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Africa, the New African Diaspora, and Religious Transnationalism in a Global World

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INTRODUCTION:
AFRICA, THE NEW AFRICAN DIASPORA, AND
RELIGIOUS TRANSNATIONALISM IN A GLOBAL WORLD

by

James V. Spickard and Afe Adogame

From
Religion Crossing Boundaries:
Transnational Religious and Social Dynamics in
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The common American phrase “all politics are local” could just as easily be applied to religion. Religion does not live in the world as a vague abstraction; it lives through specific people, in specific organizations, and in specific communities. Whenever we look for religion, we find it in churches, mosques, temples, synagogues, prayer meetings, pilgrimages, or in the solitude of individual holy practice. We find it in the ways that people in such places interact with one another, carry out their religious duties, and envision a universe that makes those duties meaningful. And we find it outside such settings, as these people carry their religious visions, ideals, and practices into the public sphere. There, indeed, they often use religion to fight with one another about the meaning of life, about ethics, and about public policy.

This makes the sociology of religion important. Sociology shows us the daily patterns on which religions draw and focuses on actual people as they make their actual way in the world. It helps us see how religions operate in specific historical moments, whether at the individual, the communal, or the societal level. Lately, it reminds us to examine what is happening to religion in a globalizing world.

What do we mean by “globalizing”? Without delving into the various sociological understandings of that term, we simply mean that the contemporary world is interconnected as it has never been before. Swift, cheap air travel, multiple modes of communication, and the growth of a world-wide economic market have created ties between people who previously had few points of attachment. These can be as benign as having a Libyan neighbor married to a Texan, putting on a party for Anglophone neighbors that features Mexican food and dances. They can be as dire as an interconnected financial collapse, in which a crisis in one part of the world creates chaos in

another. The point is, the world is now a transnational field, in which religion operates alongside other social institutions and forces. Religion’s “locality” thus crosses borders in new and complex ways.

This book explores such transnational localism for one particular set of religions – those that are based in, or connected to, sub-Saharan Africa. In this introduction, we shall provide an overview of religions in this sub-continent, particularly the various Christianities about which most of our contributors write, the Pentecostal/charismatic, and African Independent or Indigenous Churches (AICs)¹; and dimensions of neo-traditional African religions. Then we shall review several models of religious transnationalism, each of which focuses on a particular aspect of religions’ cross-border activities – both in Africa and elsewhere. Together, these sections will set the context for our contributors’ chapters, which we shall summarize at the end of our introduction.

Religion in Africa: A Very Brief Overview

The African continent is extremely complex – historically, culturally, religiously, socially, and linguistically. It is home to many indigenous religions that, despite their diversity, share common affinities in their core ideas, rituals, and worldviews (Adogame 2007d: 529, 2009: 77) It has also long been influenced by outside religions – particularly Islam and Christianity, but also other Eastern and Western-related spiritualities. These introduced new religious ideas and practices, which caused the abandonment of some indigenous beliefs and rituals and the transformation or reinvention of others. Islam and Christianity also changed as they adjusted to the African context. Finally, such interreligious contact, plus the massive social changes brought about by colonialism, produced several new religions, some of which appropriated indigenous symbols and gave them a new twist.²

Africa is thus not merely a passive recipient of global pressures. It is also a site of religious creativity that has had considerable effect on the outside world. The growth and global influence of each of the three religious heritages of sub-Saharan Africa – indigenous religions, Christianity and Islam – needs to be understood against the backdrop of mutual influence and exchange at various historical epochs (Adogame 2007d; 545). Owing to the fact that most chapters in this volume focus on Christianity (Pentecostalism and AICs), and to a lesser extent on neo-traditional religions and indigenous reli-

¹ Both terms share the acronym, as do two other terms for the same religious groups: “African Initiated Churches” and “African Instituted Churches”. Researchers typically use whichever term emphasizes their main point of interest.

² For details, see Adogame 2007d: 525-547; 2009; 75-100.

gious practices, we shall briefly map the historical trajectories of Christianity in this region.³

Christianity was present in North Africa beginning in late antiquity, where it played a large role in the development of the Christian tradition. It was, however, only weakly influential farther south, for its Latinized brand of Christianity lacked the features it would have needed to become a true missionary church and to penetrate the life of the indigenous peoples. Swept aside by the Muslim conquest, the Church left footprints in places such as Egypt and Nubia (Ethiopia); yet what remained in North Africa had little effect on the rest of the continent.

A second phase of Christianization began in the late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, with the activities of Portuguese Catholics in various African societies. Major influence was focused on Central African, particularly the Kongo Kingdom and the Zambezi valley; on the Warri and Benin Kingdoms of the Niger Delta area; and the hitherto unpopulated islands of Cape Verde and Sao Tome. The Portuguese were not just religiously motivated, as there were distinct economic and political gains inherent in their venture, especially the trade in slaves. Church and State worked hand in hand to realize possibilities on all fronts. Wherever the Portuguese flag was pitched, the Jesuits and other missionaries were on its trail.

The few Christian communities established through Portuguese influence were fragile, though, and did not always survive in the African context. The Catholic mission enterprise in Africa was intricately linked with the Portuguese crown, and so when Portugal's imperial power dwindled, the mission shrank with it. The great weakness of the Christian efforts in Africa in these middle years was its close association with the slave trade. There was a well-recognized but unsolved contradiction between converting Africans and purchasing them as slaves simultaneously.

Protestantism had its own strong foothold in South Africa, beginning with the Dutch settlement at the Cape in 1652 and the later (1688) Huguenot entrance into the colony. The colony held slaves, quite a number of whom were baptized, and in 1683 a regulation was passed which declared that all baptized slaves should be free. In 1737 Georg Schmidt of the Moravian Brethren came to South Africa, and the latter half of the eighteenth century witnessed the beginning of British missions, both there and elsewhere.

