1 Introduction

African Initiated Christianity and sustainable development

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Approaching the field: religion and development

The past 20 years have witnessed a ‘religious turn’ (Kaag and Saint-Lary 2011, 1) in international development theory, policy, and practice. A growing corpus of literature has begun to explore the manifold relationships and interactions of religion and development (Jones and Petersen 2011; Swart and Nell 2016) – in themselves two vast fields of research. Religion and development is of cross-disciplinary interest, with research spanning from religious studies and theology (e.g. Gifford 2015; Heuser 2013, 2015) to anthropology (e.g. Bornstein 2005; Freeman 2012b), sociology (e.g. Berger 2010), politics (e.g. Bompani 2010; Clarke and Jennings 2008), development studies (e.g. Deneulin and Bano 2009), and economics (e.g. Barro and McCleary 2003; Beck and Gundersen 2016; Guiso, Sapienza, and Zingales 2003). A new interdisciplinary and dynamic research field on religion and development has emerged (Bompani 2019; Ter Haar 2011; Tomalin 2015).

At the same time, development policymakers and practitioners have recognised religion as a relevant factor (Tomalin 2015). Leading examples are the initiatives by the World Bank, the British Department for International Development, and, more recently, the initiative by the German Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development, inter alia leading to the foundation of the International Partnership on Religion and Sustainable Development (Belshaw, Calderisi, and Sugden 2001; BMZ 2016; Deneulin and Rakodi 2011; Ter Haar 2011). The recent interest in the relationship of development and religion is not limited to governmental and multilateral institutions, but extends to religious communities and institutions as illustrated by a volume published by the Lutheran World Federation in 2013 (Mtata 2013) and the special issue on religion and development of the *Ecumenical Review* published by the World Council of Churches in 2016.

However, the current religion and development discourse has largely been taking place within the secular frameworks of the western-dominated development discourses. Where religious communities come into view, the perspective is mainly functional: it asks whether religion is conducive to development or hinders it (e.g. Basedau, Gobien, and Prediger 2018). The focus of the attention

is on the contribution of religious communities to secular development agendas (Deneulin and Bano 2009; Jones and Petersen 2011). As we have pointed out elsewhere

[t]he development agenda and imagination, as framed in (inter-) governmental strategies such as the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development ... remains a secular one. Nowhere in the United Nations resolution on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is religion or are religious communities mentioned explicitly.

(Öhlmann et al. 2018, 4)

This secular framework of the development discourse is not only challenged by the decolonial and postcolonial debate (e.g. Mawere 2014; Bowers-Du Toit, Chapter 21, this volume), but also by the perspective of religious actors themselves. For many religious communities ‘development is part of religion’, i.e. professional and academic experts’ notions of development represent only one dimension in a more comprehensive human and social transformation (Öhlmann, Frost, and Gräb 2016, 10) that is informed by and interrelated with religious, situated and indigenous knowledge. In this it is vital to also recognise that ‘[f]or most people in the developing world, religion is part of a vision of the “good life” ... [R]eligion is part of the social fabric, integrated with other dimensions of life’ (Ter Haar 2011, 5–6). Van Wensveen (2011) introduced a twofold typology of the contributions of religious communities to sustainable development, differentiating between an ‘additive pattern’ and an ‘integral pattern’. Development concepts and practices that follow secular western development policies can be characterised as making an ‘instrumental addition of religion to the pre-set, mechanistic sustainable development production process’ (van Wensveen 2011, 85). In difference to this ‘additive pattern’, she identifies an opposite model, in which religion does not function as an instrument for secular development goals, but in which religious communities set the agenda bringing to the table their own religious-inspired concepts and practices of sustainable development. ‘[D]evelopment as part of religion’ (Öhlmann, Frost, and Gräb 2016, 10) encapsulates precisely this ‘integral pattern’ brought forward by van Wensveen (2011).

While in the functional approach religious communities are viewed as actors of ‘mainstream development policies and programmes’ (van Wensveen 2011, 82), their own aims go beyond the specific concepts of sustainable development outlined e.g. in the UN Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development (United Nations 2015). This can imply a fundamental critique of dominant concepts of (sustainable) development. They (re)shape the very notions of development based on their religious worldviews and their situated knowledge due to the embeddedness in local contexts and cultures (see Bowers-Du Toit, Chapter 21, this volume). This is what we refer to as a process of *decolonisation of development* in the title of this volume.

Hence, one desideratum in the research field is to juxtapose the notions of development dominant in (western and international) development policy with

those of religious communities and to illuminate their respective ideological presuppositions. Alternative notions of development informed by contextual religious and cultural worldviews, such as *holistic development* (Owuso-Ansah and Adjei-Acquah, Chapter 14, this volume), *integral development* (Cochrane 2011), *transformation* or *transformational development* (Dah, Chapter 17, this volume; Masondo 2013; Myers 2011); *human flourishing* (Asamoah-Gyadu, Chapter 2, this volume; Marais 2015), *Ubuntu* (Bowers-Du Toit, Chapter 21, this volume; Gichimu, Chapter 5, this volume; Metz 2011; Padwick and Lubaale 2011); *good life* (Acosta 2016, Taru, Chapter 19, this volume); and *prosperity* (Asamoah-Gyadu, Chapter 2, this volume; Ajibade, Chapter 9, this volume; Gukurume, Chapter 18, this volume; Taru, Chapter 19, this volume; Togarasei 2016), need to be taken into account and their relationship to dominant secular notions of development and modernity needs to be investigated.

This volume situates itself within the dynamic research field of religion and development by elucidating the role of African Initiated Christianity for sustainable development. While mission-initiated Christianity in Africa, in the shape of the Catholic and historic Protestant Churches of European and North American provenience, have long been recognised as development actors both in the academic literature and in the international development policy discourse (see, e.g. Belshaw, Calderisi, and Sugden 2001; BMZ 2016; Gifford 2015; Ilo 2014), African Initiated Christianity in the shape of African Independent and Pentecostal Churches lack such recognition. Thus far, there are only a limited number of studies investigating African Independent and Pentecostal Churches' contribution to development. Notable works in this area include, for example, the comprehensive overview by Turner (1980), the contributions by Oosthuizen and his collaborators (Cross, Oosthuizen, and Clark 1993; Oosthuizen 1997, 2002) or more recent contributions by Garner (2004), Bompani (2008, 2010), Freeman (2012a), and Öhlmann, Frost, and Gräb (2016). These studies indicate that there is a substantial and growing dynamic in the contribution made by African Independent and Pentecostal Churches to sustainable development in its manifold forms. Acknowledging the role of these religious movements as actors of sustainable development requires acknowledging their understanding of sustainable development as well as the wider notions and ideas that undergird and guide their actions. As decolonial and postcolonial religious movement, African Initiated Churches seem to be ideally positioned to contribute to decolonising concepts of sustainable development. Moving beyond a functional approach assessing contributions of religious communities to a secular development agenda, this volume furthermore seeks to elucidate how African Initiated Christianity contributes to reshaping notions of sustainable development.

