Rethinking African Christianities

Beyond the Religion–Politics Conundrum

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AT THE dawn of the twenty-first century, human tragedy and sub-sequent surveillance were not the only consequences of epoch-making terrorist attacks in the United States. They also heralded a public outcry over the impact of religion on the hearts and minds of apparently gullible believers. Not only was one religion in particular the target of the public outcry, it also attributed to Islam such powers of inspiration that contextual factors—planetary inequalities, the frustrations of Muslim immigrants in the West, the plight of Palestine, new media and com-munication technologies—often fell outside the purview.[1] Moreover, such an analysis tended to overlook the persistently motivating and constrain-ing impact a related religion, Christianity, continued to have on political competition in the West, particularly in the United States.

By marveling at the "return" of religion as an all-consuming force, the outcry did little else than reframe the assumptions of secularization whose passing it ostensibly mourned. Following the founding figures of sociology, the thesis of secularization had assumed that modernizing societies would become functionally differentiated, with increasing ra-tionalization spelling the decline of the public significance of religion.[2] What the public concern in the wake of the 9/11 terrorist attacks shared with this thesis was the idea of religion as a subsystem that was separate from others in the structure of society. Its return to the public realm made it imperative to put the lid back on Pandora's box before religious passions would infuse the domains of public life.[3]

Recent anthropological studies of Islamic movements in Egypt and the rest of the Middle East have, quite appropriately, been at the forefront of devising ways out of the impasse with the secularization thesis.[4] Concerned less with theorizing an abstract society than with reflecting on actual, observable practices, these studies have shaken the very foundations of progressive politics among Euro-American academics. The movements, popular among women and young men, have engaged in the redefinition of piety and commitment in which moral and social improvement is as important as technological progress. Their predilections are, therefore, compatible with social activism,[5] and the sounds of mass-mediated sermons that fill the air of public places shape private lives. "Within this context," Charles Hirschkind writes, "public speech results not in policy but in pious dispositions, the embodied sensibilities and modes of expression understood to facilitate the development and practice of Islamic virtues and therefore of . . . ethical comportment."[6]

Progressive sensibilities are challenged by this prioritization of personal conduct over public policy. They are also confronted by the need to rethink the concept of freedom when submission to external authority would seem to be a condition for achieving the subject's potentiality. Far from dismissing adherents engaged in ethical self-formation as belligerent fundamentalists, these anthropologists urge us to "hold open the possibility that we may come to ask of politics a whole series of questions that seemed settled when we first embarked upon the inquiry."[7]

Note how, in this quote, a new understanding of religious formation holds the potential for a fresh appreciation of political practice. The domains of religion and politics are not easily kept separate for analytical purposes once the underlying view of society in the secularization thesis is rejected. Ideas expressed in, and actions taken within, apparently different domains and institutions feed into each other, and what belongs to the public sphere or the private sphere is to be investigated and not assumed. Much as this basic insight informs the chapters in this book, a note of caution must be struck. The appreciation of hybrid and complex forms has long since displaced dichotomous thought in social sciences and humanities, but it has given rise to new problems, notably the question of what the analyst can hope to keep constant when everything is understood to be in flux.[8] For some students of Africa, the ways in which religion and politics can get conflated on the continent become little else than a pretext to assert the primacy of the former over the latter. While admitting that Africans are not

busy with religion all the time, Stephen Ellis and Gerrie ter Haar, for example, maintain that "religious thought plays a key role in political life because the spirit world is commonly considered the ultimate source of power."[9] Although these and many other contemporary authors add a suitable dose of cultural relativism to such statements by highlighting religious or spiritual factors in Euro-American public life, others find in their very choice of topics for African studies an assertion of the continent's exceptionalism.[10] Religious thought, particularly as it evokes and wrestles with the occult, would seem to define African experiences in a way that it does not Euro-American experiences.

The approach in this volume is different. Rather than conflating the dichotomy between religion and politics only to reiterate ideas of "Africa's pathological exceptionalism,"[11] the chapters here engage in ethnographic and historical investigation on the complex ways in which Africans have variously appropriated Christian idioms beyond the boundaries of religious expression, asserted a cleavage between religions, kept secular and religious concerns separate, and sought moral and material renewal through Christian practice. In other words, African Christians have constituted, and not merely addressed, domains and categories for moral and political practice and reflection. Even the recent studies of Islamic piety mentioned above may, for all their ingenuity, carry a residual distinction between embodied religious self-formation and liberal modes of self-reflection and critical thought.[12]

It is debatable whether the chapters in this book cast doubt over such a distinction only because of their focus on sub-Saharan Africa rather than the Middle East and on Christians rather than Muslims. Deeper conceptual and methodological issues may account for the difference. Few of the contributors here have isolated religion as the field of their academic specialism; the perspectives they bring to bear on Christianity and public culture arise from anthropology, sociology, history, and literary criticism, as well as religious studies. As for many of the people they write about, the interest in Christianity has evolved as an aspect of engaging with other domains and experiences than religion. The upshot has been to take Christianity seriously as an aspect of life, but the contributors' intellectual and personal backgrounds also allow them to keep its impact in perspective.

Public culture is a notion that facilitates this effort to open up the study of religion in Africa to wider intellectual and pragmatic influences. Less clearly demarcated institutionally than formal politics and more

diffuse in its spread than popular culture, public culture prompts questions about how certain events, ideas, and practices assume public significance and thereby cross over the boundaries of their own domains. Among the boundaries these questions address are spatial and temporal configurations, as when the contributors to this volume explore public culture in rural no less than in urban areas, and in colonial and early postcolonial situations no less than in twenty-first-century controversies (part I). The conceptual and pragmatic boundaries that maintain a distinction between the private and the public are likewise considered, as when the relations of intimacy and reproductive and health concerns come to occupy a major public presence (part II). This volume also takes a critical look at assumptions informing academic and popular comments on the apparently explosive public presence of Pentecostal-charismatic Christianity in contemporary Africa (part III). Before introducing these themes in more detail, however, it is important to know more about the ways in which the public impact of Christianity has previously been envisioned in African studies.

Changing Perspectives on African Christianities

The history of the Christian church in Africa is complex, varied, and long. Few scholars would dare to approach that history with the panache that a lifetime of learning enabled the late Adrian Hastings to exude.[13] Not only did he trace the origins of the church in Africa to the earliest centuries of Christianity, he also saw in fourth-century Egyptian Christianity a paradigm for the subsequent history of African Christianity—as opposed to "the history of Christianity upon the continent of Africa."[14] No longer a religion of the urban imperial elite using the scriptures in Greek, Christianity came to hold increasing popular appeal by the end of the third century when most, if not all, of the Bible had been translated into the different varieties of Coptic in Egypt. What was paradigmatic for the quickening of the history of African Christianity over one thousand years later was the attempt to take African languages seriously, often resulting in the first pieces of written literature in as yet unstandardized languages. The close involvement with languages was one aspect of Christianity's impact on life and thought beyond the religious sphere. Conversely, few aspects of life—particularly the struggle for material survival and prosperity—would fail to influence the emergence of Christian identity among Africans.

