

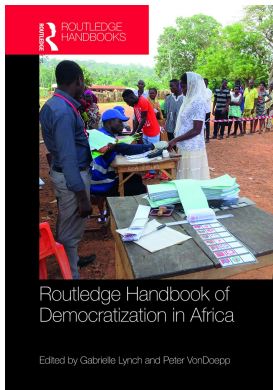
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CHRISTIANITY AND  
DEMOCRACY*Amy S. Patterson*

On a continent where 49 percent of people are estimated to be Christian and 90 percent report that religion is central in their lives (McCauley and Gyimah-Boadi 2009; Barrett and Johnson 2001, 429), churches play complex and ambiguous roles in African politics. This is because churches (or, more broadly, Christian institutions) encompass diverse actors such as congregations, denominations, ecumenical bodies (e.g., the Christian Council of Tanzania), and faith-based organizations (FBOs); they act locally, nationally, and/or globally; their political engagement is temporally dynamic; their agendas include promoting morality, urging good governance, meeting human needs, and/or fostering market opportunities; and their members belong to various ethnic groups and socioeconomic classes and support different political parties and issue positions. Their impact can be ambiguous: they may create new political visions, influence select policies, and shape politicians' performances. However, such outcomes cannot be assumed. Indeed, the policies that churches favor may not gain legislative approval or state funding, and the candidates that churches support may not be elected (Ranger 2008; Marshall 2009).

This chapter first offers an overview of Christian involvement in political life during the push for multiparty democracy from the late 1980s to the mid-1990s and then moves to Pentecostals' political engagement. Stressing that God is active in all parts of life, Pentecostal churches vary in their emphasis on holiness, prophesy, spiritual healing, preaching, deliverance, and social service delivery. Despite this variation, they share a focus on spiritual conversion, acting on one's faith, biblical teachings, and the centrality of Christ's sacrifice. Pentecostals also stress gifts of the Holy Spirit, such as speaking in tongues and healing (Kalu 2008). These churches include those introduced by the West in the early 1900s (such as the Assemblies of God) and the charismatic/neo-Pentecostal churches that emerged primarily in cities in the 1980s (Kalu 2008). They contrast with the mission churches (such as the Catholics) and mainline Protestants (such as the Presbyterians) that were introduced by the colonial-era missionaries. Mission churches tend to have longstanding, well-developed, and nuanced theological traditions that emphasize human dignity, accountability to God and His creation, community obligations, and social justice for marginalized peoples. In contrast, the Pentecostal churches tend to stress the role of individuals and emphasize the Prosperity Gospel, or the belief that Christians with sufficient faith will be blessed with health and wealth (Gifford 1995). The rise of "Big Men" Pentecostal pastors with ostentatious lifestyles seems to validate this theology (Gifford 2004; McCauley 2013). Free from the decision-making hierarchies most mission churches face, Pentecostal pastors have significant

autonomy. Despite these differences, both the mission and Pentecostal churches tend to be socially conservative, particularly on issues such as sexual education and LGBTQ rights (Pew Research Center 2013; Grossman 2015). With the desire to “build God’s Kingdom,” Pentecostal churches also deliver education and health services, a niche the mission churches had historically filled (Englund 2011; Miller and Yamamori 2007).

Even though mission churches were more prominent in politics from the late 1980s until the mid-1990s, they have been joined in the political sphere by Pentecostal churches in the new millennium. The entrance of Pentecostal voices adds to the complexity and ambiguity of Christian engagement in politics. These churches have drawn members from mainline Protestant churches and African traditional religions (Hendriks and Erasmus 2001, 54) and, by 2025, there will be an estimated 115 million more Pentecostals than mainline Protestants in Africa based on current conversion rates and population growth rates (Barrett and Johnson 2001, 29). Pentecostal language and rituals, or a “Pentecostalist style,” has come to pervade the mission churches, public political discourse and performance, and everyday popular culture across much of the subcontinent (Meyer 2004; see also Deacon 2015). Increasingly, mission churches emulate how Pentecostal churches use media technology and lively worship styles, particularly to attract youth. The prominence and influence of Pentecostalism justifies the focus on these churches in the second half of the chapter.<sup>1</sup>

