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EDITORIAL

Welcome to Volume 4 of Missio Africanus.

This issue follows a long hiatus that allowed us to do some reflection as the editorial board on what it is that we intend for this journal to accomplish. In addition to the generally accepted desire to create space for mission scholars and practitioners to engage one another on issues to do with mission in Africa and among African peoples in the diaspora, it has also become increasingly clear that the journal needs to champion a new type of missiology—a missiology that reflects the shifting heartlands of Christianity from the north-western quadrant of the globe to the rest of the world, the changing complexion of Christianity as a whole from white Europeans to darker-skinned Latin Americans, Africans, and Asians, from rich people in the West to poor peoples in rural Africa, and that these poor non-white peoples are also, by virtue of being Christians, called to serve with God in God's mission in the world *wherever God wants them to serve*. My friends in Kenya imagined this missiology was one that is not afraid to talk about the Holy Spirit. They want it to be a missiology in which the Spirit is truly the chief agent of mission through whom God is

reconciling the entire universe to Godself. Of course, this is reminiscent of John V. Taylor's words in *The Go Between God* who said that "the Holy Spirit is the chief actor in mission ... the director of the whole [missionary] enterprise."[1] Such a missiology would naturally attempt to answer the questions that African Christians have about such things as spirits, spiritual warfare, and witchcraft. It would begin to explain the enthusiastic nature of African religions (Christianity included), the rising influence of the prophets on the African Christian landscape, and the hunger for miracles that leaves many African Christians vulnerable to exploitation.

Such a missiology, according to one Ghanaian theologian, will not be ambivalent about the relationship between colonialism, racism and mission. It must be clear that the mission of God does not need imperial support to extend God's kingdom in the world. Often, the mission of God seeks to subvert empires and not to extend them. It wrestles to free those who are oppressed by unjust imperial systems of the world for whom the Son of God sets free is free indeed. It actively tries to imagine new ways of engaging in mission that are not rooted in colonialism and cultural (or religious) supremacy. While it seeks to convert people to the faith, it tries to do so without colonising them. They do not have to change their names or abandon their culture in order to belong to the kingdom. They have to be Christian in a manner that is relevant to their context. By focusing on God's kingdom, it detribalises mission and humanises God's people. For African Christians, it answers the question of whether one can be a Christian and an African at the same time with an emphatic yes, and then tries to discern what this would look like.

Such a missiology, my South African friends suggested, would be holistic in its understanding of God's mission in the world. It wants to see the Spirit of God at work beyond the church, in all humanity including those of other faiths or denominations. It also anticipates to see God's mission in creation care through which God provides for humanity. In essence, such a missiology seeks to save more than just

the soul. It attempts to shine God's light on the conditions in which people live. It wants to discern God's presence and work in the Democratic Republic of Congo, for instance, where the peace of God is desperately needed. Or in Northern Nigeria where religious violence causes people to live in fear. What is God's mission to the people of Mozambique who are at the time of this writing only beginning to recover from the destruction of Cyclone Idai? This missiology will speak to African Christians who want to make sense of their role in world Christianity. It seeks to discern how God is calling African Christians to participate in the mission of God.

It is this missiology that we commit to pursue. This issue begins to take us on that journey. You will find essays here that make bold but humble suggestions about the mission of God in post-Christian West (Kwiyani), in theological education (Kapolyo), in *ubuntu* and *koinonia* (Ireland) and in African churches in Liverpool and Minneapolis. I pray you will find these articles engaging.

Harvey Kwiyani
Missio Africanus, Liverpool, UK.

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1. Taylor, John Vernon. *The Go-between God: The Holy Spirit and the Christian Mission*. (London: SCM Press, 1972).

ONE

FROM 'UBUNTU' TO KOINŌNIA: THE SPIRIT-FORMED COMMUNITY AND INDIGENOUS AFRICAN COMPASSION

Jerry M. Ireland[1]

Evangelical missions[2] has long abided by the three-selfs deemed crucial to indigenous church-planting movements. The notions of self-support, self-governance, and self-propagation have helped Christianity to flourish in places like Africa, now home to roughly one quarter of all Christians in the world.[3] Yet, the rapid numerical growth of Christianity in Africa has raised questions for both missionaries and local pastors regarding the issue of genuine transformation. For example, Emmanuel Katongole has noted that despite African Christianity's numerical growth and compassionate efforts, "Africans in general are 40 percent worse off than they were in the 1980s."[4] One then wonders if missionaries and local churches have engaged in compassion in Africa in ways that foster the kind of ethical and moral transformation envisioned in Scripture for God's people? The thesis of this chapter essay is that this has largely not happened, and furthermore that this neglect can be traced to the imposition of Western-style, materialistic, and individualistic forms of compassion that by-pass the deeply-rooted and tightly-linked

African notions of community and spirituality. Missionaries and African pastors can rectify this by giving greater attention to the ways in which the African concept of "*ubuntu*" and the biblical concept of "*koinōnia*"[5] intersect. By maximising the biblical framework of the church as the Spirit-formed people of God, missionaries and local pastors can help foster forms of compassion that are truly indigenous and that therefore offer the greatest hope for lasting change.

NGOs and Compassion in Africa

One of the chief problems with contemporary Christian compassion in Africa is the tendency to follow the pattern of secular NGOs and development agencies without giving sufficient attention to the many problems they embody. For example, Manji and O'Coill argue that NGOs in Africa often operate from a paternalistic, neo-colonial stance.[6] They note, for example:

> As with the racist ideologies of the past, the discourse of development continued to define non-Western people in terms of their perceived divergence from the cultural standards of the West, and it reproduced social hierarchies that had prevailed between both groups under colonialism. On this basis, the so-called 'developing world' and its inhabitants were (and still are) described only in terms of what they are not. They are chaotic, not ordered, traditional not modern, corrupt not honest, underdeveloped, not developed, irrational not rational, lacking in all of those things the West presumes itself to be.[7]

Along these same lines, Hiruy and Eversole point out that NGOs tend to disempower the very people they claim to help. They do this by inserting themselves as mediator between impoverished communi-

ties and government authorities. The effect of this has been to prevent the poor from speaking for themselves. Plus, the ability of NGOs to effectively voice the concerns of the poor is often compromised by the fact that they are indebted to local and foreign governments, who often determine who receives funding and how it can be used.[8] The tendency to be donor driven at times subjugates and humiliates those that NGOs aim to serve. Charles Piot's observations of child sponsorship practices in Togo serve as a case in point. He points out that the process of having to write response letters thanking Western donors subjected barely literate Togolese parents to arduous 90-minute treks on foot (each way) to donor offices to present their thank-you letters, only to have it critiqued by organisational professionals, and at times sent back for revisions. This amounted to a process that "re-inscribes the African subject as aid-dependent, as saved, always saved, by the European—and the African parent as always inadequate and incomplete/impotent."[9] Others have pointed out that NGOs can have little impact in places like Africa unless they confront some of the damaging policies coming from the West that have continued to enslave Africa. This would include the neo-liberal economic policies that emerged as part of the Washington Consensus in the 1980s and 1990s and its emphasis on "economic growth."[10] As Olaniyan explains, policies enforced by institutions such as World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), "imposed harsh austerity measures on African economies, dragged Africa deeper into debt peonage, and under the guise of instituting 'market reforms,' impoverished the vast majority of Africans."[11] This call for NGOs to be a prophetic voice for the poor and needy though is unlikely to be realised given the dependence of NGOs on their donors and on the governments that allow them to operate.

Perhaps chief among the problems of NGOs and development goals relates to their inability to foster genuine community. This becomes especially problematic in places like Africa where the concept of

community pervades all of life. This is the argument advanced by Hiruy and Eversole based on their study of NGOs serving African communities in Australia. They have shown that from the perspective of African community organisations, NGOs sometimes ignored community concerns out of a fear of losing some of their funding.[12] Thus, the inability of NGOs to affect lasting change can be traced to their being caught between the rock of donor accountability and the hard place of international politics.[13] These two poles contribute to the perception of the NGO as an outsider. Despite the rhetoric of empowerment and transformation, NGOs must come to terms with the reality that numerous studies have shown that in Africa little in the way of lasting change or actual "development" has resulted from their efforts.[14] This shortcoming has not gone unnoticed by African communities. One African musician, for example, has made a play on the acronym "NGO" using a local dialect and rendering the term *"en jiwo"*—which means "you are stealing our money."[15]

Christian FBOs

Christian FBOs (Faith-Based Organisations) operate, generally speaking, in manners similar to their NGO counterparts, but with some key differences that have sometimes helped them to experience greater success. Chief among these differences is the ability of FBOs to maintain broad acceptance at the community level, something that often eludes NGOs.[16] Part of this acceptance flows from the spiritual emphasis and community ties that characterise many FBOs. Thus, community and spirituality go hand in hand. Because faith constitutes a central part of the lives of many people in the majority world, FBOs naturally engender trust more easily than NGOs that lack any specific faith commitment.[17] In fact, this reality has led many NGOs who previously viewed religion with scorn and skepticism to begin to take faith more seriously as an essential element in development.[18]

FBOs however often fall victim to the same hindrances as their NGO

counterparts, and they do so to the extent that they allow donors to determine their priorities as this often compromises faith commitments. Erica Bornstein has shown, for example, that child sponsorship programs in Zimbabwe led by World Vision tend to be destructive to families and communities, even though they have a positive impact on individual children.[19] In short, these programs damage the relationships between children and their biological parents, in exchange for a less concrete, less tangible, and less relatable relationship with a donor thousands of miles away. For example, the father of one sponsored child in Zimbabwe, named Albert, feared that a westerner was trying to steal his child. In addition, the sponsored child's educational opportunities made Albert's father feel inferior. At the same time, Albert's mother felt that money being given to the sponsored child should be shared equally among all the siblings. Yet sponsorship rules, set by outsiders, did not allow for this. So, while Albert benefited personally from the sponsorship program, the family itself became more fractured and dysfunctional.[20] This is especially problematic in African culture where family ties and obligations prove vitally important to the way that society functions. We see in this that foreign child sponsorship often injects radical individualism into a culture that is highly communal. It does this necessarily because of the nature of the program. This helps us to see that a compassionate initiative might be helpful in one area (a child's future prospects) but destructive in another (a child's relationship with their biological family). Such approaches run contrary to one of Christianity's most transformational resources, ignoring the centrality of community not only among Africa communities, but also as it relates to Christian spirituality.

Development and Pentecostal Churches

Evidence for the connection between community, a vibrant spirituality, and the possibility of genuine transformation can be found in the

fact that several observers have noted that Pentecostal churches often succeed in development in ways beyond even that of NGOs and FBOs.[21] Dena Freeman has identified four ways that Pentecostal churches are more successful in producing lasting change. Importantly, all of them have to do with the concepts of community and spirituality. The first highlights the issue of community and the challenges described above as they relate to donors and government agencies. "Pentecostal churches are almost entirely funded by their followers, through tithes and offerings."[22] This causes Pentecostal churches, according to Freeman, to tend to place the "religious consumer" at the top of its list of those to whom it is accountable. This contrasts sharply with NGOs who "are often neither responsive nor accountable to the people they supposedly serve, instead having to report back to national and international donors."[23]

The second way that Pentecostal churches tend to be more successful in development has to do with their ability to foster individual transformation. While in some ways this seems to run counter to the idea of community, it is in fact a central component. Communities are made up of individuals and change within the community must start there.[24] In this, it turns out that the often-lampooned fundamentalists of the early 20th century who emphasised that social change starts with individual conversion were not as far off the mark as is sometimes claimed.

Closely connected to individual transformation comes Freeman's third reason, that of participation. "Pentecostal pastors are adept at getting people involved and helping them feel part of the community." Though Freeman does not point it out, it's worth noting that a key feature of Christian salvation is not only individual transformation, but incorporation of the individual into a community collectively embodying a transformed life as a sign of God's coming kingdom. Finally, Pentecostalism functions as something of an anti-secularising force, taking seriously the non-material realities that concern many Africans. Not only does Pentecostalism take seriously

things such as demonic powers, malevolent spirits, and witchcraft, but it also offers people a genuine alternative regarding how to deal with these things.[25]

Ubuntu: Community in African Culture

Many African cultures have traditionally placed a premium on the value of community. This is captured in the concept of "*ubuntu*" common in Central, Southern, and East Africa—which basically means "a person is a person through other people." Similar notions can be found in most African communities, even if the precise terms differ. "*Ubuntu*" emphasises the "interconnectedness of human society, with the implication that people should treat others as part of the extended human family."[26] As Keith Ferdinando explains, "[Africans] see themselves as members of various groups—family, clan and people—and isolation from the community is either one of the greatest evils that can befall or, as with the witch, a sign of utter perversion and dehumanisation: 'I am, because we are; and since we are, therefore, I am.'"[27] According to Elechi et al., Ubuntu "is a prescription for treating others as we would like to be treated" and "a command to care for each other and to embrace the principle of reciprocity and mutual support." As such, it proves foundational for what Elechi, et al. refer to as the African indigenous justice system (AIJS).[28]

However ingrained the concept of community may be in many African cultures, though, it must also be admitted that this idea frequently breaks down. For one, as Ferdinando has observed, traditional African concepts of community tend to extend only as far as family, clan, or tribal affiliations.[29] Thus, *ubuntu* has proven an ineffective instrument in quelling Africa's xenophobic conflicts. Not only has it been an impotent force in this regard, but it also contributes to racial conflict to the extent that *ubuntu* is bound up with tribal identities. Others have pointed out that the concept of

ubuntu is often vague, patriarchal, and offers little in the way of practical solutions.[30]

The problems described here most likely lie not with the concept of *ubuntu* itself, but with the fact that fallen people act as its guardians. This is true not only for *ubuntu* but for any cultural norm anywhere in the world. Plus, globalism has imported ideas previously foreign to African culture, such as individualism, consumerism, and materialism, all which have worked together to weaken the concept.[31]

Koinōnia and the Redemption of Ubuntu

In the ancient world, the Greeks long sought after a source of true and abiding community, as is evident in the writings of Homer, Plato, and Aristotle, among others. As with the pursuit of "*ubuntu*" in Africa though, the concept often proved elusive and there was vast disagreement regarding how true social harmony could be achieved.[32] Interestingly, this Hellenistic longing forms the background for Luke's description of the early Christian community as "having all things in common" (Acts 2:44).[33] The word "common" here is the Greek word *koinos*, which forms the root for the term *koinōnia*, often used to describe Christian fellowship or unity. Luke's point in Acts 2:44 seems to be that this early Christianity community, centred on faith in Christ and empowered by the Spirit, had redeemed and actualised what the Greeks often sought, namely a genuine and practical basis of community that provided for human flourishing. That is, Luke seems to employ the concept apologetically, as if to say to the Hellenistic world, "Look! we have found what you have long searched for! Come, and see for yourself!"

The main idea in this essay is that in a similar apologetic and redemptive fashion, *koinōnia* has the power to set free and redeem both western individualism and African *ubuntu*, by actualising them through divine presence in the person and work of the Holy Spirit. *Koinōnia* in the NT essentially describes the notion that believers

share in the life of Christ and through Christ share all things with each other. The body of Christ is bound together inextricably with Christ and with each other in sacrificial service (1 Cor. 10:16; Phil. 2:1).

The concept of the people of God, the church, as a Spirit-formed community that functions as a sign of the kingdom of God pervades much of the New Testament. But one of the clearest declarations of this can be found in Paul's letter to the Philippians, which is worth quoting at length:

> Therefore, if there is any encouragement in Christ, if there is any consolation of love, if there is any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and compassion, **2** make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose. **3** Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; **4** do not *merely* look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others. **5** Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, **6** who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, **7** but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, *and* being made in the likeness of men. **8** Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. **9** For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, **10** so that at the name of Jesus EVERY KNEE WILL BOW, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, **11** and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Notice that according to the logic of Paul's argument here, the Spirit fosters unity and engenders within the diverse people of God a singular purpose that culminates in the church's evangelistic mandate. Thus, *koinōnia* gives direction, purpose and power to the notion of community by locating all of those things externally in the will of God. By being united with Christ through the Spirit, the body of Christ with all its diverse personalities can be united under the same purpose and values.[34] This concept has the power to help missionaries and pastors in Africa to overcome the broken systems of secular development, western materialism, prosperity teaching, and tribalism that prove so destructive to the flourishing of African societies and to the churches that serve them. The Christian concept of community has great potential because it represents a simultaneous celebration of unity and diversity, sacrifice and prosperity that defy worldly definitions and categories.

Koinōnia in Acts

The Holy Spirit in Christian theology is the Spirit of an impossible future made real and present. This is the point Luke goes to great efforts to demonstrate in the opening chapters of Acts. Indeed, Acts begins with the admonition that the disciples should wait in Jerusalem for an endowment of the Spirit that will enable them to carry out God's mission (Acts 1:8). From the moment this takes place, Luke emphasises the radical fellowship among the believers and how that unity was both a gift of the Spirit and the means for the ongoing cultivation of the Spirit's power and presence. Luke makes a point of demonstrating the connection between the reception of the Spirit and unity when he describes believers awaiting the Spirit's coming as being "all together in one place" (Acts 2:1). The use of the repetitive

phrases "all together" and "in one place" is undoubtedly emphatic.[35] Otherwise to simply say they were all together would have been sufficient. But Luke's point is to show that the unified fellowship of the believers was a key to all that would soon take place. This fellowship among believers though is heightened after the outpouring of the Spirit as is evident in Acts 2:44— "And all those who had believed were together and had all things in common (*koinos*)." The community of believers has here been moved by the Spirit's power and presence from what Luke earlier portrays as a spatial but pregnant unity, full of hopeful anticipation, to an economic, personal, and costly unity that would intensify as the Spirit worked in the church to advance God's global mission (Acts 4:32-35). This notion of personal and costly unity not only characterises the relationship of Christ to believers, but becomes a paradigm for believers' unity with Christ, with each other, and with the world.