A great historian is marked by his or her skill at discerning what can and cannot serve as a paradigm for patterns in different times and places. Hastings's history of the church in Africa is a narrative of breathtaking complexity, with different denominations, missionary orders, and African initiatives having strikingly different relations to public affairs of profound significance such as slavery, settler agriculture, and colonial rule. It is this humility before historical and political complexity that must inform studies with more modest aspirations, including the present volume.

While seeking to specify and qualify the public role of Christianity in a number of cases, this volume builds on the strengths of decades of historical and anthropological scholarship on African Christianities. Long gone, for example, is a formulaic juxtaposition between mission churches, African-instituted churches, and African traditional religion. These distinctions may well live on in popular and theological thought, and are therefore important subjects of study, but the intellectual case for questioning them was well put by Terence Ranger in 1986.[15] Finding their analysis in isolation from each other to be artificial and distorting, he pointed out, among other things, that churches launched by Africans were not necessarily more in the throes of social change than so-called traditional religion was and that mission, or mainline, churches were no less authentic than African-instituted churches as windows into African religious experiences. Ranger delivered his verdict on the back of several innovative studies of Christian independence in Africa.[16] The wider significance of these studies lay in their emancipation from the confines of structural-functionalism, whose atemporal models had so far precluded a close investigation of social change in Africa. Once it was recognized that no aspect of African social life was sealed off from the forces of change, the extension of their insights into the study of other aspects of religion was inevitable.

The late 1980s saw the rise of increasingly sophisticated approaches to the study of historical transformations through the shift of scholars' focus from Christian independence to African encounters with mission Christianity. A culturalist turn in anthropology and history facilitated this shift, much as many anthropologists and historians continued to relate their findings to the material processes of colonial exploitation.[17] Ostensibly devoted to showing the intricacies of African agency in the face of the missionary onslaught, a major innovation in many of these studies was the insistence on white missionaries as agents no less molded by culture than their black interlocutors.[18]

In order to recover the nuances of cultural ruptures in missionary encounters, anthropologists and historians had to devise new standards of method and demonstration that would make the silences of more formal archives speak. In the work of Jean and John Comaroff, in particular, a rich array of scholars' own reflections on material objects, architecture, agricultural methods, medical substances, and so on, appeared to compensate for the lack of historical records on African voices.[19] Yet this innovation also elicited doubts over the extent to which Africans lacked narratives as a form of historical consciousness.[20] More critically still, a related response was to question the implicit assumption that indigenous debate on religious transformation commenced with the arrival of Christian missionaries.[21] An emerging body of scholarship has indicated the extent to which conversations carried in African languages have predated and exceeded the impact of missionary interventions, with indigenous traditions of reflection making a Eurocentric history an ever more problematic venture.[22]

Although such recognition of African agency may bring us back to the conundrum of authenticity that the earlier work on African-instituted churches grappled with, it does raise the important question of how to acknowledge historical and cultural difference in analysis. Before the current interest in public culture, anthropologists and historians often explored this difference in terms of religious resistance to political subjugation. A range of Christian-inspired prophets and preachers stimulated more or less violent confrontations with colonial rule in different parts of Africa.[23] Karen Fields set a high standard for scholarship by demonstrating how religion remained integral to the apparently secular project of British colonialism.[24] The activities of the Watchtower movement in Malawi and Zambia in the beginning of the twentieth century troubled the colonial administration, because its practices of baptism, healing, and prophecy could be seen to carry elements of political protest.

In a similar vein, Jean Comaroff's study of Zionism in southern Africa highlighted the importance of the religious imagery and non-verbal behavior to black South Africans' resistance against the apartheid state.[25] Healing was a particularly potent practice under the circumstances of exploitation and subjugation. It marked a reintegration of matter and spirit, drawing together the social, spiritual, and embodied experiences that labor migration, among other economic imperatives, had torn apart. Symbolic and physical operations performed on the body through ritual were key to achieving this renewal of the person.

The studies by Fields and Jean Comaroff appeared at a time when social theorists were becoming increasingly disillusioned with the Marxist models of false consciousness as explanations for the lack of revolt among colonized peoples.[26] The idea of subtle resistance within culturally specific modes of hegemony seemed an attractive alternative, and these perspectives on African agency provided particularly innovative examples of what the new paradigm could offer. Scholarship has moved on, however, and a general criticism directed against the literature on resistance has asked whether scholars, with their own left-liberal sensibilities, actually looked for whatever glimmers of unconventional politics that poor and marginalized people's lives could contain.[27] In other words, resistance as a category of thought may have been imposed on ethnographic and historical observations. The current conceptualizations of agency, as in the literature on Islamic piety mentioned earlier, emphasize the discourses and structures of subordination as the conditions of its enactment.[28]

A criticism more specifically aimed at Comaroff's argument about Zionism took issue with her view on these churches as sites of incipient political protest. Generalizing about so-called healing churches in southern Africa, Matthew Schoffeleers describes them as conduits of acquiescence instead of protest.[29] Yet wider theoretical and methodological issues continue to intrigue scholars, with some insisting on an expanded and unconventional notion of the political that takes into account church members' own idioms and experiences.[30]

By expanding the scope of what they consider to be political, scholars may or may not redress the limitations of resistance studies. Bearing in mind that Zionists had subscribed to a wide spectrum of political positions in South Africa, Richard Werbner asks, "What weight must we give to the explicit intent of the people themselves as against our inferences about the implicit and the unspoken?"[31] This empirical question requires a conceptual one as its complement: how do scholars conceptualize religion as an alternative source of political commentary and contestation? The idea of resistance as pursued by the Comaroffs, not only in their study of Christianity but also in their argument about witchcraft beliefs as a response to modernity's malcontents, certainly involves a perspective on politics as something else than what takes place within the confines of formal political institutions.[32] It does so, however, by making religious or occult practices seem like substitutes for a sociological and historical analysis.

At issue is whether religion is best thought to perform "a second-order process of adjustment."[33] "What allows the Comaroffs," Ruth Marshall has recently demanded, "to assume that these practices are principally modes of interpretation and understanding?"[34] The reduction of religion to a cognitive disposition inevitably diminishes both its practical import and its imaginative resources. It is, after all, not so much politics as religion that requires rethinking, particularly the ways in which it has, as a category of thought in academia, involved assumptions about the relationship between acting and believing.[35] It is a central contention of this volume that this rethinking is achieved more decisively when the concept of religion is paired with the concept of publics rather than politics.

