoed in Wagner's (2017b) neat overview of debates around congregational music, is that, while Protestant approaches to the construction of human subjectivity emphasize individual moral autonomy rather than reliance upon material forms, one cannot escape from the inevitably material nature of human expression and embodiment. As such, Wade and Hynes (2013, pp. 176–77) recognize Hillsong's reliance upon music to make their religious beliefs "palpable [and] outwardly manifest". This is perhaps the point at which the megachurch non-place critique exhausts itself; for while it describes the physical space of megachurches like Hillsong's Century City campus almost perfectly, a church is not only, or primarily, the physical space it occupies. Hillsong's services use terms such as "welcome home" and, somewhat oddly, the use of the collective noun "church" is often heard from the stage: "Welcome home, church!" Hillsong also encourages the formation of small Bible study groups that meet in people's homes and other settings. The extent to which this undermines the "non-place" thesis is not certain. There is an obvious desire to create a faith community, beyond mere brand loyalty, but the nature of the megachurch service makes this difficult as the experience of late-capitalist spectacle and the experience of fellowship, conventionally understood, are not synonymous.[5]

[5] One way to work through these seeming contradictions in the megachurch experience might be to make use of the notion of the neo-tribe, a way to theorize identity formations created through emotional connections rather than long-term shared structural similarities (Maffesoli 1996; Abraham 2017, pp. 28–29).

Drawing on the ideas of Guy Debord, Sanders (2012, 2016) suggests that, with its emphasis on technologically facilitated bodily experiences and visual excitement, the modern individualist consumer culture of the "spectacle" most aptly describes the culture of the megachurch. This is the same approach taken by Wade and Hynes (2013, 2016), along with the critical Pentecostal insider Harrison (2017), trailing behind at a rather nervous distance. The worshipper is a born-again blank slate within this consumerist culture, rebuilding their identity and morality through the accumulation of spiritual experiences, particularly those facilitated by the music, and the accumulation of religious goods, particularly the church's music CDs and DVDs, as well as the prosperity-oriented literature on offer. In South Africa, the Faith satellite television channel features numerous Pentecostal megachurch ministries' personal development series, motivational self-help seminars facilitating prosperity by teaching people to pray, to visualize success, to "reign like kings", and so on. Indeed, Sanders' (2016, pp. 81–82) basic criticism of Hillsong-style corporate megachurch culture is that, whereas these churches attempt to convince worshippers that their faith is purely personal, separate from the baggage of institutional Christianity or the worldly vanity of consumerism, in other words, precisely what a sincere Protestant experience should be in Keane's (2007) study, they are actually participating in predictable capitalist rituals.

The threat to the sincerity of the experience of worship at a megachurch, such as Hillsong, therefore lies in the recognition of the highly regulated nature of the service and the broader experience—the enveloping culture of the "spectacle". As Wade and Hynes (2013, p. 175) argue, if one pays close attention to Hillsong services and music, one begins to notice "a seeming informality and looseness that is actually choreographed down to the smallest detail in order to best extract your affective capacities". The desire is for the technology of the culture industry deployed by Hillsong to be dissolved in the ecstasy of religious experience, something Busman (2015) calls the "vanishing mediator" model of worship music. But, if this is not achieved, then the worshipper may become aware not just of the specific religious values being communicated in the worship service, but also of the broader values of consumer capitalism upon which Hillsong's services are arguably founded (Wagner 2017a, p. 264). The threat here is that the sincere space is disrupted by politeness through a realization of deference to the norms of the consumerist individual, who may not wish to be burdened with the historical weight of institutional Christianity, and opts, instead, for a familiar and low-commitment "modular" spiritual life focused on self-improvement (Sanders 2016, pp. 80–81; Wade 2016, pp. 668–72). Following Harrison's (2017) insider critique, Hillsong can be seen to meet the need for "novelty" and experiential "wow moments", but in doing so, it can be argued that it reproduces an individualistic late-capitalist subjectivity.[6]

4. Standardizing Sincerity

One area where Wade and Hynes's (2013, p. 175) notion of a Hillsong service as a carefully "choreographed" spectacle is most apparent is Hillsong's worship music. In a Pentecostal church service, the music serves a particular function; it is "instrumental" or "catalytic" (Jennings 2014, p. 25; Wagner 2017b, p. 90), designed to facilitate personal ecstatic experience. While Miller and Yamamori's (2007, pp. 129–59) global overview of Pentecostal worship illustrates the diversity of worship styles, which can often be very basic, Hillsong deploys the full effects of the contemporary culture industry to elevate worshippers beyond the mundane. For Wagner (2017b, p. 93), this tension between secular and sacred musical cultures is just one of Christianity's foundational "dialectical tensions", along with the tension between emotion and intellect, and the tension between the demands of individuals and collectives within churches. The specific tension in worship music, Wagner argues, is the desire to

[6] Bielo's (2011, pp. 51–55) ethnography of "emerging evangelicals", a broad movement that partly overlaps with what has been called "post-evangelicalism", includes similar insider critiques from emerging/post-evangelicals who are critical of the "spiritual technologies" employed, in particular, by evangelical megachurches.

"transcend the earthly plane through practices rooted in the world" (ibid.). As Martin 2016 illustrates, this tension around the use of music is observable throughout Christian history. Augustine, for example, loved music but feared its allure, and Martin locates arguments across the centuries over the incorporation of forms of music from the profane world into sacred services, with the boundaries between acceptable and unacceptable music constantly shifting.

The "classic Evangelical critique" of standardized music in worship services is that an emphasis on liturgical form and repetition—in emic evangelical terms, "ritual"—reveals spiritual insincerity, where spiritual sincerity is understood in the affectively individualistic evangelical manner that this article has been focusing on (ibid., p. 650). This critique has more than a passing similarity to the highly influential culture industry critique, first articulated by Adorno [1941] (1990), which is also concerned with the negative consequences of the standardization of creative expression upon the human spirit. Standardized music was also a way of creating standardized societies and standardized people for Adorno and the heirs of his radical critique, although little agency was granted to individual cultural actors in Adorno's approach, other than scholars and romantic geniuses. I think the circulation of both these critiques of standardization, the first familiar within evangelical Christianity, the second familiar (in a much watered-down form) within rock music culture, helps explain why most of the Pentecostal worship musicians I have spoken with have been reluctant to discuss the planning of music in worship services in great depth; rather, virtue is to be found in many churches via spontaneity in worship. For example, Adriaan, the leader of a worship team at a moderately charismatic evangelical church in Cape Town, deflected my suggestion of "success" in his approach to music. I observed the compatibility between his multicultural congregation, which includes a large proportion of people from central and western Africa, and the approach taken to contemporary worship standards, which were performed much faster than in most other churches. This stands in contrast to secular popular music, which is often slowed down when imported into South Africa, such as the electronic dance genre *kwaito* or lachrymose Afrikaans roots rock.

Far from being something planned with the specific congregation in mind, for Adriaan, the unlikely compatibility of his punk rock style with central and western African sensibilities is a matter of God bringing the right people together:

> At the end of the day it's the Lord in His wisdom that He can figure out how to make things work together. We are an African church, and at the end of the day we want that in our worship, and it's interesting how coming from a punk rock background has met with that. We're used to playing fast and the way I play guitar is probably bad because it's so strumming-driven. That's just the Lord knowing which different roads are going to meet. There was no intentional Africanization, not even an intent to do it faster, it's just what happened because I'm used to fast music. I've got this gauge in my mind; if it's too slow for me I speed it up.

In contrast to independent churches such as Adriaan's, making use of Hillsong's music but altering it through individual choice or congregational necessity, Hillsong's own churches embrace the artifice of their music, with "artifice" understood here in the neutral sense of craftsmanship, by standardizing performances as thoroughly as possible. A significant feature of Hillsong's music is that, as the church has globalized, its musical practices have remained centralized in Sydney. In contrast to the standard strategy of global institutions and brands to "glocalize" products by adapting globally available and recognizable commodities to a local audience, Hillsong has focused on the "consistency of its product" (Wagner 2014, pp. 59–60). This involves worship musicians and the congregations themselves. Worshippers are encouraged to purchase Hillsong's recordings and learn the songs, and because of this assumed familiarity, musicians seek to replicate the recorded studio sound live during services "in the belief that too much deviation will distract the worshipers' attention from God" (ibid., p. 65).

The lengths Hillsong worship bands go to in order to standardize their performances are quite remarkable; individual church worship bands replicate the composition of Hillsong's most prominent worship bands, seeking the same number of vocalists, guitarists, and so on, and musicians make use of "click tracks", which function like a metronome to maintain a consistent and pre-determined tempo, "regardless of who is playing the song or where it is being played" (ibid., p. 66). The complexity of the music and the high levels of studio production make reproduction very difficult, especially outside the Hillsong institution itself; Evans (2017, p. 74) offers illustrative examples from online forums where musicians "deconstruct" Hillsong's music to identify the equipment Hillsong musicians use, and discuss how to configure it to replicate the sound.

Although the music is produced in Sydney and then distributed globally in a finished form, the extent to which the music is appreciably "Australian" in the minds of worship musicians and worshippers differs. Wagner cites two worship musicians from Hillsong London, who insist that they play "faster and louder" than the Australian Hillsong worship bands, because the London church is "such a vibrant place", in contrast to what they believe to be the "slower" and "laid back" nature of Australian culture (Wagner 2014, p. 65). Wagner explains that this is incorrect ("in an objective sense") because Hillsong London uses the same standardizing tethers discussed above to make their songs as close as possible to the songs recorded in Sydney, even if the musicians feel that they are playing at a faster pace (ibid.). Rocha's (2017, pp. 134–37) interviews with Brazilian Hillsong members present the opposite view of Australian culture. Far from being "slower" and "laid back", Australian culture is viewed by these young Brazilian Pentecostals as valuing punctuality and discipline; Australians are viewed as scrupulously honest and law-abiding people, and Hillsong's music is viewed as a manifestation of Australia's all-around fabulousness.

The responses I encountered in South Africa contrast once again, insofar as the Pentecostal worship musicians I interviewed felt the Australian origins of the music to be irrelevant, or at least, imperceptible. The South African Hillsong musicians I spoke with were of the view that Hillsong's own church culture is what is apparent in the songs, not any national culture. These ideas are appreciable as an emic approximation of Wagner's (2014, 2017b) notion of Hillsong's "brand", a carefully curated and highly recognizable multimodal cultural language. Further distinguishing themselves from Wagner's British research participants and Rocha's Brazilian research participants, these South Africans did not seem to associate Australian culture with any distinct value system. Niz, a vocalist, said the Hillsong songwriters have "isolated their non-negotiables" over their thirty-year history, and learned to express these values in "universal language like love and encouragement, and things that cross borders". Similar sentiments were offered by the guitarist Franz, who argued that "what Sydney does is not necessarily Australian culture; it's a culture of love, like [Niz] said. They don't bring their Australian culture in".

Although I generally respect the anthropological incest taboo against studying one's own culture, as an Australian who has spent a lot of time in the United Kingdom and South Africa, I generally concur with these observations. I find Porter's (2018) argument that Hillsong articulates a "cosmopolitan" identity more compelling, agreeing with Klaver (2015b, p. 430) that the church's individualistic prosperity theology largely explains this. Since individual salvation is the message, local social struggles and cultural concerns are secondary. This is so much so that members of the Cape Town church with whom I discussed its social programs emphasized the low-visibility nature of Hillsong's local poverty relief efforts, while simultaneously complaining about negative and distorted depictions of the church as socially disengaged. As Hillsong is not a church that believes in structural solutions, such endeavors are not part of the church's core public identity (Martí 2017, p. 380).[7]

[7] There is obviously much more to be written on this topic, far beyond the scope of this article, but three aspects of an essay by Hillsong College lecturer Christopher Parkes (2017) on the church's social and ethical engagement stand out in the context of this article: firstly, a recognition of the theological underdevelopment of the church; secondly, an emphasis on the

Further to the question of Hillsong's "Australian" character, several non-Hillsong Pentecostal worship musicians were of the opinion that one cannot approach worship music like secular pop music and assume that worshippers are interested in the original performers, composers, or even the origins of worship songs. The musicians that I spoke with are themselves aware of the sources of the songs they select for services, partly because of licensing requirements, and partly because of an awareness of the ubiquity of certain songs and composers, but their (perhaps idealized) view was that this is not a concern for their congregations. Although my research was focused on musicians rather than ordinary members of the congregations, this notion is supported by research in predominantly Zulu churches in Durban, on the east coast of South Africa, which found that "there is a sense in which all the music from 'elsewhere' is grouped together in their minds, irrespective of any brand association" (Evans 2015, p. 188). The use of English in these songs, whether by Hillsong or another global Pentecostal music "brand", offers the same generic quality as Hillsong's theologically "generalist" lyrics (ibid., p. 183), with English the dominant language in a country with no less than eleven official ones, and fluency in English a highly valued cultural commodity.

We can contrast this, once again, with data from Rocha's (2017, pp. 130–34) study of Brazilian Hillsong members, which offers the example of a young self-identified Hillsong "fan" whose appreciation of Hillsong music from the age of ten mirrors that of a typical adolescent pop music fan; she learns the names of the band members, she follows them on social media, she has a clear favorite (Joel Houston), and she tries to get as physically close to the musicians as possible during their concerts. In response to this, students at Hillsong College in Sydney are told not to treat the musicians they may encounter as celebrities, no matter how many hundreds of thousands of Instagram followers a particular performer walking around the campus may have (ibid.). Clearly, this radically differs from the idealized notion I encountered amongst Pentecostal musicians of contemporary worship musicians as self-effacing servants of God, at best, co-equals with the congregations they lead in devotion, and at worst, only reluctant celebrities (Abraham 2017, pp. 130–31; Evans 2017, pp. 70–72). It does, however, help us understand the obvious but controversial comfort with secular celebrity culture, and the "eagerness for Instagram cool", that Hillsong's highest profile young leaders display (White 2017).

A good illustration of the approach Hillsong musicians take to what I am calling the standardization of sincerity in Pentecostal megachurch music emerged in an interview with members of Hillsong's Century City worship band, who also have experience playing heavy metal and hardcore punk. In hindsight, I realize that I should have asked whether their role at Hillsong was akin to that of a "tribute band", rather than a "cover band", for it is tribute bands who seek "faithful reproduction" of an original performance (Moore 2002, p. 217). However, a realization of just how standardized their worship music actually was only emerged during the interview:

> Interviewer: Tell me if it's an offensive question, but to what extent could you consider your role in the church worship band as being like a cover band?
>
> Franz: It probably is, yeah. Well, actually, as Hillsong Cape Town we are probably a cover band—Hillsong Sydney aren't. There's a bit of an instruction there, for us as musicians, to try and be as close as possible to what's been written in Sydney, especially if it's a song that's already been on an album. As soon as they [the congregation] hear the beginning of a song, they must think, "OK, this is *this* song", and then they must connect. We don't want them to be distracted by wondering why it's different. Our purpose is not to show that we can be creative musicians. In church, our purpose is for people to connect; in that, we step aside from trying to improvise and actually just do what's already been done. It may seem that it affects us as musicians, maybe it doesn't make us as creative, but it does challenge you in

decentralization of social policy and engagement (in contrast to the centralization of music production); and thirdly, what is referred to as the "primarily oral culture of the church" (ibid, p. 247).

> other ways. Church has developed me as a musician a lot, in terms of being more technical and theory-based.
>
> Niz: An important thing is that there's a musical standard that's set by the guys in Sydney, but even there, the guys who are at church [at Hillsong's Sydney campuses] on Sunday might not be the guys writing the music—they, in a sense, are playing the same songs other people have been writing. Then, at the same time, it's not just replicating the music, it's replicating the spirit that the music came out of. That's the most important part.
>
> Jesse: I would never see it as a cover band. For me, it's lead pastors saying, musically, this is our vision. I've seen a few interpretations, I guess, of some of this stuff. But that's how I feel about it; here's something to work with and everyone picks it up and makes it their own.

When Hillsong's musicians make the music "their own", they claim emotional ownership and subjective identification with the sentiments in the music, both the content and, as Niz said, "the spirit that the music came out of". Making the music one's own is conversely not about incorporating the music into one's own performance style, but shaping one's own performance style around the music as it is written in Sydney and distributed globally in a finished form. Indeed, replicating the "spirit that the music came out of" requires replicating the sense of service necessary within a centralized global institution. It is worth quoting Niz at length once again:

> Any time you are committed to a worship team, you have to understand that it's a sacrificial thing; you have to understand that it's not about you. You get people coming in to Hillsong attracted to the platform, and attracted to the big stage and the lights and the opportunity of playing at a big conference. Their motives are quickly found out and they get taken off team; we can see that your heart is not for Jesus, your heart is here for yourself and to be a rock star or whatever. Those guys don't end up going anywhere. It's a sacrificial thing; you've got to be prepared to sing other people's songs, you've got to be prepared to sing songs that are not in your key.

So for Hillsong's musicians, making the music "their own" is a sincere of act of mimicry.

Worship music is also about individual members of a congregation making the music their own. As Franz said, the congregation "must connect" as soon as they hear the opening notes of a worship song. To what extent does this suggest a standardization of response, though? In their global study of Pentecostalism, Miller and Yamamori (2007, p. 157) suggest that personal ecstatic experiences are a "regular occurrence" at some Pentecostal churches, insofar as church staff are aware of the precise points in the service when ecstatic experiences will take place, and the precise form that they will take, and they can make preparations accordingly. Is this part of the same problematic as the phenomenon of "entrainment" that Myrick (2017, 2018) identifies in charismatic worship music, a systematic synchronization of physical responses among worshippers which he recognizes as conceptually troubling for (especially charismatic) Christians? Wagner (2017b, p. 95) also gestures towards the temptations of a cognitive approach to worship in noting the use of suspended chords in contemporary worship music, which have been found to "provoke strong physio-emotional responses such as tears".[8] In his work on Pentecostal worship music, Martí (2018, p. 26) suggests something slightly different: a "familiarity" and an "anticipation" of the personal religious event. He refers to the sense of "security" that comes from "the cumulative familiarity of liturgical forms, the consistency of local liturgical settings, and the recognizable musical practices. . . . Individuals become accustomed to

[8] From a theological perspective, Myrick (2018, p. 34) cautions against "confusing what is physical for what is spiritual", while from a social scientific perspective, the concern is about confusing what is physical for what is social. Representatively, Steven Feld (1984, pp. 4–5) cautions against placing too much emphasis on musical form, rather than the context of music in an individual's life, and trying to "crack the code" between music and fixed meaning.

a worship situation and are able to anticipate the cues for action that are to come". This helps explain Franz's concern as a musician not to "distract" the congregation by showing that he can be "creative" with a familiar song, but the act of worship, as an embodied response to standardized music practice in this case, raises deeper questions about spiritual sincerity.

5. Embodying Sincerity

To understand how these tensions work themselves out in Pentecostal worship music, it is necessary to look closer at a typical contemporary Pentecostal megachurch service, noting the clear standardization of musical worship, but also, the way in which musical worship practices become embodied by members of a congregation. The primary tension for the musicians, as Wagner (2017b, pp. 98–99) identifies it, is between maintaining the technical requirements of the performance, as worship musicians must facilitate worshipping by the congregation, while at the same time, maintaining authenticity in their performance, as worship musicians must be worshipping themselves. Drawing on his ethnomusicological study of Hillsong's London church, Wagner describes the typical "block service" format used by Hillsong and comparative Pentecostal (mega)churches, which mirrors almost exactly what I witnessed over multiple services in Cape Town.[9] The Hillsong block service consists of five songs at the start of the service: The first two songs are fast and performed in a major key; these are followed by two slower songs, performed at half the tempo and utilizing suspended chords, and then a final song builds to "an upbeat crescendo" (ibid.). Jennings (2008, pp. 163–65) observed a very similar service at a Pentecostal church using a rented hall in Western Australia; the first, fast songs were intended to symbolize a break with the mundanity of everyday life and "wake people up" physically and spiritually, in the words of the church's senior pastor.

Crucially, Wagner (2017b, pp. 96–99) argues that the block service only "works" if the congregation is able to understand the intended meaning of that kind of music, which only happens if they have been trained to listen in a particular way. As Wagner describes it, the process begins with the training of worship musicians who are placed onstage, not only because they are expert musicians, but in order to present themselves as experts at worshipping God, as well. At similar Pentecostal services, Jennings (2008, p. 163) observed "at least four attractive, well-presented singers" on the stage, and concluded that their importance "cannot be overstated". These performers "sing enthusiastically, often smiling, vigorously gesturing, and dancing . . . the congregation respond in kind, lifting their arms, closing their eyes and dancing. The singers model the correct way to experience the presence of God". At Hillsong Cape Town, these bodily actions of the worship musicians, such as raising their hands or jumping up and down (typically in a semi-choreographed or certainly well-timed manner), are most closely mirrored by the young members of the congregation, who rush to the front of the stage as soon as the worship band appears. They create an approximation of a mosh pit familiar from secular rock (especially punk) performances, where they can dance and jump around more freely than they can in their seats, therefore more closely imitating the behavior of the worship band.

The imitation of gestures, in this case, imitation of the members of the worship band by younger members of the congregation, is one observable example of authentic musical performance in Moore's (2002) influential survey of the topic. "The music we declare to be 'authentic' is the music we 'appropriate'", he argues, recognizing that "the process of authentication is one of transfer" (ibid., p. 219). What Moore labels "second person authenticity", when a musician's performance is accepted as reflecting and validating the personal experiences of a listener, can also be seen in the mimicry of dance and vocal techniques by the adolescent consumers of the most shamelessly artificial forms of pop music (ibid.). The quite serious example he offers is the instinctive response of his own daughter and her friends to S Club 7's "Bring it all Back", the most popular hit of a late-1990s

[9] The only notable departures from this block service I witnessed were a long version of the popular hymn "How Great Thou Art" on one occasion, and the appearance of a rapper immediately after the block service on another occasion.

manufactured pop group created for a children's television show. Adolescents (and older people as well, of course) are often painfully self-conscious of their bodies, and Pentecostal churches encouraging this kind of worship are typically set-up in a way so as to "facilitate self-forgetfulness" and eliminate such self-consciousness (Jennings 2008, p. 163). In churches that can afford to do so, the stage will be illuminated, sometimes with an elaborate light show, and even a fog machine, so that the congregation is relatively anonymous during the worship block.[10]

There is an additional tension embedded within this simultaneous requirement to facilitate other people's worship (a technical requirement) while maintaining one's own worship (a spiritual requirement), insofar as the latter can undermine the former. Pentecostal megachurch musicians I have interviewed have been very much aware of the limitations that must be placed on their behavior. "In church there's a feeling [that] if you move you're going to distract someone", said Will, a Sydney Hillsong guitarist who has also played in a hardcore punk/heavy metal band. Movement, in the Hillsong worship scenario, essentially means spontaneous or unscripted movement that takes the focus away from the vocalists, who will of course move around a great deal. Moore (2015, pp. 184–86) offers the similar example of a recorded performance by the worship leader Kathryn Scott in which she interjects brief extra-lyrical spiritual statements ("hallelujah", etc.) into her performance and "embellishes" aspects of her performance that serve to foreground her separation from the collective congregational worship. Moore wonders whether these are examples of her "leading" worship by expressing spontaneous religious sentiments that exceed the performance's nominal parameters, therefore (in the language of this present article) demonstrating sincerity through subjective expression beyond the "quotation" of lyrics, or whether these interjections, which all make "good expressive sense", are deliberate performative elements that make her, and not God, the focus of attention (ibid.).

Recognizing the role of Pentecostal worship musicians to model correct worship practice raises the question of the extent to which the congregational mimicry evident in megachurch practice is "sincere" in Keane's (Keane 2007) understanding of the normative Protestant use of the word. Like Kathryn Scott's religious interjections in Moore's (Moore 2015) analysis, above, can the Hillsong mosh pit be thought of as a deliberate performative element that is effectively a quotation? To help understand embodied Pentecostal worship, Wagner (2017b) turns to the influential work of Hirschkind (2006) on ethical listening practices among revivalist Muslims in Cairo. He cites Hirschkind in explaining that the process of musical worship is one of "moral attunement where worshippers do the work of listening in specific ways and with specific attitudes to achieve the affective-volitional states necessary for the religious experiences they seek" (Wagner 2017b, p. 97). Hirschkind's work offers clear parallels to the present research topic, not least because his fieldwork site, contemporary Cairo, is the precise kind of city where Pentecostal revivalism is developing as well. Whether Cairo or Cape Town, and whether Christianity or Islam, revivalist religion excels at the "emotional stripping and welding" that changing identities require in contexts of social anomy (Mol 1976, p. 171).

Analyzing the discourse of Islamic revivalism in contemporary Cairo, and focusing on the practice of listening to cassette recordings of sermons as a form of religious edutainment, Hirschkind (2006, pp. 75–76) refers to the "moral physiology" integral to this listening practice. Distinguishing correctly attuned "listening" from mere passive "hearing" (ibid., p. 70), the process of developing "what might be termed a Quranically tuned body and soul" is likened to learning how to properly articulate the "gestures of a dance" (ibid., p. 76). As is the case for Pentecostal worshippers, such as those at the church Jennings (2008, p. 167) observed, who were cautioned against relying upon "second hand revelation", this cannot simply be a matter of mimicry, as it is a process affecting "the entire moral person as a unity of body and soul" (Hirschkind 2006, p. 76). He gives the example of an actor playing

---

[10] Kate Bowler (2016), a scholar of Pentecostal prosperity theology, reports that she "once saw a megachurch pastor almost choke to death on his own fog machine. Someone had cranked it up to the Holy Spirit maximum". Fog machines periodically appear within Pentecostal discourse around contemporary worship music and megachurch practices as the key symbol of spectacular excess.

Shakespeare's King Lear having to learn his lines, but also acquire the bodily traits and forms of movement that "express the tortured soul" (ibid.). Hirschkind makes use of the "neglected" work of the early twentieth century anthropologist Marcel Jousse, who focused on the idea of gesture as integral to communication and cognition, citing the example of watching a fencing match and feeling the sensations of the competitors in one's own body (ibid., pp. 76–78). In this way the body becomes an "auditory instrument" in learning to listen in the "Quranically attuned" way the revivalists advocate, with "patterned moral reflexes" developing, such as a change in posture (ibid., p. 79).

While this process seems clear in Islamic revivalist literature, with its constant references to the flesh and the heart, and the strong emphasis on correct ritual practices through "somatic learning" in Islamic tradition, generally (ibid.), the same principles apply to Pentecostal listening practices, however much this process may seem to differ from Keane's (2007) analysis of Protestant sincerity. References to the "heart" are, of course, ubiquitous in Pentecostalism and evangelicalism in general, from Wesley's Aldersgate experience of feeling his heart "strangely warmed" to typical contemporary examples, such as an evangelical university student describing a similar sense of religious conviction as a "real heart feeling" (Bramadat 2000, p. 38). In both Islamic revivalism and Pentecostalism, an "epistemological tension" exists around what Hirschkind (2006, p. 91) refers to as the "displacement" of religious authority inherent in the circulation of religious media that consciously play upon the emotions of the listener. Listeners may cry, but not know precisely why they are crying, or whether they are crying for the appropriate religious reason.

There is a complex interplay of embodied emotion and doctrinal understanding in the practice of listening to recorded sermons, as the sermons "recruit" the body of the listener and seek to create a particular embodied ethical state that produces a particular kind of listening (ibid., p. 98). As such, Hirschkind argues, "one is capable of hearing the sermon in its full ethical sense only to the extent one has already cultivated the particular modes of sensory responsiveness presupposed in the discourse's gestural vocabulary" (ibid., p. 101). Something very similar can be said about Pentecostal worship. As the senior pastor at the Western Australian Pentecostal church in Jennings' (2008, p. 164) study explains, "Worship is not just a physical experience, but an emotional and spiritual one. Physical acts, like clapping or singing, open up your soul. Only when your soul is opened up to the spiritual can you experience encounter with God". But merely clapping one's hands does not "open up your soul" unless you have a particular embodied understanding of the kind Hirschkind analyses. There is a catch, though. For while religious doctrine—or what Jennings calls, after Paul Ricoeur, "proclamation"—is necessary to create the affective state that allows the music ministry to serve its function of the "manifestation" of belief, the personal ecstatic experience foundational to Pentecostalism, the reverse is also true: music is necessary to "animate" the congregation to receive and respond to the verbal messages in the service in the intended manner (ibid., p. 165). Members of the congregation must replicate the rules of Pentecostal worship, but adopt them sincerely, if they are going to experience the music in its intended form.

6. Critiquing Insincerity

The effectiveness of megachurches in facilitating this sincere adoption of the rules of Pentecostal worship, amongst other aspects of orthopraxy, has come under critique from many Pentecostal musicians I have spoken with. Hillsong is commonly criticized for what these musicians view as the church's overemphasis on the spectacle of their services—the precise danger for Protestants of becoming "captured" by "material forms", which undermines the sincerity of their speech-acts (Robbins 2012, p 16). Their concern also touches at times upon lyrical content of the songs, with some anxiety about the doctrinal vagueness of Hillsong's lyrics, understandable as concern about insincere speech aimed at boosting popularity by avoiding disagreement. As Evans (2015, p. 183) observes, in noting the "generalist theological foundation of the music", Hillsong must surely understand "the economic benefits of its 'resources' being utilized in the global church". This lyrical ambiguity is a notable feature of popular contemporary congregational songs more broadly, however, as analyzed

by Thornton (2017), who recognizes that what may be viewed as "generic" or "bland" from one perspective, might be viewed as "creedal" or "inclusive" from a different perspective.

The non-Hillsong worship leaders I have interviewed, who include Hillsong material in their churches' worship repertoires, can rely upon any ambiguities in Hillsong's worship songs being corrected within the liturgical whole, in keeping with Jennings' (2008) analysis of the necessity of framing Pentecostal musical worship within the theology presented in a service's sermon. This argument, that charismatic worship music requires the religious anchoring of the sermon to keep it within the Christian tradition, may be reversed in the case of some Hillsong services, however. In contrast to the sermons preached in the evangelical and non-evangelical South African churches I have observed that make use of Hillsong worship songs, the core message of Hillsong's sermons (or what comes in place of the sermons), is often secular "common sense". As Martí (2017, p. 381) has observed, Hillsong's message is one of empowerment, and empowerment "almost always centers on finding resolutions for family and work issues". Rather than the music requiring the sermon to keep it unambiguously Christian, in such cases, it is the music that is required to keep the sermon unambiguously Christian.

Such a scenario—worship music with ambiguous lyrics and a sermon grounded in secular common sense, each attempting to rely upon the other to provide some kind of deeper context and meaning—may be the highest expression of Sanders' (2016) theory of the megachurch as the "non-place", for it would not merely be the architecture stripped of its cultural referents, but the music and the sermon as well. Such a religious critique has been expressed to me by both fundamentalist and progressive Christians in South Africa, the basic idea being that Hillsong offers a positive but superficial message. We might be able to translate this religious critique into something comprehensible from a social scientific perspective by returning to Hirschkind's work on Egyptian Islamic revivalists. In that study, he makes use of Massumi's (2002) distinction between "affect" as instinctive or precognitive "emotional movements" of the body, and "emotion" as "culturally qualified affect . . . inscribed with scripted action-reaction circuits" such as codified religious virtues (Hirschkind 2006, p. 82). Wade and Hynes (2013, p. 175) also make use of Massumi's distinction, but specifically in the case of Hillsong. They reject the idea that "the fervour and ecstasy of a typical Hillsong gathering [is] simply an outward manifestation of the evangelical mindset", and argue, after Massumi, for the "autonomy" of affect which, in the case of Hillsong's services, exceeds codified evangelical "emotion". Hence, the importance of Jennings' (Jennings 2008, p. 171) observation that there is nothing automatically Christian about the "ecstatic manifestation" experienced through Pentecostal worship, and the particularly problematic nature of attempting to frame the experience within what is considered by Hillsong's Christian critics to be weak theology.

There is one final critique of the conceivable insincerity of Pentecostal megachurch music, a more specifically charismatic critique of Hillsong and proximate Pentecostal megachurch services advanced by a minority of Pentecostal worship musicians I interviewed. This critique focuses on the standardization which slowly developed within Pentecostal services over the last two decades. Several musicians associated with Rhema churches, instrumental in charismatic revivalism in South Africa in the 1990s, discussed, at length, the standardization of services within their churches, which formerly allotted much more time and autonomy to musical worship. In contrast to the "block service" described above, these Pentecostal church services would not predetermine the songs, or even the length or share of time allotted to musical worship. The stated desire would be to allow the Holy Spirit to direct the service, allowing the worship leader to facilitate the musical worship as the Spirit so directed. Although Pentecostal worship musicians described this as merely providing opportunity for the Holy Spirit to work within the congregation, the authority of the worship leaders themselves is obviously much greater in services with such planned informality.

In the contemporary case of Hillsong, it is not simply multiple Sunday services that must be accommodated and timetabled, including the movement of individuals in and out of the church and the movement of cars and buses in and out of the car park, but the coordination of live "onstage" content with pre-recorded audiovisual content, which is, itself, often coordinated across multiple "campuses", or even across the entire global Hillsong network. Hillsong's centralized structure, predicated at least in part on the desire to maintain a standardized brand image (Wagner 2014, 2017a), leads to a subsequent reduction in the authority of local worship leaders, whose role radically differs from that identifiable within earlier South African Pentecostalism. Songs are chosen from within a limited repertoire to fit within the pattern and time constraints of the aforementioned "block service". A good illustration of this is the digital timer on the mezzanine level at Hillsong's main Cape Town campus at Century City, visible from the stage, but invisible from most of the congregation. It regulates the conduct of the service, much like a printed liturgy might in a proximate context.

7. Conclusions

This analogy between the standardized Pentecostal megachurch service, epitomized by the hidden timer counting down the end of segments and the end of the service, and the traditional printed liturgy of Catholic and mainline Protestant service, returns us to the basic Christian tensions articulated by Martin (2016) and Wagner (2017b): churches seek to achieve transcendence through worldly practices. So it is, this article has sought to demonstrate, in the case of Protestant sincerity. Subjective inner states are cultivated through the use of the highest forms of technology and craftsmanship the secular culture industry can offer; moreover, these technologies are refined, standardized, and globalized by a centralized corporate megachurch (Sanders 2016) that speaks of its "clients" as a "congregation" (Maddox 2012, p. 154), and promotes a thoroughly individualistic form of faith.

This article began by outlining the particular understanding of Protestant sincerity articulated by Keane (2007), recognizing that, while Keane's study of (post-)colonial Calvinism and my study of Pentecostal megachurch music culture are hardly identical, and while Pentecostalism can be thought of as a correction to aspects of Reformed Christianity, Keane nevertheless draws out something broad and significant about not just Protestantism, but modern religion in general. The generalizability of Keane's observations about the modern sincere spiritual subject are attested to by the utility of Hirschkind's (2006) research on Islamic revivalism in Cairo for helping to explain the process of sincere mimicry in Pentecostal megachurch worship that is the focus of this article. It was argued, with specific reference to Jennings' (2008) analysis of Pentecostal worship, that the transmission of embodied practices by (in particular) members of the worship band helps to work through the tension between the excessive or purely affective nature of the charismatic worship experience and the sometimes out-of-place Pentecostal sermon, which seeks to place a framework of orthodoxy around the personal ecstatic experience, even if such sermons rely upon on the worship block to prepare receptive subjects. Nevertheless, the criticisms that Hillsong's worship style attracts, especially from other church musicians, points to the fact that the kind of worship experience the church seeks to create, in order to inspire the kind of sincere subjects it hopes to produce, runs the risk of falling into insincerity by being "captured", in Robbins' (2012, p. 16) term, by the cultural forms it seeks to expertly employ.

Funding: Funding for the research in South Africa cited in this article was provided by the Academy of Finland through grant 265976.

Acknowledgments: Prompted by the soliciting guest editor at *Religions*, this article is heavily influenced by ideas encountered through the Christian Congregational Music network over a number of years. Errors and unpopular opinions remain the author's own.

Conflicts of Interest: The author declares no conflict of interest.

References

Abraham, Ibrahim. 2017. *Evangelical Youth Culture: Alternative Music and Extreme Sports Subcultures*. London: Bloomsbury Academic.

Adnams, Gordon. 2013. 'Really Worshipping', not 'Just Singing'. In *Christian Congregational Music: Performance, Identity and Experience*. Edited by Monique Ingalls, Carolyn Landau and Tom Wagner. London: Routledge, pp. 185–200.

Adorno, Theodor W. 1990. On Popular Music. In *On Record: Rock, Pop and the Written Word*. Edited by Simon Frith and Andrew Goodwin. London: Routledge, pp. 256–67. First published 1941.

Barr, James. 1977. *Fundamentalism*. London: SCM Press.

Berggren, Jason T. 2009. *Ten Things I Hate about Christianity: Working through the Frustrations of Faith*. Self-published.

Bergler, Thomas E. 2012. *The Juvenilization of American Christianity*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.

Bielo, James S. 2011. *Emerging Evangelicals: Faith, Modernity, and the Desire for Authenticity*. New York: New York University Press.

Bowler, Kate. 2016. Death, the Prosperity Gospel, and Me. February 13. Available online: https://www.nytimes.com/2016/02/14/opinion/sunday/death-the-prosperity-gospel-and-me.html (accessed on 10 January 2018).

Bramadat, Paul. 2000. *The Church on the World's Turf: An Evangelical Christian Group at a Secular University*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Busman, Joshua. 2015. (Re)sounding Passion: Listening to American Evangelical Worship Music. Ph.D. dissertation, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, NC, USA.

Evans, Mark. 2015. Hillsong Abroad: Tracing the Songlines of Contemporary Pentecostal Music. In *Spirit of Praise: Music and Worship in Global Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity*. Edited by Monique M. Ingalls and Amos Yong. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, pp. 179–96.

Evans, Mark. 2017. Creating the Hillsong Sound: How One Church Changed Australian Christian Music. In *The Hillsong Movement Examined: You Call Me out upon the Waters*. Edited by Tanya Riches and Tom Wagner. London: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 63–81.

Feld, Steven. 1984. Communication, Music, and Speech about Music. *Yearbook for Traditional Music* 16: 1–18. [CrossRef]

Feltmate, David. 2013. It's Funny Because It's True? The Simpsons, Satire, and the Significance of Religious Humor in Popular Culture. *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 81: 222–48. [CrossRef]

Harrison, Dreu. 2017. It is (not) Alternative: On Hillsong's Vision as Sacrament and Spectacle. In *The Hillsong Movement Examined: You Call Me out upon the Waters*. Edited by Tanya Riches and Tom Wagner. London: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 219–34.

Hillsong South Africa. 2018. Welcome to Century City. Available online: https://hillsong.com/southafrica/century-city/ (accessed on 10 January 2018).

Hirschkind, Charles. 2006. *The Ethical Soundscape: Cassette Sermons and Islamic Counterpublics*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Jennings, Mark. 2008. "Won't You Break Free?" An Ethnography of Music and the Divine-Human Encounter at an Australian Pentecostal Church. *Culture and Religion* 9: 161–74. [CrossRef]

Jennings, Mark. 2014. *Exaltation: Ecstatic Experience in Pentecostalism and Popular Music*. Bern: Peter Lang.

Keane, Webb. 2007. *Christian Moderns: Freedom and Fetish in the Mission Encounter*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Klaver, Miranda. 2015a. Pentecostal Pastorpreneurs and the Global Circulation of Authoritative Aesthetic Styles. *Culture and Religion* 16: 146–59. [CrossRef]

Klaver, Miranda. 2015b. Media Technology Creating "Sermonic Events": The Hillsong Megachurch Network. *Cross Currents* 65: 422–33. [CrossRef]

Maddox, Marion. 2012. 'In the Goofy Parking Lot": Growth Churches as a Novel Religious Form for Late Capitalism. *Social Compass* 59: 146–58. [CrossRef]

Maffesoli, Michel. 1996. *The Time of the Tribes: The Decline of Individualism in Mass Society*. London: Sage.

Martí, Geraldo. 2017. The Global Phenomenon of Hillsong Church: An Initial Assessment. *Sociology of Religion* 78: 377–86. [CrossRef]

Martí, Geraldo. 2018. Maranatha (O Lord, Come): The Power–Surrender Dynamic of Pentecostal Worship. *Liturgy* 33: 20–28. [CrossRef]

Martin, David. 2016. Music and the Aesthetic in Worship and Collective Singing: England since 1840. *Society* 53: 647–55. [CrossRef]

Massumi, Brian. 2002. *Parables for the Virtual: Movement, Affect, Sensation*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Miller, Donald E., and Tetsunao Yamamori. 2007. *Global Pentecostalism: The New Face of Christian Social Engagement*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Mol, Hans. 1976. *Identity and the Sacred*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Moore, Allan. 2002. Authenticity as Authentication. *Popular Music* 21: 209–23. [CrossRef]

Moore, Allan. 2015. On the Inherent Contradiction in Worship Music. In *Congregational Music-Making and Community in a Mediated Age*. Edited by Anna Nekola and Tom Wagner. Farnham: Ashgate, pp. 183–98.

Myrick, Nathan. 2017. Relational Power, Music, and Identity: The Emotional Efficacy of Congregational Song. *Yale Journal of Music and Religion* 3: 77–92. [CrossRef]

Myrick, Nathan. 2018. Embodying the Spirit: Toward a Theology of Entrainment. *Liturgy* 33: 29–36. [CrossRef]

News 24. 2002. Cape Town's Dockside Re-Opens. July 17. Available online: https://www.news24.com/Entertainment/SouthAfrica/Cape-Towns-Dockside-re-opens-20020717 (accessed on 10 January 2018).

Ostwalt, Conrad. 2012. Secular Steeples: Popular Culture and the Religious Imagination, 2nd ed. London: Bloomsbury Academic.

Parkes, Christopher. 2017. The Contours of Hillsong's Socio-Ethical Engagement. In *The Hillsong Movement Examined: You Call Me out upon the Waters*. Edited by Tanya Riches and Tom Wagner. London: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 235–52.

Porter, Mark. 2018. Charismatic Worship and Cosmopolitan Movement(s). *Liturgy* 33: 4–11. [CrossRef]

Riches, Tanya, and Tom Wagner. 2017. Introduction. In *The Hillsong Movement Examined: You Call Me out upon the Waters*. Edited by Tanya Riches and Tom Wagner. London: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 1–17.

Robbins, Joel. 2003. On the Paradoxes of Global Pentecostalism and the Perils of Continuity Thinking. *Religion* 33: 221–31. [CrossRef]

Robbins, Joel. 2012. Transcendence and the Anthropology of Christianity: Language, Change, and Individualism. *Suomen Antropologi: Journal of the Finnish Anthropological Society* 37: 5–23.

Rocha, Cristina. 2017. "The Come to Brazil Effect": Young Brazilians' Fascination with Hillsong. In *The Hillsong Movement Examined: You Call Me out upon the Waters*. Edited by Tanya Riches and Tom Wagner. London: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 125–41.

Sanders, George. 2012. Panem et Circenses: Worship and the Spectacle. *Culture and Religion* 13: 1–17. [CrossRef]

Sanders, George. 2016. Religious Non-Places: Corporate Megachurches and Their Contributions to Consumer Capitalism. *Critical Sociology* 42: 71–86. [CrossRef]

Taylor, Charles. 1989. *Sources of the Self: The Making of Modern Identity*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Taylor, Charles. 2007. *A Secular Age*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Thornton, Daniel. 2017. Generic Christianity: An Exploration of Contemporary Congregational Song Lyrics and the Global Adoption of Popular Songs. Presented at the Christian Congregational Music: Local and Global Perspectives, Ripon College Cuddesdon, Oxford, UK, 18–21 July.

Wade, Matthew. 2016. Seeker-friendly: The Hillsong Megachurch as an Enchanting Total Institution. *Journal of Sociology* 52: 661–76. [CrossRef]

Wade, Matthew, and Maria Hynes. 2013. Worshipping Bodies: Affective Labour in the Hillsong Church. *Geographical Research* 51: 173–79. [CrossRef]

Wade, Matthew, and Maria Hynes. 2016. At Hillsong, Religious Expression Is a Global Corporate Brand. July 4. Available online: https://theconversation.com/at-hillsong-religious-expression-is-a-global-corporate-brand-28765 (accessed on 10 January 2018).

Wagner, Tom. 2014. Branding, Music, and Religion: Standardization and Adaptation in the Experience of the "Hillsong Sound". In *Religion as Brands: New Perspectives on the Marketization of Religion and Spirituality*. Edited by Jean-Claude Usunier and Jörg Stolz. Farnham: Ashgate, pp. 59–73.

Wagner, Tom. 2017a. The "Powerful" Hillsong Brand. In *The Hillsong Movement Examined: You Call Me Out Upon the Waters*. Edited by Tanya Riches and Tom Wagner. London: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 253–69.

Wagner, Tom. 2017b. Christianity, Worship and Popular Music. In *The Bloomsbury Handbook of Religion and Popular Music*. Edited by Christopher Partridge and Marcus Moberg. London: Bloomsbury Academic, pp. 90–100.

White, Adam. 2017. Inside the Hipster Megachurch that may have Lured Justin Bieber out of Music. July 28. Available online: https://www.telegraph.co.uk/music/news/inside-hipster-megachurch-may-have-lured-justin-bieber-music/ (accessed on 10 January 2018).

Williams, Bianca. 2001. Popular Nightspot Dockside Faces Liquidation. May 22. Available online: https://www.iol.co.za/news/south-africa/popular-nightspot-dockside-faces-liquidation-66827 (accessed on 10 January 2018).

© 2018 by the author. Licensee MDPI, Basel, Switzerland. This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).

religions

MDPI

Article

Acknowledgment of Country: Intersecting Australian Pentecostalisms Reembeding Spirit in Place

Tanya Riches [1,2]

[1] The Edward Cadbury Centre for the Public Understanding of Religion, University of Birmingham, Edgbaston, Birmingham B15 2TT, UK
[2] Hillsong College, 1-9 Solent Circuit, Norwest, NSW 2153, Australia; tanya.riches@hillsong.com

Received: 7 August 2018; Accepted: 7 September 2018; Published: 21 September 2018

Abstract: This article builds upon a previous application of Nimi Wariboko's "Charismatic City" proposal, adapting it to the Australian context. Within this metaphor, the Pentecostal worshipper is situated in a rhizomatic network that flows with particular energies, forming a new spirit-ed common space that serves as the basis of global civil society. In this network, the culturally dominant metropolis and the culturally alternative heteropolis speak in distinct voices or tongues: An act that identifies and attunes participants to the Spirit's existing work in the world. Here, two interweaving Australian Pentecostalisms are presented. The metropolis in this example is Hillsong Church, well known for its song repertoire and international conferences. In contrast, the heteropolis is a diverse group led by Aboriginal Australian pastors Will and Sandra Dumas from Ganggalah Church. In 2017, Hillsong Conference incorporated a Christianised version of an "Acknowledgement to Country," a traditional Indigenous ceremonial welcome, into its public liturgy, which is arguably evidence of speaking new languages. In this case, it also serves a political purpose, to recognise Aboriginal Pentecostals within a new commons. This interaction shows how Joel Robbin's Pentecostal "impulses" of "globalization," "cultural fragmentation" and "world-making" can operate simultaneously within the ritual life of national churches.

Keywords: Pentecostalism; Hillsong; Aboriginal Australian; Charismatic City; Acknowledgement of Country; Globalization

---

Pentecostalism heralded an unprecedented change to the Christian religion. Thus, Cox (2013, p. 116) epitomises Pentecostalism as a "mood," an " ... [oceanic] feeling in the pit of the cultural gut that a very big change is under way." Today, NeoPentecostalism is characterised within the literature as having spiritual and moral potency for an adherent's negotiation of (as in, both resisting and adapting to) the effects of modernity and globalization (Marshall-Fratani 1998; Gifford 2004, 2015; Porter 2017; Jennings 2017). NeoPentecostal megachurches produce cultural and artistic products that hold great narrative power, the distribution of which forces them to engage with their external contexts (Piot 2012; Myers 2015). This article suggests that even as Pentecostals resist and incorporate the world around them, distributing their resources to various markets, such interactions cause their own social relations to change. In particular, it reviews interaction between two Pentecostalisms in the Australian context, with the resulting attempt to embed the universal global liturgical practices into land or "country." Within Aboriginal Australian culture, "country" is a concept that encompasses physical ecology but also includes the experience (and harmony) of the people living in the land. For most Aboriginal people, "country" imparts an experience of the divine or transcendent. This case study perhaps points to the future trajectories of Pentecostal communities and their theologies, and therefore the contribution of their social relations to the wider world.

The central question of this paper is, "what is the nature of the church's social engagement in changing global/national political environments, and, most importantly, how are NeoPentecostal forms changed by their interactions?" Focusing on one example, the influential megachurch Hillsong,

the thesis of this paper is that the slow transformation of Australian Pentecostal worship practice is reframing worshipers' understandings of the Spirit's work inside space and place, and is thus contributing spiritual and moral imperative to a new national narrative that includes those Australian cultures most marginalised by former theologies of expansion and colonialism, i.e., Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

1. Methodology

This article contextualises these events within a burgeoning literature of global Pentecostalism, but particularly within ethnographic studies presented by anthropologists of Christianity, including Robbins (2010), who identifies Pentecostalism's simultaneous "impulses" of cultural homogenization, fragmentation, and revitalization. To explain this paradox further, the article draws upon a metaphor developed by Nigerian Pentecostal scholar Nimi Wariboko in his book *The Charismatic City and the Public Resurgence of Religion* (Wariboko 2014). Within it, he identifies Pentecostalism as a rhizomic network, meaning "both a *metropolis* (mother city) and a *heteropolis* (an other, alternative polis) that is operating in, through, and energising global cities" (Wariboko 2014, p. 26). From this, the article then identifies two interacting Australian Pentecostalisms and notes recent developments at the Sydney campuses of the megachurch Hillsong Church to consider the incorporation of a Western Christianised appropriation of the Aboriginal Australian Dreaming ceremonial "Acknowledgment of Country" into Hillsong's largest conferences. Arguing that this can be read as an instance of the dominant Australian Pentecostal group learning to speak in new tongues,[1] it outlines the interaction between the dominant culture and marginalised Australian Pentecostal groups that preceded and followed this ritual adaptation in Australia's premier Pentecostal urban conferences.[2] Although a comparison of Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australian Pentecostalisms has been previously attempted (See Riches 2016), the intersection of Australian Pentecostalisms has to date been little explored. Finally, extending Wariboko's work, the article suggests that this incorporation is perhaps evidence of the development of a new spiritual polis from which a new type of Australian civil community can be born, and is thus an example of Pentecostal "world making," consistent with the distinct "Pentecostal social imaginary" promoted by J.K.A. Smith (2010, p. 11) or the "pneumatological imagination" identified by Amos Yong (2000, p. 179).

This case study provides a local example of how ritual change occurs, with content relevant to the national Australian context, by highlighting key moments of Pentecostal worship practices found within both the historical literature and my own ethnographic study in both Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australian Pentecostal churches. The insights arose primarily from continuing resonances between the fieldwork data collected for my MPhil (which involved a review of ten years of Hillsong music at Melbourne's Australian Catholic University) and fieldwork conducted in three urban Aboriginal-led congregations for my PhD (at Fuller Theological Seminary). This research found that Aboriginal Australian-led Pentecostal congregations utilised a multiplicity of methods to negotiate globalization; however, by emphasising material production, the leaders were seeking to revitalise (often misunderstood) "pre-modern" spiritualities and relational positionalities. This information was supplemented by mining social media discussions in which friends and acquaintances outlined their responses to the "Acknowledgement of Country" event that took place at Hillsong Conference in 2017. The short comments, here construed as statements, reveal the opinions of some who attended this

[1] Here the intention is not to argue that such speech-acts are replacing the doctrinally unique glossolalic and xenolalic practices, which continue in other contexts of the church.

[2] This article draws upon Richard Trugden's well known volume *Why Warriors Lay Down and Die* (Trudgen 2000), which contrasts Australian "dominant culture" (meaning Settler or Western culture) against diverse Aboriginal cultures (such as Yolngu) on Australia's mainland. The Yongu Elders are marginalised within public discourse. Thus, the diverse first nations provide alternative Australian societies which are at times in opposition to the state.

event as well as those who heard about it afterwards. But before moving on, this event will now be situated in relation to the literature.[3]

Global Pentecostalism and Its Impulses

From the opening of the twentieth century, Pentecostalism has grown exponentially, with many scholars claiming 600 million adherents, sometimes separated into discrete "waves" linked by "family resemblances." This draws upon Allan Anderson's famous definition of "Pentecostalism(s)" as "churches with a family resemblance that emphasise the working of the Holy Spirit, sharing common experience of the Spirit and practice of spiritual gifts" (Anderson 2010, p. 157; 2013, p. 5). Notably, the historicity of these waves is disputed by historian Mark Hutchinson (2017). Nevertheless, Anderson's framework remains useful as a rough means to distinguish these communities by worship practice, a topic of Pentecostal scholarship which has only recently emerged. Therefore, while "Classical" Pentecostals place great emphasis on their denomination's normative social rules (e.g., prohibitions on drinking and smoking) and may practice tongues on a regular basis, the "Charismatic" churches, in contrast, often continue to worship in their own denominations (with traditional liturgies) and therefore tend to cultivate a fusion of practice in which the gifts of the Spirit "break in" to or occasionally disrupt more traditional worship forms.[4] This can be distinguished from the "Older Independent" or mission churches in Africa and China, who may have borrowed "the practices of prayer, healing, and spiritual gifts" but perhaps not the Pentecostal label (Anderson 2010, p. 5). Finally, NeoPentecostals are considered a diverse group that includes many of the world's megachurches, who share an identity that often crosses denominational lines. The main commonality of this group is that the authority for local worship practices lies with the church leadership, who often follow global trends rather than Pentecostal or liturgical traditions. This characteristic leads Poloma and Green (2010) to identify them more generically as "Evangelical."

While the historical debates continue, it is arguably ethnographic studies of ritual that have led to significant breakthroughs in understanding the Pentecostal movement's interaction with its world. For example, from his work with the *Urapmin* in Papua New Guinea, Joel Robbins (2010) proposes three common "impulses" of Pentecostalism, entitled "world-breaking," "world-making," and "globalization," which he claims structure the worship and other activities of most Pentecostal churches. These impulses are undergirded by powerful rituals that ensure that the movement delivers on its promises. The first stated impulse, "globalization," is debatably best described as a reordering of the spatial organization of social relations with greater "extensity, intensity, velocity and impact" (Held et al. 1999, p. 16). The second impulse of Pentecostalism, "world-breaking," involves its propensity to encourage "rupture" with indigenous rituals (Dombrowski 2001, 2002).[5] Thus, the spread of Pentecostal practice is sometimes considered emblematic of Western hegemony (Yong 2015, p. 287). However, the third feature identified by Robbins is Pentecostalism's "world-making" impulse. This allows for cultures to adopt and transform Pentecostal practice—not only its forms, but also its processes (Meyer 2003, 2009, 2010). How scholars deem the forces of cultural homogenization and cultural fragmentation to be operating *concurrently* is of interest to this paper.

As for the broader claim, there is little doubt that ritual has contributed to Pentecostalism's extraordinary global expansion. Pentecostal experience is facilitated by the communal, oral, and affective practices of the Pentecostal churches (Chesnut 1997; Albrecht 1999; Coleman 2000; Maxwell 2005). A worshipper's knowledge of the Spirit is formed largely in real time and place,

[3] All participants whose comments appear in this paper gave their consent for the content (and their name where relevant) to appear in writing.
[4] Here Anderson cites "Catholic, Anglican, Orthodox, and various Protestant Charismatics" and notes that they "sometimes approach the subject of Spirit baptism and spiritual gifts from a sacramental perspective" (Anderson 2013, p. 6).
[5] Here Robbins (2010) outlines the Urapmin's destruction of their cultural artifacts and practices such as gender segregation, which were justified by Pentecostal theologies generated in worship.

with a particular group of people whose bodies become "entrained," moving dynamically to shout or whisper in synchronicity together (Marti 2012; Myrick 2017). Thus, Pentecostal theologians cite as their movements' central motif the biblical narrative of Acts 2, in which the diverse believers gathered in Jerusalem (Solivan 1998; Cartledge 2006; Yong 2013). Within this original Pentecost event, "tongues of fire" were said to rest on each worshipper's head, with the sign of "glossolalia," or heavenly languages, following, thus marking the age of the Spirit and the inauguration of the church. Frank Macchia (1993) outlines the retrieval of this practice via the continuing importance of tongues for Pentecostals as a sacrament, a sign of God's unmediated presence that empowers the believer for Christian life and witness. Speaking in tongues quickly became a distinctive practice of Pentecostal churches, accompanied by other ecstatic experiences in worship and prayer (Lovett [1975] 2015; Hummel 1978; Synan 1993). For James Smith (2010, p. 123), this practice or speech act ultimately produces a new social imaginary, as "tongues-speech is the language of communities of resistance who seek to defy the powers that be."

Charismatic Anglican Mark Cartledge (2006) argues that the Pentecost event provides both "process" and "framework" for the diverse global movement's spirituality. As an oral community, the process of theologising continues within each worship event or public gathering. In this way, the revivals of the 1970s were characterised as a return to the biblical text via continuing this oral practice, rather than a deviance from the various denominations' traditions (Marshall 1977; Hummel 1978). This logic has arguably informed the global NeoPentecostal worship service as found in urban cities today, with a focus upon shared techne or practice, e.g., iconic symbols of embodied postures such as raised hands, a five-piece rock band, and flashing lights (Coleman 2000; Farhadian 2007; Hutchinson 2013). Such practices are easily translatable, meaning that they move across state borders and are constantly updated (Csordas 1992, 2007). Thus, Asian American scholar Amos Yong proposes that the Pentecostal "framework" or "pneumatological imagination" is a multifarious global theology formed out of this common experience of the Spirit (Yong 2000, p. 179). In this way, Pentecostalism is diverse but unified.

The case study presented in this article demonstrates how Pentecostalism transforms as it moves through time and space. Rather than viewing Pentecostalism in isolation, this article suggests that it is through the interaction of diversity and unity that Pentecostals are forging a language of Spirit empowerment and are speaking in new languages that identify and attune participants to the Spirit's work in the world—a feature which has special relevance in a new era of urban megacities and cyber space. These interactions will be examined further using Nimi Wariboko's proposal in *The Charismatic City*, which is then applied in an Australian context.

2. Nimi Wariboko's Proposal

In his book *The Charismatic City and the Public Resurgence of Religion*, Nimi Wariboko (2014, p. xii) describes Pentecostalism today as a rhizomatic network which is "both a *metropolis* (mother city) and a *heteropolis* (other, alternative city) that is operating in, through, and energizing global cities."[6] In summary, for Wariboko, Pentecostalism historically developed via three philosophies reminiscent of distinct cities: The Sacred, the Secular and the Charismatic. To form an understanding of the *metropolis*, Wariboko draws upon Western medieval European religious systems in which the king's body and land were entwined. Thus, Augustine's *City of God*, later embodied as "Christendom," became a place of intensified divine presence. All were conscious that "God is here" (Wariboko 2014, p. 99). From this city, Wariboko notes, "the task of believers' public engagement . . . [was] to sing their song well enough that the society at large [was] brought to their truth claim" (Wariboko 2014, p. 99). However, Wariboko notes the subsequent emergence of a "Secular City" in which God was proclaimed dead (Cox 2013;

[6] Wariboko presents three distinct philosophies of pneumatologically-oriented social engagement that exist simultaneously but also offer progression (See Riches (2016) for a more theological application of this theory).

Wariboko 2014). There, all space was open as even "God comes from elsewhere" (Wariboko 2014, p. 100). Wariboko (2014, p. 94) asks, did the Spirit in fact move humanity towards the Secular City? If so, what was God's mission? His controversial answer is the decentralisation of religion, which ended an elite system of priests which dissuaded converts from participation and responsibility in the polis. Within the third "Charismatic City," however, divine presence again permeates all space and all time. There is no absence of God. This is through a process of the transformation of space as the Spirit enfolds, then unfolds and refolds everything (Wariboko 2014, p. 104). As Wariboko (2014, p. 100) says, "God is in you, but God overflows and connects you to the elsewhere and to the other." This re-enchanted "New Jerusalem," he claims, is a "network of networks" flowing from "London to Buenos Aires, from New York to New Delhi, and Rome to Lagos" (Wariboko 2014, p. 1).