Romans 15:26

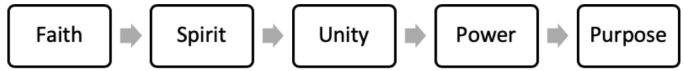
In Romans 15:26 Paul describes the manner in which Grecian churches in Macedonia and Achaia made a "contribution for the poor among the saints in Jerusalem." Here, again, the word "contribution" is the word "*koinōnia*" or fellowship. This is a concept that Paul elsewhere links to the working of the Spirit, just as Luke does in Acts. For example, in 2 Corinthians 13:14, Paul prays for the divided church at Corinth, saying, "the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship (*koinōnia*) of the Holy Spirit, be with you all." The point in all of this is that the Holy Spirit's presence within the church creates a unity that goes beyond emotional attachment or mere physical presence. Rather, it is a unity that binds the body of Christ together in mutual concern for one another often expressed in sacrificial care for needy members. As Leon Morris says of Romans 15:26 and the financial gift of the Greek believers to the suffering church in Jerusalem, "the money was not a soulless gift, but the

outward expression of the deep love that binds Christian believers in one body, the church."[36]

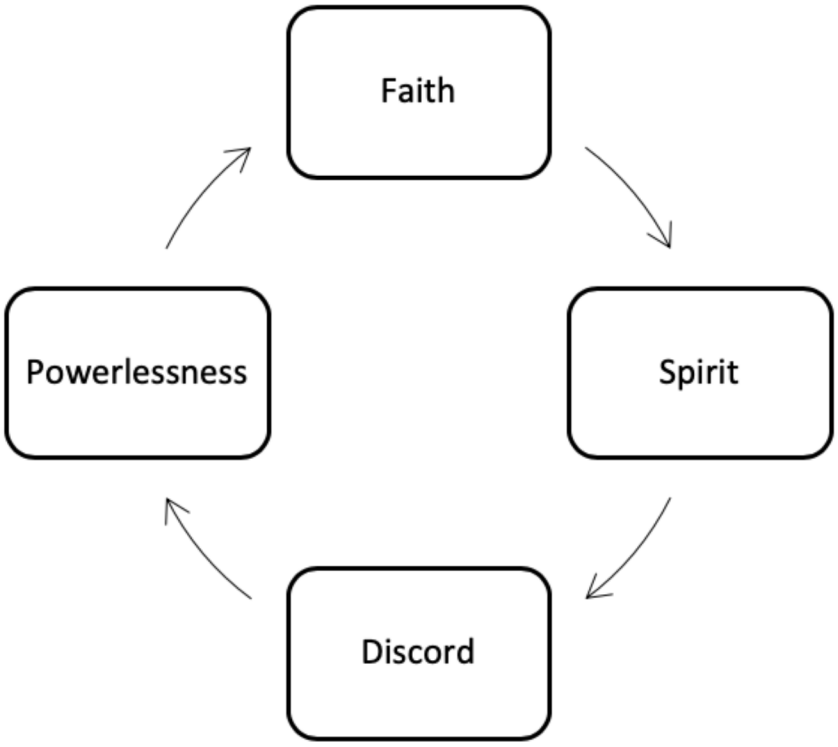
Later on, we find Paul arguing that this fellowship among believers is meant to spill over into the world as part of the church's witness. In Galatians 6:10, he says "let us do good to all people, but especially to the household of faith." He makes a strikingly similar statement in 1 Thessalonians 3:12-13, praying for believers there that the Lord would cause them "to increase and abound in love for one another, and for all people, just as we also do for you; so that He may establish your hearts without blame in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all His saints." In other words, the church was tasked to seek and preserve the unity that the Spirit created for it was essential to their functioning as the charismatic community needed for the global dissemination of the gospel (Acts 12:24). Thus, while the Spirit-formed community itself is a *charis*, a gift, the church was tasked to be constant guardians of that gift and to see to it that its expression spilled over into the world.

What sets Christian fellowship (*koinōnia*) apart is that it is simultaneously transcendent and immanent—it is both spiritual and physical, heavenly and worldly, all at once. Through the giving of the Holy Spirit, believers are united to God both spiritually and practically. In 1 Corinthians 1, Paul describes this in ways similar to Luke, for he emphasises the unity of believers based on being unified with Christ. The church is "called into fellowship (*koinōnia*)" with Jesus Christ (1:9). The effect of this fellowship is unity and the absence of divisions (*schisma*) among God's people for the advancement of the gospel (1 Cor. 1:10-17). Paul elaborates the connection between the unification of believers with each other and with Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit throughout chapters 1 and 2 of 1 Corinthians. In chapter one Paul, without directly mentioning the Spirit, describes the Spirit's work according to power (1:18, 24). In chapter 2 Paul admonishes the Corinthians for their divisions and reminds them that this flows from a neglect of the Spirit's power and presence,

to which Paul also attributes his own effectiveness in ministry (1 Cor. 2:1-16). From both Luke and Paul then, a fairly clear pattern emerges for effective ministry in the local church that looks something like this:



My central thesis is that many modern expressions of compassion in Africa by NGOs, FBOs, and missions agencies interrupts this process by hindering the development of genuine fellowship among church members and thereby hindering the church's effectiveness in the community. What Pentecostal churches have long known and what NGOs are increasingly becoming aware of is that development has both physical and spiritual causes and therefore requires spiritual and physical responses. Many modern compassionate initiatives, because as we have seen tend to be outside run and financed, interrupt the vital role of unity in ecclesial effectiveness. Without unity, the church tends toward powerlessness as disunity disempowers. The result then looks something like this:



Where discord exists, it drives the people of God back to the beginning and the necessity of faith and dependence on the Spirit. As long as discord and a lack of unity exits, the people of God go endlessly in circles, as with the Israelites in the Exodus. But where people act in faith, respond to the Spirit and cultivate the Spirit's unifying presence, the *ekklesia* enjoys both *koinōnia* and missional effectiveness.

Grace Generation Movement in Togo

Titus Uwakwe started *Grace Generation Movement*, 2014, a ministry that is non-denominational but with close ties to the *Assemblées de Dieu* (AD) in Togo. Uwakwe says of this locally run and locally

financed initiative, "Our goal is to reach the unreached by all means possible and to perfect the saints."[37] This ministry started with musical outreaches focusing on attracting young people. "We don't present ourselves as preachers, because music is an easier way to connect with youth." Now, says Uwakwe, we do "pure evangelistic outreach"—meaning they go to remote, rural areas and conduct door to door evangelism, and show Christian films (mostly from Nigeria) that emphasise power encounter. Furthermore, they especially target unreached and hard to reach rural places. Recently Uwakwe and his team visited a village so remote that they had to swim across a river in order to reach it. When they come to a village, someone on the team preaches a sermon, usually followed by an offer to pray for healing and deliverance for any who wish to come forward. But before they go, they work with regional AD directors to identify a pastor who, after the crusade, will work with new converts and plant a church in that location.

Grace Generation Movement (GGM) though does more than plant churches. They are also very engaged in social ministries, especially to vulnerable children and widows. They currently support 104 orphans by paying their school fees and providing school supplies. In addition, last year almost 20 widows were given a bag of rice each. All of the finances for these things this comes from local believers. GGM's board is comprised of pastors and Christian business people from across denominational lines in Togo who believe in the work and help raise the needed funds. Uwakwe, who himself is a business owner in Lomé, and about ten other individuals, provide most of the financial resources and governance for GGM.

According to Uwakwe, prayer has been the key, and he and his teams spend two weeks in concentrated, focused prayer before doing any outreach. As a result, they have witnessed a number of healings and deliverances. One man who was bedridden who hadn't left his home for many months, attended one of the outreaches and after was able to walk without crutches. At another evangelistic campaign, a

Muslim Fulani mother and her children came and gave their lives to Christ on the final day of the event. Because the husband was not there, the outreach organisers contacted him by phone to avoid creating any hostilities or problems for the wife and her children. The husband, grateful for the call, gave his assurance that he would allow the conversion of his wife and children and would not cause any trouble. An almost tearful Uwakwe summed up these experiences declaring, "Miracles still exist. It may take time for us to see them, but they still exist. God honours His word and brings glory to Himself."[38]

One of the striking features of GGMs work with street kids is their role as advocates so that the children can be integrated back into their families. When GGM first started reaching out to street kids in Lomé, they assumed that many of them were orphans. This proved false and they discovered that the vast majority had run away from home because they had stolen from their parents and relatives to buy drugs or alcohol. But as Uwakwe explained, in West African culture, because of their offences against their own families and their own communities, these children are now outcasts. They cannot return home unless an immediate family member advocates on their behalf and pleads their case to the family members and community leaders. But most family members are unwilling to do so, because they have been victims of the child's crimes. So, GGM spends at least two months discipling these children. Many, according to Uwakwe, are demon possessed as a result of living on the street and being exposed to voodoo, native to this area of Togo and Benin. Uwakwe says, "our perception of street kids changed dramatically. We used to think that they were without backgrounds, but we found that many come from good homes." He adds, "Lack of shelter is just a symptom of the real problem which often has spiritual roots."

As the discipleship process begins to bear fruit and the GGM team members (many of whom are student pastors in Togo) have noticed genuine changes in the children's attitudes and behaviour, they initiate the process of reintegrating them back into biological families.

Reintegration itself can be a months-long process. Members of GGM travel to the child's village (without the child) to meet with their family and verify their stories. After doing so, they offer to return with the child and stand in as their advocate, so that the child can return home. The father of one child, a Togolese policeman, recently traveled to Lomé to personally thank Uwakwe for saving his child and helping him be reintegrated to the family. In the process of doing so, the father too committed his life to Christ.

What is especially poignant about the story of GGM is that it is an indigenous expression of African compassion capable of redeeming individuals, communities, as well as traditional notions of both. It does this through practical acts of sacrificial service that are Spirit inspired and Spirit empowered. Furthermore, it is truly integrative, addressing all aspect of the lives of those that it serves, both physical and spiritual. GGM's approach helps not only the child, but the child's family, thus upholding rather than destroying the key African value of family and community. When contrasted with many western or missionary-driven approaches to street children, it becomes apparent that such efforts often tend to be ultimately destructive even if they provide temporary relief. By creating feeding programs for street kids or centres for them to be housed, fed, or entertained, western, missionary-driven approaches almost always guarantee that the child will never be reintegrated with their biological families through the creation of systems that ensure a child's perpetual homelessness. The solution then lies in indigenous approaches to compassion that maximise African spiritual and community intelligence and that by and through the Holy Spirit find genuinely African solutions to uniquely African problems. By focusing on compassionate outreach as the fostering of genuine *koinōnia*, missionaries and local pastors alike can, like Luke, declare to the broken communities of Africa, "Look! We have found what you are looking for. Come and see for yourself!"

1. Jerry M. Ireland, PhD has served as a missionary to Africa for the last 12 years, and is currently associate professor of theology and missions at the University of Valley Forge in Phoenixville, PA (USA).
2. Throughout this essay I will use "missions" (plural) to refer to the cross-cultural mandate of the church to take the gospel to those who have not heard, and to distinguish it from "mission" (singular) as referring more broadly to all that God is doing in the world.
3. David McClendon, "Sub-Saharan Africa Will Become Home to a Growing Share of the World's Christians and Muslims," Pew Research Center. http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/04/19/sub-saharan-africa-will-be-home-to-growing-shares-of-the-worlds-christians-and-muslims/.
4. Emmanuel Katongole, *The Sacrifice of Africa: A Political Theology for Africa* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011), 40.
5. Explained on page 8ff.
6. Firoze Manji and Carl O'Coill, "The Missionary Position: NGOs and Development in Africa,"*International Affairs* 78, no. 3 (2002): 567-583.
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TWO

AFRICAN AND CROSS-CULTURAL PERSPECTIVES ON THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION AND MINISTRY

Joe Kapolyo[1]

Introduction

> "Christian history indicates that the searching fundamental scholarship arises naturally out of the exercise of Christian mission and especially from its cross-cultural expression ... What happens there [in Africa, Asia and Latin America] will determine what the Christianity of the 21st and 22nd centuries will be like. ... The quality of African and Asian theological scholarship, therefore, will not only be vital for Africans, Asians and Latin Americans; it will help to determine the shape and quality of world Christianity ... In a word, if Africa, Asia and Latin America do not develop a proper capacity for leadership in theological studies, there will, for practical purposes, be no theological studies anywhere that will be worth caring about"[2]

Africa and the future of Christian mission

It is now generally recognised that the principal theatres of Christianity have shifted from the western heartlands to the southern hemispheres of Africa, Asia and Latin America. Rough statistics suggest that in 1900 more than 80% of all Christians lived in the West. By 2000 the number of Christians in the global south had risen to about 50%. In a hundred years' time, if the Lord has not returned and if the trends continue as they are now, more than 80% of all Christians will be from Africa, Asia and Latin America.

The quality of interaction between the Gospel and the cultures of Africa will determine the quality not only of African Christianity but also of world Christianity. If the quality of that interaction is healthy, we can confidently expect great things; new theologies, Christologies, mature and attractive standards of Christian living, a clear "Christ stamp" on the African Church and, of course, the growth of the universal church into the full stature of Christ. However, if the quality is poor, then we can look forward with fear to distortion, confusion, uncertainty and hypocrisy. For example, even though Rwanda, which had been the cradle of the East African Revival and was, by 1990, one of the most Christianised countries in Africa, it is generally known for the genocide that occurred in 1994 when, for one hundred days, spirit-filled evangelical Christians hacked to death other spirit-filled evangelical Christians because they belonged to a different tribe.[3] I understand that in one country in Sub-Saharan Africa criminals will pray before engaging in their evil nefarious activities. If they are successful, they will tithe their ill-gotten gains to the church. I have also been informed that some pastors drive around in new cars donated for their use by such criminals. I sincerely hope this story is apocryphal and riddled with embellishments. However, if it has any element of truth, it is a serious

sign of the kind of potential gross corruption that could so easily infect the Church. There is a window of opportunity to do what is right. I do not know how long that opportunity will last but, like most things, I know it is limited. Therefore, let all, particularly African Christians, who have interest in the development of world Christian mission, grasp this opportunity with both hands and work to develop an empowering and attractive theological methodology, a liberating hermeneutic, to enable people of African descent to think, speak and write theologically in forms that arise from the deep wells of the African soul not mediated in a second hand manner through Western intellectual categories to satisfy a culturally Eurocentric theological agenda.

Fifteen years ago, shortly after I took over as the principal of the All Nations Christian College in Ware, Hertfordshire in England, I noticed the lack of black British students not only at All Nations but in many evangelical theological institutions in the United Kingdom. At that time, these colleges, in general, and All Nations, in particular, could easily fill their student places with European students. Non-Western students were mostly hindered by lack of funds and increasingly, in fortress Europe, by exorbitant and prohibitive visa requirements. Black urban British students were a rarity.[4] At that time, I took the opportunity to consult with two of the leading black Christians in the country; Joel Edwards, then head of the Evangelical Alliance UK (EAUK) and Mark Sturge, then head of the African Caribbean Evangelical Alliance (ACEA – now defunct). In response to my quest, both gentlemen were quite clear that the curricula of our colleges offered nothing to the Black British Urban experience. The colleges and the theology they espoused, were irrelevant to the experience of life of this particular people group.

I once gave a paper at a gathering of the German Evangelical Missionary Alliance in which I suggested that "there is no such thing as theology but only theologies, including enlightenment (European), feminist, womanist, liberation, black, African, Asian, etc." I suggested

that there needed to be a revolution in the culture of theology similar to the one that took place in social anthropology when Franz Boaz removed the idea of progress and development from the supposed continuum on which all cultures and the ethnic groups they represented were located.[5] Indeed, in those days prior to Franz Boaz's revolutionary intervention, there was a strongly held presumption of a universal singular culture in perpetual motion (development) towards perfection or the civilised state. Primitive cultures, mostly of colonised peoples, were supposedly located towards the beginning of the spectrum while the most civilised, represented mostly by white Europeans and their descendants in North America, Australia, and New Zealand, were located towards the other end. My paper was, then, put on a website for wide distribution. A few months later I had an email from an American missionary working in Japan who had taken issue with my basic thesis. He suggested instead that what Europeans, Africans, Asians etc. need is a biblical theology, not 'ethnic' theologies. As I contemplated the contents of the email, I looked up to see on my bookshelf an international dictionary of pastoral theology and ethics. I flipped through it casually looking for an article on 'spirit- or demon-possession and pastoral practice.' I supposed there must have been a reference to the subject under the article(s) on the Holy Spirit. I looked in vain. Of course, theologians from cultures that are not troubled in general by demonic possession would not think to ask theological questions that would deal with that subject. African pastors deal with demon-possession regularly. An international dictionary of theology should surely give them help in that area. Unfortunately, because the authors of the articles included were grounded in very different cultures from those represented in Africa, this pressing subject did not receive any attention. Every theology is culturally biased because it is developed by people who are contextualised in time and space. How did we get here and what should we do about it in regard to theological discourse in education and ministry?

Development of theology

Strictly speaking, theology, a word derived from two Greek words, ***theos*** and ***logos,*** means a study of ideas about God, more particularly, the Christian God.[6] Sometimes, we use the expression "the doctrine of God." This is certainly the sense in which the term was used by the early North African Church fathers, who coined the phrase, in Alexandria in the second century CE.[7] These included Clement, Cyprian and Origen. Even Tertullian, the second century writer/lawyer from North Africa, spoke of theology as the study of the God of the Christians.[8] As a matter of fact, systematic theology as a discipline of study originated in Alexandria, in Egypt.[9]

Theology as a modern academic discipline was born with the founding of universities in the European cities of Paris, Bologna and Oxford.[10] Originally, the universities offered only four subjects: these included the arts, which was the entry programme for scholars. Then they would graduate to do medicine, law and theology. By the 13th century, theology was increasingly used to refer to the systematic study of Christian beliefs in general, not just the articulation of beliefs about God. The establishment of the discipline in universities drew a distinction between the much favoured and more academic theoretical and speculative study of theology, over against the practical subjects to do with the practice of Churchmanship. Until relatively recently, Practical Theology, the practice in ministry arising out of the study of theology, was seen as a very poor relation within the faculties of theology.[11]

With the onset of secularism arising from the Enlightenment in the seventeenth century in Europe and America, it was argued that theology needed to be free from any external authorities such as the church or even the creeds. This led directly to the dropping of theology from the faculties of universities in those countries with a strong secularist ideology. In countries like France and Australia, it has taken a long time before universities would admit theology as a

credible academic discipline. The more secular the countries became, the more likely that theology was looked upon with suspicion and excluded from public education at every level.[12] In the UK it is relatively recent, in the final quarter of the 20th century, that university authorities have allowed Bible Colleges to offer degree programmes for their courses (CNAA or direct accreditation with established universities).