From Politics to Publics

The conceptual and methodological difficulties discerned in the changing perspectives on African Christianities recall the cautionary comment on the recent literature on Islamic piety movements. Problems with a cognitive approach, with the notion of religion as a second-order process of adjustment, are not solved by attributing priority to embodied, non-verbal behavior.[36] The great promise of studying Christianity—and indeed any religion—as an integral aspect of public culture is the way in which embodied, deeply felt experiences can be represented as coexisting with instances of deliberative and critical reason. It is here that a conceptual shift from politics to publics seems particularly productive, because sterile definitional disputes over the scope of the political and the religious can give way to an investigation of what actually assumes public significance in the historically specific circumstances of religious and political contestation. A central interest in such investigation is to uncover the multiple ways in which people seek to make their claims public; how those claims shape, and are shaped by, other public pronouncements; and what insight claims expressed in religious idioms can give into the constitution of moral and political publics.

Note how the notion of public as something that is widely (but not necessarily universally) open and accessible requires a notion of the public as its audience. The chapters in this volume explore claim making in a range of historical and contemporary contexts, but common to them all is the idea that the public is an audience whose members are not known to those who address it in order to make claims. According to Karin Barber, a public can be imagined to be limited or vast, "reaching out beyond the known community to wider populations, whether

politically or religiously defined."[37] Crucial to this insight is the idea that a public addressed is also a public constituted—the chapters in this volume bear testimony to the ways in which Christian idioms and practices have informed the emergence of new orders of relationships. Whether public culture is the site for contestation by multiple publics is an empirical question, but the public role of religion can indicate how different publics are, in Michael Warner's words, "structured by alternative dispositions or protocols, making different assumptions about what can be said or what goes without saying."[38]

The insertion of religion into studies of contemporary public life is a relatively recent development in scholarship, and it is important to recognize the specific idea of religious experience and argumentation that often informs this development. Several recent contributions to the anthropology of religion have, particularly in relation to Christianity, registered considerable unease with the concept of belief.[39] Malcolm Ruel's argument about "the monumental peculiarity of Christian 'belief,'"[40] both building on and extending the work of Wilfred Cantwell Smith,[41] has served as a major impetus to this critique. According to Smith and Ruel, the concept of belief is largely a post-Reformation innovation that replaced earlier Christian idioms of trust and commitment with a propositional attitude.[42] Ruel's contribution was to point out the consequences for anthropological analysis, including the assumption that belief is what forms the ground of behavior and explains, therefore, various aspects of cultural and social life. Moreover, to be a believer identifies a person as a member of a group that is clearly distinct from groups of other types of believers. As an interior state, belief also puts the believer in an individual, contemplative relation to his or her God.

For recent anthropology, these critical insights have raised doubts about the concept of belief in the study of Christianity and not only in the comparative study of religion as Ruel intended. When Christian orientations, along with a host of other religious dispositions, are understood as being sustained by acts rather than states of mind, it becomes much less plausible to regard Christians as believers in the senses outlined above. Instead, researchers' attention gets directed, among other things, to the multiple ways in which Christians live their faith practically, how their convictions resonate or conflict with other viewpoints available to them, and how, once they are no longer seen as believers hermetically sealed off from other kinds of believers, they situate themselves in public life.

Whereas recent work on the public presence of religion has often highlighted the role of mass media,[43] this volume pursues its revision-ist impulse through a wider range of examples. Mass media certainly loom large in some of the chapters here (especially those by Cooper, Englund, Meyer, and Prince), but the revision of rationalist-secular theories needs to be nourished by other empirical instances than mass-mediated religious interventions. As Birgit Meyer and Annelies Moors have rightly observed, instead of attributing too much significance to the technologies of mass mediation, religion can itself be taken as a practice of mediation.[44] From the use of the scriptures to the mediating efforts of diviners and spirit mediums, various forms of religion have always enabled people to envision and engage matters beyond the con-fines of their particular lifeworlds.

A related insight into the mediating effects of religion has made much of this recent literature to take issue with assumptions in Jürgen Habermas's theory of the public sphere.[45] The theory is one of the most sophisticated examples of how the assumed public decline of religion comes to be linked to the definition of the public sphere as a domain of rational deliberation. As "the abstract counterpoint of public author-ity,"[46] the public came into being, according to Habermas, in nineteenth-century Europe with the emergence of the bourgeoisie, whose consti-tution derived as much from new property relations as from new kinds of public discourse mediated by, among others, the print media, tavern conversations, and art criticism. Although Habermas's historical nar-rative was presented as a critique, lamenting the erosion of the public sphere in the face of commodification, others have questioned not only the neglect of religion in his idealized notion but also his lack of atten-tion to gender and class in channeling access to the public sphere.[47] As a consequence, the academic debate on the public sphere has expanded the notion's remit virtually beyond recognition, with the sources and sites of deliberation identified not only in religion but in a wide range of other domains.[48] Critical has been the move from a normative stand-point to a descriptive one.

Much as this volume arises from the theoretical ferment generated by Habermas and his critics, it is not primarily concerned with refining the already extensive and complex debate on the public sphere. The concep-tual and methodological reflections offered in this introduction should be viewed as an effort to contextualize the empirical cases that form the bulk of this volume. Public culture is hardly a less theoretical concept

than public sphere, but precisely because it has not been subject to as extensive theoretical debate as the public sphere, it may facilitate historical and ethnographic analysis without a constant need to refer to abstract and often Eurocentric theorizing. The conceptual shift from politics to publics, as outlined here, involves a number of analytical challenges. For scholars to fully appreciate historical and contemporary variations in the public role of African Christianities, they need to move beyond a number of obstacles: spurious typologies of religion on the continent, models of resistance against political authority, approaches that are deaf to Africans' indigenous conversations about religious and political change, juxtapositions between embodied and discursive modalities, and the legacies of the concept of belief derived from a particular context of Christian theology. These challenges surely represent sufficient theoretical stimulus, but above all they call for fresh empirical work.

Missionary and Nationalist Encounters

It is appropriate, in light of the above-mentioned trends in current scholarship to discuss the mass media and the public sphere, that chapter 1 of this volume takes us where few studies in this vein venture: rural Africa at the onset of the missionary encounter. By describing two mission stations in Zambia's Mwinilunga District, James Pritchett offers not so much a denominational comparison between Protestant and Catholic missions as an account of how their innovations engaged local Africans' aesthetic and epistemological sensibilities. Contesting both the notions that African conversations about social and ideological change began with the missionary encounter and that early converts were marginal members of their community, Pritchett shows that missionary initiatives fed into complex African experiments with agriculture and medicine no less than with fashion, drama, and music. The two mission stations' respective specializations in medicine and agriculture give particularly clear examples of Christian conversion entwining with apparently mundane concerns. Pritchett's narrative recalls historical observations across the continent of medical missionaries as miracle workers despite themselves.[49] Agricultural innovation was no less embedded in particular Christian orientations toward the division of labor, crop selection, and ideas of what constituted an orderly field—all changes that became subject to African experimentation and reconfiguration. Pritchett's chapter releases, therefore, the study of popular and public culture from its association with urban life and

introduces a fresh perspective on rural Africa as a site of innovation and experimentation.