The late eighteenth century onwards witnessed a remarkable proliferation of Protestant missionary societies. Some of the Protestant missionaries, like their Catholic predecessors, traded slaves or collaborated with the traders. This declined with the growth of the anti-slavery movement, how-

ever. The conversion of slaves to Christianity – forced or otherwise – fed anti-slavery agitation, by raising the question of how Christians could own their co-religionists. Several freed (and Christian) slaves played key roles in the campaign. With the later resettlement of former slaves in Sierra Leone and Liberia, African Christians spearheaded the evangelization of their original homeland. For example, Samuel Ajayi Crowther led the Yoruba Christians and became the first African Bishop of the Anglican Church. Other freed Africans led the evangelization of Buganda, Madagascar, and various parts of southern Africa. (See Walls 1992)

The modern phase of missionary enterprise in Africa began with the foundation of the Baptist Missionary Society (BMS) in 1792, the London Missionary Society (LMS) in 1795, and the Church Missionary Society (CMS) in 1799. The process continued with the establishment of the British and Foreign Bible Society (BFBS) in 1804, the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) in 1810, the Leeds Methodist Missionary Society (LMMS) in 1813, the Basel Mission in 1815, and many others. While these new Protestant mission societies differed considerably in their forms of organization, they were overwhelmingly evangelical in character. Their missionary concerns were international in scope, with each Society mapping and developing a particular regional focus for actual mission work. Despite early cooperation, there was often considerable rivalry between some mission bodies. Decades of missionary endeavor produced only a small number of African converts. (See Kalu 2007a)

Between 1880 and 1920, the heyday of European imperialism, there was a dramatic expansion in the number of missionaries at work in Africa. This was exacerbated by the Berlin/Congo 1884-5 Conference where the scramble and partition of Africa by European imperial powers was formalized. Missionaries in the field often supported the imperial ambitions of their compatriots, so much so that mission and imperialism became understood by many as two sides of the same coin. The missionizing task also became synonymous with the transplantation of western civilization. The implication of this development was that African converts were taught to repudiate African culture in its entirety and assume a new status of, for instance, a 'Europeanized African'. Here was the quandary which lay at the very core of the missionary enterprise. To what extent should an African adopt the trappings of Western civilization? To what extent should he or she abandon the African culture in order to embrace the White man's faith? The attempt to reconcile these inherent contradictions within mission Christianity produced a new phase of indigenous and independent Christianity in Africa. The subsequent expansion of Christianity in the twentieth century has largely been the handiwork of African evangelists themselves. (Kalu 2007a)

³ For more details about the history of Christianity in Africa, see Walls (1996); Sundkler and Steed (2000); Kalu (2007a) and Adogame *et al.* (2008).

Generally, African Indigenous or Independent Churches (AICs) can be understood from at least three levels of development. The earliest strand refers to churches which severed from the existing mission churches owing to a number of irreconcilable issues. They flourished mainly in South Africa as 'Ethiopian Churches' and in West Africa as 'African Churches' from the 1890s. They emerged out of similar circumstances such as conflicts over rigid White (European) missionary control and domination, discrimination against local African actors, disputes over resources, a general feeling of marginalization among educated Africans, and formal apartheid – the latter mainly in the South African context. One notable feature of these churches was that in spite of the change in the mantle of church leadership, they were still tied to the apron-strings of the mission churches in their liturgical and hierarchical structures. Some of them still depended largely on the parent churches for financial resources.

The 1920s and 30s witnessed a second wave of new beginnings within Christian independency (Adogame and Jafta 2007). They include the Zionists in South Africa; the Aladura Churches (Nigeria) and Spirit Churches (Ghana) in West Africa; the Roho Churches in East Africa; and the Kimbanguist Churches (Zaire/Congo) in Central Africa. The growth of these prophetic or healing churches was the most dramatic aspect of twentieth century Christianity in sub-Saharan Africa. The centrality of the Bible, ecstatic prayers, healing, prophecy, visions and dreams, elaborate rituals, flexible modes of worship and liturgies, and charismatic leadership shape a particularly African brand of Christianity. They typically embrace a functional theology and a pragmatic approach to life, which endeared them to many Africans. Though they utterly condemn and reject the traditional religion as 'fetish' and 'demonic', their belief systems and ritual structures appear to have affinities with African cosmologies. That is why they attract members not only from the mainline churches, but also from other Christian as well as non-Christian groups, including Islam and the various traditional religions.

Despite these similarities, each of these prophetic churches has its own religious dynamic. There are differences in specific doctrines and details of ritual acts and performance, along with differences in their social and historical origins. Two patterns of emergence dominate. The earlier groups emerged from or had their nucleus as 'prayer bands' or 'fellowship groups' within the mainline church, from which they later separated. Churches in this category include the Cherubim and Seraphim (1925) and the Church of the Lord - Aladura (1930) in Nigeria, the Musama Disco Christo Church (1922) in Ghana, and the Nazarite Baptist Church (called Nazarites or ama-Nazaretha) (1911) in South Africa. Later groups were founded through the visionary experience of a charismatic figure, and arose independently of any existing mission church. Typical examples are the Celestial Church of Christ

(1947) in Nigeria, the Harrist Churches (1922) in Liberia, and the Kimbanguist Churches (1921) in Zaire/Congo.

The most recent development within Africa Christianity is the emergence and increasing proliferation of Pentecostal and Charismatic Churches, especially from the 1950s and 60s onwards. (see Kalu 2008) These have proliferated in virtually all parts of sub-Saharan Africa. We can distinguish at least two categories of Pentecostal/Charismatic Movements: indigenous Pentecostal groups and those founded as branches or missions by Pentecostal groups from abroad. The indigenous groups include the Redeemed Christian Church of God, the Deeper Life Bible Church, the Church of Pentecost, Winners Chapel, and the Rhema Bible Church. Those planted from abroad include the Four Square Gospel Church, the Full Gospel Businessmen Fellowship International, Campus Crusade for Christ, Youth with a Mission, Christ for all Nations, etc. Churches in the former group were typically founded earlier, are largely independent, and hardly ever rely on external assistance, while many groups in the latter, at least in their infancy, relied on outside funds, literature and sometimes personnel from their mission headquarters. The indigenous Pentecostal groups have also embarked on their own mission activities, by planting branches in U.S.A., Canada, Europe and other parts of the world – a reverse mission processes that is quite fascinating to explore.

