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## 1

# The Pentecostal Ethic and the Spirit of Development

*Dena Freeman*

The practice and discipline of development was founded on the belief that religion was not important to development processes.<sup>1</sup> As societies developed and modernised, it was assumed that they would also undergo a process of secularisation. The irrelevance of religion for development is a cornerstone of ‘modernisation theory’, with its narrow focus on economic growth, which dominated development theory and practice from the 1950s to the 1980s (Deneulin & Rakodi 2011: 46). From the 1980s onwards there has been a broadening of scope within development studies, with the expansion of work on the multi-dimensional nature of poverty (e.g. Kakwani & Silber 2007) and the theoretical reorientation of development’s aims from economic growth to more holistic concerns for human wellbeing and environmental sustainability – first through the livelihoods approach in the 1980s (e.g. Chambers & Conway 1991, Scoones 1998), and then in Amartya Sen’s human development approach in the 1990s (Alkire 2005, Sen 1999), and more recently with interest in development and wellbeing (Gough & McGregor 2007). During the progression through these different approaches there has been increasing appreciation for the importance of non-material matters – such as beliefs, values and morality – in the development process (e.g. Goulet 1997). This has led in recent years to a return to the question of religion and a huge surge of interest in the role of religion in development (Berger 2004, 2009, Deneulin 2009, Deneulin & Rakodi 2011, Goody 2003, Rakodi 2007, Selinger 2004, Ter Haar & Ellis 2006, Tomalin 2008, Ver Beek 2002). This book seeks to make a contribution to this new field by exploring the developmental consequences of Pentecostal Christianity in contemporary Africa.

There has, of course, long been a connection between religion and development, as evinced in the twin activities of colonialism and

missionisation. And religious institutions are, of course, a key part of civil society, being the most prevalent form of associational life in Africa today (Gifford 1994: 533). Nevertheless, two recent changes in the religious and development landscapes are forcing scholars to assess their current interconnections more closely. First, alongside the rise of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and their increasing role as the implementers of secular development interventions, there has been a recent blurring of the distinction between church and NGO, as many mainline churches established development wings following the expanded flow of aid money to civil society organisations in the 1980s and 1990s (see below). This 'NGO-isation' of the mainline churches (Gifford 1994: 521) has been matched by a parallel growth in faith-based organisations (FBOs) not necessarily directly linked to any particular church or mosque, but inspired by religious teachings and approaches. Noting the significance of these trends, there have been a growing number of studies of faith-based Christian and Muslim NGOs (Dicklitch & Rice 2004, Hefferan 2007, Kaag 2008, McDonic 2004), including some excellent ethnographic accounts (Bornstein 2005, De Temple 2006, Kamsteeg 1998), as well as discussions of donor experiences and strategies for engaging with this type of development organisation (Benedetti 2006, Clarke 2006, Marshall & Van Saanen 2007).

Second, there has been a massive 'Pentecostal explosion' that has radically altered the religious landscape in much of the developing world. Millions of people in Africa have joined Pentecostal churches in the past 30 years. This movement does not separate religion from development, and for the most part does not set up development wings or FBOs. It does, however, bring with it a radically new conception of development and broadcasts it to its followers with tremendous energy and efficiency. African Pentecostals see development in terms of 'What God wants for Africa' and most recently in terms of the gospel of prosperity. What God wants for Africa, they claim, is a continent blessed with health, wealth and abundance, where people work hard, pray hard and live upright moral lives. What the devil wants for Africa, however, is underdevelopment, poverty and suffering. And thus, along with hard work, development requires a 'war against the demons', a notion that captures hearts and minds much more energetically than the NGOs' rhetoric of the 'war against poverty'. This religious view of development is made explicit in sermons, preaching and religious literature, and it is broadcast to followers, and indeed many others across the continent, through films and teleserials made by Pentecostals (Pype 2009).

It is this second change in the religious and development landscape that is the subject of this book. Our first aim is to explore the internal

model of 'development' that drives Pentecostal organisations and to assess the implications of their activities for broader development goals. Second, we also set out to compare Pentecostal churches and secular NGOs as different types of contemporary development agent and to explore the different ways in which they operate and the different ways in which they bring about change in Africa. At the heart of our enquiry in this book is an exploration of processes of individual and social change, and their relevance to understandings of the successes and failures of development.

This introduction first describes the context of post-1980s Africa, providing the background contextualisation within which the massive rise of both development NGOs and Pentecostal churches must be understood. It then discusses the transition from state-led development to development-by-NGO, and critiques the mode of operation of NGOs and their effectiveness as agents of change. The next section considers the rise of the Pentecostal churches and provides an overview of the way in which they engage with people and reformulate subjectivities, moralities and social relationships. The following section turns to a discussion of Max Weber's *Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (2008 [1904–1905]), arguably the most important study of subjectivity and economic change in the modern social sciences, and considers its relevance to the contemporary situation of the Pentecostal ethic and the spirit of development in Africa. Finally, before outlining the subsequent chapters, this introductory chapter closes with a perhaps somewhat surprising conclusion: that Pentecostal churches are often rather more effective change agents than are development NGOs. This is because they focus on some key aspects of change that secular NGOs continue to ignore – they are exceptionally effective at bringing about personal transformation and empowerment, they provide the moral legitimacy for a set of behaviour changes that would otherwise clash with local values, and they radically reconstruct families and communities to support these new values and new behaviours. Without these types of social change, I argue, it is difficult for economic change and development to take place.

### **Africa since 1980: debt crisis, structural adjustment and neoliberalism**

In the 1980s Africa started a transition into a new era. After the initial enthusiasm following independence in the 1960s and the modest successes achieved by predominantly socialist governments in the first decade of post-colonial reality, most African countries took loans in

the 1970s to fund large infrastructural projects in the quest to develop their countries. By the 1980s, with high oil prices, rising inflation and collapsing commodity prices, these loans had spiralled into huge debts which jeopardised many African economies. The response was a policy of structural adjustment, instigated by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and implemented by governments throughout Africa (and elsewhere). As is well known, structural adjustment programmes (SAPs) forced countries to liberalise and integrate their economies into the global economy (Curry 1997, Federici 2001, Walton & Seddon 1994). An emphasis was placed on private sector development, by lowering corporate taxes, reducing business regulation, devaluing the currency and encouraging the privatisation of state-owned enterprises. At the same time social spending was massively cut, with welfare programmes drastically reduced, subsidies and services cut to a minimum and the number of government workers slashed (Bond & Dor 2003: 1). The state was effectively 'rolled back' and reduced, while it was hoped that the market would expand and lead to the generation of wealth through business and enterprise.

The 'social costs' of adjustment were huge, and despite some recognition of this even by the World Bank and the IMF and talk of 'adjustment with a human face', there were very few examples of policies that effectively mitigated against them (Walton & Seddon 1994). Most people in most countries in Africa suffered a drastic fall in their material standard of living in the post-1980s era and poverty increased across the continent (Riddell 1992). In sub-Saharan Africa as a whole, per capita incomes dropped by 21 per cent in real terms between 1981 and 1989 (Manji & O'Coill 2002: 567). Prices of essential goods skyrocketed, incomes dwindled, jobs disappeared, services were cut and many people struggled to make ends meet (Ferguson 2006, Walton & Raggin 1990). The worsening conditions brought about by these austerity measures led to protests and 'IMF food riots' in many African countries (Bush 2010: 122, Logie & Woodroffe 1993: 43, Riddell 1992: 59, Simutanyi 1996: 827, Walton & Seddon 1994). It was at this time and in this context that the phenomenal growth of both NGOs and Pentecostal churches came about.

### **The rise of the NGOs**

As international donors forced structural adjustment onto African governments, they also changed their way of offering development aid. As part of the so-called New Policy Agenda there was a drastic

reduction in foreign aid given directly to African governments as bilateral assistance, and a concomitant increase in the amount channelled through international and domestic NGOs (Edwards & Hulme 1996b: 961). This change in aid funding, combined with the new political space opened up by the weakening of the state, has led to what has been termed a 'global associational revolution' – an explosion of NGOs, civil society organisations and grassroots associations around the world (Fisher 1997, Salamon 1994). Since the 1980s the number of NGOs worldwide has skyrocketed. In 1995 there were almost 29,000 international development NGOs in existence, with an estimated US\$5 billion in aid channelled through the NGO sector, and nearly US\$3.5 billion going to NGOs in Africa. This represents just under one-fifth of the total aid to the continent (Chege 1999, Hearn 2007).