Objective theology, as taught in the universities, has several basic components: bible, systematisation, philosophy, history, pastoral care and spirituality. From my point of view, western theology as outlined above is founded on biblical ideas, filtered through Greek philosophical methods, married to rationalism and the enlightenment ideology, focused almost solely on an objective discussion of ideas (cognitive and informative), even if these ideas are about God. As a result, two major weaknesses in the western theological enterprise have become apparent. These are silence and collusion; silence (the typical sin of an individuating culture) in the face of gross injustices suffered at the hands of the West by many colonised people and collusion with the whole western cultural, economic and political imperialistic agenda.

Theology and the imperialistic agenda

The western theological enterprise was not just silent but positively encouraged the Trans-Atlantic slave trade in which many millions of Africans were displaced from their homelands and sold into chattel slavery or perished during the long voyage from Africa to the Caribbean and the Americas. It was a Roman Catholic nation, Portugal, which first took slaves from the Congo in the 1440s.[13] However, the Protestant nations that eventually overtook Portugal in slave trade and colonial expansion were no more concerned for the freedom and salvation of the Africans. Their economic interests blinded their sense of justice and mercy, righteousness and godliness. Almost two hundred years after the first enslaved Africans were brought to North

America, there emerged significant western voices of dissent (most notably John Newton, William Wilberforce, Thomas Fowell Buxton, etc.) but by and large the whole theological establishment had little to say to counter the injustices against black people and other people of colour; for example, Olaudah Equiano[14] and Ottobah Cugoano.[15] The Baptist Union of Great Britain (BUGB) Apology of 2007 was a recognition of the Union's complicity (even if by silence) in the slave trade. It was also an acknowledgement of the economic benefits derived from such an inhumane business.

The BUGB 2007 Apology was significant, not because the sins of the ancestors were unfairly visited on the children as so many seemed to think. This generation of white Christians is not to be held directly responsible for the Trans-Atlantic slave trade. However, the tragedy of the connection with Africa made by the Iberian powers back in the middle of the fifteenth century when they first exported a few slaves from the Congo has come to dominate and haunt relations between black and white people for centuries. In those relationships, white people have proved dominant and powerful in every way. This is a result of the slave trade and has serious continuing consequences for the way white and black people relate to each other.[16] This is the crucial point.

James Cone makes the point clear:

"While I had not lived during the time of the legal slavery, its impact upon black life is still visibly present in the contemporary economic, social, and political [and I would add, theological] structures of the United States. Lynching is the most dramatic manifestation of the legacy of black slavery. Incidentally, lynching, a verb derived from the surname of Mr William Lynch, is not just the physical brutality connected with summary executions of black people at the hands of white racists, it is especially a way of sowing distrust among black people so that they can never trust each other but wholly trust their slave masters."[17]

The debilitating effects of the slave trade on Africa are easy to identify. Not only were the most able-bodied men, women and children taken, leaving older less able people, but the coastal lands and their hinterlands were turned into war zones as tribe fought tribe to capture people to sell to the Europeans whose cruelty had become and remains legendary. Theology was silent; it did not seem to influence either Catholic or Protestant powers in their quest for more and more slaves to satisfy the seemingly insatiable appetite for labour of the burgeoning plantations and their slave traders, which in turn fed the ever-growing appetites of the nations' coffers back in Europe. The slave trade created untold wealth for the trading nations while despoiling the continent of Africa.

Again with a few exceptions, the western theological establishment in Germany was silent or irrelevant over the slaughter of six million Jews in the Third Reich during the Second World War. With the exception of people like Dietrich Bonhoeffer who was martyred for his opposition to the Nazi regime and Karl Barth, the majority of German theologians remained silent when this gross miscarriage of justice was committed by the Nazis.

During the pre-colonial period white missionaries in places like Calabar, Zululand, Basutoland and Buluwayo, were strictly controlled by the local tribal political figures; Moshoeshoe, Lobengula, Mzilikazi, and many others. However, during the high-water mark of colonialism (1880-1930) missionaries were part of the governing systems. Theology had too easily become the handmaiden of the European colonial enterprise, helping in land acquisition and the wholesale dehumanisation of non-white peoples all over the world. Undoubtedly, there were many individuals who bucked the trend and espoused the aspirations of Africans and fought against the injustices that characterised the colonial rule, (for instance, Lionel Cripps in Rhodesia and Frank Barlow in Kenya—a Scottish missionary turned land tenure expert who fought to give back land to the Kikuyu from the government and the mission). Nevertheless,

generally speaking, the voice of the missionary enterprise and the voice of their theology were silent in the face of gross miscarriages of justice!

Western cultural and therefore theological domination is particularly acute in certain parts of Africa, both Anglophone and Francophone, where during the period of colonialism, colonised Africans were discouraged from developing confidence to use their vernaculars and cultures for formal education, which was largely developed by Westerners for Westerners but adapted and re-packaged for the colonies. This Eurocentric approach to education, history, culture, and intellectual development excluded the possibility of serious engagement with indigenous thought patterns, categories, idioms and indeed general concerns. This is especially true in East, Central and Southern Africa where white settler presence inculcated a near-total abandonment of local languages and cultures for anything but personal and domestic use. The riches of African languages and cultures would not and did not form any serious part of educational curricula at either secondary or tertiary levels. 'Imperial western values and concepts ... were at one and the same time opening to African societies the intellectual and economic means of [modern] nationhood and also creating a universe where their traditional worldview found no place.'[18] [19] To the detriment of the African Church, this state of affairs has been perpetrated even in the post-colonial era in life in general and especially so in the Church. I find it depressing that many, perhaps even the majority, of educated Sub-Saharan African Christian ministers prefer to preach or teach in their adopted colonial *lingua franca* instead of their mother tongues even when the context of such ministry, e.g. college, church, family funerals, is totally mono-cultural. Kalilombe, writing about Malawi, laments the dearth of grassroots theological reflection because "the Christian masses tend to doubt whether they can do their own reflection on their faith".[20] I would add African professional theologians and ministers to this assertion.

Cone, writing from an African American context, makes a similar point when he says;

I think that black professors are still too captivated by structures of white thought and therefore cannot think creatively. What we think and how we organise our ideas are too much determined by our training at Union, Harvard, Yale and other white schools that imitate them. The academic structure of white seminary and university curriculums [sic] require that black students reject their heritage or at least regard it as intellectually marginal.[21]

In apartheid South Africa, the doctrine of separateness and the designation of black people as 'hewers of wood and drawers of water'[22] for white people were underpinned by the Dutch Reformed Church's (DRC) interpretation of certain biblical passages from the early chapters of the Book of Genesis (Genesis 9:24-27). They misinterpreted the curse on Canaan, traditionally understood to have been fulfilled in the subjugation of Canaan by Joshua,[23] to be a universal curse on Canaan's father Ham and all his descendants, people of colour, for ever. The demise of apartheid in South Africa was in part based on a revision of this official doctrine of the DRC.

Perhaps it is for these and other reasons that western Christianity seems to have lost its vigour and has become dispirited with declining numbers year on year. Perhaps that is why, in God's economy, the centre of gravity of the Christian church has shifted to the southern continents.[24] This shift is the third in the history of Christianity. The first occurred in the first and second centuries AD. This shift of Christianity from Jerusalem to Rome enabled the faith to survive the demise of the Jewish State, after 70 AD. Similarly, the shift from the Mediterranean basin to the northern European states enabled the church to survive the fall of Rome in 476 AD. The church will again be preserved from the ravages of rapid secularisation, even in theology, in the west as it finds a home in heartlands of Africa, Asia and Latin America.

Redeeming theology – the importance of the reader and his or her context

Contextualisation is the theological conversation that has caught the imagination of many people of the southern continents leading to such theological expressions as liberation theology, black theology, feminist and womanist theologies, and many others. Simply put, contextualisation is the abandonment by Latin Americans, black Africans, Indians, and Asians, of the western theological agenda–the traditional 'marriage between theology and western norms of thought and life'.[25] The contexts are varied. Latin American liberation theology has been dominated by the economics of injustice in that part of the world. Black Theology has been dominated by black people's fight against white racism and the injustices of white domination of black people especially in the United States and South Africa. Historical, economic, political and cultural contexts have become pivotal in the theological reflections that characterise non-western theologies. As noted earlier, there is no such thing as theology; there are only theologies. There is no such thing as non-contextualised theology—all theologies, western theology included—are contextualised.

Every one of these contexts needs to be reflected in the worldwide church's theological expression and taught as such in all our theological colleges. This has significant eschatological ramifications. In that day when the redeemed will be drawn from every tribe, tongue, language and nation, there will be a great multicultural mosaic to glorify the Lord.[26] I fear that on that day a lot of us who have come under the influence of western theology will simply reflect a faded carbon copy of the imperial image of theology bequeathed to us by those whose intellectual developments took their cues from Aristotle and Plato but neglected the wisdom that built great empires like the Ashanti of Ghana, the Zulu of South Africa and Monomotapa of Great Zimbabwe. Liberation theology, black theology, feminist and

womanist theologies, are all, in their contexts, able to speak to each other meaningfully because of their basis–the self-disclosure of the triune God revealed in nature, the written Scriptures and supremely in the Living Word of God, Jesus Christ of Nazareth.

Black Theology–James Harvey Cone

Cone was troubled when he asked the question, "How could I continue to allow my intellectual life to be consumed by the theological problems defined by people who had enslaved my grandparents? Since there was nothing in Euro-American theology that spoke directly to slavery, colonisation and poverty, why should I let white theologians tell me what the Gospel is?"[27] He found his solution in the context of black struggle for liberation. Black theology is the marriage between Black Power and Christianity—an enterprise created and engaged in solely by black theologians struggling alongside their brothers and sisters for freedom from political bondage and cultural imperialism. The issue for him was whether the biblical Christ was to be limited to the prejudiced interpretations of the white scholars.[28] At that time, any attempt to speak positively with the gospel into the historic-political movements was anathema to any serious theologian who adhered to the divine revelation.

Cone was a man reborn! His theological reflections could no longer ignore the current violence against black people; the deaths of Martin Luther King Jr, Malcolm X, and the historic killings of so many blacks in the cities of the Southern United States, the slave ships, the auction blocks, and the lynchings. 'When it became clear to me that my intellectual consciousness should be defined and controlled by black history and culture and not by standards set in white seminaries and universities, I could feel in the depth of my being a liberation that began to manifest itself in the energy and passion of my writing. Writing for the first time became as natural as talking and preaching'.[29]

'When a person writes about something that matters to him or her existentially, and in which his or her identity is at stake, then the energy comes easily and naturally'.[30] This may be the reason why there are very few truly significant black African contributions to theology. The African Bible Commentary, a remarkable achievement in its own way, although written by Africans including me, is in effect, with some exceptions, a Western document on account of the fact that all the authors were mentored by Westerners and we have bought into the myth of objective theology of the Enlightenment. There are some remarkable exceptions like Samuel Waje Kunhiyop's article on witchcraft[31] in the context of Saul's visit to the witch of Endor (1 Samuel 28).

As we look to the future, it is imperative that all theological colleges end the division between Theology and Contextualised Theologies. There is no such thing as theology there are only theologies. This does mean a striving to improve library holdings to include authors from non-western countries. It also means a determination where we teach in multicultural contexts, that we include on the faculties men and women who represent different ethnicities and cultural backgrounds.

For those of us who are African, we need the courage to move away from doing theology on the basis of the shifting sands of a borrowed culture. God has kindly left tremendous deposits of his grace in every culture. Therefore, we need the confidence to develop the skills to think like Africans, to engage with Scripture like Africans, using African thought forms and categories even when we are writing and speaking in any of the universal languages of commerce and trade.

Let me end with an example: Cleansing of widows is a cultural funerary rite practised by many Zambians. The ritual takes place a few days or weeks after the death and burial of a spouse. Traditionally, it involves in part sexual intercourse between the surviving spouse and a member (married or single) of the family of the

deceased. The practice raises obvious questions of infidelity for Christians. Although sadly, apart from blanket condemnation of the practice, which is the easy thing to do, there is very little courageous and nuanced analysis of the practice that could prove useful to Christian thought and practice. Underlying this practice of cleansing of widows and widowers are certain beliefs including an understanding that when two people marry, the marriage is not just a physical union, it is a spiritual one. The respective spirits of the two people involved in a marriage live in each other's bodies. Therefore, at death, spirit of the deceased needs to be released from the body of the surviving spouse, to return to its people; hence the sexual intercourse. Note the understanding and belief that sexual intercourse is not just two bits of flesh rubbing against each other but that it is a deeply spiritual or sacred activity between two people in a committed relationship sanctioned by the families and society. Surely this African belief and practice, albeit encrusted in centuries of sinful behaviour, harbours a deeply embedded even collective memory of a biblical view of sex and sexuality: sexual union is more than just physical; it has deeply spiritual significance for good or ill (see Ephesians 5:32, cf. 1 Corinthians 6:15)? Similarly, the understanding that marriage is not just two people in physical union but that it is deeply spiritual for it is an exchange of the human spirit that binds two married people. Surely these taken-for-granted beliefs in Zambian culture are in line with the Bible's teaching on the nature of Christian marriage and foreignness of the ideas of marital infidelity and divorce. There must be a way by which African theologians could and should tease out these deposits of grace, liberate and use them to form the basis of Christian teaching on the subjects of marriage, sexuality and death. The study of cultures is thus imperative in the context of theological study, especially so in the increasingly multicultural contexts in which we live out our Christian faith.

Returning to where I started, the intellectual energies released from this kind of study of the Bible which takes seriously the host cultures

of each ethnic group, will forge new and inclusive ways of looking at the Scriptures—ways that will be attractive to all groups of people that we seek to draw into the Kingdom of God.

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1. Joe Kapolyo recently retired from his long tenure as the Lead Minister at Edmonton Baptist Church, London. Before that, he has served as Principal of All Nations Christian College in Ware and Principal of Theological College of Central Africa (TCCA), Ndola, Zambia. He's the author of *The Human Condition: Christian Perspectives Through African Eyes* (Cumbria: Langham Global Library, 2013).
2. These quotations, taken from an unpublished paper by Professor Andrew Walls, are reflected in Chapter 5, entitled 'Africa in Christian History' in Andrew F. Walls, *The Cross-Cultural Process in Christian History* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2002).
3. Joshua Theodore Bazuin, "Religion in the Remaking of Rwanda After Genocide" (Vanderbilt University, 2013), pp. 51-52 https://etd.library.vanderbilt.edu/available/etd-01302013-163238/unrestricted/Bazuin.pdf.
4. Patel expressed the same observation in the early 90's with statistical evidence in Raj Patel, *Equal Partners? Theological Training and Racial Justice* (London, UK: CCBI, 1992), p. 10.
5. See George W Stocking et al., "Franz Boas and the Culture Concept in Historical Perspective," *American Anthropologist*, 1968, 867–82, https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/4ddd/5256441846c61c36ab7a21b62ee93860c77c.pdf.
6. Alister E. McGrath, *Christian Theology*, 4th ed. (Blackwell publishing Ltd, 2007), p. 102.
7. McGrath, *Christian Theology,* p. 5.
8. McGrath, pp. 6-7, 102.
9. McGrath, p. 102.
10. Ibid.
11. Ibid.
12. McGrath, *Christian Theology,* p. 105.
13. Herbert S. Klein, *The Atlantic Slave Trade* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 52-53; Willie James Jennings, *The Christian Imagination: Theology and the Origins of Race* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010).
14. Olaudah Equiano, Robert J., Allison, *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano* (Boston: Bedford/St Martin's, 2016).
15. Ottobah Cugoano and Vincent Carretta, *Thoughts and Sentiments on the Evil of Slavery and Other Writings* (New York: Penguin, 1999).
16. Andrew F. Walls, "'Africa in Christian History: Retrospect and Prospect,'" *Journal of African Christian Thought* 1, no. 1 (1998): 5-6.
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THREE

CONGREGATIONAL MINISTRIES AND LEADERSHIP FORMATION IN THE ETHIOPIAN EVANGELICAL CHURCH MEKANE YESUS

Samuel Deressa[1]

Abstract

While there has been much research conducted on the nature and identity of the missional church, few social scientific studies exist that address issues related to missional leadership. This is an important concern, since it is impossible to have a missional church without missional leadership (and vice versa). This qualitative study of how emerging leaders are formed and empowered by the culture of their respective congregations focuses on the experience of four congregations in the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus (EECMY) that are engaged in holistic ministry. The research finding is that the culture of a congregation determines how leaders are formed and empowered. When congregations adopt a culture of holistic

approach to ministry (both within the church and in public), they create a favourable environment for integrated leadership formation and empowerment.

Missional Leadership

The missional church conversation started in North America as a response to Leslie Newbigin's critical analysis of the missionary encounter in the 20th century. His identification and framing of crises and challenges in the way mission was understood and carried out in the western world attracted American missiologists to engage in conversation—which resulted in the creation of the *Gospel and Our Culture Network* (GOCN). This conversation mainly addressed ecclesiology and mission, with a focus on the dynamic interrelations between gospel, church, and culture.

Since the first publication of the GOCN's *Missional Church: A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America*, the term "missional" has been extensively used by scholars to talk about the identity and mission of the church.[2] Most of these publications are interested primarily in addressing the fundamental problems in American churches which are related to the notion that mission is an ecclesiastical activity—an activity of the church along with its other ministries. In previous years, mission was understood as either activities limited to local congregations or the sending of missionaries to places outside the western world.[3] The concept of the missional church, on the other hand, introduced a theocentric reconceptualisation of mission. In this way, the Trinity became the locus of mission. God is a missionary God inviting all people into communion with Him and with one another, sending them into the world to be involved in His ongoing creative work.