This Pentecostal city has no border but intersects both the real and technological worlds (Wariboko 2014, p. 87). All are authorised and empowered with new identities carved out of the many nations and tribes (Wariboko 2014, p. 59). In this way, tongues overturns traditionalism (Wariboko 2014, p. 63). This marks the new "litourgeia," or work of the people. In this city, worship is clearly political as it is done in public, or in the shared "in-between space," and this forms a new commons of sorts and the basis of a global civil society (Wariboko 2014, pp. 45, 49, 53). Therefore, the Charismatic City acts to promote freedom and to remove unfreedom, allowing every citizen's potential to be actualised. Christians speak with their "others" in the public square, embracing and celebrating each contribution in pursuit of common good and peace-building (Wariboko 2014, p. 97). Pentecostal practice becomes a site of intense human activity, which forms a type of "commons" or new place between believers, representing the (often unconscious) bodily entrainment and shared "emotional energy" achieved through ritual focus that links the individual to the body politic, since " ... to participate in or enact a practice, is to exercise power, the power of being, the power to perform" (Wariboko 2014, p. 128). However, the city itself is made up of both the dominant (*metropolis*) and marginalised (*heteropolis*) identities which continue to work upon each other, conflicting with and transforming each other. He explains this as dynamic social practice. This article investigates evidence of new Pentecostal spiritualities or speech acts of this kind which are transforming the Pentecostal "social imaginary" in the local context of Australia.

3. Hillsong as *Metropolis*

The largest of the Australian megachurches is undoubtedly Hillsong Church. Founded in 1983, its extraordinary growth and influence via music has been well documented (Connell 2005; Wade and Hynes 2013; Riches and Wagner 2017; Marti 2017). Due in part to its now global prominence, researchers note that Hillsong transcends nationality and ethnicity, allowing its diverse adherents to intuitively feel at home in its worship setting regardless of their geographic location—thus promoting a certain "cosmopolitanism" (Riches and Wagner 2017; Porter 2017, 2018). The "uneven co-configurations of imaginaries of the 'local' and 'global'" are noted by Lena Rose (2018, p. 2) for example, who examines a negative interaction with the guest MC at a Hillsong United concert who amplified American Zionist theologies which conflicted with the expectations of the marginalised local Palestinian audience. In this way, Rose notes the impact of problematic interactions that occur within transnational space (in this instance, while overseas on a music tour). However, in contrast, this article notes the ways in which Hillsong (as *metropolis*) has at its centre begun to embed into land or "country" via encounter with Aboriginal Pentecostalism (as *heteropolis*) within its core, resulting in a visibility that allows the pursuit of a common life. This suggests a way that multiple "impulses" or even realities may be sustained within Pentecostalism globally.

Today, Hillsong Church gathers over 40,000 worshippers across its 30 locations, which meet regularly in 89 services. The congregation began as "Hills Christian Life Centre," a small church planted in 1983 in the suburban Hills District of Sydney by two ministers, Brian and Bobbie Houston, affiliated with the Australian Christian Churches (formerly known as the Assemblies of God in Australia) (Connell 2005; McIntyre 2007). Its music became so successful that the church rebranded

to use its publishing name, "Hillsong," thus entrenching its geographic origins (the Hills District) and "song" as its two immutable symbols (Riches and Wagner 2012, 2017). Hillsong's contemporary choruses are now considered iconic (Riches 2010a, 2010b; Riches and Wagner 2012, 2017). Its annual calendar is punctuated by conferences, events and CD/book releases, which facilitate the distribution of its "resources" produced for other churches. Thus, Musicologist Mark Evans (2006, p. 77) states,

> There would be few churches in Australia, of any denomination or persuasion, unaffected by the music of Hillsong Music Australia (HMA). Though some Christians told me they would never set foot in Hillsong Church due to theological differences, they were more than happy to sing music written and produced there.

In the early years, Hillsong often entreated the Spirit to descend upon the Australian landscape, sacralising hearts, bodies and this space the worshippers inhabited (Riches 2010b, p. 13). As this music was distributed in the UK and North American churches, it began to be used as evidence that God was moving even in the "outermost parts of the earth" (Acts 1:8), a metaphor for reverse mission back to the centre of Christendom. There was a clear shift in the church's imagination to extend their geographical borders beyond Sydney and towards the world (Riches and Wagner 2012; Evans 2015). Much of the local content was steadily replaced by more global lyrics and imagery (Riches and Wagner 2012). Once Darlene Zschech assumed the role of lead worship pastor, Hillsong's songs largely dispensed with the petition "Holy Spirit, come." Instead, songwriters reinforced the idea that God was always present, even when seemingly absent in a post-9/11 world.[7] Arguably, however, the main purpose for Hillsong's music-making prevailed, which was the reconstruction of the Australian church as a central social institution. In this endeavour, the congregation actively participated, discerning God's supernatural anointing upon aspects of the worship service and energising these expressions. This could be measured in two ways: Physical participation in the worship event, and sales of the music (Riches 2010b, p. 50). Today, few Australians doubt that Hillsong is the dominant expression of contemporary Christianity in the nation. However, within the church itself, talk of God has expanded from reproducing its distinct practices towards developing language appropriate for the commons, or urban polis. Notions of Spirit absence have been replaced with immanence—God is everywhere, both in and outside of the church (See Riches (2016) for lyrical examples of this transition).

4. Aboriginal Pentecostalism as *Heteropolis*

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (2011), only around 1% of Aboriginal people practice "traditional religion," while 73% of Indigenous Australians self-identify as Christian (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2006).[8] Of these, 2.7% of Aboriginal people identify as Pentecostal, double the statistic for the wider population. In fact, Aboriginal Pentecostals seem to have used this religious form from the 1920s (Calley 1955; Calley and Reay 1964; Ono 2011, 2012), or even earlier. Malcolm Calley's ethnographic research took place during official racial segregation, which was maintained until Aboriginal peoples received citizenship in the 1960s. In his writings, Calley (1955, p. 11) argued that the rural East coast Australian towns at the time represented conflict between two spiritually charged and spatially distinct Australian religious ritual systems: The "old rule" of "the Dreaming," which he juxtaposed to an organised Christian religion of "the Trinity." He noted that the Bundjalung peoples had the Dreaming bora rings (or circles) for dancing (or "corroboree") ceremonies, with their initiated *marugan* or "clever men" who curated the sacred land sites. He contrasted this with local white congregations who gathered to sing hymns and listen to the "dogma" of their male clergy in Christian liturgy. They boasted similarly "righteous" or "authorized" men who curated mission outposts. Although he states, "The clever men are all dead," their power apparently lived on

[7] This is explored further in Riches (2016), the precursor work to this article, which uses Wariboko's Charismatic City proposal to compare distinct Australian Pentecostalisms.

[8] This rises to 6% in remote rural areas, but for the purposes of contrast no measure of Pentecostalism exists.

within the minds of the white clergy, who placed embargoes on "drinking, smoking and clever men," depicted as " . . . black powers of darkness, a rival force" (Calley 1955, p. 49).

Calley notes the effects of the religious segregation experienced by "mixed blood" Bundjalung living on the East Coast. Australia's missionaries and white congregations excluded them through "a feeling of unwelcome" that exacerbated their wider social marginalisation. Intriguingly, he describes a process by which a group of Bundjalung Pentecostals defied these traditionally accepted dichotomies by creating new religious space. He declares,

> Aboriginal Pentecostalism is not merely a welding of Christianity onto a mixed blood community. It is an integration of a new religion into the social framework of the old . . . the new religion, like the old, is partly magical and aspects of both the indigenous and alien cultures has been verified. (Calley 1955, pp. 4, 47)

More recently, Ono (2011, 2012) returned to these Bundjalung churches with Calley's printed photographs to reconstruct an oral history of these congregations. Her conclusion was that even today, many aspects of the Dreaming remained.

Today, Aboriginal Pentecostalism constitutes a series of overlapping networks that stretch across the nation (Riches 2017), though Aboriginal communities' relationship with both traditional churches and the state continues to be fraught. However, many Aboriginal Pentecostals living in the now more urbanised Bundjalung lands would reject claims of religious syncretism, and disagree that the Dreaming plays any part in their Aboriginal Pentecostal worship. Many prefer to denote the Dreaming as "spirituality" rather than "religion"—amidst claims that Dreaming was always a heterodox community of practice and belief (Grieves 2008). This is often simply termed "culture." Although some still associate Australian national identity with Christianity, there is increasing pressure to include Australia's original religiosity in state rituals, often reified for a late modern consumer society. Thus, the spirituality of "The Dreaming" or "Dreamtime" has become significant even in urban areas (Grieves 2009, p. 111). Of the rituals that exist, the most commonly used is the official "Welcome of Country" in which Elders welcome visitors onto land. Culturally appropriate welcomes are now staged at the beginning of every local, state and federal Australian government meeting as well as in many other institutions (Everett 2009). Thus, at state functions today, a ceremonial introduction is performed by an Elder. An Elder is a representative of the traditional owners of the land, meaning that they play an ongoing leadership role in the "country" on which the welcome is held. Or, where no Elder can be found, an adapted "Acknowledgement of Country" may be performed. An Acknowledgement may be spoken by anyone, and usually follows a pattern similar to the following: "I would like to acknowledge that we are gathered today on the land of the [insert nation] peoples, and to pay my respects to the Elders past and present." Both of these ceremonies perform (and sustain) a particular relationship to "country" for Australia's Aboriginal peoples, and are therefore significant to the continuation of these cultures. In recent years, Elders have taken a greater role in all of Australia's national holidays and public events.

Aboriginal ceremony is noted to hold complex meaning when performed in the urban space (Magowan 2000) but particularly also when performed by the state. In addition to welcome rituals, smoking ceremonies are featured at certain events, for example, as Akehurst (2012) notes incredulously, at the opening of the CSIRO, Australia's leading government agency for scientific research. But although welcome ceremonies are now generally deemed acceptable to the majority of Aboriginal Christians, smoking ceremonies can be divisive, with mixed reception by urban evangelical/Pentecostal Christians (Riches 2014, p. 28). This is likely due to associations with ancestor worship and the invoking of spirits. Rather than grapple with these complexities, most urban Christians (and their affiliated institutions, e.g., churches and schools) refuse to adopt all ceremonial practices, despite calls to do so by figures such as the late missiologist Langmead (2002, 2007). In this way, the evangelical/Pentecostal Australian church now often stands opposed to the everyday spirituality of

its state. Despite this, many Aboriginal people identify *both* with institutional Christianity and culture.[9] It is important to note that local Aboriginal spiritualities have been obscured by these and many other revisions. For example, Durkheim (1912) famously noted a particular "collective effervescence" within Australian Aboriginal Dreaming rituals as recorded by early colonists. While he never visited Australia to observe the spiritualty of Aboriginal peoples, scholars still draw upon his and Randall Collins's later theories to successfully describe the affective energies that power Pentecostal ritual and form its institutions (Collins 2004; Robbins 2010; Wariboko 2014).

The continuing vitality of Aboriginal Pentecostals and their contribution to this discussion have largely been ignored. Aboriginal Pentecostal leaders affirm Spirit as present in the world, utilising the ancient resources of Dreamtime cultural and religious practices to draw Australians' chaotic contemporary virtual life back into real time and place. For example, Birripi man Pastor William Dumas and his Bundjalung wife, Sandra Dumas, oversee Ganggalah Church. Will grew up in Sydney's urban suburbs, while Sandra is local to the area. Their diverse congregation draws on wisdoms of both Pentecostal and Indigenous cultures. In interviews, many of Ganggalah's members mentioned traditional "Welcome to Country" ceremonies as a practice compatible with Christianity. They promote this alongside sharing, hospitality, and caring for kin. Ganggalah Church regularly performs a traditional welcome honouring the land and Elders each time guests arrive into the city. But some older Aboriginal Pentecostals, such as Aunty Amelia Watego, were careful to qualify this as a "Christian welcome":[10]

> If a white person said, "Amelia is your church an Aboriginal church?" I wouldn't get offended—you know what I used to say? I used to say, "No, I tell the Lord it's his church, not our church." I said, "He could bring whoever he wants there" . . . [W]e used to always sing this song when visitors came . . . (sings) "There's a welcome here. There's a welcome here. There's a Christian welcome here."

These Pentecostals noted in interviews that white Australian pastors often rejected or blatantly ignored the Aboriginal community's requests for basic cultural recognition, citing their refusal to perform even a ceremonial "Acknowledgement to Country" to honour the traditional landowners. Many were confused by the fact that, although every Australian school and government meeting acknowledged Aboriginal Elders, they were often left unacknowledged (and therefore marginalised via their lack of visibility) at events held in the church building and by Christian leaders in public space. Many interviewees associated this decision with the missionaries, who often prohibited traditional ceremonial language and discouraged involvement in ceremonial life.

In addition, the Ganggalah Christians integrate practices of "yarning" into the centre of their worship service. "Yarn" is a pan-Aboriginal or "Lingo" word referring to a traditional form of conversing, which is primarily just an "informal and relaxed discussion" (Bessarab and Bridget 2010). However, yarning becomes a tool for meaning-making, particularly for Indigenous participants who gain solidarity in shared urban experiences (Bessarab and Bridget 2010, p. 41). It is also used for self-development as Elders bestow wisdom, and it creates a space of healing as those who suffer deep traumas learn to re-narrate their lives (Atkinson 2002, p. 4). In fact, Aboriginal Australian counsellor Judy Atkinson situates yarning within the Dreaming, as spiritual endeavour:

> I will listen to you, share with you, as you listen to, share with me . . . Our shared experiences are different, but in the inner deep listening to, and quiet, still awareness of each other, we learn and grow together. In this we create community, and our shared knowledge(s) and wisdom are expanded from our communication with each other. (Atkinson 2002, p. 17)

9 Little work has been done on these intersections from a Christian perspective, although this is the subject of a forthcoming edited journal via Australasian Pentecostal Studies.

10 However, although most of the participants enjoyed watching traditional dance and approved of Welcome to Country, only a few tolerated smoking ceremonies, and none would attend a blood ceremony.

In Indigenous life, yarning creates rapport and accountability within a transformative relationship. Ganggalah participants vocalised the benefits of forming friendships with white Christians in a church context. In particular, they hoped the recent establishment of a denominational Australian Christian Churches (ACC) "Indigenous Initiative" would bring change. The Ganggalah leaders were, through this initiative, helping form institutional links between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal churches. All interviewees celebrated Welcome (and Acknowledgement) as a practice that may facilitate a successful, equalising dialogue between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians in the urban context, something not often present either in society generally—or in urban Australian Pentecostal liturgies. In the task of yarning, participants together discern the Spirit in their world, creating narratives together that amplify Indigenous values and concerns, even within Western institutions (Walker et al. 2013, p. 8). This practice was also considered to reembed the worship into the Australian land.

5. Intersections between the Metropolis and Heteropolis

During visits to Sydney, Pastor Will Dumas encouraged church leaders on behalf of their mutual denomination to address Indigenous concerns, and a request was made that Hillsong perform an Acknowledgement of Country at its major conferences, particularly when Aboriginal Christians were attending. This was to become a reality in July 2017 at Australia's premier Christian event, Hillsong Conference, with the performance of the first ever Acknowledgement of Country. The Acknowledgement was spoken live by Jatham Staudinger, an Aboriginal man and staff member from Hillsong Darwin. Standing in front of over 20,000 people, he spoke these words:

> "In the beginning, the earth was formless and void. Darkness was upon the bottomless depths. . . . and the Spirit of God rushed upon the waters."
>
> As the Psalmist says, "When you send your Spirit, you renew the face of the earth."
>
> We are gathered together tonight during our National NAIDOC week on the Country of the Wann-gal people, the traditional custodians who lived and danced by the river.
>
> And Aboriginal people were and are here. We acknowledge the Elders past, present and future.
>
> Now together in many languages, from many lands, we join to worship Jesus, the author and the finisher of our faith, the One who unites all peoples, nations and tongues. [11]

This was followed by a roar in the stadium from the gathered conference attendees. A pre-recorded video with similar words was repeated in 2018 before thousands of attendees at the three Colour conferences for women in March (with this Acknowledgement spoken over the image of Sydney's Harbour Bridge) and was also repeated at Hillsong Conference in July (with the Acknowledgement spoken over footage of green land). At the opening of the new Hillsong campus in Perth, a more traditional Welcome to Country was performed by a local Noongar woman, Frances Ramsey.

In addition, Will Dumas encouraged Hillsong to get their Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander congregation members together for a "yarn."[12] Ultimately, in order to facilitate this event, the word was spread on social media by CityCare and College employees[13] who also advertised the event. Pastor Will Dumas attended to facilitate this first yarn (See Figure 1). The conversation was wide reaching, but during this meeting particular comment was made by the group about the effect of the Acknowledgement upon these long-term members.

---

[11] https://hope1032.com.au/stories/faith/2017/aboriginal-australians-acknowledged-hillsong-conference-opening/.

[12] This is an Aboriginal Lingo word which means conversation.

[13] Employees such as myself, Jason Allen (CityCare head of department at the time) and Vicky Rough were able to issue invitations to self-identified Aboriginal attendees across the various Sydney campuses, but changes to media law have since changed this process significantly.

Figure 1. The initial yarning conversation at Hillsong's Waterloo campus.

Many of the group later communicated on Facebook, where I initiated a thread to ask attendees of Hillsong Church about the impact of the 2017 Acknowledgement event upon them. One member of the City campus wrote:

> What I loved about the Acknowledgment last year was linking the bible verse about people dancing and celebrating on the land with the connection on lifting up Jesus. Under one name. Something that God is really taking me on a journey through is that intersection, paying respect to culture in faith-filled way.

Some of the Ganggalah Church members also responded, including one who stated that it was "a defining moment in church history. Made me cry tears of joy. It broke down natural and spiritual walls." In addition, non-Indigenous congregation members commented, including one of the African American college students:

> The first time I was at conference and witnessed the Acknowledgement to Country [at Hillsong Conference], I cried. It was beautiful. To me it wasn't just church choosing to recognise and honour the people of the land, it was church choosing to see and value them.

Although most believed that this had been a positive move forward for reconciliation, Aboriginal people had varied opinions on how Acknowledgements should be integrated into church practice. A member of the Darwin campus wrote:

> In a Christian context, I believe that we Indigenous and other people always need to include the Great I AM, without exception. As that's what our business is about in the first instance.

Others noted that they only really appreciate the ceremonial moment when it is "real," or "happens out of genuine respect." They pointed to the need for reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous congregation members to overflow from these speech acts. Another stated, "when it becomes part of a bureaucratic checklist it can feel flat." Some noted that spoken Acknowledgement was a colonial appropriation of the more traditional performances that included smoking ceremonies. However, it was clear that the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander members of Hillsong had enjoyed greater participation in the church since this speech act had occurred, with leaders understanding who they were and sparking conversations about their traditional lands and cultures. In this way, Hillsong as *metropolis* had acknowledged the *heteropolis* in its own congregation in some new ways.

6. Discussion: The Charismatic City

What do these events, and the related responses, show about The Charismatic City? In this article, I aimed to show how Robbins's three impulses at play could possibly operate simultaneously, as illustrated through the interactions of two Pentecostalisms in Australia and the impacts of the interactions upon practice. This investigation drew upon Wariboko's argument for a particular Pentecostal social engagement. His proposal points to the "mystery, openness, and possibilities" found in the Scriptures, as well as the work of the Spirit throughout Christian history, to assert a "Charismatic City" metaphor that represents a new and developing "space wherein, whereby, and whereon believers live, act, and commune with one another." Pentecostalism, Wariboko notes, is at its heart a rhizomatic network of interconnecting free churches. This New Jerusalem can be conceived as the body of Christ. However, also notably, "this space goes beyond the Church as narrowly conceived" (Wariboko 2014, p. 171). He warns,

> The body of Christ exceeds the limits of Christian membership. In the era of globalization and the emergence of the global commons, the worldwide body of Christ has become one immense, cosmopolitan city or world city. (Wariboko 2014, p. 169)

He describes a "city where there is openness to the surprises of the Holy Spirit, irruptions of divine energies for communion, and the flourishing of human coexistence (Wariboko 2014, p. 177). Wariboko (2014, p. 171) asserts, "this is . . . how the body of Christ is; it is space and places opened up by Jesus of Nazareth." In fact, he terms this a "turn to land" (Wariboko 2014, p. 179). This "enspirited" church is a work in progress, changing and adapting to its other and the context in which it lives. Thus, as Pentecostal congregations interact upon each other, they have capacity to bring Robbins's "world making" and "world breaking" impulses together simultaneously within today's globalising (and secularising) era.

And so, this proposal attempted to demonstrate *congregation* as process: Rather than a collective of individuals, it is instead seen as a series of events coordinated by practices, media representation, and/or institution (Wariboko 2014, p. 186). The process that Wariboko (2014, p. 177) describes is akin to the *polis*—a space that facilitates the meeting of strangers, who become aware of each other's needs, and from this, creatively construct a new commons together through shared practices. As communities reappropriate their locally available resources, they form new theologies that assist them to exist differently within their contexts. In this way, the church is the work of the people. The article noted interacting non-Indigenous and Indigenous Pentecostalisms set within the current political and social context of Australia, which arguably demonstrate both a dominant Pentecostal culture "*metropolis* (mother city) and pre-existing and diverse Pentecostal *heteropolis* (other, alternative city) . . . .operating in, through, and energizing global cities" (Wariboko 2014, p. xii). Pentecostalism here offers possibility for a new conception of space or place which is compatible with traditional Australian notions of "country." Thus, the global or universal that is emphasised (perhaps overemphasised) within transnational Christian worship circles such as Hillsong has potential to embed into the land, via acknowledging the continent's traditional peoples, land, and customs. Even as Australian reconciliation is arguably a failed project, each group actively participates in the formation of a transnational, glocal Pentecostal Australian civil society.

Noting the particular intersections between dominant and marginalised forms is important for understanding transnational Pentecostal worship today, as it seeks to act from an understanding of the Spirit at work in the world. As these Australian Pentecostals in the cities engage their "other," both draw upon their own traditions to "refold" what they know in order to speak in new tongues, moving towards greater understanding of each other. The evidence for the congregation as process in Australia, I have posited, is found in the new poetic languages that identify participants and attune them to the Spirit's work, here in the sense of a "*metropolis* (mother city) and a *heteropolis* (other, alternative city)" that were previously separated by racial segregation. One example of this new constructive language being outlined is found in the adoption of Acknowledgement of Country, which here serves to confirm

change within Pentecostal worship rituals and to translate Pentecostal Christianity across time and space. Wariboko (2014, p. 97) describes this as such:

> By celebrating the "pluralism" that comes from speaking in many tongues, the movement undercuts heteronomous imposition of any truth for the privilege of consensual, investigative, pragmatic truth by those who autonomously subject themselves to the Spirit of God.

These new speech acts bring the alternative into the main arena, but now empowered with religiously imbued meaning. This serves as representative of a new *polis* being created.

However, as Pentecostal congregational practices translate into the conference stadium and into the online space, we often do not know who the audience is, or, in other words, who is participating. In regards to Pentecostalism's future trajectories, the resources that now seem most useful for its task of engaging the globe are those which were previously sidelined: The marginal voices representative of the "other," and the liturgy itself; the work of artists and songwriters; and forms of the self (both emotional and feminine) often denied by the theological guild in pursuit of propositional or doctrinal statements. Sometimes, motivation for revision is borne from deep pastoral concern in the *metropolis* regarding Christianity and its engagement with its now visible "others" in the online and urban environment. The benefit of locating theological research within the work of Pentecostal people is the possibility for recognition of these ever-transforming languages of Spirit empowerment. Such fresh metaphors provide new ways of conceiving the Spirit's actions in the world today.

Funding: This research received no external funding.

Conflicts of Interest: The author of this paper is a part-time employee of Hillsong College, affiliated with Hillsong Church. All views expressed are the author's own and not representative of either organisation.

References

Australian Bureau of Statistics. 2006. Population Characteristics Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians. Canberra. Available online: www.abs.gov.au (accessed on 26 November 2015).

Australian Bureau of Statistics. 2011. *1301.0 Year Book Australia: Religious Affliation*. Canberra: Australian Bureau of Statistics.

Akehurst, Christopher. 2012. Smoking Out Evil Spirits at the CSIRO. *Quadrant Magazine* 56: 44–45.

Albrecht, Daniel E. 1999. *Rites in the Spirit: A Ritual Approach to Pentecostal/Charismatic Spirituality*. Sheffield: Academic Press.

Anderson, Allan. 2010. Varieties, Taxonomies, and Definitions. In *Studying Global Pentecostalism: Theories and Methods*. Edited by Allan Anderson, Michael Bergunder, Andre F. Droogers and A. Cornelis van der Laan. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.

Anderson, Allan. 2013. *To the Ends of the Earth: Pentecostalism and the Transformation of World Christianity*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Atkinson, Judy. 2002. *Trauma Trails, Recreating Song Lines: The Transgenerational Effects of Trauma in Indigenous Australia*. North Geelong: Spinifex Press.

Bessarab, Dawn, and Ng'andu Bridget. 2010. Yarning About Yarning as a Legitimate Method in Indigenous Research. *International Journal of Critical Indigenous Studies* 3: 37–50. [CrossRef]

Calley, Malcolm John Chalmers. 1955. Aboriginal Pentecostalism: A Study of Changes in Religion, North Coast. Ph.D. dissertation, University of Sydney, Sydney, NSW, Australia.

Calley, Marie, and Marie Reay. 1964. *Aborigines Now: New Perspectives in the Study of Aboriginal Communities*. Sydney: Angus and Robertson.

Cartledge, Mark J. 2006. *Encountering the Spirit: The Charismatic Tradition*. Maryknoll: Orbis Books.

Chesnut, R. Andrew. 1997. *Born Again in Brazil: The Pentecostal Boom and the Pathogens of Poverty*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.

Coleman, Simon. 2000. *The Globalisation of Charismatic Christianity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Collins, Randall. 2004. *Interaction Ritual Chains*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Connell, John. 2005. Hillsong: A Megachurch in the Sydney Suburbs. *Australian Geographer* 36: 315–32. [CrossRef]

Cox, Harvey. 2013. *Fire from Heaven: The Rise of Pentecostal Spirituality and the Reshaping of Religion in the 21st Century*. New York: Avalon Publishing Group.

Csordas, Thomas J. 1992. Religion and the world system: The pentecostal ethic and the spirit of monopoly capital. *Dialectical Anthropology* 17: 3–24. [CrossRef]

Csordas, Thomas J. 2007. Introduction: Modalities of transnational transcendence. *Anthropological Theory* 7: 158–272. [CrossRef]

Dombrowski, Kirk. 2001. *Against Culture: Development, Politics, and Religion in Indian Alaska*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.

Dombrowski, Kirk. 2002. The Praxis of Indigenism and Alaska Native Timber Politics. *American Anthropologist* 104: 1062–73. [CrossRef]

Durkheim, Emile. 1912. *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*. New York: Free Press.

Evans, Mark. 2006. *Open Up The Doors: Music in the Modern Church*. London: Equinox.

Evans, Mark. 2015. Hillsong Abroad: Tracing the Songlines of Contemporary Pentecostal Music. In *Spirit of Praise*. Edited by Monique M. Ingalls and Amos Yong. University Park: The Penn State University.

Everett, Kristina. 2009. Welcome to Country . . . Not. *Oceania* 79: 53–64. [CrossRef]

Farhadian, Charles E. 2007. *Christian Worship Worldwide: Expanding Horizons, Deepening Practices*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Pub.

Gifford, Paul. 2004. *Ghana's New Christianity: Pentecostalism in a Globalizing African Economy*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Gifford, Paul. 2015. *Christianity, Development and Modernity in Africa*. London: C. Hurst Publishers Limited.

Grieves, Vicki. 2008. "The Battlefields": Identity, Authenticity and Aboriginal Knowledges in Australia. In *Indigenous Peoples: Self-Determintation, Knowledge, Indigeneity*. Edited by Henry Minde. Delft: Eburon Academic Pub.

Grieves, Vicki. 2009. Aboriginal Spirituality: Aboriginal Philosophy, The Basis of Aboriginal Social and Emotional Wellbeing. In *Discussion Paper Series: No. 9*. Darwin: Cooperative Research Centre for Aboriginal Health.

Held, David, Anthony McGrew, David Goldblatt, and Jonathan Perraton, eds. 1999. *Global Transformations: Politics, Economics and Culture*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Hummel, Charles. 1978. *Fire in the Fireplace: Contemporary Charismatic Renewal*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press.

Hutchinson, Mark. 2013. "Without the Holy Spirit, you're stuffed": Pentecostalism as Globalizing Techne. Paper presented at Pentecostalism and Transnationalism Symposium, University of Western Sydney, Sydney, Australia, August 1.

Hutchinson, Mark. 2017. The Problem with 'Waves': Mapping Charismatic Potential in Italian Protestantism 1890–1929. *Pneuma* 39: 34–54. [CrossRef]

Jennings, Mark Alan Charles. 2017. Great risk for the kingdom: Pentecostal-Charismatic growth churches, pastorpreneurs, and neoliberalism. In *Multiculturalism and the Convergence of Faith and Practical Wisdom in Modern Society*. Hershey: IGI Global, pp. 236–48.

Langmead, Ross. 2002. Ecomissiology. *Missiology* 30: 505–18. [CrossRef]

Langmead, Ross. 2007. *Reimagining God and Mission: Perspectives from Australia*. Adelaide: ATF Press.

Lovett, Leonard. 2015. Black Origins of the Pentecostal Movement. In *Aspects of Pentecostal-Charismatic Origins*. Flora: Logos International. First published 1975.

McIntyre, Elisha H. 2007. Brand of Choice: Why Hillsong is Winning Sales and Souls. *Journal for Academic Study of Religion* 2: 175–94. [CrossRef]

Macchia, Frank D. 1993. Tongues as a Sign: Towards a Sacramental Understanding of Pentecostal Experience. *The Journal of the Society for Pentecostal Studies* 15: 61–76.

Magowan, Fiona. 2000. Dancing with a Difference: Reconfiguring the Poetic Politics of Aboriginal Ritual as National Spectacle. *Australian Journal of Anthropology* 11: 308–21. [CrossRef]

Marshall-Fratani, Ruth. 1998. Mediating the Global and Local in Nigerian Pentecostalism. *Journal of Religion in Africa* 28: 278–315. [CrossRef]

Marshall, I. Howard. 1977. The Significance of Pentecost. *Scottish Journal of Theology* 30: 347–69. [CrossRef]

Marti, Gerardo. 2012. *Worship across the Racial Divide: Religious Music and the Multiracial Congregation: Religious Music and the Multiracial Congregation*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Marti, Gerardo. 2017. The Global Phenomenon of Hillsong Church: An Initial Assessment. *Sociology of Religion.* 78: 377–86. [CrossRef]

Maxwell, David. 2005. The Durawall of Faith: Pentecostal Spirituality in Neo-Liberal Zimbabwe. In *Indigenous Peoples and Religious Change*. Edited by Peggy Brock. Leiden and Boston: Brill, pp. 177–201.

Meyer, Birgit. 2003. Material Mediations and Religious Practices of World-Making. In *Religion across Media: From Early Antiquity to Late Modernity*. Edited by Peter Lang. New York: Peter Lang, pp. 1–19.

Meyer, Birgit. 2009. From Imagined Communities to Aesthetic Formations: Religious Mediations, Sensational Forms and Styles of Binding. In *Aesthetic Formations: Media, Religion and the Senses*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Meyer, Birgit. 2010. Pentecostalism and Globalization. In *Studying Global Pentecostalism: Theories and Methods*. Edited by Allan Anderson, Michael Bergunder, Andre Droogers and Cornelis van der Laan. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Myers, Bryant L. 2015. Progressive Pentecostalism, Development and Christian Development NGOS: A Challenge and an Opportunity. *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 39: 115–20. [CrossRef]

Myrick, Nathan. 2017. Relational Power, Music, and Identity: The Emotional Efficacy of Congregational Song. *Yale Journal of Music & Religion* 3: 5.

Ono, Akiko. 2011. Who Owns the 'De-Aboriginalised' Past? Ethnography meets photography: A case study of Bundjalung Pentecostalism. In *Ethnography & the Production of Anthropological Knowledge: Essays in Honour of Nicolas Peterson*. Canberra: ANU E Press.

Ono, Akiko. 2012. You gotta throw away culture once you're Christian: How 'culture' is Redefined among Aboriginal Pentecostal Christians in Rural New South Wales. *Oceania* 82: 74–85. [CrossRef]

Piot, Charles. 2012. Pentecostal and development imaginaries in West Africa. In *Pentecostal and Development: Churches, NGOs and Social Change in Africa*. Edited by Dena Freeman. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Poloma, Margaret M., and John C. Green. 2010. *The Assemblies of God: Godly Love and the Revitalization of American Pentecostalism*. New York: New York University Press.

Porter, Mark. 2017. Singing Beyond Territory: Hillsong and Church Planting in Oxford, UK. In *The Hillsong Movement Examined*. Edited by Tanya Riches and Tom Wagner. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Porter, Mark. 2018. Charismatic Worship and Cosmopolitan Movement(s). *Liturgy* 33: 4–11. [CrossRef]

Riches, Tanya. 2010a. Shout to the Lord: Music and Change at Hillsong 1996–2007. M.Phil. thesis, Australian Catholic University, Melbourne, Australia.

Riches, Tanya. 2010b. The Evolving Theological Emphasis of Hillsong Worship (1996–2007). *Australasian Pentecostal Studies* 13: 87–132.

Riches, Tanya. 2014. A Poetics of Interfaith Dialogue in Australia. *Evangelical Interfaith Dialogue* 5: 28–30.

Riches, Tanya. 2016. Can we still sing the lyrics "Come Holy Spirit?" Spirit and Place in Australian Pentecostalism. *Pneuma* 38: 274–92. [CrossRef]

Riches, Tanya, and Tom Wagner. 2012. The Evolution of Hillsong Music: From Australian Pentecostal Congregation into Global Brand. *Australian Journal of Communication* 39: 17–36.

Riches, Tanya, and Tom Wagner. 2017. *The Hillsong Movement Examined: You Call Me Out Upon the Waters*. New York: Palgrave McMillan.

Riches, Tanya. 2017. (Re)imagining Identity in the Spirit: Worship and Social Engagement in Urban Aboriginal-led Pentecostal Congregations. Ph.D. thesis, Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, CA, USA, January 1.

Robbins, Joel. 2010. Anthropology, Pentecostalism, and the New Paul: Conversion, Event, and Social Transformation. *South Atlantic Quarterly* 109: 633–52. [CrossRef]

Rose, Lena. 2018. Geometries of 'Global' Evangelicalism. Available online: https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1111/glob.12211 (accessed on 20 September 2018).

Smith, James K. A. 2010. *Thinking in Tongues: Pentecostal Contributions to Christian Philosophy*. Grand Rapids: B. William Eerdmans Publishing Company.

Solivan, Samuel. 1998. *Spirit, Pathos and Liberation: Toward an Hispanic Pentecostal Theology*. London: Bloomsbury Academic.

Synan, Vinson. 1993. *The Role of Tongues as Initial Evidence*. Tulsa: Oral Roberts University, Holy Spirit Research Center.

Trudgen, Richard Ian. 2000. *Why Warriors Lie Down and Die*. Darwin: Aboriginal Resource & Development Services Inc.

Wade, Matthew, and Maria Hynes. 2013. Worshipping Bodies: Affective Labour in the Hillsong Church. *Geographical Research* 51: 173–79. [CrossRef]

Walker, Melissa, Bronwyn Fredericks, Kyly Mills, and Debra Anderson. 2013. "Yarning" as a method for community-based health research with Indigenous women: The Indigenous women's wellness research project. *Health Care for Women International* 35: 1216–26. [CrossRef] [PubMed]

Wariboko, Nimi. 2014. *The Charismatic City and the Public Resurgence of Religion: A Pentecostal Social Ethics of Cosmopolitan Urban Life*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Yong, Amos. 2000. *Discerning the Spirit(S): A Pentecostal-Charismatic Contribution to Christian Theology of Religions*. Journal of Pentecostal Theology Supplement Series; London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, p. 24.

Yong, Amos. 2013. What Spirit(s), Which Public(s)? *The Pneumatologies of Global Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity. International Journal of Public Theology* 7: 241–59.

Yong, Amos. 2015. Improvisation, Indigenization, and Inspiration: Theological Reflections on the Sound and Spirit of Global Renewal. In *The Spirit of Praise: Music and Worship in Global Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity*. Edited by Monique M. Ingalls and Amos Yong. University Park: The Penn State University Press, pp. 279–88.

© 2018 by the author. Licensee MDPI, Basel, Switzerland. This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).

religions

MDPI

Article

Pentecostal Forms across Religious Divides: Media, Publicity, and the Limits of an Anthropology of Global Pentecostalism

Marleen de Witte

Department of Anthropology, University of Amsterdam, P.O box 15509 1001 NA Amsterdam, The Netherlands; m.dewitte@uva.nl

Received: 14 June 2018; Accepted: 9 July 2018; Published: 16 July 2018

Abstract: Scholars of Pentecostalism have usually studied people who embrace it, but rarely those who do not. I suggest that the study of global Pentecostalism should not limit itself to Pentecostal churches and movements and people who consider themselves Pentecostal. It should include the repercussions of Pentecostal ideas and forms outside Pentecostalism: on non-Pentecostal and non-Christian religions, on popular cultural forms, and on what counts as 'religion' or 'being religious'. Based on my ethnographic study of a charismatic-Pentecostal mega-church and a neo-traditional African religious movement in Ghana, I argue that neo-Pentecostalism, due to its strong and mass-mediated public presence, provides a powerful model for the public representation of religion in general, and some of its forms are being adopted by non-Pentecostal and non-Christian groups, including the militantly anti-Pentecostal Afrikania Mission. Instead of treating neo-Pentecostal and neo-traditionalist revival as distinct religious phenomena, I propose to take seriously their intertwinement in a single religious field and argue that one cannot sufficiently understand the rise of new religious movements without understanding how they influence each other, borrow from each other, and define themselves vis-à-vis each other. This has consequences for how we conceive of the study of Pentecostalism and how we define its object.

Keywords: charismatic Pentecostalism; African traditional religion; media; publicity; interreligious dynamics; Ghana

---

1. Introduction

The study of global Pentecostalism, if we choose to speak of such a field, has focused on Pentecostals. Scholars of Pentecostalism have usually studied people who embrace it and belong to it, but rarely those who do not subscribe to it or explicitly reject it. This article presents some material from my ethnographic study of a charismatic mega-church and a neo-traditional religious movement in Ghana and their media practices (De Witte 2008) to reflect on the possibilities and limits of 'global Pentecostalism' as a distinct field of study. It argues that the increased mass mediation of religion complicates such a framing and compels us to widen our scope beyond Pentecostal churches, movements, and people.

My study, which was part of a larger research project on religion and modern mass media in post-colonial societies,[1] concerned the public manifestation of religion in contemporary Ghana, where the synergy of mass media, commerce and democracy has generated and enabled new religious

[1] This article is based on more than fifteen years of close observation of charismatic Pentecostalism in Ghana, including intensive ethnographic fieldwork with the International Central Gospel Church in Accra from July to September 2001 and from March 2002 to March 2003 and repeated return visits since.

forms. In Ghana, as in many other African countries, the liberalisation of the media in the nineties has produced a new religious environment that is characterised by politics of representation and othering. In this environment, I investigated the interrelationships between two mass-mediated forms of religion that are at first sight at opposed ends of Ghana's religious landscape, but on closer inspection show remarkable overlaps. The first is the audiovisual culture of 'charismatic Pentecostalism,' with Mensa Otabil's International Central Gospel Church (ICGC) and its 'media ministry' as a case study. The second is the public representation of 'African Traditional Religion' (ATR) by the neo-traditional Afrikania Mission (Afrikania). Taking as a point of departure that one cannot sufficiently understand the rise of new religious movements without understanding how they influence each other, borrow from each other, and define themselves vis-à-vis each other, I examined the paradoxical dynamics between charismatic-Pentecostal revival and traditionalist revival in Ghana and the role of the increasing mass mediation of religion in these dynamics. I discovered that, due to its strong and mass-mediated public presence, neo-Pentecostalism has provided a powerful model for the public representation of religion in general, and that some of its forms are being appropriated by other religious groups seeking publicity and public recognition, including the militantly anti-Pentecostal Afrikania Mission. The mass mediation of Pentecostalism, and of other religions, thus has consequences for how we conceive of the study of Pentecostalism and how we define its object.

Although the category of 'Pentecostalism' is a meaningful one, in defining and delimiting our field of study, we should be wary not to uncritically reproduce religious self-categorisations and boundary setting. Both 'African traditional religion' and 'charismatic Pentecostalism' are academic constructs to a comparable degree. This is well recognised and problematized for African traditional religion, but much less so for (charismatic) Pentecostalism (Droogers 2001, p. 46). Like African traditional religion, Pentecostalism lacks a central organising architecture and encompasses a wide variety of different types of Pentecostal churches and groups, and an equally wide variety of different doctrines, practices, styles, and moralities. Both designations are also used by leaders and adherents of these 'religions' themselves, but this does not mean that we can take them for granted. The usage of such terminology for self-categorisation and consolidation of religious identities forms part of religious groups' struggles for and over public presence and recognition and is thus inherently political. We should thus take into account that the definition of 'Pentecostalism' is never only a theoretical problem, but is intimately bound up with the negotiations by religious adherents themselves over what/who is Pentecostal and what/who is not. By interrogating such self-definitions and asserted religious boundaries, instead of reproducing them in defining our research subject, we are better positioned to analyse these struggles and disagreements as part of a broader politics of self-representation and religious authentication.

2. 'Charismatic Pentecostalism' and 'African Traditional Religion': Beyond Compartmentalisation

My choice for studying 'Charismatic Pentecostalism' and 'African Traditional Religion' together grew out of a certain discontent, although at the time not so consciously defined, with an anthropology of Pentecostalism/Christianity that remained too close to Christians' own emphasis on religious difference to account for the interreligious dynamics and relationships that interested me. I thus choose to frame my project not as a study of 'two religions' in Ghana, but as a study of religion as it manifests within and across the frameworks set up by two religious organisations in Ghana's religious field. Official and popular representations of 'religions in Ghana' (e.g., population censuses, school books, info sheets, tourist guides) generally slice up Ghana's diverse and volatile religious field into the categories of 'Christianity', 'Islam', 'African traditional religion', and 'other'. Sometimes the category of 'Christian' is further subdivided into 'Roman Catholic', 'Anglican', 'Presbyterian', Methodist', 'spiritualist', 'Pentecostal/charismatic', and 'other denominations'. The Population and Housing Census of 2000 (Ghana Statistical Service 2002) for the first time had a separate entry for 'charismatic and Pentecostal', indicating that charismatic and Pentecostal Christianity had by then become recognised as mainstream. According to the latest population figures (Ghana Statistical Service 2012), Christians make up 71.2 percent of the population, Muslims 17.6 percent, followers of African

Traditional Religion 5.2 percent, and others 6.1 percent.[2] More specifically, with 28.3 percent of the total population and over half of all Christians in Greater Accra regarding themselves as Pentecostal/charismatic, Pentecostal/charismatic Christianity has become the largest religious orientation in Ghana.

This neat categorisation of people into religious tick-boxes forms part of the dominant discourse, which people of various religious affiliations also use to categorise themselves (in fact, the census is based on self-categorisation). In practice, however, the boundaries between different religious categories are not all that rigid. People's religious itineraries involve moving back and forth, and dual or multiple affiliations. Religious practice may vary according to context or specific needs. Religious identification or practice differs between the public and the private realm. Census taking or Sunday worship clearly belong to the former, while visiting a shrine for spiritual consultation and healing is often kept strictly secret. It may not be understood as 'religion' at all, and even less as 'religious affiliation.' This is common knowledge among scholars of religion in Africa (and elsewhere). And yet, even if they take the plurality of religious fields into account, they mostly take as their object of study one 'religion', 'religious group', or 'religious movement'. With some notable exceptions (e.g., Peel 2016; Werbner 2011), scholars of religion, like the people they study, also group themselves into distinct academic communities—Islamic studies, Pentecostal studies—focussing on single religious traditions. Recent work from the anthropology of religion in Africa suggests new directions beyond such compartmentalisation and offers productive frameworks for analysing religious encounters, cohabitation, and entanglement in single religious fields (Janson and Meyer 2016; Larkin 2016; Larkin and Meyer 2006; Soares 2006; Peel 2000, 2016). On the whole, however, a labour division structured by difference and distinction between 'religions' still dominates scholarship on religion, including the burgeoning field of (global) Pentecostalism.

The spectacular rise of neo-Pentecostal or charismatic churches has been considered the most significant phenomenon in the history of Christianity in Ghana (Asamoah-Gyadu 2005; Gifford 2004; Meyer 2004a), Africa (Anderson 2002; Corten and Marshall-Fratani 2001; Gifford 1998; Kalu 2008; Meyer 2004b), and worldwide (Anderson 2004; Coleman 2000; Martin 2002; Robbins 2004). This neo-Pentecostal boom, starting in the late seventies and peaking in the nineties, has been accompanied by an equally exponential growth of a body of scholarly work dedicated to understanding and explaining it. This scholarship, Matthew Engelke (2010) suggests, has tended to ascribe to Pentecostalism an exclusive urgency that echoes Pentecostalism's own 'loud and domineering' self-presentations, (implicitly) claiming that if one seeks to understand Christianity (or even religion) in the world today one needs to study Pentecostal churches. It may seem too obvious to state that Pentecostal studies have focused on Pentecostals. They have examined the influence, effects, and significance of conversion to Pentecostalism, and the tensions produced in converts' lives and in the wider social and cultural realms. Those who study Pentecostalism have thus studied the people who embrace it and belong to it, but not those who do not belong, who do not subscribe to it.

I suggest that the study of global Pentecostalism should not remain limited to investigating Pentecostal churches and movements, and people who consider themselves Pentecostal. It should equally take into account the ways in which Pentecostal and charismatic ideas and forms have their repercussions outside Pentecostalism, on non-Pentecostal and non-Christian religions (De Witte 2015), on broader popular cultural forms (Meyer 2004a), and on what counts as 'religion' or 'being religious'. The entanglement of Pentecostalism and mass media plays a crucial role here. One of the most significant things about the new mass-mediated form of Pentecostalism is that it does not remain within the boundaries of the particular churches that produce it and their communities.

[2] Census figures tend to attract much controversy as both Muslims and traditionalists contest the outcome of the census, claiming that the figures for the number of Muslims and traditionalists are far under-reported. Public outcries over census documents not only point to the difficulties involved in categorisation and gathering statistics, but stand at the heart of the struggle over the public representation of religion.

Charismatic Pentecostalism's extensive media production and powerful audiovisual presence in the public sphere have produced and circulated paradigmatic formats for the public representation of religion that influence the styles of public performance and media representation adopted by other religious groups (De Witte 2005). Some recent work on Islam in Africa has hinted at the impact of Pentecostal styles and televangelism on Islamic movements and their media use (Larkin 2008; Schulz 2006) and suggested new analytical frameworks for studying Christian–Muslim encounters and entanglements (Janson and Meyer 2016; Larkin 2016; Soares 2006). While this work resonates with my own work on Pentecostal–ATR encounters and offers fruitful connection points (to which I will return below), African traditional religions have generally been placed outside the realms of public representation, media, and globalisation (but see Chidester 2008), and hence, outside the influence of mass-media Christianity.

In the field of African studies, interesting historical-anthropological work on Christianity has been done that generally has been more sensitive than the newer field of Pentecostal studies to the historical interaction between indigenous religious traditions and globalised forms of Christianity (for overviews see Fernandez 1978; Meyer 2004b; Ranger 1986). Studies of older Pentecostal groups and African Independent Churches have thus paid much attention to traditional religiosity and the issue of 'Africanisation', both 'from above' and 'from below.' Studies of the newer charismatic-Pentecostal churches have also noted continuities with traditional religiosity (Asamoah-Gyadu 2005; Gifford 2004; Kalu 2008), but have on the whole tended to stress these churches' indebtedness to global Pentecostal networks more than to indigenous religious traditions. Apparently, charismatic Pentecostalism's strong global inclination seems to absorb researchers' full attention.

Conversely, in studies of traditional religions and neo-traditionalist movements in Africa, attention has been paid to the presence of Christianity, but most studies of traditional religion are ethnographies of relatively closed, rural communities. As Birgit Meyer has observed in her survey of literature on Christianity in Africa, 'it seems that a sophisticated treatment of African religious traditions in relation to Christianity is still relatively scarce' (Meyer 2004b, p. 455). African charismatic Pentecostalism and African traditional religions are thus rarely studied together on an equal basis, without treating one as the other's 'context'. The fact that charismatic churches and traditionalists' groups appear so intrinsically different in terms of religious doctrines, practices, and outlook, and that they assertively position themselves as each other's opposites, seems to have fuelled researchers' foci on single religious groups and their self-compartmentalisation into sub-disciplines structured by religious boundaries and difference.

I suggest taking seriously, however, the inextricable intertwinement of charismatic Pentecostalism and (neo-)traditional African religion as part of one religious field with a shared history and partly overlapping audiences and examining the complex dynamics between them. The point is not only that African charismatic Pentecostalism, as part of a global religious movement, cannot be studied outside the local contexts in which it is lived and practised and upon whose broader cultural dynamics it spreads and grows. The point is also that African traditional religion, generally understood as 'local', must equally be studied as part of the historical globalisation of religion (Chidester 1996; De Witte 2010a; Ranger 1988; Shaw 1990). Just as Ghanaian charismatic Pentecostalism, despite the 'complete break with the past' it requires (Meyer 1998) and the very real changes it produces (Robbins 2007), shows remarkable continuities with traditional religion, neo-traditional reformulations of African traditional religion often show remarkable continuities with Christianity, despite their explicit rejection of Christianity (De Witte 2012).

This is not to question the sincerity of Ghanaian charismatics' claims of being 'born again,' of making 'a complete break with the past,' nor to argue that they are 'still' caught up in traditional religious worldviews. Neither is it to argue that Afrikania's claims to continuity with African traditional religions are false since Afrikania shows more continuity with Christianity, and thus Afrikanians are 'actually' Christians (although, in fact, most of the leaders of the movement are ex-Catholics who converted to African Traditional Religion). As much as I welcome Joel Robbins (2010)

call for investigating the distinctive features of 'Pentecostal culture', a strong emphasis on rupture (Robbins 2007; 2010) risks reinforcing the asserted boundaries between Pentecostalism and other religions instead of interrogating them. Surely, people's own assertions of break, boundaries, and radical change are to be taken seriously if we want to understand what becoming and being Christian or traditionalist is all about. However, we cannot take them for granted as analytic descriptions of distinct and bounded religious groups. We should take them for what they are: assertions, claims and (conversion) narratives that are part and parcel of the religious culture people belong to or wish to belong to, that is, of the interreligious dynamics that includes a politics of self-representation and authentication. Such 'anti-syncretism', as Shaw and Stewart (1994) have termed the antagonism shown by religious agents to processes of synthesis, is often concerned with the defence of religious boundaries and purity. As claims to religious identity and authenticity, assertions of difference are also contested by others in the religious playing field: Afrikanians claim that born-again Christians are fake, that they only pretend to be possessed by the Holy Spirit, but that 'real power' is with the traditional priests; traditional shrine priests suspect Afrikania of being Christianity in disguise; born-again Christians critique mainline Christians for being superficial and say that 'they are not real Christians'; and some Catholics do not take the traditionalist escapades of their walk-away-priest seriously, because 'once a Catholic always a Catholic.' The point is that charismatic Christian and traditionalist leaders operate and manifest themselves in a single religious arena, in which they seek to convince widely overlapping audiences of their claims to authority and authenticity.

A dual focus on these two manifestations of religion in Ghana reveals the paradoxical dynamics at work in the relation between them: as I will show in what follows, in opposing each other, the Afrikania Mission and charismatic Pentecostalism also become like each other. African charismatic-Pentecostal churches 'fight' against traditional religion, yet implicitly incorporate the logic, spiritual forces, and ways of worship of local religious traditions as media through which Christian spirituality is communicated. The Afrikania Mission 'fights' (charismatic) Christianity, yet adopts Christian formats in its reformulation of 'African Traditional Religion'. The entanglement of religion and mass media reinforces these dialectics. On the one hand, the growing public presence of religion extrapolates the antagonism. Religion increasingly becomes a site of public clash (Hackett 1999), especially between Pentecostals and traditionalists. At the same time, religious mass media generate and disseminate similar religious formats that have a cross-religious impact on the public representation of religion. Charismatic Pentecostalism, being the dominant and most publicly present religion, has become the template for religion as such and, surprisingly, also for Afrikania's public representations.

While the importance of mass media is well recognised in the literature on African charismatic Pentecostalism, media have mostly been treated as 'a feature' of charismatic churches, as one of their distinctive 'characteristics.' In my work I have taken up the question of media and publicity as its central problematic (De Witte 2010b). Exactly this problematic, I argue, complicates a demarcation of our field of study as restricted to Pentecostal movements alone. In the field of global Pentecostalism, quite some attention has been paid to how the mass mediatisation of Pentecostal and charismatic churches and the circulation of their images across the globe drive the globalisation of a particular 'culture of Pentecostalism'. Indeed, charismatic-Pentecostal performance in Ghana is strongly influenced, through mass media, by the styles of worship, preaching, prayer, dress, body movement, and facial expression exhibited by charismatics and Pentecostals across the world. A focus on the role of media for the global spread of Pentecostal culture alone, however, may overlook how in local religious and media landscapes, such styles move outside of Pentecostalism. Brian Larkin has referred to this process as 'the lability of religious form': 'stylistic elements that emerge within a particular religious tradition but then are loosened from those origins and circulate into other domains' (Larkin 2016, p. 635). Larkin's emphasis on religious *form*, my own attention to religious and media *formats* (De Witte 2003, 2005), and Birgit Meyer's notion of a 'Pentecostalite style' (2004b) are all part of a broader turn in the study of religion towards aesthetics (see also Meyer 2013) that in my view offers a more fruitful angle from which to analyse the dynamics of lived Pentecostalism in broader religious

and non-religious contexts than a preoccupation with doctrines and beliefs does. Other religious groups' appropriations of Pentecostal formats and styles, cut loose from Pentecostal teachings, are a significant part of 'the culture of Pentecostalism' and must be explored if we want to understand the full complexity of how Pentecostalism grows and operates in the world.

3. Two Movements in One Setting: The International Central Gospel Church and the Afrikania Mission

The two religious organisations that I studied appear diametrically opposed in many respects. With over 10,000 members, its 4000-seat Christ Temple in Accra, branches all over Ghana and in other parts of Africa as well as in Europe and the United States, a weekly primetime TV programme and daily radio broadcasts, the International Central Gospel Church is one of the largest and most influential charismatic churches in Ghana. Its leader Mensa Otabil is a public personality. His well-established media presence and flamboyant appearance have given him celebrity status. His 'life-transforming teachings' strike chords with a broad audience across Ghana's religious field and he is widely perceived as 'the teacher of the nation.' The Afrikania Mission is dedicated to representing and reviving 'African Traditional Religion' in Ghana's Christian-dominated public sphere and on the international stage of 'world religions.' In contrast to the ICGC's well-oiled and capital-driven media machine, however, the Afrikania Mission lacks resources and struggles to find alternative ways into the media. Intended as a counterweight to the Christian hegemony, it presents a strong voice for the defence of traditional cultural practices, but remains rather marginal. Although the movement seems to attract a growing number of followers in rural areas, the attendance of its worship services in Accra, where the movement originated and is still headquartered, is a far cry from the mass spectacles of charismatic worship. Lastly, the emphasis in traditional religion on secrecy and seclusion makes Afrikania's relationship to the media and the public sphere a lot more problematic than the ICGC's with its explicit strategy of outreach and evangelisation.

But there are also striking parallels between the two groups. Both celebrated their 20th anniversary in the early 2000s in buildings that belied their humble beginnings in the early 1980s. In a period of political turbulence and new cultural awareness, the Afrikania Mission was founded in 1982 by a former Catholic priest, Osofo Komfo Damuah. Two years later, amid a wave of Christian enthusiasm and new spiritual awareness, the International Central Gospel Church was founded in 1984. Early meetings were held in a small classroom, but, to accommodate the rapidly growing membership, a garage, a cinema hall, and a scout hall were rented respectively. In 1996 the church completed its own, huge church hall, the Christ Temple, which it uses for regular services, conferences, concerts and a host of other activities. Meanwhile, the Afrikania Mission moved from renting a drinking spot at the National Cultural Centre for its meetings and worship services to building its three-storey headquarters, used for services, celebrations, education, press conferences, and more.

There is also, surprisingly perhaps, a considerable overlap between the visions of the two movements' leaders. Behind the obvious antagonism of Pentecostal anti-traditionalism and traditionalist anti-Pentecostalism they express, both Mensa Otabil and the subsequent Afrikania leaders propagate an explicit message of Africanist emancipation. Both strive for values of African pride and self-awareness, seek to come to terms with the question of Africanness and modernity, and are well-versed in the Pan-Africanist discourse of 'liberation of mental slavery'. They differ fundamentally, however, in how they flesh out this emancipation. For Afrikania it implies a rejection of Christianity as 'inherently foreign', the religion used to 'dominate and exploit Africans', and a revitalisation of 'traditional religion and culture' as the only source of selfhood for Africans. For Otabil, it implies an Africanist re-reading of the Bible and a very critical approach to 'African culture' (De Witte 2018).

The ICGC and Afrikania also share a complex positioning in Ghana's broader religious field that produces a similar tension between intellectualism and spirit practice in both cases. In the ICGC, Otabil's passion and plea for knowledge, education, and critical thinking stands in tension with the emotional expression and concern with spirits of charismatic-Pentecostal religiosity, also

within his own church. He criticizes and sometimes even ridicules the spiritualist tendencies of many charismatics, and his rationalist message of self-development sets him apart in the field of Ghanaian charismatic Pentecostalism today (see also Gifford 2004; Larbi 2001). But, at the same time, he also depends (for his celebrity status, for his followers, and thus for his income) on the charismatic wave that sweeps the country. His message does not easily fit with charismatic practices like exorcism, divine healing, and reliance on divine intervention, but he has to tolerate them in his church.

The Afrikania Mission aspires to be a 'church' like all other churches, a 'religion' like all other recognised 'world religions.' In this aspiration, as the next section will detail, it takes over many Christian forms. This 'mimetic zeal' (Mary 2002), however, is paired with a 'distinctive zeal', an explicit self-definition as non-Christian, to the extent that it legitimises the movement's existence. It fights for the revival of African Traditional Religion against Christian suppression and claims to represent all traditional religious practitioners and adherents. In practice, however, the specificities of particular cults are hard to fit into the 'common religious form' Afrikania has created and undermine its 'neutrality'. Its concern with 'cleanliness', 'orderliness', and 'beauty', moreover, is hard to match with practices like ecstatic spirit possession and blood sacrifice. For the people Afrikania seeks to attract and represent, such practices are highly meaningful and powerful. Afrikania's intellectualist and modernising approach to traditional religion, then, produces a tension not only with religious practitioners outside Afrikania, but occasionally also with those who have joined the movement.

Finally, the leaders of both the ICGC and Afrikania are media enthusiasts and their movements exist by the very grace of mass media. For both, however, it is complicated to mediate the spiritual power on which their authority and attraction ultimately thrive. It is only at first sight that Afrikania's hampered efforts at media representation stand in stark contrast to the explosion of seemingly unlimited publicity of charismatic-Pentecostal media activity. Both struggle with what I have elsewhere (De Witte 2017) discussed as the problem of spirit presence and media representation. For Otabil, his authority hinges on charisma, on his ability to set in motion what people experience as a flow of Holy Spirit power. This flow risks being broken by the fixity of Otabil's media format. The successful formula of his television broadcast threatens to overrun its own success, and even established pastors like him constantly need to authenticate the implicit message that they are not 'mere' media creations, but embody 'real' and effective anointing from God, that is, divine, not human power. For Afrikania, the perpetual challenge is how to represent in public a religion in which authority is rooted in restricted access to spirit powers, mediated by practices of secrecy and seclusion and threatened by openness. Its media representations are met with caution by shrine priests for whom images may not remain 'mere' representations, but mediate spirit presence into unauthorized spaces. For both the ICGC and the Afrikania Mission, then, entering Ghana's new media sphere implies a constant negotiation of conflicting impulses.