This chapter proceeds in five sections. The first analyzes the mission churches’ involvement during both the move to multiparty democracy and the new millennium. It illustrates how mission churches often work in coalitions to emphasize social justice. The second section focuses on the economic, social, and political factors that pushed Pentecostal engagement in politics in the new millennium. The third demonstrates how political actors have adopted the language and rituals of Pentecostalism, while the fourth illustrates the uneven influence that Pentecostals have had in the political sphere—they resemble the mission churches in that they do not always achieve tangible outcomes. The conclusion raises questions for future research.<sup>2</sup>

### **The mission churches: the push for multiparty democracy and beyond**

The mission churches were relatively inactive in the nationalist movements for independence that occurred from the 1940s until the early 1970s, primarily because of their association with the colonial governments. Most thereafter supported the postcolonial governments, and when many countries turned to one-party or military rule in the 1970s, churches remained relatively silent (Gifford 1995). By the late 1980s, however, church leaders became increasingly aware of how poverty, corruption, and the austerity policies of structural adjustment hurt their followers. During what Cheeseman (2015, 86) terms the region’s “second liberation” (from the late 1980s until the mid-1990s), thirty-five countries in the region introduced multiparty elections. Many mission church leaders played a role in these transitions when they issued public speeches and engaged in private advocacy that supported pro-democracy movements and urged human rights protection. For example, in Malawi the Catholic Church issued a pastoral letter in 1992 that galvanized civil society to challenge the repressive and corrupt regime of President Hastings Kamuzu Banda (Newell 1995). The (mainline Protestant) Council of Churches in Zambia and the (Catholic) Zambia Episcopal Conference called for negotiations between the opposition leader Frederick Chiluba and President Kenneth Kaunda after the president rejected proposals for governmental reforms from a constitutional convention in June 1991. Held in the Anglican Cathedral in Lusaka in July 1991, the negotiations led to multiparty elections in October 1991 that brought Chiluba to power (Freston 2001; Phiri 2001). Church leaders also moderated the national conferences in many Francophone countries (Cheeseman 2015, 75). Sometimes

this political action was costly: Kenya's Anglican Bishop Alexander Kipsang Muge is widely believed to have been assassinated in 1990 because he supported that country's pro-democracy movement (Gifford 1995). To be clear, not all mission churches promoted democracy or human rights. The cases of Rwanda and South Africa, where churches supported oppressive regimes, serve as examples (see Longman 2010; Kuperus 1999).

During this same period, the Pentecostals typically did not challenge the political status quo, which reflected their emphasis on the spiritual realm and eternal salvation, rather than the material world of "sinful" politics. For example, Pentecostal pastors posed few challenges to Ghana's military leader-turned-president J.J. Rawlings (1981–2000). Unlike mission churches that advocated for free and fair elections in 1992 and 1996 (Rawlings's National Democratic Congress won in both years), Ghana's Pentecostal leaders avoided electoral engagement. For the Pentecostals, national apostasy caused Ghana's poverty, corruption, and underdevelopment; God, not democratic governance, would save the country (Gifford 2004, 161–9). By focusing on spiritual causes, these Pentecostals de facto supported the status quo. In Kenya, the Evangelical Fellowship of Kenya, which included large Pentecostal churches such as the Africa Inland Church, the Deliverance Church, and the Redeemed Gospel Church, was noticeably silent about the need for, or nature of, multiparty politics in the 1980s and 1990s. It emphasized Romans 13—"Render unto Caesar that which is Caesar's"—a statement interpreted to mean that "good Christians" should not challenge authoritarian President Daniel arap Moi. As a "God-fearing" leader, Moi was portrayed as chosen by the Almighty (Karanja 2008).

Unlike Pentecostals in the new millennium who have tended to act as lone voices, the mission churches have often tried to work in coalitions. During the late 1980s to the mid-1990s, their activities inspired student groups in Malawi (Newell 1995) and they collaborated with trade unions in Zambia (Hinfelaar 2009, 141–3). The (mainline Protestant) South African Council of Churches (SACC) and leaders within the Young Christian Students Organization cooperated with the African National Congress and the community-based United Democratic Front to oppose apartheid (Bompani 2006, 1139). These mission churches also collaborated with international ecumenical councils such as the World Council of Churches (WCC) and the All African Conference of Churches, as well as mission church bodies like the Anglican Communion, to gain resources and media coverage. For example, the SACC's anti-apartheid efforts received moral support from the WCC Program to Combat Racism that started in 1969, as well as its fund for southern African liberation movements that began in 1970 (Welch 2001; Macqueen 2017). In these global ecumenical forums, national problems became international issues with urgency and legitimacy (Davies 1983). Statements from global church leaders, such as Pope John Paul's encyclicals about human rights, also bolstered church efforts to challenge authoritarianism in the early 1990s.