The study of the relationship of African Initiated Christianity and sustainable development, hence, constitutes an important strand within the religion and development research field. Taking this as a point of departure, it is the aim of this book to substantially broaden the scope of the existing literature through contributions on African Independent and Pentecostal Churches and the

different dimensions and forms of development in Africa from different thematic and disciplinary perspectives. Since much of the existing literature deals with South Africa (inter alia Bompani 2008, 2010; Cross, Oosthuizen, and Clark 1993; Öhlmann, Frost, and Gräb 2016; Masondo 2014; Oosthuizen 1997; Schlemmer 2008), this volume puts the West African context into the centre of attention (including case studies on Nigeria, Ghana, and Burkina Faso). To foster overarching and comparative perspectives, it also includes contributions with a pan-African scope and contributions on the Southern African context (Zimbabwe and South Africa). The perspective presented here is necessarily partial. Hence, the volume provides an important first step in a more comprehensive investigation of African Initiated Christianity and sustainable development. It intends to open up a subfield focused on African Initiated Christianity within the religion and development discourse, while at the same time acknowledging the need for further case studies in other African countries and regions and focusing on additional notions and subthemes of sustainable development.

Approaching African Initiated Christianity: towards a definition of African Initiated Churches

African Christianity fundamentally changed in the past 100 years. In what Allan Anderson (2001) termed African Reformation, new African expressions of Christianity emerged: the African Initiated Churches. While at the beginning of the twentieth century African Christianity was predominantly marked by the historic Protestant, Catholic (and, in the North East of the continent, Orthodox) Churches, today about one-third of Africa's Christians can be estimated to be members of African Initiated Churches.

For the purposes of this volume and the research initiative it emerged from, we define African Initiated Churches as all those Christian religious communities that have their origins in nineteenth- and twentieth-century Africa (Anderson 2000, 2001). We draw on the original typology by Turner (1967, 17) to refer to churches that are 'founded in Africa, by Africans, and primarily for Africans' without 'missionary Godfathers' as Pobee and Ositelu (1998, 55) pointedly added. Their key feature is that they were founded by Africans and did not directly emerge from the European and North American mission initiatives of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.¹ This closely relates to the definition used by the Organization of African Instituted Churches (OAIC), which

understands an AIC to be a church that acknowledges Jesus Christ as Lord, and which has separated by seceding from a mission church or an existing African independent church, or has been founded as an independent entity under African initiative and leadership.

(Gichimu 2016, 810)

To emphasise this overarching common characteristic of being *initiated* in Africa by Africans, we deliberately use the term African *Initiated* Churches instead of

other commonly used interpretations of the 'I' in AIC such as Independent, Indigenous, and International (see Venter 2004a for an overview). We argue that there are enough common characteristics to necessitate the use of this umbrella term. In the literature, the acronym AIC is often used to refer exclusively to churches originating in the first and second waves of African Initiated Christianity (see below). In this volume, we adopt the following systematisation to accommodate the different approaches in the literature: the term *African Initiated Churches* denotes all churches originating in nineteenth- and twentieth-century Africa, including African Pentecostal and Pentecostal-Charismatic Churches. The term *African Independent Churches* will be used to denote all churches that can be counted as part of the first and second waves of African Initiated Christianity, i.e. Independent/African/Separatist/Nationalist/Apostolic/Zionist/Roho/Aladura/Spiritual/Indigenous Churches. This is coherent with the earlier literature (Oosthuizen 1987; Turner 1980, 1967). The terms African Pentecostal and Pentecostal-Charismatic Churches will be used to describe the Pentecostal and Neo-Pentecostal strands of African Initiated Christianity. Coherent with the volume's emphasis on case studies from the West African context, many of the contributions deal with African Pentecostal and Neo-Pentecostal Churches, which have been developing in a highly dynamic way in the past decades and constitute the major part of African Initiated Christianity in the region (Asamoah-Gyadu 2005; Meyer 2004).

African Initiated Churches do not form a clearly delimited denominational family (Hollenweger 1998). Rather, they are a heterogeneous movement (Pauw 1995) of probably more than 10,000 churches of different expressions, whose primary commonality is their formation in colonial and postcolonial Africa of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The smallest of them have just a handful of members, while the largest, such as the Zion Christian Church in South Africa or the Redeemed Christian Church of God in Nigeria, claim membership in the millions. We acknowledge that an idiosyncratic African initiated church does not exist and that various different subcategorisations are important analytical tools dependent on the questions of interest. To understand the movement of African Initiated Churches and the categorisation employed here, it is helpful to look at the history and development of these churches. The following categorisation and terminology follow Gichimu (2016) and Padwick and Lubaale (2011). Three waves of African Initiated Christianity can be highlighted, which produced different subcategories of African Initiated Churches (cf. Figure 1.1).

The first churches falling under the categorisation of African Initiated Churches employed here, emerged as secessions from Mission Churches (Sundkler 1961). In an anti-colonial move in the churches, African Christians split from the churches founded and supervised by European and North American missionaries and founded churches under their own leadership. In many cases, notably in late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century Southern Africa as well as twentieth-century pre-independence East Africa, cross-fertilisation existed between political independence movements and independence movements in

the churches. In their theology and structure, the newly independent churches were often similar to the churches from which they seceded (Sundkler 1961; Venter 2004a). Because of the focus on independence from foreign leadership, these churches were termed Independent, Separatist, or Nationalist. In the different African regions, different self-designations exist: African Churches in West Africa, Ethiopian Churches² in Southern Africa, Independent Churches or Nationalist Churches in East Africa (Gichimu 2016; Sundkler 1961). Some of these first-generation African Independent Churches still exist, such as the Lutheran Bapedi Church in South Africa, which seceded from the Berlin Mission Church in the late-nineteenth century. Nonetheless, nowadays the first-generation African Independent Churches in their original form play a marginal role (with the exception of East Africa, particularly Kenya). Many of them have either since disappeared or have incorporated elements of African traditional religious or Pentecostal elements of belief, so that they can be considered as African Initiated Churches of the second or third generations.

The second generation of African Initiated Churches emerged principally since the beginning of the twentieth century. While in the first generation the focus was on autonomy, the second generation is characterised by indigenisation and hybridisation. Elements of African traditional religions and local cultures were incorporated into Christian religious practice and belief. These churches are characterised by a worldview that assumes spiritual forces to be intertwined with the social and material world, synthesising African spiritual worldviews with Christian beliefs. Spiritual forces, whether good or evil, are considered to have an influence on people's lives, well-being, and social relations. The Holy Spirit plays a fundamental role in the theology of many of these churches. The origins of this development were strongly influenced by the Pentecostal revival in North America at the beginning of the twentieth century (Anderson 2000). The African Initiated Churches of the second wave are often called Spiritual or Indigenous Churches. Self-designations are Aladura Churches in West Africa (Ositelu 2016),³ Roho/Akurinu in East Africa (Gichimu 2016), and Zionist/Apostolic Churches in Southern Africa (Anderson 2000). Frequent characteristics are adult baptism by full immersion, strict moral codes, strict normative behavioural ethics based on literal bible hermeneutics, the importance of sanctified objects, and (often white) liturgical gowns worn by believers. Until today, the Spiritual Churches have particularly attracted the socially marginalised, but have long established themselves in all strata of society, particularly in Southern Africa. In West Africa they have increasingly faded in a general move towards African Pentecostal-Charismatic Churches (Meyer 2004).