Marja Hinfelaar, in chapter 2, complements Pritchett's immersion in a rural district with an analysis of the Catholic Church's input to imagining Zambia as a nation. Her key objective is to historicize the well-publicized pronouncement by Zambia's second president that the country was a Christian nation. By so doing, she challenges evolutionary assumptions that informed much popular and academic discourse shortly before and after independence, claiming that Zambia was on its way toward a secular public culture. In effect, Hinfelaar's chapter serves to historicize not only the pronouncement about Christian nation but also the Catholic Church's influential role in debating and shaping public life across Africa, not least during the wave of democratization in the early 1990s. The Second Vatican Council, in the early 1960s, coincided with the onset of independence in many African countries, and one of the council's consequences was the church's closer involvement in the worldly affairs of justice and peace. This involvement put the church on a collision course with the state in Zambia, because ruling politicians wished to adopt scientific socialism as the new nation's guiding doctrine. Hinfelaar shows how the Catholic clergy's objection arose less from their rejection of socialism as such—some of them were, at the time, veritable experts on Marxism—than from their defense of religiosity and diversity against the looming vanguard politics. However, when the new born-again president declared Zambia a Christian nation, the Catholic Church felt that the pendulum had swung too far in the other direction. Hinfelaar details the shifts in the church's position as it debated the difference between a secular state and a country that has no state-endorsed religion.

In chapter 3, Nicholas Kamau-Goro reveals another facet of Christianity's impact on imagining the nation in Africa. Instead of focusing on any particular church, Kamau-Goro explores another influential figure in Africa's public culture: the creative writer. Pioneering African writers were both nationalists and products of mission education.[50] This double attachment has often resulted in ambiguity, if not hostility, toward their Christian heritage, much as Christian missions sowed the seeds of nationalism by promoting the idea of ethnolinguistic units as polities and by standardizing African languages. Yet their criticism and selective appropriation of indigenous cultures also provoked a nationalist reaction against Christianity. Kamau-Goro shows the ambiguities

and paradoxes of Christian allegory and African nationalism in the work of Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o. He charts Ngũgĩ's transformation from a devout Christian to a critic of Christianity who, nevertheless, remains in his early novels loyal to Christian allegory for his choice of idioms to, in Kamau-Goro's words, "articulate [Africans'] dreams for salvation from colonial oppression." Kamau-Goro's analysis indicates, therefore, some of the ways in which Christianity has shaped public culture in Africa even as it has been ostensibly rejected.

Patriarchy and Public Culture

Public culture is as much a context for defining the boundaries of the private and the intimate as it is the setting in which large-scale public affairs such as nationalism are envisioned. The chapters in part II show how Christianity and public culture influence gender relations, sexual morals, and female empowerment. Barbara Cooper, in chapter 4, focuses on the reproductive politics of a Christian minority in the context of Muslim-majority Niger. Her case is a particularly clear demonstration of how highly intimate and embodied issues such as fertility and reproduction can assume public import. Tracing the history of contestation over the relative sizes of the Christian and Muslim populations in Niger, Cooper dissects the official patriarchal notion that the church was produced and reproduced by the acts of men. Important figures as they may have been, male pastors and missionaries could not have expanded the Christian constituency without the church attracting women and laying claim to children. Cooper builds on comparative insights from elsewhere in Africa to point out how Christian messages often appealed to women before they did so to men. In Cooper's case, it was only after the evangelical mission had embarked on medical work from the 1940s onward that it could approach women and children directly, with fostering, marriage, and childbirth complementing conversion as a path to Christianity. Cooper details the role of ritual in the mission's effort to lay claim to children. Apart from the ritual—itself a public event during which the child is displayed to a wide audience, Christian and non-Christian—Cooper discusses the radio announcements of Christian naming ceremonies and weddings as important conduits for making public the success of Christian reproduction. Her view on mediation thus combines insights into ritual and broadcasting and alerts us to the perils of considering the electronic media in isolation from older performative modes.

The infusion of Christian idioms into the politics of community survival and reproduction is also a central theme in chapter 5, by Ruth Prince. Her analysis of debates about widow inheritance among the Luo of western Kenya situates highly intimate and personal experiences in a range of interventions extending from mission and revivalist Christianity to traditionalist assertions of patriarchy to campaigns against the spread of HIV/AIDS. Within this complex field of argument and intervention, Prince identifies a spectrum of Christian responses that include support for the practice by some African-instituted churches, recent efforts to reshape it by the Anglican and Catholic Churches, and outright opposition against it by the Pentecostal and evangelical churches. Material considerations shape these arguments as opposition against widow inheritance is buttressed by well-funded alliances between Christians, human rights activists, and feminists, and as those women who succeed in opposing it have often achieved a measure of economic security. At the same time, Prince shows how claims voiced in Christian idioms can be more compelling than those expressed in terms of rights. Recalling Kamau-Goro's observation on the capacity of Christian imagery to provide tools for critique, the debate in western Kenya does not so much pit Christians against non-Christians as involve Christians of various persuasions in reflecting on tradition and morality.

When participants in a debate are all Christians, Christianity's contribution to a critique of public culture is not best described as resistance against dominant discourses. In chapter 6 Damaris Parsitau examines the entry of Pentecostal pastors and prophets into electoral politics and various charitable enterprises. What makes Parsitau's study unusual is her focus on female leaders whose achievements have offered inspiration and mentorship to countless women in Kenya, a country where women's participation in public life has long faced considerable obstacles. Drawing on biblical references to exceptional women, these female leaders have confounded their male critics through business acumen and a commitment to raising children without a husband. However, Parsitau shows how their involvement in Kenya's public culture is a complex mix of empowering and illiberal standpoints. For example, their promotion of hope and ambition among women is in tension with their preaching against abortion and premarital sex. The pride they wish to instill in single mothers can be diluted when the aspiration to become a respectable member of Parliament makes them want marriage. Their critique

of corruption and tribalism among politicians, moreover, coexists with their intolerance toward Islam and homosexuality.