After the return to multiparty politics in the early 1990s, many mission churches have continued to work through coalitions to pursue social justice. In Malawi, when the ruling United Democratic Front sought to change the constitution to allow then President Bakili Muluzi to run for a third term, the (mainline Protestant) Malawi Council of Churches and the (Catholic) Episcopal Conference spoke out. As a unified coalition, this "chorus of protest" occurred in a "context of a lack of organized political opposition to the constitutional amendment" (Ross 2004, 97). In a more recent example, the (mainline Protestant) Christian Council of Ghana collaborated with journalists and citizen groups to advocate against illegal gold mining, a practice with detrimental environmental, health, and social consequences. Council officials emphasized God's command to care for His creation and the physical and spiritual costs for not doing so (Patterson 2018).

Similarly, the Jesuit Centre for Theological Reflection (JCTR) in Zambia has challenged state leaders to tackle poverty. The JCTR also illustrates the rise of evidence-based, professional Christian advocacy. In 2011, the JCTR used data from its Basic Food Basket Survey to lobby the Zambian government to address the high cost of food (JCTR 2011). The advocacy of this highly regarded organization seemed to threaten the government of President Rupiah Banda, who was running for reelection in 2011. He labeled the organization as a tool of the opposition Patriotic Front candidate Michael Sata (a Catholic) and accused the Catholic Church of supporting homosexuality. In response, Catholic leaders threatened to sue the ruling party (*Mail and Guardian* 2011). In a country where 74 percent of people live on less than US\$1.25 per day (UNDP 2016, 38) and 21 percent of the population is Catholic (*Catholic News Agency* 2013), the JCTR's poverty messages resonated and did not help Banda's image in a context in which the public and media also denounced the regime's alleged corruption and ties to Chinese mining firms (*BBC News* 2011).

As was true during the push for multipartyism, authoritarian governments in the new millennium could respond to church actions with repression and/or cooptation. For example, the Catholic bishops in the Democratic Republic of Congo mediated an agreement between President Joseph Kabila and the opposition in late December 2016 about holding national elections in December 2017. These elections had originally been scheduled for 2015 but the president postponed them (see Ragatzki 2017 for more information). Then, in August 2017, the bishops announced that negotiations over the upcoming elections had collapsed because of the president's foot-dragging. Church leaders accused the government of fomenting instability in order to derail the elections, and they called on the Congolese people to "stand up" (Chintom 2017b). According to Human Rights Watch (2017), these calls for social justice were met by government-sponsored violent recriminations against nuns, priests, civil society leaders, and protesters. In other cases, churches proved ineffective because state cooptation undermined church unity over objectives. For example, during the 2017–18 crisis in Anglophone Cameroon, when peaceful protests against policies that marginalized English-speaking citizens were met with government repression and then escalated into violent separatist actions, the Catholic church was divided over how to respond (Chintom 2017a). This reflected a broader history of ethnic and regional divisions in the country, as well as competition among church leaders for hegemony and political favor (Gifford 1995, 304). This disunity undermined the legitimacy of the church as a mediator in the conflict.

### Political engagement by Pentecostals

Since the mid- to late-1990s, an increasing number of Pentecostals have campaigned for national office, formed political parties, and been named to government positions (Ranger 2008). Pentecostal politicians include the late Ghanaian president John Evans Atta Mills, former Nigerian president Olusegun Obasanjo, who became "born again" while imprisoned in the mid-1990s, and Yemi Osinbajo, a lawyer and Lagos pastor with the Redeemed Christian Church of God who became the vice-president of Nigeria in 2015 (Imo 2008, 47; Gaffey 2017). In Zambia, Nevers Mumba formed the National Citizens' Coalition in 1996; at the time of writing he remains the leader of the Movement for Multiparty Democracy (MMD), the party that ruled from 1991 to 2011 (*Lusaka Times* 2017a). Pentecostals have led protests in Nigeria (Branch and Mamphilly 2015, 102). And they have engaged in local politics in several African countries. In Zambia's Copperbelt region, for example, Pentecostal churches have recruited and elected their congregants to serve on district councils and school boards (interview with FBO official, June 10, 2014). More broadly, Pentecostals, as Christians who are more likely than mission church

members to say religion matters to them, tend to show a high level of interest in politics (see McCauley and Gyimah-Boadi 2009, 11–12 on religiosity and political interest).