African Pentecostal-Charismatic Churches are the third wave of African Initiated Christianity. They are closely related to the global Pentecostal movement, but are nonetheless considered an indigenous religious movement (Asamoah-Gyadu, Chapter 2, this volume; Padwick and Lubaale 2011). More so than the African Initiated Churches of the second wave, Pentecostal-Charismatic Churches generally distance themselves from African traditional belief systems and culture. Nonetheless, like the churches of the second wave,

they accommodate a spiritual worldview in acknowledging that spiritual forces influence the material world and social relations (Freeman 2012b; Gifford 2015). The role of the Holy Spirit is of central importance in these churches’ theology. Often ‘being born again’ in the Holy Spirit, affirmed by full immersion baptism is constitutive for the believers’ identity. A visible characteristic of the third wave of African Initiated Churches are lively, ‘exuberant worship services’ (Anderson 2000, 48) led by charismatic preachers, in which emotions and individual religious encounters play an important role. Often the theology of these churches is marked by a prosperity gospel, the idea ‘that God wants believers to prosper physically, materially and spiritually’ (Togarasei 2016, 1006). While classical Pentecostal Churches had emerged in Africa in the first half of the twentieth century, the African Pentecostal-Charismatic Churches are a post-independence phenomenon, emerging from the 1970s onward. Moreover, these churches geared towards success and prosperity gather particularly upwardly mobile urban middle classes (Dickow 2012). However, they can increasingly be found in rural areas as well and among lower-income parts of the population.

The following three overarching characteristics apply to a majority of these churches. First, a history of institutional and financial *independence* from the historic European and North American Christian confessions (Gichimu 2016; Onyinah, Chapter 12, this volume; Thiani 2016) Second, *contextuality*, a common origin and rootedness in colonial and postcolonial Africa (Asamoah-Gyadu, Chapter 2, this volume; Gichimu, Chapter 5, this volume; Padwick and Lubaale 2011). Third, a *spiritual worldview*, the ‘significance of the spiritual in their cosmology, be it the Holy Spirit, spiritual forces or healing’ (Öhlmann, Frost, and Gräb 2016, 2; cf. Anderson 2000; Asamoah-Gyadu

Figure 1.1 Three waves of African Initiated Christianity.

2015; Asamoah-Gyadu, Chapter 2, this volume; Padwick and Lubaale 2011; Pobe and Ositelu 1998) – even though marked differences in the churches' positioning towards African traditional religions exist.

The utility of any categorisation and conceptual framework depends on the object of investigation. With respect to the study of African Initiated Churches and sustainable development, the definition outlined above proves particularly fertile for the following four reasons.

First, because of their historical, institutional, and cosmological rootedness in Africa, the churches subsumed here as African Initiated Churches are not yet partners of development cooperation on a wider scale.⁴ In this, there is a marked difference to Mission Initiated Churches, which have implemented development projects with international funding for decades. African Initiated Churches implement manifold development-related activities as well, but the vast majority has no partnerships with international religious or official development agencies (Öhlmann, Frost, and Gräb 2016).

Second, from an institutional point of view, which is highly relevant in the study of religious communities' contributions and sustainable development, categorisations based on theological considerations might prove less useful. As we pointed out elsewhere, small Spiritual Churches, for example, might have more in common with small Pentecostal Churches than with a large Spiritual Church with millions of members like the Zion Christian Church (Öhlmann, Frost, and Gräb 2016). In terms of its structure, the Zion Christian Church might be more comparable with other transnational churches of similar size, like the Redeemed Christian Church of God, which is Pentecostal-Charismatic. An a priori differentiation between Spiritual Churches and Pentecostal Churches would obscure these similarities.

Third, the distinction between the Spiritual Churches and the Pentecostal Churches is not always clear-cut (Meyer 2004). Some churches consider themselves both, a Spiritual Church and Pentecostal. Examples are the Church of the Lord (Aladura) Worldwide with headquarters in Nigeria (Ositelu 2016, Chapter 11, this volume), Gilgal Bible Church in South Africa or the African Independent Pentecostal Church of Africa in Kenya. Other churches have crossed classificational boundaries: the Redeemed Christian Church of God, one of the largest Pentecostal-Charismatic Churches in Nigeria started out as a Spiritual Church and only later developed its Pentecostal-Charismatic profile (Adedibu, Chapter 8, this volume; Adeboye, Chapter 7, this volume).

Fourth, the OAIC, the largest umbrella body of African Initiated Churches, includes both African Independent as well as African Pentecostal Churches (Gichimu 2016; Padwick and Lubaale 2011).

Approaching sustainable development: potentials and perspectives of African Initiated Christianity

With respect to development, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) form a central frame of reference, as outlined in the United Nations 2030 Agenda for

Sustainable Development (United Nations 2015). Their 17 goals and 169 targets are internationally agreed on objectives for development policy and cooperation. The move from the preceding Millennium Development Goals to the SDGs marked a paradigm shift in international development policy. The SDGs brought together ecological objectives with economic, social, and political objectives and consolidated them in one multidimensional framework. Consequently, SDGs do not only apply to countries classified as ‘developing countries’ based on social or economic indicators. The milestone move from *development* to a framework of *sustainable development* implies that all countries are developing countries in at least part of the dimensions encompassed by the SDGs.

The notion of sustainable development was most prominently brought forward by the World Commission on Environment and Development in its 1987 report *Our Common Future*. It was defined as ‘development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs’ (World Commission on Environment and Development 1987, 43). As we have highlighted elsewhere

[T]he quintessence of the report was that economic and social development needs to take into account the ecological framework they operate in – and its limitations. In the original concept, sustainable development primarily referred to ecological sustainability. Consequently, in current development discourses, sustainable development is often used to describe a mode of development that takes into account ecological considerations and limitations of natural resources.

(Öhlmann, Frost, and Gräb forthcoming)

While the ecological dimension remains central in the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development as well, the Agenda broadened the notion of sustainable development by including economic, social, and political dimensions. When investigating the nexus of religion and sustainable development, as the contributions do, it is helpful to look at the basic meaning of sustainability:

In more general terms, sustainability refers to ‘the ability to be maintained at a certain rate or level’ (Oxford Dictionary 2017). Sustainable development interventions, hence, are such development programs or projects that produce sustained – i.e. lasting – changes beyond any given project lifetime. Ecological sustainability is a special case of sustainability: lasting change can only be generated if long-term ecological limitations are respected. Both notions have in common that they require a transformation of mind sets, values and knowledge. Ecological sustainability depends on a culture of sustainable use of natural resources. Similarly, the broader notion of sustainability depends on changes in people’s consciousness, which result in different actions.