According to Roxburgh and Romanuk, the missional church can be understood as the gathering of "the people of God, called to be

formed into a unique social community whose life together is the sign, witness, and foretaste of what God is doing in and for all of creation."[4] This means there are three primary focuses or characteristics of missional churches: (1) life together (community), (2) witness: engaging the public by participating in the ongoing work of the Triune God, and (3) spiritual formation and empowerment of each member, in which members are enabled for such ministry.

The missional church as a community of believers is *life together*—together with each other as brothers and sisters in Christ and with the Triune God in their midst. It is this togetherness that defines their identity and shapes their ministry. The *witness* of the missional church is related to or founded on its *life together*. The church's witness is its public ministry. The missional churches become witnesses by engaging in the ongoing creative work of the Triune God through multiple kinds of ministries. The third characteristic of a missional church is *spiritual formation*. The missional church forms and empowers people for God's mission in the world. The Triune God is the one that calls, forms (empowers), and sends God's people to engage the world.

Missional leadership conversation was introduced within the missional church conversation in connection to the third characteristic of a missional church, which is spiritual formation. Like the concept of missional church, missional leadership is also a theological concept that emerged from the understanding that leadership should be viewed from a Trinitarian perspective, a perspective that focuses on the ongoing involvement of the Triune God in human history. As Roxburgh rightly articulates, "missional leadership is framed, understood, and articulated in relationship to the question of what God is doing in the world."[5] The starting point in framing missional leadership is a theological reading of God's ongoing creative work. This means, missional leadership is part and parcel of missional church conversation.

As Robert Doornenbal contends, missional leadership is about cultural and spiritual formations that happen in the context where "individual participants, groups, and the community as a whole ... respond to challenging situations and engage in transformative changes that are necessary to become, or remain, oriented to God's mission in the local context."[6] By cultural formation, Doornenbal refers to the dynamic process of formation of (internal) congregational cultures when "acting on culture, primarily by shaping conversations, including the content of announcements, testimonies, lessons, and sermons" from the perspective of God's mission.[7] Missional leaders form and are also formed by congregational cultures through the process of interacting with their internal as well as external cultures (which is the larger context in which the congregations find themselves). Spiritual formation is the formation of individual members as they continually respond to "the work of the Holy Spirit, in the community of faith, for the sake of the world."[8] Activities of a given congregation, such as communal worship, pastoral counselling, community services, and so on, contribute to spiritual formation.

The emphasis of missional leadership is equipping "saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ," and this is what we refer to as formation and empowerment of believers for ministry (Eph. 4:11-12). Equipping saints is the work of God, and that is why it is emphasised that "leadership formation must be asked only in terms of what God is doing in forming the social community known as ecclesia."[9] In the missional church, all of Christ's are equipped so that they can function in a way that they all contribute to building the whole body by equipping each other as a community.

Literature on Missional Leadership

There are very few studies conducted within missional church literature that address missional leadership. A book by Lois Barrett et al.,

Treasures in Clay Jars, is one of the few significant contributions to the missional church conversation with a particular emphasis on missional leadership.[10] This book is about the development of missional leaders within a congregational setting. It is a work that signifies a shift from a literature-based approach to a practice-based study of congregations and leadership. According to Barrett, this book responds to the criticism she received on an earlier book, *The Missional Church*,[11] whereby critics noted that the contributors did not include practical aspects of congregational life but were limited to the study of literature.

Eddie Gibbs's *Leadership Next* studies how newly-established congregations develop missional leadership appropriate to their missional challenges.[12] He underlines that "organisations that are best able to operate within the new cultural reality [in the post-modern era] are flexible, fast-moving and sensitive to the change taking place in their environment."[13] His comprehensive description of the ministry of a missional church as holistic, and his creative work in framing the concept of leadership within Trinitarian theology, is a substantial contribution to the emerging literature on missional leadership.

Alan Roxburgh and Fred Romanuk's *The Missional Leader* moves the conversation toward the question of how missional theology informs the practice of leadership.[14] Their concept of missional theology centres mainly on "the memory of biblical narratives."[15] The primary task of a leader in missional congregations is to correlate the social context of the members with the memory of the larger narrative in Scripture. They argue that missional leadership is primarily concerned with cultivation of an environment in which members are able to engage in dialogue—dialogue that would lead to locating oneself "within God's narratives."[16]

Scott Cormode's *Making Spiritual Sense* identifies a congregational leader as a "manager of meaning," which means a leader provides a

theological framework for action.[17] In his article "Cultivating Missional Leaders," he also offers the concept of the "mental model," whereby he proposes that leadership formation should be viewed from the point of view of "ecology of vocation"—a careful and constructive approach to the "experience persons have had as they come into leadership roles."[18] *Theology of Church Leadership* by Lawrence O Richards and Clyde Hoeldtke's highlights the importance of body theology—that is, the church as the body of Christ—for understanding church leadership.[19] Finally, *The Missional Church and Leadership*: *Helping Congregations Develop Leadership Capacity* by Craig Van Gelder et al., is another helpful resource that demonstrates how the missional church conversation can be taken as a strategy to help American churches reconfigure their practices for training leaders.[20]

One of the limitations of studies on missional leadership (mentioned above) is that they emphasise the notion of missional leadership as the "ecclesiocentric default with its underlying anxiety for fixing the church."[21] Therefore, as Roxburgh contends, "the questions of what is at stake in forming missional leaders are still not being addressed."[22] Their other limitation is that they mainly focus on "influence," the influence of a leader on their followers. Such an understanding of leadership echoes leadership theories developed in Western individualistic culture where "I am" is more emphasised than "we are."[23] According to Roxburgh and Romanuk, for example, "missional leadership is about creating an environment within which the people of God in a particular location may thrive."[24] This description works for them in a context where there exist "leaders with skills" who are able to create such an environment. A leader is at the centre of their definition or description of missional leadership.

Such understanding of leadership, however, is incompatible with African experience. Based on African communal perspective, this research focuses on exploring the role of congregational (communal) cultures on the formation of emerging leaders (but not on the role of a

single leader in shaping or forming the community). Just as Leith Anderson also described, leadership should not be merely about leaders, but "about a matrix of followers, circumstances, power, and history."[25] This understanding about leadership is related to what Warren Bennis describes as leadership in the new era—leadership "as an organisational capability and not an individual characteristic that a few in individuals at the top of the organisation have."[26]

The study of congregational cultures and their impact on leadership formation in the African context also requires us to go one step further and ask how leaders are formed in public space. In other words, besides the communal life of the congregations, what else contributes to the formation of emerging leaders? As Craig Van Gelder and Dwight Zscheile emphasise, missional leaders are formed and empowered "as faithful disciples through immersion not only in a vibrant, participating community where we learn from mature mentors in the faith, but also through [encountering] the lives of our neighbours and our world."[27] Joanna Collicutt also argues that "[leadership] formation is seen to involve the *whole* of a person's life—embodied thinking, feeling, acting and being in relationship [which] results in freedom."[28] What Collicutt refers to as "the whole of a person's life" is not merely an in-house (congregational) affair, but it includes "compassionate identification, participation, and companionship with those suffering under sin, oppression, injustice, exclusion, and despair."[29] However, due to less focus being given to the public character of the church, such aspects of leadership formation praxis have not been explored fully. This is the reason why Van Gelder and Zscheile argue that in the missional church conversation, issues related to "the public role of the church [still] needs further scrutiny."[30]

Study Methodology

The data reported on this research comes from a qualitative in-depth personal interview and focus group conversation conducted at four congregations of the EECMY. An in-depth qualitative interview was conducted with one leading pastor at each congregation studied, followed by one focus group conversation consisting of ten participants at each congregation—which was hosted at each site.

Participants

There were four EECMY congregations selected for this research. All congregations selected for the study were Oromo-speaking congregations located in Addis Ababa, the capital city of Ethiopia. One focus group conversation with ten members and an in-depth personal interview with a leading Pastor were conducted at each congregation from July to October, 2014. This makes 44 total participants from all four congregations.

The leading pastors of the four selected congregations are all men. They come from different backgrounds but share common experiences of leadership. All have a bachelor's degree in Theology. Participants in the focus group conversation were recruited in accordance with the following criteria: (1) Members who had been involved in the congregation's local mission and/or social services to the community for over three years, (2) referrals from the leading pastors and (3) gender balance. The focus group conversation involved four categories of people: elders (leaders of the congregation), deacons, youth and children's ministry coordinators, and women ministry leaders. The youngest participants were in the age range 15-30 (eight people in that age group), and the upper age group represented was 60-70 (two participants). In terms of gender, 19 participants were female (43%) and 26 were male (57%). Most participants were in the age range of 35-50. All participants gave their informed consent to partic-

ipate in the research in accordance with procedures reviewed by the Institution's Review Board.[31] In order to protect anonymity, the studied congregations and interview participants (both in qualitative personal interviews and focus group conversation) are given fictitious names.

Data Collection and Analysis

In terms of data sources, the researcher collected data from the following five sources for each congregation: qualitative participant observation, casual conversation and in-passing conversation, one in-depth personal interview, one focus group conversation, and qualitative documents of each congregation. For the research, the in-depth personal interviews and focus group conversations are the primary sources of data, with the other data sources being supplementary.

The first phase of data gathering was qualitative participant observation. The researcher made an on-site visit over an extended weekend, recording what is seen and heard. The researcher's interest in the use of qualitative participant observation as one of the data gathering techniques developed out of the understanding that it is useful to observe people within their own cultural worldviews.[32] As a participant-observer, the researcher engaged each congregation in an on-site visit.

The second phase of data gathering was qualitative interviewing. For this study, the researcher used casual conversations and in-passing clarifications during the first phase of data gathering, participant observation. Such conversations occur when the researcher and a member of the congregation cross paths and the researcher chats with the member on topics relevant to the research.[33] The researcher had such brief moments with members of the congregation studied during which he was able to informally explore some issues related to the interest of the research. The primary data for this research was

collected using semi-structured qualitative interviewing—an in-depth qualitative interview with one leading pastor at each congregation studied, followed by one focus group conversation consisting of ten participants at each congregation.

Data analysis was accomplished in three different stages. First, one-and-a-half-hour interviews with leading pastors and approximately two-and-a-half hours focus group conversations (held at four of the selected congregations) were recorded, transcribed, and translated from Oromo to English. Second, the researcher carefully read through and reviewed the transcribed and translated data several times and compared it with the recorded interviews, field observations, and personal notes to ensure accuracy. As he carefully evaluated the data, recurring themes, persons, symbols, and descriptions of certain events became more apparent.

Thirdly, the data were coded and analysed using three stages. First, it was coded using the *in vivo* coding method. *In vivo* coding, according to Kathy Charmaz, is a use of participants' "special terms as *in vivo* codes" in order to preserve the "meanings of their views and actions in the coding itself."[34] The use of *in vivo codes* allows the voice of those researched to be prioritised and honoured. For *in vivo* coding, the researcher used words or short phrases taken from each section of the data to identify patterns. Second, these codes were compared to synthesise and conceptualise larger pieces of the data and were combined based on the general relationship between the concepts (which also helped the researcher identify the core practice of the studied congregations).[35] Third, the codes were compared again for final coding process to label ideas in such a way that it increasingly reflects theological perspectives that, once assorted, could be thematically-grouped into larger categories.[36]

Analysis

Church as Community and Leadership Formation

One of the most striking similarities across all participants of the four EECMY congregations is that the concept of community is at the core of their identity, activity, and leadership praxis. The concept of community (in the studied congregations) is adopted from African tradition and their understanding of church as community of believers. Members of all four congregations highlight the importance of community (or relationship) in their worship life, public ministry, and so on.

According to the account of participants, to be a community is to nurture each other through worship and other ministries that result in the formation of members to be Christ's true disciples. As disciples of Christ, they are engaged in serving the community both spiritually and physically. As a woman emphasised during a Group Conversation, "it is when [the EECMY congregation] members participate in church ministries as a community" that an opportunity is created to connect and interact with God, each other, and others. It is within this connection that the Triune God is experienced, and emerging leaders are formed.

Leadership (in the African context) is more about relationship in a community and about formation and empowerment of leaders in a context where life in community is experienced. In other words, for the research participants, leadership is best understood as an aspect of a community rather than as a possession of the leader—"a communal capacity and a communal achievement."[37] Such an understanding about leadership shifts the focus from a leader-centred approach to a shared leadership exercised in a Christian community.

Research participants also emphasised that the culture of shared leadership adopted by all the studied congregations makes a major contribution to the life and ministry of emerging leaders. Most activi-

ties of these congregations are led by lay ministers. As some members from Family Life Church emphasised, the tradition of shared leadership adopted by the EECMY congregations created an opportunity for leaders to emerge. According to one of the Pastors who participated in the interview, "the EECMY's tradition of giving each believer the opportunity to serve regardless of his/her age and ministerial position is what enables leaders to emerge, and to grow in service." It is this culture of shared leadership that creates opportunity for members to be formed through connecting with each other and others outside their circle. Pastors in these congregations simply facilitate and help all members exercise their gifts in sharing their God-given talents with the wider society. Pastors and evangelists describe their vocation as direction-setting or guiding the congregation towards such practice.

Public Ministry and Leadership Formation

As the interviewed pastors indicated, members of their congregations are formed not only through activities that take place within the four walls of the congregation (such as teaching, worship, Bible study fellowships, and so on), but also through being practically engaged in public ministries. Missional leadership in the studied congregation involves involvement of the Christian community in public ministry. Missional leaders are formed in their encounter with the "other" and God's creation as a whole.

As research participants indicated, outside the church, their congregations are active in engaging the community, and it is this engagement that also creates an environment (in addition to the congregational context) for emerging leaders to be formed and empowered. As the four pastors articulated during the interviews, there are two ways in which the studied congregations are involved in the community. First, they simply take part in social events such as weddings, funerals, and other social activities (all studied congregations are similar in this). By being involved in these social events, they

show their solidarity and willingness to share the joys and sorrows in their community. It is such interaction of congregation members with others that results in transformative experience of emerging leaders.

Second, they provide holistic services to their community. Their public ministry focus on three areas: *evangelism*, *development*, and *advocacy*. *Evangelism* is the major activity of the four congregations, with more budget assigned to it than all other ministries. They all have outreach programs through which they plant new congregations. They are all also involved in different *development* activities. *Development* programs are run both within the congregations (targeting the needy members) and among the community. When it comes to *advocacy*, all the studied congregations participate in awareness-raising programs with other congregations of the EECMY on health, domestic violence, and so on. As one of the interview participants states, "emerging leaders (of the studied congregations) are formed and empowered not only in their relationships with each other but also others outside their circle."

Discussion and Implication

This study has shown that leadership formation is a complex process that involves activities that take place within a church as well as in public, and that the Christian community as a whole (not just the few assigned or ordained leaders) make significant contributions to it. The culture of congregations determine how leaders are formed and empowered. When congregations adopt a holistic approach to ministry and a favourable environment for integrated leadership formation and empowerment.

This finding helps us re-evaluate leadership theories that are focused on the influence of a leader on his/her followers or a "skilled man" leadership approach. It also helps us to consider the significance of considering a communal culture or shared leadership for leadership

formation. The church as a community engages itself in the work of the Triune God through connecting with each other and the community at large. As Craig Van Gelder also emphasised, the church is "a community of mutual participation in God's own life and the life of the world—a participation characterised by openness to others."[38] This is reflected in Jesus' prayer found in John 17:22-23: "As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me."

More importantly, it highlights the significance of the public ministry of congregations for leadership formation. As the research findings show, leadership formation does not happen only within the interaction of a leader and followers. Leadership formation is more integrated in that it also involves interaction among members and our encounter with others. In other words, leadership formation of members does not happen only within the four walls of the church. It also happens when they encounter strangers (neighbours)—as Van Gelder rightly articulates, believers "are formed spiritually as faithful disciples through immersion not only in a vibrant, participating community where we learn from mature mentors in the faith, but also through coming to recognise the signs of the Triune God's movement in the lives of our neighbours and our world."[39] As Gary Simpson notes, however, what is missing so far in the missional church conversation is a public church and "a public theology dimension in a full-orbed way."[40]

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FOUR

AFRICAN PIONEERED CHURCHES IN THE WEST: LIMITATIONS AND POSSIBILITIES

Joseph Ola[1]

Abstract

Since the 1990s, we have witnessed an increasing frequency of scholarly comments on the rising cross-cultural mission praxis of Christians from the global south in the global north. In Britain, some of the key players are African missionaries, and their presence has led to an increase in the numbers of African Pioneered Churches (APCs) across the country. However, their corporate failure in engaging white British community is highly evident. Hence, this qualitative research which was aimed at recognising the factors that limit the cross-cultural effectiveness of these African pioneers and their churches in Liverpool. I interviewed five African pastors in Liverpool, they were chosen by homogenous sampling. The research also sought to identify creative

possibilities that can help them overcome the limitations and rethink their mission praxis so as to enable them to engage other ethnicities in evangelism. The study revealed significant shortcomings in their mission strategies (including an outright refusal to contextualise their ministries and the prevalent racial prejudice they encounter when they try to engage others in mission). On the other hand, it proposed that an intentional synergy with British Christianity that embraces the uniqueness of both expressions of Christianity is needed in the current context of Britain's increasing multiculturality.

Key Terms: Cross-cultural mission, African Pioneered Churches (APCs), Contextualisation, Racism

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Introduction

Mission has never been the exclusive preserve of any group of people. Whether it is the practical work of mission or the scholarly exploration of its theology or history, contemporary mission can only make sense when approached in a multicultural and multi-perspectival manner. Historically speaking, the apostles who were discipled by the Lord in Palestine blazed the missional trail, making possible 'the crossing of Christianity's first cultural frontier into the Hellenistic world.'[2] A few generations later, the heartland of Christianity moved to the gentile territories of Syria, Iraq and Egypt. Onwards, the centre of gravity of Christian mission shifted to the Western Europe and remained there for a long while, perhaps long enough for Christianity to begin to actually look like a Western religion. The last quarter of the twentieth century and the first two decades of the twenty-first have progressively revealed the error in such a misconception. Christianity in the West has progressively declined as the foothold of modernity and the Enlightenment in their domain has increased.