Several factors pushed Pentecostals to be increasingly involved in politics in the new millennium. First, the return to multiparty politics expanded the political space for associational life and political participation (Riedl 2012, 42). Multiparty elections created opportunities for church leaders—including Pentecostal pastors—to support candidates. For example, in Nigeria’s 2015 election that pitted the Christian incumbent President Goodluck Jonathan against the Muslim former military leader Muhammadu Buhari, many Pentecostal pastors backed Jonathan because of an “admixture of corporate (not excluding financial) interests, location, personal relationships, and complicated projections and permutations as to which of the two candidates would best assure that [the pastors] landed on their feet in the post-election period” (Obadare 2015). Nigeria’s democratic political space has facilitated the rise of such a “theocratic class” that helps to shape politics, society, and economics (Obadare 2006).

Second, technological innovations and media liberalization contribute to the Pentecostals’ public role. Charismatic individuals such as T.B. Joshua (Synagogue, Church of All Nations, Nigeria) and Pastor Mensa Otabil (International Central Gospel Church, Ghana) adroitly use TV and/or radio shows, tweet points from their sermons, post YouTube videos of healing ceremonies, and use WhatsApp to share photos with thousands globally (author observations in Ghana, 2017; Kalu 2008; see Togarasei 2012 on Zimbabwe and Botswana). Increased media liberalization gives pastors information on government actions and allows them to contribute to the cacophony of voices on policies related to AIDS, corruption, poverty, state spending, and education (Jubilee Centre 2015; Boyd 2015).

Third, rapid communication and global travel mean that some Pentecostal leaders have forged partnerships with congregations in the West that support their political engagement and development projects (Patterson 2011; Patterson and Kuperus 2016). These pastors have built global constituencies through organizations such as the Full Gospel Men’s Fellowship, and they have planted hundreds of congregations abroad (Kalu 2008). In these foreign venues, they urge their followers to engage in community mobilization and to exercise their right to vote (Hatcher 2017). External support empowers Pentecostal political involvement.

Fourth, the socioeconomic demographics of Pentecostal adherents encourage political engagement. Unlike Pentecostals in the West and Latin America who tend to have low income and educational levels, African Pentecostals are representative of all socioeconomic groups (Pew Research Center 2006). Many middle- and upper-class Africans attend Pentecostal churches, and these educated individuals want leaders who preach in the colonial language, are educated, have management skills, and understand politics. Pentecostal pastors—many of whom are not required by their churches to have theological training—have responded by enrolling in mainline Protestant seminaries in Africa (see Gifford 1995, 73 on Pentecostals in the Presbyterian-based Akrofi-Christaller Institute in Ghana). There they are increasingly exposed to ideas about development, politics, and management (personal observations, Zambian, Tanzanian, and Ghanaian mission schools of theology, 2011, 2015, and 2017). In addition, Pentecostal pastors often rely on American training manuals that stress individualism and upward mobility, themes that appeal to Africa’s growing middle class (McClendon and Riedl 2016, 125). While not all of these pastors use these sources of knowledge in political advocacy, there are some who do (see Patterson and Kuperus 2016).

Fifth, high unemployment, overcrowding, and poor state service delivery in urban areas drive Pentecostal political engagement (McCauley 2013). Without the kinship and ethnic ties found in rural areas, the moral economy in cities often revolves around churches. Pastors become patrons, acting not just as intermediaries to the spiritual realm, but also as links to government



services, educational and employment opportunities, and NGO projects (McCauley 2013; Maxwell 2006). They seek to combat the “evil forces” of poverty, disease, and hunger, and to promote Christian hope and dignity (Gusman 2009). In the slums of Zambia’s Copperbelt, for example, Pentecostal pastors lobbied district officials for a generator for a local clinic and materials to build a market shelter in 2011 (Patterson and Kuperus 2016). Church leadership has become a way to attain social, economic, and political influence in contexts where the state has a marginal presence (Maxwell 2006, 250).