A Plurality of Pentecostal Publics

The entry of Pentecostal clergy into mainstream political competition is a relatively new phenomenon in Africa. It is also a controversial development, both for many Pentecostals themselves and for their academic observers.[51] Whereas Pentecostals debate among themselves the extent to which party politics is fundamentally divisive and un-Christian, some observers can barely conceal their contempt for this overtly emotional and personal form of Christianity. Although Pentecostalism has had a presence in Africa since the early twentieth century, including in rural Africa,[52] Paul Gifford was one of the first to identify a new and more intense phase of proselytization from the 1980s onward.[53] Focusing particularly on southern Africa, he emphasized the negative effects of this trend on African liberation, distressed as he was by the conspicuous role played by conservative American evangelists at a time when the Christian church was being decolonized in Africa. Gifford has since explored the theological and social dimensions of the so-called faith gospel in, among other African countries, Ghana and Kenya.[54] Although he has been able to produce more nuanced accounts of Pentecostal diversity and African initiative, he has continued to find Pentecostalism problematic in its impact on public debates about the need for structural change in Africa's governance and economies.

Other liberal academics in Europe and the United States have sometimes been able to pronounce alarmist views on Pentecostalism in Africa without referring to any empirical study in particular. As recently as in 2009, Patrick Chabal deplored Pentecostalism's individualist ethos, which promotes personal self-improvement and internationalism: "Worthy as they may seem to the American churches that sponsor Pentecostalism, these priorities are disruptive of received notions of identity, reciprocity, and even nationality. In ways that are not always discernible today, they could pose a greater challenge to the African polity than is presently envisaged."[55] An unsubstantiated impression is created that African Pentecostalism depends on American churches and that the entire African polity is threatened by the way in which its priorities contradict identity, reciprocity, and nationality. The lack of references to any actual Pentecostal practitioners makes this comment particularly revealing of the ease with which this form of Christian practice lends

itself to generalizations that would hardly be acceptable in relation to other religious orientations.

Generalizations of this kind, often accompanied by pronouncements about the "spectacular rise"[56] and "enormous sweep"[57] of Pentecostalism in contemporary Africa, can be refuted on several grounds. Overall, religious and spiritual complexity has not been reduced by the undeniable mushrooming of Pentecostal churches across the continent during the past thirty years. African-instituted churches do not belong to the past but are a powerful presence in many countries,[58] while, according to David Maxwell, "the historic churches remain enormously influential, still staffed by expatriate missionaries who work in tandem with and usually under the authority of African clerics."[59] Moreover, during the rise of Pentecostalism, the African religious scene has witnessed another, less dramatic but equally significant, phenomenon in the increase of faith-based organizations that provide development and humanitarian aid.[60]

Perhaps the most devastating blow to generalizations is dealt by the sheer diversity of Pentecostal approaches and practitioners. The effect is particularly evident when scholars link Pentecostalism with Charismatic movements. Theological affinities can be obvious enough, arising from nineteenth-century revivalism in the Methodist and Holiness movements in North America, Europe, and even elsewhere, and revolving around the gifts of the spirit such as prophecy, healing, and speaking in tongues. Yet Allan Anderson, for example, advocates definitions that can be adapted to particular contexts, bearing in mind that charismatic experiences and fellowships are not the prerogative of Pentecostal-type churches but form an influential element within the Catholic Church and some Protestant denominations.[61] When resulting in staggering statistics about church growth, the linking of Pentecostals with charismatics can, therefore, serve triumphalism among Pentecostal missionaries rather than analytical purposes.[62] Part III of this volume contributes to the view that is less concerned with definitional niceties thrown up by unwarranted generalizations than with exploring doctrinal malleability and membership fluctuations in congregations and movements that identify themselves as Pentecostal.[63]

The diversity that the chapters in part III seek to demonstrate is particularly poorly served by the impression that the faith, or prosperity, gospel is the quintessential feature of African Pentecostalism. The impression obscures the range of topics that Pentecostalism has enabled

scholars, particularly anthropologists, to explore with regard to contemporary Africa, topics such as commodification,[64] transnational connections,[65] African diasporas,[66] mass media,[67] and responses to the crisis in public health.[68] In chapter 7, Birgit Meyer, who does here use *Pentecostalism* and *prosperity gospel* interchangeably, shows how this type of Christian orientation is embedded in wide-ranging reforms that, often informed by neoliberal economics, have sought to enhance free markets and pluralist democracy across Africa since the late 1980s. She points out that the process of "making public," of exposing the secrets of non-Christian worship, has a long history in African Christianity and is by no means reducible to Pentecostalism. However, Meyer argues that the current process of "going public" by Pentecostal and charismatic preachers and prophets suggests a range of new questions for research, not least because of their skillful use of media such as television, videos, radio, and Web sites. This process, Meyer emphasizes, revolves around style rather than community, casting doubt over the congregational model of religious life that has informed the study of Christianity in Africa as elsewhere. Addressing Eurocentric theorizing about the public sphere, Meyer also contends that the contemporary public sphere in Ghana is a hybrid of critical public discussion and religiously motivated consumerism.

The conflation of Pentecostalism with the prosperity gospel may betray the pull of megachurches in cities among those scholars whose linguistic and methodological limitations leave them ill equipped to face the diversity of Pentecostal practice in poor townships and rural villages. It is these settings that form the background for Harri Englund's exploration of spiritual warfare in Malawi (chapter 8). Building on fieldwork among impoverished township dwellers and born-again radio journalists, Englund shows how the quest for security rather than for prosperity animates the Pentecostal imagination. The issue of spiritual warfare, especially when it engages Muslims as its key adversaries, also bears notable public significance in a country marked by inequalities and polarization between Christians and Muslims. When the rhetoric and practice of spiritual warfare is studied in a specific historical and ethnographic context, Englund argues, unexpected insights into the rights and obligations of membership can emerge. Spiritual warfare here turns born-again Christians' gaze as much inward to demonic forces within one's own congregation, if not oneself, as outward to those who openly oppose baptism in the Holy Spirit. Central to the essentially peaceful and civil effects of spiritual warfare is the expansion of trust through

spiritual kinship that embraces anyone regardless of their religious and ethnic provenance. The experience that the Holy Spirit works in and through human relationships gives the lie to the unvarnished association of Pentecostalism with individualization. The role played by testimonies broadcast in the Chichewa language is explored in detail, from the viewpoints of both their born-again editors and their narrative contents and idioms.

Chapter 9, by Ilana van Wyk, is no less unflinching in its challenge to the stereotypes and generalizations that plague the study of Pentecostalism's impact on public culture. Here the focus is on a big urban church and its apparent prosperity gospel. The Universal Church of the Kingdom of God would seem to realize the worst nightmares of Pentecostalism's critics. The sense of a community assisting each other materially and spiritually—a sense so easily attributed to African Christianity—is demolished by the distrust among participants in the South African congregation that van Wyk has studied. Distrust is actively promoted in the church, whose pastors never stay long enough with the same congregation to develop personal attachments, whose congregations scarcely notice funerals and weddings in their midst, and whose pews are filled more with lone individuals than with couples and families. However, as in the rest of this volume, neither contempt nor endorsement is the result of analysis. Van Wyk shows how the one-off "contracts" with God that confound some observers' expectations of denominational loyalty and doctrinal rigor take place within troubled lives that involve moves from church to church and from one prophet or healer to another in search of blessings. At the heart of van Wyk's contribution lies a challenge to anthropologists and other scholars who have come to question the notion that belief is a propositional attitude (see above). An alternative notion, she suggests, is not Christian practice as trust or commitment but as a kind of technology inextricably linked to pragmatic pursuits.