According to the British Social Attitudes survey of 2016, 53% of the British public now describe themselves as having "no religion"—a 5% increase from the 2015 statistics.[3] The report further revealed that while 30% of the British public identified as Anglicans in 2000, that proportion has been halved as of 2016.[4]

The unrelenting decline in the fortunes of Christianity in the West has given a contrasting visibility to the shift in the frontiers of global Christianity from the global north to the southern hemispheres of Africa, Asia and Latin America and a concomitant reversal in the direction of mission from being southwards to becoming northwards as well as being from everywhere to everywhere.[5] In Europe, this is especially visible in Britain, given its ever-increasing multiculturality. For instance, 'a 14 percent ethnic minority made predominantly of (African) migrants [accounts] for 60 percent of church attendance in a global city like London'[6] as African, Asian and Latin American countries become the key players in sending out missionaries to Europe and to North America. These migrant churches are not only multiplying, they are also experiencing tremendous growth among themselves. This readily brings into focus a Yoruba adage: *'Onile nje pongila, alejo ni oun yoo gbe orun'* which translates 'The host is living in hunger, yet his visitor insists on staying for five days.' In the communal life of the Yorubas in the south-western part of Nigeria from where this adage originated, hospitality is a principal virtue—it is deemed at being a core expression of humanity. However, even for such a naturally welcoming people group, it is problematic when a guest could sense that his host is in lack and yet insists on staying as a guest for the proverbial 'five days'. Such insistence could only mean either of two things: the guest is blatantly insensitive and inconsiderate, or he very well could have something worthwhile to contribute to the host family that could ameliorate their standard of living. To apply this to the current reality of the British Christian space, indeed, current statistics on British Christianity readily depict a Christianity that is now proverbially insufficient to go

around. The 'host', indeed, is living in 'hunger'. Yet, in the same scenario, the growth of migrant churches and their seeming insistence on staying for the proverbial 'five days' makes the group a fascinating research focus. Are they being insensitive, or do they have something worthwhile to contribute to British Christianity? This researcher will argue for the latter in the latter part of this article.

African churches in Britain have been identified by different names over the years in scholarship including 'African-led churches'[7], 'African Independent Churches' (AICs[8]), 'African and African Caribbean churches'[9], 'African Churches'[10], 'African Immigrant Churches'[11], and 'Black Majority Churches'.[12] Currently, 'Black Majority Churches' (BMCs) seems to be the preferred term with a near-consensus usage by commentators in the field[13]. However, in this article, the preferred identifier for these churches will be 'African Pioneered Churches' (APCs) for a few reasons. First, 'BMCs' as a label has been criticised for its racial innuendo and divisiveness.[14] Alternative terms such as 'migrant churches'[15], 'African Churches' and 'African-led Churches' all seem to give an outsider's label on the community as though their constitution and membership is (meant to be limited) only to people of their kind. It only makes sense that 'African Churches' in the West are the churches meant for 'African migrants'[16] in the West and an 'African-led Church' seem to call to mind the picture of a church that will be exclusively and perpetually led by Africans. 'African Pioneered Churches' (APCs) on the other hand suggests explicitly that the churches being referred to are 'pioneered', 'initiated' or 'planted' by Africans but also implicitly suggests that the same churches may not necessarily be perpetually led by an African. They were only *initiated*—not (intended to be) exclusively led—by Africans. 'APCs' as a label also emphasises the pioneering endeavour that planting a church as an African in a contextually different and complex multicultural setting as Britain entails. Leaders of APCs are not just church planters—they are ground breakers

blazing a trail and venturing into something radically significant to the global landscape of Christianity.

To this end, the history of many APCs can be traced in some degrees to strategic mission initiatives majorly from Africa and the West Indies to Britain usually characterised by a 'mandate to re-evangelise Britain'[17] and restore her to her former Christian ethos. Where this has not been the case, the unrelenting decline in British Christianity has shaped the missionary intention of the immigrant Christians. However, their success in this regard has been highly criticised in literature—and understandably so—for if their mission is 'to the Western church'[18] then the question arises, 'is an African migrant evangelising other African migrants in Britain evangelising Britain?' The answer to this is not an outright 'no', nor a confident 'yes' but more like 'no and yes.' To get an honest answer to this question, and in the process, recognise the challenges limiting the mission work of APCs, and identify possibilities for overcoming the barriers, this research employed the direct participation of five African pioneers in the British mission space.

Methodology

This was a qualitative research[19] in the sense that it was 'an empirical, socially located phenomenon.'[20] It employed an ethnographical design that involved interviewing five pastors of APCs in Liverpool.[21] The interviewees were all founders and incumbent leaders of their respective churches. They were selected by a homogenous sampling of church planting initiatives in Liverpool from 2003 to 2015. They were chosen partly because of how long they have been resident in Liverpool, partly because of their ages to have a range of ages between 30 and 65 to explore any possible shifts in ecclesiological emphasis with respect to age, and partly based on existing relationships. Four out of the five selected pastors are Nigerian immigrants and one is a Ghanaian national.[22]

This was an insider research on a plurality of levels. First, the researcher is involved in the pastoral leadership of a Liverpool-based APC—albeit, in an assistant position—which regards Britain as a 'mission field' and considers itself an agent for the re-evangelisation of Britain.[23] In the same vein, the researcher has witnessed how the missionary feats of his African denomination have only succeeded in replicating 'migrant churches' in the United Kingdom. This foreknowledge informed some of the probes introduced in interviewing the respondents. Besides, the researcher considers himself an African Pentecostal Christian, and this is the expression of Christianity that is shared by all the five participants. Hence, the researcher has a reasonable grasp of the worldview that has shaped the cross-cultural missionary initiative of these pioneers. Lastly, the researcher shares his Yoruba ethnicity with three of the five research participants—an ethnicity that emphasises respect for elders and which shaped how these (elderly) respondents were approached and guided the general course of the conversation. By implication, while these three Yoruba respondents were interviewed, care was taken to ensure that the researcher did not appear unnecessarily formal as that would have nuanced the response that would be gotten from the respondents—if any at all—as the researcher could have been viewed as an uncultured Yoruba man in diaspora.

The interviews conducted with the five pastors were semi-structured—consisting of six guide questions probing each congregation's history, ethnic distribution, level of community engagement, ecclesiological and liturgical distinctives, and the gap between the envisioned imagery of what 'church' each of these pioneers set out to plant (bearing in mind their 'White Majority' community context) and what kind of 'church' they currently lead. Responses to these guide questions raised follow-up questions to explore interesting issues raised. While not very much could have been said prior to the study about what the data collected would look like, the researcher did have some anticipated 'broad descriptive categories'[24] that could emerge

from the research. Interestingly, while some of these anticipated themes proved consistent with the data collected (Reverse Mission, Church Pioneering in UK, African Pentecostalism, and Racism), a good number of unanticipated themes emerged (including Women's Involvement in APCs, Ministry Partnerships, ICT Usage among others).

Table 1: About the Participants and their Congregation

PASTOR	NATIONALITY OF ORIGIN	INDEPENDENT OR AFFILIATED TO AFRICA?	ETHNIC DISTRIBUTION OF CONGREGATION		
			% WHITE	% BLACK	% OTHERS
PASTOR 1	GHANA	AFFILIATED	10	90	0
PASTOR 2	NIGERIA	AFFILIATED	10	80	10
PASTOR 3	NIGERIA	AFFILIATED	2	90	8
PASTOR 4	NIGERIA	INDEPENDENT	NA	NA	NA
PASTOR 5	NIGERIA	INDEPENDENT	41	50	9

What follows is a discussion of two of the major limiting factors identified and their implications.

Contextualisation

For the pastors interviewed, it was evident from the data that the most difficult barrier to negotiate in the missionary praxis of APCs is contextual ignorance. They are struggling to understand their context in order to formulate an intentional mission strategy and an ecclesiology that fits their situation. Pastor 4 rightly asserted that "Christianity is a cultural engagement"[25] and that missionaries need to "become a part and learn the nuances of the community they seek to evangelise."[26] He continued, "While you are talking to [a Briton] from the cultural point of view of your African-ness, he is responding to you from the [enlightened] understanding of his British-ness."[27] The know-how required to navigate this cross-cultural context of the African pioneers interviewed remains largely missing. Indeed, there

is still a lot to discover for Africans who are interested in doing any meaningful and trans-generational mission work in the West.

The expressions of contextual ignorance amongst these pioneers are as varied as their approaches to overcoming the same. Beginning with the former, there is a conflicting idealisation of what a 'church'—more so, a new church—should be, both in the superficial sense of infrastructures and the deeper sense of community and organisational structure. In narrating his pioneering experience, Pastor 1 recalled,

> When we started...we were meeting in my living room and... some people won't feel comfortable being part of a church that is meeting in a 'house'. They'd rather want to see a 'proper church'... Personally, I feel that a lot of people expect the church to be in a certain way.

After a while, the small congregation moved from meeting in a living room to meeting in an office space but that did not yet make up for the idea of a 'proper church' as many of their (potential) white members still did not like the idea. Pastor 1 cited an example: "I remember, one day some white people came (on invitation) and while they were driving there (to the venue), they were expecting to see a building, but it was an office space... They were disappointed." Back in Africa, even though there is an increasing intentionality that goes into picking out a meeting venue for the 'new generation churches',[28] it is still not unthinkable for a church to start off by holding meetings in a living room (usually of its pioneer). In the British Christian space, however, the mainline British churches have shaped the infrastructural ideal of what a church (building) should look like to the locals as every parish has an unmistakable infrastructural similarity. This partly explains the motivation for partnerships between some APCs and the CofE so that, amongst other things, they could worship in the

facility of the CofE, and in cases where the APC is financially buoyant, they would attempt to buy the CofE structure.[29] As such, Church 1 and Church 2, after changing meeting venues a number of times (a phenomenon which is common to all the five participant churches), now meet in a CofE facility. Speaking about the day they moved to their current meeting venue, Pastor 1 remarked, 'the people entered the church building and many of them were like, "oh I love this!" (laughs) and, you know, I just kept my thoughts to myself.' When asked about those thoughts he kept to himself, Pastor 1 associates his personal understanding of 'church' to the image of the first century church as portrayed by Luke and Paul[30]—an image that reflects that church is not a building, but a people.[31]

This leads directly into the second index of the conflicting idea of what a church should look like in terms of the community and its organisation as pointed out by Pastor 2 who said concerning the locals (in contrast to Africans), "they see church as a community centre that caters for the needs of their immediate society..."[32] Again, this can be traced to the institutionalisation of the link between the church and the community by the *established* church, the Church of England.[33] However, the point here raised underscores part of the criticisms of African Christianity, where, for the most part, the explosive growth of Christianity is neither proportionate to accountability in leadership across board nor to assisting the needy in the society. As Danny McCain rightly pointed out in his scholarly prediction of African Christianity in the twenty-first century, "[t]he African church in the twenty-first century must understand that the church has to do far more than just sponsoring worship services and conducting funerals and weddings. It must be very much involved in identifying and meeting the needs of the society." [34]

Akin to the conflicting idealisation of church amongst the locals and African pioneers is also the conflicting ideas of what a pastor (or church leader) should look like. Admittedly, this is not limited to a white/black dichotomy as it also occurs both in Africa and in Britain

and, in fact, across denominational lines. In identifying some of the indices that disqualified him from 'fitting' the pastoral figure image of the locals, Pastor 1 recalls, '[f]irst of all, [I am] young and... [I was] not married.... So, it's like there are a whole lot of negatives associated with [me] all of a sudden.'[35] In other words, age and marital status are some of the factors that (dis)qualify a pastor (to-be). But the big issue in this regard is gender. Pointing out the gender-factor, Pastor 1 submits,

> My assistant is a woman and there is also that problem with women... In this country, they also have their own idea concerning women ministers and a lot of people even when they walk into a church and there is a woman ministering, that's it, (they say in their minds) 'I'm not coming back, forget it'.

Pastor 5 is a relevant case study in this regard being a woman herself. In her own words,

> I have been insulted when the religious folks come here. In fact, there was one that my members had to walk him out from here because he didn't believe that a woman should talk or say anything in church.

Again, this image of an ideal pastor in the minds of some of the locals can be attributed to the representation the mainline churches have given for centuries. However, that construction is changing. In the CofE, for instance, the ordination of women as deacons (as opposed to deaconesses) began in 1987, followed closely by the ordination of women as priests in 1994. By 2010, more women were being

ordained than men as priests.[36] Five years later, the first female bishop was consecrated.[37] This evolution of gender-inclusion in church leadership has not been without opposition and such opposition persists in some quarters[38] as the narratives of Pastors 1 and 5 corroborate.

Other expressions of the lag in contextualisation exhibited by pioneers of APCs include how they regard Government Policies and their general (un)acknowledgement of the difference between the systems and worldviews of the Western world and Africa. For instance, in Liverpool, an APC leader was heavily criticised in the media in the latter part of 2017 for the church's prayer pattern and much more for offering a '"dangerous" therapy to "cure" homosexuality.'[39] The prayer pattern here criticised is the same prayer pattern that had made the same denomination attract millions of followers on the African continent. Such criticism of the African expression of Christianity in the British Christian space is indicative of an educational lag in the cross-cultural mission praxis of these African pioneers. As Catto rightly observed, 'Western culture is taken for granted in these mission efforts [of APCs]; it is as if no special training is thought necessary to work within it.'[40] While none of the five pastors interviewed had an educational qualification that was less than a Masters' Degree, only three of them (Pastors 1, 3 and 4) pursued postgraduate studies in the fields of Biblical and/or Pastoral Theology. Pastor 4 was closer to the description of the kind of training African pioneers need—a form of training that transcends systematic theology to foster an understanding of the missional distinctives of planting a church in Britain. In his words, 'if we Africans come and we start a church and we think that the church will go on 'business as usual in Africa', we will not be able to do much'.[41]

However, the last decade has witnessed an increasing plurality of programmes and initiatives that are targeted at bridging this gap if only African church leaders will avail themselves of such resources.

Not only are more African scholars in Africa and in diaspora taking ownership of African scholarship thereby making African Christianity conversations more stimulating, but also, some institutions of Higher Learning in the UK are beginning to incorporate modules that could be very resourceful to pioneers of APCs into their programmes.[42] Besides, organisations that are offering special training in cross-cultural missions at a professional level are on the rise. These include the Centre for Missionaries from the Majority World[43], ForMission[44] and Missio Africanus.[45]

A context-aware African pioneer, therefore, will understand that building a relevant APC goes beyond some of the contextualisation attempts gathered from the respondents, including being more time-conscious, giving women more participation and reducing the volume of their public address system (as African church services are generally loud and exuberant, relative to British Christianity). Besides, (s)he will understand that assembling a few people to start meeting as a church in his or her living room should not be the first step in church pioneering. Pioneering a contextualised church begins with an intensive mapping of the spiritual, social, cultural and economic terrain of their target community, leveraging on such resourceful organisations and/or academic programmes earlier mentioned. This should, then, inform the description of the kind of church they are hoping to plant and what that would look like both in terms of infrastructure, community life and organisational structure while continually engaging with the ever-changing dynamics of Christianity in the West as church leaders in the West rethink, renew and reform these different aspects of church life. Thankfully, the established church is also gradually engaging with these issues as they are beginning to rethink not only their church buildings—acknowledging their 'need to fashion appropriate buildings for 21st century ministry'[46]—but also their church leadership in the light of the relentless decline plaguing Western Christianity and the increasing age profile of British clergy.[47]

Racial Prejudice

Racism is still deeply entrenched into the cultural fabric of the global north, perhaps only modernised and cloaked in newer language.[48] This is, in fact, the biggest challenge to cross-cultural mission in the opinion and experience of Pastor 1. He recalls an experience he had shortly after he arrived in the UK,

> I attended this white [majority] church and [this] person asked me, 'Oh, so have you also found some churches of, maybe, black people?' It was difficult for him to say actually, but he ended up saying it anyway. Instantly, I was like 'yeah, there are a couple of them I've found.' I answered him, but later on I was thinking about it. I was like, 'Why? Why did he ask me that?' Is it that I'm not welcomed here, or is it their way of saying 'Well, go and be with your own people'?[49]

This is not an isolated case in literature. Kugbeadjor narrated a similar experience he had in Birmingham when he visited a local congregation of the CofE.[50] Kwiyani's narrative of his experience in North America reiterates the same experience.[51] His observation that '[you] have to be of the right colour, subscribe to the right theology, wear the right clothes, speak with the right accent, have graduated from the right school and know the right people before you can be considered for inclusion"[52] is mirrored in Pastor 1's narrative—and such prerequisites exclude a typical APC leader. As Pastor 1 affirmed, 'racism is (still) very real in this environment'[53] and the fact that he is the only one that spoke extensively on it as a limitation to their mission work confirms the suggestion of Kugbeadjor and Kwiyani that it is a commonly avoided subject of discussion which the church in the UK needs to talk about more openly both at the institutional and individual levels.[54]

Pastor 1 explains,

> For an average white person—not all and I must be frank—but for some of them, it could be difficult to receive the gospel from a black person, and this could be for many reasons. ...I think some white folks might feel like 'I'm better than this guy' because of our skin colour. It plays in many people's minds whether they will accept it or not... I remember a local that I was evangelising. At a time, I was just giving him reasons and answers towards certain issues and he could sense that he was wrong but to a degree it felt like it was difficult (for him) to admit his error because it was pointed out to him by a black person that he's wrong.