Sixth, Pentecostals’ increased role in social service delivery has driven their political engagement (Miller and Yamamori 2007). For example, the Northmead Assemblies of God in Zambia set up HIV prevention and AIDS care programs in 2000, when most churches were avoiding AIDS. With US government funds, it then established a clinic to provide HIV testing and AIDS treatment to people in a low-income neighborhood in Lusaka. Its programmatic interests led its pastor—Bishop Joshua Banda—to serve on the National AIDS Council for several years, where he advocated for greater spending for youth HIV prevention programs (Patterson 2011).

Finally, the increased public involvement of Pentecostals must be situated in a context of growing Islamic fundamentalism in Africa. When northern Nigerian states implemented Sharia law in the early 1990s, more Pentecostals began to run for office and speak publicly on political issues (Imo 2008). In Tanzania, some churches mobilized in 2015 over proposed legislation to establish Islamic courts; they demanded that the High Court declare such courts and the local branch of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation to be unconstitutional (Segu 2016). Yet in countries where Muslims and Christians have historically collaborated and intermarried, the picture is more complex. In Malawi, a country where 15 percent of the population is Muslim, Pentecostals have both pointed to Islam as a “spiritual adversary” and reached out to Muslims through business partnerships and social service delivery (Englund 2011, 182).

### **Political actors embrace Pentecostal language and rituals**

The increased role of Pentecostals in politics has led some political actors to adopt their language and rituals. Pentecostal notions of healing, spiritual warfare, and Christ’s transformative power are omnipresent in the political sphere. Through prayer, Christians call on God to deliver them from Satan, a powerful force believed to cause poverty and underdevelopment, and they look to an omnipotent God for help with personal and societal problems. The Holy Spirit has the power to “redeem communities,” as an employee of a Pentecostal FBO in the informal settlement of Mapalo said. Once crime-ridden, Mapalo, located in Zambia’s Copperbelt region, has become an increasingly “moral place” because of the work of Pentecostal churches (interview with Jubilee Centre staff member, May 22, 2011). Local political leaders then used religious language when they changed the community’s name in 2013 from Chipulukusu, which means “crushed” or “defeated” in Bemba, to Mapalo, which means “blessing.” The new name indicated that a higher power had transformed the community into something loved and celebrated. The “renaming” also gained favor with the growing community of almost 40,000 people, a potentially savvy political move (interview with Jubilee Centre staff member, June 12, 2014).

Language can be used to signal God’s assumed preference for a political candidate. In the 2013 Kenyan election, the Jubilee Coalition portrayed its presidential candidate Uhuru Kenyatta and his running mate as God’s instruments for peace, redemption, and prosperity in the wake of the 2007 electoral violence that killed over 1,000 people (Deacon 2015). Such labels enable politicians to take on personas that reach beyond party, ethnic, or regional identities. In addition, as Gifford (2016, 48) points out, being “anointed” or a “savior” makes that individual indispensable: only that person is assumed to be chosen by God to bring God’s blessings to society.

The language of Pentecostalism is often embedded in public performances that incorporate the theatrics of Pentecostal worship, as three events illustrate (see also Deacon 2015, 2016; Maupeu 2014). In 2004, the “Christian fellowship” at Ghana Airways organized an all-night vigil led by the London-based Ghanaian evangelist Dr. Lawrence Tetteh to pray for divine intervention for the bankrupt state company. Throughout its deliverance ceremony and lengthy prayers, the vigil blamed Satan for the company’s demise. Similarly, in 2015, Zambian President Edward Lungu staged a national day of prayer and fasting for the currency (the kwacha), which had plummeted 45 percent in value against the US dollar. At the president’s side, Bishop Simon Chihana, leader of the International Fellowship of Christian Churches in Zambia (a Pentecostal mega-church with ties to the USA), appealed to an omnipotent higher power: “God is a god of miracles ... He will bless us and the kwacha will be restored” (*RT News* 2015). In 2016, the vigil’s organizers felt vindicated: the kwacha had increased in value 20 percent, outperforming 150 other currencies, gold, and silver, although increased copper prices and IMF loans no doubt played a role (Adegoke 2016). In a third example, rallies in the 2013 Kenyan electoral campaign often resembled Pentecostal worship services. Both include loud music, charismatic (and lengthy) speeches, well-adorned Big Men with large entourages, attendance by people of all ages, the ubiquity of party (or religious) colors in dress and decor, and sophisticated orchestration of every performance detail (Nyairo 2015).