(Öhlmann, Frost, and Gräb forthcoming)

Hence, the notion of development underlying the concept of the volume is deliberately wide and multidimensional, covering economic (e.g. Taru, Chapter 19, this volume), social (e.g. Akindolie, Chapter 10, this volume; Ouedraogo, Chapter 16, this volume), ecological (e.g. Werner, Chapter 3, this volume), and political (e.g. Asamoah-Gyadu, Chapter 2, this volume; Swart, Chapter 4, this volume) dimensions of sustainable development and accommodating for multiple and contextual notions and ideas of developments, as processes of sustained change.

With respect to African Initiated Churches and sustainable development, this volume and the research initiative in the framework of which it materialised, adopt a potentials-oriented approach. It highlights possible contributions of African Initiated Churches in the promotion of sustainable development in various contexts. Considering that African Initiated Churches are not yet recognised as development actors (Öhlmann, Frost, and Gräb 2016), it seems fitting to take this perspective. This is not to idealise African Initiated Churches in any way, or to imply that many of the potentials identified do not also exist in other churches and other religious communities. We acknowledge that there are problematic aspects in African Initiated Churches as in other churches and religious communities. Moreover, in light of the enormous size and the heterogeneity of the movement it is likely that cases of lack of transparency and accountability, personal enrichment or abuse of power can be found – such as the drastic examples documented in the South African context of pastors asking their members to drink petrol or to eat grass (CRL Rights Commission 2017; Kgatle 2017). Moreover, it should be clear that not all African Initiated Churches contribute to sustainable development. Nor do these churches contribute to all dimensions of sustainable development in the same way. Providing a differentiated perspective on the manifold relationships of African Initiated Churches with sustainable development is precisely the aim of this volume.

In the following, we identify six central themes that highlight the potential of African Initiated Churches with respect to sustainable development. We draw on the existing literature, our own field research in the context of the abovementioned project, and the contributions in this volume.

Demographic significance

First, African Initiated Churches are marked by highly dynamic development. They are among the largest and fastest-growing religious communities in many African contexts. In many countries on the continent, they represent substantial parts of the population and their networks reach even remote areas. To promote sustainable development among socially and economically marginalised parts of the population in rural and socially deprived areas, these networks constitute a pivotal resource. Moreover, their demographic significance relates to their *contextuality*. With respect to a “‘recentring’ of development’ (Bowers-Du Toit, Chapter 21, this volume) this positions them ideally to include the

Figure 1.2 Membership of African Initiated Churches.

Note

Ghana: Population: 26 million (2012), 69% Christians, Source: Ghana Living Standards Survey (Round 6), 2012; Kenya: Population: 41 million (2010), 88% Christians, Source: Pew Forum, 2010; Nigeria: Population: 159 million (2010), 46% Christians, Source: Pew Forum, 2010; South Africa: Population: 51 million (2010), 87% Christians, Source: Pew Forum, 2010; Tanzania: Population: 45 million (2010), 61% Christians, Source: Pew-Forum, 2010; Uganda: Population: 39 million (2014), 85% Christians, Source: National Population and Housing Census, 2014. Exact membership figures of African Initiated Churches are not available. In some African countries, official censuses do not include religious affiliation (such as Nigeria and Tanzania) or do not differentiate between different Christian confessions. Hence, we draw on the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life's 2010 representative survey 'Tolerance and Tension: Islam and Christianity in Sub-Saharan Africa', which covered 19 African countries. The figures presented cannot be taken at face value. African Christianity is highly dynamic and substantial shifts can occur within relatively short periods of time. Moreover, in many cases members of the Catholic or historic Protestant Churches are at the same time affiliated with African Initiated Churches, but do not appear as such in official statistics. Because of a lower degree of institutionalisation, particularly among the thousands of smaller African Initiated Churches, official figures have a tendency to underestimate the relevance of these churches.

views on desirable developments held by the local populations. Figure 1.2 provides an overview of the relevance of African Initiated Churches in selected African countries.

Development activities

Second, African Initiated Churches are actively engaged in improving conditions of life in their local contexts and societies, as many of the contributions in this volume as well as our own research highlight (Abdulsalami, Chapter 6, this volume; Akindolie, Chapter 10, this volume; Öhlmann, Frost, and Gräb 2016; Ositelu, Chapter 11, this volume; Padwick and Lubaale 2011). They do so with immense commitment and largely without outside funding. Even small

churches implement activities that contribute towards sustainable development as outlined in the SDGs, be it through HIV/AIDS awareness raising, offering scholarships for students, entrepreneurship workshops or youth empowerment (see e.g. in this volume: Ajibade, Chapter 9; Akindolie, Chapter 10; Dah, Chapter 17; Gukurume, Chapter 18; Owusu-Ansah and Adjei-Acquah, Chapter 14; Taru, Chapter 19). Many churches establish schools, training centres, clinics, and hospitals (see e.g. in this volume: Adeboye, Chapter 7; Anim, Chapter 13; Onyinah, Chapter 12; Ouedraogo, Chapter 16; Owusu-Ansah and Adjei-Acquah, Chapter 14). OAIC, jointly with its member churches, implements a decentralised livelihoods programme focused on agriculture in East Africa. Larger African Initiated Churches found universities, offer micro insurance or even finance public infrastructure (see e.g. in this volume: Adeboye, Chapter 7; Adedibu, Chapter 8; Anim, Chapter 13; Onyinah, Chapter 12; Owusu-Ansah and Adjei-Acquah, Chapter 14). Moreover, at different political levels African Initiated Churches act in the interest of their members (Bompani 2008) and speak out against corruption and misuse of power (see Ajibade, Chapter 9, this volume; Asamoah-Gyadu, Chapter 2, this volume; Lekganyane 2016). Because of their institutional and financial *independence*, their agendas are less likely to be biased by donor interests.

African solutions

Third, African Initiated Churches stand for African solutions. They are actors embedded in the local context. In large parts, they are as a grass roots movement (Swart, Chapter 4, this volume; Bowers-Du Toit, Chapter 20, this volume). Contrary to NGOs depending on external funding and development experts from the global North, they constitute durable autochthonous social and institutional structures. Hence, in light of their *independence* and their *contextuality*, they are well positioned to achieve ‘development [that] is people-driven, relying on the potential of African people’, as stipulated in the African Union’s Agenda 2063 (African Union 2015, 8). This is particularly relevant in contexts where government structures are weak and unreliable. Development-related activities implemented by contextually embedded religious communities such as African Initiated Churches increase ownership by the local population as well as transparency and accountability (Ouedraogo, Chapter 16, this volume; van Zyl, Chapter 20, this volume), as Nigerian Bishop and International Chairman of OAIC Daniel Okoh highlights:

People from Sub-Saharan Africa ... are highly religious, and anything that touches the religion of the people, they take it very seriously. And because of our colonial history, there is a way that people look at secular things.... They look at it as government and government is still seen as something that is very far away. But if it is religion, people take it to heart. And so, when you are talking about bringing the spiritual and the ... the social, it is important because, it is only by doing that, that you can actually engage the

active participation of the people. And the people would come into it and say, 'this thing, God is in this thing, you must be very, very careful'. That is how you can get something positive in transparency, in accountability and all that, because of the spiritual aspect.... So, for Africa, because of the religious nature, you'll always find a way of using it to get the ... commitment of the people to the project, whatever it is. If it is water, it must be explained spiritually. If it is [an] agricultural project, it must be explained spiritually.... Honestly, if you don't do that, you will lose it.