Countries throughout the African continent, then, have experienced a rapid increase in the number of NGOs, both international and domestic, operating in their countries during this period (Dicklitch & Rice 2004: 660), leading to what has been called the 'NGO-isation' of African society (Hearn 1998). In Kenya, for example, the NGO sector grew from 511 registered NGOs in 1996 to 2511 in 2003 (World Resources Institute 2005), while in Tanzania it grew from fewer than 20 in the early 1980s to around 3000 at the turn of the century (Hasu, this volume). Likewise, in Ethiopia the number of NGOs grew from fewer than 60 at the end of the 1980s to nearly 2000 in 2007 (Rahmato et al. 2008: 12).

NGOs are generally understood to be private, not-for-profit organisations which are independent of both government and business. There is a huge variety in the types of organisation that are grouped together under the banner 'NGO'. These organisations differ from each other in the levels at which they operate (local, national, international), in organisational structure, in membership base and in overall goals. The term NGO has been applied to groups providing social welfare services, organisations promoting development initiatives, social action groups struggling for social justice, groups lobbying for environmental protection and groups providing legal research and advocacy, to name just a few. In size and scale, NGOs range from small, loosely organised groups with a few unpaid staff members to huge organisations with multimillion dollar budgets and hundreds of salaried employees (Fisher 1997). Development NGOs can be broadly grouped into three categories: those that focus on humanitarian relief and charity, those that focus mainly on small-scale local development and those that focus on empowerment and social justice (Elliot 1987, Korten 1990). Most of the chapters in this book consider the second category of NGOs, those

with a focus on small-scale local development, and there are examples of international NGOs (chapters by Piot [5], Smith [6] and Freeman [7]), local NGOs (Parsitau [9]), community-based organisations (Jones [8]) and voluntary associations (Parsitau [9]).

For much of the post-1980s period NGOs have been the ‘favoured child’ of the international development agencies. They have become the new frontline of ‘development’, seemingly striving to help poor populations to transform themselves and improve their lives. Fighting a global ‘war against poverty’, these new organisations promise empowerment, participation and salvation from a life of struggle and misery. Seen as politically neutral, values-based civil society organisations with close links to the grassroots, NGOs have often appeared as the ideal development agent. They have been seen as a ‘magic bullet’ with the capacity to improve the effectiveness of development interventions by shifting from a top-down, state-led approach to a bottom-up approach that emphasises the involvement of poor people themselves.

The characteristics that were most expected to make NGOs effective agents of change were a focus on participation and empowerment and a close working relationship with the community (Fisher 1997: 442, Hearn 2007: 1096). It was believed that NGOs, as grassroots organisations, would be able to stimulate the participation of local people in their own development and empower them to take up new activities that would increase their wellbeing and lead to economic growth. And by working at the community level it was hoped that whole villages and societies could be transformed. However, as we shall see later, NGOs have mainly failed to live up to their expectations and have been disappointingly ineffective in bringing about social and economic change in Africa.

### **NGO performance: making a difference?**

In recent years a critical literature has developed questioning the role of development NGOs in broader international and national political contexts. The rapid increase in funding to NGOs by governments and international organisations that has spurred their growth has also changed their very nature. Whereas before the neoliberal turn NGOs were primarily voluntary civil society organisations that defined their own mission and values, raised their own funds from the public and worked with a high degree of independence; the shift towards increased donor funding from governments, bilaterals and the World Bank from the 1980s onwards has led to many NGOs becoming more like subcontractors to foreign governments and organisations, implementing their

agendas and competing with each other for the privilege of doing so (Hearn 1998, Klees 2002, Manji & O’Coill 2002, Matanga 2010). Rather than being grassroots organisations accountable to local people, Southern NGOs have been shown to be dominated by Northern NGOs and donors, accountable to foreign stakeholders and increasingly implementing projects that address foreign agendas and concerns (Dicklitch 1998, Edwards & Hulme 1996a, 1996b, Hulme & Edwards 1997, Igoe & Kelsall 2005, Michael 2004, Tvedt 1998). The extent of the power imbalance between Northern donors and Southern peoples and NGOs has led some scholars to describe the NGO-isation of Africa as a form of re-colonisation and to see development NGOs as a new type of secular missionary (Anderson & Rieff 2005, Hanlon 1991, Manji & O’Coill 2002). Thus development NGOs, even Southern ones, cannot really be seen as ‘local’ organisations and are not straightforwardly accountable to the people that they serve.

At the same time it has become apparent that development NGOs are not nearly as effective as they were once hoped to be, and there is a growing disillusionment with their performance (Lewis 2001). In particular, NGOs have been found to be less than successful in stimulating local participation and bringing about the empowerment of poor people, precisely the processes at which they were initially expected to excel (Cooke & Kothari 2001). In theory, participatory approaches to development seek to include local knowledge in development planning and to make people central to development by encouraging their involvement in the interventions that will affect their lives. As Botchway has commented, ‘meaningful participation implies at a minimum the process in which local communities discover the possibilities of exercising choice and becoming capable of managing what they understand as development’ (Botchway 2001: 136). In practice, NGOs have found this very hard to do, especially when project planning is in fact largely guided by the agenda of external stakeholders, as discussed above.

For many NGOs encouraging participation and empowerment often boils down to using techniques of participatory rural appraisal (PRA) when identifying local problems, issues and stakeholders, and/or organising local committees to manage part of the project and take ownership of it after the NGO has left. Both processes have their problems and lead to only very limited notions of ‘participation’ and ‘empowerment’. One challenge facing participatory approaches is that they are premised on the notions of individualism and equality and yet are often used in traditional settings where traditional power structures give different voice to different categories of people, often privileging chiefs, elders

and local elites (Aryeetey 1998). As Smith's chapter (6) shows in detail for southeast Kenya, participatory processes such as community planning units tend to get hijacked by local elites, thus leaving local youth excluded from decision-making processes and ultimately from resources.

It is also now widely known that local committees set up by NGOs rarely manage to function as expected or to continue in operation after the end of the project. For many beneficiaries these committees are simply a means to access resources, and when the inflow of external resources dries up the purpose of the committee disappears. As Jones' chapter (8) shows for a range of committees set up by various NGOs in northern Uganda, these committees are never truly owned by the local community and do not become established in the community landscape. They tend to remain extrinsic to local communal life and lack the moral valence that might make them meaningful long-term institutions. Once the NGO leaves, the committees disappear, and thus many NGO projects have proved remarkably unsustainable in the medium to long term.

While there is much rhetoric about how NGOs can empower poor people, there is very little discussion of what empowerment actually means and how it can be achieved. NGO models of empowerment seem to focus primarily on education, skills and access to resources. It is very rare to find an NGO that explicitly seeks to transform individual subjectivities. As Parsitau's chapter (9) shows with regard to women's NGOs in Kenya, empowerment for development NGOs is mainly about economic empowerment or legal empowerment, rather than a fundamental transformational experience of the self in which a person begins to see herself and her life in a whole different light and starts to act accordingly. Some NGOs even manage to bring about short-term improvements in economic conditions while disempowering their beneficiaries in the process. Piot's chapter (5) gives the example of a Danish child sponsorship NGO in northern Togo which – intentionally or unintentionally – humiliates its beneficiaries by making them write and rewrite letters in French to European sponsors, making them walk for hours back and forth to the project office where the latest versions of their letters are marked with red pen and sent back for further revision. While this process of letter writing ultimately leads to the inflow of resources and is for this reason tolerated by the local people, it is experienced as frustrating and humiliating and serves to remind people that they do not have the means or the ability to improve their lives, but are instead dependent on distant Europeans. And once the project came to an end, the situation in the village reverted back to

how it was pre-project, and very little development can be said to have taken place.