These political occasions highlight several themes. First, the Ghana and Zambia events minimized the need for accountable, transparent state institutions with sufficient capacity to address difficult economic issues. Because of their spiritual linkages, pastors were portrayed as the people who could solve the nation’s problems. These theatrics downplay the complexity of socioeconomic problems and the ways that institutions affect development. In addition, spiritual deliverance and prayer do not challenge the political status quo. As Asamoah-Gyadu (2005, 113) writes about the Ghana vigil: “Religion was ... used as a cover up to attribute the problems of the country [and the company] to faceless witches and demons.” Second, as the Kenyan rallies show, both religious and political events are ripe for the incorporation of symbols, color, ceremony, and entertainment, elements that may foster sociality and encourage a sense of belonging but that may also discourage attendees from questioning “politics as usual.” Third, these performances find an audience with citizens who seek hope in contexts of poverty and underdevelopment. Emphasizing hope from a spiritual source may appeal to politicians who face resource constraints and structural barriers to socioeconomic development. Finally, these events are not simply political manipulation; instead, they resonate with the hopes and fears embedded in the Christian faith (Deacon 2015, 208). They grab citizens’ attention because of the widespread belief in the power of the spiritual realm.

### **Pentecostals in the political sphere**

Pentecostals, like the mission churches described above, have had an uneven influence in politics. To begin, not all Pentecostals who have campaigned for office have been elected (Deacon 2015). They face the challenges of patronage politics, bridging ethnic divides, and fundraising. Many rely on support from one congregation instead of building a cross-denominational constituency. Similarly, their political parties may be personality-centered and face entrenched political machines that have resources and incumbency advantages.

However, even without formal political representation, Pentecostals have influenced some policies such as those on AIDS and LGBTQ issues. In Uganda, Pentecostal pastors, with support from American conservative Christian organizations like Exodus Global Alliance, pushed abstinence-only AIDS programs and anti-homosexuality policies (Gusman 2009; Boyd 2015).



While it might be tempting to assume that Western partners dictated the churches' political agenda (Hearn 2002), this assumption diminishes African agency and ignores the multiple factors that influence political action (Grossman 2015). Indeed, there is little evidence that Western ties shape Pentecostal advocacy on education, infrastructure, poverty, or corruption. In the Uganda case, the parliament passed legislation that increased penalties for same-sex relations (they were already illegal) and that punished organizations that assisted homosexuals in 2014 (Nuñez-Mietz and Iommi 2017). Uganda's Inter-Religious Council, comprised of Muslims, mission churches, and Pentecostals, supported the move, even though donors cut funds for social programs and not all church leaders agreed with the law (Grossman 2014; interview with Ugandan FBO official, June 19, 2014). Yet, the example may say little about the churches' broader political influence, since Ugandans in general are socially conservative (Pew Research Center 2013). Grossman (2015, 348) demonstrates that LGBTQ issues have become politically salient in African countries that are undergoing democratization and that have a growing number of Renewalist Christians.<sup>3</sup> This finding indicates that passing laws on LGBTQ issues may be an easy way for politicians to gain public support in competitive political environments.

Pentecostals also may sway symbolic policies, as the Ghanaian government's 2017 decision to build an interdenominational National Cathedral illustrates. After President Nana Akufo-Addo broke ground for the cathedral in March 2017, some Ghanaians questioned the need for the building, given the country's economic downturn and the ubiquity of Christian symbols, rhetoric, leaders, and houses of worship in Ghana. Pentecostal leaders (who themselves build large worship spaces) and the president responded that the construction was privately funded. The cathedral project was not isolated from Pentecostal criticisms of the construction of a new mosque funded by Turkey and approved by former President John Mahama (of the opposition party). The beautiful new mosque that glimmered in the sun on a major Accra thoroughfare seemed to challenge the churches' status. "In fairness to all," the government embraced the cathedral project, recognizing that there were political points to gain from appeasing the Pentecostal Big Men (interview with church official, March 27, 2017). Their central role in the project became apparent when the president then appointed a thirteen-member board to oversee the construction; it included seven prominent Pentecostal pastors, one Catholic, two Anglicans, and three Presbyterians (Brako-Powers 2017).