Two common features of all these Pentecostal churches are an emphasis on a personal religious conversion experience or spiritual rebirth and the manifestation of charismatic gifts such as speaking in tongues (glossolalia). Some churches are more or less 'holiness movements', more interested in religious experience than in rituals. Others are noted for preaching a 'prosperity gospel'. Some groups have assimilated ideas and features originating in American Pentecostalism. On the other hand, the commitment to the gospel of prosperity fits in well with values of the African indigenous culture, where elaborate religious rituals are engaged to ensure prosperity, health, and protection against malevolent spiritual forces. That is one reason why Christian groups such as the Pentecostal/charismatic churches, as well as the Aladura or prophetic churches, have continued to expand in contemporary Africa and in the new African diaspora. Both seek to address their members' day to day, existential problems; both see the benevolent spiritual entities as helping people in their everyday lives.

Though there is less written about the sociology of African religions than there is on religions in other parts of the world, there is some good sociologically-informed scholarship on these matters. Among the Americans, the work of Bennetta Jules-Rosette (1975; 1979) is probably the best known. More European sociologists have studied the continent's religions, among them Ruth Marshall-Fratani (2001, 2009), David Maxwell (2006), Peter

Clarke (1986, 1995, 1998), and John Peel (1968; Peel and Stewart 1987). African scholars of religion, sociologists, and historians are themselves joining this international conversation. Among them we can mention Ogbu Kalu (2008), Matthews Ojo (2006), and Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu (2005) – the last of whom has contributed a chapter on African Christianity’s use of the media to this volume.⁴

Seven Patterns of Religious Transnationalism

So much for the background on African religions; now we need a bit of background on religious transnationalism. The fact is, people move, and they take their religions with them. Humans have always been a traveling lot, but the flow of people across national borders has been a flood for at least forty years. Economic migrants seeking opportunities far from their homelands, political refugees fleeing death or imprisonment, religious missionaries out to win the world for their faiths – these people are now found everywhere. Yes, the Roman Empire mixed peoples from all over the Mediterranean. Chinese fleets and traders spanned the Asian world and perhaps beyond. Some Africans rode to Mecca, and others were sent abroad in chains, in the first African diaspora, which so shaped our present world. Willing travelers or forced by power or circumstance, people have always left their homes for strange lands.

Yet our era is qualitatively different. It is not just the number of people on the go, nor their reasons, though these matter. It is the fact that they are going everywhere at once, in all directions, even as they remain connected with all the places that they have been. Cheap, swift travel, multiple communications technologies, and an interconnected world financial system have figuratively shrunk our networked globe.

We shall take our first editor as an example. He has lived in Nigeria, Germany, the US, and the United Kingdom at different stages of his academic career. He travels frequently to attend professional meetings and work with scholars worldwide, enough that his colleagues dub him “the airport Professor”. In 2008 alone, he made five trips to the US and Canada from his home in Edinburgh (UK), visiting five states, one province, and 12 cities. Professional assignments and meetings also took him to Germany, Spain, the Netherlands, Ireland, and Italy, with other visits to Singapore, South Africa, and Ghana. Alongside these were many ‘local’ trips within the UK. Still, his itinerary cannot compare with the even fuller travel schedules of contemporary captains of industries, of politicians, or with those of the various reli-

gious entrepreneurs who traverse the globe to attend to their respective businesses, building new ties and maintaining old links and networks.

One might expect this of intellectuals and of political, economic, and religious entrepreneurs, but relative non-elites, too, lead surprisingly cosmopolitan lives. Some years ago, when the second editor lived in a California farming town, he became friends with a working-class Galician (Spanish) family that travelled freely, if not quite legally, between the U.S., Mexico, and Spain. Later on, a similarly situated Salvadoran family spent a year as guests in his home, refugees from the death squads during that country’s civil war. At the war’s end, they and other Salvadorans floated between their two countries, as family and their economic situation required. Sociologist Peggy Levitt (2001) described the religious lives of one such community of working-class “transnational villagers”, who are equally at home in the Jamaica Plain section of Boston and in the Dominican village of Miraflores. Omar McRoberts (2005) chronicled the impact of West Indian migrants on the religious ecology of another part of Boston. Karen McCarthy Brown (2001) noted the back-and-forth religious trade between Haiti and Brooklyn, as it affected Lourdes, a Vodou priestess and the subject of Brown’s ethnographic biography. Olivier Roy (2004; 2010) described networks of Moslem migrants, elite and non-elite, who have lived so many places that they have become “deterritorialized”; he thinks that radical Islam becomes, for them, a substitute for place, as a source of connection and meaning.

African religions and African migration deserve a place in this survey, but there is much less literature on sub-Saharan African religious transnationalism than there is about the religious lives of migrants to and from other parts of the world. Filling this gap is one of our chief reasons for producing this volume. (We’ll say more about this below.)

Another chief point of this book has to do with the limited ways that sociologists of religion have thought about the religious dimensions of contemporary transnationalism. More sociologists have focused on migration than on other aspects of cross-border connections, and most have viewed that migration through the lens of what historian Paul Spickard (2007) calls “the Ellis Island model”. Based on late-19th and early 20th century European immigration to the United States, much of which came through the Ellis Island Federal Immigration Station in New York harbor, this approach sees migrants shedding their old-country identities in order to become Americans, Canadians, or what have you.

In this model, people move, and permanently. First-generation migrants do not fully succeed at becoming “native” to their new homes, but their children and grandchildren gradually do so. In the American case, they (supposedly) join the famous “melting pot”, by which Latvians, Poles, Italians,

⁴ See also the contributions to the volumes edited by Olupona and Gemignani (2007), Adogame and Weissköppel (2005), and Adogame *et al.* (2008).

French, Germans, Croatians, and the like all, in time, became Americans.⁵ Similarly, Algerians and francophone West Africans can become French, so long as they pledge allegiance to the French state. Swiss and Italian migrants can (recently) become German, as can Turks – at least in theory. In reality, they have more trouble being accepted, in part because Germans treat Turks, even secular ones, as ‘Muslims’ and thus as potentially unassimilable (Gök-türk *et al.* 2007). The American case has precedents for this, as well, especially in the anti-Catholic agitation (even riots!) of the 1840s (Fitzgerald 1992).