For these reasons, and several others, NGOs have largely disappointed development theorists and failed to bring about significant social and economic change in Africa. After an optimistic start they have proved to be no ‘magic bullet’ to Africa’s problems. Most surprisingly, they have failed to live up to the buzzwords so often associated with them – despite the rhetoric and the intentions, NGOs rarely succeed in fostering participation or empowerment, they are rarely local grassroots organisations accountable to their beneficiaries, and they consistently fail to become embedded in local communities. In these respects, as we shall see later, they are rather different from Pentecostal churches.

For some theorists, NGOs have failed to bring about significant change because they remain part of the mainstream development ideology, promoting a spirit of development resolutely based on modernisation, capitalism and Westernisation. These more radical post-development theorists, as van Dijk discusses at length in his chapter (4), question this whole ‘spirit of development’. Instead they seek alternatives to development, looking for models of progress and improvement that are rooted in local traditions, rather than in Western capitalist forms (Escobar 2007, Nederveen Pieterse 1998). Pentecostals, as we will see later, can be seen to offer a third approach to development – different from both the mainstream development and the more radical post-development views. While they embrace the mainstream capitalist ‘spirit of development’ with its desire for wealth and commodity consumption, they maintain a magico-religious worldview in sharp contrast to mainstream development’s rational secularism. And while they acknowledge the existence of traditional practices and values, they seek to break away from them, in stark contrast to the post-development theorists who seek to base new models of the future in these traditional pasts. The Pentecostal model of change concurs with neither development nor post-development views. It offers a new and different way to think about and enact social change. Before discussing these dynamics in more detail, let us first provide a brief overview of Pentecostalism in Africa today.

## **Pentecostal and charismatic Christianity in Africa**

The post-1980s period has also witnessed – alongside the rise of NGOs – the phenomenal growth of a new religious movement: what has come to be known as Pentecostal and charismatic Christianity. From humble

beginnings as an early twentieth century revivalist movement among America's poorer socio-economic groups, Pentecostalism has spread across the globe to become what is broadly believed to be the fastest growing Christian movement today (Anderson 2004: 1, Burgess & van der Maas 2002, Hollenweger 1997). In just over 100 years Pentecostal Christianity, and its charismatic and neo-charismatic relatives, has won over half a billion souls worldwide (Barrett 2001), representing almost 28 per cent of organised global Christianity (Barrett & Johnson 2002) and constituting what David Martin (2002) has called 'the largest global shift in the religious market place' in recent years.

By far the majority of these new Pentecostal and charismatic converts are to be found in the non-Western world, particularly in Latin America, Asia and Africa. Africa alone is estimated to have 126 million Pentecostals and charismatics, constituting some 11 per cent of the continent's total population. The vast majority of them, some 109 million, have joined since 1980 (Barrett & Johnson 2002: 287). Christianity is, of course, not new to Africa, and the growth of Pentecostal Christianity in recent years must also be seen in the context of the ongoing process of the appropriation of Christianity throughout the continent (Gifford 1995, 1998). Birgit Meyer (2004) has argued that, broadly speaking, there has been a shift over the course of the twentieth century from mainline missionary churches that brought European styles of Christianity and rejected traditional African religion, to African Independent Churches that creatively combined Christian and African religious elements in syncretic mixtures, to the new Pentecostal and charismatic churches which, as we shall see later, offer a form of Christianity that fits well with African sensibilities and which acknowledges the validity of traditional African beliefs – in witches, spirits, ancestors – while at the same time providing a way to break from them.

Many scholars and Pentecostal leaders alike have linked this sudden growth of Pentecostalism in Africa with the economic crisis of the 1980s and the subsequent SAPs that led to the worsening material conditions of life for many people at this time. Ruth Marshall (1991: 25), for example, quotes from a book written by a Nigerian Pentecostal pastor, entitled *Hope for the SAPPed Generation*, which proclaims that:

Fear and lack of confidence in the future are becoming the common currency of the day... We no longer trust anything or anyone. Those we trusted have mortgaged us and held us to ransom for foreign loans which we did not benefit from... Everything – absolutely

everything – is on the decline and on the verge of collapse . . . No jobs, no money, no food, no clothing, no personal dignity.

This sense of collapse and despair was echoed in many African countries at this time (Akoko 2007, Maxwell 2005, Meyer 1998b). Despite their foreign roots, Pentecostal churches, unlike development NGOs, were a local, home-grown response to this situation. And with the economic situation showing little sign of improvement, it is not surprising that Pentecostal and charismatic churches continue to grow and flourish. At present it is estimated that, globally, there are approximately 9 million new members per year – over 25,000 a day – with the vast majority hailing from the global South (Barrett & Johnson 2002: 284).

There is a huge variety of different Pentecostal and charismatic churches and it is difficult to generalise across them all. Nonetheless, it is broadly accepted that there are three broad categories, or waves, of Pentecostal and charismatic Christianity: classical Pentecostal, charismatic and neo-charismatic (Anderson 2004, Hollenweger 1997). Classical Pentecostal refers to churches with links to the early American and European Pentecostal churches and which stress the importance of speaking in tongues, or glossolalia, as evidence of baptism by the Holy Spirit. Examples include the Assemblies of God, the Church of God in Christ and the Pentecostal Church of God. Charismatic Christians are those members of mainline Christian denominations – Lutheran, Presbyterian, Catholic and so on – who began to experience the gifts of the Holy Spirit in the form of speaking in tongues, spiritual healing, miracles and the like. This ‘Pentecostalisation’ of mainstream Christianity started in the 1960s and there are now charismatic churches across virtually all Christian denominations (e.g. Coleman 2000, 2002, Csordas 1992, 2007). The third wave, or neo-charismatics, is the broadest category, serving much as a catch-all for the vast number of non-denominational or post-denominational churches and fellowships that have exploded onto the scene since the 1980s. Neo-charismatics have been particularly creative and innovative in their adaptation of Pentecostal doctrine and styles to new settings and contexts. Examples could include Mensa Otabil’s International Central Gospel Church, David Oyepedo’s Winner’s Chapel, the Rhema Church and the Vineyard Fellowship (Bialecki 2008, Luhrmann 2004). Churches from all three waves are flourishing today in Africa and are discussed in the chapters of this book.

Pentecostal and charismatic Christianity has been characterised as a ‘frankly supernatural and experientially robust’ form of Christianity

(Robbins 2004: 120). It places an emphasis on strict moralism, combined with exuberant and ecstatic prayer. At its core are four key elements of doctrine, often known as 'Full Gospel' theology, which stress that (a) Jesus offers salvation, (b) Jesus heals, (c) Jesus baptises with the Holy Spirit and (d) Jesus is coming again (Dayton 1987: 19–23, Robbins 2004: 121).

While there is a huge amount of variation between different Pentecostal and charismatic churches in Africa today, in different countries and between urban and rural settings, there are nonetheless a number of characteristics that are shared by many of these churches throughout the continent. The chapters of this book provide rich ethnographic detail about particular churches in all their idiosyncrasy and variety, but it is useful here to provide a brief overview of some of the key characteristics of contemporary African Pentecostal and charismatic Christianity.

The most readily visible aspect of Pentecostal and charismatic Christianity in Africa is the ecstatic, spirit-filled church service, which frequently involves speaking in tongues and outbursts of ululations, as well as lively singing and dancing. These church services often last for two to three hours, sometimes all night and in many cases take place several times per week. They are emotionally charged, high-volume gatherings, with pastors 'amped up' by sound systems, words to hymns and songs projected karaoke-style, and congregants frequently being moved to stand up, extend their arms upwards and exclaim 'hallelujah!' Pentecostal worship is incredibly participatory – there is no sitting quietly at the back. Congregants frequently have to engage in call and response, share their hopes and fears with their neighbours or come up to the front to tell good news stories or to ask for blessing. There is a phenomenal power in this combination of euphoria and participation.