In contrast to their actions on "morality" policies and symbolic projects, Pentecostal efforts to shape good governance have been less effective. Pentecostals often avoid such issues, except when they frame corruption as the result of Satan's work or individual moral failings (Ranger 2008; Gifford 2004). When Pentecostals do advocate for good governance, they, like mission churches, may quickly be silenced through cooptation, patronage politics, or even threats (interview with Zambian FBO official, June 10, 2014). Events in Zambia in 2017–18 illustrate some of these dynamics. Some major Pentecostal churches joined the Council of Churches in Zambia, the Zambia Episcopal Conference, and the Evangelical Fellowship in Zambia to pen a June 2017 statement that condemned limits on media freedom and the incarceration of opposition leader Hakainde Hichilema (*Lusaka Times* 2017b). The strongly worded statement may have been an effort to protect the churches' legitimacy, since Zambians have become increasingly concerned about the country's democratic deterioration (Bratton, Dulani, and Nkomo 2017, 2). But not all Pentecostals endorsed the statement, and their silence was perceived as support for the status quo (*Lusaka Times* 2017a). In retaliation, the government required pastors to gain theological training, and it limited the activities of foreign pastors (*Zambian Observer* 2017). Both regulations would affect a wide range of churches. Church leaders seemed to be cowed, and their public comments diminished. Then in January 2018, the government banned church services, ostensibly to curtail the spread of cholera, a waterborne disease. When police raided a Catholic, mainline Protestant, and Pentecostal church that defied the ban, one Pentecostal pastor

noted the irony that in prior national crises, the government had called on churches to gather their members to pray for the nation. Most pastors, however, dutifully followed the edict (*Lusaka Times* 2018). The Zambian events of 2017–18 show that Pentecostals may have limited sway on good governance or social policies because, like the mission churches, they may experience government threats and face internal divisions.

Rather than directly influencing policies, Pentecostals may affect the norms and behaviors of citizens. Some Pentecostals stress that citizenship in a spiritual community breaks ethnic or class boundaries and fosters communal action (see Englund 2011; Parsitua 2011, 131). For example, in the slums of Zambia's Copperbelt region, the Jubilee Centre, a Pentecostal FBO established in 2000 to help people living with or affected by HIV and AIDS, urges collective action to solve local problems such as sanitation and crime (interviews with Jubilee participants, June 8–10, 2014). These activities may teach skills such as consensus building in decision-making (Ranger 2008; Mukonyora 2008), and they may foster "responsibilized citizen-subjects ... [who] produce governmental results that do not depend on direct state intervention" (Ferguson 2010, 172–4). Pentecostal organizations urge people to "believe in their own self-worth" and to transform their mindsets from "victims to victors" (McClendon and Riedl 2016, 121). Pentecostalism stresses believers' sense of self-control, it fosters self-efficacy and purpose, and it allows people to "address their longing for a modern, individual and prosperous way of life" (Meyer 1998, 763). In the process, it validates consumerism within Africa's growing middle class and appeals to the urban poor, who long to improve their material conditions (Deacon and Lynch 2013). Church-owned businesses and wealthy Pentecostal individuals reinforce these messages (Obadare 2006; Kalu 2008). For example, the Redeemed Christian Church of God, a Nigeria-based church led by media star Enoch Adeboye, built its own community with roads, schools, a health clinic, restaurants, stores, an electricity plant, and housing subdivisions. The tens of thousands of people who attend worship services at its community outside of Lagos are a captive group of consumers. Commercial ventures abound. With over five million members and branches in more than 120 countries, the church's size and success through self-reliance send a neoliberal message that government cannot foster socioeconomic development. One of the church's leaders said: "If you wait for the government, it won't get done" (Maclean 2017).