4. Mass Media and the Dialectics of Religious Antagonism and Entanglement

How do charismatic Pentecostalism and African traditional religion relate to each other in Accra's religious landscape, and what does the mass mediation of both religions do to this relationship? By studying the International Central Gospel Church and the Afrikania Mission as part of a single religious field with a shared genealogy and a partly overlapping audience, I discovered that the relationship between charismatic Pentecostalism and African traditional religion in this field is characterised by a paradoxical dialectics of opposition and entanglement. In opposing each other and asserting difference, charismatic Pentecostalism and (neo-)traditional African religion not only influence each other, but are intimately bound up with each other. This dialectic is historically informed by the 'long conversation' between Christianity and indigenous religions, but gets amplified in the present era, in which religious manifestation is increasingly mass mediated. The mass mediation of religion, which boomed with the liberalisation of the Ghanaian media scene in the 1990s, both sharpens

religious antagonism and generates religious aesthetic and discursive forms that are shared across religious boundaries.[3]

Both the charismatic and the traditionalist revival movement have been inherently mass mediated from their very beginnings in the early 1980s. In the 1990s, however, the synergy of democracy, media liberalisation, and neo-liberalism brought about a revolution in the relationships between the Ghanaian state, mass media, religion, and commerce that fundamentally changed both movements' styles and strategies of public presence and representation. From 1992 onwards, Ghana's formerly state-controlled media scene gradually developed into a plural, liberalized, and commercialised field of interaction. Religious groups, and especially charismatic-Pentecostal churches, made use of the new opportunities for media access this offered. This has intensified both religious competition for public presence, expressed in terms of public visibility and audibility, and tensions between born-again Christians and traditionalists in the public sphere. In this field, charismatic Pentecostalism and African traditional religion seem at first sight to be radically opposed in terms of media use and public presence.

The new commercialised media culture of personality creation, spectacle, and dramatisation provides particularly fertile ground for charismatic-Pentecostal media strategies. Charismatic Pentecostalism, with its emphasis on charismatic leaders, massive crowds, and embodiment and dramatic expression of spirit power, flourishes in Ghana's public sphere, where pastors become celebrities and mass-mediated sounds and images facilitate the flow of the Holy Spirit. The success of the televisual culture of charismatic Pentecostalism in Ghana can be traced, I have argued elsewhere (De Witte 2005), to the elective affinities between the formats, styles, and modes of address of commercial broadcast media and those of communicating spirit power in charismatic ritual. African 'Men of God' such as Mensa Otabil tap into the globalised commercial formats of celebrity, spectacle, and branding as a source of power in a local religious context in which religious specialists are perceived to embody divine power. The convergence of these two kinds of power in the figure of the pastor-celebrity enhances his charismatic appeal.

The Afrikania Mission has more difficulty spectacularising traditional religion and bridging the gap between the practices of shrines and the formats of the commercial public sphere. Having lost its earlier state-sponsored radio broadcast to the liberalisation of the broadcast media, Afrikania has adopted new strategies for the public representation of African Traditional Religion (ATR) that make it visually attractive for a broad media audience and seek to counter the demonising representations of traditional religious practices that Pentecostals disseminate. Afrikania's efforts, however, are hampered by lack of resources and dependency on Christian-oriented media houses and professionals. On a deeper level, what complicates Afrikania's media activities is a clash between the requirements of the Christian-dominated televisual public sphere, which presuppose certain formats for what 'religion' is and should look like, and the dominant formats of spiritual mediation in shrines. The latter are not modes of visual attraction, spectacle, and mass address, but rather of seclusion, secrecy, and concealment. In representing ATR in the media, Afrikania thus has to negotiate with traditional priests and priestesses, who are often wary of audiovisual media.

This difference between charismatic Pentecostalism and African traditional religion is reinforced by their antagonistic position towards each other. In forming and authenticating religious identities and subjectivities, both strongly affirm boundaries, stress discontinuity, and present the other as ultimate Other. The charismatic-Pentecostal stance towards traditional religion as the evil Other finds expression in sermons, healing and deliverance rituals, and media representations. Otabil's intellectualist stance towards African traditional religion takes some distance from the sensationalist demonisation of it that inundates the popular media. Nevertheless, his message of radical cultural transformation equally identifies African traditional religion and culture as the root cause of Africa's problems. In a mirroring

[3] On this point, a comparison with Harri Englund's study of radio broadcasting in Malawi (Englund 2011) suggests parallels between Pentecostalism and human rights as discursive forms that, due to their dominance in particular media, shape wider debates in the public sphere.

move, Afrikania holds Christianity, and charismatic Pentecostalism in particular, responsible for all evil in Ghanaian society. Only a return to traditional religious systems of morality, crime prevention, and social and spiritual control could save the country and the African continent.

Behind the surface of religious differentiation and antagonism, however, interesting continuities and mutual influences emerge. Four shared aspects of charismatic Pentecostalism and African traditional religions are particularly relevant here: first, a religious imaginary that recognises the direct presence and influence of spirit beings in people's daily lifeworld; second, a practical, this-worldly (rather than other-worldly) focus that is directed at spiritual problem-solving and physical, material, and social wellbeing; third, an emphasis on the role and power of divinely elected religious specialists as intermediaries between human beings and spirit powers (despite the ostensible Pentecostal rejection of such mediation) and, by extension, a competition for clients between such religious specialists; and fourth, a bodily regime that values expressive, emotional modes of worship and constitutes the body as the prime medium of interaction with the spirit world. Despite its marked globalism and explicit distancing from African traditional religion, charismatic Pentecostalism thus resonates with much of indigenous religious tradition. This is crucial to understanding its tremendous appeal.

Conversely, the foundation of the Afrikania Mission and its neo-traditionalist revival can be understood only in direct connection with the historical and contemporary presence of Christianity in Ghana. The very notion of African Traditional Religion is a historical product of the close interaction with Christianity. Continuing this interaction, Afrikania has adopted a Christian-derived form and concept of religion for its reformation of traditional religion, despite its fierce opposition to Christianity and its claim to provide an 'authentically African' alternative. This 'christianization' of ATR included the formulation of a systematic doctrine with religious creeds, holy scriptures, and authorised prophets; the possibility of 'conversion' to ATR as a personal choice based on inner conviction; and the practice of Sunday worship service, clearly modelled after Catholic liturgy. Additionally, the terminology Afrikania uses indicates a borrowing from a Christian idea of what religion entails: church, bible, liturgy, preaching, communion. With the rapid rise and public appearance of charismatic-Pentecostal churches there has been a shift in what constitutes the format for religion. Whereas in the past Catholicism provided the format for Afrikania, more recent practices like public conventions, camp meetings, evangelisation, all-night prayers, and a general preoccupation with public audibility and visibility have been taken over from charismatic churches. The same type of Christianity that has pushed Afrikania into a more explicitly anti-Christian attitude, now also provides the dominant format for what religion looks like and drives Afrikania to borrow generously from its repertoire of practices and aesthetic forms through which public presence is established in Accra's urban landscape: a highly visible, huge and brightly colored building with a copious office for the leader; conspicuous signboards, banners and posters along roadsides; the use of a loudspeaker van for public evangelisation; and passionate preaching styles broadcast into the neighbourhood through a public address system at high volume.

Religious groups' increased use of mass media has strengthened tendencies of both mutual opposition and entanglement, thus amplifying the paradoxical dynamics between charismatic Pentecostalism and African traditional religion. On the one hand, with the adoption of mass media, religious groups establish an ever-stronger public presence. They become more assertive and self-conscious while religious differences and antagonisms become ever more marked. Religion increasingly becomes a site of public clash and occasional violence, especially so between Pentecostals and traditionalists. At the same time, the global dissemination of religious messages through television, radio, audio and video tapes and CDs, print media, and Internet sites generates and reproduces similar religious formats not only across spatial boundaries, but also across religious boundaries. However, mass media are more favourable to some religious formats than to others. Through their extensive media activity, charismatic churches have by now become mainstream and have established a strong auditory and visual presence in the public arena, thus providing the format for 'religion' in general and influencing not only other Christian denominations, but also

non-Christian religions seeking publicity. The mass mediatisation of charismatic Pentecostalism thus has a cross-religious impact on media representations and styles of performance, as other religions that do not accept or even radically reject its messages do draw upon its formats of representing religion, albeit with varying success.

In the current religious and media climate, Afrikania employs the media mainly in response to charismatic Pentecostalism's repression of traditional religion and the encroaching 'pentecostalisation' of the nation. In attracting media coverage, however, it draws on dominant styles of representing religion that are heavily influenced by globally circulating images and sounds of charismatic-Pentecostal preaching and worship and that emphasise visual attraction, sonic impression, spectacle, and crowd imagery. These formats of extraversion are at tension with formats of spiritual practice found in traditional shrines. Paradoxically, however, the current Pentecostal hegemony in Ghana's public sphere, at the same time, pushes Afrikania closer to shrine practitioners. Pentecostal churches' emphasis on the reality of African spirits and the ways they offer to deal with them, widely publicised through their media ministries, drives Afrikania to also claim access to spiritual power and allow more room for spiritual practices than in its earlier years. This move also entails an economic aspect of competition in a spiritual market place. Operating in a single arena in which religious specialists of various traditions offer similar spiritual services for similar problems is another important dimension of the close and everyday entanglements of Pentecostalism, African traditional religion, and other religious movements.

5. Conclusions

In this article I have examined two religious organisations in Ghana, the charismatic-Pentecostal International Central Gospel Church (ICGC) and the neo-traditionalist Afrikania Mission, as they manifest themselves in the liberalised and commercialised media sphere. This dual focus on two religious groups that seemed at first sight so intrinsically different allowed me to lay bare their complex entanglement. I have argued that, in the Ghanaian religious landscape, charismatic Pentecostalism and African traditional religion are at once strongly opposed to each other and intimately bound up with each other. The ways in which religion gets mass mediated plays an important role in reinforcing both the opposition and the intimacy between them.

On the basis of this conclusion, I wish to offer some reflections on the possibilities and limits of an anthropology of Pentecostalism. The question of course is, how do we frame our field? What would such a label add? When can a framing of our field of study as anthropology of Pentecostalism be productive? I think this framing is most productive at an empirical level, to call attention to an empirical phenomenon: the ubiquitous presence, unprecedented vigour, and extreme diversity of Pentecostalism throughout the world. This has been particularly important against the background of the historical-anthropological suspicion and neglect of Christianity as being 'Western', not 'authentic', or 'foreign' to the cultures under study. The anthropology of Pentecostalism has put Pentecostalism high up on the research agenda, and rightly so. Especially the interest in the global circulation of religious forms and the transnationalisation of religion has produced and will continue to produce fascinating and important ethnographies.

I am more doubtful, however, about the possibilities of an anthropology of Pentecostalism as a theoretical framework. The problem of such a framing is that it tends to reproduce emic notions and categories as analytical notions and categories. To the question of whether scholarly divisions along 'denominational' grounds have much analytical value, I thus tend to respond negatively. What Pentecostals themselves define as the criteria and boundaries of Pentecostalism should be an object of enquiry, and this should not get confused with where we as scholars of Pentecostalism place those boundaries, if we wish to place them at all. Mensa Otabil's ICGC can certainly be analysed as a charismatic-Pentecostal church. However, Otabil also explicitly distances himself from what he considers 'typical' Pentecostalism in present-day Ghana. With his outspokenly anti-spiritualist message, he does not represent a 'typical' Pentecostal church and it may indeed be fruitful to see the

ICGC as something else. The Afrikania Mission is certainly not a Pentecostal church, but it cannot be understood without reference to Pentecostalism. Many of its forms and styles of representation can be recognised as Pentecostal in origin, even if Afrikanians themselves would fiercely deny such an analysis. The point is that any definition of who or what is Pentecostal (or Christian, or traditional) and who or what is not, is always the outcome of historical and political processes of negotiation over such definitions and boundaries. As anthropologists, we should explore these processes rather than reproduce their always temporary and unstable outcome. This same critique can of course be leveled at the anthropology of Christianity, of Islam, of Buddhism and so on, and, in the end, also at the anthropology of 'religion'. The case of the Afrikania Mission makes clear that the struggle for being recognised as 'a religion' is most forcefully fought by those who have historically been denied this label.

In studying Pentecostalism, I suggest, we thus should not limit ourselves to studying Pentecostalism per se. We also have to look at the following: (1) the history and politics of the very category of 'Pentecostal' and its boundaries as it plays out *between* religions in broader religious fields, in local practices of religious identification, and in struggles for public representation and recognition; (2) relationships with other religions, not only from the perspective of Pentecostalism, but also from that of those other religions, recognising that explicit opposition is as much an engagement with Pentecostalism as is subscription; and (3) the spill-over of Pentecostalism into expressions of popular culture and political culture that may not be Pentecostal as such. Limiting the scope of an anthropology of Pentecostalism to Pentecostal churches may not be the most productive way to approach the task. The limits of an anthropology of global Pentecostalism involve the dialogic qualities of debates about public representations of 'religion' that have long arisen in conjunction with new sensational forms in Africa and elsewhere. By keeping the framework of the anthropology of Pentecostalism 'strong at the core and open at the edge', as an interdenominational church in Amsterdam defines its motto, we leave room for the contingencies and surprises that the religious field has to offer and may find significant traces of Pentecostalism in unexpected places.

Funding: The research programme of which my initial study was part, 'Modern Mass Media, Religion and the Imagination of Communities: Different Postcolonial Trajectories in West Africa, India, Brazil and the Caribbean,' was generously sponsored by the Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research NWO.

Conflicts of Interest: The author declares no conflict of interest.

References

Anderson, Allan. 2002. The Newer Pentecostal and Charismatic Churches: The Shape of Future Christianity in Africa? *Pneuma* 24: 167–84. [CrossRef]

Anderson, Allan. 2004. *An Introduction to Pentecostalism: Global Charismatic Christianity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Asamoah-Gyadu, Kwabena. 2005. *African Charismatics: Current Developments within Independent Indigenous Pentecostalism in Ghana*. Leiden: Brill.

Chidester, David. 1996. *Savage Systems: Colonialism and Comparative Religion in Southern Africa*. Cape Town: University of Cape Town Press.

Chidester, David. 2008. Zulu Dreamscapes: Senses, Media, and Authentication in Contemporary Neo-Shamanism. *Material Religion* 4: 136–59. [CrossRef]

Coleman, Simon. 2000. *The Globalisation of Charismatic Christianity: Spreading the Gospel of Prosperity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Corten, André, and Ruth. Marshall-Fratani, eds. 2001. *Between Babel and Pentecost: Transnational Pentecostalism in Africa and Latin-America*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

De Witte, Marleen. 2003. Altar Media's *Living Word*: Televised Charismatic Christianity in Ghana. *Journal of Religion in Africa* 33: 172–202. [CrossRef]

De Witte, Marleen. 2005. The Spectacular and the Spirits: Charismatics and Neo-Traditionalists on Ghanaian Television. *Material Religion* 1: 314–34. [CrossRef]

De Witte, Marleen. 2008. Spirit Media: Charismatics, Traditionalists, and Mediation Practices in Ghana. Ph.D. thesis, University of Amsterdam, Amsterdam, The Netherlands.

De Witte, Marleen. 2010a. Transnational Tradition: The Global Dynamics of 'African Traditional Religion'. In *Religion Crossing Boundaries: Transnational Religious and Social Dynamics in Africa and the New African Diaspora*. Edited by Afe Adogame and Jim Spickard. Leiden: Brill, pp. 253–85.

De Witte, Marleen. 2010b. Religious Media, Mobile Spirits: Publicity and secrecy in African Pentecostalism and traditional religion. In *Travelling Spirits: Migrants, Markets, and Mobilities*. Edited by Gertrud Hüwelmeier and Kristine Krause. New York: Routledge, pp. 83–100.

De Witte, Marleen. 2012. Neo-Traditional Religions. In *The Wiley Blackwell Companion to African Religions*. Edited by Elias Bongmba. Oxford: Blackwell, pp. 173–83.

De Witte, Marleen. 2015. Media Afrikania: Styles and Strategies of Representing African Traditional Religion in Ghana's Public Sphere. In *New Media and Religious Transformation in Africa*. Edited by Rosalind Hackett and Ben Soares. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, pp. 207–26.

De Witte, Marleen. 2017. Spirit Media and the Spectre of the Fake. In *Christianity and the Limits of Materiality*. Edited by Minna Oppas and Anna Haapalainen. London: Bloomsbury, pp. 37–55.

De Witte, Marleen. 2018. Buy the Future: Charismatic Pentecostalism and African Liberation in a Neoliberal World. In *Pentecostalism and Politics in Africa*. Edited by Adeshina Afolayan, Olajumoke Yacob-Haliso and Toyin Falola. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 65–85.

Droogers, André. 2001. Globalization and Pentecostal Success. In *Between Babel and Pentecost: Transnational Pentecostalism in Africa and Latin-America*. Edited by André Corten and Ruth Marshall-Fratani. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, pp. 41–61.

Engelke, Matthew. 2010. Past Pentecostalism: Notes on Rupture, Realignment, and Everyday Life in Pentecostal and African Independent Churches. *Africa* 80: 177–99. [CrossRef]

Englund, Harri. 2011. *Human Rights and African Airwaves: Mediating Equality on the Chichewa Radio*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Fernandez, James W. 1978. African Religious Movements. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 7: 195–234. [CrossRef]

Ghana Statistical Service. 2002. *Population and Housing Census 2000*. Accra: Ghana Statistical Service.

Ghana Statistical Service. 2012. *Population and Housing Census 2010*. Accra: Ghana Statistical Service.

Gifford, Paul. 1998. *African Christianity: Its Public Role*. London: Hurst and Company.

Gifford, Paul. 2004. *Ghana's New Christianity: Pentecostalism in a Globalising African Economy*. London: Hurst and Company.

Hackett, Rosalind. 1999. Radical Christian Revivalism in Nigeria and Ghana. Recent Patterns of Conflict and Intolerance. In *Proselytization and Communal Self-Determination in Africa*. Edited by A. An-Na'im. Maryknoll: Orbis Books, pp. 246–67.

Janson, Marloes, and Birgit Meyer. 2016. Introduction: Towards a Framework for the Study of Christian–Muslim Encounters in Africa. *Africa* 86: 615–19. [CrossRef]

Kalu, Ogbo. 2008. *African Pentecostalism: An Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Larbi, Emmanuel. 2001. *Pentecostalism: The Eddies of Ghanaian Christianity*. Accra: Centre for Pentecostal and Charismatic Studies.

Larkin, Brian. 2008. Ahmed Deedat and the Form of Islamic Evangelism. *Social Text* 26: 101–21. [CrossRef]

Larkin, Brian. 2016. Entangled Religions: Response To J. D. Y. Peel. *Africa* 86: 633–39. [CrossRef]

Larkin, Brian, and Birgit Meyer. 2006. Pentecostalism, Islam and Culture. New Religious Movements in West Africa. In *Themes in West Africa's History*. Edited by Emmanuel Akyeampong. Oxford: James Currey, pp. 286–312.

Martin, David. 2002. *Pentecostalism: The World their Parish*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.

Mary, André. 2002. Pilgrimage to Imeko (Nigeria): An African Church in the Time of the 'Global Village'. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 26: 106–20. [CrossRef]

Meyer, Birgit. 1998. 'Make a Complete Break with the past': Memory and Post-Colonial Modernity in Ghanaian Pentecostal Discourse. *Journal of Religion in Africa* 27: 316–49. [CrossRef]

Meyer, Birgit. 2004a. 'Praise the Lord': Popular Cinema and Pentecostalite Style in Ghana's New Public Sphere. *American Ethnologist* 31: 92–110. [CrossRef]

Meyer, Birgit. 2004b. Christianity in Africa: From African Independent to Pentecostal-Charismatic Churches. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 33: 447–74. [CrossRef]

Meyer, Birgit, ed. 2013. *Aesthetic Formations: Media, Religion, and the Senses*. New York: Palgrave.

Peel, John. 2000. *Religious Encounter and the Making of the Yoruba*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Peel, John. 2016. Christianity, Islam, and Oriṣa Religion: Three Traditions in Comparison and Interaction. Oakland: University of California Press.

Ranger, Terence. 1986. Religious movements and politics in Sub-Saharan Africa. *African Studies Review* 29: 1–69. [CrossRef]

Ranger, Terence. 1988. African Traditional Religion. In *The World's Religions: The Study of Religion, Traditional, and New Religion*. Edited by Stewart Sutherland and Peter Clarke. London: Routledge, pp. 106–14.

Robbins, Joel. 2004. The Globalization of Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 33: 117–43. [CrossRef]

Robbins, Joel. 2007. Continuity Thinking and the Problem of Christian Culture: Belief, Time, and the Anthropology of Christianity. *Current Anthropology* 48: 5–38. [CrossRef]

Robbins, Joel. 2010. Anthropology of Religion. In *Studying Global Pentecostalism: Theories and Methods*. Edited by Allan Anderson, Michael Bergunder, André Droogers and Cornelis van der Laan. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Schulz, Dorothea. 2006. Promises of (Im)mediate Salvation: Islam, Broadcast Media, and the Remaking of Religious Experience in Mali. *American Ethnologist* 33: 210–29. [CrossRef]

Shaw, Rosalind. 1990. The Invention of 'African Traditional Religion'. *Religion* 20: 339–53. [CrossRef]

Shaw, Rosalind, and Charles Stewart. 1994. Introduction: Problematizing Syncretism. In *Syncretism/Anti-Syncretism: The Politics of Religious Synthesis*. Edited by Charles Stewart and Rosalind Shaw. London: Routledge.

Soares, Benjamin, ed. 2006. *Muslim–Christian Encounters in Africa*. Leiden: Brill.

Werbner, Richard. 2011. *Holy Hustlers: Apostolic Reformation in Botswana*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

© 2018 by the author. Licensee MDPI, Basel, Switzerland. This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).

religions

MDPI

Article

Will God Make Me Rich? An Investigation into the Relationship between Membership in Charismatic Churches, Wealth, and Women's Empowerment in Ghana

Sara Gundersen

Department of Economics, Valparaiso University, 1400 Chapel Drive, Valparaiso, IN 46383, USA; Sara.Gundersen@valpo.edu

Received: 15 May 2018; Accepted: 17 June 2018; Published: 19 June 2018

Abstract: In recent decades, there has been an explosion in the growth of Pentecostal churches in Ghana, many of which preach that belief in God will translate into material wealth for both men and women. While some have argued that women in these churches are likely to be more empowered due to female leadership and focus on the individual, others have argued that this may not translate to the typical congregant's experience. After all, members of the Pentecostal church subscribe to the belief that wives should "submit to their husbands" (Biblia n.d.). In this study, I used the 2014 Demographic Health Survey to directly test whether women who identify as Pentecostal/Charismatic/Evangelical have a higher level of empowerment as measured by autonomy in decision making. I found that they exhibit significantly less decision-making power than other Christian women in making big household purchases and on their own healthcare. This exists both before and after controlling for wealth. Thus, the notion that Pentecostal women are more empowered than other Christians appears to be misguided.

Keywords: Pentecostalism; Ghana; women's empowerment

---

1. Introduction

Ghana's Pentecostal churches (also known as neo-Pentecostal or Charismatic churches)[1] have been growing rapidly in recent years (Gifford 2004b; Heaton et al. 2009) with membership estimated at over 40% of the population. Beck and Gundersen (2016) find that earned income varies among women by religious denomination in Ghana, and that women identifying as Pentecostal earn more income than the Presbyterian base group after controlling for socioeconomic variables. Because of the churches' focus on individualism and the presence of female leaders, one may assume women who belong to Pentecostal churches are more empowered than women of other religions, and that this may contribute to the earnings differential. This may be enhanced by the focus on acquisition of material wealth. However, the theoretical link between membership and women's empowerment is unclear, as

[1] The term Pentecostal may present some confusion. While Ghana's newer Pentecostal churches contain some similarities to traditional Pentecostalism, they differ in many ways. For example, they do not necessarily practice 'initial evidence': (Soothill 2007). Difficulties also arise with the use of the term Charismatic, as these churches differ from Charismatic Protestant and Catholic wings in that they are largely nondenominational. Still, they are typically grouped together due to shared features such as a focus on the individual, spirits, and material prosperity, and scholars often refer to the group as "neo-Pentecostal." The Demographic Health Survey asks about religious denomination as a country-specific question and in 2008 began aggregating this group as Pentecostal/Charismatic/Evangelical in Ghana. For this paper, I refer to the group as Pentecostal in general and Pentecostal/Charismatic/Evangelical where using data but acknowledge the heterogeneity in the group.

wives are taught that they should "submit" to their husbands and the experiences of female leadership does not necessarily extend to the typical "born-again" experience (Soothill 2010).

This is the first study to explicitly test for differences in women's empowerment within Pentecostal churches in an African context. Using the 2014 Ghana Demographic Health Survey, I was able to test for differences in women's empowerment by religious denomination while controlling for socioeconomic variables such as wealth, education, and working status. Women's empowerment is measured by decision making over large household purchases, visits to family or relatives, spending of their own or their husband's earnings, and their own health care. While women of most religions exhibit more decision-making power than Traditional/Spiritual/Animist religions with regard to family visits, women who identify as Pentecostal/Charismatic/Evangelical have significantly less decision-making power than other Christian women when it comes to big household purchases and their own healthcare. Thus, the notion that Pentecostal women are more empowered than other Christians is not supported by this data.

This paper proceeds as follows: Section 2 provides background information and Section 3 describes the theoretical links between membership in Pentecostal churches and women's empowerment. Section 4 addresses the definition and measurement of women's empowerment. Section 5 describes the data and Section 6 provides the econometric methodology and results. Section 7 discusses the findings of the study and offers a summary conclusion.

2. Background

Ghana is deeply religious, with traditional religions existing well before the introduction of Christianity (Addai 2000; Heaton et al. 2009). This religious quality continues today, with Gallup determining Ghana to be the most religious country in the world in 2012 (WIN-Gallup International 2012). Although significant portions of the population continue to practice traditional religions and Islam, Christianity is both the largest and fastest-growing group. In particular, Ghana has not been immune to the rapid growth of Charismatic or neo-Pentecostal churches occurring throughout the African continent.[2] Gifford (2004b) describes how in Ghana, membership in these churches grew at rates of up to 100% between 1986 and 1992 (versus 17% for total religious membership during the same time period). Heaton et al. (2009) report similar growth from 1993–2003, where non-Catholic and non-mainline Protestant Christians increased from 16.9% of the population to over 41%. Using sample weights in the Ghana Demographic Health Survey I found that women who identify as Pentecostal/Charismatic/Evangelical represented 40.2% of the population in 2014.

Among the major tenets of these churches is a focus on material wealth (Gifford 2004a, 2004b; Heaton et al. 2009). Gifford writes: "Just talking to these Christians, or studying their sermons, testimonies, and literature, one finds recurring words like progress, prosperity, breakthrough, success; their opposites, closed doors, poverty, sickness, setback, hunger, joblessness. Probably the biggest word in this Christianity is 'breakthrough'" (Gifford 2004b, p. 171). He notes that prosperity in this context means abundant rather than merely adequate wealth. Heaton et al. (2009) write about an instance where "the message is crassly portrayed on a poster outside a large church depicting a large mansion and an exotic sports car with the phrase "with God all things are possible" (p. 74). They note that continual exposure to this message could legitimize pursuit of material goods and argue that it may even lead to greater personal efficacy (p. 74). While scholars have speculated that this can lead to greater empowerment among women, the theoretical links are unresolved. The next section describes this in the context of Ghana.

---

[2] See Anderson (2013) for a detailed analysis of the global phenomenon.

3. Theoretical Links

Although it is commonly assumed that the expansion of Pentecostalism will benefit women, Martin (2001) wrote about a "Pentecostal Gender Paradox" in a global context, with competing theoretical forces between membership in Pentecostal churches and women's empowerment. This paradox is unresolved globally and in Ghana, where women traditionally serve as subordinates to their husbands and are disadvantaged economically (Awumbila 2006) and with respect to education, credit, equipment, high-productivity activities, and access to food (Wrigley-Asante 2008). Additionally, they face high rates of intimate partner violence (Oduro et al. 2015) and have little decision-making power (Boateng et al. 2014).

On the one hand, Pentecostal churches in Ghana remove many traditional barriers to female leadership. Along with some high profile positions, Gifford (2004a) notes that women are often in lower level leadership positions, such as "ushers, choristers, prayer warriors and evangelists" (p. 183). However, Soothill (2010) argues that what appears as female empowerment among high profile women in the church, such as pastors' wives or the female pastor Christie Doe Tetteh, may not reflect the experiences of born-again women[3] (ibid., p. 90). Indeed, "When asked if it was the churches' attitude towards women's 'empowerment' and the acceptance of women leaders that had attracted them to the charismatic movement, most of them said 'no'. Rather, it was the power of charismatic prayer"[4] (ibid.).

Another argument is that the churches' focus on development of individuals provides an opportunity for women to legitimize personal pursuits, especially given the churches' teachings on wealth and prosperity. Soothill (2010) writes, "Whilst the equality of men and women's spiritual experiences was recognised almost a century before by the early Pentecostal and Holiness movements (Powers 1999; Lawless 1988), Ghana's new churches take this a step further. They argue that in terms of worldly success–with which this form of Christianity is so concerned–there is no difference also between male and female believers. That is to say, 'success' and 'prosperity' do not depend on gender" (p. 84). Gifford (2004a) also notes that the message of winning is frequently directed at women. He relays a sermon by Pastor Mensa Otabil on 2 August 2002: "Most of you women have great potential but you will die pathetic creatures ... A woman's lot is not to depend on a man. Have your own house, car ... I'm looking for purpose-driven, achievement-oriented women" (Gifford 2004a, p. 184).

However, a woman is still expected to "submit" to her husband (Biblia n.d.) and in fact this can become a strategy to personal success itself, with the motto of the Pastors' Wives and Women in Ministry Association being "Helpmeet! By his side!" (Soothill 2010, p. 84). Bawa (2017) also describes the role of the church in reinforcing this submissiveness,[5] noting a particular instance of "Arch Bishop" Duncan Williams, the head pastor of a famous Pentecostal church that many would expect to be progressive, who in a 2014 sermon, "stated that women ought to be grateful to men who married them since that validated them as women. He suggested that, given the statistics of a relatively high number of women to men (7:1 to be precise), married women were to be 'thankful and stop complaining'; unmarried women on the other hand were chided to be submissive in order to be considered marriageable" (ibid., p. 11).

Thus, the relationship between the Charismatic movement and female empowerment is complex and unresolved in the literature. This study takes an empirical approach, testing whether differences in women's empowerment, as measured by women's decision-making power, exist both before and after controlling for socioeconomic factors and wealth.

---

[3] In this context, born-again refers to Pentecostal-style belief and practice.

[4] Bawa (2017) argues that Soothill (2010) underestimates the potential effect of women in these positions, writing, "while visibility is not synonymous with positive social transformation in gender relations, it opens up spaces of possibilities and dialog for future entry of females into zones otherwise reserved for males in the Ghanaian society": p. 7.

[5] She draws on fieldwork to show how deep knowledge of the Bible for self-identified Christians can be used to overcome these inequalities but notes that this is dependent upon socioeconomic status.

4. Measuring Women's Empowerment

Golla et al. (2011) define women's economic empowerment as having "both the ability to succeed and advance economically and the power to make and act on economic decisions," (p. 4) and the two are connected. For example, skills and resources that allow women to advance economically, such as those taught in school, can lead to power and agency; but possessing power and agency can enable women to obtain skills and resources. This is all done in the context of norms and institutions (ibid). Measuring women's empowerment is therefore not a simple task and there are pros and cons to any method of doing so. This is made more complex with limited data availability in datasets that report religious denomination. The 2014 Ghana Demographic Health Survey (DHS) was used in this study, which does not contain data on the distribution of household asset ownership (used to measure bargaining power), earnings, or spending, and has limited data on domestic violence.[6] However, the DHS does contain five questions on decision-making power, which measure the latter part of Golla et al.'s definition of empowerment: women's power to make and act on economic decisions. Within the possible power and agency indicators outlined by Golla et al., these decision-making questions address "control over assets" (spending of their own or their husband's earnings), "agency/decision-making" (large household purchases), and "autonomy and ability" (visits to family and relatives). Healthcare decision making spans both "agency/decision-making" and "gender norms" (p. 8).

I chose to focus this analysis on a women's empowerment measure that captures power and agency rather than resources and skills for two reasons. First, I believe it provides a more interesting theoretical contrast to the focus on female submissiveness in the Ghanaian Pentecostal Churches. Second, although I am able to control for some skills and resources—namely, education and employment status, number of children, and wealth—I do not believe these alone provide a rich enough proxy for empowerment to justify their use as dependent variables. As Oduro et al. (2015) discuss, empirical evidence is mixed in regard to labor market activities and empowerment as measured by intimate partner violence, and feminist economists have questioned the theoretical links between a woman's education, employment, income and empowerment (pp. 4–5).

5. Data

This study used the International Public Use Microdata Series, or IPUMS (Minnesota Population Center 2017) recode of Demographic Health Survey (DHS) data from the 2014 Ghana dataset. The DHS asks women who are married or living with a partner about their role in making decisions related to large household purchases, visits to family or relatives, spending of their own or their husband's earnings, and their own health care.[7] The dependent variable is a woman's decision-making power, coded as a 1 if the woman reports that she makes the decisions alone or jointly with her partner and 0 if she does not. Information on years of education, the total number of living children born, woman's age, and dichotomous variables were also included, with 1 representing an urban status, whether a woman has worked in the last 7 days, whether there is a female head of household, and regional locations, and 0 representing the absence of that variable. The DHS surveys include information on household assets and use this information to construct a wealth index, which is reported as wealth quintiles. I included wealth quintiles with the poorest quintile as the base group.

Table 1 reports means for religious denominations. After dropping observations with missing, incomplete, or unclear answers (135 observations, making up 2.5% of the sample) there are 5417[8] women in the sample. The DHS has country specific answers to the question, "What is your religion?" with the options in the Ghana DHS (2014) listed as "Catholic, Anglican, Methodist,

[6] The DHS has some data available on attitudes toward women and violence, but because other datasets contain richer information on domestic violence, I will save this for future work.

[7] Specifically, the questions read, "Who usually makes decisions about ... " The DHS does not ask non-married or non-cohabiting women about decision-making power.

[8] 3940 women in the DHS sample are not married or cohabiting and are therefore not asked about decision-making power.

Presbyterian, Pentecostal/Charismatic/Evangelical, Other Christian/unspecified/general, Islam, Traditional/Spiritual/Animist, No Religion, and Other." The Pentecostal/Charismatic/Evangelical group is the largest of the sample at 36%, followed by Muslim women at 19%. Traditional/Spiritualist women are 3%, and 4% of women say they have no religion. I aggregated the Christian religions as Catholic, Anglican, Methodist, Presbyterian, Pentecostal/Charismatic/Evangelical, and Other Christian, and this group makes up 74% of the sample. Each denomination is coded as a dichotomous variable with 1 representing membership in the religion and 0 otherwise.

Table 1. Reported Religious Denomination in the Sample.

	Percentage of Sample
Catholic	14%
Presbyterian	4%
Anglican	1%
Methodist	5%
Pentecostal	36%
Other Christian	12%
Muslim	21%
Traditional/Spiritualist	3%
No Religion	4%

Table 2 reports decision-making power by religion. The number of observations varies for each dependent variable to represent women who answered questions on the relevant dependent variables. Results mirror the socioeconomic variables with the Pentecostal/Charismatic group in the low to middle range of the Christian religions for decision making. The Traditional/Spiritual/Animist group is at the low end of the spectrum, with the Muslim and No Religion groups having slightly higher decision-making power. All groups have relatively high scores for deciding where female earnings are spent and low scores for decisions regarding the use of husband's earnings, which could presumably be expected.

Table 3 reports means and standard deviations for independent variables. The Traditional/Spiritual/Animist group has the lowest education and wealth, followed by the No Religion and Muslim groups. Of the Christian religions, the Methodist group has the highest levels of education and wealth and the Catholic has the lowest. The Pentecostal/Charismatic women are in the middle of the Christian subgroup for most variables. All groups have a relatively high number of women who work, with the Traditional/Spiritual/Animist group at the top.

Table 2. Female Decision-Making Power by Religious Denomination.

	Catholic	Presbyterian	Anglican	Methodist	Pentecostal/Charismatic/ Evangelical	Other Christian	Muslim	Traditional/Spiritual/ Animist	No Religion
Big Household Purchases	77.89%	82.23%	80.00%	82.44%	76.42%	82.28%	64.09%	59.65%	73.40%
Observations	760	242	35	262	1925	666	1125	171	203
Family Visit	88.34%	90.08%	88.89%	93.54%	87.55%	89.69%	79.61%	73.84%	86.21%
Observations	763	242	36	263	1936	669	1133	172	203
Female Earnings	95.62%	92.97%	95.00%	96.07%	94.76%	93.29%	95.31%	92.19%	89.29%
Observations	479	185	20	178	1430	477	597	128	140
Husband Earnings	50.60%	42.26%	52.94%	57.14%	48.74%	52.36%	34.68%	26.19%	33.66%
Observations	755	239	34	259	1900	657	1116	168	202
Female Healthcare	82.52%	83.06%	75.00%	84.79%	77.75%	82.73%	74.05%	59.41%	69.46%
Observations	761	242	36	263	1924	666	1129	170	203

Means are reported for women who are married or cohabit who demonstrate shared or solo decision-making power in each category.

Table 3. Independent Variable Summary Statistics.

	Catholic	Presbyterian	Anglican	Methodist	Pentecostal/Charismatic/ Evangelical	Other Christian	Muslim	Traditional/Spiritual/ Animist	No Religion
Years of Education	5.464	7.905	7.333	8.639	6.352	6.882	3.177	1.140	2.158
	(5.439)	(4.776)	(4.329)	(4.539)	(4.782)	(4.731)	(4.686)	(2.700)	(3.169)
Urban	0.324	0.521	0.444	0.479	0.456	0.513	0.550	0.145	0.256
	(0.468)	(0.501)	(0.504)	(0.501)	(0.498)	(0.500)	(0.498)	(0.354)	(0.438)
Number of Children	3.168	3.017	3.194	2.780	3.080	3.302	3.300	4.547	3.759
	(1.941)	(1.958)	(1.895)	(1.995)	(1.969)	(2.043)	(2.015)	(2.137)	(2.136)
Married	0.818	0.665	0.611	0.745	0.706	0.738	0.937	0.802	0.764
	(0.386)	(0.473)	(0.494)	(0.437)	(0.456)	(0.440)	(0.244)	(0.399)	(0.426)
Age	33.404	35.244	34.028	33.540	33.381	34.112	33.303	35.151	34.562
	(8.040)	(8.049)	(7.737)	(7.995)	(7.875)	(7.968)	(8.104)	(8.008)	(8.336)
Female Household Head	0.152	0.252	0.167	0.262	0.199	0.242	0.116	0.105	0.163
	(0.359)	(0.435)	(0.378)	(0.441)	(0.399)	(0.429)	(0.320)	(0.307)	(0.370)
Wealth 1	0.438	0.136	0.167	0.076	0.222	0.126	0.362	0.797	0.522
	(0.496)	(0.344)	(0.378)	(0.266)	(0.415)	(0.332)	(0.481)	(0.404)	(0.501)
Wealth 2	0.180	0.203	0.139	0.236	0.190	0.209	0.190	0.145	0.227
	(0.384)	(0.403)	(0.351)	(0.425)	(0.392)	(0.407)	(0.392)	(0.354)	(0.420)
Wealth 3	0.147	0.219	0.278	0.202	0.192	0.242	0.182	0.041	0.133
	(0.354)	(0.414)	(0.454)	(0.402)	(0.394)	(0.429)	(0.386)	(0.198)	(0.340)
Wealth 4	0.122	0.161	0.222	0.175	0.189	0.224	0.171	0.017	0.099
	(0.327)	(0.368)	(0.422)	(0.381)	(0.392)	(0.417)	(0.377)	(0.131)	(0.299)
Wealth 5	0.114	0.281	0.194	0.312	0.208	0.199	0.095	0.000	0.020
	(0.318)	(0.450)	(0.401)	(0.464)	(0.406)	(0.399)	(0.294)	0.000	(0.139)
Employed	0.856	0.843	0.778	0.856	0.850	0.848	0.817	0.913	0.842
	(0.352)	(0.365)	(0.422)	(0.352)	(0.358)	(0.360)	(0.387)	(0.283)	(0.365)
Observations	763	242	36	263	1936	669	1133	172	203

Standard deviations in parentheses. Regional dummy variables also included in analysis.

6. Econometric Methodology and Results

Because decision-making variables mirror socioeconomic variables, with Traditional/Spiritual/Animist women at a disadvantage and Christian women, particularly Methodists, at an advantage, it is not clear whether factors like education, work status, or wealth are driving the women's empowerment results. For example, women in the Methodist religion may be more empowered simply because they have higher levels of education. To control for this, I ran logistic regressions that included the independent variables detailed above. A logistic model is appropriate when the dependent variable is binary, in this case a 1 representing some decision-making power and 0 representing none. The model is,

$$y_i = \beta_0 + \beta x_i + Religion_i + \varepsilon_i \quad (1)$$

where y represents decision-making power, x represents independent variables as described above, and Religion contains a set of dummy variables for each woman's religious denomination. β_0 and ε_i are intercept and stochastic error terms, respectively. I used survey weights[9] to control for the sampling procedure.

Table 4 shows the results. With a logistic regression, coefficients do not have an intuitive interpretation so, where appropriate, I provide marginal effects for parameters of interest. Panel A shows the entire sample with Traditional/Spiritual/Animist religions as a base group. The only regression for which the Pentecostal/Charismatic/Evangelical variable is significant is for family visit decisions. The marginal effect for this is 7.03% (from 83.7% to 90.8%, holding other variables constant). However, it is unclear whether the Pentecostal/Charismatic group is different from the Christian variables because each of these (except Anglican) is also significantly higher than the Traditional/Spiritual/Animist group.

To further explore this result, I ran the same regressions for only the Christian subgroup with all non-Pentecostal/Charismatic Christians aggregated together as the base group. The results show that women who identify as Pentecostal/Charismatic/Evangelical have significantly lower decision-making power for big household purchases and for female health care, holding all other variables constant, although the big purchases variable is only marginally significant. The marginal effect for the big household purchases regression is −4.3% (from 79.7% to 75.4%) and the marginal effect for the female healthcare regression is −3.3% (from 81.3% to 78.0%). This indicates that women who identify as Pentecostal/Charismatic/Evangelical have less decision-making power than other Christian women.

Other independent variables show that, generally, women who have more education, who work, and who live in female-headed households consistently have more decision-making power. Age is only significant for major household purchases, and marital status is only significant for husband's earnings and female healthcare. Wealth dummy variables generally show a positive correlation between wealth and decision-making power, although results are not significant for many quartiles, particularly for the big household purchases and female healthcare decisions.

[9] In particular, I ran tests of sample weights, which indicate weights are appropriate for respondents' own and their partners' earnings, along with female healthcare. I used weights for all regressions to keep results consistent.

Table 4. Results.

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)
Sample	All	All	All	All	All	Christian	Christian	Christian	Christian	Christian
Religion Base Group	Traditional/Spiritual/Animist					Non-Pentecostal Christian				
	Big Household Purchases	Family Visit	Female Earnings	Husband's Earnings	Female Healthcare	Big Household Purchases	Family Visit	Female Earnings	Husband's Earnings	Female Healthcare
Muslim	0.0449	0.280	0.414	−0.0199	0.367					
	(0.279)	(0.308)	(0.500)	(0.375)	(0.263)					
Catholic	0.402	0.750 **	0.655	0.255	0.587 **					
	(0.288)	(0.336)	(0.475)	(0.354)	(0.285)					
Anglican	0.379	1.011	0.361	0.556	−0.205					
	(0.602)	(0.656)	(1.144)	(0.538)	(0.515)					
Methodist	0.386	1.478 ***	0.759	0.131	0.326					
	(0.364)	(0.426)	(0.592)	(0.393)	(0.321)					
Pentecostal/Charismatic/Evangelical	0.213	0.686 **	0.271	0.0479	0.179	−0.267 **	−0.132	−0.0343	−0.0878	−0.230 *
	(0.267)	(0.298)	(0.442)	(0.348)	(0.243)	(0.128)	(0.150)	(0.210)	(0.0984)	(0.126)
Other Christian	0.590 **	0.736 **	0.184	0.223	0.396					
	(0.299)	(0.346)	(0.476)	(0.360)	(0.281)					
Presbyterian	0.461	0.708 *	0.0286	−0.310	0.339					
	(0.346)	(0.384)	(0.524)	(0.372)	(0.325)					
No Religion	0.269	0.841 **	0.0986	−0.229	0.209					
	(0.323)	(0.413)	(0.408)	(0.401)	(0.306)					
Years of Education	0.0387 ***	0.00582	0.0323	0.0367 ***	0.0578 ***	0.0420 ***	0.00402	0.0460 **	0.0416 ***	0.0507 ***
	(0.0112)	(0.0131)	(0.0197)	(0.00929)	(0.0113)	(0.0131)	(0.0178)	(0.0224)	(0.0110)	(0.0131)
Wealth 2	0.122	0.435 **	0.478 **	0.294 **	0.253	0.237	0.764 ***	0.424	0.184	0.360*
	(0.162)	(0.196)	(0.240)	(0.138)	(0.157)	(0.207)	(0.276)	(0.303)	(0.160)	(0.209)
Wealth 3	0.209	0.618 **	0.715 **	0.162	0.248	0.424 *	1.014 ***	0.833 **	0.0282	0.290
	(0.189)	(0.247)	(0.303)	(0.160)	(0.182)	(0.226)	(0.335)	(0.368)	(0.180)	(0.238)
Wealth 4	0.225	0.662 **	0.269	0.255	−0.00691	0.343	0.964 **	0.251	0.134	−0.0200
	(0.222)	(0.301)	(0.294)	(0.213)	(0.220)	(0.267)	(0.398)	(0.353)	(0.223)	(0.285)
Wealth 5	0.105	0.928 ***	1.136 ***	0.178	−0.0696	0.140	1.225 ***	1.116 **	0.00124	−0.104
	(0.255)	(0.341)	(0.430)	(0.257)	(0.264)	(0.306)	(0.440)	(0.459)	(0.271)	(0.324)
Urban	−0.0379	−0.146	0.161	−0.252 *	−0.197	−0.0656	−0.321	0.0234	−0.218	−0.248
	(0.162)	(0.176)	(0.235)	(0.140)	(0.156)	(0.191)	(0.213)	(0.249)	(0.146)	(0.187)
Number of Children	0.0567 **	0.0361	0.00929	0.0213	0.0447	0.0584	−0.00432	−0.0121	0.0268	0.0493
	(0.0288)	(0.0331)	(0.0546)	(0.0281)	(0.0271)	(0.0382)	(0.0408)	(0.0682)	(0.0342)	(0.0345)
Married	0.130	0.184	0.147	0.408 ***	0.365 ***	0.172	0.138	0.242	0.465 ***	0.463 ***
	(0.114)	(0.125)	(0.207)	(0.0995)	(0.118)	(0.127)	(0.135)	(0.227)	(0.105)	(0.135)
Age	0.0246 ***	0.0112	0.0157	−0.00536	0.0153 **	0.0243 ***	0.0126	0.0154	−0.00843	0.0158 *
	(0.00669)	(0.00744)	(0.0145)	(0.00698)	(0.00748)	(0.00803)	(0.0106)	(0.0169)	(0.00728)	(0.00929)
Female HH Head	0.500 ***	0.473 ***	0.244	−0.359 ***	0.309 **	0.482 ***	0.419 **	0.261	−0.321 ***	0.300 **
	(0.128)	(0.156)	(0.228)	(0.0967)	(0.125)	(0.136)	(0.172)	(0.245)	(0.106)	(0.133)
Employed	0.729 ***	0.663 ***	−0.437	0.383 ***	0.902 ***	0.726 ***	0.693 ***	−0.547	0.434 ***	0.900 ***
	(0.114)	(0.136)	(0.522)	(0.124)	(0.133)	(0.139)	(0.177)	(0.668)	(0.141)	(0.159)
Constant	−1.607 ***	−0.723	1.369 *	−1.154 ***	−1.431 ***	−1.149 ***	0.0460	1.717 **	−0.927 ***	−0.904 **
	(0.396)	(0.451)	(0.779)	(0.430)	(0.403)	(0.362)	(0.513)	(0.872)	(0.280)	(0.399)
F-Statistic	11.97 ***	6.42 ***	1.91 ***	7.34 ***	9.65 ***	11.95 ***	5.8 ***	1.88 ***	7.88 ***	10.35 ***
Prob > F	0.000	0.000	0.004	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.012	0.000	0.000
Observations	5389	5417	3634	5330	5394	3890	3909	2769	3844	3892

Region dummy variables also included. Standard errors in parentheses. *** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$.

7. Conclusions/Discussion

This study is the first to test for differences in empowerment for women who identify as Pentecostal in Africa. Though some argue that the spread of Pentecostalism empowers women, there exists a "Pentecostal Gender Paradox" (Martin 2001) where complex messages in the church complicate this link. In Ghana, messages of individuality, equal access to material wealth, and female leadership theoretically enhance women's empowerment, while messages of submissiveness to men diminish it. Using data from the 2014 Ghana Demographic Health Survey, I tested for differences in decision-making power for married/cohabiting women by religion. Raw data show that women who identify as Pentecostal/Charismatic/Evangelical are in the center to low end of the distribution for Christians but have more decision-making power than most non-Christians. Once education, wealth, and other socioeconomic variables are controlled for, Pentecostal women have more decision-making power than the Traditional/Spiritual/Animist base group only for family visits. Among the Christian subgroup, they have less decision-making power than other Christians for big household purchases and female healthcare.

To the extent that decision-making power represents female empowerment, these results indicate that women who identify as Pentecostal/Charismatic/Evangelical are less empowered than other Christians when it comes to household purchases and healthcare. It is important to note, however, that this does not indicate that membership in these churches *leads* to lower levels of female empowerment. First, there may be missing variables, such as income, that are driving results. Second, women who are less empowered may be drawn to Pentecostal churches, which would lead to the negative estimates. It is also worth noting that even if a perfect measure of empowerment existed, it would not necessarily indicate fully favorable outcomes for women. For example, as Mahmud et al. (2012) point out, greater economic visibility may expose women to violence; or a greater role in decision making may cause men to withdraw support for things like health care. Thus, it is important to remember that although greater women's empowerment is a desirable outcome, it is by no means a holistic measure of well-being.

Even in light of these caveats, the finding that Pentecostal women are *less* empowered than other Christians in Ghana seems puzzling in the face of Beck and Gundersen's (2016) finding that Pentecostal women have higher earned income than the Presbyterian base group. One way of reconciling the two findings relates to Carvalho's (2012) work on female veiling in Muslim societies. He describes the dramatic increase in veiling from the 1970s and notes the puzzling fact that it originates among urban, educated, middle-class women who work outside the home. To reconcile the two, he developed a model where women use veiling to pursue economic opportunities while avoiding disapproval in their communities. Similarly, Mate (2002) analysed teachings in prominent women's organizations in Zimbabwean Pentecostal churches and found that they use notions of domesticity to "tighten the patriarchal grip on women" (p. 549) but also encourage modernity outside the home. In this case, it is possible that Ghanaian Pentecostal women maintain submissiveness in marriage so that they can pursue economic outcomes elsewhere. For example, they may choose to obtain higher paying employment, land ownership, or other assets while preserving gender roles within the home. In light of this possibility, it would be interesting to explore whether bargaining power, as measured by ownership of assets, is correlated with religious denomination or to test the relationship between religious denomination and empowerment using a dataset that also contains earnings information.

While data limitations prevent me from exploring these pathways here, my hope is that this analysis motivates both quantitative and qualitative work. In addition to the possibilities for quantitative studies described above, qualitative researchers could evaluate how economic behavior relates to gender norms in both Pentecostal and non-Pentecostal churches.

As the first study to explicitly test for female empowerment in African Pentecostal churches, however, I believe the results are relevant to scholars of religion and gender studies. Until now, Soothill (2010) notes that most scholars have possessed an "'enthusiasm' fueled by the perception that [the global Charismatic movement] will, in some sense, 'empower' its female adherents" (p. 82). This analysis shows that such a perception may not be supported by the data.

Conflicts of Interest: The author declares no conflict of interest.

References

Addai, Isaac. 2000. Religious affiliation and sexual initiation among Ghanian Women. *Review of Religious Research* 4: 328–43. [CrossRef]

Anderson, Allan H. 2013. *To the Ends of the Earth: Pentecostalism and the Transformation of World Christianity*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Awumbila, Mariama. 2006. Gender equality and poverty in Ghana: Implications for Poverty Reduction Strategies. *GeoJournal* 67: 149–61. [CrossRef]

Bawa, Sylvia. 2017. Christianity, Tradition, and Gender Inequality in Postcolonial Ghana. *African Geographical Review*, 1–16. [CrossRef]

Beck, Sedefka V., and Sara J. Gundersen. 2016. A Gospel of Prosperity? An Analysis of the Relationship between Religion and Earned Income in Ghana, the Most Religious Country in the World: Religion and Earned Income in Ghana. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 55: 105–29. [CrossRef]

Biblia. n.d. Ephesians 5: 22–24. Available online: http://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph5.22-24 (accessed on 16 March 2018).

Boateng, Godfred Odei, Vincent Zubedaar Kuuire, Mengieng Ung, Jonathan Anim Amoyaw, Frederick Ato Armah, and Isaac Luginaah. 2014. Women's empowerment in the context of millennium development goal 3: A case study of married women in Ghana. *Social Indicators Research* 115: 137–58. [CrossRef]

Carvalho, Jean-Paul. 2012. Veiling. *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 128: 337–70. [CrossRef]

Gifford, Paul. 2004a. *Ghana's New Christianity: Pentecostalism in a Globalizing African Economy*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Gifford, Paul. 2004b. Persistence and Change in Contemporary African Religion. *Social Compass* 51: 169–76. [CrossRef]

Golla, Anne Marie, Anju Malhotra, Priya Nanda, and Rekha Mehra. 2011. *Understanding and Measuring Women's Economic Empowerment*. Washington: International Center for Research on Women (ICRW).

Heaton, Tim, James Spencer, and Oheneba-Sakyi Yaw. 2009. Religion and Socioeconomic Attainment in Ghana. *Review of Religious Research* 17: 71–86.

Lawless, Elaine J. 1988. *Handmaidens of the Lord: Pentecostal Women Preachers and Traditional Religion*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Mahmud, Simeen, Nirali M. Shah, and Stan Becker. 2012. Measurement of Women's Empowerment in Rural Bangladesh. *World Development* 40: 610–19. [CrossRef] [PubMed]

Martin, Bernice. 2001. The Pentecostal Gender Paradox: A Cautionary Tale for the Sociology of Religion. In *The Blackwell Companion to Sociology of Religion*. Edited by Richard K. Fenn. Malden: Blackwell Publishing Ltd., pp. 52–66. [CrossRef]

Mate, Rekopantswe. 2002. Wombs as God's Laboratories: Pentecostal Discourses of Femininity in Zimbabwe. *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute* 72: 549–68. [CrossRef]

Minnesota Population Center. 2017. *Integrated Public Use Microdata Series, International: Version 6*. Demographic Health Survey, Ghana 2014. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota. [CrossRef]

Oduro, Abena D., Carmen Diana Deere, and Zachary B. Catanzarite. 2015. Women's Wealth and Intimate Partner Violence: Insights from Ecuador and Ghana. *Feminist Economics* 21: 1–29. [CrossRef]

Powers, Janet Everts. 1999. Your daughters shall prophesy: Pentecostal hermeneutics and the empowerment of women. In *The Globalisation of Pentecostalism: A Religion Made To Travel*. Edited by Murray W. Dempster, Byron D. Klaus and Douglas Petersen. Oxford: Regnum Books International.

Soothill, Jane E. 2007. *Gender, Social Change and Spiritual Power: Charismatic Christianity in Ghana*. Leiden: Brill.

Soothill, Jane E. 2010. The Problem with 'Women's Empowerment': Female Religiosity in Ghana's Charismatic Churches. *Studies in World Christianity* 16: 82–99. [CrossRef]

WIN-Gallup International. 2012. Global Index of Religion and Atheism. Available online: https://sidmennt.is/wp-content/uploads/Gallup-International-um-tr%C3%BA-og-tr%C3%BAleysi-2012.pdf (accessed on 16 March 2018).

Wrigley-Asante, Charlotte. 2008. Men are poor but women are poorer: Gendered poverty and survival strategies in the Dangme West District of Ghana. *Norsk Geografisk Tidsskrift—Norwegian Journal of Geography* 62: 161–70. [CrossRef]

© 2018 by the author. Licensee MDPI, Basel, Switzerland. This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).

religions

MDPI

Article

Pentecostalism, Politics, and Prosperity in South Africa

Maria Frahm-Arp

Department of Religion Studies, University of Johannesburg, Auckland Park, Johannesburg 2006, South Africa; mariafa@uj.ac.za

Received: 8 August 2018; Accepted: 1 October 2018; Published: 3 October 2018

Abstract: One of the fastest growing religious movements in South Africa is a form of Pentecostal Charismatic Evangelical (PCE) Christianity that has some version of prosperity theology as a central pillar. This paper, based on sermons and interviews with 97 PCE pastors in the area of Johannesburg, South Africa, argues that these churches form loose clusters defined by similar emphases along a continuum of prosperity theology. These clusters are "abilities prosperity," "progress prosperity," and "miracle prosperity." Some churches fall neatly into one of the clusters, while others appear as more of a hybrid between two of these types. The paper shows that a relationship exists between the type of theology preached by PCE churches and the nature and extent of the political engagement that the pastors suggested that members in these churches should have.

Keywords: prosperity; theology; South Africa; politics

---

1. Introduction

During the 1980s and early 1990s, churches and other religious organizations in South Africa played a central and critical role in the anti-apartheid struggle. Under the leadership of Nelson Mandela and Thabo Mbeki, there was a strong, decisive drive to shape South Africa as a modern, secular country. When Jacob Gedleyihlekisa Zuma ran for the office of president, however, he styled himself as a Christian leader, ordained by God to lead South Africa "until Jesus comes again." He claimed that everyone who voted for the African National Congress (ANC) would go to heaven. Himself a Pentecostal pastor, Zuma closely aligned himself with Ray McCauley of Rhema Bible Church and other leading Pentecostal pastors during his presidency. In the run-up to the 2014 elections, several Pentecostal churches gave political leaders platforms on which to address their congregations by inviting them to speak at Sunday morning services (Frahm-Arp 2015). In South Africa, as in other parts of Africa like Zimbabwe (Biri 2013), Ghana, and Nigeria, "religions appear to be of prime importance not only on the level of private experience and inner belief but also with regard to the sphere of politics and public affairs, thus thwarting a typically modernist vision of society as differentiated into separate compartments, one of them being religion" (Meyer 2010, p. 115).

Pentecostal churches in the larger Johannesburg region are involved to varying degrees with contemporary politics and civic engagement. Civic engagement here is understood as activities and views that "connect (people) with the life of their community" (Putnam 1995, p. 665). Bayart (1981, pp. 53–82) reminds us that politics is not only performed in traditional, Western-organized political structures but, critically, is also made by ordinary people from below (Bompani 2008; Bompani and Frahm-Arp 2010). The paper shows that there is no uniform approach towards politics and civic engagement in these churches but that the picture is quite varied. This paper argues that, instead of secularization and modernity, we are seeing globalization with the sort of religionization and re-enchantment observed by Droogers (2001) and Meyer (2010, p. 127) in South Africa.

The research is based on 97 Pentecostal churches in the Johannesburg area during late 2015 and 2016. The churches were randomly selected from a database of churches compiled using software that

picked up if a church spoke about Pentecostal themes or presented itself as Pentecostal or Charismatic. The selection includes 19 mainline churches, one Seventh-Day Adventist church, and 77 Pentecostal or Charismatic churches. This study did not include any African Independent Churches as those in the Johannesburg area that we had access to did not consider themselves Pentecostal or Charismatic.[1]

In order to contextualize this discussion, I need to begin by giving an overview of contemporary issues in South Africa and a working framework for what I mean by Pentecostalism and prosperity theology or the prosperity gospel.