Personal transformation is a key theme in these churches, as indeed with all evangelical and 'born again' churches. Perhaps more than most, though, the Pentecostals and charismatics are extremely effective in bringing about dramatic changes in subjectivity (see particularly chapters by van Dijk [4], Freeman [7] and Parsitau [9]). They focus on a 'revision of consciousness' (Martin 1990: 287), a 'remaking of the individual' (Maxwell 1998: 352), a 'reorientation of persons' (Barbalet 2008: 75). There is an emphasis on making a break with the past (Meyer 1998a), which in many cases means attempting to break off from any form of traditional religion or ritual practice. The key element in this transformation of subjectivity, however, is a shift from seeing oneself as a victim to seeing oneself as a victor. Many people, particularly the urban

poor, first come to Pentecostal churches feeling wretched, despised and hopeless. Their self-esteem is low and they feel powerless to change their situation. Through their engagement with pastors and other church members, in study, prayer and healing, these people begin to see themselves as valued individuals, part of God's people, a 'somebody' rather than a 'nobody'. Most important of all, they begin to move beyond a passive fatalism and come to realise that they have agency in their lives (Maxwell 2005).

Pentecostal belief has been shown to bring about a dramatic restructuring of families, as believers loosen ties with the extended family and focus on the nuclear family as the central unit of production and consumption. There is also a concomitant reformulation of gender relations. With alcohol consumption, smoking and extramarital relations cast as immoral, many Pentecostal men are effectively 'domesticated' and they turn the focus of their energy and resources to their family (Maxwell 1998, van Dijk 2002b). And, as discussed in depth in Parsitau's chapter (9), women's status is often enhanced by the equalising power of the Holy Spirit – available to anyone – and the gifts that it brings, although ultimate gender ideologies tend to remain rather conservative, with women entreated to remain subservient to their husbands. Pentecostalism also challenges traditional power structures and modes of social organisation and instead emphasises individualism and personal achievement (see chapters by Smith [6] and Freeman [7]).

Another key feature of many Pentecostal and charismatic churches in Africa is an emphasis on spiritual healing and deliverance. This might come through prayer or the laying on of hands, but the belief in the ability to heal 'in the name of Jesus' is widespread. It is often linked to a parallel belief in the devil and his role in putting obstacles in the way and causing suffering. Thus healing is often related to exorcism and 'spiritual warfare', where evil spirits are cast out of the sufferer in noisy deliverance services with much crying, weeping and wailing. In many cases the devil is associated with traditional African religions, which are then recast as forms of devil worship. In this framework, then, it is impossible to elaborate self-consciously syncretic religious forms, combining traditional and Christian elements. Instead it is necessary to try to 'make a break with the past' and make every effort to separate oneself from former social networks and to actively shun traditional cultural practices. Despite the challenges of doing this in practice, this push to break with the past is paradoxically one of the main attractions of Pentecostalism. As we shall see later, and throughout this book, Pentecostalism is one of the few modalities – religious or secular – that

both demands and legitimises radical behaviour change, including the restructuring of families, communities and social relations.

Pentecostals place a strong emphasis on moral purity and ethical behaviour. They refuse, in theory and often in practice, to give or receive bribes or to engage in other forms of corruption. They observe strict injunctions against theft and lying, and place particular emphasis on honesty and reliability, clean and smart appearance and marital fidelity. While not everyone can live up to these high standards, it is widely believed, both inside and outside Pentecostal communities, that Pentecostals are in general more honest, trustworthy and hard-working than other people. In many countries in Africa it is not uncommon to hear employers, of whatever religious persuasion, preferring to hire born-again staff to work in their homes or businesses (Marshall 1991: 29). And, as Jones' chapter (8) shows, in situations of extreme moral breakdown, such as after the violent insurgency in northern Uganda in the late 1980s and early 1990s, Pentecostalism can be very appealing because of its strong moral framework.

Since the 1980s there has been the emergence of another feature that is now extremely common in very many, although not all, Pentecostal and charismatic churches in Africa, and that is some form of the prosperity gospel. While earlier forms of Pentecostalism promoted a rather ascetic approach to the material world, shifts since the 1980s in both the classical Pentecostal churches and, more particularly, in the new charismatic and neo-charismatic churches have led to a fundamental realignment with regard to views about the material life and this-worldly concerns. The new view, first espoused in America, but taken up with phenomenal enthusiasm in post-1980s Africa, promises an 'economically advantageous redemption' (Bialecki et al. 2008: 1149). Salvation, in this view, can take place in this life because Jesus wants his people to enjoy abundance and prosperity (Akoko 2007, Marshall 1991, Maxwell 1998, Meyer 1998b, Ukah 2005, van Dijk 2005). Churches that preach the prosperity gospel encourage their members to pray to Jesus for wealth and abundance, and also to do their part in the bargain, by engaging in business and working hard. Sermons are often blatantly materialistic. The Ghanaian Pentecostals studied by Meyer were told by their pastor to 'close their eyes and fill in a cheque in their minds', which they should then send up to heaven where 'God would sign [it]... and they would, in the future, receive the money requested' (Meyer 1998b: 762–763).

Members are encouraged to give quite substantial proportions of their new-found wealth to the church, through tithes and various offerings,

with the belief that 'give and you shall receive'.<sup>2</sup> Tithing is central to the Pentecostal moral economy and serves as a new form of taxation in places where churches, rather than governments, provide most social services. Many churches also engage in business activities themselves, as a way to raise church funds, and in some notable cases run newspapers, radio stations and even banks, gyms and universities. One of the results is that many of these churches, particularly those in major urban centres, are phenomenally rich. Their pastors whizz around in fast cars, dress in expensive suits and sport the latest mobile phones. Congregants are encouraged to copy this style of opulent abundance, and material success is taken as a sign of God's blessing. This enthusiasm for material wealth is not without its dilemmas, often associated in Africa with witchcraft and, in some cases, although most certainly not all, churches acknowledge traditional fears of wealth accumulation and create practices that purify potentially dangerous commodities and legitimise accumulation by good Christians (Meyer 1998b). In all these ways, then, Pentecostal and charismatic churches create new social, economic and moral structures and act to transform both the subjectivities and the lifestyles of their followers. Let us now consider in more detail their influences on economic behaviour.

### **Weber's legacy: the Protestant Ethic and the Pentecostal ethic**

One of the key questions regarding the impact of Pentecostalism on development is whether it can be seen to bring a 'Protestant ethic' to the people of non-Western countries. Many theorists have indeed suggested a continuity between Weber's Protestant Ethic of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and the Pentecostal ethic of today. In a review of the anthropology of Christianity, Bialecki et al. claim that 'in the prosperity gospel... it seems that we have a new Protestant ethic to match a new, neoliberal spirit of capitalism' (Bialecki et al. 2008: 1149–1150). Bernice Martin has called the spread of Pentecostalism in Latin America a 'new mutation of the Protestant Ethic' (Martin 1995, see also Martin 1998, 2006) and the Comaroffs have referred to 'new Protestant ethics and spirits of capitalism' (Comaroff & Comaroff 2000, 2001). Regarding Africa, several scholars have claimed that Pentecostal Christianity leads to increased entrepreneurial activity and saving, as Weber's thesis would suggest (e.g. Garner 2000, Maxwell 1998, Meyer 1998b, 2007, Schlemmer 2008). Others, however, have vehemently denied the relevance of Weber's thesis to contemporary Pentecostalism. Paul Freston has argued that Pentecostalism is 'quite unlike the popular Puritanism of the "Protestant ethic" [because] it separates wealth and

salvation, [and] thus... [lacks] the psychological mechanism (anguish about eternal destiny) which supposedly impelled the Puritan in his rational search for prosperity' (Freston 1995: 132). He even goes as far as to say that 'Prosperity Theology represents an advanced stage of the *decline* of the Protestant ethic' (ibid.: 131, my emphasis). And with regard to Africa, Paul Gifford has argued that, with very few exceptions, Pentecostal Christianity does not offer a new work ethic, an inner-worldly ascetic or the deferral of gratification that Weber's thesis would suggest, but rather promotes a new appetite for consumerism (Gifford 2004). The debate over whether, to what extent and how Pentecostal Christianity plays a role in establishing a type of 'Protestant ethic' in today's Pentecostal converts has been described by Joel Robbins as 'the key debate in discussions of [Pentecostal and charismatic] economic culture' (2004: 136). It is worthwhile, therefore, to consider the issues in some detail.