(interview Daniel Okoh 2017)

Empowerment and agency

Fourth, African Initiated Churches seem to be conducive to economic initiative in the market economy. The theology of many African Initiated Churches is directed towards the liberation of the person from poverty. The Christian faith and the power of the Holy Spirit find their expression in the believers' material life. This sets free motivational forces, shapes new subjectivities, and fundamentally affirms the individual's agency (Dah, Chapter 17, this volume; Gukurume, Chapter 18, this volume; Maxwell 2005; Owusu-Ansah and Adjei-Acquah, Chapter 14, this volume; Ruele 2016; Taru, Chapter 19, this volume; Togarasei 2016). Togarasei (2016) emphasises the relationship of African prosperity theology with traditional African notions on the connection between the divine and physical well-being and material prosperity. This is facilitated by what we have described above as the key characteristics *contextuality* and *spiritual worldview*. Moreover, Freeman describes a parallel between African Pentecostal-Charismatic Churches and Max Weber's Protestant Ethic.⁵

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.

(Freeman 2012b, 20)

Nearly four decades ago, Turner similarly highlighted this with respect to African Independent Churches:

[A]ttitudes pervade many of the independent churches, which exhibit a loose parallel to the Protestant work ethic. People do tend to prosper when they join these groups, not only because of moral reform, health

improvement, less wasteful spending practices and regular habits built round the 7-day week programme of their church, but also because of a belief that they now have access to the power of the Spirit made available through these churches, their founders and practices, and through the Bible. This encourages confidence, initiative, perseverance, adaptability to the changing modern situation and freedom from distraction through political or other hysterias.

(Turner 1980, 528–529)

Promotion of business and entrepreneurship plays an important role for many African Initiated Churches. In many African Pentecostal Churches, prosperity gospel is not only preached from the pulpit, but is complemented by the active promotion of empowerment and business initiatives (Freeman 2012b). Churches offer entrepreneurship trainings and support business start-ups of their members with finances and expertise (Gukurume, Chapter 18, this volume; Taru, Chapter 19, this volume). While this is particularly important in African Pentecostal-Charismatic Churches, similar tendencies have been documented in other realms of the African Initiated Church movement as well (Öhlmann, Frost, and Gräb 2016; Turner 1980). Moreover, education is almost universally considered the key to personal success and sustained development. One key result from our own research, encompassing individual interviews and focus group discussions of African Initiated Church leaders, is that SDG 4: Quality Education is nearly unanimously rated as one of the most important development goals. Several church leaders underlined that ‘development starts with education’, because all other forms of development would follow from it (interview Daniel Oppong, 2017). As Rev. John Mahero, General Secretary of the African Divine Church in Kenya, illustrates: ‘[E]ducation is a key to development, without education, you can’t develop. You develop the heart, the mind and the whole body. First here [pointing to his head], then the heart, and the whole body’ (interview John Mahero, 2018). The importance of education in African Initiated Churches is inter alia highlighted in the contributions by Adeboye (Chapter 7), Adedibu (Chapter 8), Owusu-Ansah and Adjei-Acquah (Chapter 14), Ouedraogo (Chapter 16), and Gukurume (Chapter 18).

Transformation

Fifth, African Initiated Churches can be considered as agents of social change and individual transformation (see e.g. in this volume: Adedibu, Chapter 8; Adeboye, Chapter 7; Asamoah-Gyadu, Chapter 2; Gukurume, Chapter 18; Taru, Chapter 19). Due to their consideration of ‘African sensibilities’ (Freeman 2012b, 20; cf. Asamoah-Gyadu 2015) and their interwovenness with an African *spiritual worldview*, African Initiated Churches have a high ‘transformative potential’, i.e. ‘the capacity to legitimize, in religious or ideological terms, the development of new motivations, activities, and institutions’ (Eisenstadt 1968,

10). This can be illustrated with the example of the Zion Christian Church, the largest church in Southern Africa. In his Easter sermon, the church's bishop, Barnabas E. Lekganyane, called upon believers to

Be in a state of readiness. Make sure you are registered to vote in your area. Prepare yourselves to go elect your local leaders who will represent your aspirations. Even those who will be asking your vote should remember that leadership is about service to the community. I know that some of the candidates will be coming to you for the first and last time ever even if they win. We can only hope and pray that they will not forget about you once you've elected them. When talking about leadership, Henry A. Kissinger cautions thus 'The task of the leader is to get his people from where they are to where they have not been', adding that, '90% of the politicians give the other 10% a bad reputation'. Remember that every community deserves the leadership they elect. So you've got the power to determine who leads you. Utilize that power to choose correctly and to empower your people.

(Lekganyane 2016)

Such encouragement to contribute to the democratic process by voting in the upcoming municipal elections is likely to have substantial impact on the church's millions of members precisely because of ZCC's rootedness in African belief systems and the church's significance in the religious dimension of people's lives. Asamoah-Gyadu (Chapter 2) describes a similar type of encouragement for civic engagement in the Ghanaian context: International Central Gospel Church leader Mensa Otabil prior to the 2016 elections encouraged his congregants to exercise their right to vote in a sermon entitled 'Your Vote'. Similar arguments are also brought forward by Ajibade (Chapter 9), while Adeboye (Chapter 7) is more sceptical regarding the Nigerian context. The Church of Pentecost deliberately engages with the public sphere, e.g. by hosting Christian leadership conferences for politicians (Onyinah, Chapter 12, this volume).

The transformative potential is also visible at the individual level. African Initiated Churches aim at a transformation of the whole person and to enable each person and the community to live a good life. Elijah Daramola, at that time Pastor in Charge of the Southern Africa Region of the RCCG pointedly stated:

You need to change the whole person. Because it will be a waste of time and money if you train people without their lives being changed ... Our goal must be made clear. Is it in just impacting people and leave them living anyhow? Or is it impacting people and mak[ing] live peaceful? If we have this agreement, we will flow together. But otherwise [our] work will not be a blessing to others.

(interview Elijah Daramola 2016)

It is the interrelation and interaction of spirituality and socioeconomic development that goes along with a mutual openness to local culture that breaks the ground for transformation and sustainable development. African Initiated Christianity creates spaces that make (ecologically, socially, and economically) sustainable development also culturally sustainable (cf. Meireis and Rippl 2019), providing for an ‘embeddedness in local cultural frameworks (essentially including all forms of religious knowledge), which produces continuously maintained processes of change’ (Öhlmann, Frost, and Gräb forthcoming).