1.1. Pentecostalism

Pentecostalism began in different parts of the world (Creech 1996), including the United States (Roll 2004; Synan 1997), Europe (Synan 2012), Africa (Anderson 2005), and Asia (McGee 1999), during the first decade of the twentieth century.[2] There are a number of ways in which we can discuss, define, and classify Pentecostalism. One approach is historiography, which Hollenweger (1997) and Wagner (1999) suggested when they proposed that Pentecostalism falls under broad historical categories like Classical Pentecostals, the Charismatic renewal movement, Pentecostal or "Pentecostal-like" independent churches, and Fourth Wave Pentecostalism. A second approach is to classify Pentecostalism according to perceived characteristics and phenomena, as done by social scientists like Martin (1990, 2002) and Coleman (2000). A third alternative is to study it according to theological themes, doctrines, and ideas (Kärkkäinen 2010; Cartledge 2010). This paper follows a broadly constructionist viewpoint and argues that Pentecostal churches vary greatly and that there are few clear boundaries. As Bergunder (2010, p. 52) has pointed out, Pentecostalism

> exists up to the present without an appropriate theoretical justification. The most serious problem lies in the fact that a broad understanding of Pentecostalism refers neither to a common dogmatic basis nor to a common institutional framework (international umbrella organizations like the Pentecostal World Conference only cover parts of it). Pentecostalism's unity cannot be described in the way traditional church history has dealt with Eastern Orthodoxy, Roman Catholicism, German Lutheranism, and so on.

What we can observe are trends and this paper is particularly interested in the current trends visible among a group of churches in Johannesburg. This approach is echoed by Anderson (2010, p. 13) who talks about Pentecostalism "by using the family resemblance analogy": While members of the family group are not all the same, there are commonalities and similarities between them as they are all in a relationship with one another. Robbins (2004) talks about Pentecostalism as "a far-flung network of people held together by their publications and other media productions, conferences, revival meetings, and constant travel" (ibid., p. 125). Understanding Pentecostalism as a family or network gives us a way to deal with one of its most defining characteristics: its changing and fluid nature. For this study, I include the following as additional key characteristics: theologically, (1) they are open to and engage with experiences of the Holy Spirit, including the prophetic gifts of many of their pastors; (2) they are "born again," in other words, their members have experienced a conversion in which they claim Jesus as their savior, an experience which ensures their access to the community; (3) they see the world as dualist, divided between "good" and "evil," Satan and God, illness and health, a world in which their pastors have the ability to drive out evil (Anderson 2010, p. 21); and (4) they do not see ancestor veneration as an acceptable practice and demand that members break with their African heritage. The churches in this study have all, in various ways, been influenced by Pentecostalism, the Charismatic

---

[1] This stands in contrast to Hollenweger (1997) and Anderson (2004) who both regard AICs as Pentecostal.

[2] Scholars like Hollenweger (1997) have argued that the Pentecostal movement began in Azusa Street, Los Angeles, in 1906 and spread from there, not that it emerged in different parts of world that were not first influenced by the Azusa Street mission. Others, like Grant Wacker (2001) and James Goff (1988), trace Pentecostalism to developments within the radical Holiness movement at the turn of the century.

movement and the Evangelical movement; in this study, I thus refer to them as Pentecostal Charismatic Evangelical (PCE) in order to signal their eclectic and fluid nature.[3] Through these different influences, there are variants amongst the churches in this study. Some churches place a great deal of emphasis on evangelizing people, others on the Bible as the divinely inspired Word of God, and yet others place less emphasis on these themes.

1.2. Prosperity Theology

One of the earliest preachers of the Word of Faith Movement in Africa was David Oyedepo, the founder of Winner's Chapel in Nigeria, who was particularly influenced by Kenneth Hagin and Kenneth and Gloria Copeland. Broadly speaking, prosperity theology in its different forms traces its roots back to Kenneth Hagin's teaching and the Word of Faith Movement. According to Hagin, poverty is the result of sin against God, not tithing regularly or giving adequately, and the failure of individuals to understand and apply the divine laws that would allow them to claim their wealth in God's name. Dominion theologians, such as C. Peter Wagner or Cindy Jacobs, maintain that in order to confess or claim their prosperity through words, people also need to become aware of their specific destiny and calling and, through this, claim their blessings (Maltese 2015, p. 71).

According to Köhrsen (2015, p. 49), prosperity theology offers a teaching that aims to help people improve their quality of life by teaching them various improvement strategies. In South America, these tend to focus on the importance of self-discipline as well as emotional and psychological wellbeing, while in Africa significant emphasis is placed on "breaking with the past" (Köhrsen 2015, p. 49).

The features of prosperity theology in Africa can be broadly outlined as: (1) an attitude of hope in a positive future; (2) an entrepreneurial attitude of "winning ways," which in Africa usually means making a break with the past and the wider claims of extended families and culture; (3) the use of life improvement strategies that might include an ethic of hard work or how to cope with life through "strong prayers"; (4) consistent tithing or employing various means to sow "seed" offerings, thus, giving money to the church (Gifford and Nogueira-Godsey, cited in Drønen 2015, p. 254); and (5) preacher-prophets gifted with special powers to speak against and fight the "spirit of poverty."

Prosperity theology is not static. Maltese (2015), for example, shows how in the 2000s the Word of Faith teaching in the Philippines expanded to include "kingdom theology," the notion that a nation could also claim God's blessings if its leaders and people were morally good and not corrupt. This development firstly implies that God's blessing of prosperity is not limited to individuals and adds a dynamic of sanctification to prosperity theology that was not in Hagin's original teaching. "Sin became a signifier for corruption and structural poverty, while holiness stood for righteous leadership and structures" (Maltese 2015, p. 78). All these developments were ways to explain why the promised blessings preached before the 2000s had not materialized. The new sense of the collective includes the idea of seed money, thus giving money to the church so that it can develop social outreach and development programs and support political leaders running for office (Maltese 2015, p. 73). A very similar process has taken place among the churches in this study, which use the language of "kingdom theology" to maintain that in some way the collective sin of the nation explains the economic hardships

---

[3] Since Pentecostalism began at the turn of the twentieth century, a defining characteristic of the movement has been its changing and fluid nature. The movement was marked by the firm belief that speaking in tongues was the sign that a believer had been baptized by the Holy Spirit and was filled with the Spirit. During the twentieth century, we have seen the rise of the Neo-Evangelical movement, most notably from the 1950s onwards (Ellingsen 1988). This movement, whose most famous representative was Billy Graham, maintained that its teaching was based exclusively on the literal reading of the Bible and held that the central role of a Christian was to bring other people to faith in God. Beginning in the 1960s, the Charismatic movement, primarily in mainline churches, first in America (Walker 1997) and then in other parts of the world, began to gain popularity. This movement differed from the Pentecostal movement because it argued that, once baptized in the Holy Spirit, believers might not speak in tongues but could manifest any of the gifts of the Spirit. In the latter part of the twentieth century, these three movements have significantly influenced each other and the fluid nature of the churches and their theology means that, in South Africa at present, we have a large group of churches that have elements of all three movements. I therefore refer to them as Pentecostal Charismatic Evangelical churches.

in South Africa that have shattered the dreams of equality and prosperity that were at the heart of the "New South Africa."

1.3. South Africa

South Africa has been impacted by many of the same trends that have affected sub-Saharan Africa where, since the first countries gained independence more than fifty years ago, people:

> have been confronted with two major challenges: firstly, the age of globalization with its demands of structural adjustment of national economies to international markets led internally to more social inequality between the newly emerging social class of beneficiaries and the many poor in villages and towns. Not everywhere, but in many countries, mass poverty increased dramatically as a combined result of external factors, bad governance at home, and a fast-growing population confronted with bleak job and income opportunities for the youth. Secondly, the wide-spread failure of undemocratic African governments in building prosperous nations intensified the existing (until then "sleeping") social tensions between different ethnic-regional groups. (Tetzlaff 2015, p. 47)

In 2016, when most of the fieldwork for this study was done, the African National Congress (ANC) under President Zuma was in power. There were violent service delivery protests and the extent of the corruption in the Zuma government was beginning to emerge in the public domain. Zuma was clinging on to power as a growing voice both within the ANC and the country wanted him removed from office. He was finally maneuvered out of office and Cyril Ramaphosa was inaugurated as president in February 2018. During 2016, the country was under threat of being downgraded to "junk status" by Moody's and other ratings agencies. According to Statistics SA, the unemployment rate in November 2016 was at 27.1% and the expanded unemployment figure was 36.2% (this includes people who have stopped looking for employment and those who have occasional employment). Youth unemployment (people between 18 and 35 years of age) was 38.2% of which 60% were young people who do not have a matric certificate (South Africa's school-leaving certificate) (STATSSA http://www.statssa.gov.za/?p=9123). The average South African has learnt not to look towards the ANC government to build the economy and develop the country through industrial productivity, but rather to recognize that South Africa is now a "distributive state" in which an unproductive elite takes what it can for itself and creates very little (Tetzlaff 2015, p. 45). In this space of economic uncertainty and constraint, xenophobia has taken hold since 2008, and "perceptions of national identity are replaced by a discriminatory concept of 'native Africans' that indicates a stranger-citizen dichotomy" (Tetzlaff 2015, p. 33).

Against this socio-economic and political background, this study looks at the relationship between religion, politics, and economics by examining the prosperity theology taught by PCE churches in the Johannesburg region. Data were collected from attending one service, transcribing at least one sermon, and interviewing the pastors of 97 PCE churches. All churches were in the larger Johannesburg area, which included Soweto, Johannesburg South, the East Rand, the West Rand, and Midrand. The social media communication on Twitter and Facebook of the large churches like Rivers, His People (recently renamed Every Nation) Church, and Grace Bible Church were tracked for three months during 2015–2016. Many of the smaller churches did not have active social media platforms. It was found that while all the churches regarded themselves as Christ-centered, attentive to the workings of the Holy Spirit, Bible-based, and focused on converting people to Christianity and then teaching them how to be disciples, the prosperity theology they preached varied.

Three types of prosperity theology emerged from this study: "abilities prosperity," "progress prosperity," and "miracle prosperity." Abilities prosperity focuses on getting believers to exercize and develop their own abilities. The belief is that anyone can achieve anything when they align themselves with God's principles, claim God's blessings, give generously to the church, and work hard. Progress prosperity centers on shifting people's attitudes and emphasizes the idea that prosperity

means progress. Members are encouraged to see any small success, such as getting a new client for their business or passing an exam, as progress and, therefore, a sign of prosperity. Prosperity is achieved through faith and righteous living and includes social outreach programs to develop and uplift others in the community. Miracle prosperity, in turn, embraces the belief that spiritual growth determines material wealth and that people achieve material wealth through victory in spiritual battles of prayer, driving out demons, and making personal sacrifices. This form of prosperity theology often, but not always, includes "positive confession" or "naming and claiming" practices.

When asked whether politics was discussed or engaged with in their churches, most pastors answered in the negative. Yet when asked whether they had encouraged their congregation to vote in the 2014 presidential and 2015 municipal elections, 96% of pastors answered in the affirmative. In this study, 27% of churches gave political parties a platform to address their congregations in the run-up to both elections, but fewer than 10% made suggestions to their congregations of which party people should vote for. It was in the area of prayer and civic engagement that churches showed the most consistent engagement with a wider political agenda, and this was not always directly linked to voting at elections. It is through their prayers that the political rhetoric of the different churches is shaped and expressed. Most of the churches placed a great deal of emphasis on offering prayers for the country that addressed corruption in government, the lack of service delivery, and high unemployment. In many churches, some form of weekly prayers, whether in services or at prayer meetings, were said for the political situation in the country.

The major themes in these prayers were that the current government (in this case that of 2016) was corrupt, but that people should pray for their leaders to change their ways rather than take up arms and revolt. In only a few cases did churches encourage their members to protest against the government, a stance taken mostly by churches from the mainline tradition. A dominant theme in many churches was that Christians should be in positions of leadership in the country in order to promote the moral regeneration of the country and its leadership. These churches maintained that a good Christian is also an active and engaged citizen who works to improve his or her country through engagement with civil society or groups involved in social care. Most churches preached that the real emotional and material regeneration of South Africa would only begin when the family structure was repaired in society. All the churches preached some version of the message that the crisis in government experienced in 2016 was due to the sins of the past and/or the work of the devil.

The move by PCE churches towards greater civic engagement and political involvement is not unique to twenty-first century South Africa. M'fundisi (2016, p. 195) points out changes in the PCE focus in Zambia, for example. Where converting people and helping them to live holy lives in preparation for the Second Coming of Christ used to be their focus, they now focus increasingly on social and civic engagement, with most churches involved in one or more social care projects. For example, Bishop Eddie Mulenga, a prominent PCE leader, argues:

> We the Pentecostals are trying to rise up to be relevant and, yes, there is a shift, and this is why people are rising up to build schools, orphanages, and hospitals and engaging in politics. (M'fundisi 2016, p. 197)

Similar trends have been noted in Zimbabwe, in particular by the Prophetic Healing and Deliverance (PHD), Ministries, Zimbabwean Assemblies of God Africa (ZAOGA), and United International Family church (UIF), (Chitando et al. 2016). However, in South Africa, very few PCE churches have begun to build schools or orphanages, and none have yet built hospitals or universities as is the case in Zimbabwe (Shoko and Chiwara 2013) and Nigeria (Magbadelo 2004).

The aim of this paper is not to determine the material impact that the political rhetoric of PCE churches is having on South Africa. Rather, it is to show that politics is widely and varyingly engaged with by the 97 churches in this study and to unpack the relationship between their political rhetoric and their theology, in particular their prosperity theology, which is a key message of the churches in this study. To do this, the paper works with the framework suggested by Droogers (1995, p. 665;

2003), who argued that there are three dimensions informing how faith and the social/civic engage and interact with one another: the sacred/transcendental dimension, the internal dimension, and the external dimension. This study uses this anthropological model to examine the intersectionality of these dimensions and how they influence, and are influenced by, each other. The different forms of prosperity theology (the sacred/transcendental dimension) influence the internal dimensions (leadership and organization) of the church to engage with external dimensions (political engagement, social care projects, and civic involvement) which in turn may affect the theology, and so the circle continues as practitioners engage with their faith and society. The work of Maltese (2015) and Bergunder (2010) shows that the relationship between culture, society, politics, and religion is not as neat as Droogers at first claimed. In this paper, then, I am not suggesting that there is a neat linear relationship between the three dimensions that Droogers identified, but I continue to use this framework because it allows us, for the sake of analysis, to separate out these three dimensions and unpack them, while acknowledging that in reality they are not clearly differentiated from each other but are rather intertwined in multiple ways.

2. Methodology

The 97 PCE churches in the wider Johannesburg area that form the basis of this study spoke of themselves as being either Pentecostal or Charismatic, and had a strong evangelical focus on growing their churches. The churches ranged from a small congregation of about 50 people meeting in a rented space with a pastor who held other jobs to support himself financially, to huge megachurches, like Rivers and Grace Bible Church, with congregations of over 40,000 people, elaborate church campuses, and a well-paid clerical staff. Some of the churches were in informal settlements (shantytowns) while others were in the most financially exclusive suburbs of Johannesburg. At each church, one of the senior pastors was interviewed by one of the seven researchers working on the project. Each pastor was asked the same set of structured, open-ended questions. The questions focused on the composition of the parish, the main theology of the church, the relationship that pastors thought there might be between material wealth and spirituality, the social outreach of the church, and what role they thought politics should or did play in the lives of their congregants. The focus of this study was on pastors because we wanted to hear their views. Many studies focus on the lived experience of the members, but this study focused on the teaching of the pastors. We verified their teaching by triangulating or comparing what they said in interviews with the message they gave in sermons and in the whole way in which they conducted services, including the messages in the prayers and songs.

In the data set of the 97 churches, 28% pursued a mainly miracle type of prosperity gospel, 39% progress prosperity, and 33% abilities prosperity. Progress prosperity and abilities prosperity churches attracted members from a range of economic backgrounds, spanning from people who were living on the street to people in the top one percent of South Africa's earners. The miracle churches were predominantly located in poorer areas and attracted members from their surrounding community, and, thus, did not include any high earners. All the mainline churches fell into the progress prosperity category.

The project began in November 2015 and continued until October 2016. Researchers observed one service in each church, and one or more sermons from each church were either recorded by a researcher during a church service or downloaded from the church website. Using ATLAS.ti, all the transcribed interviews, notes from the services attended, and the transcribed sermons were subjected to content analysis. Five of the researchers in the project were honors students who were paid to conduct the interviews and attend services, and the two lead researchers were faculty members, one at the University of Johannesburg and the other at Harvard University.

At the beginning of the project, the honors students were given extensive training on qualitative interviewing skills. Every two weeks, the students met with the lead researchers in the offices of the Johannesburg research team leader while the USA-based researcher joined the conversation via Skype. All the student researchers were South African. One of the research leaders was American

while the other was South African. Four of the student researchers were young black women while one was a white male. The two research leaders were white women. A key obstacle in conducting this research was getting access to the pastors. Many of the churches were initially unwilling to meet with researchers. This was, at least in part, because, during the period in question, the Commission for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Cultural, Religious and Linguistic Communities (CRL) was in the process of investigating independent churches due to the high levels of abuse reported in some PCE churches in South Africa, and many pastors believed that our researchers were part of this commission. In this paper, the identities of the pastors are protected by not giving any of the pastors' names and only referring by name to the churches. This was the only way in which pastors were willing to be interviewed and, therefore, some of the standard practices of referencing interview material have been excluded. Researcher bias was mitigated to some extent by the fact that seven different researchers worked on the project and interviewed pastors using the same structured, open-ended research questions. All data analysis for this paper was done by one of the lead researchers.

3. Three Clusters of Prosperity Theology

This paper shows that, in the mid-2010s, different forms of prosperity theology were preached at the 97 churches in this study. In analyzing the data from the churches, three clusters—churches with similar ideas, practices, and characteristics—began to emerge, while several churches emerged as hybrids between clusters. The clusters themselves are not thought of as static and discreet but rather as located on a fluid continuum. Although other criteria could certainly be used to identify patterns and establish clusters, prosperity theology stood out because of its salience as a highly publicized marker of identity in South Africa during the early and mid-2010s. Most churches in all three clusters employ the positive confession—sometimes dubbed "name it and claim it"—mindset and rhetoric of the Word of Faith Movement. Identifying these clusters is important, however, because they allow us to see the nuances of difference among churches. The clusters bring to the fore the fact that neither the PCE churches nor the prosperity theologies they preach are uniform.

According to the anthropological framework suggested by Droogers (1995, p. 665), as noted above, religions play themselves out on three different levels that interact with and influence each other, namely the sacred/transcendental dimension, the internal dimension, and the external dimension. This paper understands the transcendental dimension not in terms of the experiences people might have of the transcendental but in terms of how they speak about or understand the sacred. In the case of the churches studied here, this refers to the theology these churches have established and work with. Droogers' (1995, 2003) internal dimension refers to the way people's understanding of the divine shapes how they think about themselves and structure their churches. Finally, the external dimension focuses on what they actually do in the world outside the church. The internal and external dimensions, in turn, shape theology and the experience of the divine. Based on this framework, I argue that the theology of a congregation shapes how its members live out their lives, and this means that it shapes their civic engagement. The next section outlines the three different forms of prosperity theology and the internal dimensions of each different type, such as the structures or programs created by these churches. The final section of the paper then shows how the theology of these churches shapes their political and civic engagement.

3.1. Abilities Prosperity

Abilities prosperity is based on the idea that if Christians live according to biblical principles and work hard, then they will succeed in whatever they choose to do. Of the three categories, it is the type of prosperity gospel most influenced by dominion theologians such as C. Peter Wagner or Cindy Jacobs, and it continuously encourages people to find God's purpose for their lives and claim their blessings. Glory Divine Ministries is typical of this type of church. It was started in 2001 with approximately 800 members in a poor community on the East Rand of Johannesburg, and the pastor runs his own business because the community is too poor to pay him. "Jesus became poor so that

people could become rich" was a recurring theme in his interview and his sermons. Yet these riches, he argued, are only realized when people go out and use their abilities. This message is echoed by Corner Stone Church, located in a lower-middle-class area with a congregation of just over 500 people that is able to fully support its pastor. Another church to preach this theology is the Rivers megachurch in the affluent Johannesburg suburb of Sandton. Here the pastor talks about "creative wisdom for wealth creation." In the sermon from November 2015 recorded for this study, he preached that real wisdom comes from God: if believers align themselves to the teaching and wisdom of God, then they will realize the creative wisdom they need to create wealth. A key slogan of his is that people should go from "being employees to employers and from servants to masters."

When believers do not enjoy the wealth they were hoping for, abilities prosperity theology explains this in terms of their unrepentant sins that hold them back from realizing God's blessings. If people would just come to God and ask for forgiveness for all that they have done wrong, then their lives would be blessed. The agent of each person's success is the person him- or herself. Individuals have to repent, they have to believe, and they have to live according to God's word. In this theology, the devil plays a less central role than in miracle prosperity theology, which, as we will see, understands misfortune as the work of the devil, witchcraft, and the ancestors. Satan is not entirely absent amongst abilities churches, but there is some variance as to the emphasis placed on Satan and the need to exorcize malevolent forces from the lives of believers. An example of an abilities prosperity church is the Nigerian Winner's Chapel, whose leader Oyedepo states that poverty is an individual's own fault: "poverty is a proof of unrighteousness! . . . (it) is a curse and is self-made" (Gifford 2015, p. 87). Gifford posits that "Oyedepo's theology is not 'enchanted' or concerned with combatting the myriad evil forces threatening us—as are some of his mega-rivals in Lagos, churches like the Synagogue Church of All Nations of the Prophet T.B. Joshua, or Daniel Olukoya's Mountain of Fire and Miracles Ministry" (Gifford 2015, p. 97). However, a few relatively new churches in Johannesburg that have leaders who are referred to as "prophets"—because of their extraordinary spiritual abilities to heal and bless people, unlocking their potential to prosper—are beginning to place significant emphasis on the devil and the power of evil, and are something of a hybrid between abilities and miracle prosperity.

With a theology primarily focused on the individual and personal ability, abilities prosperity churches place a lot of emphasis on helping people to develop themselves. They run business training programs, skills development courses, and conferences to help people get in touch with themselves and their own desires and come up with effective plans for implementing these dreams so they can become more successful and prosperous. They believe that the primary resource of the church is its people, and that the more energy the church puts into developing its members, the more the church will flourish. These types of churches place comparatively little emphasis on developing civil support programs such as schools or soup kitchens. Their primary focus is not giving handouts but, as they see it, "equipping people" so that they can realize their abilities. These churches also place less emphasis on home cell groups, Bible study groups, or programs that foster a sense of community and belonging amongst members than churches that espouse progress theology, the second type of prosperity theology.

3.2. Progress Prosperity

While abilities prosperity is primarily focused on the individual, progress prosperity theology is concerned with the community. Progress prosperity churches in the Johannesburg region did name and claim wealth but often downplayed this practice. All the mainline churches fell into this category. This theology holds that any small blessing or step of progress is a form of prosperity. A key message in PCE churches of this type is that people need to change their attitudes so that they can see things as they truly are. In other words, people often do not *see* the prosperity in their lives because their understanding of prosperity is wrong. In this theology, "prosperity" means any form of progress in the life of a believer.

Cosmo City Church, founded in 1999, is located in Cosmo City, a new suburb of low-income housing in the northern outskirts of Johannesburg, and has a congregation of 450 members made up largely of working class or unemployed young adults. For the pastor, the problem with people is that they want "big" material blessings but do not recognize that these only come through a relationship with God. When people are in this relationship with God, then they begin to see all the ways in which God is blessing them. As the pastor explained, "God changes their [members'] views." Part of changing one's attitude is, according to the pastor, for people to realize that blessings come through a relationship with God in which people must work hard and live with integrity, and then God will bless their efforts. This is very similar to the Karambiri practices of Pentecostalism in Burkina Faso where pastors tell people to "work and have integrity and God will reward your efforts with worldly wealth" (Langewiesche 2015, p. 189).

The pastor from First Light Revival further elaborated on this idea. His small church, located in Braamfontein in the inner city of Johannesburg, was founded in 2003 and has about 70 members from all over Africa, of whom only 15% tithe regularly. According to him:

> If I have two people in my congregation, one is running a hair salon and another is having his own law firm. They both pray to God for prosperity. And both people receive two new clients in a day. They are going to be equally blessed—they both progressed and got new clients, but they will not be equally prosperous because, um, the one [type of work] pays much better than the other. But they are equally blessed.

The role of attitude or perspective in a believer's prosperity is also stressed by the head pastor of Banner of Truth church on the East Rand, founded in 1997 with a congregation of about 350 members. According to him, "spiritual maturity has nothing to do with material wealth," and people need to shift their focus away from wealth onto their relationship with God. The pastor at Full Gospel Church in Alexandra, a township in the northern part of Johannesburg, also emphasized that people need to change their attitude. For him, the central theme of the gospel is that people can change their thinking in Jesus. Consequently, his sermons (we transcribed three for this research) frequently addressed the theme of limitations that come from incorrect thoughts, which in turn are often connected to unhealthy influences, human and otherwise. He explained that people hold themselves back by listening to the wrong voices around them, such as their friends, media, or parents: "people limit themselves by doubting themselves and, most of all, Satan hinders us and people need to pray against his powers." While the work of Satan is generally not a significant focus of this cluster of churches, the Full Gospel Church is an example of a hybrid between progress and miracle prosperity.

Of the three categories, progress prosperity places the least amount of emphasis on material gain in the lives of believers and the most on the importance of social concern projects and helping people who are in need. These social concern projects include providing material help such as clothes and food to the destitute, but also engaging in a vast array of programs stretching from how to parent children effectively to how to run one's own business. The internal structure of these churches is geared to developing community. Most of these churches have home cell groups or Bible study groups that form a central pillar of the churches' organization and constitute settings where people develop a sense of community and come to feel part of a "family." These churches tend to set up orphanages, aftercare centers, soup kitchens, and even schools. They believe that it is the role of the Christian to offer practical help to those in society who are less fortunate and that Christians need to be aware of the needs of their community and work towards alleviating these. The money to do all these projects comes from the tithes and other offerings that members give. An important part of the teaching of these churches is that people should tithe responsibly, which means giving 10% of one's income to God but not giving beyond reason or ability. This stands in contrast to the other two clusters, where giving and "giving generously" is taken to such an extreme that it is sometimes to the detriment of a believer's own well-being (see van Wyk 2014; van de Kamp 2016).

Not only do progress prosperity churches engage with the community, but—like abilities theology—they also promote an entrepreneurial mindset or spirit. As Daniels (2015, p. 265) has

noted in other parts of Africa, various versions of the prosperity gospel "offer business education as an essential element within the reframing of this revised Prosperity Gospel. When entrepreneurship emerges with the prosperity doctrine, a pragmatic form of Prosperity Gospel (emerges) which stresses personal responsibility for learning business skills requisite for 'realizing' prosperity, blending of business and biblical knowledge, and an educational apparatus to disseminate a prosperity doctrine oriented business education" (Daniels 2015, p. 265). David Martin (2002) argued that PCE churches could be a raft that will bring Africa into the modern age both economically and politically, and this form of prosperity theology is the most likely to do so.

3.3. Miracle Prosperity

While abilities prosperity and progress prosperity place a great deal of emphasis on developing the individual, they place comparatively less emphasis on deliverance or miracles. Miracle prosperity, on the other hand, is primarily concerned with explaining the way the world is and how prosperity can be achieved through miracles. Here there are three subgroups defined by their core claims: (1) miraculous wealth and health happen through applying God's laws of faith—the "classic" "Faith Gospel" (Gifford 2004); (2) miraculous wealth and health come about when the devil is vanquished so that, following this, God can perform miracles; and (3) a merging of the two ideas in which miracles only happen when people have sufficient faith and, through their faith and the power of the prophet, evil is exorcized from their lives. They claim that when these things do not materialize, it is the fault of Satan or a person's sin. Some but by no means all of these churches have a positive confession theology that works together with their deliverance theology. Wealth in these churches is achieved not through hard work and a strict moral code—as is preached to varying degrees by the other two clusters—but rather through God's desire to bless people with miraculous wealth, either through their own faith or by vanquishing the spiritual powers of evil that continually want to thwart God's miracles.

This sentiment is well captured by the young pastor of Christ the Word church in Soweto, who said, "It would give me a problem if a mature spiritual person is not able to gather wealth." This church was started in 2009 and currently has about 100 members. The pastor, a young man in his early thirties, gave up a career in graphic design to pastor full time. Yet he concedes that he has not been able to gain what he calls a "good income" from his church, where only about 20 people tithe regularly. He assured the interviewer, however, that this would be changing because as the congregation grew in spiritual maturity it would also grow in material wealth. The focus of his ministry is on "equipping the saints in the spiritual gifts," which he considers a more effective means to gaining wealth than trying to help people find jobs, improve existing skills, or learn new ones. In the current context of high unemployment among young South Africans, despite having valid school-leaving certificates and even tertiary education, the "old ways" of hard work and education seem to fail them. If they want to get a job, they believe it will require a miracle in a situation where everyone else around them has the same qualifications, lacks work experience and struggles to find a job; they are no different from the millions of their peers also hoping to find employment. In this context, a teaching that explains that their joblessness is the work of the devil, who is holding back the miracles and blessings God wants to give his people, makes a lot of sense. Praying against the devil is something that they can actively do to try to improve their life chances, and it gives them a sense of agency.

In this form of prosperity theology, wealth is won in a spiritual battle, and in order to win this battle, "strong prayers" (van Wyk 2014) are needed. The people with the most power to do this are the prophet-pastors of miracle prosperity churches like City Life Church. City Life Church started in 2000, is located in the inner city of Johannesburg and has a membership of about 800 people. According to the head pastor, people's spiritual maturity is evidenced in their material prosperity. In their services, the pastor spent a significant amount of time praying with people to drive out the evil from their lives. In a similar vein, the Apostolic Faith and Acts Church, which began in 1936 and now operates in a poor part of Soweto, also dedicated much of its service to "deliverance," prayers that evil spirits might be banished and the hold of witchcraft released from the lives of members. One of the largest

churches to teach this message is the Universal Church of the Kingdom of God (UCKG). While the UCKG pastors in the Johannesburg city center were not willing to be interviewed for our project, they allowed one of our researchers to attend their services. As in the work of van Wyk (2014) and van de Kamp (2016), we found that this theology emphasizes that wealth is within the grasp of every person. All that members have to do is to believe and make significant personal sacrifices, usually in the form of contributions of money, so that the pastors can pray "strong prayers" over them to drive out the evil spirits and ancestors who are preventing them from realizing the wealth that God has promised them. This theology is focused on breaking the bonds of the devil and ancestors. Many of these churches are led by pastors who are referred to as prophets because they are seen as having great spiritual powers to heal people and make them wealthy, largely through their ability to drive out demons. Examples of such churches in South Africa more widely would include Rabboni Church and the Church of the Seven Angels. Very often the prophets who lead these churches like to use dramatic spiritual tools like telling people to eat grass or spraying them with Doom (a South African insect repellent) as a way to exorcize Satan. While much time is spent fighting the devil in these churches in order to "claim God's miracles" (City Life Church service), implicit in the teaching of this form of prosperity—as with the other two—is the requirement that people have converted to Christianity and believe in God.

The miracle theology also impacts on the internal structure or dimension of these churches: they do not offer any programs to upskill members through education and skills development, but rather offer prayer services, often several times a day (as for example at UCKG churches) at which people can drive out evil and become blessed. These churches do not have social outreach or social care programs, such as schools, soup kitchens, or homeless shelters. Furthermore, none of these churches had home cell groups or Bible study groups and developing a caring Christian community was not a prominent emphasis in their theology. While the Bible was referred to as the Word of God, this was often only done fleetingly in the sermons. This stands in stark contrast to the progress prosperity churches where biblical teaching was often the most important component of their services and where learning "The Word" was seen to be an essential part of a Christian's development; this usually took place in a Bible study or home cell group.

Based on this outline of the theology of the PCE churches in Johannesburg and their internal dimensions, I turn, in the final section, to examine the external dimension of these churches, in other words, their political and civic engagement. For the purpose of a clear argument here, I am discussing the external dimension of these churches in a sequential manner following my review of their transcendental and internal dimensions. Herewith, I am not suggesting that there is a neat linear development from the transcendental dimension to the internal and then, finally, to the external dimension; rather, I wish to propose that these three dimensions continually influence, inform, and even (re)shape each other.

4. Political and Civic Engagement

There appear to be two key differences between miracle prosperity and progress or abilities prosperity. Miracle prosperity places a central focus on the work of evil spirits and the need for pastors to drive these out of the lives of their members through prayers. These prayers are made more powerful when people demonstrate their faith by donating large sums of money to the church. The same theology of evil shapes their view of politics. The pastor from Glory Divine Ministries argues that Christians must fight the forces of evil that corrupt their government by praying for the government, but people should not get involved in political meetings or activities.

Churches in this study that preached a form of miracle prosperity all said that they did not get involved in politics. Scholars such as Robbins (2004) and Gifford (2004) have been critical of the political impact of PCE churches. Robbins (2004) argues that they actually undermine good governance and democracy while Gifford (2004, p. 190) suggests that they create a worldview that is "hardly the kind of mentality that will help us [Ghana] as a society to participate fully in the modern world of democracy and capitalism." These findings resonate with the miracle form of prosperity theology.

One of the pastors at Apostolic Faith and Acts Church said that "people only teach the Word of God—people don't do political things here." These churches did, however, claim that it was the role of the Christian to pray against the hold that the devil has on government and the witchcraft that makes some people wealthy while leaving so many unemployed. These churches did not encourage any political dialog amongst members nor did they have specific prayer sessions focused on politics. Any prayers for the government, peace, and an end to corruption usually took place in the contexts of their more general prayers for people's prosperity. Similar trends have been identified in Zambia, Zimbabwe, and Mozambique, where the poor economy is "blamed on the works of the devil, rather than on the poor performance of government officials and widespread corruption" (M'fundisi 2016, p. 198). These churches do not encourage members to become active in civic groups or political issues. For them, this would be a waste of time and could open Christians up to attacks from the devil. The lack of prosperity in South Africa is for them a sure sign of spiritual attack and the power of the devil. The most effective thing to do, therefore, is to pray that everyone in the country becomes a born-again Christian and to exorcize the demons of corruption and poverty that hold the country hostage. Quite often, this is done through a confessing theology of "naming it and claiming it."

In contrast, the theology of abilities prosperity and progress prosperity places much more emphasis on people acknowledging their own sinfulness than on praying against the work of the devil. These types of churches also focus much more on how good Christians need to be good citizens. In their view, this means that people need to inform themselves about current political events.

Pastors who maintained a progress prosperity theology believed that ordinary citizens would not be able to enjoy progress in their lives if the country continued to be a corrupt and violent place. The pastor at El Shaddai Restoration church said that "when people have peace, then you can think and study, you can ... focus on ... business and succeed." All the churches in this group said that they told their members that it was their Christian duty to vote. They all held special prayer services leading up to the elections, praying for the country and the leaders to be elected, but did not publically specify which leaders their members should vote for. Almost a third of them also invited political leaders to address their congregations during Sunday services in the lead up to the 2014 elections. During 2016, when there was no election taking place in South Africa, many of these churches continued to hold regular prayer sessions for the government, the #FeesMustFall movement,[4] and better provision of basic public services. Pastors from churches such as God First and His People/Every Nation Church spoke about it being the church's duty to "engage in politics and social issues, because you know the Gospel applies to every area of life" (God First). Progress prosperity resonates with the findings of authors such as Corten and Marshall-Fratani (2001) and (Marshall 1995, p. 240), who have shown how leaders in PCE churches have become much more involved in politics in Africa, often becoming political figures themselves.

It is in the prayers of these progress prosperity churches that their political rhetoric and agenda comes to the fore. They refer to the current government as corrupt, and to violence as being endemic in the country. According to them, South Africa was being poorly managed in 2016 with a problematic delivery of municipal services such as rubbish removal and running water. At the same time, they also maintained that the president must be obeyed, the office of the president respected, and the rule of law upheld, thereby indicating that violent protests were to be shunned. In their view, South Africa is a great country, blessed by God and ordained by God for greatness, but Christians have to pray and work to bring this about.

Many of these progress prosperity churches were involved in various social media debates about civic issues like the #FeesMustFall campaign. With respect to the latter, churches like His People/Every Nation Church were actively involved, calling members of the church community to assemble at the

[4] Between 2015 and 2017, there were a number of demonstrations and protests at tertiary education institutions in which the students called for free tertiary education for all South Africans.

gates of several universities to pray for an end to high student fees. These churches also think that it is the duty of the Christian citizen to become politically informed, and many of them either gave political leaders a platform to speak to their congregations or encouraged social media discussion groups about contemporary politics. Overall, these churches were driving a particular political message that claimed that the country was in economic and political crisis due to its leaders and citizens having sinned both now and historically. According to them, it is the role of good Christian citizens to pray for forgiveness and commit themselves to living according to the strict moral code laid down by God and adhered to by members of these churches. This was a very different message from that of the miracle churches, who maintained that the corruption and mismanagement that were so rife in South Africa were the work of the devil and that the primary obligation of Christians was to wage spiritual war against the devil, not to become activists for secular political reform.

While all three of these clusters called for their members to be good citizens, progress and abilities prosperity churches, which otherwise appear quite similar, showed two marked differences that stemmed from their theology. While the progress prosperity churches all maintained that Christians should partner with civil society and state organizations to work towards improving South Africa and push the government to deliver what they "should" to citizens, the abilities prosperity leaders urged their members "not to be dependent on government" and to create their own success. As a result, they were critical of the social grants system that they blame for developing a culture of dependency on government. Abilities prosperity was far less involved in politics, and very few of these churches offered political leaders any form of physical or virtual platform. None were particularly engaged with civic issues like #FeesMustFall. There seemed to be a feeling that, if people are equipped to embrace their abilities, then they will prosper, regardless of the political climate.

5. Conclusions

M'fundisi (2016, p. 194), writing about Pentecostalism in Southern Africa, observes that Pentecostalism "is not only about the relationship between humankind and the transcendent, but also about how the experiences of humankind's altruistic behaviours shape their understanding of God." This relationship between how people interact with each other and the social world and their understanding of God has been the focus of this paper. Analyzing the particular message of prosperity theology preached in 97 PCE churches in the Johannesburg area has shown that they fall into three broad clusters. The best way to visualize the argument is to see the different churches as part of a scatter-graph, which is how we plotted them according to recurring themes. What emerges are three clusters around common characteristics or features. In this paper, I have labeled the clusters abilities prosperity, progress prosperity, and miracle prosperity, but these are by no means neat typologies and many churches were a hybrid with elements from different clusters. The idea of the clusters emerged from the research as we observed common trends in various churches. One of the key reasons for highlighting the clusters is that a correlation between forms of theology preached and the political engagement of these churches emerged; it therefore became meaningful to discuss these findings in terms of the different clusters. Both miracles prosperity and abilities prosperity churches are very focused on the individual, albeit in very different ways, while progress prosperity is more concerned with community; this distinction has a great impact on how they view politics and political engagement. Progress prosperity is the most focused on political engagement while the other two clusters generally showed little sustained engagement with political concerns. If political engagement had not been the key focus of this study, the clusters might well have been quite different, highlighting the tenuous and largely untested nature of these clusters. More work will have to be done to see whether these clusters remain applicable if the focus is shifted to other practices and belief structures, such as those related to healing.

As has become clear in this paper, the different prosperity theologies share many of the same elements, including an emphasis on conversion and spiritual gifts, faith in God's desire to bless his followers with wealth and health, and some form of life improvement strategies. In some of

the churches in this study, these life improvement strategies were primarily focused on spiritual empowerment while others focused mainly on practical skills development. Most of the churches in the study had some form of positive confession theology. While all believed in the power of the devil, miracles prosperity preached the most overt form of deliverance theology, a message that dominated their practices and worldview in ways that did not apply in the other two clusters.

All three clusters preached the centrality of tithing and giving generously, one of the key components of Word of Faith teaching. While progress prosperity churches had a measured approach to tithing—saying that people should give generously and abundantly to God while not putting themselves into financial danger in the process—abilities and miracle prosperity churches maintained that excess giving was one of the most effective ways of proving personal faith and thereby winning God's favor and blessings.

This paper has focused on the voice of the pastors and what they think and teach, and has not engaged with ordinary members of the congregation. At the beginning, I outlined the different kinds of socio-economic groups that the different clusters primarily attract, but I have not developed this line of thinking because the focus of the study has been on what pastors, not congregants, thought. The next step in this larger project will be to interview members from the different congregations to engage with questions like do people make decisions about joining a church based on their socio-economic status or their theology? Do people join churches primarily because they offer them solutions to life's challenges or for other reasons? How does the political and prosperity teaching of the pastors in these different churches resonate with their congregants?

This paper has used Droogers' concept that religions work along various dimensions, the transcendental, the internal, and the external. These dimensions should be understood as influencing each other and as interrelated, and although they have been oversimplified and dealt with as neat categories for the purposes of this paper, I do not mean to suggest that there is a strict flow in reality from theology to internal to external political practices; I only wish to suggest that, in order to unpack these influences, it is easiest to speak of them in terms of a sequential flow. In the scope of this study, it is impossible to unpack where or how the influence begins and ends. I have chosen to begin with the theology of these churches because, in much of the social sciences literature on their politics, the theological dimension is underdeveloped. An interesting follow-on study would be to explore how the relatively new political engagement of these churches is affecting or changing their theology, particularly in the case of progress prosperity churches, which are the most overtly engaged politically.

Conflicts of Interest: The author declares that there is no conflict of interest.

References

Anderson, Allan. 2010. Varieties, Taxonomies, and Definitions. In *Studying Global Pentecostalism: Theories and Methods*. Edited by Allan Anderson, Michael Bergunder, André Droogers and Cornelis van der Laan. Berkeley: University of California Press, pp. 13–29.

Anderson, Allan. 2004. *An Introduction to Pentecostalism: Global Charismatic Christianity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Anderson, Allan. 2005. The Origins of Pentecostalism and its Global Spread in the Early Twentieth Century. *Transformation* 22: 175–85. [CrossRef]

Bayart, Jean-Francois. 1981. Le politique par le bas en Afrique noire: Questions de méthode. *Politique africaine* 1: 53–82.

Bergunder, Michael. 2010. The Cultural Turn. In *Studying Global Pentecostalism: Theories and Methods*. Edited by Allan Anderson, Michael Bergunder, André Droogers and Cornelis van der Laan. Berkeley: University of California Press, pp. 51–73.

Biri, Kudzai. 2013. African Pentecostalism and Politics in Post-Colonial Zimbabwe: A Comparative Critique of the Leadership Styles of Ezekiel Guti and Robert Mugabe. In *Prayers and Players: Religion and Politics in Zimbabwe*. Edited by E. Chitando. Harare: SAPES Books, pp. 111–24.

Bompani, Barbara, and Maria Frahm-Arp. 2010. *Development and Politics from Below: Exploring Religious Spaces in the African State*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Bompani, Barbara. 2008. African Independent Churches in Post-Apartheid South Africa: New Political Interpretations. *Journal of Southern African Studies* 34: 665–77. [CrossRef]

Cartledge, Mark. 2010. Practical Theology. In *Studying Global Pentecostalism: Theories and Methods*. Edited by Allan Anderson, Michael Bergunder, André Droogers and Cornelis van der Laan. Berkeley: University of California Press, pp. 268–85.

Chitando, Ezra, Munyaradzi Nyakudya, and Government Phiri. 2016. *Resilience under Siege: The Zimbabwean Economy, Politics and Society*. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

Coleman, Simon. 2000. *The Globalisation of Charismatic Christianity: Spreading the Gospel of Prosperity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Corten, André, and Ruth Marshall-Fratani. 2001. *Between Babel and Pentecost: Transnational Pentecostalism in Africa and Latin America*. Indianapolis: Indiana University Press.

Creech, Joe. 1996. Visions of Glory: The Place of the Azusa Street Revival in Pentecostal History. *Church History* 65: 405–24. [CrossRef]

Daniels, David. 2015. Prosperity Gospel of Entrepreneurship in Africa and Black America: A Pragmatist Christian Innovation. In *Pastures of Plenty: Tracing Religio-Scapes of Prosperity Gospel in Africa and Beyond*. Edited by Andreas Heuser. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, pp. 265–78.

Drønen, Tomas Sundnes. 2015. "Now I Dress Well. Now I Work Hard"—Pentecostalism, Prosperity, and Economic Development in Cameroon. In *Pastures of Plenty: Tracing Religio-Scapes of Prosperity Gospel in Africa and Beyond*. Edited by Andreas Heuser. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, pp. 248–63.

Droogers, A. 1995. *Identity, religious pluralism and ritual in Brazil. Pluralism and Identity: Studies in Ritual Behaviour*. Leiden, New York, Köln: EJ Brill.

Droogers, André. 2001. Globalisation and Pentecostal Success. In *Between Babel and Pentecost: Transnational Pentecostalism in Africa and Latin America*. Edited by André Corten and Ruth Marshall-Fratani. Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, pp. 41–61.

Droogers, André. 2003. The Power Dimensions of the Christian Community: An Anthropological Model. *Religion* 33: 263–80. [CrossRef]

Ellingsen, Mark. 1988. *The Evangelical Movement: Growth, Impact, Controversy, Dialog*. Minneapolis: Augsburg.

Frahm-Arp, Maria. 2015. The Political Rhetoric in Sermons and Select Social Media in Three Pentecostal Charismatic Evangelical Churches Leading up to the 2014 South African Election. *Journal for the Study of Religion* 28: 115–41.

Gifford, Paul. 2004. *Ghana's New Christianity: Pentecostalism in a Globalizing African Economy*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Gifford, Paul. 2015. The Prosperity Theology of David Oyedepo, Founder of Winners' Chapel. In *Pastures of Plenty: Tracing Religio-Scapes of Prosperity Gospel in Africa and Beyond*. Edited by Andreas Heuser. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, pp. 83–100.

Goff, James. 1988. *Fields White unto Harvest: Charles F. Parham and the Missionary Origins of Pentecostalism*. Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press.

Hollenweger, Walter. 1997. *Pentecostalism: Origins and Developments Worldwide*. Peabody: Hendrickson Publications.

Kärkkäinen, Veli-Matti. 2010. Pneumatologies in Systematic Theology. In *Studying Global Pentecostalism: Theories and Methods*. Edited by Allan Anderson, Michael Bergunder, André Droogers and Cornelis van der Laan. Berkeley: University of California Press, pp. 223–44.

Köhrsen, Jens. 2015. Pentecostal Improvement Strategies: A Comparative Reading on African and South American Pentecostalism. In *Pastures of Plenty: Tracing Religio-Scapes of Prosperity Gospel in Africa and Beyond*. Edited by Andreas Heuser. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, pp. 49–64.

Langewiesche, Katrin. 2015. The Ethics of Wealth and Religious Pluralism in Burkina Faso: How Prosperity Gospel is Influencing the Current Religious Field in Africa. In *Pastures of Plenty: Tracing Religio-Scapes of Prosperity Gospel in Africa and Beyond*. Edited by Andreas Heuser. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, pp. 183–202.

M'fundisi, Naar. 2016. Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity in Zambia: Historical and Theological Developments and Civic Engagement. In *Global Renewal Christianity: Spirit-Empowered Movements Past, Present, and Future, Vol. 3: Africa*. Edited by Vinson Synan, Amos Yong and J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu. Lake Mary: Charisma House, pp. 189–202.

Magbadelo, John Olushola. 2004. Pentecostalism in Nigeria: Exploiting or Edifying the Masses? *African Sociological Review* 8: 15–29. [CrossRef]

Maltese, Giovanni. 2015. An Activist-Holiness Kenneth Hagin? A Case Study of Prosperity Theology in the Philippines. In *Pastures of Plenty: Tracing Religio-Scapes of Prosperity Gospel in Africa and Beyond*. Edited by Andreas Heuser. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, pp. 65–80.

Marshall, Ruth. 1995. God is not a Democrat: Pentecostalism and Democratisation in Nigeria. In *The Christian Churches and the Democratisation of Africa*. Edited by Paul Gifford. Leiden: Brill, pp. 239–60.

Martin, David. 1990. *Tongues on Fire: The Explosion of Protestantism in Latin America*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Martin, David. 2002. *Pentecostalism: The World Their Parish*. Oxford: Blackwell.

McGee, Gary. 1999. "Latter Rain" Falling in the East: Early-Twentieth Century Pentecostalism in India and the Debate over Speaking in Tongues. *Church History* 63: 648–65. [CrossRef]

Meyer, Birgit. 2010. Pentecostalism and Globalisation. In *Studying Global Pentecostalism: Theories and Methods*. Edited by Allan Anderson, Michael Bergunder, André Droogers and Cornelis van der Laan. Berkeley: University of California Press, pp. 113–30.

Putnam, Robert. 1995. Tuning In, Tuning Out: The Strange Disappearance of Social Capital in America. *PS Political Science and Politics* 28: 664–83. [CrossRef]

Robbins, J. 2004. The Globalization of Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 33: 117–43. [CrossRef]

Roll, Jarod. 2004. From Revolution to Reaction: Early Pentecostalism, Radicalism and Race in Southern Missouri, 1910–1930. *Radical History Review* 90: 5–29. [CrossRef]

Shoko, Tabona, and Agness Chiwara. 2013. 'The Prophetic Figure in Zimbabwean Religion'. In *Prophets, Profit and the Bible in Zimbabwe: Festschrift for Aynos Masotcha Moyo*. Edited by Ezra Chitando, Ragies Gunda and Joachim Kügler. Bamberg: University of Bamberg Press, pp. 217–30.

Synan, Vinson. 1997. *The Holiness-Pentecostal Tradition: Charismatic Movements in the Twentieth Century*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.

Synan, Vinson. 2012. *The Century of the Holy Spirit: 100 Years of Pentecostal and Charismatic Renewal, 1901–2001*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

Tetzlaff, Rainer. 2015. Political Architecture of Poverty: On Changing Patterns of 'African Identity'. In *Pastures of Plenty: Tracing Religio-Scapes of Prosperity Gospel in Africa and Beyond*. Edited by Andreas Heuser. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, pp. 33–47.

van de Kamp, Linda. 2016. *Violent Conversion: Brazilian Pentecostalism and Urban Women in Mozambique*. Suffolk: Boydell & Brewer.

van Wyk, Ilana. 2014. *The Universal Church of the Kingdom of God in South Africa: A Church of Strangers*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Wacker, Grant. 2001. *Heaven Below: Early Pentecostals and American Culture*. Cambridge Mass: Harvard University Press.

Wagner, C. Peter. 1999. *Churchquake: How the New Apostolic Reformation is Shaking up the Church as We Know it*. Ventura: Regal Books.

Walker, Andrew. 1997. Thoroughly Modern: Sociological Reflections on the Charismatic Movement from the End of the Twentieth Century. In *Charismatic Christianity: Sociological Perspectives*. Edited by Stephen Hunt, Malcolm Hamilton and Tony Walter. London: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 17–42.

© 2018 by the author. Licensee MDPI, Basel, Switzerland. This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).

religions

MDPI

Article

Pentecostalization and Politics in Paraguay and Chile

Henri Gooren

Department of Sociology, Anthropology, Social Work and Criminal Justice, Oakland University, Rochester, MI 48309, USA; gooren@oakland.edu

Received: 13 July 2018; Accepted: 31 October 2018; Published: 3 November 2018

Abstract: This article analyzes Pentecostal churches in Paraguay and Chile, tracing how their older ethos of politics as worldly and corrupt is gradually changing and why. It explores changing church–state relations and conceptions of political culture and citizenship among Pentecostal members and leaders, and assesses some mutual influences that Pentecostal and mainstream Protestant churches exert on each other. Chile has the oldest autochthonous Pentecostal churches of Latin America, whereas Pentecostal growth only recently started in Paraguay, providing a contrast in levels of Pentecostalization. The article develops a general overview of modes of (in)direct involvement of Pentecostal leaders and members in national politics by assessing the risks and advantages of five possible positions.

Keywords: Pentecostalism; Pentecostalization; politics; Paraguay; Chile

---

1. Introduction

This article analyzes Pentecostal churches in Paraguay and Chile, tracing how their older ethos of politics as worldly and corrupt (Lalive d'Epinay 1969, p. 114; Fediakova 2004, p. 277) is gradually changing and why. It explores changing church–state relations and conceptions of political culture and citizenship among Pentecostal members and leaders, and assesses some mutual influences Pentecostal and mainstream Protestant churches exert on each other. Hence, this article complements the literature on the consequences of Pentecostal growth for different Latin American societies. It also follows the early research advice of (Levine 1986, p. 99) to begin with "what religious groups and people *actually do*."

Paraguay and Chile represent the extremes of Pentecostal growth in Latin America. Chile has the oldest autochthonous Pentecostal churches in Latin America, whereas Pentecostal growth only started in the 1980s in Paraguay, providing a contrast in levels of *Pentecostalization*, a term that refers to the combination of Pentecostal numerical growth, Pentecostal influence on other religions, and/or Pentecostal impact on the rest of society, including politics (Gooren 2010b). Using ethnographic field research, participant observation, semi-structured interviews, and surveys, I studied Pentecostal and non-Pentecostal churches and organizations in Asunción, Paraguay (2010 and 2012) and Santiago de Chile (2011). Seven trained research assistants (undergraduate students at two local universities) and I conducted 188 formal semi-structured interviews with 48 experts and 140 church members using the same interview protocols. In each country, I visited ten different churches and, together with local experts, selected an illustrative sample of congregations for in-depth study through participant observation and interviews. This meant that I went to Sunday meetings and other events for at least a month, conducted interviews with leaders and members, collected books and brochures, watched Pentecostal TV programs, and analyzed the contents of church websites. Interviews with church members and leaders as well as local experts were coded by topic and triangulated with other coded data from books, brochures, websites, and participant observation. A total of nine religious congregations were studied in-depth: five in Asunción (*Centro Familiar de Adoración*, *Más que Vencedores*, a Pentecostalizing Mennonite congregation, and two charismatic Catholic parishes), and four in

Santiago de Chile (a Vineyard and a Pentecostalizing Anglican congregation, and two charismatic Catholic parishes). My fieldwork research allows me to present the unique voices of church members and a dozen congregational leaders from Paraguay and Chile and their perspectives on the connections between (their) churches and politics.

Chile is the birthplace of autochthonous Pentecostalism in Latin America; the *Iglesia Metodista Pentecostal* (IMP), the country's biggest Pentecostal church, was already underway by 1909. Pentecostalism in Chile exploded in the 1920s and 1930s, stabilized in the 1960s, and exploded again in the 1970s and 1980s during the Pinochet dictatorship (1973–1990).[1] Protestants currently make up over one-fifth of the total Chilean population, which ranks among the higher percentages in Latin America (Mandryk 2010, p. 46), and the vast majority of them—approximately 85 percent—are Pentecostals (Parker 2000, p. 624). Political involvement by Pentecostal members and leaders, however, is low in Chile in contrast to Brazil. Chile has "no major Protestant political parties and few examples of Protestants elected to major public office" (Patterson 2005, p. 7). This article will explain why.

Pentecostal growth in Paraguay started as late as the 1980s, during the final years of the Stroessner dictatorship (1954–1989), and has continued until the present day. In 2002, Pentecostals made up only 3 percent of the Paraguayan population, with mainstream Protestants, especially Mennonites and Lutherans, accounting for another 3 percent.[2] By 2009, Pentecostals made up 4.6 percent of the population and mainstream Protestants 5.4 percent (Mandryk 2010, p. 676). The influence of Pentecostalism, however, is greater than these numbers suggest, since popular elements of the movement are starting to find their way into mainstream Protestantism. Many Baptist and especially Spanish-speaking Mennonite churches in Asunción are "Pentecostalizing". They use Pentecostal songs and worship styles, although they stop short of allowing members to speak in tongues. Furthermore, in the Protestant community overall, the two most successful churches in terms of membership growth are both Pentecostal. *Más que Vencedores*, started by Emilio Agüero in 2001, specializes in targeting young people. The *Centro Familiar de Adoración* (the only megachurch in Paraguay) started in 1985 and successfully appeals to families, thanks to its charismatic leader Emilio Abreu, its sophisticated evangelization methods, and its extensive use of mass media. The Pentecostalization process in Paraguay has made significant advances, then, although it remains in its initial phase, making the question of how Paraguayan Pentecostals view political involvement particularly interesting and offering a perspective on how these processes unfold over time.

It is imperative to place any analysis of political involvement in Paraguay and Chile in a larger comparative context. Paul Freston has studied the wider topic of church–politics relations for over two decades, resulting in important books on evangelicals and politics in the Global South and on Protestant political parties. He also stressed the need for "more detailed country-level studies" (Freston 2001, p. 281). Freston developed a four-fold typology of Protestant modes of national-level political involvement worldwide (Freston 2001, p. 285 ff.):

> While universalist concerns such as human rights and democracy predominate among some actors, the practice of many is reducible to an ecclesiastical *corporatism* which seeks to enlist state resources for church aggrandizement (Assemblies of God and Universal Church in Brazil); or to a *political imitation of the dominant actor in the religious field*, whether Catholicism or Islam (Iglesia Metodista Pentecostal in Chile, much Pentecostalism in Nigeria); or to a *triumphalism* which talks of a divine right of evangelicals to govern (Guatemala, Zambia).

[1] (Cleary and Sepúlveda 1997, p. 100); (Gooren 2015, pp. 208–9). The Protestant percentages in Chilean censuses since 1907 are: 1907, 1 percent; 1920, 1.4 percent; 1930, 1.5 percent; 1940, 2.3 percent; 1952, 4.1 percent; 1960, 5.6 percent; 1970, 6.2 percent; 1992, 13.2 percent; 2002, 15.1 percent (Cleary and Sepúlveda 1997, p. 106; Masías-Hinojosa et al. 2008, p. 3). For 2009, (Mandryk 2010, p. 210) reported 20.9 percent: 11.7 percent mainline Protestants and 9.2 percent Pentecostals.

[2] (Holland 2006, p. 205). (Johnstone and Mandryk 2001, p. 514) reported 5 percent mainline Protestants and 3.6 percent Pentecostals for 2000.

(Freston 2001, p. 305) concluded that corporatism and triumphalism are "clearly prejudicial to democracy." He saw corporatism as typical for evangelical leaders in Brazil and Central America (see, e.g., Gooren 2010a), triumphalism as typical of Presidents Ríos Montt and Serrano in Guatemala, and political imitation of the dominant Roman Catholic Church as uniquely typical of Chile's Iglesia Metodista Pentecostal. While Freston acknowledged the role of theology, he did not explore the main motivations for why churches and their leaders do or do not get involved in politics, which is what I will do here.

This article proposes an overview of five possible modes for direct or indirect involvement of Pentecostal leaders and members in national politics, each with its own risks and advantages. These are descriptive options that I derived from my fieldwork observations in these Pentecostal congregations in Paraguay and Chile. I will distinguish patterns that run from low risk and low involvement to high risk and high involvement. First, the low-risk position involves staying focused on a core evangelical teaching: converting as many people as possible, with the expectation that this should eventually result in positive changes in politics and society, while fulfilling one's civic duties by voting during elections.[3] The second option limits the mobilization of the faithful to key moral-ethical issues like divorce, abortion, and same-sex marriage, often in alliance with conservative Roman Catholics. Third, churches may mobilize the faithful around religious or political leaders who are thought to exemplify biblical principles and set a moral example, and who explicitly campaign against corruption in politics. The fourth option endorses the direct political involvement of church members, as exemplified by Ernst Bergen, a Mennonite businessman who served as a minister in Paraguay's Duarte government (2003–2008). Finally, the fifth course of action involves church leaders getting directly involved in politics as office holders, as occurred in Guatemala with General Efraín Ríos Montt (1982–1983) and President Jorge Serrano (1991–1993). I will use these five options to analyze and understand Pentecostal involvement in politics in Paraguay and Chile in historical and contemporary perspective.

2. The Old Ethos: Protestantism and the State in Paraguay and Chile

Protestantism originally developed in Paraguay as an embattled minority, persecuted by Catholics until as late as the 1960s and struggling to win official state recognition. Furthermore, Pentecostalism, for its part, reached Paraguay relatively late. The Philadelphia Evangelical Church arrived in 1938, followed by the Assemblies of God in 1945. The Church of God (Cleveland, TN) started its mission work in 1954. For many years, Pentecostal success was very limited. More successful was a unique local brand of Pentecostalism, *El Pueblo de Dios* (The People of God), founded in 1963 as an independent church. The latest Pentecostal church from the United States arrived in 1985: the Foursquare Gospel Church. The biggest Pentecostal churches were the Assemblies of God, the *Iglesia de Dios del Paraguay*, and the *Iglesia Evangélica Asamblea de Dios Misionera*. Paraguay experienced the highest Pentecostal growth in the 1980s and again after 2002 (Gooren 2013).