In his famous book, Weber (2008 [1904–1905]) argued that there was an elective affinity between the spread of Protestant Christianity and the growth of capitalism in sixteenth and seventeenth century Europe. He did not claim that Protestantism caused the development of capitalism or that the Protestant view of the world and the capitalist view of the world were the same. Rather, he sought to show that Protestant belief led to an ethic of hard work and limited consumption that had the *unintended consequence* of leading to successful enterprise and capital accumulation, and thus the further growth and spread of capitalist economic practice. The key Protestant belief in question was the doctrine of predetermination, whereby it was believed that God had pre-chosen the elect who would go to heaven, and that it was impossible to know or influence His decision. Unable to deal with the anxiety that such a doctrine promoted, many Calvinist Protestants came to see success in this-worldly affairs as a sign of God's grace in their lives, and thus a hint that their future lay in heaven.

Since then anthropologists have mainly applied Weber's ideas to non-Protestant societies, particularly when looking at issues of economic development and modernisation in non-Western countries in the 1950s and 1960s. At this time a number of studies were undertaken exploring how various religions affected orientations to economic development, with the aim of understanding why some countries modernised more rapidly than others (Bellah 1957, 1963, Geertz 1956, 1962, Nash 1965, Spiro 1966, Stone 1974). Some of the most influential of these studies were brought together by S.N. Eisenstadt in his edited collection, *The Protestant Ethic and Modernisation* (Eisenstadt 1968). After

this spurt of activity, interest in the Weberian thesis largely declined in anthropology, with some important exceptions (e.g. Gellner 2001, Grombich & Obeyesekere 1989, Roberts 1995). Surprisingly, there is a marked lack of in-depth anthropological work that applies Weber's ideas to contemporary Protestantism. This section, and indeed much of this book, seeks to fill this gap.

### **Different contexts**

An initial look at early modern Europe and late modern Africa might suggest that the context of the contemporary growth of capitalism in the latter is not so different from the context of the original growth of capitalism in the former. Pre-modern European societies were largely based on subsistence agriculture and feudal arrangements, were frequently plagued by famine and disease and were often at war. The growth of capitalism took place against the decline of feudalism and the development of the sovereign state, processes rather similar to those that took place in late twentieth century Africa.<sup>3</sup> In Europe the Protestant Reformation was a key part of this transformation. It is easy to see the temptation to interpret the spread of Pentecostalism in contemporary Africa as a parallel African Reformation.

Nonetheless, it is also important to consider the very real differences between the contexts in which capitalism and Protestantism developed in sixteenth century Europe and in twentieth century Africa. First, capitalist modernisation in Africa is largely, although not entirely, taking place under the impact of external forces rather than internal initiative. In most countries capitalist modalities were first introduced through the processes of colonisation and missionisation, and today this process continues through the activities of multinational corporations, international NGOs and Western-dominated global financial institutions such as the World Bank and the IMF. To a very great extent, capitalism as an economic and cultural system has been parachuted into Africa from the outside. This is quite different from the context of internally driven scientific advance, technological discovery and cultural renaissance in which sixteenth century European capitalism developed (cf. Eisenstadt 1968, Martin 1995). And while European capitalism developed in the context of early modern state formation, contemporary capitalism in Africa is spreading in a context of the 'rolling back' of the state.

Second, European industrial capitalism was built with the capital produced during the earlier period of merchant capitalism, when huge amounts of capital were generated by colonial extraction and nascent international trade. Early European capitalism was thus supported and

facilitated by the inflow of wealth from the colonies. Contemporary capitalism in Africa has not been supported by a similar inflow of wealth.<sup>4</sup> Rather, in sharp contrast, it has been seriously challenged by the huge outflow of wealth to repay international loans. Contemporary Africa is a net exporter of capital (Ellis 1996: 24). This contrast is profound and significant.

Third, the nature of early industrial capitalism and late twentieth century neoliberal consumer capitalism is very different. Capitalism is not a singular 'thing'. Early European capitalism focused on industrialised production, particularly in the factory. Early capitalist entrepreneurs invested in expensive machinery and required a large number of workers – the proletariat – to carry out routine productive operations in a disciplined and rationalised way. In return they offered them secure employment, regular salaries and often housing and basic education. The development of capitalism in Africa followed a somewhat different trajectory, with more emphasis on agriculture and less on industrialisation. In contemporary late-modern neoliberal capitalism, particularly in Africa, jobs are in scarce supply and when offered tend to come with no job security, piece rates instead of salaries and very few other benefits. In the contemporary situation, workers are likely to move from job to job, often with long periods of unemployment in between. Many jobs, moreover, are likely to be in the service sector rather than in production, calling for a rather different personal orientation and set of skills. And furthermore, contemporary neoliberal capitalism increasingly stresses consumption over production and sets up a world where desires are satisfied and identities are forged through consumption activities (Miller 1987). Again, the contrast is profound.

Fourth, and finally, there is the very different religious context of sixteenth century Europe and late twentieth century Africa. Protestantism in Europe developed against the backdrop of Catholicism, a form of Christianity which in its philosophy – if not always in its practice – placed little value on this-worldly matters and promoted an ascetic ideal, culminating with monks living in monasteries far removed from worldly concerns. This is in sharp contrast to the religious context in Africa throughout much of the twentieth century, where many people belonged to mainline Christian denominations – Protestant and Catholic – or to African Independent Churches, and also retained, to a greater or lesser extent, beliefs and practices associated with pre-colonial traditional African religions. These traditional African religions emphasised the importance of making offerings and sacrifices to the ancestors

or the spirits in order to receive blessing – generally understood as health, wealth and fecundity – and to minimise misfortune. In these worldviews, then, the spiritual and the material were intimately entangled and wealth and this-worldly success were key values and concerns. Thus it is not so much the case that the prosperity gospel ‘draws Pentecostals right into the “world”’, as Meyer (2007: 19) has argued, but rather that it recasts and re-legitimises their already being there, in a way that other Christian denominations could not.

### **Differences between Calvinist and Pentecostal Protestantism**

As we might expect, late twentieth century Pentecostal Protestantism, particularly the rapidly growing sector that is influenced by the prosperity gospel, is itself rather different from sixteenth century Calvinist Protestantism. We will discuss three major differences that are pertinent to our discussion here: differences in philosophy, theology and mode of embodiment.

Most obviously, there is a major difference in philosophy regarding the value of this-worldly goods and pleasures. Sixteenth century Calvinist Protestantism was deeply ascetic, whereas late twentieth century Pentecostal Protestantism is blatantly materialistic. While Weber’s Calvinists found themselves accumulating capital and possessions unintentionally, today’s African Pentecostals explicitly desire material wealth and abundance (cf. Comaroff & Comaroff 2000, Maxwell 1998, 2000, Meyer 2007). For many this desire is quite modest – to be able to eat three meals a day, to have enough money to send their children to school – while for others in the upwardly mobile middle classes it might be more extravagant, with desires for fast cars, expensive suits, fine jewellery and the latest mobile phones. In all cases though, these materialist desires are explicit and acknowledged, and are not only sanctioned, but promoted, by the Pentecostal churches.

While the Calvinists may have seen God in everything, they did not believe that God would directly intervene in this-worldly affairs. This-worldly success may have come to be seen by many as evidence of God’s grace and proof that you were following the divine plan, but there was no notion that God would directly intervene in these matters Himself. Today’s African Pentecostals offer a very different theology. For them, God is intimately involved in everyday matters and in direct communication with them through the Holy Spirit, which gives the gifts of tongues, healing and prophecy. God might save you from a traffic accident by making you forget something in your office and leave late that day, or heal you from an illness that you have been suffering from for

years. While the God of the Calvinists was transcendent, the God of the Pentecostals is astoundingly immanent.