Decolonising development

Sixth, African Initiated Churches have the potential to make key contributions to a decolonisation of development. In his inaugural lecture for the chair of development policy and postcolonial studies at University of Kassel, Aram Ziai highlighted two desiderata regarding the decolonisation of development: first, taking into account notions of development other than the dominant ones undergirded by ‘western ... hegemonial models of the organisation of economy, politics and knowledge’ and second the ‘dismantling of hierarchies between development experts and the people concerned’ (Ziai 2017, authors’ translation; cf. Bowers-Du Toit, Chapter 21, this volume; van Zyl, Chapter 20, this volume). In a related vein, Mayer (2019) draws on postcolonial theory to develop three criteria for postcoloniality with reference to African Initiated Churches. These criteria are, first, ‘resistance and indigenization’ (building on Varela, María do Mar Castro Varela, and Dhawan 2015; Heuser 2016), second, referring to Chakrabarty 2008, ‘decentralization and empowerment’, and, third, the ‘dismantling of Eurocentric patterns of thought’ (relating to Becker 2018; Böttigheimer 2016; Heaney 2015; Said 1978). Essentially, this takes up and relates to the key themes of *independence*, *contextuality*, and *spiritual world view* introduced above. It hence emerges that these central characteristics can be directly transposed as conceptual categories delineating their contributions to decolonising concepts and practices of development.

Because of their institutional and financial *independence*, they are much less subject to the influence of donor agendas than donor-funded NGOs or religious development organisations. Hence, African Initiated Churches have the potential to contribute to the decolonisation of development by enabling agency of people and communities (Bowers-Du Toit, Chapter 21, this volume). As independent actors, African Initiated Churches can thus promote development based on local agendas, agency, and ownership. In their independence from outside funding also lies great potential for internal accountability and transparency, as inter alia the case of the Church of Pentecost illustrates (Anim, Chapter 13, this volume; Onyinah, Chapter 12, this volume; see also Owusu-Ansah and Adjei-Acquah’s chapter on Perez Chapel International, Chapter 14, this volume). Moreover, the ends of their activities have the potential to be more focused on the priorities of the respective local communities. This relates to the idea of ‘development from below’ (Swart, Chapter 4, this volume), that

development needs to not only be driven by international organisations and governments, but by people and organisations at the micro and meso levels of society. As Swart highlights, various authors argue that African Initiated Churches bear great potential for a ‘development from below’, a development driven by the local people. Also in this collection many contributions show how this ‘development from below’ is put into practice and even trickles upward to wider levels of society – for example through the provision of schools, hospitals, universities, and the engagement with political circles (see e.g. in this volume: Adeboye, Chapter 7; Anim, Chapter 13; Asamoah-Gyadu, Chapter 2; Onyinah, Chapter 12; Owusu-Ansah and Adjei-Acquah, Chapter 14).

Moreover, due to their *contextuality* their actions have the potential to be more aligned to contextual notions of development informed by contextual culture and religion. African Initiated Churches are embedded in their respective context. Beyond being independent, they are thus able to make reference to, navigate in, and incorporate local social structures as well as cultural and religious worldviews and cosmologies, for example *Ubuntu* (Bowers-Du Toit, Chapter 21; Gichimu, Chapter 5, this volume) or *Ilosiwaju/Omoluabi* (Adeboye, Chapter 7, this volume). Moreover, they can be seen not only as representatives of the local communities, but rather as focal point of people’s action itself, as Swart (Chapter 4, this volume) points out with reference to Sanyal and Korten:

[W]hen considered in terms of NGO organisational theory, AICs could according to this appreciation as development from below agents even be seen as surpassing NGOs’ role as ‘third-party’ organisations that operate on behalf of people’s interests.... Instead, they could be seen as taking on the role of ‘first-party’ organisations that embody people’s *direct* participation.

But perhaps the greatest potential for decolonising development is related to the ideological level. The *spiritual worldview* of African Initiated Churches fundamentally challenges dominant, secular notions of sustainable development (Bowers-Du Toit, Chapter 21, this volume; Öhlmann *et al.* 2018).⁶ As we have pointed out with reference to Freeman (2012b); Gifford (2015); Masondo (2013); and Oosthuizen (1988): ‘AICs are embedded in a specific discursive, material and practical context. They are rooted in a worldview in which the spiritual, social and physical spheres constitute various layers of the same reality’ (Öhlmann *et al.* 2018, 9), and in which ‘religious or spiritual, moral and cultural dimensions ... are inseparable from other spheres of society’ (Adogame 2016, 3). Freeman (2012b, 9) notes with respect to African Pentecostal Churches (the statement can be generalised to African Initiated Christianity): ‘[T]hey maintain a magico-religious worldview in sharp contrast to mainstream development’s rational secularism’. Religious dimensions are essential and inseparable parts of notions of development:

It becomes clear that from the perspective of African Initiated Churches and the communities they are embedded in, it is vital to note that

spirituality is an essential part of a good life and hence a fundamental dimension in development.

(Öhlmann *et al.* 2018, 9)

This can be illustrated with quotes from church leaders interviewed in our own field research. Elijah Daramola, already quoted above, expressed this in the pointed statement ‘Spiritual development is part of development. A good life includes spirituality’ (interview Elijah Daramola 2016). Notions of a good and fulfilled life extend beyond material and social aspects, as Elias Mashabela, bishop of Bophelong Bible Church in Polokwane, South Africa, explained:

The NGOs are taking care of people, but they do not take care of the spiritual part of the human being. So, we are taking care of the people ... but we go beyond. We also look at the spiritual well-being of the persons ... We run similar programmes, but we do more by adding the spiritual level.

(interview Elias Mashabela 2016)

A church leader from Nigeria (wishing to remain anonymous) declares these dimensions inseparable: ‘When it comes to development, we have spiritual development, we have physical and social development. So, so you cannot separate any of the development from each other, because the church provides both the social and the spiritual development’ (interview 2017/N/14).

In the field of tension between (western-dominated) secular concepts of development and (African) spiritual worldviews, decolonising concepts and practices of development *inter alia* mean bringing forward alternative notions of development, which adequately take into account local religious knowledge and cosmologies and incorporate cultural and spiritual dimensions. This is the primary contribution African Initiated Churches can make to the decolonisation of development.

Approaching the book: outline of this volume

Written predominantly by scholars from the African continent, the chapters in this volume illuminate potentials and perspectives of African Initiated Christianity with respect to different notions and dimensions of sustainable development. The purely academic perspectives in this volume are complemented with essays by renowned church leaders themselves, marked as distinguished church leader contributions in the respective part of the book. These essays deliberately include personal views, experiences, and opinions and provide forms of knowledge production that by their very nature pure research articles cannot provide.

The book is structured along regional lines. In Part I, the book offers overarching perspectives on different themes applying to the African Initiated Church movement across contexts (Asamoah-Gyadu, Chapter 2; Werner, Chapter 3; Gichimu, Chapter 5) or reflect on the academic discourse on African Initiated Christianity and development (Swart, Chapter 4). Part II provides

perspectives on and from selected African contexts, starting with Nigeria (Abdulsalami, Chapter 6; Adeboye, Chapter 7; Adedibu, Chapter 8; Ajibade, Chapter 9; Akindolie, Chapter 10; Ositelu, Chapter 11). Part III is on Ghana (Onyinah, Chapter 12; Anim, Chapter 13; Owusu-Ansah and Adjei-Acquah, Chapter 14; Oduro, Chapter 15); Part IV is on Burkina Faso (Ouedraogo, Chapter 16; Dah, Chapter 17). Moving to Southern Africa, Parts V and VI focus on Zimbabwe (Gukurume, Chapter 18; Taru, Chapter 19) and South Africa (van Zyl, Chapter 20; Bowers-Du Toit, Chapter 21).