Despite their divergent perspectives on Pentecostalism, the chapters by Meyer, Englund, and van Wyk all indicate dissatisfaction with the conventional models of churches and congregations as stable, bounded communities. Style, spiritual kinship, and technology are some of the conceptual alternatives these three authors, respectively, put forward instead to capture the sense in which Pentecostal publics are in the process of becoming rather than simply addressed. However, Michael Okyerefo (chapter 10) completes this volume's exploration of Pentecostal diversity

by analyzing two Ghanaian churches' search for public respect and legitimacy. The key means by which they attempt to go mainstream is through the provision of health and orphan care and educational facilities. Okyerefo thereby documents a trend that liberal critics' consternation has not been able to foresee. Along with participation in electoral politics, developmental activities have seemed a distant prospect in Pentecostals' self-indulgent ways. Okyerefo expands, however, the issue of public legitimacy and respect to address the manner in which development has been envisioned, not only by Africa's foreign masters but also by Pentecostalism's liberal critics. Rather than seeing in Pentecostals' interventions in development work another cynical ploy to attract followers and money, Okyerefo asks whether the very concept of development has to be revised in light of these interventions. Do they not bespeak a desire to unite the economic and spiritual dimensions of life into one concept of development?

This volume comes full circle with Okyerefo's chapter describing in a contemporary context the indivisibility of the material and the spiritual that Pritchett's account of medical missionaries as miracle workers demonstrated for historical encounters. In a broader sense, this insight is but an aspect of the perspective this volume seeks to put forward. The relationship between Christianity and public culture in Africa is not so much an instance of religion determining some people's approach to apparently secular institutions as an invitation to rethink the manner in which influential academic and popular theories, with the secularization thesis *and its inversions* at the helm, have partitioned society into subsystems. What publics as constituted and not merely as addressed demonstrate is that we cannot know the significance and form of such divisions in advance of empirical research. A closer attention to the claims African Christians make warrants a contextual and historical approach to the boundaries that separate the religious and the secular, the private and the public, the liberal and the illiberal.

Notes

1. The journalistic and academic writing along these lines has grown into a veritable industry, and the decontextualized approach is particularly evident in discussions about so-called jihadism and Islamic extremism. A flavor of book-long interventions, often including prescriptions for the West's response, can be gained, for example, from Will Marshall, ed., *With All Our Might: A Progressive Strategy for Defeating Jihadism and Defending Liberty* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2006).

2. A defense of the secularization thesis is given in Steve Bruce, *God Is Dead: Secularization in the West* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2002). Much debate was provoked by Bruce's

earlier book, *Religion in the Modern World: From Cathedrals to Cults* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996). A more wide ranging—and less tendentious—intellectual history is provided by Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age,* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007). The idea that religion can be abstracted as a separate system goes further back in intellectual history than the works of Durkheim, Marx, and Weber, at least to the Enlightenment. Among contemporary sociologists, José Casanova put forward the argument that although society may be functionally differentiated, religion has not ceased to have public significance, as events in many parts of the world since the 1980s attest. See Casanova *Public Religions in the Modern World* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994).

3. Crusading atheists such as Richard Dawkins and Christopher Hitchens were an inevitable by-product of this panic over religion in public life. See, for example, Richard Dawkins, *The God Delusion* (London: Bantam Press, 2006); Christopher Hitchens, *God Is Not Great: How Religion Poisons Everything* (New York: Atlantic Press, 2008). Their arguments have been ably demolished by Terry Eagleton, *Reason, Faith, and Revolution: Reflections on the God Debate* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009).

4. See, for example, Lara Deeb, *An Enchanted Modern: Gender and Public Piety in Shi'i Lebanon* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006); Charles Hirschkind, *The Ethical Soundscape: Cassette Sermons and Islamic Counterpublics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006); Saba Mahmood, *Politics of Piety: The Islamic Revival and the Feminist Subject* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005). See also Talal Asad, *Formations of the Secular: Christianity, Islam, Modernity* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003).

5. Deeb, *Enchanted Modern.*

6. Hirschkind, *Ethical Soundscape,* 106.

7. Mahmood, *Politics of Piety,* 39.

8. Bruno Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern* (New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1993); Marilyn Strathern, "Cutting the Network," *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 2, no. 3 (1996): 517–35.

9. Stephen Ellis and Gerrie ter Haar, *Worlds of Power: Religious Thought and Political Practice in Africa* (London: Hurst, 2004), 6. For a critique, see Maia Green, "Confronting Categorical Assumptions about the Power of Religion in Africa," *Review of African Political Economy* 33, no. 110 (2006): 635–50. See also the response by Ellis and ter Haar to some of their critics in "Religion and Politics: Taking African Epistemologies Seriously," *Journal of Modern African Studies* 45, no. 3 (2007): 385–401.

10. A sweeping and therefore ill-informed indictment on Western scholars' choice of research topics in African studies can be found in Jemima Pierre, "Anthropology and the Race of/for Africa," in *The Study of Africa,* vol. 1, *Disciplinary and Interdisciplinary Encounters,* ed. Paul Tiyambe Zeleza (Dakar: CODESRIA, 2006), 39–61.

11. Paul Tiyambe Zeleza, *Rethinking Africa's Globalization,* vol. 1, *The Intellectual Challenges* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2003), 282.

12. For an alternative to the piety literature, see Magnus Marsden, *Living Islam: Muslim Religious Experience in Pakistan's North-West Frontier* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Marsden, "Talking the Talk: Debating Debate in Northern Afghanistan," *Anthropology Today* 25, no. 2 (2009): 20–24. Mahmood, among others, has noted how contemporary Islamist discourses presuppose the practical and conceptual conditions of the secular-liberal world they criticize. See Mahmood, *Politics of Piety,* 191–92. This point is, however, separate from the observation that the same persons may subscribe to both religious and liberal dispositions.

13. Adrian Hastings, *The Church in Africa, 1450–1950* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994).

14. Ibid., 7.

15. Terence Ranger, "Religious Movements and Politics in Sub-Saharan Africa," *African Studies Review* 29, no. 2 (1986): 1–69.