Finally, the modes of embodiment of Calvinist and contemporary African Pentecostal Protestantism are extremely different. Calvinism was severely rational: emotions were to be controlled and repressed, and the mode of worship shunned music. This is in sharp contrast to the emotion-filled exuberance of lively Pentecostal worship, where music and song, and frequently movement and dance, enliven the church service. The emphasis on embodied religious experience, conceptualised as the embodiment of the Holy Spirit, leads to a very different embodied religious experience for Pentecostals as compared with Calvinists.

### **A Pentecostal ethic?**

With these significant differences in historical context, type of capitalism and type of Protestantism, it is clear that we should not expect a simple repetition of Weber's argument in the spread of Pentecostalism in contemporary Africa. Weber's key point, however, was that in order for a new economic system – capitalism – to be taken up by people, there had to be shift in their values and subjectivity in order to motivate new behaviours and to make the new economic system seem moral, and that Protestantism unintentionally did this. Can Pentecostalism be seen to play the same role with regards to neoliberal capitalism and development in Africa?

The studies in this book indicate that Pentecostalism does indeed play a similar role in Africa today. It is a form of Protestantism that not only fits with African sensibilities, but also stimulates a transformation of behaviour that can lead to success, or at least upward mobility, in the contemporary neoliberal economy. It motivates new behaviours and renders them moral. It is the notion that 'God wants you to have abundance' and that this is the divine plan that motivates these new behaviours, not an anxious quest to find evidence of one's election for salvation in the next world. Nevertheless, the consequences are the same: hard work, saving and a limitation on certain types of consumption. While African Pentecostals certainly do not shun consumption to the extent that Weber's Calvinists did, they most certainly do limit and constrain it. Restrictions on the consumption of alcohol and tobacco and injunctions against extramarital relationships and visits to prostitutes have a huge impact on spending patterns among Pentecostals compared with others. There is a marked limitation of 'wasteful consumption' and a reorientation towards investment and accumulation. And while Calvinism moralised hard work and saving as an ascetic

practice in itself – a good way to fill your time so you are not tempted to sin – Pentecostalism makes it moral because this is the way to achieve God’s plan for you: to become rich and abundant right here on earth.

Furthermore, for many Africans one of the main barriers to accumulating wealth is the pressure to participate in traditional practices, such as rites of passage or rituals of commensality, and the constant demands for financial support from poorer kin. Redistribution, in one form or another, is inherent in most traditional African religions and moral systems, and it makes personal accumulation virtually impossible. By linking these traditional practices with the devil, as shown most clearly in the chapters by van Dijk (4), Piot (5) and Freeman (7), Pentecostalism makes avoidance of them, and separation from more distant kin, intensely and aggressively moral, and thus enables the emergence of previously impossible behaviours.

There is a different emphasis in the Pentecostal ethic in urban and in rural settings. In urban settings, with a rapid influx of people newly disembedded from tightly knit communities in the countryside, Pentecostalism initially played an important role in providing new forms of community and morality in the new social setting. Many Pentecostal churches continue to play this role for newly arriving migrants and for the urban poor that have as yet remained on the peripheries of town life. Other Pentecostal churches have branched out and focused their attentions on the middle class. In post-structural adjustment Africa, this population has had to struggle increasingly to find employment, particularly as government jobs have been cut. Those jobs that are available demand workers that are diligent, flexible and that can work with minimal supervision. Pentecostalism helps produce such disciplined subjects, ideal for the neoliberal economy (cf. Martin 1995).

In today’s economy, however, the route to wealth and prosperity at a greater scale is not through employment, but through business. Many of the new Pentecostal churches play a major role in stimulating business behaviour, empowering people to be courageous and aim high and in encouraging their members to start enterprises, large and small. Paul Freston (1995: 132), for example, quotes a Pentecostal pastor telling his congregation: ‘It’s not enough just to give the “sacrifice” (a special offering) and cross your arms. You have to leave your job and open a business, even if it’s only selling popcorn on the street. As an employee you’ll never get rich.’ In a manner not that different from Western secular motivational speakers, such as Anthony Robbins or Stephen Covey, Pentecostal leaders are encouraging people to take

risks and follow their dreams. And as van Dijk's chapter (4) shows in detail, they are increasingly also giving them the business management tools needed for these endeavours.

In rural settings the situation is significantly different. Most people are living by subsistence agriculture and remain marginal to global capitalist practices and values. Many are ensconced in traditional communities and the redistributive practices inherent in them. In these contexts, as Freeman's chapter (7) discusses in detail, capitalism is most often being promoted by NGOs, in the guise of market-led development or 'making markets work for the poor'. In other words, development, in the rural context, is these days predominantly about trying to stimulate a shift from traditional to capitalist economic practices. NGOs seek to do this by promoting the production of cash crops, facilitating the establishment of value chains and giving trainings on business and marketing. But what they do not do is consider whether people's motivations and values fit with these behaviours. In very many instances they do not, and these projects fail. For such projects and practices to take hold, a radical shift in values is necessary. And in recent years, as Pentecostalism has begun to spread out to rural areas, it is the Pentecostal churches that provoke this shift in values, bringing new motivations and legitimising new types of behaviour. It is here, then, that the Pentecostal ethic most clearly supports the spirit of development.

### **The power of Pentecostalism**

I have argued that Pentecostalism does indeed bring about a Pentecostal Ethic, similar to Weber's Protestant Ethic, which supports and legitimises the spread of capitalism. One question remains: Why does Pentecostalism do this so much better than mainstream Protestantism, which has, of course, been present in much of Africa since the nineteenth century? I offer three suggestions to explain the contemporary power and popularity of Pentecostalism, compared with mainstream Protestantism.

First, Pentecostalism incorporates a holistic ontology that fits well with the lived experience of many Africans and accords with most traditional African ontologies. Indeed, the dualistic worldview and ascetic ideas of mainstream Protestantism always seemed rather strange and somewhat irrational to most Africans and could never be fully embraced despite decades of mainstream Protestant and Catholic intervention (Meyer 2007: 13). What Pentecostal Protestantism offers is a form of Protestantism that fits with certain key African sensibilities. But at the

same time as acknowledging the existence and power of spirits and demons, it simultaneously provides a route for believers to distance themselves from them – to make a break – and it is in this that it has its particular appeal, as well as its fundamental difference from other forms of Christianity, as Joel Robbins (2004) has so cogently argued.

Second, there is the important role played by charisma and ecstasy. While there have been numerous descriptions of Pentecostal charisma, most scholarly *analysis* of Pentecostalism to date has either ignored its charismatic nature or been strongly influenced by anthropological theories of charisma that emphasise its role in constructing liminal stages in rituals which, although they temporarily challenge the social order, ultimately re-establish it (Gluckman 1954, Turner 1968, 1969). Thus the charismatic outbursts regularly witnessed in Pentecostal churches have been seen as cases of catharsis and examples of ritual *communitas* in many of the deprivation theory approaches to Pentecostalism (e.g. Austin 1981). Instead, following Weber, I would suggest that Pentecostal charisma and ecstasy play a fundamental role in transforming embodied subjectivities and in creating the felt *experience* of newness which makes the rhetoric of rebirth feel *actual* (cf. Csordas 2002, Maxwell 2005). Such charismatic experiences make possible a fundamental rupture in the social order and then lead to the possibility of the establishment of a new order (Keyes 2002: 249). What other forms of Protestantism may seek to do with sober words, stories and prayer, Pentecostalism achieves far more effectively with its exuberant rituals, exorcisms and gifts of the Spirit.

Third, Pentecostalism is becoming far more popular than other forms of Protestantism in contemporary Africa because it is itself constituted in part through the logic of neoliberal capitalism and is thus actively and creatively marketed. Contemporary evangelism, in the hands of Pentecostals and charismatics, has harnessed new media and technologies and combined them with the logic of consumer advertising to spread the word far and wide, through music, films and teleserials, by tape cassettes, DVDs, online chat forums and Facebook (Hackett 1998, Meyer 2002, 2006, Pype 2009). Appropriating contemporary marketing methodologies that combine advertising with entertainment, today's Pentecostals and charismatics have created a form of evangelism which is energetic, enticing and ubiquitous. They have become experts at 'advertising Jesus', marketing Him to the masses and thus growing their churches.