In terms of their scope on African Initiated Christianity, several chapters deal with the movement as a whole (Asamoah-Gyadu, Chapter 2; Werner, Chapter 3; Swart, Chapter 4; Gichimu, Chapter 5; Abdulsalami, Chapter 6). Others shine a spotlight on specific churches or branches of the African Initiated Church movement. The majority of the chapters focus on Pentecostal-Charismatic Churches, the most dynamic expression of African Initiated Christianity in many African contexts (Adeboye, Chapter 7; Adedibu, Chapter 8; Ajibade, Chapter 9; Onyinah, Chapter 12; Anim, Chapter 13; Owusu-Ansah and Adjei-Acquah, Chapter 14; Gukurume, Chapter 18; Taru, Chapter 19). The contributions on Burkina Faso (Ouedraogo, Chapter 16; Dah, Chapter 17) offer perspectives on Evangelical Churches. African Independent Churches are the frame of reference for Oduro (Chapter 15), van Zyl (Chapter 20), and Bowers-Du Toit (Chapter 21), while Akindolie (Chapter 10) and Ositelu (Chapter 11) provide insights on the respective Nigerian local expression, Aladura Churches.

With respect to sustainable development, some of the chapters focus on a subset of dimensions of the SDGs (e.g. Werner, Chapter 3, on ecology; Abdulsalami, Chapter 6 and Ouedraogo, Chapter 16, on gender), while others take a more comprehensive perspective. Most of the chapters raise fundamental issues relevant for the entire discussion on African Initiated Christianity and sustainable development beyond the immediate regional or case study scope. In particular, several of the chapters advance important points regarding notions of sustainable development and the decolonisation of development (inter alia Asamoah-Gyadu, Chapter 2; Swart, Chapter 4; Adeboye, Chapter 7; Ajibade, Chapter 9; Onyinah, Chapter 12; Owusu-Ansah and Adjei-Acquah, Chapter 14; Dah, Chapter 17; Taru, Chapter 19; van Zyl, Chapter 20; Bowers-Du Toit, Chapter 21).

Chapter outlines

J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu (Chapter 2) refers to the *spiritual worldview* of African Initiated Christianity by describing them as African ‘pneumatic movements’. He traces their history from the early-twentieth century onwards and highlights their close relationship with the social and cultural environment (*contextuality*). Asamoah-Gyadu argues that what is most relevant for development in African Independent Churches ‘is the stress on personal transformation ... and its implications for ethics and morality on societal development’. With respect to the Pentecostals, ‘Paradigms of Prosperity’ and ‘Hermeneutics of

Black Empowerment' emerge as key themes. Asamoah-Gyadu makes out a constructive engagement with the state: in the case of the Independents, their 'contribution to the emergence of pro-political independence [and] the ability ... to transcend "the limitations of language, tribe, and region" [Turner 1979] to create a wider community of people' and in the case of the Pentecostals a strive for 'responsible citizenship' and 'social engagement'.

In Chapter 3 Dietrich Werner reflects on the potential of African Initiated Christianity for rediscovering traditional African values. African Pentecostal and Independent Churches, the author points out, rethink Christianity in a non-western way (*contextuality*). This leads to a decolonial concept of development, which means 'development from below' but also includes ecological sustainability. He indicates that these churches bear great potential to reinforce ecological responsibilities grounded in their theologies and practices. African eco-theologies, according to Werner, display a closer relationship between nature and humankind than other branches of Christianity. African Initiated Churches articulate important elements of such an African eco-theology. He conjectures that they can lead the way out of the ecological dilemmas presented by western-dominated development concepts.

Ignatius Swart (Chapter 4) takes a meta perspective by investigating the hypothesis emerging from the literature that African Initiated Churches are actors of 'development from below'. This is a type of 'grassroots development' grounded in the micro level of society and particularly enabling ownership, agency and local agenda-setting – essentially drawing on the characteristics of *independence* and *contextuality*. Swart scrutinises this hypothesis by analysing what different authors understand as 'development from below', identifying five dimensions: (1) 'development from below as a de-secularised catchphrase'; (2) as a 'counterpoint to development from above'; (3) the political role of African Initiated Churches; (4) personal empowerment and the economic realm; and (5) social capital. Swart proposes these dimensions as conceptual frameworks for further research on African Initiated Churches and development and highlights possible points of departure.

John Njeru Gichimu (Chapter 5) outlines African Initiated Churches' theology in relation to their *contextuality*, finding its expressions in 'localism' and 'communalism'. He highlights key elements of their beliefs and practices from an East African perspective (which in many points is generalisable to the whole sub-Saharan region). Moreover, Gichimu focuses on the theology of African Initiated Churches. He draws on the OAIC's definition of theology in the context of African Initiated Christianity as 'people making sense of God in the midst of their histories, cultures, worldviews and contemporary struggles for survival'. The author describes how theological training in African Initiated Churches has evolved and is continuing to evolve – and how OAIC contributes to facilitating these processes.

Drawing on her personal experience as founder of an African Independent Church, Atinuke Abdulsalami (Chapter 6) focuses on the role of women in African Initiated Christianity. In her distinguished church leader essay, she criti-

cises that while gender equality is discussed at different levels of society, especially in African Pentecostal Churches in Nigeria women are still ‘in the closet of “to be seen, not heard”’. Nevertheless, she observes a growing movement of women fellowships in African Pentecostal Churches through which women have not only shown their ability to lead, but also ‘impacted the lives of women in and outside of the churches’. The author describes hindrances women and women leaders face in the church and gives recommendations for their support and empowerment. Through her own achievements, she exemplifies what women are able to do for the church and the wider community if they have the possibility to lead instead of being ‘limited by some men’s limited imagination’.

Olufunke Adeboye (Chapter 7) focuses on the Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG). As one of the largest Charismatic Churches in the world, it is in itself a materialisation of empowerment, confidence, and *independence*. The author analyses RCCG’s social service work in Nigeria, epitomised in the church’s recent rebranding of these services as ‘Christian Social Responsibility’. While RCCG’s social service engagement is extensive – inter alia covering health, education, and economic empowerment – Adeboye argues that one ‘critical element missing in the policy structure of RCCG’s [Christian Social Responsibility] is a commitment to social justice and social action’. The author grounds her analysis of RCCG in discussions of the history of Christian social work in Africa, the Pentecostal movement in Nigeria, and Christian as well as Yoruba cultural notions of development, thereby relating to the characteristic of *spiritual worldview*.