The Ellis Island model notes, however, that religion can also aid the assimilation process. Religion certainly helped European immigrants become Americans during the massive immigration to the U.S. in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The American Catholic Church set up ethnic parishes, to ease migrants’ transition to their new land while keeping them Catholic. Various Protestant groups formed ethnic denominations: Swedish, Norwegian, and German Lutherans, German and Swedish Baptists, and so on. After assimilation, many ethnic parishes closed and various Protestant groups merged. By the 1950s, Will Herberg (1960) could write about American religion as a process by which various immigrant peoples become unhyphenated Protestants, Catholics, or Jews.

Recent sociological work on American immigrant religion sees similar processes happening today. Warner and Wittner’s “New Immigrants Project” showed how new immigrants to the U.S. can become even more religious in their new country than they were in their old. Theirs and other studies show immigrants molding their home religions to fit America’s dominant organizational form – the congregation. Wendy Cadge’s (2005) Thai Buddhist community, for example, has become quasi-congregational, with lay leaders taking a much larger role in the community’s life than was the case in Thailand. This is typical, as immigrant laity do not wait for religious specialists to decide where (or whether) to build the churches, mosques, and temples that they feel they need. Laity buy the land, build the buildings, hire the priests, ministers, or imams, and even organize the pattern of services. Anjun Appadurai (1996:56-57) writes of attempting to visit a Hindu priest in India, only to find that he had been hired away to staff a temple in Houston – the site of Ebaugh and Chafetz’s (2000, 2002) immigrant congregation studies. Clearly, religion is changed in this transnational process.

Yet, the Ellis Island model describes but a single transnational pattern, one that is perhaps not the most important in today’s world. Though instructive, the model has problems – among them the fact that it does not deal with

race well (P. Spickard 2007; but see Warner 1998). While Latvians, Poles, Italians, etc. did become Americans, they really became White Americans, able to celebrate their optional ethnicities (Waters 1994). African-Americans, Mexican-Americans, and Asian-Americans did not have the option of assimilating to Whiteness. The problems faced by African-Americans are the most familiar, but Frank Wu (2001) has written movingly about the “perpetual foreigner syndrome”, by which Asian-Americans are cast as outsiders, no matter how many generations their families have lived in the United States. Germany’s Turkish citizens might recognize this treatment Ignatieff 1993). Be that as it may, the Ellis Island model is but one of several ways in which religion crosses borders in the contemporary world.

We have identified six other patterns of such border-crossings, which we shall call “religious bi-localism”, “religious cacophony”, “reverse missions”, “South-South religious trade”, “transnational organization theory”, and “de-territorialized religious identity”. All appear in the sociological literature, though not all have received extensive treatment. Together with the Ellis Island model, these patterns describe a very complex transnational religious scene.

We mentioned religious bi-localism a few paragraphs ago, in citing the work of Peggy Levitt. She studied Dominican migrants to a Boston neighborhood, finding that the presence of cheap communications and affordable air travel allowed them to become integrated into the U.S. while simultaneously maintaining close ties to the folks back home. Specifically, they could, and did, participate in parish activities in both Boston and in the Dominican village of Miraflores, down to the details of gossip and social pressure that are so typical of church life. They did not just send money, the economic remittances that sustain many poorer countries. Equally in play were what Levitt calls “social remittances”: the exchange of ideas, practices, and even identities that shifted the Dominican parish’s sense of itself. These shifts ran both ways, from Miraflores to Boston and back again; both ends were changed. The title of Levitt’s book, Transnational Villagers, aptly describes the result.

Levitt’s recent work (2007) traces the family connections, social networks, and religious exchanges linking towns in the Boston area to Valadares (Brazil), Gujarat (India), Karachi (Pakistan) and Inishowen (Ireland). She shows in great detail how transnational migrants can live fully in two worlds, remaining residents both of America and of the world of their origin. Religion plays a large role in this living. She reports, for example, on “Gurjaratis and Pakistanis who are helping to create and re-create Islam and Hinduism in this country as well as in their homeland” (2007:170). Her point is that religion is becoming as global as are politics and business. “People who live transnationally are the face of the future” (2007:169), and religious transna-

⁵ American Indian activist Vine Deloria described a “melting pot” as “a cauldron in which the scum rises to the top and everything on the bottom gets burned.”

tionalism is part of that face. Easy travel and electronic communications make migrant life different today than it was in the past.

What of the communities in which these transnational migrants settle? Some groups join immigrant “ghettos”, choosing to live with people very much like themselves. For example, the city of Monterey Park, in southern California, is a noted magnet for immigrant Taiwanese, who shape the city’s religious life as well as its politics and culture (Chen 2008). But there is another pattern, one that urban ecologist Greg Smith describes in the Newham area of East London. There, immigrant groups have built a *mélange* of peoples and faiths, living cheek by jowl. According to the 2001 British Census,

Newham is one of the most ethnically and religiously diverse districts in Britain with only 33.8% of its people being recorded as White British, with Black Africans (13%) being the next largest group, followed by Indians (12%), Bangladeshi (9%), Pakistanis (8%), Black Caribbeans (7%) and Other Whites (4%). . .

These people bring with them a huge variety of religions. Smith’s (2000) survey of the area found over 300 religious groups using 104 different buildings for their services. The majority were Christian – some 60% – but most of these were small Pentecostal groups that catered to African, Caribbean, and Latin American migrants. There were 22 mosques, along with numerous congregations serving at least ten other major religious groupings (Hindus, Jews, Sikhs, Buddhists, and so on).

A walk through this neighborhood produces some striking juxtapositions.⁶ The Calvary Charismatic Baptist Church (Caribbean Pentecostal) on Barking Road stands next door to the Canning Town Muslim Trust – a mosque that now occupies what was once the local synagogue. A betting shop flanks the mosque on the other side. Three blocks farther east, just off Barking, is Glory House, a charismatic prosperity-gospel church, whose multi-ethnic congregation has a multi-national African leadership. Their building was once a mainline Christian church, then it became a shop. It is now a church again.