Ihewulezi recounted similar stories of Western Catholics who would not be under the leadership of a person of colour nor receive communion or homilies from such[55] on the assumption of their superior race. And the same could be said of black immigrants who would not want to have anything to do with the whites nor live in white-majority territories. Pastor 1 highlighted an example in support of the notion that the racist party can as well be the black person, viz: "K.C. Price [talked] about a black person who came to church and was ushered to sit next to a white person and the black person says 'no, I want to sit next to a black person'". This white-black dichotomy in fact defines to a great extent the mission outreach approach of African pioneers. Pastor 1 described this best by saying "sometimes, we [African pioneers] want *our own* [fellow Africans], we want to have *our* people but, yet, we also want to have *them* [white British] to become part of *us*."[56]

The five pastors are exploring racial inclusivity in their congregations in different ways. Pastors 1 and 2 are partnering with the CofE by

worshipping *in* CofE cathedrals. The congregation of Pastor 2 takes that further by worshipping *with* the congregation of the CofE once a month such that at least once a month, the 'church' looks highly multicultural. Every other Sunday, the congregations are separated back into their respective racially-shaped congregation. Pastor 3 employs a vision that makes evangelising Africans his church's primary goal and evangelising the British locals a secondary result. He reasons that if African immigrants are reached out to and discipled into an active Christian living, the congregation will then reach out to the white British locals in their neighbourhood, at their workplace and in the community. Pastor 4 is doing this by renting out a multipurpose hall within the church building for free to anyone in the community (white or black) that has a special event and by hosting weekly free events with a global target (with free inter-continental dishes served) while Pastor 5 is being intentional about singing un-African songs and organising un-African programmes to attract non-Africans—not leaving out providing coffee at their services. In her own words, "here, there is no African music... We sing the kind of music that the people of this environment are conditioned to.... [Also,] whereas in Africa, when we finish the church service, we don't do anything else, here we have tea and coffee before and after the service...." As a result of this, she recalls "... we've only got one Nigerian .... In fact, Nigerians don't stay obviously because we don't create an atmosphere for them to stay." Her narrative thus affirms the possibility of having an APC that becomes so 'un-African' in its ecclesiology that Africans find it unattractive and unappealing as suggested by Pastor 1.[57]

While all the five pastors are managing the tension of racial prejudice (un)consciously in different ways, none of them is doing this adequately (as the ethnic distribution of their weekly attendance seemed to reflect). However, this is a tension that can be managed via a newer approach which is gaining increased acceptance in literature and in the public arena: *Multiculturalism*. This is 'a recent

phenomenon where dominant and minority cultures interact respectfully as whole others and enrich each other in the process.'[58] The concept of multiculturalism recalls the Yoruba adage earlier mentioned and applies the adage in the light of the guest also having something worthwhile to contribute to the host and thus ameliorate the living standard of both parties. To balance that adage with another Yoruba adage; the Yorubas will say *'ajoji owo kan ko gberu dori'* which means 'no stranger's hand successfully lifts the load to the head.' In other words, when a stranger offers a helping hand to lift one's burden to his head (the Yorubas usually carry loads on their head), such a stranger will never be successful without the person being helped supporting the stranger's helping hand with his. The emphasis of the wisdom in the adage is in the necessity of partnership for successful burden bearing. If African missionaries will successfully bear the burden of the relentless decline in the fortunes of Christianity in the West, two things are necessary: they need to be willing to stretch out their African hand in help, and the hosts need to support these God-sent helpers by adding their British hand. In doing this, the colour of the hands of the stranger or the host is irrelevant; the focus is on the burden that needs be lifted—each party needing each other. An apt metaphor for this is a salad bowl where all the ingredients collaborate without losing their respective flavours or Paul's allegory of a body with different members working together. While this strategy proposes a unique beauty in diversity and a high appeal and suitability for Britain's highly multicultural context, it will warrant an intentional willingness to accept the immigrants by the host and the immigrants' concomitant appreciation for the uniqueness of their 'strength' wrapped in their culturally shaped theology. An African pioneer can receive multicultural training in this regard from any of the aforementioned training organisations as the issues of ethnicity and race (and faith) will continually be rethought in the light of twenty-first century globalisation and the reality of Western Christianity which—from all indications—will increasingly become non-white in ethnicity as we go deeper into the century.[59]

Possibilities

There is a need to bridge the knowledge gap in contextualisation. Another Yoruba proverb says *onile a te'le jeje, ajoji a te girigiri,* which translates, 'the host threads softly, the stranger threads roughly'. The proverb is cited as a means of calling the stranger to an intentional awareness of his/her 'ignorant' status. In cross-cultural mission, APCs (and by extension, global-south churches in the UK) need to embrace an awareness of their need for knowledge and be intentional in 'studying to show themselves approved' unto God and unto the (multicultural) community of their situation. An avenue for doing this is by building genuine interactions, collaborations and partnerships between the APCs and the indigenous churches. The partnership between Church 2, CofE and the Iranian church is a step in the right direction—but only the beginning. All congregations must be willing not only to share but much more to learn from and intentionally listen to each other as they embrace and explore the interrelatedness of church, identity and culture. This will consequently and progressively evaporate the 'elephant in the room' status of racism in intercultural dialogues[60] as more and more churches come together to combat the ideology from the root alongside social injustices. This, in fact, needs to become an agenda embraced by all churches regardless of denomination or culture.

Secondly, there is a pressing need to rethink, unpack and publish 'Black Theologies'—rediscovering and reinterpreting the Bible in a post-modern, post-Christian and racially prejudiced context with a view to asserting God as being real in African lives in the diaspora.[61] The African Christian community in the UK (and elsewhere in the West) is on a journey towards developing a theology of cross-cultural mission and repositioning mission and evangelism from either ends of meeting spiritual or material needs of the people to meeting both. While there is an onset of such theological reasonings being published,[62] there is yet a 'writing gap' that needs to be filled by

'black' theologians who are both scholarly sound and practically immersed in the pastoral or leadership praxis of African Christian communities in the diaspora. These writers must be willing to unpack the theological tangents of collaborative mission with the indigenous churches, multiculturalism, social and community engagement, healing and deliverance ministries, missional leadership and other distinctives of the various expressions of African Christianity in the diaspora. And this must be done in a contextually relevant deliverable way—as Kwiyani rightly posits, 'every theology is a contextual theology'.[63]

Conclusion

With the combination of a growing perception of 'spiritual need' in the West, the increasing prominence and expansion of Christian immigrant communities as well as the increasing number of autonomous missions from the global south, APCs (and other non-Western churches) will need to rethink their strategies for contextualisation so that, as Pastor 3 feared, the next generation (children of African members of APCs who grow up within the British contexts) will not replicate the displeasure with and exodus from the church as has been the experience of many mainline indigenous churches in the West. To this end, APC leaders will do themselves a lot of good by maximising the available resources for such training as is relevant for their church planting initiatives while acknowledging the differences in the system upon which the government and the society is being run in the West as opposed to their African contexts of origin. This will translate into being intentional about adherence to government policies and adequate disciplines. In the same vein, the West will increasingly become pro-women and so women's involvement (and ordination) will help churches be relevant to the West's re-evangelisation. Each APC leader will need to understand and fully embrace the specifics of his or her calling (as Pastor 3 modelled) but within an intentional framework that aims at fulfilling the ultimate

requirements of the Great Commission in the multicultural context of their situation. Besides, rather than hiding behind political correctness or outright denial, church leaders across the board need to engage in discussions about racial discrimination within the church and onwards into the community. This will equally translate into meaningful partnerships between churches preceded by sincere and intentional relationships amongst church leaders. From all indications, government policies will remain in favour of charitable ventures that engage with the community. Thus, APCs will need to embrace these provisions and leverage them to be more intentional in their community engagement initiatives and partnerships or alliances with mainline churches and ecumenical bodies.

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2. Andrew F Walls, *Crossing Cultural Frontiers* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2017), p. x.
3. *Natcen's British Social Attitudes Survey: Religious Affiliation Among Adults in Great Britain* (The National Centre for Social Research, 2017), pp. 1-2 <http://www.natcen.ac.uk/media/1469605/BSA-religion.pdf> [accessed 6 December 2017].
4. "British Social Attitudes: Record Number of Brits with No Religion", *National Centre for Social Research* (*NatCen*), 2017 <http://www.natcen.ac.uk/news-media/press-releases/2017/september/british-social-attitudes-record-number-of-brits-with-no-religion/> [accessed 6 December 2017].
5. This phenomenon has been broadly described as 'Reverse Mission' which sounds intelligible in the context of the change in the direction of migration (and so, mission) but is not quite an appropriate terminology given the fact that the mandate for mission at its core is supposedly from anywhere to everywhere.
6. Harvey Kwiyani, "Can the West Really Be Converted?: A Non-Western Reflection on The Newbigin Question (Part 1 of 2)", *kwiyanifiles*, 2017 <https://harvmins.com/2017/10/28/can-the-west-really-be-converted-a-non-western-reflection-on-the-newbigin-question-part-1-of-2/> [accessed 1 December 2017].
7. Gerrie ter Haar, *African Christians In Europe*, 3rd edn (Nairobi: Acton Publishers, 2001), p. 14.; Afe Adogame, *The African Christian Diaspora* (New York: Continuum, 2013).
8. Even the term AIC has also become ambiguous as the 'I' can mean 'indigenous',

'initiated', 'independent', 'instituted' or 'international'. See Mark R Gornik, *Word Made Global* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 2011), p. 28.

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12. Andrew Rogers, "Being Built Together: A Story of New Black Majority Churches in The London Borough of Southwark" (Roehampton: University of Roehampton, 2013) <https://www.roehampton.ac.uk/globalassets/documents/humanities/being20built20togethersb203-7-13.pdf> [accessed 6 July 2017].
13. Ibid., 45. Hence, the title of Olofinjana's book: 'Partnership in Mission: A Black Majority Church Perspective on Mission and Church Unity.' Israel Olofinjana, *Partnership in Mission: A Black Majority Church Perspective on Mission and Church Unity* (Wartford: Instant Apostle, 2015)
14. For an extensive discussion on this, see Arlington Trotman's article titled 'Black, Black-led or What?', in Joel Edwards (ed.), *Let's Praise Him Again: An African Caribbean Perspective on Worship* (Eastbourne: Kingsway, 1992), pp. 12-35.
15. See Claudia Währisch-Oblau, *The Missionary Self-Perceptions of Pentecostal/Charismatic Church Leaders from the Global South in Europe: Bringing Back the Gospel* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2009), pp. 35-6.
16. Claudia Währisch-Oblau's position in acknowledging 'migrant churches' as being a possibly appropriate label on the basis that such "congregations have been founded by people with recent migration background, are led by them, and have a majority of members from such a background" does make sense at least on that basis.
17. Babatunde Aderemi Adedibu, "Reverse Mission or Migrant Sanctuaries? Migration, Symbolic Mapping, And Missionary Challenges of Britain's Black Majority Churches", *Pneuma*, 35.3 (2013), 407 <https://doi.org/10.1163/15700747-12341347>.
18. Matthews Ojo, 'Reverse Mission', in Jon Bonk, *The Routledge Encyclopedia of Missions and Missionaries* (New York: Routledge, 2007), p. 381.
19. Alternative terms include: Ethnographic, Case Study, Humanistic, Naturalistic and /or phenomenological research. See Harry F. Wolcott, *Writing Up Qualitative Research* (Newbury Park, California: Sage, 1990), p. 10.
20. Jerome Kirk and Marc L. Miller, *Reliability and Validity in Qualitative Research* (Newbury Park, California: Sage, 1986), p. 10.
21. Besides being home to one of the first APCs in Europe (Pastor Daniels Ekarte's African Churches Mission established in 1931 and demolished in 1964), Liverpool is home to the oldest Black African community in Britain, dating to at least the 1730s. Some black Liverpudlians can trace their ancestors in the city back ten generations. Ray Costello, *Black Liverpool* (Liverpool: Picton, 2001).
22. The reality is that most of the APCs in Liverpool are actually pioneered by pastors from either of these two countries. According to data culled from Black and Multicultural Churches website (run by the Minority Ethnic Christian Affairs Depart-

ment at 'Churches Together in England' which encourages free registration of Black and Multicultural churches and organisations to facilitate becoming the largest and most accurate listing of black and multicultural churches and supporting organisations in the UK), of all the ten Liverpool-based BMCs listed on the website—and there are definitely more than ten BMCs in Liverpool—only one was not pioneered and led by a Nigerian. See "Liverpool « BMC Directory", *blackandmulticulturalchurches.co.uk*, 2017 <http://www.blackandmulticulturalchurches.co.uk/?s=liverpool&cat1=> [accessed 9 August 2017].

23. While this is clearly reflected in the 'About Us' page of the Church Website of the UK Mission of this denomination, the link is withheld according to the anonymity provisions of the research.
24. Silverman, *Interpreting Qualitative Data*, p. 64.
25. Personal interview with Pastor 4 (Liverpool, 2017).
26. Personal interview with Pastor 4 (Liverpool, 2017).
27. Personal interview with Pastor 4 (Liverpool, 2017).
28. In an attempt to be more attractive from the outset besides other mixed motives such as competition and desire for visibility, many new generation churches will start out from hotel conference rooms, multipurpose rooms at eateries, town halls, event centres or even from a rented shop converted into a church space. For how this plays out among the African Churches in China, See Heidi Østbø Haugen, "African Pentecostal Migrants in China: Marginalization and The Alternative Geography of a Mission Theology", *African Studies Review*, 56.1 (2013), 81-102 <https://doi.org/10.1353/arw.2013.0010>.
29. Hence, Burgess *et al* suggested that the quite close ties that a good number of RCCG branches have with the Church of England is based on an informal agreement between them whereby the CofE first offers to sell its church buildings to the RCCG before putting them on the market. Kim Knibbe, Richard Burgess and Anna Quaas, "Nigerian-Initiated Pentecostal Churches as A Social Force in Europe: The Case of The Redeemed Christian Church of God", *Pentecostudies: An Interdisciplinary Journal for Research on The Pentecostal And Charismatic Movements*, 9.1 (2010), 97-121 <https://doi.org/10.1558/ptcs.v9i1.97>.
30. Acts 20:20, Romans 16:5, Philemon 1:2, 1 Corinthians 16:19, Colossians 4:15
31. Hence, Snyder notes that 'Christians did not begin to build church buildings until about A.D. 200'. Howard A Snyder, *The Problem of Wine Skins* (Downers Grove, Ill.: Inter-Varsity Press, 1985), p. 69.
32. Personal interview with Pastor 2 (Liverpool, 2017).
33. Edward J Eberle, *Church and State in Western Society: Established Church, Cooperation, and Separation* (Ashgate Publishing Group, 2011), p. 2.
34. Danny McCain, "The Church in Africa in the Twenty-First Century", *Africa Journal of Evangelical Theology*, 19.2 (2000), 105-130. (p. 128)
35. Personal interview with Pastor 1 (Liverpool, 2017). Can you explain why these were negatives?
36. Martin Beckford, "More New Women Priests Than Men for First Time", *The Daily Telegraph*, 2017 <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/religion/9060296/More-new-women-priests-than-men-for-first-time.html> [accessed 22 September 2017].
37. Phil Noble, "After Turmoil, Church of England Consecrates First Woman Bishop", *Reuters*, 2015 <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-religion-anglican-

women/after-turmoil-church-of-england-consecrates-first-woman-bishop-idUSKBN0KZ0Z820150126> [accessed 22 September 2017].

38. See Robert Pigott, "BBC NEWS | UK | Synod Struggles on Women Bishops", *BBC News*, 2009 <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/7889946.stm> [accessed 22 September 2017].
39. Josh Parry, "ECHO Goes Undercover at Gay 'Cure' Church Offering 'Dangerous' Therapies", *Liverpool Echo*, 2017 <http://www.liverpoolecho.co.uk/news/liverpool-news/echo-goes-undercover-gay-cure-13468107> [accessed 15 September 2017]. See also: Josh Parry, "Who Are The Mountain Of Fire And Miracles Ministries?", *Liverpool Echo*, 2017 <http://www.liverpoolecho.co.uk/news/liverpool-news/who-mountain-fire-miracles-ministries-13468115> [accessed 27 September 2017].

    The fact that this happened few weeks after the CofE's General Synod released a public statement to condemn gay conversion therapy as being 'unethical, harmful and (of) no place in the modern world' amplifies the contextualization disparities in operating that APC in the UK. See Mark Woods, "Church of England's General Synod Condemns Gay 'Conversion Therapy' | Christian News on Christian Today", *Christian Today*, 2017 <https://www.christiantoday.com/article/church.of.englands.general.synod.condemns.gay.conversion.therapy/110544.htm> [accessed 27 September 2017].
40. R. Catto, "From the Rest to The West: Exploring Reversal in Christian Mission in Twenty-First Century Britain" (unpublished Ph.D., University of Exeter, 2008), p. 121.
41. Personal interview with Pastor 4 (Liverpool, 2017).
42. Olofinjana reported his facilitation of 'African Pentecostals in Britain' at School of Oriental African Studies (SOAS). See Israel Olofinjana, *Turning the Tables on Mission* (Watford: Instant Apostle, 2013), p. 35. He also mentioned that Springdale College in Birmingham was to start teaching 'Reverse Mission' as a module in its Masters in Missional Leadership degree. Israel Olofinjana, *Partnership in Mission* (Wartford: Instant Apostle, 2015), p. 39. Kwiyani confirmed by word of mouth to this researcher that this programmed has commenced, however, the module was named 'Cross-cultural Missions' and not 'Reverse Mission'. Finally, Liverpool Hope University is in the process of designing provision for a new MA African Christianity programme—a programme design in which this researcher participated. The programme is scheduled to kick off in February 2019.
43. This is a training hub that aims to 'prepare, equip and encourage pastors and missionaries from the Majority World in Britain as well as help indigenous British Christians and churches understand Christians from the South.' "About", *Centre for Missionaries from The Majority World*, 2017 <http://www.cmmw.co.uk/about/> [accessed 27 September 2017].
44. ForMission is a mission organization with an educational outreach (ForMission College) which equips Christian Leaders to transform their communities through 'accredited training, thought leadership and missional support'. "Our Vision", *Formission College*, 2017 <http://college.formission.org.uk/vision/> [accessed 27 September 2017].
45. Missio Africanus is a cross-cultural missions initiative being carried out by the Missional Innovations Inc. in London, UK. It is a missions training project that helps missionaries and Christian leaders from around the world to 'understand

and overcome the cultural barriers they encounter in their work in the West'. "Who We Are – Missio Africanus", *Missio Africanus*, 2017 <http://missioafricanus.org/who-we-are/> [accessed 27 September 2017].