For most of their history, the dominant attitude of Pentecostals and other Protestants toward politics was one of abstinence (Plett 1988, p. 131; Duarte 1994, 2001). Protestant leaders were pleased when dictator Stroessner reiterated the importance of religious freedom in 1967 (Plett 1988, p. 103). In return for the freedom of religion and official state recognition they had long yearned for, they stayed out of politics, which was deemed corrupt and worldly. The legacy of foreign mission churches also depoliticized the Protestant leadership and supported a theology of separation from society. This created a clear contrast with the Roman Catholic Church, which historically sided with the elites

[3] (O'Neill 2010, p. 160) reported that neo-Pentecostals believed that Guatemala can only change though conversion, individual repentance, Bible study, and hard work, which open the believer to the "values of progress: punctuality, responsibility, and cleanliness." However, members of the mega-church El Shaddai "are more likely to pray for Guatemala than pay their taxes; they tend to speak in tongues for the soul of the nation rather than vote in general elections; and they more often than not organize prayer campaigns to fight crime rather than organize their communities against the same threat" (O'Neill 2010, pp. xvi, 201).

but had, since the 1960s, moved toward "a preferential option for the poor" (Gooren 2002, p. 29ff.). As some bishops gradually became more political in the 1970s and 1980s, emphasizing human rights and confronting Stroessner, the Protestant and Pentecostal leadership continued their earlier position of being "apolitical".

Just as in Paraguay, an ethos separating the church and "the world" (including the state) prevailed among the Pentecostal churches in Chile. The *Iglesia Metodista Pentecostal* (IMP) and the *Iglesia Evangélica Pentecostal* (IEP), which together dominated the Protestant community there (Johnstone and Mandryk 2001, p. 156), shared "a passive ethic that proclaims total separation from the world" of politics and education (Sepúlveda 1988, p. 300). This ethos is typical of classical Pentecostalism and of mission churches in general, and it clearly hampered efforts by some progressive leaders and members to become more involved in Chilean society in the 1960s and early 1970s. Yet the authoritarian structure of the IMP allowed its conservative leaders to lend legitimation to the Pinochet military government through a Pentecostal "Te Deum," first celebrated in their new Jotabeche "cathedral" in 1974. This created tensions that eventually resurfaced in leadership struggles following the death of Bishop Vásquez in 2003 (see below).

The old Pentecostal political ethos is nicely summarized by a middle-aged male member of the Methodist Pentecostal Church (IMP) in San Ramón, Santiago:

> I believe that the orientation of the practicing Christians in Chile is not about establishing a presence in society. It's to influence society to turn back to God, to improve the quality of life, to live with morality, with respect, according to what the Word of the Lord states. I personally believe that the church . . . I don't believe we want to interfere with the political parties.[4]

This is a perfect expression of the first position in my overview of modes of political involvement of Pentecostal leaders and members: focusing on the core task of converting as many people as possible to their church, hoping that through conversion they will have a change of heart and become better people, which in turn will make the country a better place. It is the position that used to be shared by the majority of Protestants and Pentecostals in Latin America, including Chile and Paraguay. To explain its origins, we need to look at history.

3. Protestantism, Political Parties, and Electoral Campaigns

Whereas Chilean Catholicism even before Vatican II (1962–1965) was more progressive than elsewhere in Latin America (Barrett et al. 2001, pp. 187–88), Chilean autochthonous Pentecostalism (IMP, IEP, and their subsequent schisms) was dominated from the start by the traditional ethos proclaiming total separation from the world (Sepúlveda 1988, p. 300). Based on these radically different theological origins, more societal involvement from Catholics than Pentecostals was to be expected.

Yet Fediakova identified two factors that have facilitated greater political involvement of Pentecostals since the 1970s: (1) the need to protect their institutional interests (Freston's corporatism), especially during the Pinochet dictatorship (1973–1990), and (2) the development of Chilean civil society after the return to democracy in 1990. As relations between General Pinochet and the Catholic Church deteriorated, the government looked to Pentecostal leaders for support. The conservative IMP leadership responded eagerly and positively. Hence, the new Jotabeche cathedral of the *Iglesia Metodista Pentecostal* (IMP) was officially inaugurated in September 1974 in the presence of General Pinochet and other official representatives of the military dictatorship (Fediakova 2004, p. 259). This happened during the "Te Deum," which was originally a Catholic ritual to bless the new government. The new version, however, was a much broader symbolic mixing of religious and political power and leadership. Two days earlier, 2500 conservative Protestant pastors and church members published a document supporting the September 1973 coup: "The military intervention of the Armed Forces in the historic

---

[4] Chile interview 48; August 23, 2011. All Chile interviews were conducted in Santiago de Chile.

process of our country was the response of God to the prayer of all believers who see in Marxism the maximum darkness of satanic forces."[5]

While some conservative Pentecostal leaders had, like their Protestant counterparts, rallied to the support of the military, their rank-and-file members—overwhelmingly poor and with less education—had mostly supported the leftist Allende government (1970–1973) that was toppled by Pinochet (Tennekes 1985). (Cleary and Sepúlveda 1997, p. 105) concluded that conservative Pentecostal leaders used Pinochet to boost their resources and consolidate their power base—corporatism, again. Meanwhile, the more progressive Pentecostal groups pursued independence from the state and founded new organizations like FASIC (*Fundación de Ayuda Social de las Iglesias Cristianas* or Foundation for Social Help of the Christian Churches) and SEPADE (*Servicio Evangélico para el Desarrollo*: Gospel Service for Development), working for socioeconomic development with key social actors of all religions, while the Catholic hierarchy increasingly challenged Pinochet on human rights violations (Fediakova 2004, p. 261). Yet Pentecostals in Chile remained sharply divided, both politically and theologically. They founded multiple umbrella organizations that were unable to coordinate collective evangelization campaigns or maintain an effective political lobby.[6]

Augusto Pinochet, the "perpetual general," (Allende 2003, p. 181) controlled politics in Chile from 1973 to 1990. Upon the return to democracy, party politics were dominated for twenty years by the progressive *Concertación* coalition governments of Aylwin (1990–1994), Frei Ruiz-Tagle (1994–2000), Lagos (2000–2006), and Bachelet (2006–2010). The victory of Sebastián Piñera in 2010 was the first for the right in twenty years and more the result of a vote against the *Concertación* and in favor of change than a vote for Piñera.[7]

Following the return to democracy in 1990, Protestant leaders and their umbrella organizations were sometimes contacted by presidential candidates to court their votes in return for institutional support (Fediakova 2004, p. 264). This was particularly clear during the Lagos administration (2000–2006) and the first Bachelet administration (2006–2010), when progressive Protestant leaders maintained good relations with government officials.[8] Conservative Protestant leaders had founded their own political party in November 1995, the *Alianza Nacional Cristiana* (ANC, Christian National Alliance), but its candidates only obtained three percent of the vote in 1997 and the party soon disbanded. Fediakova concluded that it was poorly organized and too narrowly identified with rightwing politics, and that Protestants in Chile were too divided to be represented by only one party (Fediakova 2004, pp. 265–66).

Politicians in Chile did not court Pentecostal voters as openly as in Nicaragua or Venezuela, where the corporatist model dominated (Gooren 2010a, pp. 48, 50, 55ff.). Religion was not an important theme in the 2009–2010 presidential campaign at all, until Bishop Emiliano Soto openly came out in support of Frei of the progressive *Concertación* coalition. In quick response, IMP Jotabeche Pastor Eduardo Durán Castro and other conservative pastors publicly came out in support of *Renovación Nacional* candidate Sebastián Piñera. Before going on to win the elections, Piñera made a list of thirty promises to these evangelical leaders, including updating the 1999 *Ley de Culto* (guaranteeing freedom of worship), greater equality before the law, financial support for Protestant social ministries, and an increase of Protestant chaplains in the armed forces. In 2011, there was grumbling among evangelical leaders that the government was dominated by conservative Opus Dei Catholics and that none of the thirty promises had been kept, illustrating the risks of corporatism.[9]

---

[5] Translated and quoted by (Sepúlveda 1988, p. 312) from the Declaración de apoyo a la Junta de Gobierno de las iglesias evangélicas no. 2 in *Posición Evangélica*, edited by Pedro Puente (Santiago: mimeo, 1975).

[6] Chile interviews 12, 26, 35, and 74; July 13 and August 5, 20, and 24, 2011.

[7] (Meyer 2011, p. 5). Bachelet served again as president in 2014–18 and Piñera was again inaugurated as president on March 11, 2018.

[8] Chile interviews 5, 12, and 17; June 26, July 13, and July 25, 2011.

[9] Chile interviews 12, 15, 28, and 29; July 13, July 21, and August 8 (twice), 2011.

Institutional politics in Paraguay demonstrated even more continuity than in Chile. General Stroessner based his authoritarian 1954–1989 rule on an iron alliance between the armed forces, the state, and the Colorado Party (Carter 1991, p. 39).[10] Other political parties were allowed after 1962, but the Colorado Party continued to hold power for almost twenty more years after Stroessner was forced to resign as president in 1989 and the first truly free elections were organized.

When internal strife in the Colorado Party in 1999–2000 led to the assassination of Vice-President Luis María Argaña Ferraro, most people blamed President Raúl Cubas Grau (1998–2003) rather than his Colorado Party (Hanratty and Meditz 2005, p. 5). Under Colorado President Nicanor Duarte (2003–2008), the Paraguayan economy improved, although it remained uneven and highly unequal. Duarte's wife, María Gloria Penayo Solaeche, became a Mennonite in 2001 and soon persuaded her husband to join her. Hence, Duarte became the first non-Catholic President in Paraguay and the Mennonite churches gained their maximum political influence during his government.[11] The wider Protestant community also benefited from this; the Duarte government was perceived as being favorable to Protestants and maintaining more distance than usual from the Catholic hierarchy.[12] For the first time in history, Protestants tasted the forbidden fruit of corporatism, finding that involvement in national politics could yield concrete advantages. However, President Duarte's popularity decreased at the end of his term over internal corruption scandals and conflicts with the owner of the *ABC Color* newspaper and TV channel *Telefuturo* (Méndez Grimaldi 2009, p. 28; Segovia 2009, pp. 241–43; Thompson 2012).

In September 2007, a center-left coalition of a dozen small parties plus the much bigger *Partido Liberal Radical Auténtico* (the Liberal Party—PLRA) selected Fernando Lugo as their presidential candidate. The PLRA provided the vice-president, Federico Franco. Born in 1951, Lugo was a supporter of liberation theology and the former bishop of the impoverished northern San Pedro department from 1994 until 2005 (O'Shaughnessy and Díaz 2009, pp. 93–97, pp. 112–13). Because the Paraguayan Protestant community was so small, politicians routinely ignored the non-Catholic vote. Somewhat surprisingly, with a former Roman Catholic bishop running against the first ever female candidate of the Colorado Party,[13] religion was not an important theme in the 2007–2008 presidential campaign at all, except for the question of whether the Vatican would allow Fernando Lugo to become the first ever bishop to be elected as president in Latin America.[14] In an exceptionally dirty campaign, even by Paraguayan standards, Lugo was accused of fathering an illegitimate child, orchestrating the murder of a former president's daughter, and "being an active member of the Colombian guerrilla organization FARC" (O'Shaughnessy and Díaz 2009, p. 113). Only the first accusation was true; in 2009, Lugo admitted to fathering a child in a decade-long relationship with Viviana Carrillo, but denied parenthood in all other cases (O'Shaughnessy and Díaz 2009, pp. 127–31). Lugo surprised the Colorado Party and probably many of his supporters by winning the elections.

By 2010, the early popularity of the Lugo government had shattered, partly because voters' expectations had been unrealistically high (Méndez Grimaldi 2009, pp. 30–31; Espínola 2009, pp. 135–44; Beittel 2010, p. 4). Lugo's long affair and illegitimate son created an outcry among his political enemies, but his supporters were not much influenced by these revelations.[15] Lugo's relationship to the Paraguayan bishops was frosty, but his relations with the Protestant community were not exactly cordial either. Almost all my Pentecostal informants had a negative opinion of Lugo, based mostly on his moral character:

---

10 For 61 years (1947–2008), party politics in Paraguay were dominated by the Colorado Party, which had been founded in 1887 by Bernardino Caballero to oppose the new Liberal Party.

11 The Duarte administration also included the first ever Mennonite minister, Ernst Bergen (see Bergen 2008).

12 Interview with Dr. Martín Eitzen (*Instituto Bíblico Asunción*), Oakland University (Rochester, MI); May 14, 2010.

13 Blanca Ovelar had been Minister of Education in the Duarte government (Méndez Grimaldi 2009, p. 28).

14 Paraguay interviews 6, 7, and 10; July 15 (twice) and July 20, 2010. See also (O'Shaughnessy and Díaz 2009, pp. 110–11, 116).

15 Paraguay interview 59 (July 3, 2012); (Beittel 2010, p. 5).

> Lugo enters the presidency as a man of God, a religious man. In the eyes of God, he already failed from here to the moon because of the children, the fact that he's a promiscuous man and all that. He already started badly. It's a personal matter, OK, but next in his job as a politician he didn't do anything either; everything was promises. He abandoned the people who helped him with 85 percent to become president, who were the Liberals. They got tired of him.[16]

This informant indirectly refers to the third position of Pentecostal political involvement, mobilizing the faithful around church leaders, and holds up a Catholic leader, Lugo, as a negative (anti-)example. Another informant reported that Lugo made a loose remark during the electoral campaign that all evangelical church buildings would be converted into daycare centers.[17] This greatly worried the Protestant leadership. They were already suspicious of a former Catholic bishop sympathetic to liberation theology who was elected president in 2008 with the backing of progressive sectors of civil society.[18] Similar to Chile, the political culture in Paraguay is intensely personal.

4. The New Political Ethos: "Because We Are Part of This Society"

Pentecostal informants in both countries consistently told me that their churches were not interested in politics, kept out of politics, or at best reluctantly allowed their members to get involved in it. However, many informants felt that Pentecostals *should* get involved in politics to raise its moral standards and to fight corruption. I analyze this new political ethos, its origins, and its possible consequences by referring to the five modes of possible political involvement by Pentecostals outlined above.

Most Chilean Pentecostal informants reported that their churches were just not interested in politics at all. Two informants from the neo-Pentecostal church *Tiempo de Dios* explicitly wanted Pentecostals to show more involvement in society.[19] However, a female 22-year-old university student from another independent Pentecostal church resented the fact that their pastor had openly from the pulpit called on members to vote for Sebastián Piñera.[20] Yet she did want Pentecostals to get more involved in Chilean society; she had participated in massive protest marches in Santiago against the projected Hydro-Aisén hydroelectric plant in a national park and in support of student demands for better access to higher education.

A 40-year-old member of the *Iglesia Evangélica Pentecostal* (IEP) summarized the difference between the old and the new ethos, or the transition from the first position of Pentecostal political involvement to the third, like this:

> In the old days, we the youth were told that we didn't have to get into the universities because the university meant your perdition and the result was that our parents were the janitors in businesses. [..] Nowadays we're making the same mistake with politics. I have the experience of my daughter who wanted to be a spokesperson in her high school. But the [church] youth leader and others next to her wanted to prohibit this as if it were a sin to be a spokesperson for something, of a movement that is fighting for something that's right for students today. We're cutting off a part that she could develop. Perhaps tomorrow, she might become a great political leader or a great religious leader—somebody who makes a difference in religion and in politics.[21]

---

16 Paraguay interview 58; July 3, 2012.
17 Paraguay interview 1; July 7, 2010.
18 O'Shaughnessy and Díaz (2009). Lugo was impeached on June 22, 2012 in a controversial two-hour parliamentary session and succeeded by his vice-president Federico Franco (BBC 2012).
19 Chile interviews 62 and 64; August 26 and September 2, 2011.
20 Chile interview 49; August 23, 2011.
21 Chile interview 45; August 6, 2011.

(Fediakova 2004, p. 263) traced the increased willingness of Chilean evangelicals to engage with society to two main factors: the growth of civil society during the early part of the Pinochet dictatorship and the return to democracy in 1990. Her sophisticated study of evangelicals and civil society used participant observation in churches, interviews, and surveys. Seventy percent of her evangelical sample thought that evangelicals should be able to participate in Chilean politics at any level; only 18.5 percent were against this (Fediakova 2004, p. 278). Some of the main motivations given were that "God needs Christian politicians to help with His plan" and "because we are a good example for society." Another informant simply wrote, "because we are part of this society" (Fediakova 2004, p. 279).

Pentecostal laity and leaders alike in both countries stressed that voting was not only a civic right, but an obligation. This represents the first position of Pentecostal political involvement in the overview: trying to convert as many people as possible while voting during elections. A leader in an independent Pentecostal church in Asunción, Paraguay, saw voting during elections as a civic duty of all Pentecostals:

> I personally think that people should vote. Fulfill their civic duty. In fact, I believe it is a biblical duty: to elect the authorities, to pray for them. I think we are part of a government system and a social system and we cannot live alienated from those. I don't have a personal involvement in politics. I don't have preferences for political party A or B [..]. But I do think that it is a civic duty of the believer to participate in elections. In my opinion, I think that some believers should be candidates ... [But] I don't defend the position of some governments to accept pastors or religious leaders as candidates, because I believe there is a conflict of interests. [..]
>
> Sometimes I voted because a certain candidate impressed me in some way and I thought they were worthy of my vote as a citizen. But in other cases, I examined the candidates and I felt so frustrated with all of them that I cancelled my vote, I voted blank. I fulfilled my civic and legal duty, but I didn't support any of them.[22]

This man was active in his local neighborhood committee, but not in any political party. Like most Paraguayans, he was thoroughly disillusioned with party politics.

In Chile, a fourth-generation IMP member, 56 years old, likewise thought that evangelicals should be more conscious of the importance of their vote, especially during presidential elections:

> Deep down we all have our little preference, whether left or right or center. But the believer knows that all comes from God; he removes kings and raises up kings. The believer who believes in this must logically trust in God and ask Him: "Who does the Lord want to be the next president of our country?"[23]

There were some political actions that all informants, not just leaders, agreed on as important duties. These included fighting against corruption at all levels of society (including politics), fighting against gay marriage and liberalization of abortion, and fighting to retain, and if possible expand, state recognition of Protestant churches. A minority of Catholic informants in Paraguay and Chile agreed with these points as well (except for the last one), creating favorable conditions for a possible future alliance between conservative Catholics and Protestants. This option is reflected in the second position in the overview of the Pentecostal political involvement: limiting mobilization of the faithful to key moral-ethical issues. This second position now appears to be accepted by a majority of Pentecostal believers across Latin America, although with some significant differences between countries.

A gradual transition from the first type of Pentecostal political involvement to the more active third one is also expressed by founding Pastor Emilio Abreu of the mega-church *Centro Familiar de*

[22] Paraguay interview 44; August 24, 2010.
[23] Chile interview 42; August 3, 2011. Note the Biblical reference to Daniel 2, verse 21.

Adoración (CFA) in Asunción, who stressed that his church aims to help its members bring out "the talent that God gave them." That God-given talent could also be in politics:

> EA: I have people who want to get involved in politics and we encourage them because politics needs honest people at this moment. People [..] who can stand firm and say: "Well, we have to do things right."
>
> HG: Are there people who are involved with the parties here?
>
> EA: We have people in the parties; that's right.
>
> HG: But it will be very difficult for them to change the structure of the political parties?
>
> EA: No, we are not trying to change the structure of the party; we change the people and the people will have an influence.[24]

Abreu's perspective mirrors a growing sentiment among Protestant leaders generally that Christians should get involved in politics to raise its moral standards and to fight corruption. One senior Baptist leader said that the people who were currently involved in Paraguayan politics were "aggressive, dishonest, and without scruples." He thought that all Protestants should get more directly involved in politics themselves and leave their old theological dualism of state and church behind.[25]

This new willingness to get more involved in society was also visible in recent Pentecostal leadership struggles in Chile. The *Iglesia Metodista Pentecostal* (IMP) is the oldest autochthonous Pentecostal church in Latin America and the biggest in Chile, but has received little scholarly attention until recent years. After the death of the authoritarian Bishop Javier Vázquez in 2003, a severe leadership crisis ensued. The first power struggle was between Bishop Roberto López and Bishop Bernardo Cartes; López became the national "presiding" IMP bishop but Cartes remained in office as bishop of Chillán. A schism followed in which all IMP congregations were forced to take sides and church buildings were registered under two different legal personalities. Soon after, Pastor Eduardo Durán Castro of the huge Jotabeche Cathedral in Santiago started making moves to separate himself from both Bishop López and Bishop Cartes. The Jotabeche Cathedral has 7000 members and an estimated monthly tithing income of 120 million pesos, or about US $240,000 (equivalent to almost US $3 million a year), giving Pastor Durán Castro a strong financial power base.[26]

Of the three IMP leaders, Bishop Roberto López was by far the most open to change. Bishop López supported a stronger role for women in the IMP, the creation of youth groups, more IMP church involvement in Chilean society through NGOs, and more contact with other Pentecostal and Protestant churches, and even with the Roman Catholic Church.[27] These innovations challenged a century-old conservative classical Pentecostal tradition and generated much controversy. Bishop López was convinced that the IMP must remain in control of finding its place in modern society; without renewal, he felt, the IMP would keep losing members and risk becoming irrelevant in Chilean society.[28] None of the three IMP factions provided membership statistics, but Bishop López indirectly hinted at membership losses while a staff member of Pastor Durán Castro mentioned steady membership growth.[29] Judging from their actions during the 2010 elections (see above), Durán Castro and López were more open to indirect involvement in politics than Cartes. Their church support base, which included well-educated staff members who tended to be middle-aged (for Durán Castro) or younger (López), encouraged this new ethos as well.

Young college-educated IMP supporters of Bishop López generally viewed greater church involvement in politics more favorably, although some expressed ambiguity. A 39-year-old female

---

[24] Paraguay interview 16; July 27, 2010.
[25] Paraguay interview 1; July 7, 2010.
[26] Chile interview 27; August 7, 2011.
[27] Chile interviews 19 and 27; July 27 and August 7, 2011.
[28] Chile interview 27; August 7, 2011.
[29] Chile interview 28; August 8, 2011.

manager participated in a political campaign in 2005 and was shocked by some Pentecostal pastors offering to deliver votes for her: "I'll support your candidate, but he has to guarantee that I'll get a new lot for my church."[30] Obviously, one main risk of the more direct political involvement represented by modes three and four is exactly this type of quid pro quo or, more generally, corporatism.

Not surprisingly, the most elaborate reflections on the pros and cons of direct involvement by Pentecostals in politics (positions four and five) came from a 44-year-old Paraguayan politician who had been a member of the nondenominational Pentecostal church *Más que Vencedores* (More than Conquerors) for ten years. He got involved in politics as a student leader during the violent 1999–2000 protests against the assassination of Vice-President Argaña Ferraro. Four years later, he had a conversion experience, which he described as "gradual and very rational." In 2009, he became national leader of the small social-democratic party *Encuentro Nacional*:

> The Christian philosophy teaches a lifestyle, not just privately but also publicly. I believe that the Bible teaches us behavior values and the Bible talks often about the leaders of the past with Christian biblical principles. Personally, I believe that I have matured much as a politician and as a person through the teachings of the Bible. It allows me to endure hard and difficult moments; it allows me to have an armored character during the moment of crisis, right? [. . .]
>
> I believe that politics is an expression of love for your neighbor, a public expression of love for your neighbor. This is what I practice: Aristotle's definition of politics as the search for the common good, the search for the good of all, not just my personal or private good but that of all of society. [. . .]
>
> I believe that is one of the hardest things to accomplish—not just in politics but in personal life . . . Yet a great Christian teaching [is] also that of nonviolence, loving your neighbor. In the Bible, there are all these concepts that, if they were followed in politics, it would be much easier.[31]

The informants advocating greater political commitment of their churches were invariably more highly educated, most were under thirty, and many were also middle-class. The same was true of the supporters of Bishop Roberto López in Chile, the most open to change among the three IMP leadership contenders. Yet Pentecostal pastors in Chile continued to keep their distance from politics. In Paraguay as well, Pastor Emilio Abreu (*Centro Familiar de Adoración*) and Pastor Emilio Agüero (*Más que Vencedores*) had very popular TV programs, but neither expressed a personal interest in political involvement, illustrating the historical Pentecostal reserve.

That position contrasts with steps taken by some fellow Protestants in Paraguay. For example, in early 2012, shortly before my second fieldwork period in Asunción, Mennonite pastor Arnoldo Wiens, a well-known media personality thanks to his programs on the Mennonite-owned stations Radio Obedira and TV Red Guaraní, surprisingly gave up his vocation (and his popular TV programs) to launch a presidential campaign.[32] However, he found it impossible to raise sufficient funding as an independent candidate. Soon after, Wiens announced his support for Horacio Cartes as presidential candidate for the dominant Colorado Party; in return, Cartes put Wiens first on the list of Colorado Senate candidates. The responses to Wiens' candidacy from the Pentecostal community were mixed, with many being very critical.[33]

---

[30] Chile interview 40; July 20, 2011.
[31] Paraguay interview 59; July 3, 2010.
[32] This is in line with (Levine 2012, p. 116): "Media skills are notable and careers in religious or other broadcasting are increasingly common stepping-stones to political candidacies."
[33] Paraguay interviews 71, 75, and 85; July 16, 19, and 25, 2012.

5. Conclusions

This article presented a range of different approaches among Pentecostals to the challenge of political engagement and showed how those approaches have changed over time. Based on that data, we are now in a position to revisit and refine the central features of these positions and explore their broader implications for the relationship between Pentecostals and politics. Below, I further develop my overview of five possible modes of (in)direct involvement by Pentecostal leaders and members in national politics, assessing both their risks and advantages. The easiest and safest position is staying focused on a core evangelical teaching: converting as many people (including politicians and their children) as possible, which should eventually result in positive changes in politics and society. What is new relative to the traditional Pentecostal position in this model of involvement is the conviction that Pentecostals should always vote during elections. This position is nowadays accepted by virtually all Pentecostals in Latin America. It was explicitly espoused by mega-church Pastor Emilio Abreu and was also visible in the small minority of neo-Pentecostal and Vineyard churches in Chile (Fediakova 2004, p. 275). This position takes few risks and has the advantage of keeping members and leaders focused on a core teaching: evangelization. However, the available evidence does not (yet?) show a correlation between high numbers of converts and positive changes in politics and society. The countries in Latin America with the highest population percentages of Protestants are El Salvador (40.8 percent), Nicaragua (35.6 percent), Brazil (30.4 percent), Honduras (28.1 percent), and Guatemala (27.9 percent).[34] These are also some of the region's poorest countries (apart from Brazil) with some of the world's highest homicide rates.

The second position aims to mobilize the faithful around key moral-ethical issues like divorce, abortion, and same-sex marriage, often in alliance with conservative Roman Catholics. Almost all of my informants in both countries expressed support for this approach. Successful applications of this position have been reported for Brazil, Nicaragua, Chile, Paraguay, and other countries in Latin America where gender roles and social values are contested and gradually changing. However, the government of Cristina Fernández de Kirchner passed a law in July 2010 legalizing same-sex marriage (BBC 2010) in spite of the intense, combined lobbying efforts of Catholics and Protestants. This substantially weakened an ad-hoc ecumenical alliance in Argentina and vividly illustrated one main risk of this position: when a strong lobby is unsuccessful, it can seriously hurt the image of the churches and the leaders involved and create deep divisions between them.

The third possible position of Pentecostal involvement in politics is an extension of the second. It aims to mobilize the faithful by rallying around religious and political leaders who exemplify biblical principles, set a moral example, and explicitly campaign against corruption in politics. Applications of this position can be seen in Guatemala (see below), Bolivia (Wightman 2007), and especially Brazil (Brasil Fonseca 2008, pp. 201–4). This approach offers some important advantages and limits the risks, as stressed by a great number of informants in Paraguay and Chile. The position builds on the older tradition of Pentecostal churches as corporatist groups lobbying for recognition. It allows pastors to mobilize their members, but does not necessarily require them to get personally involved in politics themselves. Many Pentecostals in both Chile and Paraguay wanted to see their churches get more involved with society and with politics, but they did not approve of pastors running as candidates for office. They considered the risks of failure and disillusionment as simply being too high.

Fourth, there is a position of direct political involvement of Pentecostal members (but not leaders), which offers few risks and many advantages, as reflected in the political careers of persons like Ernst Bergen, the Mennonite businessman serving as minister in Paraguay's Duarte government (2003–2008). The main motivation for involvement here is to help one's fellow countrymen, to serve both God *and* country. Yet Bergen possessed several advantages that few other trailblazers will share. He was a successful and wealthy businessman who had never broken the law. Hence, Bergen could present

[34] (Clawson 2012, p. 250), based on 2009 figures from Mandryk (2010).

himself as a technocrat without party affiliation or personal political ambitions. One suspects that few Pentecostals across Latin America will be able to follow Bergen's example (the literature on Latin America documents no similar cases).

The fifth position, synonymous with Freston's *triumphalism* or the divine right of evangelicals to govern, was developed by neo-Pentecostal leaders in Guatemala, building on "dominion theology".[35] This approach aims to get church leaders directly involved in politics as office holders. The main examples so far are two neo-Pentecostal heads of state who aimed to redeem Guatemala's sinful past by setting a moral example, applying biblical principles to solve the country's problems, counteracting Mayan spiritual practices, and following neoliberal economic policies. Yet the Guatemala case also demonstrated the inherent risks of this position. General Efraín Ríos Montt (1982–1983) waged a brutal counterinsurgency against guerrillas and Mayas alike, while Jorge Serrano (1991–1993) combined biblical principles and neoliberal policies only to be impeached for corruption (Garrard Burnett 2010). More recently, neo-Pentecostal pastor Harold Caballeros struggled to create the evangelical party VIVA (*Visión con Valores* or Vision with Values) and failed to become a presidential candidate, although he was recruited as Minister of Foreign Affairs by Otto Pérez Molina in his 2012–2015 government.[36] Yet in Chile, no Protestant leader has gotten involved in politics at all, and in Paraguay, most Pentecostals reacted negatively to Wiens' political activism.

In the early stages of Pentecostal growth in both countries, roughly up until the 1960s, staying out of politics (position one) was the safest and also the best way to obtain state recognition, especially for mission churches. In this old ethos, even voting during elections was controversial for dualist theological reasons and for fear of ruffling powerful politicians' feathers or attracting negative attention (Lalive d'Epinay 1969, pp. 118–19). In Chilean Pentecostalism, this position dovetailed with its traditional ethos of a clear separation between church and world. However, it was altered by some conservative leaders of the Iglesia Metodista Pentecostal who began angling for state recognition by organizing yearly "Te Deum" celebrations in their Jotabeche "cathedral" soon after General Pinochet's 1973 coup. Freston considered this to be a form of political imitation of the dominant Roman Catholic Church, clearly reflected even in the Catholic terms used (Te Deum, cathedral). In Paraguay, being apolitical remained the best way for Protestant churches to obtain official state recognition during the Stroessner dictatorship (1954–1989).

Several factors contributed to the transition from the old to the new ethos of moderate political involvement in Chile and Paraguay. With the flourishing of civil society in both countries in the 1980s and 1990s, new opportunities for the political involvement of Protestant churches opened.[37] The return to democracy added the promise of obtaining favors from political candidates in return for support (Freston's *corporatism* with its concomitant risks). Modern mass media like television and internet made believers more aware of politically active Protestants and Pentecostals in Guatemala and especially Brazil.[38] Increasing levels of education and upward social mobility among Pentecostals likely influenced many committed believers to favor greater political involvement from their churches as well. Yet Pentecostal leaders in both countries remained reluctant to get directly involved in politics themselves, likely perceiving the risks (both to themselves and to their churches) to be greater than the potential rewards. Together, the Paraguay and Chile cases can illuminate why Pentecostal leaders in countries as varied as Mexico, Venezuela, Peru, Argentina, and Uruguay tend to stay out of politics.

---

[35] Based on Genesis (1, verse 26), in which God gave "dominion" over the earth to mankind, the dominion movement started in the United States "among socially conservative Christians who sought to gain influence or control over secular civil government through political action. It was characterized by striving for a nation to be governed by Christians or by biblical principles" (Holvast 2009, pp. 161–62).

[36] Pérez (2011). Caballeros, who has written four books and holds both an MBI and an MIR, is obviously a successful pastor, yet struggles to find his place in Guatemalan politics. See also (O'Neill 2010, pp. xix, 203). President Pérez Molina ultimately resigned over a corruption investigation on September 3, 2015 (BBC 2015).

[37] (Levine 2012, p. 122), in fact, saw the main role of Protestant churches in the strengthening of civil society through building communities, not through direct (partisan) political involvement.

[38] See Gooren (2018) for an extended analysis of the impact of mass media on the churches in Paraguay.

The Chilean case demonstrated that even a century-long history of autochthonous Pentecostalism and Pentecostal influence on mainstream Protestant churches does not necessarily lead to a strong Pentecostalization of civil society or, one phase later, of political culture. The traditional dualist Pentecostal theology was one main reason for this fact, as was the long Pinochet dictatorship (1973–1990). However, most neo-Pentecostals in Chile did want to see more societal involvement of their churches and the same was true among younger members of the autochthonous IMP and IEP. The Paraguay case showed that even recent Pentecostal growth could lead to Pentecostalizing effects on mainline Protestantism, but also, perhaps more surprisingly, that this was a two-way process. The Mennonites' economic power led them, by way of Radio Obedira and TV Red Guaraní, into politics. One trailblazer, Mennonite businessman Ernst Bergen, became a government minister, but Arnoldo Wiens's Senate candidacy showed that direct political involvement of Protestant leaders was still controversial in Paraguay. As Pentecostals gradually become part of mainstream society, as happened in Guatemala and is still continuing to happen in Chile, younger and increasingly better-educated members will want their churches to get more involved in society and to follow the lead of other, more directly engaged Protestants, profoundly affecting their churches' theology, leadership, organization, evangelization, and political practices in the process.

Acknowledgments: I conducted fieldwork in Asunción, Paraguay (June–August 2010 and 2012) and Santiago de Chile (June–August 2011). My individual research project, "The Pentecostalization of Religion and Society in Paraguay and Chile," was funded by the Pentecostal-Charismatic Research Initiative (PCRI), which was sponsored by the John Templeton Foundation and administered by the University of Southern California under grant number 13839 (see http://crcc.usc.edu/initiatives/pcri). Special thanks go to Martin H. Eitzen, Daniel Jordan Smith, and Richard L. Wood for their critical comments on earlier versions of this article. Additional thanks are due to three anonymous peer reviewers and to Roger G. Robins, the editor of this special edition.

Conflicts of Interest: The author declares no conflicts of interest.

References

Allende, Isabel. 2003. *My Invented Country: A Nostalgic Journey through Chile*. New York: HarperCollins.

Barrett, David B., George T. Kurian, and Todd M. Johnson. 2001. *World Christian Encyclopedia*, 2nd ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation). 2010. Argentine Gay Couple Tie Knot under New Marriage Law. Available online: http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-latin-america-10823279 (accessed on 29 March 2013).

BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation). 2012. Removal of Paraguay's President Lugo Draws Strong Reactions. Available online: http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-latin-america-18564206 (accessed on 29 March 2013).

BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation). 2015. Renuncia el presidente de Guatemala, Otto Pérez Molina. Available online: http://www.bbc.com/mundo/noticias/2015/09/150903_renuncia_perez_molina_guatemala_corrupcion_aw (accessed on 2 June 2013).

Beittel, June S. 2010. *Paraguay: Political and Economic Conditions and U.S Relations*. Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service of the Library of Congress. Available online: http://www.dtic.mil/cgi-bin/GetTRDoc?AD=ADA514199 (accessed on 15 June 2013).

Bergen, Ernst. 2008. *Jumping into Empty Space: A Reluctant Mennonite Businessman Serves in Paraguay's Presidential Cabinet*. Intercourse: Good Books.

Brasil Fonseca, Alexandre. 2008. Religion and Democracy in Brazil: A Study of the Leading Evangelical Politicians. In *Evangelical Christianity and Democracy in Latin America*. Edited by Paul Freston. New York: Oxford University Press, pp. 163–206.

Carter, Miguel. 1991. *El papel de la iglesia en la caída de Stroessner*. Asunción: RP Ediciones.

Clawson, David L. 2012. *Latin America and the Caribbean: Lands and Peoples*, 5th ed. New York: Oxford University Press.

Cleary, Edward L., and Juan Sepúlveda. 1997. Chilean Pentecostalism: Coming of Age. In *Power, Pentecostals, and Politics in Latin America*. Edited by Edward L. Cleary and Hannah Stewart-Gambino. Boulder: Westview Press, pp. 97–121.

Duarte, Rogelio. 1994. *El desafío protestante en el Paraguay*. Asunción: Centro Cristiano de Comunicación Creativa.

Duarte, Rogelio. 2001. *Historia y mensaje de los bautistas en el Paraguay*. Asunción: Etigraf.

Espínola, Gabriel. 2009. La situación política y las tareas principales para el gobierno de Lugo. In *Gobierno Lugo: Herencia, gestión y desafíos*. Edited by Luis Rojas Villagra. Asunción: BASE Investigaciones Sociales, pp. 131–44.

Fediakova, Evguenia. 2004. "Somos parte de esta sociedad": Evangélicos y política en el Chile post autoritario. *Política* 43: 253–84.

Freston, Paul. 2001. *Evangelicals and Politics in Asia, Africa and Latin America*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Garrard Burnett, Virginia. 2010. *Terror in the Land of the Holy Spirit: Guatemala under General Efraín Ríos Montt, 1982–1983*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Gooren, Henri. 2002. Catholic and Non-Catholic Theologies of Liberation: Poverty, Self-Improvement, and Ethics among Small-Scale Entrepreneurs in Guatemala City. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 41: 29–45. [CrossRef]

Gooren, Henri. 2010a. Ortega for President: The Religious Rebirth of Sandinismo in Nicaragua. *European Review of Latin American and Caribbean Studies* 89: 11–27. [CrossRef]

Gooren, Henri. 2010b. The Pentecostalization of Religion and Society in Latin America. *Exchange* 39: 355–76. [CrossRef]

Gooren, Henri. 2013. The Growth and Development of Non-Catholic Churches in Paraguay. In *Spirit and Power: The Global Impact of Pentecostal Growth*. Edited by Richard Flory, Donald E. Miller and Kimon Sargeant. New York: Oxford University Press, pp. 83–98.

Gooren, Henri. 2015. The Growth and Development of Non-Catholic Churches in Chile. *Review of Religious Research* 57: 191–218. [CrossRef]

Gooren, Henri. 2018. Mass Media Impact on Christian Churches in Paraguay. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Society for the Scientific Study of Religion, Las Vegas, NV, USA, October 27.

Hanratty, Dannin M., and Sandra W. Meditz. 2005. *Paraguay: A Country Profile*; Washington, DC: Federal Research Division for the Library of Congress. Available online: http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/profiles/Paraguay.pdf (accessed on 28 October 2008).

Holland, Clifton L. 2006. Paraguay. In *Worldmark Encyclopedia of Religious Practices: Volume 3, Countries M-Z*. Edited by Andrew Riggs. Detroit: Thomson Gale, pp. 205–9.

Holvast, René. 2009. *Spiritual Mapping in the United States and Argentina, 1989–2005: A Geography of Fear*. Leiden: Brill.

Johnstone, Patrick, and Jason Mandryk. 2001. *Operation World*, 6th ed. Carlisle: Paternoster Lifestyle.

Lalive d'Epinay, Christian. 1969. *Haven of the Masses: A Study of the Pentecostal Movement in Chile*. London: Lutterworth.

Levine, Daniel H. 1986. Religion and Politics in Comparative Perspective. *Comparative Politics* 19: 95–122. [CrossRef]

Levine, Daniel H. 2012. *Politics, Religion, and Society in Latin America*. Boulder: Lynne Rienner.

Mandryk, Jason. 2010. *Operation World*, 7th ed. Colorado Springs: Biblical Publishing.

Masías-Hinojosa, Víctor Hugo, Paola Ramírez-Pérez, and María Inés Winkler-Müller. 2008. Construcción de identidad en personas convertidas a la Iglesia Metodista Pentecostal de Chile. *Forum: Qualitative Social Research* 9: 1–29.

Méndez Grimaldi, Idilio. 2009. Batalla contra el imperialismo, la oligarquía y la corrupción. In *Gobierno Lugo: Herencia, gestión y desafíos*. Edited by Luis Rojas Villagra. Asunción: BASE Investigaciones Sociales, pp. 25–42.

Meyer, Peter J. 2011. *Chile: Political and Economic Conditions and U.S. Relations*. Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service of the Library of Congress. Available online: http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/row/R40126.pdf (accessed on 11 November 2011).

O'Neill, Kevin L. 2010. *City of God: Christian Citizenship in Postwar Guatemala*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

O'Shaughnessy, Hugh, and Edgar Venerando Ruiz Díaz. 2009. *The Priest of Paraguay: Fernando Lugo and the Making of a Nation*. London and New York: Zed Books.

Parker, Cristián. 2000. Religion and Culture. In *Chile in the Nineties*. Edited by Cristián Toloza and Eugenio Lahera. Stanford: Stanford University Press, pp. 617–60.

Patterson, Eric. 2005. Religious Activity and Political Participation: The Brazilian and Chilean Cases. *Latin American Politics and Society* 47: 1–29. [CrossRef]

Pérez, Rodrigo. 2011. Pérez confirma que Harold Caballeros será el canciller. *Siglo XXI*, November 12.
Plett, Rodolfo. 1988. *El protestantismo en el Paraguay*. Asunción: FLET/IBA.
Segovia, Diego. 2009. La necesaria democratización de las comunicaciones. In *Gobierno Lugo: Herencia, gestión y desafíos*. Edited by Luis Rojas Villagra. Asunción: BASE Investigaciones Sociales, pp. 239–53.
Sepúlveda, Juan. 1988. Pentecostal Theology in the Context of the Struggle for Life. In *Faith Born in the Struggle for Life: A Re-Reading of Protestant Faith in Latin America Today*. Edited by Dow Kirkpatrick. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, pp. 299–318.
Tennekes, Hans. 1985. *El movimiento pentecostal en la sociedad chilena*. Amsterdam and Iquique: Cultural Anthropology VU University/CIREN.
Thompson, Warren. 2012. *Evangelizing the State: Mennonite Brethren Technocrats in Paraguayan State Reform, 2003–2008*. Albuquerque: MA Thesis in Sociology, University of New Mexico.
Wightman, Jill M. 2007. Healing the Nation: Pentecostal Identity and Social Change in Bolivia. In *Conversion of a Continent: Contemporary Religious Change in Latin America*. Edited by Timothy J. Steigenga and Edward L. Cleary. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, pp. 239–55.

© 2018 by the author. Licensee MDPI, Basel, Switzerland. This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).

religions

MDPI

Article

'The Altars Are Holding the Nation in Captivity': Zambian Pentecostalism, Nationality, and African Religio-Political Heritage

Chammah J. Kaunda

Human Development Science—Human Sciences Research Council—(HDS-HSRC), School of Religion, Philosophy and Classics, University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN), Scottsville 3209, Pietermaritzburg, South Africa; ckaunda@hsrc.ac.za; Tel.: +27-76-378-8383

Received: 8 February 2018; Accepted: 23 April 2018; Published: 28 April 2018

Abstract: The study draws on ontocracy political theory to investigate Zambian Pentecostal interpretations of politics as a sacred realm of contestations between forces of good and evil. It argues that Zambian Pentecostal theology of nationality is a continuation of traditional African religio-cultural ethnonational heritage. It demonstrates how Zambian Pentecostal theology of nationality is based on socio-historically constructed conceptions that drew their foundation from traditional myths, symbols and cultures. It concludes that Zambian Pentecostalism has failed to make distinctions among various types of human authorities, thereby promoting a theology of nationality that mystifies the source of the political authority of the presidents of the nation, who are perceived as absorbing both secular and spiritual responsibilities.

Keywords: altars; ethnonationality; Zambian Pentecostalism; religio-political heritage; ontocracy political theory

---

1. Introduction

> *Culture is an inter-generational repository and heritage or set of values, and an active shaping repertoire of meanings and images, embodied in values, myths and symbols that serve to unite a group of people with shared experiences and memories, and differentiate them from outsiders* (Smith 1998, p. 187).

In this statement, Anthony Smith, taking an ethno-symbolic approach, presents an argument that explains the persistence of ethnonationalities. He argues that ethnonationality involves the co-existence of fluidity and resilience. It is dynamic and at the same time, a continuation of ancient ancestries and commonalities that transcends the present and thus is not reducible to its present manifestations. Smith's ethno-symbolism is middle ground among the three approaches to nations and nationalism: modernism, neo-perennialism and postmodern constructivism. The modernist view holds that nations and nationalism are a product of modernization, resulting from an amalgamation of forces of urbanization, industrialization and secular education. They are thus the work of an elite culture, which also deliberately delineates and controls them. The neo-perennialists reject modernism, contending that some nations have existed long before the inception of the processes of modernity. Postmodern constructivists hold that nations are "ultimately a fiction engineered by elites using 'invented traditions' for purposes of social control" (Smith 2009, p. 11). The strength of ethno-symbolism is in the ability to perceive value in the three schools of thought. This approach highlights the significance of ethnic groups, with their symbolic and cultural practices, as intricately linked with the formation of nations as human heritage (Smith 2009, p. 87; Kaufman 2011, pp. 208–9). Ethnonationalities are embodied in the myths, symbols and religio-cultural heritage (Hutchinson

2001, p. 76). Anderson (Anderson 2006/1983, pp. 5–6) asserts that the “nation” (not “state”) is an “imagined political community—and imagined as inherently limited and sovereign.” Llywelyn (2010, p. 57) premises her argument on that of Anderson, advancing nationality as a reality that is both fictive and objective; imagined and invented; and “the experience of feeling national identity remains partly ineffable, extending beyond the reach of human language and analysis.” Llywelyn (2010, p. 281) underlines that “nationality is one of those [methods] by which human beings construe meaning and purpose for their lives.” If this assertion is true, many so-called African nations are political states[1] housing multi-ethno-nations, each centered on traditional leadership in line with customary law and practices as the physical manifestation of a religio-cultural national heritage. In other words, nationality is contextual in nature, that is to say, it arises and is shaped by specific historical exigencies, experiences, cultural imaginations and social contexts. It also means that models of nationality vary from ethnic group to ethnic group.

The forgoing raises a question of the relationship between religion, ethnonationalism, and state as an area of important theological and social-scientific interest for scholars of global Pentecostalism. This study examines how this relationship has unfolded within Zambian Pentecostalism. It investigates how African Pentecostal movements adopt, embody, and transform ethnonational imaginations via the particular case of Zambian Pentecostalism. In seeking to respond to these questions, the article utilizes an ontocratic political theory to analyze Zambian Pentecostal theology of nationality as a specific religious phenomenon.

2. Theory and Method: The Challenge of Ontocracy

The article is based on a wider project that sought to capture Zambian Pentecostal culture and identity that embodies its understanding of God’s mission in the context of national politics (Kaunda 2017a). The data was gathered from 350 Pentecostal ministers, leaders, and ordinary people through a qualitative multidirectional approach that included face-to-face interviews, group discussions, surveys, emails, and blogs in Lusaka and Ndola from March 2016 to October 2017 (see Kaunda 2017a).[2] The findings show that there are contestations within Pentecostal interpretations and engagements with nationality. On the one hand, there are some conservative Pentecostals, especially the elites, who have rejected separation of the throne from the altar thereby promoting a political theology that uncritically integrates politics and religion in what Arend Theodoor Van Leeuwen (1964, p. 165) classifies as “ontocracy.” On the other hand, there are also voices of dissent arguing for a critical approach to politics by appreciating critical principles of a democratic society including advancing social justice and economic equality.

This article employs ontocracy theory to analyse Pentecostal theology of nationality (Bediako 1993, 1995). It argues that the phenomenon of nationality has empirical implications because it is embedded within the faith communities’ ongoing participation in religiously informed political contexts in Africa. Ontocracy as political theory seeks to understand how religious communities use a religious frame of reference based on their particular faith tradition to interpret and legitimate political spheres as extensions of divine rule. It argues that religious traditions have well formulated notions of nationalities which are based on their beliefs and practices that are used to promote social control through specific values, norms, and ethics. The challenge is that such religious approaches do not separate between the religion and political realms but rather perceive them as an integrated system. Bediako (2004, p. 102) stresses that “by the close association of religious (sacred) authority and political power in the person of the traditional ruler, African traditional societies [are] ‘ontocracies’, sacralizing authority and power with the effectual integration of altar and throne” as demonstrated in the next section.

1 In this article, the State is defined as legal and political entity with a territorial sovereignty, which is conferred on the people living inside the borders in order to regulate their movements (Gallaher et al. 2009).

2 Following accepted social scientific and humanities practice, pseudonyms have been used for all participants represented in this manuscript.

Walls (1976, p. 187) believes that "Africa has avoided Christian ontocracies." He wrote, "Most African states were ontocratic before the arrival of Christianity and Western influences; and, however one assesses the impact of Christianity on African society, it can be argued that Christianity often provided a new worldview just ... when traditional worldviews were breaking down" (Walls 1976, p. 187). Perhaps, this observation makes sense within mainline Protestant and Roman Catholic churches in Africa. As highlighted below, most of the Pentecostal churches seem to have not adequately navigated ontocracies, but rather have evolved new ontocracies. These ontocracies have been developed through uncritical synthesis of Western informed Christian faith and African religio-cultural national heritage.

Since nationality is an aspect of politics, scholars suggest empirical theology as a methodological approach. Jongeneel (1995) and Faix (2007) affirm that empirical research is a methodological foundation for desacralisation thinking as well. This approach focuses on how Pentecostalism interprets the phenomenon of nationality rather than on the views of specific congregations (Osmer 2008). This means, if theology is critical reflection on religious praxis of the church and is contextual in character, and if historical and cultural context is a factor in experiencing and articulating the Christian faith, then, to understand the religious foundation of Zambian Pentecostal notions of nationality, we have to turn to the religio-cultural heritage that formed their notions of nationality. African religio-cultural heritage can reveal clues to help us understand the cultural psychology that is at work within Zambian Pentecostal theology of nationality.

3. African Concept of Nationality

I have classified the traditional notion of community as an ethnonational entity. This is in keeping with the matrilineal imagination of the Bemba-speaking people of Zambia, who regard themselves as belonging to Chitimukulu's (The Big Tree/the title of the paramount king) kingdom (Bembaland). In contemporary Zambia, Bemba people are scattered across various provinces, but are mainly from the Northern, Muchinga and Luapula provinces. The Bemba notion of *icalo* (singular—nation) relates to understandings of nationality, nation, nationhood, national identity, nationalism, ethnicity and ethnic identity. Icalo is a geopolitical-spiritual unit with fixed borders, and the name dates from antiquity (Richards 1940, p. 91). In the local language, icalo is differentiated from *umushi* (community). Icalo is comprised of *ifyalo* (plural) or self-sustaining geopolitical-spiritual units, which are a replication of the icalo. *Ifyalo* are decentralized governments, each governed by an *infumu* (king). This form of governance could be described as an "implicit monarchy"—a kingdom in which other kings and kingdoms exist. These fractional kings and kingdoms derive their powers from both their localized ancestors and the paramount King. These diffused kings are almost an end in themselves, within their specific geopolitical-spiritual contexts. The paramount King has his own icalo, called Lubemba, in addition to being the overall King of the Bemba nation (Meebelo 1971). Ifyalo are comprised of *imishi* (communities) under the governance of *mwine mushi* (a steward of the community). *Ifyalo* are unionized in Chitimukulu, who sits on the original *infuba* (shrine or altar) of the first ancestors who established icalo. Infuba is the ultimate spiritual power of the king. Icalo, ifyalo and imishi are all centered around the sacred relic shrines (*babenye*)—hereditary relics of the past kings, their stools, spears, specific body parts (teeth, eyes, tongue, private parts, and nails) which are removed after their death and preserved at the *ing'anda ya babenye* (the house of relics/altar). As the Bemba people would say, *infuba elubemba lwine* (the altar is really the Bemba nation). The altar gives the Bemba people what could be classified as a national spiritual sovereignty. The nation is not neutral. It is spiritual in character and protected not so much by the natural as the spiritual realm.

Hence, the *Ukusefya pa Ng'wena* (celebrating on the crocodile) annual ceremony is the most sacred of Bemba ceremonies, in which Chitimukulu plays a dominant spiritual role. Not merely a celebration of the formation of the Bemba people and their nation, it is a period of renewal of the ancient covenant with the ancestors, including acts of sacrifice at *kunfuba* (sacred places) both within and outside the palace. These ceremonies are shrouded in secret rituals of consecration, purification and *ukushilika icalo ne nfumu* (fortification of the nation and the king). The prosperity and wellbeing of the nation

and its people lie not in their abilities or hard work, but as it were in the mystical spheres of life. If the ancestors are not pleased, the people's abilities and hard work might yield nothing. Ukusefya pa Ng'wena is viewed as restoring eco-relational balance, a symbolic way to advance towards the fullness of life for icalo. Thus, Ukusefya pa Ng'wena is also a ritual of repentance for the wrongs committed on the land over the previous year, and a quest to repair the breach in various segments of eco-relationality—between humanity and God (including, ancestors); humanity and environment; humanity and humanity.

The altar is significant in the Bemba worldview, with each ethnonation, each community, and each household (inhabited by a legitimately married couple) having its own altar. These altars could be regarded as diffused, because they are all subject to the ultimate altar of Chitimukulu—the ultimate source of life for the entire ethnonation. The altar is a court of law, and the seat of spiritual powers, political administration, policy formulation, and so on. It is the unionizing space of the whole community. It is at the altar where grievances between the king and the people, and among the people themselves, are all brought for the ancestors to arbitrate (Wilson 1959, p. 12). National calamities and all forms of misfortune are brought before the altar, which is the soul of the kingdom. It is the breath and life force of the whole nation. They believe that if anything goes wrong with the altar, the whole nation suffers.

The king cannot function without the altar. The two are essentially intertwined. The king is an embodiment of the ancestors, whose presence is symbolized by the altar. The act of sitting on the ancestral stool ("seat of power") brings the king into a mystical union with the ancestors (Geurts 2002). It unites him/her with the ancestors in a mysterious way, such that the source of power of the ancestors is in his/her own body and personality, which he/she passes on to the people, their herds and fields, and the whole territory (Wilson 1971; Oberg 1940). Olupona (2014, p. 38) observes, "Kings are said to possess mystical, life-sustaining powers, with their own well-being intimately entwined with the well-being of their people, lands, and institutions." Olupona adds, "For this reason, African kings are often the subject of extremely strict taboos that address how their person can be treated, predicated on indexical relationship between the body of the king and the body of the kingdom." The welfare and prosperity of the body of the kingdom are intricately locked to the life-giving functioning of the body of the king. The king is a direct link to a spiritual source of life through the ancestors, and any calamities and natural disasters are mostly linked to his failure to please them. The people believe that the authority and power of the ancestors is embodied in the king, who acts as the unionization of religion and political power in his body and personality. The king is not like any other person; by his person and being, he is the kingdom in a mystical sense. As Mbiti (1969, p. 178) argues, rulers

> . . . are not simply political heads: they are the mystical and religious heads, the divine symbol of their people's health and welfare. The individual as such may not have outstanding talents or abilities, but their office is the link between human rule and spiritual government. They are therefore divine or sacral rulers, the shadow or reflection of God's rule in the universe. People regard them as God's earthly viceroys.

Fortes and Evans-Pritchard (1940, p. 16) note,

> An African ruler is not to his people merely a person who can enforce his will on them. He is the axis of their political relations, the symbol of their unity and exclusiveness, and embodiment of their essential values. He is more than a secular ruler . . . his credentials are mystical and are derived from antiquity. Where there is no chief, the balanced segments which compose the political structure are vouched for by tradition and myth and their interrelations are guided by values expressed in mystical symbols.

Fortes and Evans-Pritchard (1940, p. 18) further argue, "the social system is, as it were, removed to a mystical plane, where it figures as a system of sacred values beyond criticism and revision." While it is true that traditional authority was "removed to a mystical plane," however, the system was not

"beyond criticism and revision" as demonstrated in the next paragraph. Indeed, people could not criticize or revise the mystical powers of the ancestors, as embodied in the king. For in the person and body of king, the altar and the throne are mystically integrated. The king functioned as priest-prophet at the altar of the ancestors. He performed religious ceremonies and divination on behalf of the nation (Olupona 2014; Gluckman 1940). In this regard, Willoughby (1928, p. 214) observes that such rites "were designed as a ritual of intercession with spirits of the old chiefs, the tutelary gods of their tribes. Hence, the surviving successor of any given line of chiefs, who was born to share their divine prestige, is the only possible officiant."

Yet, the myths that surround the origin and person of the rulers (such as taboos, superstitions, and prohibitions) suggest that Africans understand that "much danger is attributed to the exercise of power" (Mathuray 2009, p. 68). As Mathuray (2009, p. 68) argues, it is "both a symbolic way of preventing abuse of power and a reflection of the humanistic bias of the religious order." The king's exercise of power is constrained with ancestral checks and balances within the religious moral system. In Bemba religious systems of thought, morality originates and flows from *Lesa* (God, the ground of all beings and moral order) through the ancestors into the community and ecological order. "God is the initiator of the people's way of life, its tradition" (Magesa 1997, p. 35). The ancestors are custodians of morality, the reason for its establishment and its ultimate purpose. Thus, as Fortes and Evans-Pritchard (1940, p. 19) argue, the ritual functions of rulers are not merely a means to sanction political authority, but rather "serve, also, as a sanction against the abuse of political power and as a means of constraining political functionaries to perform their administrative obligations as well as their religious duties, lest the common good suffer injury."

4. Pentecostal Ontocracies: The Material Legacies of African Religio-Political Past

How does the foregoing discussion relate to Zambian Pentecostal theology of nationality? It is important to highlight that African religions are not only religious imaginations but also worldviews. Harvey Sindima (1989, p. 537) defines the African worldview by stating, "The way people construe their world informs their self-understanding, relation to others, nature and God. In other words, a model of living arises out of a particular cosmological framework. The framework shapes the mind or informs knowledge and understanding." As a way of life, the African religio-cultural worldviews lay the foundation for a collective African consciousness that continues (albeit in a modified form) to shape the understandings, interpretations and conceptions of reality. Thus, the worldview is "a construct about the makeup of life as it struggles with the questions of reality, truth, ethics and history. It is a construct that provides a point of departure, a sense of direction, a locus of destination, and a strategy of unity for human thought, life and action" (Fowler 2009, p. 8). In contemporary African Christianity, the African religious imaginations function in the interstices between continuity and discontinuity with the notion of the spiritual and the physical reality as many scholars have observed (Maxwell 1999, 2002, 2006; Meyer 1999; Gifford 1998, 2004, 2009; Gordon 2012). We may describe the African religio-cultural worldviews as "the central control box" of cultures, as Kraft (2005, p. 44) argues, "a basic model of reality" that generates and determines the value systems of African people. This implies that many Africans are a product of African religio-cultures. While many have converted to new religious traditions, their worldviews remain unconverted (Mbiti 1993). In other words, the key elements of a traditional African spirituality and worldviews are traceable in most African Christian imaginations (Dickson 1975; Kibicho 1978; Bediako 2004).

Several other scholars have noted how African religio-cultural systems remain salient and resilient in shaping morality and politics in the modern public spaces (Kalu 2008; Oduyoye 1993; Dickson 1965; Asamoah-Gyadu 2005; Clark 2011). It must, however, be acknowledged that the notions of African religio-cultural worldviews cannot easily be assigned to the entire Pentecostal movement. Rather, it is possible to identify general characteristics that influence and shape Pentecostal political theological perspectives (Taylor 2006). One of the key motivations for the political engagement of

Zambian Pentecostals is grounded in their theology of nationality, which appears to have an affinity with traditional African notions of nationality (as discussed above).

5. Zambian Pentecostal Theology of Nationalism: Findings and Discussions

In what follows, I discuss the findings, giving attention to the critical contours of the Zambian Pentecostal theology of nationality.

5.1. Integration of the Sacred and the Secular

The findings of the interviews show that Zambian Pentecostals conceive nations not as neutral geopolitical spaces, but rather as having spiritual destinies, which evil forces seek to distort. In an interview with Rev. Mushala (3 July 2016), a Pentecostal theologian and lawyer, he argues,

> Zambian Pentecostal worldview is heavily predicated on indigenous worldviews that do not create a distinction between the sacred and the secular or between faith and politics. In much of [the] Zambian traditional worldview, God lives in the state and the state exists for God or gods. The advent of Christianity did not change this predisposition among [Zambians].