Yet the Pentecostal emphasis on individual achievement and citizen participation that concentrates on local problems may provide little impetus for government to act. This focus has the potential to undermine social solidarity and to downplay how socioeconomic and political structures affect people's advancement (Deacon and Lynch 2013, 126). It may dilute messages about government's responsibility to citizens, and it may weaken the churches' collective advocacy for poverty alleviation and good governance. As one example, when the Christian Council of Ghana publicly advocated in early 2017 for the government to pay the US\$45 million that it owed church-based clinics so that they could continue to provide millions of people with primary healthcare, the appeal got little public or governmental attention (Ibrahim 2017). In summary, even though Pentecostals have had uneven success in policymaking and elections, their greatest significance for African politics may be the ways that their emphasis on individualism affects the promotion of social justice for the broader community.

## **Conclusion**

The political role of churches in Africa is complex and ambiguous. Many mission churches have been involved during and after the push for multiparty democracy, although with mixed outcomes. Pentecostals have embraced electoral and representational politics with uneven

success. Politicians adopt Pentecostal language and rituals, seeking to demonstrate that they have God's favor. The Pentecostals' individualistic focus and the Prosperity Gospel urge believers to embrace market economics, as they present challenges to the mission churches' focus on social justice and good governance. The outcomes of church political engagement are often context-specific: Pentecostals shaped anti-homosexuality and AIDS policies in Uganda and church construction in Ghana, issues on which they already were influential. Mission churches unified around good governance in Malawi and Zambia during the early 1990s, but not in Cameroon in 2017. Pentecostal influence on good governance was minimal, as Zambia in 2017 illustrated; and as Kenya's 2013 elections indicate (Deacon 2015), Pentecostals have not always been victorious at the ballot box.

Three questions emerge for future research. First, one important contribution from Latin Americanists concerns the ways that competition among churches can shape their political and pastoral approaches and strategies (see Gill 1998). With this in mind, how does the competition between mission churches and Pentecostals for followers, resources, and influence affect how various churches approach politics? On Christmas Day 2017, a Tanzanian Pentecostal pastor sounded like a mission church leader when he told congregants that Tanzania was "quietly turning into a one-state rule" because President John Magufuli was "systematically banning political activity" (*BBC News* 2017). The action, and the government's subsequent threat to shut down the church, counters the notion that because Pentecostals focus on individual responsibility they avoid holding state leaders accountable. What factors might urge Pentecostals to take cues from the mission churches on social justice issues?

Second, how do themes in Pentecostal discourse translate into concrete governance outcomes? More specifically, why has the election of some (although far from all) Pentecostals who campaign as "moral candidates" not led to a reduction in corruption in countries such as Nigeria? How does the focus on individualism affect Pentecostals' ability to recognize and address the structural causes of corruption, such as weak state capacity and patronage demands among kinship networks? Scholars should more closely investigate church structures and Pentecostal politicians' socialization to answer such questions.

Third, how do churches maintain their long-term legitimacy in the political sphere? If they are viewed to be involved in politics solely to promote their own narrow interests (such as morality politics, the election of their congregants, their economic ventures, or access to state patronage), how do they maintain moral power? Surveys indicate that citizens in several African countries increasingly view politics to be a secular endeavor. As a result, religious voices may become increasingly marginalized in politics (McCauley and Gyimah-Boadi 2009). To ensure long-term political influence, Grzymala-Busse (2016) finds that churches must advocate for the broad issues that benefit many people in society, such as poverty reduction, social justice, and income equality. Indeed, African churches have tended to be the most influential when they have stood up for the marginalized and spoken for the voiceless, as they did during Africa's move to multiparty democracy. Future research should ask what factors enable churches to take up such issues and what doing so means for their long-term legitimacy with the public.

## Notes

- 1 The chapter does not include discussion of the African Independent Churches, such as the *Aladura* in Nigeria or the Zionists in southern Africa. On their public role, see Ranger (2008).
- 2 The chapter relies on media accounts, secondary literature, author observations, and semi-structured interviews with over 100 pastors, denominational officials, Christian activists, and FBO officials conducted in Ghana (2008 and 2017), Zambia (2011 and 2014), Uganda (2014), and Tanzania (2015).

Analysis of the Jubilee Centre in Ndola, Zambia is based on interviews, focus group discussions, and participant observation conducted in 2011 and 2014.

- 3 Grossman (2015, 342) uses the term “Renewalist” Christians in his study to refer to a broad category that includes Pentecostals. Like Pentecostals, Renewalists emphasize conversion and the role of the Holy Spirit in the believer’s life.

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