Moving east, one comes to the Plaistow Christian Fellowship (named for one of Newham’s sub-neighborhoods), then to the Ethiopian Christian Fellowship – a group begun in order to provide services in Amharic to expatriates. It has, however, grown largely by evangelizing second-generation Ethiopians and Eritreans born in the UK. Around the corner to the south, we find St. Andrew’s Church, a successful Anglican congregation that advertises

itself as “a spiritual home to 23 ethnic groups”. The list of varied religious communities and their ritual spaces go on and on.

Most of these congregations have little to do with one another. As Smith (2000:27) puts it, “Whatever contact does exist has usually been initiated by Christians with a specific liberal theology, and has met a more open response among Hindus, Buddhists, and Baha’ists than among Muslim leaders.”

Smith (2000:23) points out that the religious vitality of this area “is a notable contrast to recent national trends in the UK.” Ninety-four of Newham’s religious bodies have been founded since 1971 – and the proportion is higher for the Pentecostal, Hindu, Muslim, and Sikh groups that most serve immigrants. Unlike the older British denominations, “for the most part, these new faith communities have operated as refuges from the troubles of wider society rather than as bases for engagement with it” (Smith 2000:24).

We are calling this situation “religious cacophony”. Immigration to places like Newham has created a multitude of religious voices, each crying for attention. This kind of religion does not offer a smooth transition into British life; it reformulates that life as multi-cultural and multi-vocal. Add in the fact that these migrants, like Levitt’s, maintain complex ties with the various places they have previously lived, and we see Newham as a miniature of very complicated world. The Ellis Island model is by no means the whole story.

The next three approaches are related to one another. “Reverse missions”, “South-South religious trade”, and “transnational organization theory” all break the stereotype that places the North Atlantic at the center of the religious universe. Each illustrates a kind of religious action that may include “the West”, but which does not privilege it.

Reverse missions are not hard to comprehend. In ‘the old days’, American and European churches sent out missions to other parts of the world, hoping to help ‘the heathen’ and to ‘save souls for Christ’. Such missions continue today, but missionaries now also come from those other parts to re-Christianize the Metropole – particularly Europe, where organized Christianity is far weaker than it used to be. Ironically, these ‘new missionaries’ from the non-West are appropriating a similar rhetoric in describing Europe as a ‘dark’, ‘prodigal’ continent in dire need of mission (reverse flow), in which the heathens (Europeans), lost souls, secularized church and derailed Christians need to be saved and brought back to “life in Christ” (Adogame 2000b, 2002, 2007a, 2007b; cf. Kalu 2008:271-91; Ojo 2007; Akinade 2007).

As another example, we cite Rebecca Catto’s (2007; see also 2008) recent account of twenty-four Melanesian Brothers and Sisters, who came from the Solomon Islands in 2005 to bring the Christian ‘good news’ to England. Part of the Worldwide Anglican Communion, these missionaries displayed a vibrant faith, theologically and socially conservative, but, Catto writes, “in an

⁶ Inspiration for this walk comes from Smith’s unpublished presentation at the 1999 Biennial Conference of the International Society for the Sociology of Religion, Leuven, Belgium. See also Smith (1999). Recent (2008) details were found at Google Maps (<http://maps.google.com>).

idiom shaped by the Melanesians' ethnic and national context." They visited and preached at many English churches, commenting on how old the local Anglicans seemed, relative to their own youth, and on the emptiness of the English cathedrals as opposed to their overflowing churches at home. Catto quotes several English Anglicans, who spoke of their own comparative lack of spiritual vitality. As she puts it, "Missionaries coming to support a struggling mother church in a far more developed nation certainly challenge concepts of mission by disrupting the traditional donor/receiver pattern" (2007:12).

As Catto also notes, there is more than mere role reversal at work here. To start, there is the very clear sense that both hosts and guests are speaking out of a long-standing cultural opposition between East and West, which the latter's wealth contrasts with the former's deep spirituality. Catto's informants buy into the myth that the West has won its material comfort at the price of its soul. The English Anglicans express nostalgia for a time of (supposedly) more certain belief. They do not, however, give up their relative wealth to regain that past. They do not discard their way of life in order to imitate the lives of the missionaries who have come to convert them to Jesus. They are perfectly willing to donate money to support these foreign-born preachers, but the amounts are minor, and they surrender neither position nor power. Unwilling to change, they must be happier with their spiritual situation than they let on, even if they are too polite to their Melanesian guests to say so.

We have left accounts of reverse missions to a companion volume (Adogame and Shankar forthcoming), though our chapter by Mei Mei Sanford on the transnational activities of a *Kerubu ati Serafu* elder touches on related issues. Various other chapters touch on missions of one kind or another, though not in a West-converts-the-Rest mold.

We have also included chapters about what we are calling "South-South religious trade" – the second pattern in our expectation-breaking triumvirate. If old-style missions used to take religious goods from Europe and North America to other parts of the world, and "reverse missions" take them back again, then South-South trade involves religious connections between parts of the global South that leave the North Atlantic out altogether. Several scholars have recently brought attention to these relationships. For example, a volume edited by André Corten and Ruth Marshall-Fratani (2001) explored the connections between African and Latin American Pentecostals. Rijk van Dijk (2001) contributed to that volume; together with Linda van de Kamp, he has also contributed to this one.

This is an exciting field, especially if, as Philip Jenkins (2002) claims, Christianity's center of gravity is shifting southward. But South-South connections between Muslims also need to be explored. In this case, the standard

model assumes that such ties will run through the Middle East. These ties are important, but so are direct ties between, say, Africa and Indonesia, or Africa and Pakistan. We found no contributors knowledgeable about such links, so our volume only contains chapters on Christian South-South ties. We hope that scholars will someday choose to explore these other worlds.

The last pattern of this trio invokes what we call "transnational organization theory". It examines transnational religious organizations, attempting to discover the organizational dynamics that shape transnational religious life.

Transnational religious organizations are not hard to find. Catholicism (both Roman and Orthodox) and the Latter-Day Saints are the most studied, but the Anglican Communion, the World Council of Churches, and various evangelical counterparts are also well-known. Several of the "new religions" of the 1970s and 1980s operated across national boundaries (Lewis 2001). Pentecostal groups have planted churches in different parts of the world, and have attempted at least some transnational coordination (Coleman 2000). Less prominent groups do so as well.