46. *Our Growth Conversation: Bigger Church, Bigger Difference* (Liverpool: Diocese of Liverpool, 2016), p. 8. (Does this work have an author?)
47. It was reported in 2017 that about 40 percent of incumbent parish clergy are due to retire before 2027. See John Bingham, "Church of England Cannot Carry on As It Is Unless Decline 'Urgently' Reversed - Welby and Sentamu", *The Daily Telegraph*, 2015 <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/religion/11340590/Church-of-England-cannot-carry-on-as-it-is-unless-decline-urgently-reversed-Welby-and-Sentamu.html> [accessed 22 September 2017].
48. Koutonin argued in an article in *The Guardian* that there is a racist reason behind referring to 'white people' who travel to other countries to reside for a period as 'expats' while 'Top African professionals going to work in Europe are not considered expats. They are immigrants. Period.' Mawuna Remarque Koutonin, "Why Are White People Expats When the Rest of Us Are Immigrants?", *The Guardian*, 2015 <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development-professionals-network/2015/mar/13/white-people-expats-immigrants-migration> [accessed 2 October 2017].
49. Personal interview with Pastor 1 (Liverpool, 2017).
50. William Doe Kugbeadjor and Harvey Kwiyani, "Exploring Adaptive Challenges Faced by African Missionaries in Britain: The Case of The Church of Pentecost", *Missio Africanus Journal of African Missiology*, 1.2 (2016), 4-15.
51. Kwiyani, *Sent Forth*, 198-200.
52. Kwiyani, *Sent Forth,* 175.
53. Personal interview with Pastor 1 (Liverpool, 2017).
54. Kugbeadjor and Kwiyani, "Exploring Adaptive Challenges," 10.
55. Cajetan Ngozika Ihewulezi, *Beyond the Color of Skin* (South Carolina: BookSurge Pub., 2006).
56. Personal interview with Pastor 1 (Liverpool, 2017).
57. Pastor 1 suggested this possibility when he said, "[W]hen you try to create an environment that a Nigerian [or] Ghanaian or British can flourish in, someone can come into the church and say, 'oh, you're being too white!'" Personal interview with Pastor 1 (Liverpool, 2017).
58. Harvey C. Kwiyani, *Mission-Shaped Church in A Multicultural World* (Oxford, UK: Grove Books Ltd, 2017), p. 8.
59. Jehu Hanciles, *Beyond Christendom* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 2008), p. 293.
60. Kugbeadjor and Kwiyani, "Exploring Adaptive Challenges," 10.
61. This was first raised as a recommendation from workshops at the WCC Consultation in 1995. See Roswith Gerloff and H. Van Beek, *Report of The Proceedings of The Consultation Between the World Council of Churches and African And African-Caribbean Church Leaders in Britain, Leeds, 30 November-2 December 95* (Geneva: WCC, 1996), pp. 36-42.
62. So, Israel Olofinjana, *African Voices: Towards African British Theologies* (United Kingdom: Langham Global Library, 2017).
63. Kwiyani, *Mission-Shaped Church,* p. 17.

FIVE

CAN THE WEST REALLY BE CONVERTED?

Harvey Kwiyani[1]

In 1987, Lesslie Newbigin published an essay in the International Bulletin of Missionary Research in which he reflected on a question that was raised by a certain General Simatupang at a conference in Bangkok in the 1970s. The discourse at the conference had turned to the need to rethink evangelism in the West, and Newbigin notes that General Simatupang uttered under his breath, "the number one question is, 'can the West be converted?'"[2] Almost a decade later, Newbigin made this *number one* question the title of one of his brilliant but less known essays. As an African missiologist who has worked in the West for some time, I find both Simatupang's question and Newbigin's essay very fascinating. From my first experience of mission among Europeans in Switzerland almost twenty years ago, to my efforts at church planting in Minnesota, to now teaching mission and theology in Britain, I have always wondered, can the West really be re-evangelised?[3]

It is now thirty years since Newbigin's "Can the West be Convert-

ed?" was published. I take advantage of this anniversary of the essay to revisit some of the issues Newbigin raised and reflect on them afresh in a world that is different from that of the 80s when he wrote the essay. I am writing as an African *resident alien* among Westerners, reflecting on mission in the West through foreign eyes. As I engage this essay and Newbigin's wider corpus, I am aware that I am approaching a piece of British holy ground. My elders in Malawi would advise me to proceed with great caution—*you do not play where an elder is resting*. With great caution, indeed, do I attempt to reflect on one of the works of Britain's most eloquent missiologist of the twentieth century.

Can the West be Converted?

To ask the question, "Can the West be converted?" is to risk being misunderstood. It is a rhetorical question that holds a pessimistic tone; the person asking seems to doubt the possibility of Westerners ever being converted back to Christianity. Maybe the inquirer anticipates to hear a "Yes, but ...." in response. Or probably an outright "No, it is not possible." Indeed, this seems to be what General Simatupang was saying; that the West—as he knew it in the 1970s—could not become Christian again. It had become too secularised to respond to the Christian gospel. Newbigin's essay, however, is more optimistic: Yes, the West can be converted if Western Christians recognise that the West is now a mission field and engage it as such.

In addition to asking a rhetorical question that seems to expect anything but an affirmative answer, to talk about 'converting people' today may seem anachronistic. Many of my Western friends would frown at my retaining of the word "conversion" in the title because, to them, conversion has a negative connotation. Most of them will say converting people to Christianity sounds more like compelling them to adopt a better religion and a superior culture which then implies some arrogance and superiority complex on the part of those doing

the evangelising. There is a very thin line between converting and colonising people, they will say. In all fairness, such conversions happened many times in mission history, especially during the colonial era. However, looking at the West from outside, I am convinced that what is needed to re-evangelise Westerners is nothing short of conversion. To many of us non-Westerners, the typical Western psyche appears so secularised that we believe it will take conversion for Westerners to embrace Christianity again.[4] Part of the challenge, most of us are convinced, is the false but deep-seated belief that the Western worldview is already Christian and therefore needs no conversion. If anything, as outsiders, we believe that the kind of evangelism that must engage the contemporary non-Christian (or even anti-Christian) beliefs we face now in the West must be deep enough to engage the very core of Western culture, and such an evangelism has not happened in the West before, or at least, not for centuries. Thus, I agree with General Simatupang; can the West really be converted? In this world of Western supremacy and racial hierarchies, can the West hear the gospel from non-Westerners?

I use the word 'conversion' cautiously though. While I am convinced that it will take conversion for Westerners to embrace Christianity again, I am also certain that this conversion and the evangelisation that makes it possible will look different from what happened when Westerners evangelised and converted Africans, Latin Americans and Asians one hundred years ago. It will not be a top-down evangelism that also seeks to civilise the converts, promising some form of upward mobility (through access to health care, education, and power). Western converts will not be coming to a powerful religion that dictates the West's cultural values as it did for many centuries. In most cases, they will be converting to a marginalised and liminal religion that often struggles to tell its own story—the story of a crucified God who lives and loves the world. Or that of its bloody history down the centuries, stories that do not make sense to many Western sons and daughters of the Enlightenment and modernity. Consequently,

the type of evangelisation that will speak to Westerners will have to be apologetic in its approach, humble in its outlook, and less confident in its posture and its truth claims. Yet, evangelisation it will be, and it will demand a conversion—probably not to a religion but to a new way of life under the lordship of Christ.

Is it really possible to re-evangelise Europe?

Some of the people who believe that the West can be re-evangelised point to the history of revivals and how, within a short time, the desert becomes a fruitful field (to use imagery from Isaiah 32:15 which I have heard preached in many revival meetings over the years). A good British example of these revivals is the Welsh Revival of 1904, the impact of which is still seen today (for instance, when Welsh sports fans sing Christian hymns at games). Across the Atlantic Ocean, in North America, good examples include the three Great Awakenings and the Azusa Street Revival when somewhat secularised peoples responded to the move of the Spirit and were converted *en masse* to evangelical Christianity and Pentecostalism respectively. These revival-believing Westerners pray and hope for an outpouring of the Spirit strong enough to make Christianity attractive enough again in the West. If God moved in such a mighty way in Wales, Boston, Los Angeles, and many other places, they believe, there is nothing that can prevent God from moving likewise in the West today.

Others who believe that the West can be converted but do not believe in revivals—the word "revival" itself seems to have different meanings in various parts of the Christian West which, for the most part, are sceptic—trust that if their congregations do more outreach, become more attentive and kinder to their neighbours, have a coffee shop or an artistic hub in their basement, or have a better preacher and an even better worship band than the church down the street to provide a perfect Sunday service experience to their members, or

rather *clients*, people will somewhat begin to respond to the Gospel, and consequently, their neighbourhoods will be converted. This, they believe, justifies their optimism that the West can be converted.

Both these responses are only scratching the surface of the issues we face as mission thinkers, scholars, leaders, and practitioners in Europe today. A great deal has changed on the British religious landscape since Newbigin wrote his essay in the mid-1980s but, in a nutshell, the situation looks a lot darker in 2017 than it did in 1987. Christianity has been losing its place in British culture for decades. Millions of members have left the church in a mass exodus. Efforts to slow down or reverse the haemorrhage have mostly been unsuccessful. Census figures from 1991, 2001, and 2011 reflect rather clearly that the numbers of those who identify as Christians are not holding up—falling from 72 percent in 2001 to 59 percent in 2011. The British Social Attitudes survey of 2016 concluded that the number of people in England and Wales who identify themselves as having no religious affiliation has reached 53 percent, exceeding—for the first time—those who self-identified as Christians at 44 percent.[5]

Where the church is growing in Britain, it is largely because of migration—especially that of African Christians. In London today, over 60 percent of church attendance on any given Sunday will be of African peoples (including those from the West Indies) while those African peoples form only 14 percent of London's population.[6] This fact that a 14-percent-minority group made predominantly of migrants can account for 60 percent of church attendance in a global city like London ought to make us think seriously about mission in the West. In addition, all this could not be foreseen even thirty years ago when Newbigin published "Can the West be Converted?" It is because of these changes that the need to talk about evangelising Westerners is more pronounced now than it was in the 1980s.[7]

In his *Unfinished Agenda*, Newbigin said that "[Mission] is much harder [here] than anything I met in India. There is a cold contempt

of the Gospel in Britain, which is harder to face than opposition."[8] He was right. Today, many Westerners are not just uninterested in Christianity, they are outright antagonistic to it—something that has gotten worse since the 1970s when Newbigin returned to England after spending over thirty years in India.[9] Newbigin was also right in his diagnosis: Western Christianity is still struggling to cope with the impact of the Enlightenment and modernity on European and other Western cultures.[10] For the past 300 years, a strong cultural bias in Europe towards science, reason, and logic created a dualism that pits the material world that we see against the spiritual world that is unseen, and by favouring the former, a great deal of the mysterious in religion was pushed from the public sphere. The belief that everything worth knowing is scientifically calculable, measurable, and observable meant that religion lost its value in society. In a black and white facts-versus-values world, facts won, and many European Christians responded by adapting their faith and theology to science, reason, and logic. To do this, they had to relegate those aspects of the faith they considered unable to withstand a scientific interrogation to the private spheres of life. Of course, since the mid-1600s, an increasingly greater segment of European Christianity has tried to belong within the sciences by adopting a *reasonable* approach to faith. In the 1700s, theology began to seek recognition as a scientific discipline as the likes of Friedrich Schleiermacher tried to make sense of Thomas Aquinas' "Theology is the queen of the sciences."[11] Indeed, Schleiermacher suggested that [dogmatic] theology is "the science which systematises the doctrine prevalent in a Christian church at a given time."[12] In the end, we find ourselves with a Christianity that is just as dualistic as the wider Western culture; one that has adopted the bias towards the material and struggles to make sense of the spiritual.

Again, Newbigin is right in pointing to Christianity's engagement with the Enlightenment as central to its disestablishment and to the demise of Christendom. I suspect it was his long stay in India that enabled him to see the religious landscape of Britain with foreign

eyes. The Indians, just like Africans would, must have shown Newbigin that a religion domesticated by reason and science loses its power and right to be a religion. Rationalism and science do not set the limits for religion, they only form a small portion of a world in which religion touches and connects everything. Of course, many non-Western Christians believe in science and reason, but they are also very aware that what they believe in their religious life is much wider than science can fathom. Science, for them, does not answer all questions, and they must, therefore, allow for the spirit-world to be more engaged in their life and worship. Of course, their Christianity is undergirded by a worldview that rejects the material/spiritual dualism of modernity.

I do remember one of my ancestors, a spirit medium and herbalist, making an apology for refusing to convert to the Christianity of the Western missionaries saying, "Your religion has no sense of mystery and wonder. Its spirit is too passive; one would think it does not exist at all. Therefore, your religion is no religion at all." He would later tell me, "A religion that fails to connect with the spirit is only a moral philosophy whose only good news is either moral legalism—'thou shalt have no abortion' or 'thou shalt not be gay'—or moral liberalism —'if the wider culture says it is all right, regardless of what the Bible says, then it is all right.'" In response to his charge, another one of my Christian grandfathers founded an African independent church in which he tried to imagine a Christianity in which the Spirit was alive and active.

Faith for the Buffered Self

In *A Secular Age*, Charles Taylor says a typical Westerner is a "buffered self"[13]; an invulnerable self, isolated and protected from any sense of the transcendent, essentially living in a world without God or spirits because they do not exist or if they exist, they are too far away (in any case, they are neither needed nor welcome). This is the

extent to which the dualisms of modernity can take us. Unfortunately, a major part of Western Christianity today is still grounded in these dualisms, shaped by and for the buffered individualistic self, ignoring the spirit world, and living according to science, reason, and logic. Such a Christianity tends to demythologise the miracles of the Bible because it struggles to imagine how the spirit can defy logic to breakthrough into the material world.[14] Three hundred years of this dualistic Christianity has led us to a place where we know God the Father to be distant and disconnected from us while Jesus sits on a chair inside our hearts guiding our morality, and we have no clue what to do with the Holy Spirit. Of course, in many churches, the Spirit is still generally unknown, confusing, and unwelcome. One of my American professors of Systematic Theology once told me, "This dualism has made us (Western Christians) to be practical atheists even though we recite the Apostles' Creed every Sunday" causing Christians to live their daily lives as if there is no God—as Christian-buffered-selves if at all that is possible. When I pushed back, he said, "What we are engaged in, which we call Christianity, is simply a moralistic therapeutic deism; this distant god wants us to follow the rules of morality, and after this, that god will make us happy with personalised blessings (usually material)." I think he was too harsh, but he has a point, a buffered self cannot make a good disciple of Jesus.

Quite often, the downplay of conversion (even for people who say they are Christians simply because they were born in Britain) makes evangelism impotent. We often tell people to follow Christ without telling them that this will change their lives. Of course, how can a Westerner, born and bred in consumerism, individualism and secularism begin to follow Christ without the change that comes with conversion? Yet, we often invite people to follow Christ without explaining that being a follower of Christ involves adopting a new worldview. It is nothing short of conversion when Enlightenment-shaped Westerners who live in a dualistic world where God is non-

existent (or very transcendent and distant) and are buffered from anything that cannot be proven by science, have to switch to a world-view in which God is both real and close, the spirit-world (including both good and evil spirits) is active and in constant contact with the human world, and then be baptised into the fellowship of the Holy Spirit and walk in this same Spirit. This is conversion.

Missional but not Spiritual

Newbigin's work on the impact of the Enlightenment and modernity on Christianity has inspired many conversations on how to engage the pluralistic cultures of the West in mission. In North America, we have seen the rise of the Gospel and Culture Network as a direct response to Newbigin's work in Britain. As they contextualised Newbigin's mission theology, they developed what became the missional church movement, later sparking other conversations like the Emergent Village and the emerging church. Here in the UK, we have seen the likes of the Alternative Worship movement, Fresh Expressions and many other types of churches ably qualified by numerous adjectives, e.g., messy church and inclusive church. These movements have all proposed missional tools, means, habits and practices that, if followed, will help congregations become missional and in the process, help re-evangelise Europe. Unfortunately, in my opinion, most of these conversations never really managed to escape the spiritual-material dualism and everything it entails. For instance, the secular-sacred split lives on. A great deal of their missiology remains intact if the Spirit were to be somewhat redacted out. For most of them, the Gospels remain demythologised. Two easy examples of how this shows is the absence of the call to prayer and the minimal attention given to the gifts of the Spirit in most of those conversations. They are able to talk about all the best practices and strategies for mission without attending to the one factor many non-Westerners consider the most important; prayer. As I write this, I think of my friends who are starting a missional community in the Midlands that

is totally dependent on social engagement with the neighbours. Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram are their primary tools. They believe they can start a missional community without engaging the spirit-world in prayer. When I led a church plant in the US a few years ago, my father—a seasoned church leader—had only three words for me; *bend the knees*. These friends of mine in the Midlands see no need for prayer or anything that may look religious and yet (or maybe because of this) they are missional leaders. How can one be missional without paying attention to the Spirit and the spiritual world around us?

Can the West then be converted?

So, back to Newbigin's question, "Can the West be converted?" My honest answer is that it is possible that we will see Westerners embrace Christianity again—though it maybe later rather than sooner, and if it happens, it will not be a straightforward endeavour. Our missiology is still facing the wrong direction. The confidence that many have that because Europe was Christian before, it will be evangelised with less difficulty is grossly misplaced. Yes, Europe was the *Christian-dom* (or Christendom), but that does not promise anything about the future possibilities of successful evangelism in any of the European countries. We know from history that parts of North Africa, the Middle East and Asia Minor were once Christian heartlands. In most of those areas, Christianity today exists only in archaeology and history books. There is nothing that suggests that once-evangelised lands are easier to evangelise. If anything, the mission field of Europe is a lot harder than many parts of the world. I would add that Europe is a much harder mission field than probably anywhere else in the world.

As an African Christian, I am confident that revivals do happen. I have seen a few and I believe they can happen in the West at any time. However, I am also certain that revivals do not just happen.

The outpouring of the spirit that makes revivals happen always responds to spiritual hunger and prayers (usually of the few on behalf of the many). Prayer forcefully clears the spiritual atmosphere to make way and "open the gates for the king to come in" (in the language of the Psalmist). These are not the prayers we say before a meal. While such prayers are important and have their place, it takes fervent and long-sustained prayer to make revival happen; the very kind of prayer that many Westerners dismiss, saying it is extreme, unnecessary, and "African." People ask me often, "Do we really have to pray with that intensity for God to answer our prayers?" My answer is always "No, God knows your desires before you pray—and sometimes answers your prayers before you say them. However, sometimes you have to pray that long and that intensely for you to receive the answers". It is this type of prayer and revival that have made the conversion of millions of people in Africa possible. However, as the story of African Christianity suggests, revivals work if they complement a proper sense of mission. We need both revival and mission.