16. For example, Johannes Fabian, *Jamaa: A Charismatic Movement in Katanga* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1971); James W. Fernandez, *Bwiti: An Ethnography of the Religious Imagination in Africa* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982); Bennetta Jules-Rosette, *African Apostles: Ritual and Conversion in the Church of John Maranke* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1975); J. D. Y. Peel, *Aladura: A Religious Movement among the Yoruba* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1968); Bengt Sundkler, *Bantu Prophets in South Africa* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1948).

17. For example, Nicholas B. Dirks, ed., *Colonialism and Culture* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1992).

18. The literature is vast and varied, but see, for example, T. O. Beidelman, *Colonial Evangelism: A Socio-historical Study of an East African Mission at the Grassroots* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982); Jean Comaroff and John L. Comaroff, *Christianity, Colonialism, and Consciousness in South Africa,* vol. 1 of *Of Revelation and Revolution* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991); Richard Gray, *Black Christians and White Missionaries* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990); Dorothy Hodgson, *The Church of Women: Gendered Encounters between Maasai and Missionaries* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005); Paul Landau, *The Realm of the Word: Language, Gender, and Christianity in a Southern African Kingdom* (London: James Currey, 1995); David Maxwell, *Christians and Chiefs in Zimbabwe: A Social History of the Hwesa People, c. 1870s–1990s* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999); Birgit Meyer, *Translating the Devil: Religion and Modernity among the Ewe in Ghana* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999); Peter Pels, *A Politics of Presence: Contacts between Missionaries and Waluguru in Late Colonial Tanganyika* (Amsterdam: Harwood Academic, 1999).

19. Jean Comaroff and John L. Comaroff, *The Dialectics of Modernity on a South African Frontier,* vol. 2 of *Of Revelation and Revolution* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997). The Comaroffs' turn to a culturalist historical anthropology had been prefigured by Marshall Sahlins, *Islands of History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985).

20. J. D. Y. Peel, "'For Who Hath Despised the Day of Small Things?': Missionary Narratives and Historical Anthropology," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 37, no. 3 (1995): 581–607. See the response in Comaroff and Comaroff, *Dialectics of Modernity.*

21. Landau, *Realm of the Word;* Derek R. Peterson, *Creative Writing: Translation, Bookkeeping, and the Work of Imagination in Colonial Kenya* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2004).

22. Karin Barber, ed., *Africa's Hidden Histories: Everyday Literacy and Making the Self* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006).

23. See, for example, George A. Shepperson and Thomas Price, *Independent African: John Chilembwe and the Origins, Setting and Significance of the Nyasaland Native Rising of 1915* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1958); Landeg White, *Magomero: Portrait of an African Village* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987). The rising led by John Chilembwe in present-day Malawi can be seen as an instance of the wider phenomenon of Ethiopianism, whose varieties deployed from the late nineteenth century onward Christian idioms to advance the cause of African liberation and independence. See James T. Campbell, *Songs of Zion: The African Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States and South Africa* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998); Hastings, *Church in Africa,* 478–87.

24. Karen Fields, *Revival and Rebellion in Colonial Central Africa* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985).

25. Jean Comaroff, *Body of Power, Spirit of Resistance: The Culture and History of a South African People* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985).

26. One example of changing perspectives on power and resistance is the work of James C. Scott, notably *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985). See also Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990). Another influence, particularly apparent in Jean Comaroff's work, was the cultural studies school initiated in Birmingham in the United Kingdom by, among others, Stuart Hall. See, for example, Hall and Tony Jefferson, eds., *Resistance through Rituals: Youth Subcultures in Post-war Britain* (London: Hutchinson, 1976).

27. See, for example, Lila Abu-Lughod, "The Romance of Resistance: Tracing Transformations of Power through Bedouin Women," *American Ethnologist* 17, no. 1 (1990): 41–55; Sherry Ortner, "Resistance and the Problem of Ethnographic Refusal," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 37, no. 1 (1995): 173–93.

28. Mahmood, *Politics of Piety,* 15.

29. Matthew Schoffeleers, "Ritual Healing and Political Acquiescence: The Case of the Zionist Churches in Southern Africa," *Africa* 61, no. 1 (1991): 1–25.

30. See, for example, Barbara Bompani, "African Independent Churches in Post-apartheid South Africa: New Political Interpretations," *Journal of Southern African Studies* 34, no. 3 (2008): 665–77; Joel Cabrita, "Isaiah Shembe's Theological Nationalism, 1920s–1935," *Journal of Southern African Studies* 35, no. 3 (2009): 609–25; Liz Gunner, *The Man of Heaven and the Beautiful Ones of God: Writings from Ibandla lama Nazaretha, a South African Church* (Leiden: Brill, 2002).

31. Richard Werbner, "The Political Economy of Bricolage," *Journal of Southern African Studies* 13, no. 1 (1986): 151–56.

32. Jean Comaroff and John Comaroff, introduction to *Modernity and Its Malcontents: Ritual and Power in Postcolonial Africa,* ed. Jean Comaroff and John Comaroff (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993); Comaroff and Comaroff, "Occult Economies and the Violence of Abstraction: Notes from the South African Postcolony," *American Ethnologist* 26, no. 2 (1999): 279–303. Among the many critiques of the Comaroffs' argument about witchcraft, see esp. Adam Ashforth, *Witchcraft, Violence, and Democracy in South Africa* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 116–21.

33. Ruth Marshall, *Political Spiritualities: The Pentecostal Revolution in Nigeria* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 29.

34. Ibid., 28.

35. A remarkable precedent for such rethinking can be found in Talal Asad's critique of the category of religion in anthropology. See Asad, *Genealogies of Religion: Discipline and Reasons of Power in Christianity and Islam* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), 27–54.

36. As the above discussion has indicated, the Comaroffs' work has represented religious resistance as both cognitive and nonverbal.

37. Karin Barber, *The Anthropology of Texts, Persons, and Publics: Oral and Written Culture in Africa and Beyond* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 139–40.

38. Michael Warner, *Publics and Counterpublics* (New York: Zone Books, 2002), 56.

39. For example, Harri Englund, "Pentecostalism beyond Belief: Trust and Democracy in a Malawian Township," *Africa* 77, no. 4 (2007): 477–99; Thomas G. Kirsch, "Restaging the Will to Believe: Religious Pluralism, Anti-syncretism, and the Problem of Belief," *American Anthropologist* 106, no. 4 (2004): 699–709; Galina Lindquist and Simon Coleman, "Against Belief?" *Social Analysis* 52, no. 1 (2008): 1–18; Joel Robbins,

"Continuity Thinking and the Problem of Christian Culture: Belief, Time, and the Anthropology of Christianity," *Current Anthropology* 48, no. 1 (2007): 5–38.

40. Malcolm Ruel, *Belief, Ritual and the Securing of Life: Reflexive Essays on a Bantu Religion* (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 36.