## **NGOs and Pentecostal churches: contrasting models of development and different modes of implementation**

We have seen how the Pentecostal ethic supports and legitimates the spirit of development – the development of economic behaviours which enable people to better function in the neoliberal economic setting of contemporary Africa. And we have seen how secular development NGOs seem to be surprisingly less successful in this endeavour. Let us complete the analysis, then, by summarising the similarities and differences between these two development styles and trying to make explicit the reasons why their capacity to bring about change is so strikingly different.

Both Pentecostal churches and secular development NGOs are products of the contemporary neoliberal turn and its reconfigurations of self, society and economy. Born in the same circumstances, and addressing similar societal issues, Pentecostal churches and secular development NGOs thus have much in common. Most obviously, both provide services and welfare that used to be provided by the state, and both are part of translocal networks and confer translocal sensibilities (Corten & Marshall-Fratani 2001, van Dijk 1997, 2002a). Both operate in and are attuned to a strongly market logic. New Pentecostal churches and new NGOs appear at dizzying speeds, with new offerings and new innovations adapting to meet local demand. There is strong competition within each sector, and sometimes between them. Local churches and NGOs are often established by young charismatic leaders, and both often seek to challenge traditional and established power structures. Both are driven by values and are inspired by a particular vision of society and the ‘good life’ that they try to bring about. Both invoke a state of crisis and offer routes to salvation, whether it is salvation of the soul or of the soil. Both offer deliverance, from sin or from underdevelopment. And both wage wars against evil, be that conceptualised as Satan or as poverty.

Why, then, do the Pentecostal churches seem to be rather more successful in bringing about change that is effective, deep-rooted and long-lasting? I would suggest that there are four main reasons. First, although Pentecostal churches and secular NGOs both exist within a market logic, their funding sources are considerably different and this leads to some highly significant differences in their modes of operation and accountability. While most NGOs receive much of their funding from external stakeholders, such as foreign governments and international donors, and thus have to respond to the demands of stakeholders far removed

from the people that they actually serve, Pentecostal churches are almost entirely funded by their followers, through tithes and other offerings. Thus a church's survival and fortune depends on it attracting a large, and preferably wealthy, congregation. One consequence of this funding arrangement is that for churches to succeed they must be responsive to the demands of the 'religious consumer' and continuously adapt to follow trends. Third wave, neo-charismatic churches can be the most responsive of all, having no links to the more centralised and regulated forms of the mainline denominations. NGOs, in contrast, are often neither responsive nor accountable to the people they supposedly serve, instead having to report back to national and international donors.

Second, Pentecostal churches focus on transforming individual subjectivities. And they have become experts in this area. The 'transformative capacity' (Eisenstadt 1968) of Pentecostalism is quite astonishing. As several of the chapters in this book show, converts learn to see themselves and their lives in a new light. They reject passive, fatalistic beliefs and reclaim their agency. And in very many cases this new sense of empowerment leads to new behaviours and new types of social relations – both of which enhance economic development and foster upward social mobility. While NGOs and secular development theory are beginning to become interested in the connection between personal change and social change, and to place more emphasis on empowerment (Fisher 1997, Friedmann 1992, Kauffman 1990), they currently lack the tools to bring about personal transformation to anywhere near the same degree as the Pentecostals. While Pentecostals focus very strongly on the individual, most development NGOs tend to think more at the community level. While Pentecostals seek to bring about personal transformation, NGOs tend to be more interested in structural transformation.<sup>5</sup> When it comes to bringing about social and economic change it seems that approaches that focus on individuals are rather more effective.

Third, Pentecostal churches are rather better than NGOs at fostering participation. Church members find themselves actively involved in church activities from the start – whether it is participating in bible study, singing in the choir or running numerous other church activities. Pentecostal pastors are adept at getting people involved and helping them to feel part of the church community. Decision-making is very often democratic and all sectors of society are included, even women and outcaste groups. As such, Pentecostal churches are indeed locally owned organisations, run by the people for the people, in a way that most development NGOs simply are not. And because of this,

Pentecostal churches quickly become embedded in local communities and are seen as moral and meaningful institutions.

The fourth reason has to do with the way that Pentecostalism and secular development ideologies relate to the past and to traditional African religions and cultural practices. As discussed above, NGOs and secular ideologies of development largely ignore religion and culture altogether. They operate in a rational ontology, assume a society of Western-type individuals and pay little attention to traditional values, practices or forms of social organisation. In doing so, they fail to offer people a way to legitimately change any of these traditional forms or to extricate themselves from them. In contrast, Pentecostalism, with its holistic ontology which incorporates spirits and ancestors and witches, profoundly recognises the social and cultural reality in which people live, and, moreover, offers people a way to legitimately – morally – remove themselves from these traditional social and cultural forms, to reshape important social relations and to behave in a way which focuses more on individualism and accumulation.

It is for these reasons, as the chapters of this book show in rich ethnographic detail, that Pentecostal churches are often more successful in bringing about social and economic change than are secular development NGOs. And when these two types of organisation work together, or in parallel, in the same community, the overall potential for change is phenomenal.

## **Outline of the book**

### **Part I. Pentecostalism and the neoliberal turn**

The three chapters in Part I explore the rise of Pentecostal Christianity in the context of the major socio-economic transformations of neoliberalism. In the opening chapter (2), Jean Comaroff describes the epochal shift in the relations between capital, labour, consumption and place that characterises global neoliberal capitalism, with business increasingly liberated from regulatory control, states being rolled back and the division of labour becoming increasingly globalised. For many people in the developing world these changes are experienced as increasing instability, peripheralisation and inequality, coupled with widening gulfs between aspiration and possibility. Noting that the interplay between economics and religion has never been severed, and discussing the contemporary relevance of Weber's Protestant Ethic, she identifies two major dimensions of religious change that have emerged in dialectical tension to these socio-economic shifts. Both indicate a

move towards holism and a reconnection of the binary oppositions that laid the bedrock of the modernist project. The first is a sociological shift towards breaking down the dichotomy of church and state or religion and society. In the Pentecostal worldview, religion cannot be relegated to the private sphere, but rather God is in everything, from business to politics to entertainment. Second, there is a related ontological shift, reconfiguring the boundaries between sacred and secular, spiritual and material, self and society and emotion and cognition. Comaroff eloquently argues that these religious shifts emerge from a loss of faith in modernist conceptions of the world, as people find them inadequate to explain their lived reality or to offer routes to success. The new religious holism of Pentecostalism, in contrast, has something to offer to both the winners and losers of neoliberalism. For the rich it acknowledges aspirations and assuages guilt, and for the poor it offers welfare services and healing.

Päivi Hasu takes up this latter theme in her chapter (3) about Pentecostal churches in Tanzania. She provides a detailed study of two very different Pentecostal congregations in Dar es Salaam. Efatha is a rapidly growing, independent church catering to the entrepreneurial middle class. Drawing on the theology of Ghanaian 'religious superstar' Mensa Otabil, Efatha preaches a self-consciously materialist form of salvation, and encourages its congregants to work hard, empower themselves and enjoy abundance and economic prosperity. A central tenet of belief for Efatha congregants is 'give and you shall receive', and large amounts of money are given to the church in weekly collections and tithes and in the purchase of shares in the Efatha Foundation. With this money Efatha now owns and runs its own TV station, bank and newspaper, allowing it to spread its message further and to utilise business at the very heart of its evangelical activities. In stark contrast, the Glory of Christ Tanzania Church has a predominantly poor and underprivileged congregation, and it focuses on healing activities and deliverance from satanic forces. This church in particular is known for its ability to return people from the state of being zombies (*misukule*), people who are thought to be taken to carry out nocturnal unpaid labour for witches, while their bodies lie in bed at night. Victimised and slaving away for their capitalist owners in an occult economy that mirrors the emerging neoliberal one, these zombies wake up listless and exhausted. The Glory of Christ Tanzania Church organises services, consultations and vigils to drive away these satanic forces and to restore their victims to health and wellbeing. It helps its congregants to reconceptualise their problems (such as failure at school, teenage pregnancies) as the actions of demonic

forces and gives them support and direction in life. Through these two very different churches, Pentecostalism is able to cater to the spiritual needs of both the rich and the poor, the winners and the losers in the neoliberal turn. In both cases it seeks to bring about massive transformations in ontology, subjectivity and behaviour, creating new individuals, more able to deal with the social and economic situations in which they find themselves.