For those who believe that the church needs to *do social* better, it is always helpful to remember that you cannot socialise or philosophise a person into the fellowship of the Spirit in which, of course, spirituality is the currency. The scriptures are clear on their invitation for the followers of Jesus to walk in the Spirit, hear what the Spirit says, chase the fruit of the Spirit and live in accordance with the Spirit's testimony that we are children of God. Indeed, to walk in the Spirit is to stay in tune with the Spirit of God at all times; an undertaking that is impossible to those buffered selves who live in a world without spirits. And, of course, all these exhortations are given to all followers of Christ and not only Pentecostals. It is right that mission has to be relational, but that alone will not convert people. Conversion invites people to a new reality and worldview where God, through the Spirit, lives in, among, and around us, interacting with us on a regular basis, and teaching us to live according to God's Spirit in God's

power. Relational mission is a good starting point as it creates space to explain this new way of living, but one has to be born of the Spirit to belong to the fellowship of the Spirit. Evangelism programs that we use in the West are great, but they often depend too much on logic alone and have very little to say and show about the spiritual foundations of the Christian walk. They are mostly shaped in modernity's dualism and, therefore, fail to challenge it. We are wrong to assume that people resist Christianity simply because they have insufficient information about its rightness and goodness. Yes, we need Christian apologists, but they alone will not do the evangelisation that is needed now. Instead, I suspect that many Westerners respond negatively to Christianity partly because it lacks the sense of the transcendent. If so, Western Christianity's relationship with modernity has also become its existential trap.

What shall we do?

I wish to consider here some of the factors that I believe will help us begin to look forward to re-evangelising the West.

1. Acknowledge that Europe is a mission field (needing foreign missionaries to help evangelise it again)

The landscape of mission in the world has changed drastically in the twentieth century. Countries that sent missionaries now need missionaries sent to them. Britain is one of them. Yet, if you listened to the conversations in churches on Sunday and if you attended board meetings of mission agencies, you will be surprised that many are still living and talking as if Europe is Christian and mission and evangelism are done elsewhere. Mission agencies still recruit missionaries to be sent to Africa and other places. If they recruit for Europe, as someone told me, they are unable to fundraise for them because congregations do not understand why someone would be a

missionary in Europe. Another fundraiser in a different mission agency recently told me that he had congregations on his list that could not support a black missionary no matter where he/she served —he said such congregations do not understand how a black person can be a missionary (in 2017!). Unfortunately for them, non-white missionaries will be increasing in number as we go deeper into this twenty-first century.

Mission training colleges are still preparing missionaries for service among some "animistic" cultures in Africa or Asia, for instance. Westerners train fellow Westerners how to be effective missionaries overseas, not paying attention to their godless secular neighbours who need to hear the gospel too and not allowing Christians from those lands train them for mission in their own cultures. Most of these mission agencies and training colleges operate as if we are still in 1910—insisting on carrying out their mission and evangelism somewhere out there, and not in Europe, at a time when she is in need of a fresh missional engagement. Not many realise that things have changed—and that this means they have to change their behaviour as far as mission is concerned. Who is training missionaries for Europe-Britain (and not just for the Muslims living in EuropeBritain)? Where are the resources for this? Especially resources that help us negotiate the multicultural reality that shapes Europeour Britain today? How will the non-Western Christians living in EuropeBritain be empowered to become missionaries among EuropeansBritish people?

2. Learn how to engage in mission without the help of the empire

Since the 1800s, mission has been largely from the West to the rest of the world and has, for the most part, ran on the back of the mighty empires of Europe and North America. In many parts of the world, this false gospel of Western cultural superiority served as a vehicle for

the preaching of the gospel of Christ. The fruit of such mission remains questionable, but it is quite evident (at least to me) that most of the prevailing models of mission in the world today still depend on some 'imperial' powers to civilise and convert people. Without the economic powers of the Western church, its mission to the rest of the world seems almost impossible. Many only know how to engage in mission from a position of power—"we will go to Africa to build schools, and hospitals, to teach them English, or Science, or Midwifery"; they do not know any other way to do mission but to do something to or for the less privileged. They cannot just *be* with the people; there is no model for that. Many do not even know how to receive hospitality from those they are reaching out to. This kind of engagement will not work in the West where the Christianity is often marginalised and its efforts at evangelism are often dismissed as misguided and anachronistic. So, to be effective in mission among Westerners, we need to let go of the imperial clutches and engage in mission in bold humility (as lambs among wolves). The liminal situation of the church today in Western cultures calls for Western Christians to be missionaries in their neighbourhoods and this calls for a new understanding of mission—one that depends more on a properly contextualised approach and the power of the Spirit than on the Mighty Pound.

3. Embrace the call to be with the marginalised

This discourse about evangelising Europe afresh must consider the need to find intentional ways to engage the less privileged in society. These include not just the less affluent lower middle-class workers but also the needy who survive on benefits. They also include all those who are, for one reason or another, living at the margins of society; communities of immigrants and other ethnic minorities, people of other faiths or sexual orientations, and the outright poor, homeless, elderly and those struggling with addictions. Europe will not be evan-

gelised if Christianity continues to be the religion of the white middle class. The Christianity of the suburbs has to find ways to engage those living in the estates again—not for the sake of charity (to do things for the needy) but of being and identifying with them; to learn their languages and cultures so as to effectively share the story of God's love. To most of us non-Westerners who came to the faith in the 70s, 80s, and 90s, the suburban middle-class capitalism-shaped Christianity that is often clueless on how to relate with the marginalised is puzzling. The church in Europe should not be silent in the face of rampant capitalism that takes advantage of the poor, or the new slave trade of human trafficking, or the political demonization of migrants, and racially-motivated police brutality against minorities. The poor need to hear the gospel just as much as the rich do but they need to hear it without being expected to leave the estates and move upwards to the middle class. Poor people can be Christians too and they can have low-budget or no-budget churches that worship just as effectively as the high-budget churches in the suburbs. Planting a church in the US a few years ago, I was given the advice that the quality of coffee provided by the church on Sundays would determine our success. "Great churches spend a lot on coffee," they said. We do well to always remember that Christ lived at the margins as a carpenter from Nazareth who spent his ministry around fishermen.

4. Relearn evangelism

I heard an African evangelist joke that as far as evangelism in Europe is concerned, the only verse that Western Christians know is Mark 1:44, "See that you say nothing to anyone." He had observed that most Western Christians find it difficult to talk about their faith to others. Of course, this is understandable. On the one hand, an overwhelming majority of European Christians still think mission and evangelism only happen in other parts of the world. On the other, as Westerners, they hold their faith in the private spheres of their lives

and, therefore, hardly talk about their faith in the public arena. Centuries of Christendom have them believing that there is no need to evangelise the West as it was believed to be evangelised already. Modernity made it difficult to talk about faith in public. As a result, European Christians today need to learn how to evangelise their own friends and neighbours (mostly buffered individualistic selves who care less about religion). The giving of tracts on the high street—as I see the Africans do—is only remotely relevant. Evangelistic *crusades* often yield no results. The usual evangelical ways of reaching out like door-knocking and tract-distributing often seem intrusive and disrespectful. While relational evangelism makes a difference, some worry that it is too slow and demanding, especially if they want their churches to grow quickly.

5. Rediscover discipleship

Any form of Christianity that does not take discipleship seriously has no future. Yet, the concept of discipleship itself is distant in Europe. Many who talk about discipleship think about it only as the passing on of important knowledge about the Bible and doctrine from older Christians to new Christians, and in a context where the numbers of people converting to Christianity is small, you do not find people to disciple. While it is true that discipleship involves imparting of knowledge, to make disciples effectively involves much more. Discipleship is, at least, both the sharing of a master's teaching and a real-life modelling of the demands of those teachings on followers. We are basically disciples of Christ called to make other disciples for him by teaching everything Jesus taught us and demonstrating how to live according to his teachings. Often though, we make *church members*, and this focus on increasing our members usually leads us to prioritise and measure wrong variables like how many people came to church on a Sunday and not whether their lives are being transformed according to the teachings of Christ. When discipleship

becomes central to a congregation's life, every member becomes empowered and equipped to engage in his mission in the world. This is where *missional* should begin. Discipleship releases God's people in mission in their neighbourhoods. Disciple-making churches remove the gap between the laity and the clergy and democratise the ministry, reducing the number of spectators in their services. This is what makes the *evangelisthood* of all believers—a great need in Europe today—possible. Church leaders ought to become convinced that their congregations are the place for ministry training.

6. Allow space for foreign Christians to lead

The segregated churches that we see every Sunday morning are the greatest folly of our Western ecclesial times. Do not believe the excuses that try to justify this church segregation; right from Antioch, Christianity communities have the ability to be multicultural. It actually seems they work better when they incorporate people of different cultures who regard each other as equals. The Christian segregation we see today is more about race than it is about theology, culture, class or anything else. Some people feel uncomfortable worshiping with people from other races. This has been the case for decades. In Britain, many Windrush Generation migrants from the West Indies were rejected from British churches in the 1950s. Most African migrants continue to face this rejection today. Unfortunately, many leaders of British churches have ignored both foreign Christians (even when they are members of their congregations) and the need for a conversation that detribalise the church. The number of black leaders in British churches and denominations is negligible. You hardly find black faculty in Christian colleges and Bible schools across the nation. All this is happening at a time when cultural diversity is increasing in Britain.

In this multicultural Europe, evangelistic partnerships between European and foreign Christians will prove helpful. African Chris-

tians, for instance, come with the evangelistic zeal that is generally lacking in Europe; and they come with the prayers to engage in spiritual warfare too. European Christians know their culture well and can tell when something works or not. Complementary partnerships will be of great value. In the end, Africans learn the cultural sensitivities of how European people respond to the gospel and European Christians learn a bit about how to do evangelism.

7. Subvert the dualisms

To evangelise in the West today is to actually invite people to adopt a new worldview—a pre-modern one that has the Spirit of God and many other spirits active in it. Nothing else will do. And yet, this is not a simple thing to do. We need to find new ways of talking about the gospel in ways that do not just clarify the issues people have with Christianity but also invite them to this enchanted reality that shapes our world. Let us be bold and open about this—it could be a strength in this context of late modernity or postmodernity. We have to let go of the dualisms that colour everything about how we live out the faith; our theology, missiology, ecclesiology, evangelism, discipleship, etc. Once we break free of these dualisms, prayer, fasting, spiritual gifts and spiritual warfare become alive again. When people begin to expect the Spirit to 'show up', God does not disappoint. However, to get to this place, a paradigm shift needs to take place. It will be self-defeating to convert people to Christianity and leave them with the dualistic modernity worldview.

Conclusion

The West can be converted, that question is settled. However, the question worth considering today is will this actually happen? Will the West be re-evangelised? I believe it will take Westerners eventually finding ways to evangelise their fellow Westerners. Non-Western

Christians living in the West will also have to learn to evangelise Westerners. Are they willing to do this? Only God can tell. That said, we continue to watch and pray. We stay missional as we work with the Spirit to glorify the Son. "When I am lifted up," he said, "I will draw all people unto myself" (John 12:32).

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1. Harvey Kwiyani teaches African Theology at Liverpool Hope University in Liverpool, England. He is the founder and director of Missio Africanus and also the general editor of *Missio Africanus: The Journal of African Missiology*. His books include *Sent Forth: African Missionary Work in the West; Mission-Shaped Church in a Multicultural World* and *Our Children Needs Roots and Wings: Equipping and Empowering Young Diaspora Africans for Life and Mission*.
2. Lesslie Newbigin, "Can the West Be Converted?," *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 11, no. 1 (1987).
3. This essay is an adaptation of a long-form blog post that was published on the author's website, www.harvmins.com, in November 2017.
4. Many non-Western Christians find the secularism that has overwhelmed European Christianity frustrating and confusing. It seems strange that Europeans are choosing secularism at a time when the world is becoming more religious? Yet, they were the mission-sending countries just a century ago. Overall, we must still wrestle with the question, "how do you evangelise a secular person?" As will be argued later, the work of re-evangelising post-Christian Europe will involve converting Europeans from secularism back to Christianity and must make room for non-Westerners to engage in mission in Europe.
5. NatCen Social Research, "British Social Attitudes 34: Record Number of Brits with no Religion," http://www.bsa.natcen.ac.uk/media-centre/archived-press-releases/bsa-34-record-number-of-brits-with-no-religion.aspx.
6. United Kingdom Census, 2011.
7. Lesslie Newbigin, *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1989).
8. Lesslie Newbigin, *Unfinished Agenda: An Autobiography* (Geneva: WCC Publications, 1985).
9. Lesslie Newbigin, *Foolishness to the Greeks: The Gospel and Western Culture* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1986).
10. Newbigin's other works like *Foolishness to the Greeks*, *The Open Secret* and *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society* explore the impact of the Enlightenment and modernity on European cultures and how they respond to religion and Christianity.
11. Thomas Aquinas described theology as the queen of science in his great work *Summa Theologica* (written between 1265 and 1274). In his day, most people assumed that all intellectual action came down to questions about God, and in practice that was pretty much the case.
12. Schleiermacher, *The Christian Faith* (Edinburgh: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2016), 88.

13. Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007), 37-39.
14. For more on this, see John S. Mbiti, "Theological Impotence and the Universality of the Church," in *Mission Trends No.* 3, ed. Gerald H. Anderson and Thomas F. Stransky, Third World Theologies (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1976).

SIX

BOOK REVIEW OF "OUR CHILDREN NEED ROOTS AND WINGS: EQUIPPING AND EMPOWERING YOUNG DIASPORA AFRICANS FOR LIFE AND MISSION"

Israel Olofinjana[1]

Roots and Wings is a new book written by one of my friends and colleague, Dr Harvey Kwiyani. The book explores issues related to how to effectively engage in discipleship and mission second generation African migrants. These are children born in Britain of African parents. As a pastor of a Black Multicultural Church (BMC) in London with half of the congregation being second generation Africans, this book excites me and is of paramount interest to me. As an African Theologian researching in the areas of Diaspora Missiology, I am aware that essays, journal articles and book chapters have been written on the subject. An example of the latter is Caleb Nyanni's chapter contribution in *African Voices: Towards African British Theologies* (2017). His contribution, based on his ongoing PhD research, investigated the pneumatology of second generation Africans within the Church of Pentecost. I am equally aware of a current doctoral student exploring the use of the Bible among second generation Caribbean Christians within one of the Caribbean Pentecostal churches. But no one has yet published a monograph on the

subject in Britain, therefore the efforts of Dr Kwiyani is to be commended for pioneering such a work.

The central question the book wrestles with is, how can we best equip and disciple younger generation of Africans for mission in Britain? In tackling this question are the issues of identity which second generation Africans or others struggle with. Are they Africans or British? Can they be both at the same time? These are questions to do with hybridity and liminality. But the book goes further than just a sociological exercise on the hybrid nature of second generation as it proposes insightful and pragmatic approach in how we can effectively disciple and empower younger Africans to engage in God's mission. In effect, the book is missiological, addressing the mission implication of younger Africans' involvement in mission in Britain. The book sees reaching second generation Africans not only as a form of intergenerational ministry, but also a cross-cultural matter as it is possible for a father and daughter living in the same house to live by different cultural worldviews. In essence, the first generation must cross the frontiers as missionaries do when they travel to a different culture if they want their children to follow their faith.

The book, using the Hebrew saying of giving two gifts to children in roots and wings, explores how important it is for younger Africans born in diaspora to have a sense of belonging and identity, that is roots, but at the same time not be trapped by their parents' cultural background so that they can grow wings to explore something foreign to their parent's culture. The author argues that when roots and wings are not balanced, we have scenarios of younger Africans being global citizens at the expense and sacrifice of their Africanness. The other scenario is of course when African parents do not want their children to explore anything that is alien to their own cultural background and worldview. This, in the process entraps younger Africans and the result usually backfires so that they reject their parent's faith and culture. The author went on to argue convincingly that the future of Christianity in the British Isles is at stake if we fail to

disciple second generation Africans. One can understand this assertion, because if the current growth of Christianity in the UK, with London as a leading example, is among Black Majority Churches, it simply means the future legacy of these churches is conditioned on how that faith is passed on to the next generation.

All the chapters in this book are excellent, but one that I find very helpful and know will be of use to youth pastors, leaders and church leaders in general is chapter six. The chapter addresses how we can build second generation friendly churches so that younger Africans and others feel a sense of belonging. One of the suggestions in this chapter was for African pastors and churches to ensure that the church is thinking intergenerational in its approach and outlook. This means the church cannot be run to cater just for the needs of the first generation, it has to rethink and give room to second generation Africans to operate in the church so that they feel a sense of ownership and belonging. This is not a question of how do we keep our young people in the church so that they do not run off to another church. It is rather a question of how can we empower and support our younger people in their faith and ministries?

Part of engaging younger Africans will mean African pastors and churches understanding the digital native culture, that is, how young people live and inhabit the digital space. This will mean African pastors interested in using technology not just to promote their self-help books and conferences, but understand how to habit it comfortably so that they can engage younger people. Younger generation appears to use the digital world for sharing life together and doing discipleship. This is different from wanting to use the tools of technology to promote sales of books or conferences. This means for African pastors to engage second generation Africans they have to themselves become natives of the digital world. This however is not a substitute for face to face fellowship which younger Africans must be encouraged to be part of.

One critique I will like to offer is that while the author mentions that the Caribbean churches somehow failed to pass on the faith to their second generation and that African churches must learn from this. I would have like to see a whole chapter possibly devoted to this looking at what led to the failures and what African churches can learn from those failures. Such a chapter can even compare through analysis and data collection African churches and Caribbean churches. Perhaps this is for further research and reflection.

In concluding, a succinct point that the author makes is that if African churches can seek to understand their children who are British perhaps this can in turn help them to understand the wider British public and their mission in Britain.

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