41. Wilfred Cantwell Smith, *Belief and History* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1977); Smith, *Faith and Belief* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979).

42. Ruel, *Belief,* 36–59.

43. Dale F. Eickelman and Jon W. Anderson, eds., *New Media in the Muslim World: The Emerging Public Sphere* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999); Rosalind I. J. Hackett, "Charismatic/Pentecostal Appropriations of Media Technologies in Nigeria and Ghana," *Journal of Religion in Africa* 28, no. 3 (1998): 258–77; Birgit Meyer and Annelies Moors, eds., *Religion, Media, and the Public Sphere* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006); Dorothea A. Schulz, "'Charisma and Brotherhood' Revisited: Mass-Mediated Forms of Spirituality in Urban Mali," *Journal of Religion in Africa* 33, no. 2 (2003): 146–71; Hent de Vries and Samuel Weber, eds., *Religion and Media* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001); Marleen de Witte, "Altar Media's *Living Word:* Televised Charismatic Christianity in Ghana," *Journal of Religion in Africa* 33, no. 2 (2003): 172–202.

44. Meyer and Moors, introduction to *Religion and Media,* 7. See also Harri Englund, "Witchcraft and the Limits of Mass Mediation in Malawi," *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 13, no. 2 (2007): 295–311; Jeremy Stolow, "Religion and/as Media," *Theory, Culture and Society* 22, no. 4 (2005): 119–45; Hent de Vries, "In Media Res: Global Religion, Public Spheres, and the Task of Contemporary Comparative Religious Studies," in Vries and Weber, *Religion and Media,* 3–42.

45. Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1989).

46. Ibid., 23.

47. An excellent guide to the critique of Habermas remains Craig Calhoun, ed., *Habermas and the Public Sphere* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1992).

48. For example, Nick Crossley and John Michael Roberts, eds., *After Habermas: New Perspectives on the Public Sphere* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004); Jon Elster, ed., *Deliberative Democracy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Luke Goode, *Jürgen Habermas: Democracy and the Public Sphere* (London: Pluto Press, 2005); Christina Tarnopolsky, "Platonic Reflections on the Aesthetic Dimensions of Deliberative Democracy," *Political Theory* 35, no. 3 (2007): 288–312.

49. Comaroff and Comaroff, *Dialectics of Modernity;* Hastings, *Church in Africa,* 277; Markku Hokkanen, *Medicine and Scottish Missionaries in the Northern Malawi Region, 1875–1930: Quests for Health in a Colonial Society* (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 2008).

50. J. D. Y. Peel, "Christianity and the Logic of Nationalist Assertion in Wole Soyinka's *Ìsarà,*" in *Christianity and the African Imagination: Essays in Honour of Adrian Hastings,* ed. David Maxwell with Ingrid Lawrie (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 127–50.

51. Harri Englund, "The Dead Hand of Human Rights: Contrasting Christianities in Post-transition Malawi," *Journal of Modern African Studies* 38, no. 4 (2000): 600; David Maxwell, *African Gifts of the Spirit: Pentecostalism and the Rise of a Zimbabwean Transnational Religious Movement* (Oxford: James Currey, 2006), 218–21.

52. Maxwell, *African Gifts,* 38–59.

53. Paul Gifford, *The New Crusaders: Christianity and the New Right in Southern Africa* (London: Pluto Press, 1991).

54. Paul Gifford, *African Christianities and Public Life: A View from Kenya* (London: Hurst, 2009); Gifford, *Ghana's New Christianity: Pentecostalism in a Globalising African Economy* (London: Hurst, 2004).

55. Patrick Chabal, *Africa: The Politics of Suffering and Smiling* (London: Zed, 2009), 102.

56. Birgit Meyer, "Christianity in Africa: From African Independent to Pentecostal-Charismatic Churches," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 33, no. 1 (2004): 448. Unlike Chabal, Meyer indicates familiarity with Pentecostal diversity.

57. Chabal, *Africa,* 102.

58. See, for example, Matthew Engelke, *A Problem of Presence: Beyond Scripture in an African Church* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007); Thomas G. Kirsch, *Spirits and Letters: Reading, Writing and Charisma in African Christianity* (New York: Berghahn, 2008); Isabel Mukonyora, *Wandering a Gendered Wilderness: Suffering and Healing in an African Initiated Church* (New York: Peter Lang, 2007).

59. David Maxwell, introduction to *Christianity and the African Imagination: Essays in Honour of Adrian Hastings,* ed. David Maxwell, with Ingrid Lawrie (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 21.

60. Erica Bornstein, *The Spirit of Development: Protestant NGOs, Morality, and Economics in Zimbabwe* (New York: Routledge, 2003).

61. Allan Anderson, *An Introduction to Pentecostalism: Global Charismatic Christianity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 13–14.

62. See Gary B. McGee, "Pentecostal Missiology: Moving beyond Triumphalism to Face the Issues," *Pneuma* 16, no. 2 (1994): 276–77.

63. David Martin, *Pentecostalism: The World Their Parish* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002); Donald E. Miller and Tetsunao Yamamori, *Global Pentecostalism: The New Face of Christian Social Engagement* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007).

64. Birgit Meyer, "Commodities and the Power of Prayer: Pentecostalist Attitudes towards Consumption in Contemporary Ghana," *Development and Change* 29, no. 4 (1998): 751–77.

65. André Corten and Ruth Marshall-Fratani, ed., *Between Babel and Pentecost: Transnational Pentecostalism in Africa and Latin America* (London: Hurst, 2001).

66. Rijk A. van Dijk, "From Camp to Encompassment: Discourses of Transsubjectivity in the Ghanaian Pentecostal Diaspora," *Journal of Religion in Africa* 27, no. 2 (1997): 135–59; Dijk, "Negotiating Marriage: Questions of Morality and Testimony in the Ghanaian Pentecostal Diaspora," *Journal of Religion in Africa* 34, no. 4 (2004): 438–67.

67. De Witte, "Altar Media"; Hackett, "Charismatic/Pentecostal Appropriations"; Birgit Meyer, "'Praise the Lord': Popular Cinema and Pentecostalite Style in Ghana's New Public Sphere," *American Ethnologist* 31, no. 1 (2004): 92–110.

68. Hansjörg Dilger, "Healing the Wounds of Modernity: Salvation, Community, and Care in a Neo-Pentecostal Church in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania," *Journal of Religion in Africa* 37, no. 1 (2007): 59–83; Frederick Klaits, *Death in a Church of Life: Moral Passion during Botswana's Time of AIDS* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010); James Pfeiffer, "Condom Social Marketing, Pentecostalism, and Structural Adjustment in Mozambique: A Clash of AIDS Prevention Messages," *Medical Anthropology Quarterly* 18, no. 1 (2004): 77–103.