Mushala highlights that nationality is a sacred social construction that emerges in the way religious people construe their place in the world in relation to themselves, others, nature, and God. For him, the Zambian Pentecostal theology of nationality is not a reaction to traditional African religious nationality, but rather an organic inculturation of this worldview. Pentecostals see the old systems as divisive, obsolete, and, at worst, as "demonic altars" which need to find new interpretations that could help transcend any single ethnonational community, to synchronize with the One Ultimate Altar erected to Jesus at the Zambian national level. They argue that to enthrone Jesus as King of Kings at the national altar is critical, because "many of our cities and nations are under the control of the evil one. Almost all geographical areas have principalities in charge" (Bunda 2006, p. XIII). Apostle Bwinga (9 April 2016) agrees: "nations are ruled by principalities, these are the ones using the president, to declare the nation what it is." Satan, the prince of darkness, has set up a rule over the various nations, cities, ethnic groups, families and individuals under the governance of demons, principalities and powers. The Zambian Pentecostal form of sacralization of political realms has an affinity with traditional African worldview as explained above. This becomes even clearer in the way they interpret the State House as seat of spiritual power.

5.2. State House—Seat of Authority—National Altar

The symbol of national political power, in the Pentecostal imagination, is State House. State House is defined much in the same way as the traditional African ancestral stool or *infuba* (shrine, gate, altar or foundation) is defined in African religio-political thought, as a symbol of heritage and authority—a "seat of power/Authority" (Nwaka 2007, p. 74; see also Geurts 2002, p. 87). According to Zambian Pentecostals, the State House is "a national gate" between the spiritual and physical realm (Nwaka 2010, pp. 7–8). State House is interpreted symbolically as a source of all political and spiritual power that controls the national resources, prosperity and wellbeing. As Kachikoti (2015c, p. 6) explains, "Altars lay foundations, which decide the nature and strength of every building. Demonic commitments destroy foundations, and once that happens, even the righteous can do nothing." Kachikoti (2015c, p. 6) stresses, "Zambia has a rich biblical heritage with difficult tribal (sic) foundations, both of which are decisive factors in our frequent progress with frequent retrogression." He believes the explanation for "[t]he unbelievable levels of poverty in the midst of plenteous natural resources arise from demonic foundations laid at our national, ethnic, family and personal beginnings." As an altar, the State House "commands a great authority and influence over every sphere of life" (Nwaka 2007, p. 10). The altar is the foundation of everything that could be advanced in the nation. It takes an altar to lay the foundation for anything. Apostle Alunda (6 April 2016) explains that

> at the national level, the altar is different, because every church . . . is an altar, raised to the living God. Every church that calls the name of the Lord in truth and in spirit; it's an altar to God and prayer is part of an offering that we give to God . . . Now this altar which is been erected unto God the father is national . . . this altar speaks for the nation of Zambia. It will speak against poverty, it will speak against disunity, it will speak against occultism, it will demolish the demonic altars that [were] raised by our founding fathers in this nation. When that is erected [it] is a greater altar, because God's altar, who can raise a fist against God and win? No one, so [. . .] demonic altars are scared of it. Those who understand spiritual things in the demonic world and . . . in the spiritual sense they know it, they know that the national one is going to smash [. . .] [the] kingdom of darkness.

The altar is the source of national spiritual power, from which the president draws power and authority for political governance. Nwaka (2007, p. 73) argues that "every throne, whether in the kingdom of God or from the kingdom of darkness . . . operate[s] with an altar. The altar is one of the foundational components that make up the throne of rulership." You cannot separate the throne from the altar. The Zambian Pentecostal ontocratic tendencies that have resulted from uncritical inculturation of African religio-political worldviews points to an important area that needs further study in both social science and religious studies. It remains unclear whether this process is unrecognized or has merely occurred in an uncritical, unexamined way.

Zambian Pentecostals argue that the president of the nation can never become powerful without the altar. They believe that the altar gives power to the institution of presidency. Pastor Sunday Sinyangwe (2017) of Shalom Embassy Ministries International affirms: "You want to sit on the throne called State House . . . you can't sit on that throne, you can't rule on that throne if you are not connected to the righteous God. Otherwise, the seat will reject you. The seat will say 'no to you'." During the tenure of President Kenneth Kaunda, the first President of the Republic of Zambia, it is argued that the State House drew power from the prince of humanism. There is no nation that is spiritually neutral—every nation bows to something. This also means that the spiritual power to which State House is dedicated determines the nation's character (Kachikoti 2015c, p. 6). The theology of State House plays a significant role in the Zambian Pentecostal theology of nations, because Pentecostals believe it gives character to the nation. As already demonstrated above, there is a clear connection between the State House and the traditional ancestral stool, as both are perceived to have both religious and political dimensions. In other words, both signify the soul of the nations. As Kachikoti (2015a) argues: "Nations too have a soul and a conscience." This argument is expressed succinctly in Sri Aurobindo's spiritual psychology. Aurobindo (1997, p. 97) argues,

> The nation or society, like the individual, has a body, an organic life, a moral and aesthetic temperament, a developing mind and a soul, behind all these signs and powers for the sake of which they exist. One may say that, like the individual, it essentially is a soul rather than has one.

The process of consecrating State House after Chiluba won the presidential elections in 1991 was meant to consecrate the national altar from the demonic forces to which President Kaunda had dedicated the altar. One of the key aspects of the Pentecostal theology of nationality is a belief that the demonic altars established by ethnonational communities and by the modern founding fathers of the present Zambia have not been dealt with, and as such have been fighting against the national altar established to honor Jesus. Thus, when Kaunda prayed a prayer of release, many Pentecostals believed some key altars were dealt with in spirit. Kaunda (cited in Kachikoti 2015b, p. 5) declared,

> I Kenneth David Kaunda first President and founding father of the Republic of Zambia wish to express my heartfelt gratitude to God Almighty, the President and the people of Zambia for honouring me as the founding father of this Nation.
>
> I hereby pronounce today a blessing of peace, prosperity and stability upon our Nation of Zambia, the Presidency and the people of Zambia.

> I bless and therefore release the nation, its people and the Presidency from every negative force made against this nation. I submit the souls now living and posterity . . . and its Presidency to the salvation and Lordship of our Lord Jesus Christ and the Father.
>
> I further declare that Zambia shall forever enjoy tranquility and shall remain a united and peaceful people under the motto: One Zambia, one nation.
>
> The Lord bless Zambia, and keep Zambia.
>
> God bless you all. I thank you.

This prayer is significant to Pentecostals as Kaunda was accused of opening national spiritual doors to the forces of darkness through his introduction of humanism and subsequent establishment of the David Universal Temple at the State House. The temple, named after Kaunda's father, David, taught Eastern mysticism (such as transcendental meditation, the heaven that is on earth, humanism, and reincarnation).[3] Thus, Kaunda's so-called "spiritual release [of] the nation" is perceived to have positively addressed evil forces, which he had allowed to enter the nation. Most Pentecostals saw the prayer as a public acknowledgement and renunciation of the cultic covenant, which Kaunda had allegedly entered. These Pentecostals believe that through this cultic covenant he made with forces of darkness, Kaunda opened the spiritual gates of the nation, thereby exposing the national altar to these demonic forces that manipulated the nation politically and economically. Thus, Kachikoti (2015b, p. 6) rallied fellow Pentecostals to spiritual warfare. He demanded,

> Thirty days after Kenneth Kaunda pronounced a spiritual 'release' upon the nation, [the] time is now for the soldiers of the Cross of Jesus Christ to seek out and practically uproot every altar that speaks and works evil towards the present and future of this country. If Zambia were not a Christian Nation, this discussion would be unnecessary. It is all about the powers that the first president spoke of when he 'released' Zambia from all 'negative forces' at State House on 25 May. Because of his privileged position as the founding father of the republic, he is well placed to be aware of key altars and shrines which are the source of 'negative forces,' that were set up at different locations for the purpose of securing the ruling UNIP [United Independence Party] then, and to fortify his rule. It is time for him to work with those children of the Living God who are divinely endowed and assigned to demolish any remaining major altars and shrines that have ultimately impounded the national and familial economies of the land. The children of God have since the Christian Nation Declaration in 1991 been praying and visiting territorial landmarks that are entry points for demonic influence, uprooting altars that hold power over tribes and families. After pronouncing his blessing on the nation, KK can expedite the completion of this process.

There is a general belief among some Zambian Pentecostals that in his quest for power, Kaunda had strayed from the Christian path and joined cultic religious traditions that became the foundation and source of his political authority. Lilanda (30 May 2016) underlines this:

> Zambia actually started off very well in a Christian background, but over time, evil came in and evil altars were raised . . . we have several evil altars in this country that were raised during that time and you see, you need to understand that power, when people are in power they are either with God or with the devil.

The argument is that political power is never neutral, and there is no vacuum in the spirit: politicians draw their power either from God or from Satan (Nwaka 2010, p. 73). In her critique of the traditional African religious altar, Lilanda (30 May 2016) argues that:

---

[3] Elsewhere, I have discussed on details Pentecostal view of Kaunda's humanism and its relationship to Pentecostal theology of nations (Kaunda 2017b).

> you cannot discard your culture . . . that's what makes us, our culture is what makes us, what you just need to realize . . . you see in the spiritual world we have what we call altars; you have godly altars and evil altars, it's a battle between altars. The traditional ceremonies, usually it's a time for them to sacrifice, it's a time for them to feed to their altars rather. Before all that happens that you see on TV, they have done things, not all of them, for most of them, for most of those ceremonies . . . they have to submit to one authority. So there are those of us who submit to the authority of God and those who submit to the authority of the devil, and they have their rituals the way we have our rituals in our churches, Holy Communion, we have tithe, they also have rituals. For us we have the one sacrifice, Jesus Christ, he died once his blood was shed, that's it. They still have to kill that is why you hear [about] ritual killings, they need blood, human blood for their power to continue, you understand. So those ceremony[ies], they used them for those things to get power to do whatever is it they need to do, to service their altars, because those altars they need to be serviced. So it's not as easy as it looks, on the top it might look like it's politics, this one I know, this one no . . . no it's very deep, it's very spiritual. You know to govern, to rule, you have to fight with principalities because they also don't want to let go.

It appears that Lilanda is accusing some African politicians of using human sacrifice to secure political positions. Some of these accusations are based on what is described as ritual murders in which the person is murdered as a human sacrifice to secure or consolidate political power from a specific supernatural deity. Pentecostals perceive politics as an arena of supernatural activities. They believe that nations are ruled by supernatural forces, from which some politicians get their powers to win elections and stay in power (see also Nwaka 2010, p. 73; Bunda 2006, p. 13). The public visibility of Pentecostalism is also tied to the need to combat negative spiritual forces in the political life of modern Zambia in order for the nation to experience prosperity. For Rev. Mulimba (9 June 2016),

> the core element in Pentecostal praying that has impacted the nation, has reached a spiritual warfare and when you are dealing with spiritual warfare you begin to engage traditional spiritual systems. And so it has [an] effect on all level[s] but in regards to the chief it has brought awareness to the nature of those ancestral spirits. To which they are ancestors their predecessor hold allegiance, it's a very fundamental thing, practically in every traditional chieftaincy you can't be a chief without going through a ritual that connects you to the old dead chief. Yeah, you can't and to break away from that one requires enlightenment and the true nature of those altars that have been raised. The next thing you need to do is to know, to have access to spiritual power that can counter those processes.

This reflects the traditional African beliefs that the altar is a source of spiritual power and that nations are spiritual in character. This means that Zambian Pentecostals' religio-political worldview affirms that traditional religions "revolve [. . .] around the quest for power—how to acquire and retain power for protection and prevention against forces of evil." Thus, Zambian Pentecostals believe that s/he who occupies this altar has the power to control the destiny of the nation. There is, therefore, a need for good people to have access to good power, which can be used to counteract the powers of evil forces (Mbiti 1975, pp. 42, 165). This view of State House has implications for the Pentecostal theology of the President in the modern political context.

5.3. The Presidency as Spiritual Institution

Since Pentecostals argue for integration of the altar and the throne, it remains that the one who sits on the national throne unionizes within her or himself religion and politics. In essence, the individual ambiguously takes on the spiritual functions of a priest and prophet. Zambian Pentecostals rarely separate, even in thought, presidential office from religious functions. They believe traditional leaders and even the president cannot be powerful without the altars, as the path to the spiritual realm is through the altar. Many respondents argue that altars (whether demonic or good) are established

and sustained by priests. The altar and the priesthood are indivisible. In the case of State House, the president, by virtue of assuming the presidency, is conceived as occupying a priest-kingly position, and is sometimes referred to as a prophet or man of God. For instance, Bible Gospel Church in Africa overseer, Bishop Peter Ndhlovu, distinguishes between the president and the presidency as an institution. He argues that the presidency as an institution deserves respect, even in the midst of disagreements with the one holding office at any given time. He emphasizes that "people must learn to respect the Presidency because the Presidency is an institution and if you don't respect that office, who will you respect?" (Cited in Lusakatimes.com 2017). Bishop Ndhlovu and many other Pentecostals regard the office of the president in terms of an African religio-political view as having being instituted by God. This argument affirms African religious imaginations (as argued above), which view the king as sitting on the seat of the ancestors. The president must be respected, and never spoken of badly or confronted. S/he must be rendered acts of reverence and loyalty because, in essence, s/he represents the rule of God. It does not matter whether s/he has the skills required for the job–his or her office is a representation of spiritual government. This approach to the presidency has a sacral dimension, as the president is perceived as the shadow or reflection of God's rule over the nation (Mbiti 1969, pp. 177–78).

For instance, Rev. Godfridah Sumaili (Sumaili 2016), assistant pastor at Bread of Life International and minister of National Guidance and Religious Affairs (MNGRA), notes: "He [President Edgar Lungu] is a man of God, he hears God, he has been obedient to God to create the Ministry [MNGRA]." The president is not perceived as a mere human, but a spiritual and political head of the nation. The Pentecostals stress, "*[a]ll leadership is spiritual. Physical leadership is a representation of a spiritual authority* ... [W]hen a leader comes to power, there is a spiritual authority to which he submits his position. It is from this authority that he will draw power to rule and make decisions. He must dedicate his throne to that spiritual power" (Nwaka 2007, p. 74, italics added for emphasis). Nwaka (2007, p. 74, italics added for emphasis) stresses,

> The Bible tells us that all authority is from God. The devil also tries to usurp this authority and give his own authority to men [sic] in order that they may rule. Therefore, it does not matter which spirit—whether God's or a spirit from the devil—men [sic] will rule because they receive power to do so, from a spiritual source ... if he comes in by witchcraft, he will dedicate the throne to the evil spirit. If he comes in by any means but God, then that *seat of authority* is connected to [an] evil source from the kingdom of darkness.

Nwaka (2007, p. 74) believes it is only by the same spiritual force that gave them power to rule that politicians can sustain their position:

> When people begin to [lose] control or need [some] interpretation of inexplicable occurrences in their lives or territories, they go back to the source of power and inquire from it. If it is an evil spirit then they are required to make sacrifices and promises of relinquishing their territory in a deeper way to the source of their power. If they enquire from the Lord, the Holy Spirit will give them guidance.

The argument from Nwaka suggests that the president's office is not a combination of separate offices, but rather a single office, "and its various duties and activities, and its rights, prerogatives, and privileges, make up a single unified whole" (Radcliffe-Brown 1940, p. XXI). Bishop Ndhlovu argues that a Christian president "has a mandate from God which no devil or man can destroy" (cited in Patriotic Front—PF 2016). Ndhlovu (cited in Patriotic Front—PF 2016) continues: "We are asking God to bless President Lungu so that he can deliver development in this country. If the hands of God are with President Lungu, he will accomplish what God has planned for him to deliver to Zambians." Similarly, State House chaplain, Rev. Atlas Samukuma (cited in Patriotic Front—PF 2016), emphasizes that since the government is Christian, it should "be guided by the Spirit of God, otherwise the nation could go astray." Nwaka highlights that only a throne dedicated to the Spirit of God can overcome

demonic altars. He noted, "many leaders, especially in Africa, who did not dedicate their positions to the God of heaven, but to the kingdom of darkness, have plunged our nation into anarchy, confusion, lack of development and failure *because that is the ultimate agenda of Satan—to steal, kill and destroy (John 10:10a).* **The kingdom of darkness will do things on earth as it is in hell**" (Nwaka 2007, p. 75, italics and bold in the original). He further argues: "those who dedicate their throne to Satan, through any other power, rather than God, do so to the detriment of their societies. Africa is a vivid example" (Nwaka 2007, p. 75). The emphasis here is that African leadership is religious, and its source of power is mystical.

However, Pentecostal sacralization, priestization and monarchianization of the presidency means that the president holds divine powers to make declarations over the nation. This understanding means that beyond the sacralizing of the president, the whole realm of politics is sacralized and democracy is at a risk of failing. It is now in the power of the president to follow his own intuition, as a king who was elected to become president. The president is perceived much like traditional kings, who drew their authority from the spiritual realm. For instance, Apostle Bwinga (25 April 2016) stresses, "Whatever the president declares has implications in the spiritual realm either negatively or positively . . . When the head of state declares something, he is dethroning, disarming principalities and powers." The president is depicted as a mediator or an intercessor, as one who wrestles against evil forces on behalf of the nation. The president has spiritual authority to determine the destiny of the nation, merely by the words coming from his mouth (Nwaka 2010). In other words, the president as a unionization of the altar and the throne, in his being, shapes the economy of the nation (Nwaka 2010, p. 89). In a way, the president is "a divine symbol of the nation's health and welfare" (Mbiti 1969, p. 178).

The anointing service for presidents such as Dr. Frederick J. T. Chiluba, the second Republican President of Zambia, which was to be inspired by the anointing of King David in the Old Testament, functions as a tool to consolidate the process of monarchianization. Chiluba was no longer a democratically elected president but the chosen and anointed servant of the Lord. Gifford (1998, p. 197) writes that Chiluba was charged to "[b]e strong and show yourself a man, keep the charge of the Lord your God, walk in his ways, keep his statutes, his commandments, his precepts, and his testimonies as it is written in the first and second testaments." Henceforth, his religious commitment would supersede political decisions (Phiri 2003, p. 406; Cheyeka 2008b, p. 161). Scholars observe that some in Pentecostal circles believe since Chiluba was anointed, he should not be touched or questioned. They argue that whoever contradicted Chiluba risked bringing divine curses on themselves, for Chiluba was the anointed of God (Phiri 2003; Cheyeka 2008b; Komakoma 2008). Chiluba positioned himself as prophetic-king. Some Pentecostals argued for Chiluba's ordination as pastor (Cheyeka 2008a, p. 115). With such beliefs, the consolidation of the priestization and monarchianization, Chiluba's political power was relocated within the realm of human capriciousness, in which abuse of the office could easily be justified.

The current president regards himself as a man of faith. President Edgar Chagwa Lungu (cited in Zambian Eye 2016) argues, "Zambians know the kind of leader that I am, and that I am a man of faith that walks with God." He has followed Chiluba's presidential trajectory and made declarations to confirm Zambia as a Christian nation. The implications of this ethical system are that the president can make a covenant on behalf of the nation. This is in keeping with the African religio-political ethical system, in which the covenant plays an important role in the formation of the ethnonational community. In the traditional African political system, all life is entrenched in covenantal imaginations.

However, some Pentecostals have not adopted the "theology of nation" perspective. Some participants during the fieldwork questioned the value of spiritualization of the institution of the presidency. They asked,

> Where does God come in because it is the people who decided via a 'vote' and many times the voters are not voting with a free will but because they have been bribed, bought, threatened and promised heaven on earth, which promises are usually not fulfilled anyhow? God cannot be brought into this 'mess' that we create ourselves. (Mulembwe, 21 June 2017).

For many of these Pentecostals, the act of election is merely aimed at meeting the righteous demands of modern democracy. In fact, the very process of holding elections has been coopted into Pentecostal theology, since God can use any means to fulfil his purpose in the world. This means elections only confirm the individual whom God has chosen. Unfortunately, as a respondent argued,

> What some church leaders do is flower/sugarcoat the result of such an election with randomly selected quotes from the Bible to try to sanitize or launder the result and make it God given. In the meantime opponents are whipped, intimidated, refused decent free campaigns; violence is rampant, media clampdown, etc. How can a true Christian, with a free conscience, pure heart, celebrate such a win and call it God anointed? (Mulembwe, 21 June 2017).

This shows that there is a struggle within Pentecostalism between politically conservative and progressive movements. On the one hand, the conservative advance Pentecostal-sanctioned notions of theology of the nation through political activism. On the other hand, the progressive with ecumenical orientation are seeking transformation through engagement with political structures in accordance with the mission of God in the world.

5.4. Covenanting the Nation—"Declaration" of the Christian Nation

One of the key features of Zambian Pentecostal ontological theology is covenantal spirituality. It is argued that any nation can claim to be Christian by virtue of having a large population of Christians. Conversely, Pentecostals argue that Zambia is a Christian nation not by demographic population but through the Declarations, which is in keeping with both the African religio-political worldview and Old Testament theology. In Pentecostal theology, the president is an embodiment of the power of the Spirit of God, and whatever he declares at the altar is established.

Declarations and decrees play a key role in the establishment of a covenant within Pentecostal theology. At the national level, the Pentecostal demand to establish the covenant is based on the belief that structures of evil are destroyed when believers raise an altar to Jesus Christ. Only an altar raised to Jesus can deal with national challenges. Thus, the covenant seeks to displace what Pentecostals perceive as wrong covenants upon which the nation and ethnonational communities are established. They argue that the ungodly covenants that were raised by the ancestors have brought nothing but national disgrace and misery. Nwaka contends, "In Africa, many of our fore-fathers made covenants with demons (sic) for prosperity, security, poverty, lack, sickness and other negative consequences." Some Pentecostals have taken for granted that African ancestors made agreements with demons. They reject the African religious past on account that it does not fit in with Western Christian categories. For them, President Chiluba made a covenant in the order of Abraham's covenant with God, in an attempt to redress the wrong covenants, realign the nation's original ontological union with God, and reestablish the primal harmony of life and the nation (Shenk 1983, p. 73). The significant aspect of the notion of a Christian nation lies in the concept of "Declaration" and the overall national priestly role of the president. Pentecostals believe in the power of the tongue and the power of the word, which are brought into effect through the power of the Declaration. They argue that God created all things through the power of the word. He spoke things into existence. Mushala (7 March 2016) maintains that God has given believers the same power to speak words of life. Mushala (7 March 2016) stresses,

> He viewed himself as a messenger of God because in Pentecostal theology God can speak through him. Chiluba also saw himself as a tool God would use to kick out Satan out of Zambia ... Chiluba took the Pentecostal ideals of "word of faith" to declare spiritual blessings, he believed that once he makes a Declaration, God will bring blessings upon Zambia.

This argument is not merely biblical; it finds its impetus in the African religio-political ethical imagination. As the African ethicist Bujo (2001, p. 46) argues, "one must recall the function of word

in black Africa. The word possesses such tremendous power that it can either create or destroy the community. This means that the word signifies life or death—it is medicine or poison." The word is never perceived as neutral in the African religious worldview but is the locus of the power of life and death. Hence, in the traditional worldview, leaders were skilled in the art of handling words with prudence and discretion, because whatever they decreed was regarded as final, as a word from the ancestors on whose stool the leader sits. In keeping with this worldview, Mushala (7 March 2016) argues, "Chiluba ... looked at himself not as a mere president, but a godly prophet and king who could from the pillars of State House bring about spiritual changes in the nation."

The Declaration of Zambia as a Christian nation is a covenant that cannot be dissociated from the words of Chiluba, or dissolved easily, as that might indicate that the nation has failed to follow the path of God. In other words, as Proverbs 6:2 states, "[the nation has] been trapped by the words of [Chiluba's] lips—ensnared by the words of [his] mouth." Chilanda (13 March 2017) argues,

> Chiluba played the role of priest and king. As priest, he sought to surrender the nation to God by entering into covenant with God on behalf of the nation. By so doing he entered into [an] unconditional covenant with God. His personal failure therefore could not affect the covenant. His main role was to surrender the nation to God. This was achieved by declaring Zambia a Christian Nation. However, as king he sought to rule the country according to the values reflected in the word of God.

In other words, his failure—given his shortcoming as a president (king)—did not invalidate the covenant. But others argue that Chiluba's Declaration of Zambia as Christian nation was based on Josiah's model, in which Josiah made a promise to be a different kind of king in Judah (2 Kings 23: 1–3). In this case, it was the responsibility of the king to keep the covenant and his failure would have resulted in the nullification of the promise. For example, Kachilambe (2 March 2017) argues,

> The Declaration was a personal promise to God and an ideal introduced to the national population . . . In the wording of the Declaration, President Chiluba pledged to honor the Living God and to lead a government based on biblical principles.

However, Kachilambe (2 March 2017) attributes Chiluba's failure to overcome his vices to many factors that he believes are still at work in Zambian politics:

i. He was not psychologically and spiritually prepared for that high office with its privileges and pitfalls.
ii. He was neither tutored nor groomed for leadership at that level; and to date presidential entrants have no such schooling or mentoring.
iii. He lacked the requisite Christian support group. There were believers around him, but they exploited him rather than reinforcing him spiritually.
iv. Being a young believer at the time of taking power, he did not disconnect himself from old associations that in the end ensnared him by stoking the fires of appetites he had turned away from on committing to Christ.

Then Kachilambe (2 March 2017) asks, "Did his moral failures nullify the Declaration?" He replied to himself categorically: "No, but they certainly crippled and diluted its essence." However, he considers that the intentions of God for the nation cannot be invalidated by the actions of an individual. In other words, the Holy Spirit used Chiluba to declare Zambia a Christian nation.

6. Concluding Analysis—Pentecostal Ontocratic Political Theology

The strong public presence of Pentecostalism in Zambia, with its ontocratic tendencies as mystical values that are attached to the presidential office, raises salient challenges for the promotion of democracy and democratization. The Zambian Pentecostal approach to politics makes the president very powerful, as his being and office are spiritualized through entwining the political with spiritual

powers. In this way, the Pentecostal adaptation of the African religio-political ethical system has made the Zambian democracy and democratization process vulnerable to authoritarian annexation, as it allows political leaders to claim their credentials and legitimacy from mystical spheres rather than from the people who vote for them.

The process of making politicians spiritual brothers and sisters has resulted in politicians' perceiving themselves as spiritual leaders who are beyond criticism and who could demand an authoritarian or a monarchical form of respect afforded to traditional leaders. One of the challenges of Pentecostal ontocracies is that they tend to demonize dissenting voices, especially those of opposition political parties. Bediako (2005, p. 136) argues that "the struggle for African democracy is also at least about the struggle for the legitimacy of dissent in African politics." The theology of demonization of political dissent promotes the elimination of dissenting voices in politics—in essence, the prophetic tool that sharpens modern democratic systems. Those who resist the policies of the reign of government are perceived as enemies who must be silenced or eliminated.

While in African religio-political systems of thought the fear of ancestors constrained the use of religio-political power, the Pentecostal notion of the Holy Spirit is not formulated with checks and balances which could bring a level of constraint to the use of political powers. The Pentecostals in Zambia have reinterpreted the ancestors in the frame of the Holy Spirit. This has resulted in what could be described as ancestro-pneumatology—a pneumatology that, at least at the political level, functions in much the same way as ancestors did in the traditional system. The Holy Spirit is conceived of as the source of political (God's) power, which embodies the political leader in order to rule the nation. It is evident that the thought of fortification, struggle against evil forces and demons, is prominent in ancestro-pneumatology.

To overcome ontocracies, there is a need for desacralisation of politics without de-spiritualization, as Bediako (1993, 1995) insistently argues. He is not proposing a normative desacralisation theory in which religious imaginations are removed from or reduced in their influence in political realms. Rather, he advocates a process of reconfiguration of powers in which various powers that have direct effect on human communities, including supernatural powers, are relocated within the realm that promotes full accountability to humanity. Thus, Bediako's desacralisation affirms the continuation of the African world as a spiritually animated reality but functioning with configured powers in which all the various forms of human leadership have a more direct accountability to the people they affect. For Bediako, desacralisation is based on the incarnation of Jesus, which reflects a decisive encounter between God and creation in which radical accountability resulted in justice and equality for all involved parties. Therefore, desacralisation of the political realm is critical for subverting dictatorial and absolutist claims that seem to be inherent in contemporary African politics and religious institutions (Bediako 1995, p. 2004).

Acknowledgments: The research grant was given by John Templeton Foundation, through the Nagel Institute for the Study of World Christianity under the theme "Christianity and Social Change in Contemporary Africa," Grant ID: 2016-TH210.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

References and Notes

Primary (Interviews)

Apostle Alunda, interview with the author, Lusaka, 6 April 2016.

Apostle Bwinga, interview with the author, Ndola, 9 April 2016.

Dr. Lilanda, interview with the author, Lusaka, 30 May 2016.

Rev. Kachilambe, personal communication with the author, 2 March 2017.

Rev. Mulimba, interview with the author, Ndola, 9 June 2016.

Rev. Mushala, personal communication with the author, 3 July 2016.

Rev. Mulembwe, personal communication with the author, 21 June 2017.

Rev. Dr. Chilanda, personal communication with the author, 13 March 2017.

Secondary

Anderson, Benedict. 2006/1983. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, rev. ed. London: Verso.

Asamoah-Gyadu, Kwabena J. 2005. *African Charismatics: Current Developments within Independent Indigenous Pentecostalism in Ghana*. Leiden: Brill.

Aurobindo, Sri. 1997. *The Human Cycle: The Ideal of Human Unity, War and Self-Determination*. The Complete Works of Sri Aurobindo; Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram Press, vol. 25.

Bediako, Kwame. 1993. Unmasking the Powers: Christianity, Authority and Desacralization in Modern African Politics. In *Christianity and Democracy in Global Context*. Edited by John Witte, Jr. Boulder: Westview Press, pp. 207–29.

Bediako, Kwame. 1995. *Christianity in Africa: The Renewal of a Non-Western Religion*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP.

Bediako, Kwame. 2004. *Jesus and the Gospel in Africa: History and Experience*. Maryknoll: Orbis Books.

Bediako, Kwame. 2005. Christian Witness in the Public Sphere: Some Lessons and Residual Challenges from the Recent Political History of Ghana. In *The Changing Faces of Christianity: Africa, the West and the World*. Edited by Lamin Sanneh and Joel A. Carpenter. Oxford: Oxford UP, pp. 117–33.

Bujo, Bénézet. 2001. *Foundations of an African Ethic: Beyond the Universal Claims of Western Morality*. Translated by Brian McNeil. New York: Crossroad Publishing.

Bunda, Alexander. 2006. *Effective Strategic Warfare: Prayer to Subdue the Enemy*. New York: Xulon Press.

Cheyeka, Austin. 2008a. *Church, State and Political Ethics in a Post-colonial State: The Case of Zambia*. Zomba: Kachere Series.

Cheyeka, Austin. 2008b. Towards a History of the Charismatic Churches in Post-colonial Zambia. In *One Zambia, Many Histories: Towards a History of Post-colonial Zambia*. Edited by Jan-Bart Gewald, Marja Hinfelaar and Giacomo Macola. Leiden and Boston: Brill, pp. 144–63.

Clark, Clifton R. 2011. *African Christology: Jesus in Post-missionary African Christology*. Eugene: Pickwick.

Dickson, Kwesi, ed. 1965. *Akan Religion and the Christian Faith: A Comparative Study of the Impact of Two Religions*. Accra: Ghana UP.

Dickson, Kwesi A. 1975. Continuity and Discontinuity between the Old Testament and African Life and Thought. In *African Theology En Route: Papers from the Pan-African Conference of the Third World Theologians, December 17–23, 1977, Accra, Ghana*. Edited by Kofi Appiah-Kubi and Sergio Torres. Maryknoll: Orbis Books, pp. 95–108.

Faix, Tobias. 2007. The Empirical-Theological Praxis (ETP) cycle as a methodological basis for missiology. *Missionalia* 35: 113–29.

Fortes, Meyer, and Edward Evan Evans-Pritchard. 1940. Introduction. In *African Political Systems*. Edited by Meyer Fortes and Edward Evan Evans-Pritchard. London: Oxford UP, pp. 1–23.

Fowler, John M. 2009. The Adventist World-View: A Ground to Stand, a Life to Live. Paper presented at the 40th International Faith & Learning Conference, Asia-Pacific International University, Muak Lek, Thailand, July. Available online: http://christintheclassroom.org/vol_40/40cc_561-569.pdf (accessed on 8 February 2018).

Gallaher, Carolyn, Carl T. Dahlman, Mary Gilmartin, Alison Mountz, and Peter Shirlow, eds. 2009. *Key Concepts in Political Geography*. London: Sage Publications Ltd.

Geurts, Kathryn L. 2002. *Culture and the Senses: Bodily Ways of Knowing in an African Community*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Gifford, Paul. 1998. *African Christianity: Its Public Role*. London: C. Hurst.

Gifford, Paul. 2004. *Ghana's New Christianity: Pentecostalism in a Globalising African Economy*. London: Hurst and Co.

Gifford, Paul. 2009. *African Christianities and Public Life: A View from Kenya*. London: Hurst and Co.

Gluckman, Max. 1940. The Kingdom of the Zulu of South Africa. In *African Political Systems*. Edited by Meyer Fortes and Edward Evan Evans-Pritchard. London: Oxford UP, pp. 25–55.

Gordon, David M. 2012. *Invisible Agents: Spirits in a Central African History*. Athens: Ohio UP.

Hutchinson, John. 2001. Nations and Culture. In *Understanding Nationalism*. Edited by Montserrat Guibernau and J. Hutchinson. Cambridge: Polity, pp. 74–96.

Jongeneel, Jan A. B. 1995. *Science, and Theology of Mission in the 19th and 20th Centuries: A Missiological Encyclopaedia: The philosophy and Science of Mission*. Zurich: Peter Lang.

Kachikoti, Charles. 2015a. Africa: Living without Boundary Walls... the Case for Cyber Security and National Sovereignty. Available online: http://allafrica.com/stories/201511060690.html (accessed on 4 August 2017).

Kachikoti, Charles. 2015b. Let's Face It: The Meaning of KK's Spiritual 'Release'. *Times of Zambia*, Friday, May 29.

Kachikoti, Charles. 2015c. Let's Face It: Uproot Altars of Zambian History. *Times of Zambia*, Friday, May 26.

Kalu, Ogbu. 2008. *African Pentecostalism: An Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford UP.

Kaufman, Stuart J. 2011. Book review: Ethno-Symbolism and Nationalism: A Cultural Approach, by Anthony D. Smith. (New York: Routledge, 2009), 184. *Comparative Politics* 9: 208–9. [CrossRef]

Kaunda, Chammah Judex. 2017a. 'From Fools for Christ to Fools for Politicians': A Critique of Zambian Pentecostal Theopolitical Imagination. *International Bulletin of Mission Research* 41: 296–311. [CrossRef]

Kaunda, Chammah Judex. 2017b. A Nation 'sold to the enemy': Zambian Pentecostalism and Kaunda' humanism. *Theologia Viatorum* 41: 49–80.

Kibicho, Samuel G. 1978. The Continuity of the African Conception of God into and through Christianity: A Kikuyu Case-study. In *Christianity in Independent Africa Edited by Africa*. Edited by Edward Fashole-Luke, Richard Gray, Godwin Tasie and Adrian Hastings. London: Rex Collings, pp. 370–88.

Komakoma, Joe. 2008. *The Best of Fr. Joe Komakoma's Ruminations [Texte Imprimé]: Published in 'The Post' from 1999–2004*. Edited by M. Hinfelaar. Ndola: IDREF.

Kraft, Charles H. 2005. *Christianity in Culture: A Study in Biblical Theologizing in Cross-Cultural Perspective*. New York: Orbis Books.

Van Leeuwen, Arend Theodoor. 1964. *Christianity in World History: The Meeting of the Faiths of East and West*. New York: Charles Scribner.

Llywelyn, Dorian. 2010. *Toward a Catholic Theology of Nationality*. Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield.

Lusakatimes.com. 2017. Every Zambian must Respect the Presidency, Regardless of Who Is in the Office—BIGOCA, April 25. Available online: https://www.lusakatimes.com/2017/04/25/every-zambian-must-respect-presidency-regardless-office-bigoca/ (accessed on 7 August 2017).

Magesa, Laurent. 1997. *African Religion: The Moral Traditions of Abundant Life*. New York: Orbis, p. 296.

Mathuray, Mark. 2009. *On the Sacred in African Literature: Old Gods and New Worlds*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Maxwell, David. 1999. *Christians and Chiefs in Zimbabwe: A Social History of the Hwesa People, c. 1870s–1990s*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP.

Maxwell, David. 2002. Introduction to Christianity and the African Imagination. In *Christianity and the African Imagination: Essays in Honour of Adrian Hastings*. Edited by David Maxwell and Ingrid Lawrie. Leiden: Brill, pp. 1–24.

Maxwell, David. 2006. *African Gifts of the Spirit: Pentecostalism and the Rise of a Zimbabwean Transnational Religious Movement*. Oxford: James Currey.

Mbiti, John S. 1969. *African Religions Philosophy*. Norfolk: Biddles Ltd.

Mbiti, John S. 1975. *Introduction to African Religions*. Oxford: Heinemann.

Mbiti, John S. 1993. Peace and Reconciliation in African Religion and Christianity. *Dialogue and Alliance* 7: 17–32.

Meebelo, Henry S. 1971. *Reaction to Colonialism: A Prelude to the Politics of Independence in Northern Zambia 1893–1939*. Manchester: University of Manchester Press.

Meyer, Birgit. 1999. *Translating the Devil: Religion and Modernity among the Ewe in Ghana*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP.

Nwaka, Bernard J. 2007. *Invading the Babylonian System*. Lusaka: Campus Voice.

Nwaka, Bernard J. 2010. *Troops Will Be Willing in the Day of Your Power: The Mystery of the Priesthood and the Altar*. Lusaka: Campus Voice.

Oberg, K. 1940. The Kingdom of Ankole in Uganda. In *African Political Systems*. Edited by Meyer Fortes and Edward Evan Evans-Pritchard. London: Oxford UP, pp. 121–62.

Oduyoye, Mercy A. 1993. *Hearing and Knowing: Theological Reflection on Theology in Africa*. Maryknoll: Orbis Books.

Olupona, Jacob. 2014. *African Religions: A very Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford UP.

Osmer, Richard R. 2008. *Practical Theology: An Introduction*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.

Patriotic Front—PF. 2016. A Leader's Mandate is from God—President Edgar Lungu. Available online: https://ar-ar.facebook.com/patrioticfrontzambia/posts/1729242217310584 (accessed on 7 August 2017).

Phiri, Isabel A. 2003. President Frederick J.T. Chiluba of Zambia: The Christian Nation and Democracy. *Journal of Religion in Africa* 33: 401–28. [CrossRef]

Radcliffe-Brown, Alfred Reginald. 1940. Preface. In *African Political Systems*. Edited by Meyer Fortes and Edward Evan Evans-Pritchard. London: Oxford UP, pp. XI–XXIII.

Richards, Audrey I. 1940. The Political System of the Bemba Tribe—North-Eastern Rhodesia. In *African Political Systems*. Edited by Meyer Fortes and Edward Evan Evans-Pritchard. London: Oxford UP, pp. 83–120.

Shenk, David W. 1983. *Peace and Reconciliation in Africa*. Nairobi: Uzima Press.

Sindima, Harvey. 1989. Community of Life. *Ecumenical Review* 41: 537–51. [CrossRef]

Sinyangwe, Sunday. 2017. Pastor Sunday Sinyangwe. Available online: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GFws1nGyKiQ&t=1273s (accessed on 5 May 2017).

Smith, Anthony D. 1998. *Nationalism and Modernism*. London: Routledge.

Smith, Anthony D. 2009. *Ethno-Symbolism and Nationalism: A Cultural Approach*. New York: Routledge.

Sumaili, Godfridah. 2016. *A Christian Nation*.TV 3 Christian Channel. December 10.

Taylor, Scott D. 2006. *Culture and Customs of Zambia*. Westport: Greenwood Press.

Walls, Andrew F. 1976. Towards Understanding Africa's Place in Christian History. In *Religion in a Pluralistic Society: Essays in Honour of C.G. Baeta*. Edited by John Pobee. Leiden: Brill, pp. 180–89.

Willoughby, William C. 1928. *The Soul of the Bantu: A Sympathetic Study of the Magico-Religious Practices and Beliefs of the Bantu Tribes of Africa*. Westport: Negro UP.

Wilson, Monica H. 1959. *Divine kings and the "breath of men"*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Wilson, Monica. 1971. *Religion and the Transformation of Society: A Study in Social Change in Africa*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP.

Zambian Eye. 2016. "I Am a Man of Faith that Walks with God ... " Lungu Chides the Nation on Violence. Available online: http://zambianeye.com/i-am-a-man-of-faith-that-walks-with-god-lungu-chides-the-nation-on-violence/ (accessed on 7 August 2017).

© 2018 by the author. Licensee MDPI, Basel, Switzerland. This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).

religions

MDPI

Article

Mobilising Religious Assets for Social Transformation: A Theology of Decolonial Reconstruction Perspective on the Ministry of National Guidance and Religious Affairs (MNGRA) in Zambia

Chammah J. Kaunda [1,*] and Mutale Mulenga Kaunda [2]

1 Human Development Science–Human Sciences Research Council—(HDS-HSRC), Religion, Philosophy and Classics, University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN), Pietermaritzburg 3209, South Africa

2 Religion, Philosophy and Classics, University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN), Pietermaritzburg 3209, South Africa; KaundaM@ukzn.ac.za

* Correspondence: Ckaunda@hsrc.ac.za; Tel.: +27-76-378-8383

Received: 16 May 2018; Accepted: 25 May 2018; Published: 28 May 2018

Abstract: The article argues for a theology of decolonial reconstruction to aid the Ministry of National Guidance and Religious Affairs (MNGRA) in its search for a new political vision for Zambian society. The MNGRA was established in 2017 by President Edgar Chagwa Lungu to strengthen the Declaration of Zambia as a Christian nation. The second republican President Frederick JT Chiluba declared Zambia a Christian nation (hereafter, the Declaration) on 29 December 1991. In 1996, the Declaration was enshrined in the preamble of the National Constitution. Zambian Pentecostalism, perceived as chief architect and guardian of the Declaration, is also believed to have masterminded the introduction of the MNGRA. A female Pentecostal Pastor, Hon. Rev. Godfridah Sumaili, in fact heads the ministry. One of the key roles of the MNGRA is to stimulate faith-based organizations and religious communities' interest, support and participation in pursuit of social reconstruction and transformation of the nation. To this effect, MNGRA has deployed a methodology, which seeks to dialogue with these organizations and at the same time use a 'top-bottom' approach to promote religious morality in the process of social reconstruction and transformation. This article argues that, being a ministry with a strong conservative Christian orientation, MNGRA is in danger of falling prey to a Pentecostal demo-theocratic (democratic and theocratic) political paradigm which rejects certain human rights, religious pluralism, and knowledge constructions from other religions, which are perceived inferior. The article also analyses the viability of 'top-bottom' approach utilizing a theology of decolonial reconstruction. This approach embraces a pluralistic model of integral religious praxis at all levels of life.

Keywords: theology decolonial reconstruction; Zambian Pentecostalism; Ministry of National Guidance and Religious Affairs (MNGRA); spiritual capital; religious pluralism

1. Introduction

The MNGRA was established in 2017 by President Edgar Chagwa Lungu to strengthen the Declaration of Zambia as a Christian nation. The Second Republican President Frederick JT Chiluba had declared Zambia a Christian nation (hereafter the Declaration[1]) on 29 December 1991. In 1996,

1 Among Zambians, the declaration is used as a shorthand description for the Christian nation.

the Declaration was embedded in the preamble of the National Constitution. One of the key roles of MNGRA is to stimulate Faith Based Organisations' (FBOs) and religious communities' interest, support and participation in the pursuit of social reconstruction and transformation of the nation (Sumaili 2018). To this effect, MNGRA has deployed a methodology which seeks to dialogue with FBOs and religious communities through a "top-bottom" approach to promote religious morality in the process of social reconstruction and transformation.

Through content analysis, the article will demonstrate how a theology of decolonial reconstruction can help in reconceptualising MNGRA in the search to promote an authentic religiously grounded mission from the margins to influence democratization processes, social justice and human rights for all. The approach focuses on demonstrating how the rich national religious heritage is a source of spiritual capital capable of energizing altruistic behavior towards social transformation. Religion as national spiritual capital for social consciousness raising has potential to challenge the dominant political thought in the nation. The dominant or neo-colonial political system has a negative effect on people and perpetuates material legacies of colonialism through various socio-relational systems that Quijano (2000) classifies as a "power matrix." The "power matrix" characterises all dimensions of socio-relational life, such as gender, sexuality, authority, politics, economics, religion, subjectivity and labour. The challenge, as explained below, is that many Christian institutions with strong conservative orientation have embraced Eurocentric modernity with a reactive modernity. This worldview was inherited from the 19th-century colonial missionary enterprise, which was shaped by classical Eurocentric hierarchy of powers—patriarchal, heterosexual, authoritarian, religious hegemony and ethnocentrism. The continuous reactive posture as a strategy for liberation from Eurocentric modernity has meant for many Christian organisations, especially African Pentecostalism, retracting into a Pendamentalist (Pentecostal fundamentalism)[2] totalitarianism based on a political model with adopted elements from democratic and theocratic political philosophies.

African Pentecostalism has situated itself as one of the key religious competitors in contemporary Africa. Its demographic advantage has given it a massive public presence and helped articulate its resistance to the meta-religious narrative that forms traditional Christianity. Situated within post-modern reactions, Pentecostalism has questioned the legitimacy of traditional religious structures and authority and preferred individualistic approach to religion. This approach has helped to chart terrains for many pastors who now openly engage in politics in many African countries. In Zambia in particular, Pentecostalism, as chief architect and guardian of the Declaration, is believed to have also masterminded the introduction of the MNGRA, which is headed by a female Pentecostal pastor, Hon. Rev. Godfridah Sumaili. The challenge is that the ministry is influenced by a particular brand of Pentecostalism with a strong fundamentalist orientation. Thus, MNGRA is conceptualised within a demo-theocratic (democratic and theocratic) political paradigm which functions with selective elements from the 19th-century colonial missionary enterprise and American Evangelical fundamentalism; these influences inform an interpretation of reality that rejects certain human rights, religious pluralism and knowledge constructions from other religions.

The question is, how can a theology of decolonial reconstruction help the MNGRA redefine social transformation from the cosmologies and epistemologies of pluri-religious-based knowledge situated on the margins? In response to this pertinent question, the following questions can be raised: In what ways can the theology of decolonial reconstruction be employed to help reconceptualise the MNGRA for the common good? Decolonial reconstruction is a way of engaging in the process of decolonising, liberating and redesigning the existing, but dysfunctional and colonial-shaped

[2] Pendamentalism is a synthesis of selective Pentecostal philosophy and American Evangelical fundamentalism with its literalism and strict adherence to theological doctrines without sufficient regard for the humanity of others. This emerged as a reaction against modern theologies that promote the humanity of all people through contemporary instruments such as human rights, equality, justice and peaceful co-existence of all people regardless of religious (or no religious) background, race, gender, sexuality, and the like.

structures through intercultural and pluralistic dialogues, for an interchange of experiences and meanings rearticulated from diverse indigenous histories. It also seeks to transform such local histories themselves by rejecting elements that do not promote the fullness of life for all. It seeks to create knowledge for social reconstruction from the margins, in order to decolonise principles on which reigning political knowledge is grounded, as well as ideological discourses that inform national political vision (Mignolo 2011, p. 22).

Thus, decolonial reconstruction is not a matter of merely changing frames of thinking and approaches to social reconstruction. Rather, it is a critical approach to decolonise the way social reality is constructed and articulated in the former colonised nations in order to promote a pluralistic articulation of shared meanings and political visions based on experiences of the margins. This is imperative in promoting a shared vision of social reconstruction more aligned with God's intention for humanity. How can the MNGRA take advantage of religious-based local histories to foster social reconstruction and political transformation? In responding to these key questions, this article argues that a theology of decolonial reconstruction has potential to help the MNGRA to take an inclusive and pluri-religious approach to engage religious knowledge and missional practices for social transformation in post-colonial Zambia. The article is predicated on the idea that a theology of reconstruction and decolonial imagination cannot be divergent systems of knowledge in the Zambian search for social transformation.

Before we proceed to analyse how a theology of decolonial reconstruction can assist in reconceptualising the MNGRA, it is important to put it within the broader context of the concept of the Ministry of Religious Affairs.

2. The Concept of Ministry of Religious Affairs

The concept of a Ministry of Religious Affairs (MRAs) is not new and not unique to Zambia. Many countries have had a similar government department responsible for religious matters. These departments have been called by various names, such as The Ministry of Worship of France, the Ministry for Ecclesiastical Affairs of Denmark, Israeli Ministry of Religious Service, State Administration for Religious Affairs of China or Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs in Greece, and most majority-Muslim nations have similar departments. These ministries have been established with the duty of managing and overseeing the religious operations of various religions in the nation. For instance, the Danish government maintains the position of Minister for Ecclesiastical Affairs of Denmark, which has overseen church operations since 1916 (Sriram 2015). In some countries, especially those with a Muslim majority, the ministries also function to inhibit influence promoting sexualisation, secularisation, terrorism and radicalisation and to set perimeters for proselytization (El-Katiri 2013; Crouch 2013). However, in most cases such regulations are implicated in religious power dynamics, which appear to favour a dominant religion in the nation (Kjaersgaard 2017). The term dominance is used here in reference not to numerical majority, but rather to power relations in which one religious group sets itself on the top of the socio-political hierarchy. Such religious groups receive a disproportionate share of social privileges, exercise predominant political authority, covertly dominate the sociocultural systems, and seek to control the destiny of a particular nation or community (Marger 1991). One common feature of the MRAs is their strong assertion of practicing religious tolerance and promoting peaceful coexistence while, on a closer examination, seeking to reinforce the religious beliefs and values of the dominant religion. For example, although freedom of worship is stipulated in the Constitution of Denmark, until recently there was a lack of religious diversity. But now, Islam is becoming the largest minority religion (Nielsen 2012). As a result, the religious management largely targets and disadvantages those religious groups with limited or no access to political power (Sharfman 1993). While MRAs in post-Christian societies such as France and Denmark have less influence on public morality, those in majority-Muslim countries are used as tools to impose an Islamic moral order on society. They seek to reinforce rigorous religious values, especially in the fields of sexuality, blasphemy, and alcohol and drug consumption. The continuous Islamization of

society is presented as a covert religious duty of the MRAs in most Islamic nations (Peters 2005). There is still a need for more studies to understand how the MRAs align themselves with the dominant religious ideologies that have little or no regard for pluralism (including morality and religious pluralism), which is a natural consequence of democratic and moral maturation. It is clear that if MNGRA wishes to make a positive difference in Zambia, it has to transcend the narrow approaches many of the MRAs have taken. By embracing the project of theology of decolonial reconstruction, we argue, it could better promote social reconstruction and transformation and the unconditional common good of every Zambian citizen. It is within this framework that MNGRA is analysed in order to understand its function in national politics and how a theology of decolonial reconstruction could assist in reconceptualising the ministerial approach.

3. The Rise of MNGRA in Zambia

3.1. Seeking to Operationalize Chiluba's Declaration

Christianity has played a dynamic role in shaping Zambian institutions and culture since its arrival in the mid-19th century. The nation was believed to have been established as a Christian nation by its first president, Kenneth Kaunda (Hinfelaar 2009, 2011). Christianity has remained constant throughout the political history of post-colonial Zambia. However, it was the late Second Republican President, Fredrick JT Chiluba, who formally integrated Christianity and politics through the public Declaration of Zambia as a Christian nation. Since the Declaration, Zambia has been characterised by religious controversy and confusion over the missional role and mandate of the church in national politics. Some scholars have consistently argued that the Declaration was politically empty, since it did not introduce new substantive laws to help overcome the challenges of neo-colonialism, such as political corruption, nepotism, dictatorship, economic and social injustice and human rights abuse, that afflict most neo-colonial African national-states (Freston 2001; Cheyeka 1998, 2008a, 2008b, 2016). However, these scholars have failed to see, as Gordon (2012; see also Van Klinken 2014) observes, that the public act of Declaration presented a distinctive form of political theology which has subjected the whole nation to the Pentecostal "Born Again" theology and resistance to the influence of Satan in the life of the nation through spiritual warfare. Thus, when in 1996 the Declaration was enshrined in an amendment to the constitution, it was merely to give it a level of legitimacy as it was already established as a national religious value. There is empirical evidence, however, which suggests that the Declaration has not translated into religious accountability giving obligation to public officials and government offices and affecting their political behavior toward the promotion of the common good. In other words, they are under the impression that the Declaration has not promoted the imperatives of sound policy design and implementation that can benefit the people on the margins (Freston 2001; Cheyeka 2008b). The lack of understanding as to the political function of the Declaration has meant that, over the years, politicians have leveraged its influence to create an elite system of control conformed to religious beliefs and practices about the ultimate source of power and authority to shape political leadership. The Declaration is framed in Pentecostal theology that perceives the ultimate problem and solution concerning spiritual and/or moral forces and factors to be embedded in the mystical realm. This means that emphasis is to be always placed on spiritual remedies/ritual practices of protection or purification and adherence to moral strictures (Kaunda 2018). Consequently, there is less emphasis on pragmatic, material remedies aimed at, for example, promoting good government and economic development, and policy has to some extent sought to repress choices and behaviours that are deemed unrighteous or ungodly and are therefore seen as posing a danger to the spiritual welfare of the nation (Kaunda 2018).

President Edgar Chagwa Lungu succeeded Michael Sata after his death in the office on 28 October 2014, completing his remaining term until elections in August 2016. His ascension to the presidency was characterised by political faction and rivalry over who should lead the party into the presidential elections. Lungu was finally adopted as the candidate for the Patriotic Front (PF) and won an

election that was filled with "tribalism," and his few months in the office experienced overwhelming economy challenges, with the currency plunging over 45 percent against the United States dollar. Lungu resolved to declare 18 October 2015 a public holiday for the National Day of Prayer and Fasting (Lusakatimes.com 2015). On this day, Lungu (2015) first re-affirmed Chiluba's Declaration, adding his declaration of "Zambia set free from the dark forces of evil" and gazetting 18 October as the National Day of Prayer (NDP). He also started building the Tabernacle of the National House of Prayer (NHoP) to help realise Zambia as a Christian nation (National House of Prayer 2016, p. 4). He appointed a Pentecostal bishop, Joshua Banda of the Northmead Assembly of God, as Chairperson for the Advisory Board for the construction of the NHoP. As a result, many Pentecostals became partisan. During the campaign, some Pentecostals promoted a defamatory discourse against the main opposition: The United Party for National Development (UPND) candidate, Hakainde Hichilema (hereafter HH, as he is generally known in Zambia), was often described as a Satanist. Some have argued that President Lungu's association with Pentecostals contributed to securing his victory in the presidential race of 2016.

Some people, furthermore, believe that the introduction of MNGRA was to show appreciation for the Pentecostal sector that supported President Lungu during the campaign (ZambiaBlogTalkRadio 2017). This is because the proposal to introduce MNGRA came in the midst of the petition in the Constitutional Court over the presidential election of 11 August 2016 (Zambia Reports 2016). President Lungu won the election with 50.3 percent of the vote, defeating HH who got 47.6 percent.[3] The election was regarded as rigged, and the main opposition, UPND, required a recount of the votes. President Lungu maintained that the introduction of MNGRA was imperative in order to reaffirm and strengthen the Declaration and operationalise the Christian nation's values and practices. In a joint statement, the Zambia Conference of Catholic Bishops (ZCCB) and the Council of Churches in Zambia (CCZ) rejected the introduction, describing it as both "unwise and unnecessary" in view of the various economic and political challenges of the nation (Vatican News 2016). They further argued, "Zambians want their country to be a democracy rather than a theocracy," according to Vatican News (2016). However, the introduction of MNGRA received indiscriminate support and affirmation from most Pentecostal ministers, who make up 90 percent of the membership of the Evangelical Fellowship of Zambia (EFZ) (EFZ 2016; See also Gifford 1998a, 1998b; Burgess 2012). Thus, President Lungu went ahead and appointed Hon. Rev. Sumaili, from Bread of Life Church International, as the head. It is important, therefore, to analyse MNGRA's self-understanding and highlight its key mandates.

3.2. MNGRA Self-Understanding

MNGRA was ratified by Parliament in 2017. It draws its mandate from the preamble and Part II, Article 8 of the Constitution of Zambia Amendment Act No. 2 of 2016. It is also published in the Government Gazette No. 6526, Lusaka, Friday, 18 November 2016 [Vol. LII, No. 76]. The specific portfolio functions of MNGRA, according to the Government Gazette and the Constitution, are Christian affairs, interdenominational dialogue, national guidance, national values, principles and ethics, public religious celebrations, preservation of Christian and religious sites, and religious affairs. As could be seen in these functions, a distinction is made between Christianity and other religions. For example, Christian affairs and religious affairs are regarded as separate categories. Even in the national symposium which the MNGRA held in March 2018 under the theme "to equip the people of faith for today's challenge," it was made clear that one of the key purposes was to "appreciate the Bible as a promoter of peace and national unity" (Sumaili 2018, slide 10). The other challenge is that these functions are not defined and explained. This potentially suggests that the meaning for each category would possibly be that which the MNGRA assigns. In addition, there is no MNGRA staff member

---

[3] Chiluba created a Ministry Of Religious Affairs, which later became a Religious Affairs Desk under State House, with a Pentecostal pastor as Deputy Minister. It became dysfunctional after Chiluba handed power to Levi Mwanawasa.

with an advanced theological background to engage more effectively in ecumenical and interreligious dialogue. This also makes it difficult when it comes to interpretation and translation of the so-called national values and principles, which is often done through an Evangelical/Pentecostal framework.

MNGRA defines its main objective as to promote national values and principles, thereby actualising the Declaration while safeguarding individual rights, freedom of conscience and religious orientation. MNGRA is mandated to systematically mainstream Christian values throughout Zambian society by seeking to reconstruct and transform seven pillars of culture, which are religion, government, business, education, family, media, and arts/entertainment (Sumaili 2018, slide 8). It also seeks to limit the influence of certain religious beliefs and practices from both within Christian denominations and other faith traditions that are perceived to be incompatible with Zambia's Christian national values. The national values and principles that MNGRA seeks to promote are categorised as morality and ethics; patriotism and national unity; democracy and constitutionalism; human dignity, equity, social justice, equality and non-discrimination; good governance and integrity and sustainable development (Sumaili 2018, slide 9). Yet, it is very difficult to understand the practical meaning of these specific Zambian national values. Whatever these national values might be, it is clear that there is considerable diversity in the way Zambian people view them and the role they have in individual and social life. For example, despite the affirmation of "equality and non-discrimination" as national values, sexual and gender minorities have no rights, and discrimination remains commonplace in the nation—discrimination which is reinforced by the MNGRA itself. Perhaps, this helps us to appreciate that interpretations of concepts such as human rights, justice and equality are not neutral but very much embedded in cultural and political contexts. The virtue of MNGRA's rejection of universalism of values is commendable and has an affinity with theology of decolonial reconstruction thinking, but to deny dialogue on multiple notions of national values is rejecting the fundamental moral foundation of decoloniality, which sees human dignity, equality and non-discrimination as critical for social reconstruction and transformation in a pluralistic society. Are there ways in which a theology of decolonial reconstruction could help MNGRA to construct the interpretation of national values in a manner that promotes pluri-local thinking (plural local thinking) through inter-cultural and religious dialogue? What is the role of the government in articulating national values as the nation searches for social reconstruction and transformation? Should the government impose moral values on the citizen or provide some guidelines through decolonial dialogue with various stakeholders, especially the people on the margins?