Running a transnational religious organization is no easier than is running a transnational business, and poses many of the same problems. Cross-cultural misunderstanding, economic inequality, bureaucracy, and offensive power relationships all get in the way of smooth operation. The second editor's study of the transnational outreach of one of the new Japanese religions showed some of the issues that arise as religious organizations try to work across national boundaries (Spickard 1991,1995, 2004).

Organizationally speaking, hierarchical transnational religions do not seem to work any better than do hierarchical transnational corporations (Spickard 2004). Though such corporations are clearly powerful international players, they do not always realize the promised comparative advantage of cross-national coordination and internalized transactions (Doz and Prahalad 1993). Put simply, there is a reason that International Telephone and Telegraph – better known as ITT – no longer exists as a powerful international conglomerate: it failed to make money. A good part of its problem was its inability to coordinate its various units, while hamstringing their efforts to respond to their local markets.

Successful transnational corporations, it turns out, can best be thought of as anthills, whose workers organize themselves to carry out self-identified tasks on behalf of the corporation, without waiting for orders from the central office. These corporations amount to inter-organizational networks (Ghoshal and Bartlett 1993). They consist of overlapping constituencies whose cooperation the organizational leadership needs to help, not hinder. As Gunnar Hedlund (1993) puts it, they are "heterarchical" – they emphasize the cooperation of autonomous corporate sub-units across organizational lines, for the benefit of both the sub-units and the corporate whole.

Several of the groups about which our contributors write approximate this model – among them Joël Noret’s and Edlyne Anugwom’s chapters on transnational cooperation at West African Pentecostal revivals. Though the cooperating groups maintain formally independent organizations, they coordinate their activities by exchanging ministers, books and videos, and hosting conferences and traveling delegations. They borrow each other’s expertise, working together to generate mutual success. Yes, some of the parties are more powerful than others; even mutually beneficial evangelistic relationships are not necessarily symmetrical. But their flexibility allows them to respond well to local markets, increasing ‘business’ for all.

We think that the parallel between transnational religious groups and heterarchical transnational corporations is worth pursuing. We suggest that you read our contributors’ chapters with this parallel in mind.

The final transnational pattern that we wish to highlight is a bit different. It involves again transnational migration, but not just the migration from one physical place to another. Instead, it involves the creation of a transnational “imagined community” – one made up of deterritorialized migrants, united by their religious identities.

Our reference to Benedict Anderson’s Imagined Communities (1991) is deliberate. Anderson described how the idea of the ‘ethnic nation’ arose, first in Europe then around the world, and how it reshaped the world political order. The fiction that the world is made up of separate ‘peoples’, each having a shared language, history, culture, and ‘blood’, fed the view that each such ‘people’ deserved its own state. Anderson showed how print-capitalism, museums, maps, and censuses supported this mythologizing, and resulted in our contemporary international state system.

Migration poses a problem for an ethnically based state system, because it takes individuals, families, and groups from one place and puts them in another. Ethnic nationalism works if people stay put, but that is not the case today. Can migrants change their ethnicity, in order to participate as members of their new national community? To some degree, this depends on what they look like, as race-based nativist agitation in many parts of the world has tried to get countries to expel ‘unassimilable foreigners’. (Examples range from Uganda’s 1972 expulsion of East Indians to the U.S. Minuteman Project and France’s Jean-Marie LePen.) The ‘melting-pot’ model of ethnic change works best for people who moved just once and whose skin-color and language match the locals (P. Spickard 2007). Even then, the process takes a couple of generations. American assimilation was aided by the fact that U.S. nationalism is technically based on citizenship rather than ethnicity. German nationalism before 2000, to take an opposite example, was fully ethnic: it welcomed ‘Germans’ whose ancestors had moved to Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union even hundreds of years ago, but made it hard for Italians,

Croats, Turks, and others to become citizens, even if their families had lived in Germany for two or three generations (Ignatieff 1993).

Contemporary migration, however, does not lift people from one place to plant them in another. It is not a move-once-and-settle proposition. Instead, it sets people on a journey with many stopovers but no clear point of arrival. We might have a man born in Egypt, raised in France, educated in Germany and the United States, now teaching in Singapore after stints in Abu Dhabi, Copenhagen, and Johannesburg. We might encounter an ethnically Japanese woman, raised in Peru or Brazil, educated in the United States and France, married to a Moroccan, now retired and living in Spain. Nation and ethnicity cannot define such people, yet they need a sense of belonging every bit as much as do others.

Religions can provide this sense of belonging, precisely because the identity they confer is not based on place. “We are the people who worship God as He wishes” makes perfect sense, no matter where one happens to reside. So does “We are the people whose God has called us to travel with Him in this world.” Such statements tie people to each other, both locally and around the world. It marks off those who belong from those who do not, binding the former into an imagined community.

Olivier Roy explores such a community in his book Globalized Islam (2004). He argues that most contemporary migration is best conceived neither as a set of journeys to somewhere – immigrations – nor as journeys from somewhere – diasporas. Instead, it is best grasped as the creation of delocalized peoples, who must craft new identities that correspond to their delocalized situation. Muslim immigrants to Europe, he says, have become particularly deterritorialized. Those of the first generation are unable to find work in their home countries – for either economic or political reasons – and they are also not accepted in their countries of residence. The second generation feels accepted in neither place, even if they could return to their parents’ countries of origin – which is not the case with many, such as exiled Palestinians. Even if they are formally citizens of one country or another, identifying with that citizenship is barred. In his words,

Highly qualified professionals (such as computer programmers and doctors) and scholars are going from position to position according to market opportunities and political circumstances: an Egyptian born Muslim Brother may teach in Kuala Lumpur, then in Tampa or Berlin. ... The same happens with political refugees. An uprooted, deterritorialized and cosmopolitan intelligentsia, sharing a common language (English or, less often, modern literary Arabic), plays a role in producing values, teachings, and world views adapted to globalization. ... Regional, ethnic, or religious identities take precedence over citizenship and pristine nationalities, according to choices made by the indi-

vidual (an Iraqi Kurd in exile can decide whether he is first an Iraqi, a Kurd, or a Muslim). (Roy 2004:104-5)