Basing himself in post-development theory, Rijk van Dijk also looks at the transformation of subjectivity and behaviour in his rich ethnographic study of the 'embedded development thinking' in Ghanaian Pentecostal churches, both in Ghana and in Botswana. Van Dijk's churches cater mainly to the upwardly mobile middle classes and particularly to Ghanaian migrant business-people in Botswana, who primarily own and run shops, beauty salons and car repair businesses. The chapter (4) focuses on how these churches seek to change selfhood and behaviour in two key areas – sexuality and relationships and business and enterprise. In the area of sexuality, the church offers counselling services to young couples and promotes 'Christian courtship' and 'abstinence pledges'. It promotes a marked 'break with the past' regarding sexual behaviour and carries out extensive AIDS education. Church counsellors speak frankly with youth about sexual matters and try to convince them that premarital abstinence is the way to a happy and healthy life. With regard to business and enterprise, these churches promote an ideology of hard work, empowerment and pro-activity. Similar to the Efatha church in Tanzania, the Ghanaian churches draw on the teachings of Mensa Otabil, and promote a form of salvation through the market. Rather strikingly, they back this up with business trainings and seminars, and the active promotion of such modernist skills as time management, planning and budgeting. They thus actively give their congregants the skills and outlook necessary to succeed in a market economy. Van Dijk argues that the analytic separation between religion and development, which has characterised development and post-development discourse since the 1950s, must be collapsed in the study of these Pentecostal movements, where the tools of development and economic growth are often being given by the churches themselves.

## **Part II. Pentecostal churches and secular NGOs: different routes to salvation**

The five chapters in Part II seek to compare and contrast Pentecostal churches and secular NGOs as different types of development organisation operating in a variety of settings. The first three chapters

focus mainly on the similarities and complementarities. Piot's chapter (5) discusses the rise of the Pentecostal churches and development NGOs in post-Cold War, neoliberal West Africa, focusing particularly on Ghana and Togo. His analysis moves between the cities and the villages, and he shows how both the Pentecostals and the NGOs employ a 'spiritual cartography' whereby Satan (Pentecostals) or poverty and backwardness (NGOs) are to be found in the villages, while Christ (Pentecostals) and modernity (NGOs) are to be found in the towns. 'Salvation' or 'development' can only be achieved through a marked 'break with the past'. He also shows how both types of organisation make important use of affect and emotion: the Pentecostals with their emotionally laden prayer services and rousing speakers who make people feel good and motivate them to take control of their lives, and the NGOs, particularly BØRNEfonden, a Danish child sponsorship agency working in Togo, who use affect in the creation of (pseudo-)personal relationships between Western sponsors and 'their' African child.

Moving to East Africa, Smith discusses very similar themes in his chapter (6) on Taita, a rural area of Kenya where the neoliberal turn has led to a massive influx of both Pentecostal churches and secular development NGOs. Smith's analysis of the similarities and differences between these two types of organisation echoes Piot's, indicating the continent-wide nature of this social-economic-religious transformation. He also goes further, and begins an analysis of how Pentecostal churches and secular development NGOs interact with each other, as in practice many are present in the same communities and work with the same individuals. He explores what happened when Plan, a secular development NGO began operations in Taita, with its established Catholic Church of the older elites and the new Pentecostal church of the rather revolutionary youth. He shows that while the Pentecostals and the NGO shared a desire to break down old and corrupt power structures and create a more transparent and democratic society, they failed to fully align with each other because of their different understandings of the past and of 'tradition'. Plan considered recent power structures to be corrupt and unequal, but harkened back to an imagined past where they believed that traditional leaders presided fairly over community issues. For the Pentecostals, these very traditional structures were what were corrupt and unequal, and they sought to overthrow them, not reinstate them. Plan sought out local leaders to work with and ended up handing over much of the management of their projects to the Catholic elite, thus inadvertently reinforcing local power structures. When they realised what had happened and began to suspect that

funds were being siphoned off, they tried to place young Pentecostals onto the community committees. However, the Catholic elders refused to show them the accounts, and eventually the Pentecostal youth pulled out. Despite the desire to break down traditional power structures, the traditional elite managed to win this particular power struggle. Soon afterwards Plan left Taita, and the Pentecostals decided to form their own NGO.

Freeman's chapter (7) also explores what happens when Pentecostal churches and development NGOs operate in the same community, focusing on the village of Masho in the Gamo Highlands of southern Ethiopia. Using her ethnography to discuss both Marxian and Weberian theories of change, she shows how in this case the Pentecostal church and the development NGO, respectively, offered the two necessary ingredients for rapid social transformation – a change in values and subjectivity, and a new opportunity for enterprise. While on their own it is likely that neither organisation would have had much impact in Masho, the fact that they were operational there at the same time and that the changes they brought about could feed off each other, led to staggering social change in a very short time, including the successful development of a market-based apple enterprise and rapid conversion to Pentecostal Christianity.

The final two chapters explore some of the key differences between Pentecostal churches and secular NGOs as development actors. Jones' chapter (8) offers a fascinating analysis of the various institutions set up by the Pentecostal Assemblies of God church and various development NGOs in Teso, Uganda. Teso is a poor rural area, only marginally involved in national or international markets. Its most significant recent history is the violent insurgency that took place between 1986 and 1993, in which tens of thousands of people died. In the period after the insurgency, the Pentecostal church and various NGOs entered the area. Seeking to draw a line after this period of terrible social and moral collapse, many people were attracted to the Pentecostal church with its demand to 'make a break with the past'. It offered law and order, tight morals and meaning for a traumatised people terrified of further violence. Its institutions, both the church itself and the various committees it established, have become enduring features of Teso community life. In contrast, argues Jones, the activities of the NGOs failed to offer meaning or morality to the people of Teso, and thus their institutions – water committees, marketing associations, rural innovation groups – remained extrinsic to community life and disbanded as soon as the project finished or the NGO left.

In the final chapter (9), Parsitau looks at the transformation of gender relations by Pentecostals and NGOs in Kenya. While both types of organisation desire women's empowerment and carry out a wide range of activities to bring it about, they differ markedly in their views about quite how much women should be empowered and whether they should take on leadership positions or ultimately remain subservient to their husbands and men in general. While the NGOs push for full gender equality but fail to achieve it, the majority of the Pentecostal churches do not accept women into leadership positions and preach the biblical notion that woman should be man's helpmate. This intransigence, and their lack of acceptance of women in 'non-traditional roles' (unmarried, divorced, single mothers) has, however, spurred a breakaway movement of women-only church organisations, run by women, for women. Parsitau explores the various gender dynamics of both the Pentecostals and the NGOs and considers the extent to which either succeeds in bringing about a transformation of gender relations in Kenya.

## Notes

1. This introduction has benefited from input and inspiration from all the contributors and also from detailed comments from Maurice Bloch, Jean Comaroff, Deborah James and Norman Long.
2. The amount of money raised by these churches worldwide is quite astounding, topping US\$30 billion in 2000 (Barrett and Johnson 2002: 287).
3. And in both cases there was a marked increase in concern about witches and witchcraft, further suggesting the parallels in these two situations.
4. Wealth that has flowed into Africa in recent years in the form of foreign direct investment has led to wealth flowing out again in the form of profits and revenues to foreign investors. Very little of the revenue generated from mineral and resource extraction, to take the most significant example, has entered into wider African society (Ferguson 2005).
5. Although some NGOs are beginning to place more emphasis on the individual – particularly in micro-finance and enterprise projects – there is still a tendency to think at the level of the collective, such that even in these projects individual beneficiaries are often organised into savings groups, enterprise associations or cooperatives. In any case, even when they focus on the individual they consider material opportunities and economic conditions, and not on subjectivity.

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