3.3. *'A Ministry from Heaven': The Custodianship of Pentecostalism*

As already highlighted, the idea to create MNGRA is believed to have been engineered by some key Pentecostal leaders who surrounded President Lungu during the campaign in 2016. The Pentecostals have sought to transform Zambian political psychology by promoting Pentecostal moral sensibilities and political imaginations. Scholars believe that Zambian Pentecostals seek to orient and influence public discourses and define national identity (Van Klinken 2014). It has been argued that Pentecostals have taken on a form of militant theo-political activism underpinning the search to Pentecostalize the nation without regard for religious pluralism (Yong 2010, p. 10; Dowd 2015, p. 30). Most of these Pentecostals argue that it is not enough to engage politics through intercessory prayers and from the pulpits, and are seeking to influence politics through media, parliament, and security organs.[4] As already argued, this has resulted in more and more Pentecostals becoming uncritical partisans of ruling parties (Bompani 2016). In Zambia, most of these Pentecostal leaders try to be on good terms with every succeeding ruling party (Kaunda 2017b, p. 298). They see this as a strategy to

[4] Elsewhere I have demonstrated how Zambian Pentecostals have articulated their theology of nationality in ways that seek to transform the nation into a spiritual institution which is easily manipulated by politicians for their benefits (see Kaunda 2018).

safeguard the Declaration, which they use as a tool to defend the nation from sexualising forces such as homosexuality and abortion, which remain high on the Pentecostal religio-political agenda. Thus, the introduction of MNGRA is described as as "a ministry from Heaven." They argue that President Lungu "heard God and announced the establishment of the ministry." Therefore, MNGRA is believed to have been created by God in order to strengthen the nation (Mwenda and Goma 2017). Scholars have argued that African Pentecostals have been aspiring to create Pentecostal Nationalisms, which remain a priority of their political involvement (Maxwell 2006; Marshall 2009). In his study, Nimi Wariboko discovered that, while African Pentecostals utilise different theological paradigms in their political engagements, they all have one mandate: to transform national morality through the medium of politics (Wariboko 2012).[5] African Pentecostalism seeks to promote a form of nationalism entrenched with Pentecostal theo-political imaginations (Kalu 2008; Van Klinken 2014; Bompani 2016). Pentecostals have supported MNGRA, believing that because Zambia is a Christian nation, the ministry will help bring about moral transformation so that God can prosper the nation. As Rev. Mwanza (2016, p. 2), Executive Director of EFZ, writes, to justify the process, "if we prioritize God, the material needs of our country will be taken care of by God's supernatural provision and blessings. First Things first."

Beyond spiritualisation of politics, there are three basic threats that have forced Zambian Pentecostals to seek to institutionalise their political engagement in Zambia through MNGRA. The first is a moral threat to the sexual purity of the nation. Pentecostals perceive MNGRA as a critical space for protecting the Declaration from disintegrating into the abyss of secularisation. Homosexuality is often perceived as un-African and un-Christian because it is framed within the discourse of secularisation and human rights. The MNGRA has made it clear, according to Rev. Sumaili (2018), that "discussions on pervasive sexuality such as homosexuality, lesbianism, transgender are not welcome because such practices are illegal and an abomination in a Christian nation." However, national sexual purity is not only about resisting homosexuality; it is defined based on the Christian traditional notion of family, which allows for expression of only heteronormative romantic love as God's ideal and excludes all other sexual expressions as forms of rebellion against God. For instance, recently, MNGRA warned Zambians to stop using sex dolls: "It is totally unacceptable for anybody to start using the sex dolls because Zambia being a Christian nation does not embrace such" (Zambian Eye 2018). Based on the Christian injunction, a South African musician, who often dances without underwear, was deported from the country on the grounds that her performance was "contrary to public interest and [would] undermine our national values" (Entertainment Reporter 2018). The MNGRA "is informed by an ideology of Pentecostal nationalism with a millennialist undertone" (Van Klinken 2016). As Adriaan Van Klinken (2016, p. 493; 2014, p. 268) further argues, in Zambian Pentecostal thinking, "the sexual purity of the nation has eschatological significance and is believed to be under the threat of cosmic forces of evil" disguised as human rights. But there is more to this, as Pentecostals believe that material prosperity is the natural consequence of moral purity. In other words, material prosperity is understood as the token of divine approval and adversity as the sign of God's displeasure with the nation. Hence, defence of national moral purity is believed to be both a litmus test for patriotism and a divine obligation. The Ministry is perceived as a religious instrument to promote national moral discourse in the public imagination so that the nation can experience blessings through material prosperity.

The second threat is religious: Islam. The Pentecostals have sought to fight Islam through MNGRA's political power. Many Pentecostals are uncomfortable with the drastic growth of Islam in Zambia, especially in the east of the country. The Declaration itself was partly intended to offer some form of resistance to the proliferation of Islam (Cheyeka 1998, 2008b). On the one hand, some Pentecostals appear to tolerate and verbally affirm religious freedom, yet, on the other hand, they nevertheless nurse a deep islamophobic attitude (Marshall 1995). Bishop Bernard Nwaka (2007, p. 105)

[5] Nimi Wariboko identifies about five basic theological paradigms that frame African Pentecostal engagement in politics, which are covenant, spiritualist, leadership, nationalist and developmental.

for instance, advises: "One thing you do not want to ever happen in your nation is that it becomes a nation bound by the religion of the bondwoman's son—Islam and the sharia law." Muslims, according to Nwaka (2007, p. 106), "desire to put in leadership people who will push their agenda in the continent but we have a decree to stand in prayer and declare that their plans shall not stand, nor shall they come to pass." This is the main reason Nwaka (2007, p. 107) believes Zambia should have "a forum where [Christian lawyers] can use their professional skills to advise and guide the church leaders in making proper, well advised decisions, and also pray with understanding." Bishop Joshua Banda (2016) agrees and cautions, "[w]hat is now deemed as freedom of religious worship in Zambia has become a matter of concern, given the rise of radical Islam in Africa." Banda (2016, pp. ix–x) is alarmed that "The religion of Islam is strongly taking root in Zambia, with recent 'road shows' of Muslims celebrating the birth of Mohammed, in time for the season of Christmas." The minister of MNGRA in a radio interview (ZambiaBlogTalkRadio 2017) was asked if there was room for other religions as well. She responded, "we intend to work very closely with these other religions [...] we need to know what they are doing in Zambia. We need to know their strategies." This statement appears to suggest that MNGRA is a tool being used by Pentecostals to study other religions in order to come up with a strategy to limit their proselytization in the country.

The third threat Zambian Pentecostals seek to address is an image threat posed by neo-prophetic (new Pentecostal) movements. Zambian Pentecostals have been forced to seek institutionalisation of their political engagement in order to utilise political power to redeem their image in the context of numerous scandals emerging from neo-prophetic movements. Many mainstream Pentecostal clergy exhibit tendencies of hostility toward the approach that neo-prophetic movements have taken. The scandals and unorthodox approaches of these movements make them *ifyana fyabene* (children of unruly and untraceable lineage), as they are called by some mainstream Pentecostals. They are increasingly perceived as black sheep, nuisance members who have brought shame and disgrace to the Pentecostal family. In her "Ministerial Statement on the Mushrooming of False Churches and Prophets, and Measures Being Put in Place," Rev. Sumaili outlines the grievances against neo-prophetic movements. She underlined the concern that these movements are abusing the favourable environment of a Christian nation and engaging in strange practices, which put some of the Zambian people at risk. These strange practices include the use of water, which has become a ritual, raping women and children, and using witchcraft. They are obsessed with material wealth, perform fake miracles, issue false and misleading prophecies, and endanger members by, for example, stopping HIV/AIDS patients from taking their medication (Sumaili 2017).[6] The proposed solution was to create the MNGRA to help "clean up" the churches through "registration" "and making sure that false prophets are flushed out," as Rev Sumaili puts it (ZambiaBlogTalkRadio 2017). Already, the Ministry refused entry into the country to the Malawian, South-Africa-based prophet Shepherd Bushiri (known as Major 1), describing him as a "false prophet". Rev Sumaili (ZambiaBlogTalkRadio 2017) underlined that she would not "allow false prophets, magicians" in 'our' nation, adding, "we are not going to accept confusion in our country. We want to preach the true gospel." A Nigerian prophet, Andrew Ejimadu (known as Seer 1) was deported for putting expiry dates on holy water, and a Zimbabwean prophet, Uebert Angel, was refused entry into the country (Zambian Observer 2016).[7] Rev Sumaili (2017) seeks to promote accountability and integrity among pastors and their congregations, and require every church to affiliate with church mother bodies. Pentecostals see this as a viable approach with potential to

---

[6] Rev Sumaili's analysis is affirmed by the findings of the Rights of Cultural, Religious and Linguistic Communities (CRC 2017) on the "commercialization of religion and abuse of people's belief systems". The 50-page report outlines 12 abuses: See, "CRL Rights Commission's Preliminary Report of the Hearings on Commercialisation of Religion and Abuse of People's Belief Systems".

[7] "Angel's refusal of entry into Zambia is mainly due to Godfridah Sumaili's active role as a pastor in Bread of Life Church." "It is all about jealousy and corruption, as we suspect that she is being unduly influenced by her man of God to further their selfish church interests" (Zambian Observer 2016). This argument does not reflect the reality on the ground, which is based on general grievances against these movements.

redeem their image from neo-prophetic scandals. The question remains, how can MNGRA resist being a political tool at the service of Pentecostalism and politicians and make a constructive contribution to social transformation? In other words, how can the theology of decolonial reconstruction help MNGRA redefine social transformation from the perspective of cosmologies and epistemologies of pluri-religious-based knowledge situated on the margins?

4. Theology of Decolonial Reconstruction—Toward a Framework for MNGRA

This section only begins a conversation on the theology of decolonial reconstruction as a possible framework that might help in reconceptualising MNGRA as a tool for social reconstruction and transformation. The effectiveness of the theology of decolonial reconstruction is its embeddedness in pluri-verse (multiple universals—knowledge making) and pluri-local (multiple local contexts) perspectives, which reflect pluralistic responses to human values and interpretations of reality. This approach emerges out of respect for communication and dialogue across multiple places, religions, ideas, cultures and cosmovisions (Dunford 2017). The early advocates for a theology of reconstruction[8] in Africa, such as Mugambi (2003, 1995) and Villa-Vicencio (1992), did not adequately position the paradigm within decolonial thinking.[9] They did not explicitly recognise the need for theology of reconstruction to engage invisible socio-political power structures that perpetuate colonial relations of exploitation and domination that continue to define African reality long after the end of colonialism (Maldonado-Torres 2006; Grosfoguel 2007; Mignolo 2007; Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2013; Kaunda 2015). A theology of decolonial reconstruction affords more than a strategic response to material legacies of colonialism and its neo-colonial successor, and more than an ability to engage in interreligious dialogue: It seeks to reposition religions as national spiritual capital, as critical assets in reimaging social reconstruction and transformation. A theology of decolonial reconstruction perspective does not claim universality, neutrality, and singular religious knowledge as the only immutable truth (Grosfoguel 2009, 2015). Rather, it seeks to articulate an inclusive and shared knowledge that takes into account interreligious co-creation of diverse systems of meanings and interpretation of reality based on the experiences emerging from and in the margins of society. Applied to MNGRA, a theology of decolonial reconstruction would require radical rethinking of its political praxis in light of the divine mission to promote the fullness of life for all in the nation. This radical rethinking is imperative in the search to establish a new social order informed and shaped by God's intention for humanity. Theology of decolonial reconstruction understands God's mission as a form of knowledge that emerges within and is directed toward the marginalised communities who are the true victims of colonial and neo-colonial domination. It demands reconceptualising how MNGRA can work in productive ways in partnership with diverse religious and non-religious imaginations to decolonise socio-political, economic, and cultural practices at work in the nation for the sake of the common good. Theology of decolonial reconstruction seeks to engage the people from the margins in an attempt to build a relational society. It is a religious political praxis, which resists separating religiosity from political commitment to total liberation, social reconstruction and transformation (Sindima 2008, p. 47). It seeks to understand and discern where God's redemptive activities in the nation are taking place. This might not necessarily be in the church or other religious spaces, but could be anywhere within the context of the margins. This makes the theology of decolonial reconstruction critical of Western-centrism and local religious fundamentalisms (including religious hegemony), patriarchy (including sexism and heterosexism), colonialism, neo-colonialism and ethno-nationalisms (Grosfoguel 2006).

---

[8] This theology has been critiqued by various theologians for its narrow approach to reconstruction which sought to abandon liberation and inculturation, and for its inadequate engagement with gender, sexuality, ecology and so on (see for example, Farisani 2002; Gathogo 2007).

[9] In this article, we are not dealing with the conversional theology of reconstruction that was proposal by the Kenyan theologian, Jess Mugambi, and South African White theologian Charles Villa-Vicencio.

It is an inclusive paradigm based on pluri-religio-relationality, which seeks the "fullness of life for all." Significant to theology of decolonial reconstruction is its embeddedness in the "bottom up" knowing and acting. This is based on the understanding that all knowledge creation is geopolitically situated. This also means that the knowledge from the center cannot adequately bring transformation on the margins. This does not mean that all knowledge emerging from the margins is shaped by the thinking of the margins, for a thinker can be physically located on the margins whilst their thinking is shaped and located at the center, and vice versa. This is why the theology of decolonial reconstruction seeks to do critical reflection with the people on the margins and reinstate their questions to help them re-describe their realities (Kaunda 2017a). It also gives epistemological privilege to diverse rhythms of their knowledge constructions based on their struggles and hopes. In other words, it promotes subversive knowing, being, and acting as radical ways to realize divinely redeemed and sanctified sociopolitical and economic structures in the nation. It perceives religion as not just a force for good but also a force for destruction, which should be directed toward dynamic social transformation through engaging religious institutions to position themselves as national loci for evolving plural-relationality.

The theology of decolonial reconstruction seeks to reconstruct religious imaginations to allow for openness, hospitable thinking and transformations within religious institutions themselves. Religious ideological transformation can be seen as imperative for any religious institution to become a safe space for radical inclusion and promotion of unconditional citizenship in which all individuals and groups have a sense of belonging, full participation, and know they are recognized and legitimated as full human beings with dignity and value for social transformation. It is through engagement with the knowledge emerging from the margins that this transformational process arrives at privileged knowledge for engaging socio-political, cultural, economic, and indeed all human institutions.

This paradigm sees the entire reality of human existence as a stage where divine redemptive activities take place, which become the impetus for human proactive engagement in the process of transforming sinful structures that perpetuate poverty, gender inequality, social injustice, oppression, authoritarianism, religious hegemony, tribalism and colonial mentalities. The theology of decolonial reconstruction therefore requires a paradigm shift so as to recognize the dignity, value and importance of each person, not only as an ethical norm and moral imperative, but also as a legal principle, a societal goal, and ultimately, as internalized practice. In other words, the paradigm affirms that no human being should be discriminated against as a result of class, race, religion (or lack thereof), ethnicity, sexuality or gender. This is an affirmation of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals' (UN 2015) ethical imperative: "No one must be left behind, and no human right ignored." To this end, framing MNGRA with the theology of decolonial reconstruction as its orientation can play a critical role in promoting religious political engagement that has potential for sustainable social transformation.

5. Conclusions

The article argues for a theology of decolonial reconstruction as imperative to help the MNGRA in the search for an alternative political narrative for Zambian society. It critiques the "top-bottom" approach utilising a theology of decolonial reconstruction and calling the MNGRA to embrace a pluralistic model of integral religious praxis at all levels of life. The guiding questions could be restated here: Are there ways in which the theology of decolonial reconstruction could help the MNGRA in redefining social reconstruction and transformation from the cosmologies and epistemologies of pluri-religious-based knowledge situated on the margins? How can MNGRA leverage religious-based assets to foster social reconstruction and political transformation? Based on this question, the article demonstrates that the theology of decolonial reconstruction has potential to make a distinctive and valuable contribution to assist MNGRA in reconceptualising its ministerial approach. This framework rejects a narrow understanding of national values as having potential to legitimatize the colonial matrix of power, and proposes interreligious and intercultural dialogue across diverse worldviews in the process of creating knowledge for social reconstruction and transformation. In so doing, it refuses to specify, in advance, how national values are to be defined and lived. In other words, it embraces an

inclusive approach to constructing values based on their contribution to social reconstruction and the transformation of the nation.

Author Contributions: C.J.K. contributed in the following capacity: Conceptualization, Methodology, Formal Analysis, Investigation, Writing-Original Draft Preparation, and Writing-Review & Editing. M.M.K. contributed in the following capacity: Methodology, Formal Analysis, Writing-Original Draft Preparation, and Writing-Review & Editing.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

References

Banda, Joshua. 2016. Zambia-Specific Preamble. In *Africa Arise—Zambia Chapter Beza International Ministries, Embracing Our Destiny: Redeeming Zambia in Religiousness—Africa's Tithe*. Nairobi: Asaph Office Publications, pp. ix–x.

Bompani, Barbara. 2016. 'For God and For My Country': Pentecostal-charismatic Churches and the Framing of a New Political Discourse in Uganda. In *Public Religion and the Politics of Homosexuality in Africa*. Edited by Adriaan van Klinken and Ezra Chitando. Surrey: Routledge, pp. 19–34.

Burgess, Richard. 2012. Pentecostals and Political Culture in Sub-Sahara Africa: Nigeria, Zambia, and Kenya as Case Studies. In *Global Pentecostal Movements: Migration, Mission, and Public Religion*. Edited by Michael Wilkinson. Leiden: Brill, pp. 17–42.

Cheyeka, Austin. 1998. The Proclamation of Zambia as a Christian Nation: The Islamic Dimension. *African Christian Studies* 14: 55–72.

Cheyeka, Austin. 2008a. Church, State and Political Ethics in a Post-Colonial State: The Case of Zambia. Zomba: Kachere Series.

Cheyeka, Austin. 2008b. Towards a history of the Charismatic churches in post-colonial Zambia. In *One Zambia, Many Histories: Towards a History of Post-Colonial Zambia*. Edited by Jan-Bart Gewald, Marja Hinfelaar and Giacomo Macola. Leiden and Boston: Brill, pp. 144–63.

Cheyeka, Austin. 2016. Zambia, a 'Christian nation' in Post Movement for Multiparty Democracy (MMD) Era, 2011–2016. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science* 6: 159–72.

CRC. 2017. CRL Rights Commission's Preliminary Report of the Hearings on Commercialisation of Religion and Abuse of People's Belief Systems. Available online: http://www.crlcommission.org.za/docs/Preliminary%20Report% (accessed on 11 July 2017).

Crouch, Mellissa. 2013. Proselytization, Religious Diversity and the State in Indonesia: The Offense of Deceiving a Child to Change Religion. In *Proselytizing and Limits of Religious Pluralism in Contemporary Asia*. Edited by Juliana Finucane and Michael Feener. Singapore: Springer, pp. 17–40.

Dowd, Robert. 2015. Christianity, Islam, and Liberal Democracy: Lessons from Sub-Saharan Africa. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Dunford, Robin. 2017. Toward a decolonial global ethics. *Journal of Global Ethics* 13: 380–97. [CrossRef]

EFZ. 2016. Our Executive Board Members. Available online: http://www.efzsecretariat.org (accessed on 17 October 2016).

El-Katiri, Mohammed. 2013. The institutionalisation of religious affairs: Religious reform in Morocco. *The Journal of North African Studies* 18: 53–69. [CrossRef]

Entertainment Reporter. 2018. Zodwa Wabantu Urges Fans to Stay Calm Over Zambia Deportation. March 12. Available online: https://www.iol.co.za/entertainment/celebrity-news/local/zodwa-wabantu-urges-fans-to-stay-calm-over-zambia-deportation-13735552 (accessed on 5 April 2018).

Farisani, Elelwani Bethuel. 2002. The use of Ezra-Nehemiah in a quest for a theology of renewal, transformation and reconstruction. Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Natal, Durban, South Africa.

Freston, Paul. 2001. *Evangelicals and Politics in Asia, Africa and Latin America*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Gathogo, Julius. 2007. Liberation and Reconstruction in the works of J. N. K. Mugambi: A Critical Analysis in African Theology. Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg, South Africa.

Gifford, Paul. 1998a. *African Christianity: Its Public Role*. London: Hurst & Company.

Gifford, Paul. 1998b. Chiluba's Christian nation: Christianity as a factor in Zambian politics 1991–1996. *Journal of Contemporary Religion* 13: 363–81. [CrossRef]

Gordon, David. 2012. *Invisible Agents: Spirits in a Central African History*. Athens: Ohio University Press.

Grosfoguel, Ramón. 2006. Decolonizing political-economy and post-colonial studies: Transmodernity, border thinking, and global coloniality. *Tabula Rasa* 4: 17–48. [CrossRef]

Grosfoguel, Ramón. 2007. The epistemic decolonial turn: Beyond political-economy paradigms. *Cultural Studies* 21: 211–23. [CrossRef]

Grosfoguel, Ramón. 2009. A decolonial approach to political-economy: Transmodernity, border thinking and global Coloniality. *Kult* 6: 10–38.

Grosfoguel, Ramón. 2015. Transmodernity, border thinking, and global Coloniality. *Nous* 13: 1–37.

Hinfelaar, Marja. 2009. Legitimizing Powers: The Political Role of the Roman Catholic Church, 1972–1991. In *One Zambia, Many Histories: Towards a History of Post-colonial Zambia*. Edited by Jan-Bart Gewald, Marja Hinfelaar and Giacomo Macola. Lusaka: Lembani Trust, pp. 129–43.

Hinfelaar, Marja. 2011. Debating the Secular in Zambia: The Response of the Catholic Church to Scientific Socialism and Christian Nation, 1976–2006. In *Christianity and Public Culture in Africa*. Edited by Harri Englund. Athens: Ohio University Press, pp. 50–66.

Kalu, Ogbu. 2008. *African Pentecostalism: An Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Kaunda, Chammah Judex. 2015. Denial of African Agency: A Decolonial Theological Turn. *Black Theology: An International Journal* 13: 1–23. [CrossRef]

Kaunda, Chammah Judex. 2017a. On the Road to Emmaus Together towards Life as Conversation Partner in Missiological Research. *International Review of Mission* 106: 34–50. [CrossRef]

Kaunda, Chammah Judex. 2017b. 'From Fools for Christ to Fools for Politicians': A Critique of Zambian Pentecostal Theopolitical Imagination. *International Bulletin of Mission Research* 41: 296–311. [CrossRef]

Kaunda, Chammah Judex. 2018. 'The Altars Are Holding the Nation in Captivity': Zambian Pentecostalism, Nationality, and African Religio-Political Heritage. *Religions* 9: 145. [CrossRef]

Kjaersgaard, Anne. 2017. *Funerary Culture and the Limits of Secularization in Denmark*. Münster: LIT Verlag.

Lungu, Edgar. 2015. President Edgar Lungu Speaks at the Day of Prayer & Fasting. Available online: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UDEw7zTM2rU (accessed on 18 October 2016).

Lusakatimes.com. 2015. Zambia Observes National Day of Prayer and Fasting. October 18. Available online: https://www.lusakatimes.com/2015/10/18/zambia-observes-national-day-of-prayer-and-fasting/ (accessed on 18 October 2016).

Maldonado-Torres, Nelson. 2006. Cesaire's Gift and the Decolonial Turn. *Radical Philosophy Review* 9: 111–38. [CrossRef]

Marger, Martin N. 1991. *Race and Ethnic Relations: American and Global Perspectives*, 2nd ed. Belmont: Wadsworth Pub. Co.

Marshall, Ruth. 1995. 'God is Not a Democrat': Pentecostalism and Democratisation in Nigeria. In *The Christian Churches and the Democratisation of Africa*. Edited by Paul Gifford. Leiden: E. J. Brill, pp. 239–60.

Marshall, Ruth. 2009. *Political Spiritualities: The Pentecostal Revolution in Nigeria*. Chicago: Chicago University Press.

Maxwell, Martin. 2006. African Gifts of the Spirit: Pentecostalism & the Rise of a Zimbabwean Transnational Movement. Athens: Ohio University Press.

Mignolo, Walter. 2007. Introduction: Coloniality of Power and De-Colonial Thinking. *Cultural Studies* 21: 155–67. [CrossRef]

Mignolo, Walter. 2011. Decolonizing Western Epistemology/Building Decolonial Epistemology. In *Decolonizing Epistemologies: Latina/o Theology and Philosophy*. Edited by Ada María Isasi-Diaz and Eduardo Mendieta. New York: Fordham UP, pp. 19–43.

Mugambi, Jesse. 1995. *From Liberation to Reconstruction: African Christian Theology after the Cold War*. Nairobi: EAEP.

Mugambi, Jesse. 2003. *Christian Theology and Social Reconstruction*. Nairobi: Acton.

Mwanza, Pukuta. 2016. Justification for the Construction of the National House of Prayer—An Evangelical Reaction. Unpublished paper. January 6, 1–7.

Mwenda, Joseph, and Stella Goma. 2017. Sumaili Explains her Plan for Religious Ministry. April 9. Available online: https://diggers.news/local/2017/04/09/sumaili-explains-her-plan-for-religious-ministry/ (accessed on 14 June 2017).

National House of Prayer. 2016. *Brochure*. Lusaka: National House of Prayer.

Ndlovu-Gatsheni, Sabelo. 2013. Perhaps Decoloniality is the Answer? Critical Reflections on Development from a Decolonial Epistemic Perspective. *Africanus: Journal of Development Studies* 43: 1–12. [CrossRef]

Nielsen, Jørgen, ed. 2012. *Islam in Denmark: The Challenge of Diversity*. Lanham: Lexington Books.

Nwaka, Bernard. 2007. *Invading the Babylonian System*. Lusaka: Campus Voice.
Peters, Rudolf. 2005. *Crime and Punishment in Islamic Law: Theory and Practice from the Sixteenth to the Twenty-First Century*. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press.
Quijano, Aníbal. 2000. Coloniality of Power, Ethnocentrism, and Latin America. *NEPANTLA* 1: 533–80.
Sharfman, Daphna. 1993. *Living without a Constitution: Civil Rights in Israel*. Armonk: M. E. Sharpe.
Sindima, Harvey. 2008. *The Gospel According to the Marginalize*. New York: Peter Lang.
Sriram, Sharanya. 2015. Religion in Denmark. *JYAN Blog*. December 11. Available online: https://berkleycenter.georgetown.edu/posts/religion-in-denmark (accessed on 4 April 2018).
Sumaili, Godfridah. 2017. Ministerial Statement by the Hon. Minister of Religious Affairs and National Guidance, Rev. Sumaili, on the Mushrooming of False Churches and Prophets, and Measures Being Put in Place. March 21. Available online: http://www.parliament.gov.zm/sites/default/files/images/publication_docs/MINISTERIAL%20STATEMENT%20BY%20HON%20SUMAILI.pdf (accessed on 12 July 2017).
Sumaili, Godfridah. 2018. Role of Ministry of National Guidance and Religious Affairs. PowerPoint. Paper presented at National Symposium, Equipping People of Faith to Face the Challenges of Today, Lusaka, Zambia, March 20.
UN. 2015. Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Available online: https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/post2015/transformingourworld (accessed on 6 April 2018).
Van Klinken, Adriaan. 2014. Homosexuality, politics and Pentecostal nationalism in Zambia. *Studies in World Christianity* 20: 259–81. [CrossRef]
Van Klinken, Adriaan. 2016. Christianity and Same-Sex Relationships in Africa. In *Routledge Companion to Christianity in Africa*. Edited by Elias K. Bongmba. New York and London: Routledge, pp. 487–501.
Vatican News. 2016. Catholics and Protestant Churches in Zambia against new Ministry of Religion. Available online: http://en.radiovaticana.va/news/2016/09/21/catholics_and_protestants_in_zambia_against_new_ministry/125974 (accessed on 28 October 2016).
Villa-Vicencio, Charles. 1992. *A Theology of Reconstruction: Nation-Building and Human Rights*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Wariboko, Nimi. 2012. Pentecostal Paradigms of National Economic Prosperity in Africa. In *Pentecostalism and Prosperity: The Socio-Economics of the Global Charismatic Movement*. Edited by Katherine Attanasi and Amos Yong. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 35–59.
Yong, Amos. 2010. *In the Days of Caesar: Pentecostalism and Political Theology*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans.
Zambia Reports. 2016. Pres. Lungu Wins Tight Presidential Election; ECL 1, 860, 877 Hichilema 1, 760, 347. August 15. Available online: https://zambiareports.com/2016/08/15/pres-lungu-wins-tight-presidential-election-ecl-1-860-877-hichilema-1-760-347/ (accessed on 28 August 2016).
ZambiaBlogTalkRadio. 2017. Rev. Godfridah Sumaili, Minister of National Guidance & Religious Affairs. Available online: http://www.blogtalkradio.com/zambiablogtalkradio/2017/05/20/rev-godfridah-sumaili-minister-of-national-guidance-religious-affairs (accessed on 12 June 2017).
Zambian Eye. 2018. The Rise of Buying Sex Dolls in Zambia Worries Government. February 7. Available online: http://zambianeye.com/the-rise-of-buying-sex-dolls-in-zambia-worries-government/ (accessed on 5 April 2018).
Zambian Observer. 2016. Corrupt Zambian Minister Rev. Sumaili Exposed Over Prophet Angel Issue. Available online: https://www.zambianobserver.com/corrupt-zambian-minister-rev-sumaili-exposed-over-prophet-angel-issue/ (accessed on 28 August 2016).

© 2018 by the authors. Licensee MDPI, Basel, Switzerland. This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).

religions

MDPI

Article

Stigmatisation and Ritual: An Analysis of the Stigmatisation of Pentecostalism in Chile

Wilson Muñoz [1,2,3,*] and M. Esther Fernández-Mostaza [3]

[1] Faculty of Education & Humanities, Universidad de Tarapacá, 1000000 Arica, Chile
[2] Laboratory of Social Anthropology, Collège de France/EHESS/CNRS/PSL Research University, 75231 Paris, France
[3] Department of Sociology, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, 08193 Bellaterra, Spain; mariaesther.fernandez@uab.cat
* Correspondence: wilsonsocio@gmail.com; Tel.: +34-935-811-729

Received: 9 July 2018; Accepted: 8 August 2018; Published: 16 August 2018

Abstract: Pentecostalism has been one of the most successful religious movements in Chile due to both its historical growth and its ascendancy in different spheres of society. Nevertheless, from its origins to the present day, it has also been the most stigmatised religious movement in the country. Studies have explained this phenomenon by referring to variables of social class or religious rivalry. However, they have forgotten a factor that is key to this problem and to Pentecostalism: its ritual dimension. The aim of this article is to analyse the relationship between the stigmatisation of the movement and its unusual ritual life. It is concluded from the analysis of documentary sources that the principal contexts in which Pentecostalism is stigmatised are those that feature the staging of ritual, and that the stigmatisation mainly attacks and disparages the most distinctive ritual practices of the movement.

Keywords: Pentecostalism; stigmatisation; ritual

---

1. Introduction

Over the course of the 20th century, no other religious movement grew more quickly than Pentecostalism, and in recent decades, it has become the most dynamic wing of Christianity. Its magnitude is such that its emergence and development have permanently altered global Christianity (Anderson [2004] 2007, p. 325). It is now present in almost every country in the world, while the largest centre of Pentecostal Christianity continues to be Latin America, where the movement has expanded exponentially. Such is its importance in this region that some authors refer to Pentecostalism as an authentically Latin American movement (Casanova 2004, p. 79), and a measure of its influence is that other relatively successful Christian movements have shown a tendency to "Pentecostalise" in order to survive in recent decades (Bastian 2006a; Gooren 2010; Maduro 2009; Linhardt 2016).

In this context, Chilean Pentecostalism has proved to be one of the most interesting case studies around the world (Lagos 1982; Ortiz 2009), due to its special characteristics. It was in Chile that the first Pentecostal church in Latin America (1909) was established, following an internal schism in the Methodist Protestant Church and precipitated by a "spiritual revival" of a global nature (Cleary and Sepúlveda 1997). Furthermore, from its beginnings this was an autonomous, native, and popular movement, which mainly took root in deprived social strata, in contrast with the development of the great majority of Protestant churches in the region in the 19th century (D'Espinay [1968] 2009). Moreover, as a result of its growing success at a national level, combined with the eminently missionary nature of its work, the movement in Chile became one of the principal driving forces for the spread of Pentecostalism in the Andean region (Rivière 2007, p. 4). But what has most attracted the attention of researchers is the sustained rate of growth—one of the most significant rates worldwide—shown by

the movement throughout the 20th century (Corvalán 2009, p. 94; Linhardt 2012). In addition, in recent decades, its presence has increased in different spheres of society, and it has become an increasingly relevant social player (Cleary and Sepúlveda 1997; Talavera and Beyer 1991; Fediakova 2002a, 2002b, 2007; Calderón 2008).

However, its relative success has not prevented Pentecostals from continuing to be one of the groups that meet with most discrimination and stigmatisation in Chile today (Mansilla 2007a, p. 58). This is an undeniable fact, for which there has been clear evidence since the origins of the movement. With varying intensity and frequency, Pentecostalism has historically been one of the favorite targets of criticism from traditional Protestantism, the leaders of the Catholic Church, social scientists, and, more generally, Chilean society as a whole.

This has aroused the attention of the social sciences, and research conducted basically offers two broad hypotheses by way of explanation. On the one hand, it is maintained that the stigmatisation of Pentecostalism is due, above all, to a historical sociocultural factor, namely that the majority of its followers have belonged to groups that have been socially excluded in the course of Chile's history (Mansilla 2007a, 2007b). On the other hand, from a more general perspective, it has been posited that the symbolic violence deployed against Pentecostalism forms part of the power strategies used by members of other confessions in their struggle not to lose their monopoly on the symbolic capital invested in religion, which is steadily being taken from them by Pentecostalism (Bastian 1990, 2006a, 2006b, 2008).

While aware of the importance and the reliability of these explanations, in this article we approach this problem by focusing on an aspect which, although it has been studied little, is of vital importance for Pentecostalism: its ritual dimension (Linhardt 2011). We maintain that it is impossible to fully understand the stigmatisation long suffered by Pentecostalism without considering its relationship with the particular way in which Pentecostal religiosity is expressed through ritual. Furthermore, we will propose a hypothesis which provides an alternative, based on an empirically informed interpretation, to the existing literature that seeks to understand the origin of this stigmatisation.

2. Materials and Methods

This research applies a qualitative interpretative approach based on the analysis of historical documentary sources. To be specific, two print media sources were used. First, analysis was made of the first 75 issues of *Revista Fuego de Pentecostés*—the official journal of the nascent Pentecostal evangelical movement—which appeared between 1928 and 1934. This journal published general information about the movement, theological reflections and personal testimonies, among other items. The emphasis of the analysis is on the testimonies that related situations of hostility toward Pentecostalism and on the *Historia del avivamiento Pentecostal* (History of the Pentecostal Revival) written by the pastor W.C. Hoover and published in instalments in the journal. Second, the information in the newspaper *El Mercurio de Valparaíso* was analyzed, specifically the reports published in 1909 that covered the revival of the Pentecostal movement in Valparaíso.

In historical terms, the observation of events is limited to the period between 1909 and 1925, the first decade of existence of Pentecostalism and the period to which the accounts of the aforementioned sources refer. It was during this time that the movement aroused considerable hostility in society, clearly reflected in the press, with the result that, today, a large amount of material about the stigmatisation of the movement originates from this particular period.

3. Pentecostalism and Its Stigmatisation

Pentecostalism is a Christian religious movement that emphasises "the working of the gifts of the Spirit, both on phenomenological and theological grounds" (Anderson [2004] 2007, p. 27). The theological basis of the movement is a cosmovision in which the Holy Spirit can invade absolutely everything. But its hallmark is to prioritise the development of a direct and personal experience with the Spirit, with the aim of making the immanence of God tangible. In order to achieve this

manifestation of the Spirit, effervescent liturgies are conducted (worship sessions, vigils, days of prayer, etc.), in which most of the community actively participates. In this context, highly spontaneous ritual practices take place, marked by the predominance of orality, bodily movements, and emotion (Poewe 1989; Mossière 2007), and these even acquire ecstatic connotations at times. Among the most characteristic ritual practices, we find speaking in tongues (glossolalia), healing by the laying on of hands (thaumaturgy), and exorcisms; however, testimonies, visions, prophecies, music, dancing, sacred songs, and public preaching are also seen as spiritual gifts (Cartledge 1998; Anderson 1999; Garma 2000a, 2000b; Guerrero 2000; Mary 2001; Mena 2003, 2009; Llera 2004, 2005; Lynn 2006; Campos 2008; Lucena 2008; Andrade 2008; Barrios 2009; Fancello 2009; Guerra 2009; Plaideau 2010).

The hallmark of Pentecostalism, both in Chile and globally, is the radical importance of its ritual aspects (Robbins 2009). In other words, it is the special ritual practices which have made Pentecostalism an unusual and a particularly striking movement. Specifically, Chilean Pentecostalism is a paradigmatic case study, due principally to its significant success. Since its origins, it has shown sustained growth and one of the highest rates of adherence in the region. For many decades now, it has been the second largest religious group in Chile behind Catholicism and followed at a considerable distance by other religious movements, such as Jehovah's Witnesses and Mormons (Corvalán 2009). Furthermore, Pentecostalism has gradually gained a higher degree of visibility and participation in different social spheres, such as education, the media, social welfare, and politics (Cleary and Sepúlveda 1997; Talavera and Beyer 1991; Fediakova 2002a, 2002b, 2007; Calderón 2008).

Paradoxically, the relative success of the movement in religious and social terms has not prevented a phenomenon that has accompanied it since its origins: stigmatisation. In fact, historically, Pentecostalism has been stigmatised more than any other popular religious group in Chile. Although the settings, players, and vestments have changed, evidence of this stigmatisation may be observed throughout the history of the movement, and, on many occasions, there has been a truly dramatic edge to the stigmatisation, mainly in the earliest years of the movement, as we will proceed to show in detail in this article.

If the observer steps back and gains a greater perspective of the development of Pentecostalism, it will become clear that, historically, the movement has been the target of attacks and criticism from a variety of groups in Chilean society (Teenekes 1985; Martin 1990). From the very first days of the revival, the leaders of Protestant Methodism were hostile toward the innovative spiritual manifestations of Pentecostalism and were quick to discredit Pentecostals as a religious group. Later, as the movement steadily gained more converts among Catholics, the traditional Catholic Church was quick to attack it, thereby contributing to its loss of public legitimacy. Moreover, although Pentecostalism increasingly acquired an identity as a popular social movement, society in general, steeped in a Catholic tradition, has greatly encouraged discrimination toward it. Clear evidence of this can be found in the nicknames, ridicule, and negative stories about Pentecostalism which feed the collective imagination of the Chilean people. Finally, the academic world also played its part, since Pentecostalism was largely forgotten about by 20th century historiographers, and the first social studies that took an interest in learning about the movement, completed in the 1960s, were quick to classify it as a mere "sect", using the word in a clearly pejorative sense. In summary, the disadvantaged position of the movement in the national arena cannot be refuted.

The important question here is: Why, historically, has Pentecostalism in particular been the most stigmatised religious movement in Chile? According to a first theory put forward, the discrimination and stigmatisation suffered by Pentecostalism is due to the fact that most adherents have belonged, and continue to belong, to the lowest social strata, comprised of groups that are excluded from Chilean society (Mansilla 2005, 2007a, 2007b).

A second theory is also worthy of mention. Although it does not specifically explain the origin of the stigmatisation of Chilean Pentecostalism, it has offered a hypothesis for understanding the hostility toward the movement in Mexico in particular and Latin America in general. Furthermore, it synthesises a theoretical approach supported by many researchers in the region toward understanding the

situation of Pentecostalism. Wholly based on the theory of fields of Bourdieu [1971] (2006) and Bastian (1990, 2006a, 2006b, 2008), this theory suggests that the opposition historically encountered by Pentecostalism among the population is due to the effect the movement had, when it emerged, of reconfiguring the religious arena.

Both of the aforementioned proposals point to factors that are key to understanding the problem of the stigmatisation of Pentecostalism, and in this respect their contributions are undeniable. However, they fail to resolve certain issues which are worthy of analysis.

On the one hand, Mansilla's theory draws attention to a fact that cannot be denied: by and large, the poor have embraced Pentecostalism. Nevertheless, there are other popular religious manifestations that have mainly given refuge to disadvantaged social groups and which have not received the same stigmatising treatment, or at least, not with the same intensity. On the other hand, if what we might call the social variable ultimately triggered this situation, it begs the question why the Pentecostal movement has been discriminated against and stigmatised by members of the same social class.

For its part, Bastian's theory offers an explanatory outline that is too generic, and the theory is weak when seeking to explain why this religious movement is stigmatised more than others. Two unexplained conditions lack a satisfactory response. When arguing that the hostility of the Catholic Church is due to the fact that Pentecostalism was seen as a clear religious competitor, no answer is provided as to why equally violent action was not taken against other religious movements. The counter argument could of course be that Pentecostalism was its favourite target because it proved to be the most successful competitor in the religious field; yet, at the outset, it was a marginal movement, and years passed before it established itself as a relevant religious player. Moreover, in view of the fact that Pentecostalism has steadily increased its presence in different spheres of society and gained much greater recognition, why has this social recognition not prevented it from being stigmatised?

We consider that both theories reproduce a common supposition in many studies on Pentecostalism. Preoccupied with revealing the diverse relationships that Pentecostalism weaves with various ambits of social life (politics, socio-economics, etc.), relationships that are constituent elements of the movement, the studies often appear to forget a primary essential fact: that Pentecostalism is fundamentally a religious movement (Míguez 1998; Semán 1998; Bergunder 2009), and it is on this plane that we can find insightful explanations about the phenomenon of stigmatisation.

Goffman understood stigma as a "profoundly discrediting attribute" which established a clear difference between the stigmatised and the stigmatiser (Goffman [1963] 2008, p. 15). However, the North American sociologist added that the most relevant aspect of stigma was not its value as a mere attribute, but its relational nature. In other words, neither the person stigmatised nor the stigma considered in isolation is of sole importance, since the fundamental element is the social process involved in the stigmatisation.

> ... stigma involves not so much a set of individuals who can be separated into two piles, the stigmatised and the normal, as a pervasive two-role social process in which every individual participates in both roles, at least in some connections and in some phases of life. The normal and the stigmatised are not persons but rather perspectives. These are generated in social situations during mixed contacts by virtue of the unrealised norms that are likely to play upon the encounter. (Goffman [1963] 2008, pp. 171–72).

The first thing we would retrieve from this definition is the idea of conceiving stigmatisation as a social distinction between stigmatiser/stigmatised, where, while on one side there is an outpouring of favourable expectations ("normal"), on the other there falls the weight of social discredit ("abnormal"). So, in order to analyse stigmatisation, it is necessary to focus particularly on what is referred to and distinguished from by the stigmatisation.

It is from here that the second aspect of Goffman's proposal is deduced, which is particularly relevant to knowing how to approach the analysis of stigmatisation. The unique feature of the author's

sociological proposal is not only conceiving stigma as a social process, but, above all, emphasising that these phenomena tend to originate and recur in settings in which interactions take place, that is to say, social situations in which at least two persons are physically present, and where the co-presentiality becomes the main focus of attention and communication (Goffman [1983] 1991, p. 173). Hence the author's interest in the "mixed contacts", generated when stigmatisers and stigmatised meet and communicate, for it is in these situations that stigmatisation occurs and its greatest social effects are felt.

On the other hand, Goffman also maintained that high ritual activity took place in the interactional encounters whenever the social players engaged in symbolic practices designed to "protect" what they considered to be highly valuable, indeed sacred for the group (Goffman [1967] 1970, p. 56). But at the same time, these situations provide a favourable setting for the emergence of transgressions and ceremonial profanations. These have the same ritualistic nature, but at the opposite end of the spectrum, because they use actions and language considered incorrect, with the aim of attacking what is valuable for the social group being assaulted. In this respect, a practice like stigmatisation can have a clear ritual connotation, due to both the setting where it may take place and what it may symbolically attack.

This said, the aim of returning to the interesting theoretical reflections of Goffman on the stigmatisation-interaction-ritual triad is to obtain a specific proposal for analysing the research problem under investigation here. In this respect, if stigmatisation is a social process that originates and recurs particularly in situations where stigmatised and stigmatisers interact, in order to genuinely understand the reason why Pentecostalism has been the most stigmatised religious group in Chile, we will proceed by analysing the specific practices of stigmatisation of which this movement has been a victim, devoting particular attention to both the aspects attacked by the stigma and the settings in which this phenomenon most commonly occurred.

4. Results

4.1. The Origin of Pentecostalism and the Breath of the Spirit in Chile

The Chilean Pentecostal movement emerged in 1909 in the city of Valparaíso within the Methodist Church, led at that time by the pastor W.C. Hoover. He is key to gaining an understanding of how the movement developed, for it was under his leadership that the nascent Pentecostal movement broke away from Methodism. In 1907, Hoover began to correspond with world leaders of the incipient Pentecostal movement (Orellana 2006, p. 28). The pastor was particularly interested in the baptism of the Holy Spirit, of which there were testimonies in various parts of the world, and he also requested general information about the spiritual renewal that was taking place within the movement. This would have a decisive influence on the way in which Hoover began to develop worship practices and Bible study in the church. From that point on, Hoover was the target of easy criticism for having revived a new form of expressing religiosity that challenged the traditional canon.

At that time, the picture that the Pentecostal proto-movement presented to the rest of society was unusual and particularly striking. People from the lower social classes mainly formed the group; most were poor, many were without work and uneducated, and women played a prominent part. The Pentecostal ranks were even swelled by reformed criminals. For his part, the pastor did not really stand out on the basis of his theological training or the orthodoxy of his practices. Around the year 1908, the church would still meet regularly under a flimsy awning in all forms of weather, although on many occasions the modest homes of the believers served as improvised settings for many of their religious ceremonies. But perhaps of most significance was the unusual nature of their worship practices, which quickly attracted the attention of the local and the national community. This completed the extraordinary image that Pentecostalism began to project, one that would bring them many detractors.

4.1.1. The Manifestations

Throughout the year 1909, this church was one of the focal points of what was dubbed the Pentecostal "revival" worldwide. That year, the worship sessions, the days of prayer and the vigils became more frequent and more intense. A growing number of practices developed that were characterised by an outpouring of emotion and highly effervescent ritual. According to Hoover himself, they were "extraordinary manifestations of various kinds: laughter, weeping, shouts, singing, strange tongues, visions, ecstasy during which the person would fall to the ground and feel transported elsewhere, to heaven, to paradise, to beautiful fields, with various experiences; they spoke with the Lord, with angels, or with the devil" (Hoover [1926] 2008, p. 39). At that time, the fire of the Spirit had begun to burn on Chilean soil, and it would never go out.

These manifestations rapidly attracted the attention of the inhabitants of the city. One of the most surprising and innovative practices was preaching on the street, a distinctive feature of Chilean Pentecostalism which has continued to the present day and has led to countless conversions. In the early stages of the revival, the tremendous spiritual manifestations frequently overwhelmed the believers themselves, propelling them on to the street to proclaim their religious message:

> This Spirit encouraged young people to take to the street with their "God is love" and inspired the baptised to proclaim the mercy of God in the streets with remarkable fervour and courage. It was generally an impulse totally removed from their intentions or thoughts, and their exhortations and messages were delivered with a zeal and a fearlessness that was clearly not natural to them—boys and girls and shy women spoke with a power that overcame those listening, frequently making them tremble or cry (...) Inspired by these circumstances, the brothers began to go out in groups to preach in the streets (I.E.P 1928e, p. 8).

Up until that time, Protestants worshipped privately inside churches, in a formalised and discreet fashion. Although popular Catholic manifestations such as processions took place in the public space, these were staged on specific days in the calendar (feast days) and normally in or around a particular location (shrines, grottoes, etc.). Thus, it was impossible for an activity so out of the ordinary to go unnoticed either by devotees or by detractors. On many occasions, the police arrested the Pentecostals while they were preaching and sent them to the nearest police station, charging them with disorderly behavior in a public place or some other minor offence. However, they were then released due to the lack of more serious charges. Sometimes, the believers used the police station to continue preaching, providing personal testimonies of God's work in their lives and calling on their listeners to be converted. It is interesting to note that, from then on, public spaces such as squares, streets, taverns, and bars were scenes of notable ritual violence against Pentecostals (Mansilla 2007b, p. 2), who increasingly sought to make inroads into society, adopting an unusual and distinctive manner of relating to the sacred and addressing their fellow citizens.

4.1.2. The Press

But the revival continued its course. It would reach its zenith between the months of August and September 1909. The use that Pentecostalism made of public space and its "scandalous and noisy" ceremonies quickly attracted the attention of both the local and the national secular press.

An example can be found in the coverage given by the newspaper *El Chileno* to the events that occurred in the church led by Hoover. The editorial management sent a reporter to investigate the new situation that was causing such a stir in the city. For two weeks, the newspaper published a series of daily reports, but the information was presented in a clearly derogatory and tendentious tone, offering "a conglomeration of half truth and half lies, conveniently coloured to produce a sensation of scorn and disdain", in the words of Hoover himself. The pastor provided an example of this when he reproduced a headline from the newspaper that refers to the activities of his church. The daily caption in large print occupied two columns and read as follows: "The New Escobar, the work of a swindler or a madman.

Shouts, swoonings and slaps. Tragi-comic scenes. Full details. Police complaints. Intervention by justice officials" (Hoover [1926] 2008, p. 47).

This quotation clearly shows the image of Pentecostalism that began to be circulated. On top of the falsehood, deception, madness and lack of reason that supposedly defined the activities of the new movement, there came disdain delivered in a mocking tone ("tragi-comic scenes"), epitomising the way the press wrote about the movement. In this way, the news that monopolised the headlines of *El Chileno* for weeks made a decisive contribution to smearing the reputation of the movement in Chilean society.

While the incidents filled the pages of the press, the fervent revival in Valparaíso continued and began to spread to neighbouring areas. Adherents to this new wing of the church were on the increase, and they were anxiously waiting for the Conference so that Hoover could offer his testimony of the goodness of the events that had occurred during this period. They believed that the success of the church was irrefutable proof of the action of the Spirit in their lives.

4.2. The Annual Conference

The Annual Conference was held in Valparaíso in the temple recently raised by the Pentecostals themselves, a building that could accommodate 1500 people. At that moment, the movement had 220 new probationary members, a school attendance of around 600 and a congregation of almost 1000. The movement was in the ruddiest of health. But the passionate atmosphere, although prepared for a "great blessing" (Hoover [1926] 1948, p. 65), augured a dramatic outcome.

Normally, the Annual Conferences tended to deal with various concerns that affected the congregation, but on this occasion all attention was focused on the analysis and evaluation of Hoover's work as the leader of the revival. A "disciplinary commission" was specially appointed by the Conference to judge the matter, and Hoover had no choice but to sit on the accused bench. The commission decided to present two charges: "First charge: Teaching and disseminating false and anti-Methodist doctrines, publicly and privately" and "Second Charge: Conduct gravely imprudent". But the most interesting thing about these accusations was the series of specifications that accompanied each of these charges. With respect to the first accusation, two specifications show where the crux of the Methodist attack lay:

> Specification One: Whereby during the ecclesiastic year 1909–1910, in the Methodist Episcopal Church of Valparaíso, W. C. Hoover on many occasions has taught false and anti-Methodist doctrines, namely: In the public services he has declared that the baptism in the Holy Spirit manifests itself by visions, rolling on the floor, the gift of tongues and prophecies. (. . .) Specification Six: W. C. Hoover has disseminated literature that teaches false and anti-Methodist doctrines (. . .) teaching the doctrines of the raising of hands, baptism with fire, miracles of healing by faith, visions, gift of tongues, prophecies, the fixing of the date of the advent of Christ, falling under the power of the Holy Spirit, and opposition to the organised churches (I.E.P 1928h, p. 8; I.E.P 1928i, p. 8).

With regard to the second accusation, some of the specifications put forward by the disciplinary commission were the following:

> First Specification: Forasmuch as said W. C. Hoover has done and permitted in the services things gravely imprudent and unworthy, such as when in a Sunday school service of the Valparaíso church in the month of August or September, Miss Elena Laidlaw took most of the time allowed for the Sunday school for the imposition of her hands on the heads of many persons, pretending in this way to impart the Holy Spirit. And W. C. Hoover himself knelt before her, receiving the imposition of her hands. (. . .) Specification Three: He permitted that the services develop confusion and cries, putting our church as a cause of scandal in the neighbourhood, especially during the months of September and October, which brought about an investigation by the Judge of the Criminal Court (. . .) Specification Four:

> He permitted a series of scandalous acts in the services during the months of September and October when people, falling on the floor—men and women and young people of both sexes—were left together in a dishevelled fashion, offensive to decency and morals (I.E.P 1928i, p. 8).

We have reproduced these extensive texts because they splendidly sum up the type of opposition that Pentecostalism had to contend with. If analysis is made of the specifications supporting the first accusation—the promotion of "false and anti-Methodist" doctrines—it is interesting to note that, despite the title of the accusation, the theological or doctrinal aspect is not the main focus of attention. The specifications primarily attack the "inappropriate" Pentecostal practices of worship. It is these practices that lead to the conclusion that the principles that potentially underpin them are inappropriate. Essentially, it is the practices of glossolalia, thaumaturgy, the gift of prophecy, visions, the raising of hands, etc., which lie behind the accusation that seeks to exclude the movement from the heart of Methodism. Indeed, faced by a variety of similar accusations, Hoover defended himself by declaring and demonstrating that doctrinally he followed the journals of John Wesley, one of the fathers of Methodism. Furthermore, in response to the accusation of the Conference, Hoover asked repeatedly for a trial to be staged at which these theological issues could be discussed, but the Methodist leaders never granted him this request.

This said, the fundament of the "inappropriateness" of these ritual activities is made clear in the specifications of the second charge, which accuses Hoover of promoting conduct "gravely imprudent". Although a direct attack is made on a ritual practice, healing by the imposition of hands, one of the aspects that proved to be genuinely disturbing for the disciplinary commission is the fact that this had been carried out by a woman, who had already been humiliated earlier by the superintendent, and furthermore, that the leading pastor, a man, had even gone so far as to kneel before her, inverting roles and positions of power. It is this inversion of what is "correct" that angers the accusers most. Thus the scandal, the cries and the confusion appear to be a clear attack on the "correct order" of things. This is shown even more clearly when the division of the sexes is questioned: men and women together, lying on the floor, could only represent an attack on morals. In summary, it is the effervescence, spontaneity and emotional intensity of the Pentecostal ceremonial activities that place these manifestations outside the everyday, in a kind of strange religious marginal area, clearly questioning the established canon. Not for nothing is the commission responsible for evaluation first and foremost "disciplinary".

4.3. The Following Years

From 1910, the new Pentecostal movement began to spread within Chile, meeting with particular success in the poor outlying areas of Valparaíso, Santiago, and Concepción. However, it did not make a great impact on Chilean society in general, and several decades passed before the remaining religious and social groups really recognised it as a religious movement. In this new phase, evangelisation and the role played by small local churches with their respective leaders (many of whom were charismatic) were key factors in the gradual expansion of the movement.

Nevertheless, stigmatisation continued to accompany the movement, and in many areas, it would even increase and intensify. Thus, for example, whereas the Catholic Church barely noticed its ascendancy in its first phase, after the 1920s, it pounced on Pentecostalism and joined in with initiatives to stigmatise the movement. However, the daily hostility that flared up, above all in public spaces where Pentecostals would frequently mix with non-Pentecostals, continued to originate from members of the poorer social classes on the whole, most of whom had grown up in the Catholic tradition. For example, many documents testify to the violence that occurred as a reaction to preaching in the street, an activity that became a regular feature of Pentecostalism as the years went by. This situation is clearly reflected in two eye-witness accounts published in *Revista Fuego de Pentecostés*.

> In 1925, in Villa Alemana, some people were preaching on the street and a man broke into the group, interrupting them. He had a litre of wine with him and he wanted to force the brothers to drink some. When they refused, he threatened to pour it over their heads. Since they ignored him, he did indeed pour the wine over their heads and clothes, and then he left. He returned later, and from outside the group he did the same thing again. He eventually withdrew into a nearby bar (I.E.P 1928d, p. 4).

> On another occasion, in 1925, we were preaching in Quilpué at a crossroads where a butcher had a stand on the corner. The butcher said to a policeman: "Arrest these donkeys that are braying"; and the policeman stopped us from preaching (I.E.P 1928i, pp. 4, 6).

The public humiliation suffered by the Pentecostals is evident in these incidents. In the first account, it is interesting to observe that use is made of an element charged with symbolism in order to offend them: wine. Although wine has sacred associations within Christian ceremony, one of the principal criticisms that Pentecostalism voiced against popular Chilean practices was the abuse of alcohol in many traditional festivities. For Pentecostals, this was a social scourge that showed the presence of the devil in their lives. It is interesting to note that one of the main effects of converting to Pentecostalism in deprived social groups has been the decision to give up alcohol. Therefore, the practice of urging the Pentecostals to drink wine while they were preaching is clearly provocative and a desecration of a sacred ritual, and the subsequent action of pouring wine over them simply made the humiliation worse. This baseness is expressed even more clearly in the second account, in which the preachers—preaching being a characteristic activity of Pentecostals—are reduced to mere animals, the image of the donkey evoking ignorance, the lack of intellectual capacity, and obstinacy. On top of everything, the humiliation is supported by the official power of the police.

Finally, the Pentecostal movement continued to be stigmatised in the years that followed. In fact, this dynamic remains even today. There can be no doubt that the settings, the protagonists, and the frequency and intensity of the stigmatisation have changed, but the logic that has driven this social process and which continues to inundate the popular imagination with ridicule, jokes and remarks, constantly reinvented with new material, remains present in Chilean society. The analysis of specific situations in which Pentecostalism was treated with hostility during the period of the first two decades following the birth of the movement clearly demonstrates the nature of this stigmatisation and the settings in which it tended to surface.

5. Discussion

We would like to first present two findings based on our empirical research, then propose a new hypothesis, and finally to briefly discuss these findings. First, the analysis of historical sources has shown that on both a semantic and a practical level, stigmatisation of the Pentecostals principally attacked their unusual ritual practices; these included glossolalia, thaumaturgy, public preaching, testimonies, and dancing. These activities were explicitly reviled since they were thought to be based on ignorance, madness, falsehood, superstition, inhumanity, and moral degradation. But it was really "the form" acquired by these ritual manifestations that was the focus of the stigmatisation. The spontaneity, emotional intensity, and ritual effervescence of these manifestations went against the social and religious canons of the time, becoming an easy target for stigma. Moreover, this ritual activity offered the possibility of establishing more direct communication with the sacred in forms—unheard of until then in the context of Chilean Christianity—whereby the body itself of the believer could be possessed by the Spirit, symbolising the very limit between transcendence and immanence since this activity represented the irruption of the sacred into the world.

Second, empirical evidence also shows that the principal situations in which stigmatising practices toward Pentecostalism occurred and recurred correspond to scenes that involve a high degree of ritual. This staging of stigma only made the stigma more dramatic and effective. A clear example of this can be seen when, on repeated occasions, the Methodist authorities, policemen, press reporters and

onlookers would burst in on the places of worship of the Pentecostals, with the aim of an inspection, or to mock them, insult them and even make arrests; in one way or another, all of these practices clearly represented sacrilegious acts. A further example may be observed in people's violent reactions to preaching in the street. While the Pentecostals saw the public space as a scene of sin and degradation, and therefore a place where the Christian message also had to be taken, many viewed this type of evangelism as a provocation, a kind of desecration of a space assigned to sociable practices; therefore, violence and stigmatisation were the arms employed in response to this situation created by the presence of Pentecostals in the street.

We would like to propose a tentative hypothesis to advance the understanding of why Pentecostalism has been the most stigmatized religious movement in Chile. Indeed, our interpretation is that Pentecostalism is viewed in the social context of Chile as a profoundly disturbing manifestation because symbolically it brings together a set of stigmas that are severely condemned by this society. In this respect, both the fact that this is a religious minority that questions traditional religious authority (Bastian) and the fact that its adherents are essentially people from social classes that are clearly excluded by Chilean society (Mansilla) are influential and reinforce the image of Pentecostalism as posing a threat. However, these factors are catalyzed and heightened by the ecstatic ritual life practised by Pentecostals. As a minority religious movement that engages in its various practices in specific settings with particular people, what Pentecostalism really does on a symbolic level is to attack society at large, questioning the pre-established order through its worship practices. This leads to the broad spectrum of opprobrium and insults that can be read in the language used against the Pentecostals, a language which encompasses the most diverse dimensions of social and human life. It is in this respect that, in some way, with their ritual practice, the Pentecostals embody a kind of social chaos.