The third of these has been most significant, given the problematic nature of ethnicity and the events of the last decade. In Roy's view, it is no surprise that radical Islam has found its most loyal cadres in the West. The 9/11 terrorists (except the Saudis), for example, became born-again Muslims in Western lands. Roy writes,

Far from representing a traditional religious community or culture, on the margins of which they lived, and even rejecting traditional Islam, most of these militants broke with their own past and experienced an individual re-Islamisation in a small cell of uprooted fellows. Here they forged their own Islam, as shown by Muhammad Atta's will. They are not disciples of anybody in Islam, and paradoxically often live according to non-Muslim standards. (Roy 2004:52)

Roy argues that Islamic radicalism provides identity by connecting its converts to a deep religious tradition – a “chain of memory”, to use Danièle Hervieu-Léger's (2000) concept – around which they can order their lives. They see themselves as heirs to a world-historical tradition, one rooted in the 1st century of the *hijira* calendar. It makes sense, Roy says, that “the recomunalised Muslims of the West are fighting at the frontiers of their imaginary *ummah*” (Roy 2004:312) – in New York, London, and Madrid instead of Cairo or Karachi – because they model themselves on the first Muslim fighters, who did likewise. Their chain of memory rejects most of the intervening Muslim centuries, which were more Sufist than Salafi or Wahabi. It picks and chooses among the *hadith*, discards several traditional schools of jurisprudence, and otherwise creates a monotonic Islam, with no colors and even few shades of grey.

Our point is not that deterritorialized religion must be ideological, violent, or even militant, nor do we limit deterritorialized religion to Islam. The point is that contemporary transnational migration can create people who find themselves unconnected with particular places, states, or ethnic groups, but still faced with a burning question of who they are. Some of these people will find a “home” in one or another religion. There, they form communities, not of face-to-face interaction, but of shared identity and purpose. These communities are apt to be sectarian, in the sense that they do not share much with those who walk other religious paths. To use an old Christian phrase, they are “in the world but not of it”. This is a far cry from the Ellis Island model, which saw religions as helping people to adjust to a new, this-worldly, home.

So: we have outlined seven patterns of religious transnationalism: “Ellis Island”, “religious bi-localism”, “religious cacophony”, “reverse missions”, “South-South religious trade”, “transnational organization theory”, and “de-

territorialized religious identity”. We believe that all are significant, though not all are active in any particular case. We have not organized our chapters around them; instead, we present them as sensitizing concepts, useful for seeing the underlying dynamics of religion in a globalizing world.

African Religious Transnationalism

We focus our volume on religious transnationalism, because African religions are increasingly transnational – and because scholars are only now beginning to put that transnationalism under their lenses. Students of African Pentecostalism have made the most progress. A volume edited by André Corten and Ruth Marshall-Fratani (2001) took a transnational perspective. It devoted two essays in the volume's Part I and its entire Part III to exploring such issues as expansion of churches beyond national borders, the new organisational patterns that such expansion requires, identity formation in transnational space, and what one contributing author referred to as ‘trans-subjectivity’ (van Dijk 2001).

More recent studies, such as those by Olupona and Gemignani (2007), Ojo (2008), and our own first editor (Adogame 2007a, 2007b, 2008a, 2008b, 2009) are beginning to tease out the complex internal dynamics and external circumstances that shape these transnational religious processes. Here is a sample of the topics these authors cover.

The book by Olupona and Gemignani (2007) contributes significant theoretical and conceptual perspectives to the emerging field, challenging us to look beyond traditional explanations of migration from Africa, which are usually treated as matters of economics and politics. Instead, it asks us to take religious motives seriously. Among its contributors, for example, Kalu (2007b) weaves the intricate trajectories of the migration process, as both imagined and lived experiences; he canvasses ‘exile’ and ‘crossing Jordan’ discourses as competing models for understanding the diasporic condition. Akinade (2007) and Bongmba (2007) both explore the religious dynamics and motives of mission, in part by examining the rhetoric of ‘reverse mission’ (which we mentioned above).

In his own contribution to another book, Ojo (2008) discusses, from a historical and contextual perspective, transnational religious networks and their interrelationship with the missionary enterprises that have been initiated and promoted by Nigeria-based independent Pentecostal and charismatic movements within West Africa. Adogame (2008a) describes the Embassy of the Blessed Kingdom of God for All Nations founded in Ukraine by Nigerian-born Sunday Adelaja. This is an exceptional example of a church founded by an African immigrant with a non-African membership majority. Adogame explores an instance of religious transnationalisation by focusing on the increasing mobility and itinerancy of the founder/leader, as he moves

between the Ukraine, several countries in Europe, North America, and Africa itself.

African religions have always had international dimensions. On Islam, we can cite works by Salzbrunn (2002), Abusharaf (2003), and Assal (2005), among others.⁷ Mission Christianity in Africa was founded mainly by European and American missionaries, and some of these churches retain significant missionary connections, though they no longer depend on those connections for vitality (Kalu 2008). African Independent Christian churches (AICs) now send missionaries of their own, both throughout the continent and to emigrant groups overseas (Ter Haar 1998; Adogame 2000a, 2000b, 2002; Adogame and Weissköppel 2005). Europe, Canada, and the U.S. host expatriate African communities, which are themselves fertile targets for mission work; many welcome missionaries from the “home country”, and they also send their own missionaries back (Adogame 2008b; Walls 1996; 2000; Hanciles 2008). Some groups connect with other parts of the world: for example, Paul Freston (2001a) describes a lively Pentecostal “trade” between Brazil and Lusophone Angola and Mozambique. In short, wherever Africans have gone or made connections, traits of African religions follow.

Were we to try to cover all this, we would be spread too thin. The term “African Diaspora” is certainly transnational, as it refers to the broad movement of African peoples across the world, much of it rooted in the former slave trade. A volume about transnational religious dynamics in this diaspora could include everything from Garveyism to the National of Islam, and from Voudon to Candomblé. All of these make interesting reading, but they neither break new ground nor do they clearly connect to Africa, one of our chief aims. To keep things simple, we have decided to concentrate on a more recent diaspora – the movement of African peoples during the 50-year post-independence period, both from one African country to another and to overseas. We have further decided to center our chapters on only those religions which have at least one foot in Africa, so to speak – leaving out those groups that operate solely in migrants’ new homes. We have thus asked our contributors to write about one or another aspect of African religious transnationalism, in the context of these recent migrations. This gives us breadth with depth, bringing out aspects of religious transnationalism that would be lost if we tried to cover too broad a field.