This symbolic condensation (Turner 1967) of social stigmas (Goffman [1963] 2008) that appears in Pentecostalism can help us begin to understand, on the one hand, the depth of the process of stigmatization to which it has been subjected, and on the other, its constancy in time. However, this observation must be given a double nuance. In the first place, we should avoid imagining the Chilean Pentecostal movement and its actors as mere victims of stigmatization. It is important here to return to the origins of the notion of stigma as defined by Goffman [1963] (2008), which in that sense relates to "deviance" phenomena. In this context, American sociologists showed how these social groups tried to manage the stigma that society had imposed on them, one of their specific forms being stigmatization owing to religious conditions.

Our case study here, then, presents a dialectical issue: It is true that Hoover, when facing the charges of the Methodist authorities, alleged that the new Pentecostal movement had been the victim of a series of accusations that would stigmatize it among Christians, which in turn would deepen its social stigmatization within Chilean society in general; yet, the other aspect of the dialectic leads us to the realization that we should not conceive of Pentecostalism as having both a hierarchical and a distant relationship with other Evangelicals or with Christianity in general in Chile. Pentecostalism is not a denominational equivalent of "pollution" (to use Goffman's image once more) and is not seen solely as such by the rest of society. At this point, we can note the diverse relationships that the Pentecostal movement has woven to treat stigma on a symbolic and ritual level with respect to the larger society, within Christianity, and even within the Pentecostal movement itself.

This is a field of research that would help us to test our preliminary hypothesis and advance the understanding of our study. Here, it would be interesting to clarify whether, during the historical period investigated, there were various symbolic and ritual oppositions between Pentecostalism and other social groups that would have operated in a hegemonic way as a kind of "iconization process in linguistic ideology" (Irvine and Gal 2000, pp. 37–38). This would also allow us to explore the scope of this sociocultural phenomenon more fully. However, while this perspective would be quite relevant, it exceeds the limits of this article.

The analysis of the historical stigmatisation experienced by Pentecostalism should be continued in the future, for not only will this enable the hypothesis we have put forward here to be tested, but, most importantly, it will also allow more to be learnt about this social problem. Only through an understanding of this dynamic will we be able to contribute to the creation of a less distant and more reflective image of the religious idiosyncrasies of Pentecostalism, underlining the need to definitively consider this movement as a truly valid religious proposal.

Author Contributions: Conceptualization, Methodology, Investigation, Writing—Original Draft Preparation: Wilson Muñoz. Writing—Review & Editing, Supervision, Project Administration: Esther Fernández-Mostaza.

Funding: This research was funded by the UNESCO/Japan Young Researchers' Fellowship Programme, UNESCO—France and the Government of Japan. The first author was supported by the CONICYT in the form of a *Becas Chile* scholarship, N° 72150364.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

References

Anderson, Allan. 2007. *El Pentecostalismo. El Cristianismo Carismático Global*. Madrid: Akal. First published 2004.

Anderson, Allan. 1999. The gospel and culture in Pentecostal mission in the third world. Paper presented at the 9th Conference of the European Pentecostal Charismatic Research Association, Hamburg, Germany, July 13–17.

Andrade, Rosa. 2008. Manos que sanan. Experiencia de salud en mujeres pentecostales chilenas. *Cultura y Religión* 2: 1–16.

I.E.P. 1928d. *Fuego de Pentecostés* 4, April.

I.E.P. 1928e. *Fuego de Pentecostés* 5, May.

I.E.P. 1928h. *Fuego de Pentecostés* 8, August.

I.E.P. 1928i. *Fuego de Pentecostés* 9, September.

Barrios, Angélica. 2009. Teo-odisea cantada: Vida e imaginario del creyente pentecostal a través de sus cánticos. *Cultura y Religión* 3: 152–71.

Bastian, Jean-Pierre. 1990. *Historia del Protestantismo en América Latina*. México: CUPSA.

Bastian, Jean-Pierre. 2006a. De protestantismos históricos a los pentecostalismos Latinoamericanos: Análisis de una mutación religiosa. *Revista de Ciencias Sociales* 16: 38–54.

Bastian, Jean-Pierre. 2006b. La etnicidad redefinida: pluralización religiosa y diferenciación intraétnica. In *De indio a Hermano: Pentecostalismo Indígena en América Latina*. Edited by Bernardo Guerrero. Iquique: Ediciones Campvs—Universidad Arturo Prat, pp. 21–53.

Bastian, Jean-Pierre. 2008. En diálogo con la obra de Lalive, d'Epinay. Búsquedas de una sociología histórica del cambio religioso en América Latina. *Cultura y Religión* 2: 1–25.

Bergunder, Michael. 2009. Movimiento pentecostal en América Latina: Teorías sociológicas y debates teológicos. *Cultura y Religión* 3: 6–36.

Bourdieu, Pierre. 2006. Génesis y estructura del campo religioso. *Relaciones* 25: 29–83. First published 1971.

Calderón, María. 2008. En Busaca de la Tierra Prometida ... Cultura Política de Líderes Evangélicos. Master's thesis, Institute of Public Affairs, Department of Political Science, University of Chile, Santiago, Chile.

Campos, Bernardo. 2008. Manifestaciones recientes de un movimiento del espíritu: El movimiento apostólico y profético en el Perú. Paper presented at Encuentro de Estudios y Teología Pentecostal, Santiago, Chile, May 20–23.

Cartledge, Mark. 1998. The Future of Glossolalia: Fundamentalist or Experientialist? *Religion* 28: 233–44. [CrossRef]

Casanova, José. 2004. Religiones públicas en un mundo global. Interview. *Debates* 218: 73–86.

Cleary, Edward, and Juan Sepúlveda. 1997. Chilean Pentecostalism: Coming of Age. In *Power, Politics, and Pentecostals* in Latin America. Edited by Edward Cleary and Hannah Stewart-Gambino. Colorado: Westview Press, pp. 97–122.

Corvalán, Óscar. 2009. Distribución, crecimiento y discriminación de los evangélicos pentecostales. *Cultura y Religión* 3: 76–98.

D'Espinay, Lalive Christian. 2009. *El Refugio de las Masas. Estudio Sociológico del Protestantismo Chileno*. Santiago: Universidad de Santiago de Chile—Instituto de Estudios Avanzado USACH—Centro Evangélico de Estudios Pentecostales CEEP. First published 1968.

Fancello, Sandra. 2009. Migration et plurilinguisme: Parler en langues dans les Églises africaines en Europe. *Social Compass* 56: 387–404. [CrossRef]

Fediakova, Evguenia. 2002a. Separatismo o participación política: Evangélicos chilenos frente a la política. *Revista de Ciencia Política* 22: 32–45. [CrossRef]

Fediakova, Evguenia. 2002b. Somos parte de esta sociedad. Evangélicos y política en el Chile post autoritario. *Política* 43: 253–84.

Fediakova, Evguenia. 2007. Religión, política, ciudadanía: Cambio de paradigmas. Iglesias evangélicas en Chile postguerra fría. *Bicentenario—Revista de Historia de Chile y América* 6: 71–98.

Garma, Carlos. 2000a. La socialización del don de lenguas y la sanación en el pentecostalismo mexicano. *Alteridades* 10: 85–92.

Garma, Carlos. 2000b. Del himnario a la industria de la Alabanza: Un estudio sobre la transformación de la música religiosa. *Ciências Sociais e Religião* 2: 63–85.

Goffman, Erving. 2008. *Estigma: la Identidad Deteriorada*. Buenos Aires: Amorrortu. First published 1963.

Goffman, Erving. 1970. *Ritual de Interacción*. Buenos Aires: Tiempo Contemporáneo. First published 1967.

Goffman, Erving. 1991. El orden de la interacción. In *Los Momentos y Sus Hombres*. Edited by Yves Winkin. Barcelona: Paidós, pp. 169–205. First published 1983.

Gooren, Henri. 2010. El pentecostalismo en Guatemala: Aportes y debilidades. Paper presented at Rostros del Protestantismo en Guatemala, Managua, Nicaragua, July 28–30.

Guerra, Cristián. 2009. Tiempo, relato y canto en la comunidad pentecostal. *Cultura y Religión* 3: 133–50.

Guerrero, Bernardo. 2000. Cantos e himnos en la religiosidad popular: La búsqueda de salud. *Revista de Ciencias Sociales* 10: 23–36.

Hoover, W. C. 1948. *Historia del Avivamiento Pentecostal en Chile*. Valparaíso: Imprenta Excelsior. First published 1926.

Hoover, W.C. 2008. *Historia del Avivamiento Pentecostal en Chile*. Concepción: CEEP Ediciones. First published 1926.

Irvine, Judith T., and Susan Gal. 2000. Language Ideology and Linguistic Differentiation. In *Regimes of Language: Ideologies, Polities, and Identities*. Edited by Paul Kroskrity. Santa Fe: School for Advanced Research Press, pp. 35–84.

Lagos, Humberto. 1982. *La Función de las Minorías Religiosas. Las Transacciones del Protestantismo Chileno en el Periodo 1973–1981*. Lovaine la Neuve: UCL.

Linhardt, Martin, ed. 2011. *Practicing the faith: the ritual life of Pentecostal-charismatic Christians*. New York: Berghahn.

Linhardt, Martin, ed. 2012. *Power in Powerlessness: A Study of Pentecostal Life Worlds in Urban Chile*. Leiden and Boston: Brill.

Linhardt, Martin, ed. 2016. *New Ways of Being Pentecostal in Latin America*. Lanham and London: Lexington Books.

Llera, Ruy. 2004. A Música na Construçao de uma Identidade Religiosa. O caso do movimiento evangélico cigano em Portugal. Paper presented at the VIII Luso-Afro-Brazilian Congress on Social Sciences, Coimbra, Portugal, September 16–18.

Llera, Ruy. 2005. Music as Discourse. Gypsy Pentecostal Music in Portugal and Spain. Paper presented at the XIX World Congress IAHR, Tokyo, Japan, March 24–30.

Lucena, Silvio. 2008. Estructura e implicancias del relato testimonial de conversión en la Iglesia Universal del Reino de Dios. *Iberoamérica Global* 3: 78–102.

Lynn, Dana. 2006. Pentecostal Charismata and Health: Modeling the Neo Governmentality and Psychoneuroimmunology of an Ethnomedical System. Paper presented at the Northeast Anthropology Association Annual Conference, Albany, NY, USA, May 5–7.

Maduro, Otto. 2009. Religión y exclusión/marginación. Pentecostalismo globalizado entre los hispanos en Newark, Nueva Jersey. *Cultura y Religión* 3: 37–54.

Mansilla, Miguel. 2005. Nacidos en la calle. De la construcción bestial del predicador callejero a su construcción como patrimonio cultural. *Si Somos Americanos* 7: 187–206.

Mansilla, Miguel. 2007a. La canutofobia en Chile. Factores socioculturales de la discriminación evangélica en Chile. *Revista de Ciencias Sociales Online* 4: 48–61.

Mansilla, Miguel. 2007b. Despreciados y desechados. Itinerario de la canutofobia en Chile en la primera mitad del siglo XX. *Cultura y Religión* 1: 1–18.

Martin, David. 1990. *Tongues of Fire. The Explosion of Protestantism in Latin America*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Mary, André. 2001. From One Syncretism to Another: Culture of Trance and Charisma of Deliverance. *Social Compass* 48: 315–31. [CrossRef]

Mena, Ignacio. 2003. Sobre dones carismáticos. Una aproximación a la glosolalia y a la liberación de espíritus en los cultos evangélicos gitanos. *Gazeta de Antropología* 19: 20.

Mena, Ignacio. 2009. Dones proféticos y contextos de conversión en el pentecostalismo gitano. *Cultura y Religión* 3: 55–70.

Míguez, Daniel. 1998. ¿Qué puede agregarse a los clásicos?: Buscando nuevos horizontes a los estudios sobre el Pentecostalismo Latinoamericano. *Newsletter de la Asociación de Cientistas Sociales de la Religión en el Mercosur* 6: 4–6.

Mossière, Géraldine. 2007. Sharing in ritual effervescence: emotions and empathy in fieldwork. *Anthropology Matters Journal* 9: 1–14.

Orellana, Luis. 2006. *El fuego y la Nieve. Historia del Movimiento Pentecostal en Chile 1909–1932*. Concepción: CEEP Ediciones.

Ortiz, Juan. 2009. *Historia de los Evangélicos en Chile 1810–1891: De Disidente a Canutos, Liberales, Radicales, Masones y Artesanos*. Concepción: CEEP Ediciones.

Plaideau, Charlotte. 2010. La seconde libération, ou la guerre néopentecôtiste contre les démons afro-brésiliens à Bahia, Brésil. *Social Compass* 57: 110–26. [CrossRef]

Poewe, Karla. 1989. On the Metonymic Structure of Religious Experiences: The Example of Charismatic Christianity. *Cultural Dynamics* 2: 361–80. [CrossRef]

Rivière, Gilles. 2007. Bolivia: El pentecostalismo en la sociedad aimara del Altiplano. *Nuevo Mundo Mundos Nuevos*. Available online: http://journals.openedition.org/nuevomundo/6661 (accessed on 1 July 2018).

Robbins, Joel. 2009. Pentecostal Networks and the Spirit of Globalization. On the Social Productivity of Ritual Forms. *Social Analysis* 53: 55–66. Available online: http://www.acsrm.org/upload/newsletterantiguos/News6.pdf (accessed on 1 July 2018). [CrossRef]

Semán, Pablo. 1998. Para nuevas perspectivas en los estudios sobre el pentecostalismo. *Newsletter de la Asociación de Cientistas Sociales de la Religión en el Mercosur* 6.

Talavera, Arturo Fontaine, and Harald Beyer. 1991. Retrato del movimiento evangélico a la luz de las encuestas de opinión pública. *Estudios Públicos* 44: 1–52.

Teenekes, Hans. 1985. *El movimiento Pentecostal en la Sociedad Chilena*. Iquique: Sub-faculty of Cultural Anthropology of the Free University of Amsterdam (Holland)—Centro de Investigaciones de la Realidad del Norte.

Turner, Victor. 1967. *The Forest of Symbols. Aspects of Ndembu Ritual*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

© 2018 by the authors. Licensee MDPI, Basel, Switzerland. This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).

religions

MDPI

Article

Impossible Subjects: LGBTIQ Experiences in Australian Pentecostal-Charismatic Churches

Mark A. C. Jennings

School of Arts, Murdoch University, 90 South Street, Murdoch 6150, Australia; m.jennings@murdoch.edu.au

Received: 12 December 2017; Accepted: 7 February 2018; Published: 9 February 2018

Abstract: This paper is the product of in-depth interviews with 20 Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex, and Queer (LGBTIQ) people who identify, or formerly identified, as members of Pentecostal-Charismatic Christian (PCC) churches. Interviewees typically found themselves confronted with a number of choices (not necessarily mutually exclusive): remain closeted, come out but commit to remaining celibate, undergo "SOCE" (Sexual Orientation Conversion Efforts) therapy, or leave. Most left their churches, often after agonising attempts to reconcile their faith and their sexuality. Several of the practices adopted by Australian PCC churches exclude LGBTIQ people from full participation in their own congregations, rendering them "impossible subjects." Australian Pentecostalism's surprisingly egalitarian history, wherein the spiritually authorised ministry of women was both recognised and celebrated, suggests another, more inclusive way forward in regard to this vexed issue.

Keywords: LGBTIQ; Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity; Australia; Australian Pentecostal history; Sexual Orientation Change Efforts; Inclusive faith

1. Introduction

This paper emerged from the "Two Different Worlds" project, initiated by the author in 2015 in order to find out more about the experiences of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex, and Queer (LGBTIQ) people who attend or have attended Pentecostal-Charismatic Christian (PCC) churches in Australia.[1]

Several of those interviewed reported being in ministry or volunteering roles in their congregations. Often, they had verified spiritual experiences and exercised charismatic gifts, such as glossolalia, inspired speech, or healing. However, if they wished to remain in these roles, they were confronted with a dilemma—continue to conceal their LGBTIQ status, or come out and risk losing their ministry, and maybe more. In rare cases, LGBTIQ people in PCC churches were referred to a version of Sexual Orientation Change Efforts (SOCE), ranging from "conversion" therapy to exorcism.

Some LGBTIQ people who were able to stay in their PCC churches described supportive relationships with pastors and others in their churches. In a couple of instances, informants even reported that they were able to be open with the whole congregation, sharing their stories from the platform, and had even been able to continue in a ministry role, even when the churches they were attending were unable to "affirm" their sexuality. There was one condition: the requirement that they abstain from romantic and/or sexual same-sex relationships, also known as "the line".

While those who were willing to accept the celibacy "line" requirement may have managed to stay, the majority of informants indicated they had made the difficult decision to leave. In this cohort, several who had occupied ministry or volunteering roles feared that their ministries would

1 At the time of writing, I have not interviewed any Intersex informants.

end if they came out. In a number of cases, these fears were justified, as coming out indeed meant displacement from leadership positions. Further, several LGBTIQ people who left their congregations reported experiencing silencing and loss of formerly supportive communities. However, there were also profound experiences of relief reported.

LGBTIQ people who participate and exercise spirit-empowered ministry in their churches represent a significant theological challenge to Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity, where spiritual experience is regarded as the primary qualification and authorisation for ministry. Indeed, LGBTIQ people exercising gifted ministry in PCC churches are "impossible subjects"—queer recipients of God's blessing and favour who simply cannot exist in an exclusively heteronormative understanding of Christianity.[2]

It may seem to many within and without PCC that LGBTIQ exclusion is the only option, given the movement's historically literalist reading of some of the apparent prohibitions against same-sex attraction in the Bible.[3] However, Pentecostal-Charismatic Christians can find inspiration for a different approach through an appreciation of the inclusive history of the movement, particularly in Australia. This is perhaps best demonstrated in the role of early Australian Pentecostal women leaders, who transcended exclusionary interpretations of sacred scripture and church tradition in order to pioneer most of the Australian congregations in the early twentieth century—primarily because it was believed they had been spiritually authorised to minister.

Drawing on the interviews, I argue in this paper that "the line" celibacy requirement is unnecessary and untenable. The egalitarian history of Australian Pentecostalism stands testimony to the possibility of another, more inclusive approach.

2. Background to the Research

At the time of writing, 20 in-depth interviews had been completed with LGBTIQ individuals who attend—or formerly attended—PCC congregations, with more interviews anticipated.[4] In order to compile a sample, the project was advertised via the website of the author's academic institution, and permission was also sought to advertise via the website freedom2b, an online community forum for Australian LGBTIQ Christians (Freedom2b n.d.). The author's own networks in the PCC and LGBTIQ communities, as well as snowball sampling whereby I relied on informants to recommend or refer other contacts, proved invaluable. By far the largest response has been from participants who were encouraged by peers to contact the author.[5] As with nearly all research that passes through university ethics committees, anonymity and de-identification is mandated, and in this case is particularly important. All interviews have been anonymized, and participants are given a gender-neutral pseudonym when they are quoted in this paper.

For the LGBTIQ cohort, a set of indicative questions was put together. The first section consisted of 12 general questions for all participants (Figure 1). The second section of 10 questions was for the

[2] This term was coined by Ibrahim Abraham, who recognises queer Australian Muslims as similar impossible subjects—a configuration of sexuality and spirituality 'impossible' in heteronormative understandings of Islam (Abraham 2009). See also (Ngai 2004).

[3] The passages often quoted in support of the sinfulness of same-sex attraction and/or relations (as an example of one LGBTIQ issue) are: Genesis 19; Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13; Romans 1:18–32; 1 Corinthians 6:9–10; 1 Timothy 1:9–10; and Jude 6–7. Some LGBTIQ Christians refer to these as "clobber passages," as they have been used in the past to exclude same-sex attracted people from faith and ministry (Gresham 2012; Kirby 2013). In doing this, it is fair to say that several of these texts have been taken out of context, and many have pointed out some of the hermeneutic challenges associated with these passages. Nevertheless, as Wink (1999) has indicated, there are at least three texts in the Biblical canon that appear, when applying sound hermeneutic critique, to unequivocally condemn same-sex romantic and sexual relations. They are Leviticus 18:22; 20:13; Romans 1:18–32: Walter Wink, "Homosexuality and the Bible," in *Homosexuality and Christian Faith: Questions of Conscience for the Churches*, ed. Walter Wink (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1999), 33–49.

[4] Interviews will continue until "data saturation": namely, the point at which no new themes or unfamiliar narratives are emerging from interviews is reached. My initial proposal was to complete 20 in-depth interviews with PCC pastors and 30–50 interviews with LGBTIQ participants.

[5] This is a qualitative study, employing non-probability sampling, and hence makes no claims to being representative of all LGBTIQ experiences of PCC in Australia.

cohort no longer attending a PCC church (Figure 2). Finally, the third section of nine questions was relevant to LGBTIQ informants whose attendance and participation in a PCC church were ongoing (Figure 3). Interviews were semi-structured, and often in the course of the interview participants answered questions I had not put to them. This was anticipated, and the questions were purposefully indicative, meaning that questions could be dropped when they were deemed unsuitable or the informant had already addressed them in other answers.

- Can you tell me about your spiritual journey over the course of the last ten or so years?
- How did you come to be involved with a Pentecostal-Charismatic church? Do you still attend a Pentecostal-Charismatic church?
- What, if anything, do you appreciate about Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity and spirituality?
- What, if anything, would you like to change in regard to Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity and spirituality?
- Can you tell me about your LGBTI coming out journey?
- Were or are the close people in your life aware of your sexual orientation / gender identity / intersex status? If so, were or are they supportive of you?
- Were or are the people in your church aware of your sexual orientation / gender identity / intersex status? If so, were or are they supportive of you?
- Was or is the pastor or pastoral carer in your church aware of your sexual orientation / gender identity / intersex status? If so, was or is that person supportive of you?
- From your perspective, what are the unique challenges faced by LGBTI individuals in Pentecostal-Charismatic churches?
- Which of the following terms best describes your current status in relation to faith and belief in God or the divine, and can you expand on your answer?
    a. I pray and experience the presence of God or the divine regularly
    b. I pray, but do not feel strongly connected to God or the divine
    c. I do not pray, I am unsure about my relationship with God or the divine
    d. I no longer believe in God/I am agnostic or an atheist
    e. Something else (please specify)
- Given your answer to the previous question, can you expand on how your experience of Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity may have impacted your current relationship with God?
- Have you ever been encouraged or coerced by anyone in your church (or anyone at all) to participate in "conversion therapy?" If so, was the therapy connected to a Pentecostal-Charismatic church or organisation?

Figure 1. Indicative interview schedule—general questions for all participants.

For the purposes of writing this paper, I carried out thematic analysis with the assistance of the qualitative analysis software programme NVivo 10. The themes emerging from this analysis pertinent to this paper relate to LGBTIQ peoples' experiences of ministry, remaining in or leaving their PCC churches, and SOCE.

In order to position myself in relation to this research and provide some personal context for this paper, I take this opportunity to declare my own horizons. I am a cisgender, straight male, and I have attended PCC churches most of my life, although I no longer do so. My personal understanding of LGBTIQ people and issues began with ignorance, moving first toward a belief that this phenomenon was real but could not be reconciled with Christianity, and finally to an embracing of both diverse sexualities and the interpretive nature of all approaches to the Bible. I regard myself as an ally of LGBTIQ persons and an advocate for their full inclusion and acceptance in faith communities.

- Can you tell me what led to you leaving the Pentecostal-Charismatic church you were involved with?
- From your position now, what word most accurately expresses your feelings in regard to that experience:
  - Anger?
  - Sadness?
  - Anxiety?
  - Happiness?
  - Affirmation?
  - Relief?
  - Something else (please specify)?
- Do you currently attend another church, or are you part of another religion or other form of spirituality?
- If so, how would you compare your experience as an LGBTI person in that church, religion, or form of spirituality to your experience in a Pentecostal-Charismatic church?
- What was the worst thing about leaving that Pentecostal-Charismatic church?
- What was the best thing about leaving that Pentecostal-Charismatic church?
- Do you still have any contact with the person you regarded as responsible for your pastoral care at that Pentecostal-Charismatic church? Why, or why not?
- Is there a song; movie; television show; or piece of art that expresses how you feel now about your involvement with your Pentecostal-Charismatic church? What about that particular thing expresses your feelings?
- Is there a song; movie; television show; or piece of art that expresses how you feel now about your life now? What about that particular thing expresses your feelings?
- Imagine having a discussion with a younger version of yourself – perhaps you as a teenager. What would you say to that person about becoming involved in a Pentecostal-Charismatic church?

Figure 2. Indicative interview schedule—questions for participants who are no longer attending a Pentecostal-Charismatic Christian (PCC) church.

- Are you able to be open regarding your sexual orientation / gender identity / intersex status to your church?
- If so, what led you to realise you could be open with your church?
- If not, is there anyone in the church that you have been open with? If the answer is yes, is that person or group involved in the leadership of the church?
- What of the following elements would you regard as being of most important in your continued involvement with your church:
  - Community and friendship?
  - Spirituality and spiritual experience?
  - Personal relationship to one or a few members?
  - Personal relationship with God or a spiritual entity?
  - Desire to advocate for change in that church?
  - Something else (please specify)?
- If you could change three things about your church, what would they be?
- How would you describe your relationship with the pastor or person you regard as responsible for your pastoral care at your church?
- Is there a song; movie; television show; or piece of art that expresses how you feel now about your involvement with your Pentecostal-Charismatic church? What about that particular thing expresses your feelings?
- Is there a song; movie; television show; or piece of art that expresses how you feel now about how you might like your relationship with your church to develop in the future? What about that particular thing expresses your feelings?
- Imagine having a discussion with a younger version of yourself – perhaps you as a teenager. What would you say to that person about becoming involved in a Pentecostal-Charismatic church?

Figure 3. Indicative interview schedule—questions for participants who are currently attending a PCC church.

3. Those Who Stayed: LGBTIQ in Ministry

Of those LGBTIQ informants who remained in their PCC congregations, some did not make their sexuality known. Yazz, who communicated with me via email, formerly worked as a youth pastor in a PCC church. Yazz's church required that they be in an accountable relationship and attend counseling.[6] Yazz did not "come out" as LGBTIQ to the church, and as Yazz was not in a romantic relationship until meeting and marrying a person of the opposite gender, it never came up.

> *About a year into being in the [name redacted] church and at the beginning of being on staff there, I was appointed a female mentor. Part of her role was to keep me accountable with my sexuality. ... I did not participate in any formal conversion therapy but I did see a counsellor for some time that was recommended to me by the church. The counsellor was sought for other reasons but my sexuality certainly came up. She never tried to convert me and encouraged me to explore where I stood with my sexuality.*

There were also cases where only the pastor or a few people in the church knew about the informant's status. One transgender participant, Phoenix, felt safe enough to disclose this information to the pastor.

> *I don't tell people. A situation happened the year I started at [church name redacted] that my pastor was told by people that used to know me, that were trying to get me to change back. ... But he basically stopped and went, "No. You know what? Talk to me. Tell me your story." And I went, "This is it." And he went, "I don't understand it, but I'm not going to reject you. I want you to still stick around the church." There are things, like because I'm not allowed to get up on the pulpit, I'm not allowed to be in the musicians—I can do the sound, but I can't get up and sing, you know, and do those sort of things—but it's a journey for them as much as it is for me.*

Phoenix, as a transgender person, did not identify as part of the queer community.[7] While most of the informants encountered barriers to full participation in their PCC congregations based on sexuality, Phoenix could "pass" for a cisgender person. As indicated in the above quote, Phoenix rarely told people they were transgender, having experienced very negative reactions from PCC people in churches in the past. This came up when Phoenix was asked to suggest what changes should occur in PCC.

> *If anything, I'd like to change their opinions, at times, in relation to—some of them can be very, I won't say dogmatic—but just take the fact that I'm a transgender, it's the sheer fact that if people find out, suddenly I'm ostracised because of it."*

It seems, then, that as long as Phoenix's transgender status remained a secret from all but their pastor, no negative attention was experienced, presumably because other congregants assumed Phoenix was cisgender. However, the pastor did place limitations upon permissible forms of ministry—Phoenix could operate the sound desk, but not participate in up-front platform ministry.

Variations of this limitation, referred to as "the line" by some participants, was a commonly referenced practice aimed at putting conditions on the involvement of LGBTIQ people in PCC ministry. In Xavi's church, LGBTIQ people were welcome in the "foyer" and the "living room," but not in the kitchen, the deepest and most intimate level of membership, where those who volunteer in the church were to be found.

---

[6] Please note that throughout this paper, gender-specific pronouns have been eschewed in favor of the non-gendered "they", "them," or "their," even when referring to singular entities. For the sake of readability, I have endeavoured to keep this to a minimum.

[7] Transgender people can be straight, gay, lesbian or bisexual. For instance, a trans man who is attracted only to women would identify as straight.

So I knew [my former church] like the back of my hand ... I had grown up in this place. I had an all-access pass. I had a key to pretty much every door ... It was about the same time [the leader] was identifying the language to use about the church and ... [they] kind of had this concept of a foyer space ... a living room space, a kitchen space, and they have different levels of intimacy. So a foyer space is kind of like a weekend service for a guest-type person. Anyone is welcome to the foyer. I think a living room was to do with shared interests. So like a small group. And a kitchen space was, like, very intimate, so your very close group of friends or volunteering or leadership, and things like that. The core was, if you're a practising homosexual (... there was no concept of LGBTI or anything like that ...) you were welcome but not affirmed. So, "We want you, we love you, and you're welcome, and we want you to come to our church, but effectively that's where it ends. If you want to be part of the church, you ... can be gay, but you have to be celibate" ... That's the line. [8]

LGBTIQ people were only welcome "in the kitchen"—that is, able to exercise ministry and volunteering roles in their churches—if they committed to abstain from romantic and/or sexual relationships with those of their own gender. "The line" has the function of excluding LGBTIQ people from positions of leadership, where they might in time come to exert a more inclusive influence in the congregation, because volunteering is the pathway to leadership in many PCC churches.

In contrast to Phoenix and Xavi, some informants reported being able to be open about their LGBTIQ status with pastors and even the wider congregation, and experienced feeling strongly supported by both. One example is Harley, who described PCC in general as "very, very loving."

I know people who love me deeply, and I feel deeply loved by them, and you know, ... we'll get together and we'll pray and we'll worship and we'll fellowship, and it's beautiful, and the presence of God is so there. And yet if I were to go and get ... romantically involved with another [person of the same gender], like, they would sit down with me and be like, "Hey, what's going on?"

It is important to acknowledge that Harley did not regard their congregation's love and support as conditional, but merely observed that becoming involved in a same-sex relationship would trigger a process of accountability. Harley experienced the congregation as very accepting, noting that no attempt had been made to "fix" Harley's sexuality.

By and large, people have been really accepting and embracing of me as a person and me as a human being, with all of my struggles, and they've been really understanding and really supportive ... I couldn't be happier with the way in which people have journeyed with me, because ... it's not been this on the front foot, proactive, hands-on approach where they're trying to fix me and I'm their project of sorts.

Harley reported exercising a recognised ministry role in the church, including offering testimony before the whole congregation. However, Harley was also emphatically committed to remaining celibate, having even attempted (unsuccessfully) to date people of the opposite gender. Harley remained sanguine about the possibility of a future relationship, not being prepared to "limit the power of God."

[God] may very well do a work within my heart and within my mind and within my life that shifts the desires I have, and all of a sudden ... I find one day down the track ... I do desire to be with a [member of the opposite sex] and to have a [spouse] and all of that normal stuff that comes with a family.

Harley was not the only informant to express the hope that divine intervention might produce a "shift" in sexual orientation. Gabriele, who also remained within a PCC church and felt highly

---

8 The phrase "welcome but not affirmed" differentiates churches wherein LGBTIQ people are fully included in church life and ministry from those churches that "welcome" LGBTIQ people, but do not "affirm" their sexuality or gender. The late Stanley Grenz outlined this position in the book of the same name (Grenz 1998).

supported by the congregation, voiced the same hope. Asked whom specifically in the church they could be open with about sexuality and gender, Gabriele replied as follows:

> *There's my pastor, my missions pastor, and a few of my good friends in church. They're supportive for my change. They don't—they don't agree with it, and neither do I, so we're all supportive for my transformation and my change ... Nobody agrees with this lifestyle, so just to make that clear. Everyone supports my journey of healing, not my journey into it, if that makes sense ... So yeah, they're all praying for me to get healing and continue to live a celibate life, and I ... hope to get healed one day.*

To clarify, "it" in the above quote refers to same-sex attraction. Gabriele reported having felt same gender attraction for many years, and here indicates that the church is willing to support them—but not "that lifestyle." In other words, Gabriele, the pastor, and the church are praying that Gabriele will be "healed" from same-sex attraction. Like Harley, Gabriele has accepted that, until this happens, adherence to "the line" of celibacy is required.

Again, it would be a misrepresentation to claim that Gabriele felt that the support and love of the pastors and church was conditional. However, corresponding to "the line," both Gabriele and Harley were only able to continue exercising ministry roles so long as they remained celibate, and both aspired to a shift in orientation. Be that as it may, the support and care that Harley and Gabriele, among others, experienced contrasts sharply with the treatment reported by those who ended up leaving their PCC congregations.

4. The Devil Made You Do It: PCC and SOCE

Another informant, Fain, related leaving their home church and joining another one, in part because of confusion and fear over coming out. Following the decision to come out, and upon returning to the original congregation, Fain was called to the pastor's office for a discussion. The pastor was blunt in assessing what had happened to Fain at the other church.

> *[My pastor said] that I had been deceived by the devil and followed a false prophet ... that I had then been convinced that I was a homosexual and chosen to live a sinful lifestyle, and that if I wanted to have any active part in leadership or in the church, I had to repent, and either go through therapy or be celibate for the rest of my life.*

Iva described the trauma of being convinced that their sexuality—something deeply integral to one's identity—was attributable to demonic possession or influence.

> *When my awareness around my sexuality came up, I was in deep, deep trauma ... I really split myself between my belief in a God that I believed was all-powerful and connecting to an amazing community that I was within, whilst at the same time I had a deep, deep, deep, dark, hidden secret—which, through teaching at [Church name redacted], was attributed to Satan, demons, the devil, and evilness. So I constructed for myself a really big sort of duality of good and evil.*

Iva's experience reflects a PCC view of the body, one which is complex and seemingly contradictory at times. Michael Wilkinson has argued that, in Pentecostal thought, the body can be perceived as "a site for a type of battle that manifests through interpretations of good and evil that require Pentecostals to control evil spirits" (Wilkinson 2017). This has implications for understanding PCC attitudes to LGBTIQ people. While it might be easy to dismiss exclusionary attitudes as simply uninformed or bigoted, it is important to remember that a particular set of PCC understandings of the body and sexuality mean that many PCCs would regard advocating healing or exorcism as a compassionate approach toward people whose bodies are believed to have been possessed by malign forces, whether of illness or demonic possession or both. One of the purposes of the research presented in this paper is to indicate what such understandings do to LGBTIQ people themselves.

Fain and Iva were not alone in having their same-sex attraction blamed on demonic influence. Phoenix, when asked whether or not "conversion therapy" (a form of counseling aimed at "converting"

participants from LGBTIQ to heterosexual) had ever been suggested or mandated, related a similar incident.

> *Interviewer: The next question is, have you ever been encouraged or coerced by anyone in your church, or anyone at all, to participate in conversion therapy?*
>
> *Phoenix: No. The only thing I can say is when I . . . before transition, when I was going to [Church name redacted], I had—one of the pastors there believed I had a demonic spirit in me for homosexuality and tried to pray it out of me.*

Conversion therapy—also known as "ex-gay therapy" or "reparative therapy"—is regarded as highly controversial in Australia. However, some congregations unofficially offer "counseling" or group work programmes to LGBTIQ people, such as Living Waters or Exodus, which are described as targeting "addiction."[9] Some participants defended SOCE programmes. Gabriele, who had positive experiences of these two programmes, objected to the term "conversion therapy."

> *Interviewer: So, have you ever been encouraged or coerced by anyone, either in your church, or anybody at all, to participate in conversion therapy?*
>
> *Gabriele: What's conversion therapy?*
>
> *I: So conversion therapy, or ex-gay ministry, sometimes it's called, is a ministry that is aimed at helping people transition or change their sexual preference or identity.*
>
> *G: Well, that's what counseling is. When you go to a Christian counselor you can expect that they're going to help you walk with Jesus, so not to be a homosexual. To be the opposite.*
>
> *I: Mm, hmm. And you mentioned—*
>
> *G: Whatever the opposite is for you, whether it's heterosexual or not. Whether that's heterosexual or not, you just can't be homosexual. So I wouldn't call that conversion therapy.*
>
> *I: You wouldn't call it conversion therapy. Okay. You mentioned Exodus and Living Waters. Can you tell me a bit more about your experience of those?*
>
> *G: They're fantastic. They bring in the Holy Spirit, the word of God. They don't directly say, you know, you have to be a certain way, they just basically lead you and guide you by the Holy Spirit how to live with Jesus, and whatever addiction you have, whether it's sexual or not—you can put yourself in there quite safely.*

For Gabriele, the focus of the SOCE programmes is therefore addiction rather than conversion, with the proviso that the purpose of the therapy is to render one the "opposite" of homosexual. Gabriele articulates the view of many conservative PCCs in stating, "you just can't be homosexual."

As an LGBTIQ person who remained within a PCC congregation, Gabriele also speaks positively of the community offered by these SOCE programmes, which provided a high level of support and identification.

> *So you're in small groups, and you get to share your own personal testimonies. And everyone did it when I did it, which was nice, because then you realised, "Oh, I'm not that different to others" . . . Even though I struggle with this, they struggle with that, and so we could all support one another.*

---

[9] The Australian arm of Living Waters officially ceased operations in 2014, and Exodus International officially ceased operations in 2013 (Venn-Brown 2014; Payne 2013). However, as Venn-Brown indicates, there remain a "handful of organisations" offering SOCE in Australia, possibly using the same methods and approaches as Living Waters and Exodus (Venn-Brown 2015).

Gabriele's description corresponds with Bernadette Barton's participant observation at the 2009 Exodus International conference. Barton notes that the conference was a unique space in which attendees did not need to conceal the fact that they were gay, where "[n]obody—not their conservative Christian family members or gay friends—was allowed them to give them a hard time." It was a brief time and space where they did not have to hide, and there was "something freeing about that" (Barton 2012).

Graham Douglas-Meyer, pastor of the affirming Open Arms Fellowship, a PCC church in Perth, Western Australia, is highly critical of SOCE. However, Douglas-Meyer expressed observations similar to Barton's in relation to the "Genesis" programme, an outreach of Exodus International.

> *I found the group to be quite encouraging. For the first time in ten years I was working alongside other young men who were facing a similar struggle to my own and who also wanted to do something about it. I made some good friends without the need for sexual intimacy.* (Douglas-Meyer 2014)

While these descriptions of group work and counseling in Living Waters and Exodus are somewhat positive, there are other reports of less edifying encounters with SOCE. Anthony Venn-Brown, a former Pentecostal minister and ex-gay survivor, has tracked the changes in terminology and language being generated by SOCE ministries and organisations in Australia. In the early stages, when instant cures and exorcisms were still commonly offered, SOCE was described as "freedom from homosexuality." As it became clearer that instant cures were not the normal experience, SOCE language moved to dealing with "unwanted same-sex attractions." Most recently, the language has become even more inclusive, with reference to sexual or relational "brokenness"—phenomena that any Christian, or indeed any individual, may experience, regardless of gender or sexuality. Venn-Brown remains skeptical of SOCE.

> *[T]his kind of terminology is an attempt to make the message more palatable to the seeker of help and as a defence to those opposing SOCE work ... the underlying message remains the same—"homosexuals are broken people and God can fix them."* (Venn-Brown 2015)

Venn-Brown's and Douglas-Meyer's experiences of SOCE are part of the limited, but very significant, autobiographical works of Australian LGBTIQ people who identify or formerly identified as PCC. While living in New Zealand, Australian author Jim Marjoram participated in the Living Waters 26-week course on numerous occasions, both as a "worship leader" (that is, someone who coordinates music and leads participants in singing praise and worship music, a highly significant part of PCC spirituality) and leading small groups (Marjoram 2017). Marjoram makes the important observation that commitment to celibacy, rather than insisting that one is "cured" of same-sex attraction, may actually be a healthier state of being for participants in SOCE.

> *It [Living Waters] all produced endless introspection and confession, and a religious obsession that starts to get really uncomfortable and detached from reality ... There are smiles and laughs, but underneath it all is a heavy intensity that slowly keeps piling up guilt and shame, or should I say slowly repressing overt guilt and shame until unreality sets in, often resulting in depression and a constant nagging that you can never live up to God's standard, eventually creating a far more serious and deeper dissonance than before, with absolutely no hope of being yourself or living with personal integrity. It effectively shuts down the most basic and fundamental parts of our makeup behind a wall of religious activity ... Without exception, every person who I have spoken to or observed, claiming to be transformed, simply denies that there is a problem anymore, even though they still have to wrestle with same sex attraction ... There are some who have a semblance of honesty and just refuse to act on their inherent sexuality, claiming celibacy is the only option, until they have achieved the magical goal of becoming straight, if ever. Most however, delegate their same sex attraction to the same basket as any sinful thought, and keep repenting and standing on God's apparent promises of healing.* (Marjoram 2017)

As these accounts make clear, some LGBTIQ PCCs regard their options as either lifelong celibacy or possible healing via SOCE, since in their understanding of their faith, it is simply impossible to be both queer and Christian. For Hollis, the choice was no choice at all—seek conversion therapy, with the promise of a heteronormative life with a spouse, family, and ministry, or come out and lose God and church.

> *I wish I'd known then that you could be gay and Christian, and I wish I'd known other people and other stories that had communicated that to me. Because for me, it was come out and lose God, lose your friends, lose hope, lose a good life, or don't come out, try to change, go through this stuff, and you can still keep God, you can still keep your church, you can still keep your friends. You may have a [spouse] one day, you may have kids one day . . . It was definitely my choice, but at the same time it was kind of like, you know, what other choice did I have? . . . I wish that churches—even though I know they don't do this now—but I wish that churches could offer almost like a balanced view . . . I would hope that churches don't recommend that anyone do conversion therapy or ex-gay programs or anything like that now. I hope that that doesn't happen. But I think if they were to offer a view and say, "Yeah, you can be gay and Christian, and we support you, and we want to encourage you in your faith regardless of if you're gay or straight," I think that would be so much more helpful.*

If any indication were needed that the LGBTIQ people who participate in PCC churches (as well as other Christian denominations that have endorsed SOCE in the past) have a genuinely held faith, we need look no further than the experiences of those like Hollis who went to extraordinary lengths to try to change.[10] In the end, Hollis was one of several informants who, after trying hard via SOCE to "be straight," ended up leaving PCC.

5. Those Who Left: Able to Breathe

Several informants reported a crisis wherein they felt they could no longer remain closeted, but at the same time feared being open would lead to loss of formerly supportive communities and ministries. Often, they made the wrenching decision to leave their churches.

One example was Fain, who exercised a recognised healing ministry in a PCC church. However, coming out as gay ended Fain's ministry.

> *There are so many other accounts where I've been in churches and laid hands on the sick and seen supernatural healing come to people, and medically verified. One lady had cancer. It . . . was bladder cancer, and it got to the point that it had rapidly spread to . . . other parts of her body . . . It was a long, long time, probably over a year, that we were praying for her. And she came straight to me, because in the church environment, these sort of encounters weren't happening for anybody else, but they were happening for me.*
>
> *So I was essentially put on a pedestal, and put on the, on a prayer team, and put on the leadership team in outreach, and put on—even if that was short-lived, because I came out of the closet (laughs).*

Another example was Xen, who prior to coming out was a volunteer in a church-based children's ministry. However, after Xen came out, this ministry ceased.

> *I think the biggest challenge is fighting for who you are, you constantly feel like you are not good enough to be there and no longer do people look at you the way they once did. I was no longer allowed on kid's ministry. I couldn't talk to the youth about it; I couldn't share my struggles because I "refused" to change. But, an adulterer, porn addict, an ex-drug addict and ex-prostitute could. They could even get on stage and share about their experiences, but not me. I had to be quiet. That's*

[10] Mark Henrickson makes a similar point, praising the resilience of LGBTIQ people in remaining faithful to traditions that have in many cases abandoned them (Henrickson 2007).

> *the battle: Not only are you fighting in your own head, but you are fighting an entire belief system that has previously told you, you are loved and that God will meet you wherever you are at.*

Xen's description suggests that the situation was traumatic for some in the congregation as well, who experienced Xen's honesty not as authenticity, but as a refusal to change. Xen experienced this as being silenced, left unable to share authentically, because of this perceived refusal to accept the sinfulness of queer sexuality.

Several informants reported agonising, sometimes for years, over this dilemma, having internalised the belief that their sexuality or gender was sinful and wrong. Xen was one who was able to find friends to confide in about the struggle.

> *I started to talk to some really good and trustworthy friends of mine who were incredible, and to this day I owe them my sanity. They would tell me that I was amazing, loved, and that my sexuality didn't mean I was a bad person. But no matter how hard I tried, I couldn't admit it. The fact was, Christianity told me it was "wrong," "sinful" and "not what God intended for me." I hurt, thinking I was hurting God. Whilst talking to my friends, I would cry, get choked up and become so enraged with myself for feeling this way! I wanted to be straight so bad. But I was realising that it just was not who I was.*

Xen's experience of shame and guilt is not unique. Research has indicated that LGBTIQ Christians internalise "homonegativity"—judgments and feelings of shame and guilt about their sexuality or gender—more often than non-Christian LGBTIQ people (Sowe et al. 2014). Many want to "be straight so bad" that it literally makes them unwell. Several informants indicated that they had experienced suicidal thoughts and the desire to self-harm.

It is perhaps unsurprising, then, that some LGBTIQ informants reported a profound sense of relief—along with other emotions, such as sorrow or anger—upon coming out and leaving their PCC churches. When asked what the best thing about leaving was, Yule vividly expressed this sentiment.

> *It was actually being able to breathe, and ... for me, it was like having my head underwater my whole life and then finally being able to gasp for air, and finally just fill my lungs with air and breathe, and just finally breathe.*

Several informants reported finding more homopositive forms of church or faith. Some of those who maintained a Christian faith post-PCC, such as Yazz, related that negative experiences in church-based relationships continued to affect their self-image and relationship with God.

> *I had become a Christian and was sure God loved me and was with me, but I guess this created doubt over the years of hearing it, and I never really bought into the fact that Christians loved gay people as much as they said when they said things like "Hate the sin not the sinner." Being who I knew myself to be on the inside, I doubted people would love me as much if they knew, and that they would focus on trying to change me if I said anything. I lost a couple of close friendships when I did try, and all this chipped away at how God might view me. I know better now and am comfortable with myself, but I do the feel the loss of the divine relationship I once had. I don't blame that primarily on being part of a PCC church, but it has played a part.*

Most informants indicated that they no longer attended a PCC church, and in some cases, they reported having lost their faith entirely. This is reflective of the trend among Australian LGBTIQ people in general: according to the 2005 *Private Lives* survey, LGBTIQ people are more likely than the rest of the population to identify as "no religion," and also more likely to change their religious affiliation from the faith they grew up in to no religion (Couch et al. 2008; Hillier et al. 2008).

6. Pentecostalism and LGBTIQ in Australia

It might surprise many to learn of the egalitarian and inclusive roots of Australian Pentecostalism, which celebrated the pioneering ministry of women before other forms of Christianity "caught up."

It is beyond the scope of this paper to develop a fully-fledged inclusive PCC theology, but in this section, I will argue that the egalitarian history of the movement in Australia offers another way forward in relation to LGBTIQ people and issues.

One of the most striking things about nascent Pentecostalism, both in the United States and in Australia, was its openness to the ministry of those excluded from leadership in other forms of faith. Perhaps the most celebrated pioneer of the movement was the African-American William Seymour, pastor of the Azusa Street Mission in Los Angeles, California, when the congregation first experienced the "baptism in the Holy Spirit" in 1906 (Wacker 2001; Hollenweger 1997).[11] Australian PCC's inclusive theological and ecclesiological foundations are rooted in a number of what Shane Clifton has referred to as "voluntarist" religious movements that emerged in the nineteenth century (Clifton 2009). Tanya Riches has uncovered the existence of an Aboriginal-led Pentecostal congregation in Innisfail, Queensland, as early as 1904, starting as an offshoot of the Welsh Revival (Riches 2016).

In a similar vein, Pentecostalism and its antecedents celebrated the ministry of women perceived to have experienced the empowerment of Holy Spirit baptism. As early as 1859, American evangelist and co-founder of the Holiness movement Phoebe Palmer published an apology for the ministry of women, arguing on the basis of the second chapter of the New Testament book of Acts for the egalitarian nature of the baptism in the Holy Spirit (Dayton 1987). In Australia, Sarah Jane Lancaster experienced this blessing, and opened Good News Hall in Melbourne on New Year's Eve, 1909. Lancaster thus became the foundation leader of what has, until recently, been regarded as the first Pentecostal congregation in Australia.[12] By 1930, more than half the Pentecostal congregations in Australia had been started by women (Chant 2000). Chant writes as follows on the empowering of female ministers by the Holy Spirit in the early days of the Australian movement:

> *It was the coming of the Spirit that commissioned people for ministry—and He was coming not only to men, but to women, too. So ordination was no longer a gender issue. If God Himself had anointed someone with the Spirit, what further endorsement did they need?* (Chant 2000)[13]

Sadly, this progressive beginning appears not to reflect the status of PCC women in ministry in contemporary Australia—not at least if the executive board of Australia's largest Pentecostal denomination, the Australian Christian Churches, is any indication. That board lists eight men and only one woman among its members (Australian Christian Churches 2014). Clifton suggests that early Pentecostalism, restorationist in orientation, was "grounded in a first century ideal," seeking to return to the church of the New Testament and thus adopted a cultural and social conservatism that was believed to reflect first century norms (Clifton 2009).

While this restoration orientation, together with a traditionally literalist interpretation of the Bible, may arguably support the exclusive positions many PCC pastors and churches take in regard to LGBTIQ people and ministry, those positions are complicated by the strong emphasis in PCC on spiritual experience. Traditionally, authorisation for ministry in PCC congregations is not formal

---

[11] Other than Seymour, the individual most often cited as the pioneer of Pentecostalism in the United States is Charles Fox Parham, founder of Bethel Bible School in Topeka, KA, where Agnes Ozman first exhibited glossolalia on New Year's Day, 1901. Parham's legacy is complicated, particularly in terms of this paper, as he was arrested in 1907 on charges of sodomy. The charges were dropped, and Parham always insisted that he had been framed. Walter Hollenweger's comment is worth noting: "It seems to me that, until further evidence is presented, Parham should be considered as having been 'not guilty as charged.' Furthermore, the Parham story (and other similar stories) might sometime stimulate Pentecostals to theologically re-examine their approach to homosexuality, especially in the light of newer theological and medical evidence" (Hollenweger 1997).

[12] Apart from the aforementioned Aboriginal-led Pentecostal congregation in Innisfail, which predates Good News Hall, recent research by Peter Elliott indicates that the antecedents of Australian Pentecostalism should be traced to the arrival of representatives of Edward Irving's Catholic Apostolic Church (a Christian group who embraced the "charismatic gifts") in Melbourne in 1853 (Elliott 2012).

[13] It is also important not to paint too rosy a picture of Pentecostal acceptance of women in ministry. As Grant Wacker has pointed out, with reference to the American context, such "roseate portraits" can minimize the sociological and theological challenges many women had to negotiate in the early days of the movement (Wacker 2001).

ordination but spiritual experience, perceived to have its source in God's Holy Spirit (Clifton 2009; Dayton 1987). Such spiritual experiences often take the form of ecstatic phenomena, such as glossolalia, prophecy or inspired speech, healing, and the ability to exorcise evil spirits. The social and cultural norms may have remained patriarchal and Eurocentric, and older, more entrenched forms of Christianity represented these norms. However, in the understanding of the early Pentecostals and some of their antecedents, the "latter rain" Holy Spirit empowerment occurring in the early twentieth century transcended merely human barriers. This helps to explain the flourishing ministries of women and formerly excluded ethnic minorities in the movement's early days.

Returning to the theme of this paper, the interviews quoted herein demonstrate that LGBTIQ Christians in PCC churches have had experiences and exercised gifts believed by their PCC peers to have their source in God's Holy Spirit, just as early Australian PCC women did. LGBTIQ people can reasonably argue that, as God does not render them straight or cisgender in this empowering action—any more than early PCC women were transformed into men—it follows that divine authorisation is not contingent on gender *or* heteronormativity. Just as this divine authorisation was recognised in the early days of the movement as demonstrating the inclusion of women and ethnic minorities in God's new work, so LGBTIQ people exercising spiritually empowered and authorised ministry in PCC churches may suggest a future direction that is both more inclusive and closer to the spirit of the early PCC movement (Jennings 2017).

7. Opening up about PCC and LGBTIQ Members

The interviews quoted in this paper indicate that the presence of LGBTIQ people in PCC congregations remains a vexed issue for PCC churches. Several informants expressed grace and gratitude toward their congregations for offering them a level of acceptance. Harley, for instance, was even prepared to concede that it was tougher on the congregation than on him.

> *I've had my challenges, but it's been in some ways, I think, more challenging for those around me to know how to counsel me, how to walk with me, how to shepherd me, how to love me appropriately in the midst of it all.*

By and large, however, this has not been the case. Many LGBTIQ PCCs have agonised over their sexuality, believing that they would face rejection, the end of their ministry, and loss of community if they chose to be open about their status. In several cases, these worries were justified. Those who remained—even in supportive churches—reported experiencing a dilemma straight cisgender Christians never have to deal with: remaining in an environment where every possible expression of their authentic sexuality is regarded as sinful (Vines 2014).

The injustice of this situation is especially acute in cases where PCC congregations have benefitted from the gifted ministry of LGBTIQ people in their midst. This is demonstrated in the story of Zan.

> *And I looked for a church for a year, and then in Easter 2011, I played piano at a church, [Church name redacted] ... I was asked there by the pastor's wife, and she was also a worship leader, and I've been playing piano there ever since. I was on the board of the church for a while there as well. They knew I was gay from the start. But then, when I explained to them that I'm prepared to date, I think that ... frazzled them a tiny bit. And then they actually asked me if I could share my story recently, so a month ago I actually shared in church, and in that experience they asked me to step down from the board so it wasn't too confronting for members if they got upset.*

Although the church was aware of Zan's LGBTIQ status, Zan was permitted to play piano in the church. Problems began when Zan indicated openness to dating, breaching the celibacy line. Once again, it is evident that Zan and similarly spiritually gifted LGBTIQ people are simply "impossible subjects" in the heteronormative construal of faith which is currently hegemonic in Australian PCC.

This does not need to be the end of the story, however. It remains a hallmark of PCC theology that spiritual empowerment from God is the main authorisation for ministry. If, as indicated here,

several LGBTIQ people in PCC churches are believed to have had this experience of empowerment and authorisation, and have exercised ministries in their churches on the basis of it, this fact presents a clear and present theological challenge to those who worship in PCC churches—LGBTIQ and non-LGBTIQ alike. The egalitarian history of Australian PCC points to the possibility of another, more inclusive, approach to this challenge, one that celebrates LGBTIQ people exercising ministries in PCC.

Conflicts of Interest: The author declares no conflicts of interest.

References

Abraham, Ibrahim. 2009. 'Out to get us': Queer muslims and the clash of sexual civilisations in Australia. *Contemporary Islam* 3: 79–97. [CrossRef]

Australian Christian Churches. 2014. Available online: http://www.acc.org.au/about-us/ (accessed on 7 December 2017).

Barton, Bernadette. 2012. *Pray the Gay Away: The Extraordinary Lives of Bible Belt Gays*. New York: NYU Press.

Chant, Barry Mostyn. 2000. *The Spirit of Pentecost: The Origins and Development of the Pentecostal Movement in Australia 1870–1939*. Lexington: Emeth Press.

Clifton, Shane. 2009. *Pentecostal Churches in Transition: Analysing the Developing Ecclesiology of the Assemblies of God in Australia*. Leiden and Boston: Brill.

Couch, Murray, Hunter Mulcare, Marian Pitts, Anthony Smith, and Anne Mitchell. 2008. The religious affiliation of gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex Australians: A report from the private lives survey. *People and Place* 16: 1–11.

Dayton, Donald W. 1987. *Theological Roots of Pentecostalism*. Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers.

Douglas-Meyer, Graham. 2014. *You Shall Walk in the Dark Places: My Story—Resolving My Sexuality and My Faith*. Beeliar: The Love of God Publishing.

Elliott, Peter. 2012. Nineteenth-century Australian charismata: Edward Irving's legacy. *Pneuma* 34: 26–36. [CrossRef]

Freedom2b. n.d. Available online: https://freedom2b.org/ (accessed on 18 July 2016).

Grenz, Stanley James. 1998. *Welcoming but Not Affirming: An Evangelical Response to Homosexuality*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press.

Gresham, Benny. 2012. Breakfast with Brian: Hillsong, Homosexuality and the Future. Available online: http://bennygresham.blogspot.com.au/2012/05/breakfast-with-brian-hillsong.html (accessed on 19 January 2018).

Henrickson, Mark. 2007. A queer kind of faith: Religion and spirituality in lesbian, gay and bisexual New Zealanders. *Aotearoa Ethnic Network (AEN) Journal* 2: 6.

Hillier, Lynne, Anne Mitchell, and Hunter Mulcare. 2008. 'I couldn't do both at the same time': Same sex attracted youth and the negotiation of religious discourse. *Gay & Lesbian Issues and Psychology Review* 4: 80–93.

Hollenweger, Walter J. 1997. *Pentecostalism: Origins and Developments Worldwide*. Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers.

Jennings, Mark. 2017. A silence like thunder: Pastoral and theological responses of Australian pentecostal-charismatic churches to LGBTQ individuals. In *Annual Review of the Sociology of Religion: Pentecostals and the Body*. Edited by Wilkinson, Michael and Peter Althouse. Leiden and Boston: Brill, pp. 217–38.

Kirby, Michael. 2013. Clobbering Religious Gay Prejudice. Available online: https://www.eurekastreet.com.au/article.aspx?aeid=36395 (accessed on 19 January 2018).

Marjoram, Jim. 2017. *It's Life Jim ... One Man's Story of "Coming out:" Unravelling Religion, Sexual Identity and Personal Integrity*, 3rd ed. San Bernadino: James Marjoram.

Ngai, Mae. 2004. *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Payne, ed. 2013. Group Apologizes to Gay Community, Shuts Down 'Cure' Ministry. Available online: http://edition.cnn.com/2013/06/20/us/exodus-international-shutdown/index.html (accessed on 20 January 2018).

Riches, Tanya Nicole. 2016. (Re)imagining Identity in the Spirit: Worship and Social Engagement in Urban Aboriginal-Led Pentecostal Congregations. Ph.D. dissertation, Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, CA, USA.

Sowe, Babucarr J., Jac Brown, and Alan J. Taylor. 2014. Sex and the sinner: Comparing religious and nonreligious same-sex attracted adults on internalized homonegativity and distress. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry* 84: 530–44. [CrossRef] [PubMed]

Venn-Brown, Anthony. 2014. Living Waters Australia to Close. Available online: http://www.abbi.org.au/2014/03/living-waters-australia/ (accessed on 23 August 2017).

Venn-Brown, Anthony. 2015. Sexual orientation change efforts within religious contexts: A personal account of the battle to heal homosexuals. *Sensoria: A Journal of Mind, Brain & Culture* 11: 81–91.

Vines, Matthew. 2014. *God and the Gay Christian: The Biblical Case in Support of Same-Sex Relationships*. New York: Convergent Books.

Wacker, Grant. 2001. *Heaven below: Early Pentecostals and American Culture*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Wilkinson, Michael. 2017. Pentecostalism, the body, and embodiment. In *Annual Review of the Sociology of Religion: Pentecostals and the Body*. Edited by Wilkinson, Michael and Peter Althouse. Leiden and Boston: Brill, pp. 17–35.

Wink, Walter, ed. 1999. Homosexuality and the bible. In *Homosexuality and Christian Faith: Questions of Conscience for the Churches*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, pp. 33–49.

© 2018 by the author. Licensee MDPI, Basel, Switzerland. This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).

MDPI
St. Alban-Anlage 66
4052 Basel
Switzerland
Tel. +41 61 683 77 34
Fax +41 61 302 89 18
www.mdpi.com

Religions Editorial Office
E-mail: religions@mdpi.com
www.mdpi.com/journal/religions

MDPI
St. Alban-Anlage 66
4052 Basel
Switzerland

Tel: +41 61 683 77 34
Fax: +41 61 302 89 18

www.mdpi.com

ISBN 978-3-03897-454-3