This volume, then, speaks to two *lacunae* in the sociological literature: a relative neglect of religions’ transnational dimension and a relative paucity of work on contemporary African religions. The first was understandable before our current global era, but will be less and less excusable as time goes on. The second simply needs to be rectified. What Philip Jenkins (2002) has said

⁷ See also Beck (2007), Sodig (2007), Soares and Otayek (2007).

about “the Global South” as a whole is certainly true of Africa: it is a major center for religious vitality in the contemporary world. The religious life of its people thus deserves to be better known – particularly its transnational dimension, which looms large.

Our Chapters

As noted, we have not organized our chapters according to either one of the foregoing category systems. Instead, we wrote our introduction to give our readers that background they need, to appreciate what our contributors are adding to the literature on African and the new African diasporic religions. Now, however, it is time to provide a brief orientation to the chapters that follow.

We open our volume with a section entitled “Transnational Dynamics in African Migration”. This section consists of four chapters, each of which examines an aspect of religion in the transnational migration process. The first of these, by Ebenezer Obadare and Wale Adebani, explores potential Nigerian migrants’ use of religion in the visa-seeking process. Overwhelmed by uncertainty and by official mistreatment, would-be migrants use religion to gain a sense of control over their fates. The authors argue that post-immigration religious practices must be seen as a continuation of these pre-migration experiences.

Mei Mei Sanford’s chapter describes the transnational life of a women’s leader in the *Kerabu ati Serafu*, a Yoruba (Aladura) indigenous church. Sanford shows how Enirapada helps maintain her co-religionists’ symbolic and conceptual connection with Nigeria, while simultaneously adapting to residence in the U.S. and Canada. She explores the multi-dimensional strategies this leader uses to maintain her church’s transnational presence.

Géraldine Mossière explores a similar transnationality among Congolese Pentecostals, this time centred on a Canadian expatriate congregation with missions to the homeland. Mossière shows how linguistic practices, the public role of religious groups, and the ideology of global Pentecostal expansion shape Congolese migrants sense of themselves and of their mission in the world.

Rounding out this section, Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu describes how Africa’s new Pentecostal/charismatic churches use new media to maintain contact with their members abroad. After showing how such media have become quasi-sacramental in the African context, he explores similar processes in an African-led Pentecostal church in the Ukraine. He argues that, in this case, African religious sensibilities have been transplanted to a different continent and to a culturally different population.

Our second group of six chapters focuses on transnational religious dynamics within Africa itself. The section opens with Joël Noret’s study of in-

tra-African religious transnationalism in West Africa. Drawing on fieldwork in Benin, Nigeria, and Togo, he shows how having transnational contacts provides local Pentecostal leaders with a form of symbolic capital. Being seen as part of a global movement aids their work, whether or not their actual trans-border experiences are deep and involved.

Linda van de Kamp and Rijk van Dijk contribute a chapter on South-South Pentecostal transnationalism, looking at Brazilian and Ghanaian religious efforts in southern Africa. They focus on Pentecostal efforts to distinguish between ‘religion’ and ‘culture’, which shapes a critical attitude toward national cultural practices. They argue that the deliberate promotion of cultural discontinuity shows a different side of transnational Pentecostalism than is typically found in North-South contacts. Thus, South-South links show how Pentecostalism shapes globalization, as well as being a response and reaction to it.

Laura Grillo explores the role that divination and sacrifice play in the West African urban diaspora – a significant intra-African transnationalism that is seldom mentioned in discussions of globalisation. She shows that the ongoing appeal to divination is one creative way by which Africans in this urban diaspora live out their commitment to their ‘local’ indigenous ideologies, even within the globalised context of the ethnically heterogeneous city. Divination and sacrifice, she argues, foster a sense of community based on ‘Africanness’ that transcends nationalism without recourse to divisive notions of ethnicity.

Our next two chapters focus on transnational dynamics in particular sectors of African life. Susan Kilonzo discusses the ways in which youth have forged transnational ties in several Kenyan African Initiated Churches. By creating ‘places to feel at home’, these groups give young people an outlet for their creativity while forging connections across national borders. Damaris Parsitau and Philomena Mwaura explore similar processes in three female-founded and led Kenyan groups. They show how women leaders have forged transnational alliances to present women with different religious models than have previously been available. By speaking directly to women’s experiences and vulnerabilities, they provide African women with opportunities to exercise autonomy through religious leadership.

Ending this section, Edlyne Anugwom uses a 2008 crusade in southeastern Nigeria, led by the German Pentecostal evangelist Reinhard Bonnke, as a foil to explore the ways in which local churches use outside evangelists to strengthen their own credibility. He also shows how local people of various religious persuasions react to the Bonnke’s presentation and message. He is particularly interested in their wish that religions speak to them practically, and to the trials of everyday life.

We have entitled our third and final section “Wider Implications of Transnational African Religions”. It contains two chapters. The first, by Samuel Krinsky, shows how African Pentecostal ideology provides a new way for Africans to conceive of themselves, their nations, and their national destinies. Focusing on the Winner’s Chapel, an international Pentecostal denomination headquartered in Nigeria, he shows how religious ideas produce a new sense of Nigerian providential significance within an international context.

In our final chapter, Marleen de Witte shows how transnational dynamics have shaped the Afrikania Mission in Ghana and its representation of “Afrikan Traditional Religion” as a ‘world religion’, in both national and transnational spaces. Refusing to assent to the idea that traditional religions are merely ‘local’, Afrikania and other revivals of tradition must be understood as part of the historical globalisation of religion *per se*. Thus, neo-traditional African religion and the new African Christianity are part of a single religious field, which has a shared and strongly transnational history. This chapter, particularly, has significant implications for theories of religious globalisation.

By exploring the transnational dynamics of contemporary African religions in their individual detail, these twelve chapters shed considerable light on wider religious processes. We commend them to you, both for the individual stories they tell and as grist for your thinking.

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