To highlight the contribution of Pentecostal Churches to development Babatunde Adedibu’s chapter (8) also draws on the example of the Redeemed Christian Church of God. Starting with a critical analysis of Gifford’s book *Christianity, Development, and Modernity in Africa* (2016), the author argues that ‘in the last six decades, Pentecostal Churches have responded to some of the criticism of their tradition and have made an impressive impact in socio-economic, political and educational initiatives in Africa and diaspora’. Adedibu demonstrates the postcolonial character of the spiritually grounded ‘development from below’ model, enabling people to maximise their potentials to ‘live life to the fullest, based on dignity, equality, and fulfilment’ and undergirding the church’s contribution to social capital building, healthcare, and education.

Mobolaji Oyeibisi Ajibade (Chapter 9) explains that in Nigeria Pentecostals are beginning to contribute to decolonising concepts and practices of development by participating actively in civil society. They embrace forms of political participation and social action they had formerly rejected. The author asserts that Pentecostals follow religious principles that have direct effects on economic behaviour. They lend religious and ideological legitimacy to new motivations, activities, and institutions. The impact of Pentecostalism on decolonising concepts of development, the author shows, comes not so much from its theological doctrine, but from its flexibility and its capacity to give expression to new social practices in the defining moments of a society in transition.

Akinwumi Akindolie's focus is on Aladura Churches in Nigeria (Chapter 10), which, despite the gravity shift from Independent to Pentecostal Churches in West Africa (Meyer 2004), constitute a large and dynamic branch of African Initiated Christianity in the country. The author argues that because of the emphasis of an indigenous *spiritual worldview*, they have been predominantly seen as churches that primarily cater for people's spiritual needs. However, Akindolie shows that regardless of challenges such as financial and human resource limitations, they move beyond the spiritual dimensions. They engage in various social service and human development activities, inter alia in the fields of education and health, but also by encouraging civic engagement and doing political advocacy work.

In his distinguished church leader essay Rufus Ositelu (Chapter 11), one of the most prominent representatives of the Aladura Church movement, provides an overview of the theology of one of the largest and oldest Aladura Churches, the Church of the Lord (Prayer Fellowship) Worldwide. According to its core tenets, the author highlights, the church is 'Pentecostal in Power', 'Biblical in Pattern', 'Evangelical in Mission', 'Prophetic in Ministry', 'Social in Responsibility', and 'Ecumenical in Outlook'. This illustrates the commonalities across the Independent and Pentecostal branches of African Initiated Christianity as well as the church's commitment to the material, social, and political dimensions of believers' lives and wider society.

The former chairman of the Ghanaian Church of Pentecost (CoP), Opoku Onyinah (Chapter 12) provides an in-depth account of the church's history, core beliefs, structures, and engagement in social services and the public sphere. The key theme in his distinguished church leader essay is *independence*, a principle clearly visible in the CoP's principles of self-sustainability and autonomy. This strongly relates to the notion of decolonialisation. The author portrays the church as a role model for transparency, accountability, and institutional good governance. As such, the church is increasingly active in the public sphere, through individual members as well as at the institutional level for example by hosting events 'for Christian politicians and chief executives with the aim to help them put into place good and godly governance practices and administration'.

Emmanuel Kwesi Anim (Chapter 13) presents the work of the Church of Pentecost as an example of the changing self-understanding of Pentecostal Churches and situates it within the wider context of different development models. While, as he points out, African Pentecostal Churches used to focus on the spiritual aspect of their work, they have become increasingly active in improving the social and physical lives of their members and the wider communities. The Church of Pentecost is an important development agent active in the fields of education, economy, and ecology. Due to its comprehensive engagement and its financial self-reliance (*independence*), the church exemplifies both the growing engagement of Pentecostal Churches as well as the 'bottom-up' type of development Anim is advising.

Sylvia Owusu Ansah and Philip Adjei-Acquah (Chapter 14) critically engage with the notion of sustainable development in their chapter. The

authors investigate the case of Perez Chapel International, a Ghanaian Pentecostal-Charismatic Church. They relate the church's beliefs and aims to notions of sustainable development, arguing that 'sustainable development and holistic development [...] go together'. They also highlight the church's commitment, accountability, and *independence*. The focus of the chapter is on educational and youth empowerment activities, major areas of engagement of the church. Referring to the 'Youth Explosion Programme', the authors show how the church uses holistic notions of transformation to promote youth empowerment and agency – thereby demonstrating how the *spiritual worldview* contributes to success in the material realm.

The relationship of Mission Churches and African Independent Churches in Ghana is the topic of Thomas A. Oduro's distinguished church leader essay (Chapter 15). The author zooms in on Good News Theological Seminary, a theological training institution in which students from both church backgrounds study together on equal terms. Oduro traces the history of the seminary and illustrates how through strategic dialogue and engagement the leadership of the institution contributed to bridging gaps between two church families that, a few decades ago, had been marked by prejudice, distance, and mutual scepticism. Moreover, he points out how the seminary has contributed to theological education in Independent Churches, to the documentation of their history and the evolvement of their theology.

In his distinguished church leader essay, Philippe Ouedraogo (Chapter 16) highlights the contribution of African Initiated Christianity to education and female empowerment in Burkina Faso. From his analysis of the Assemblies of God Church and two religious organisations working in the Burkinabe education sector, an important lesson is the relevance and benefit of partnerships between faith communities and government institutions at local and national level. The author moreover highlights imperatives for development cooperation with religious communities: The expansion of partnerships with religious communities in the area of education and the need for the state and international development cooperation to support local, independent, and contextual actors in their work instead of bringing in international experts.

Ini Dorcas Dah's contribution (Chapter 17) refers to the case of Centre International d'Évangélisation/Mission Intérieure Africaine in Burkina Faso. The author draws on Myers's (2011) concept of 'transformational development' to undergird her analysis of the church's work. The denomination's development activities relate to education and training, child protection and welfare, women empowerment, and practices that protect and sustain the environment. Dah's results closely relate to the notion of decolonising development. A core element of the church's notion of sustainable development is the spiritual dimension (*spiritual worldview*). Moreover, development is not only oriented towards economic growth, but takes into consideration social and environmental dimensions. Sustainability, the author argues, is about empowering people to develop their own means of survival (*independence*) within their socioeconomic, political, and environmental contexts (*contextuality*) without causing threats to the future generations.

Simbarashe Gukurume (Chapter 18) analyses how New Pentecostal Charismatic Churches (PCCs) in Zimbabwe contribute to shaping young people's futures. He explores the economic teachings of these churches and shows how they initiate new development concepts and practices in the postcolonial Zimbabwean context. Development, he argues, in light of his analysis of the diverse youth empowerment activities of PCCs, is no longer the prerogative of the state. Instead, new PCCs impact on the development of their members and the nation at large. They view it as their role to liberate their congregants and their country from poverty through a combination of spiritual technologies and concrete means of empowerment such as business trainings and empowerment workshops. Their teachings resonate strongly with African ontologies, sensibilities, and realities (*spiritual worldview*). In terms of notions of development, prosperity emerges as the key concept.

Prosperity is also a central theme in Josiah Taru's chapter (19) on the Zimbabwean context. In his in-depth analysis of a Pentecostal-Charismatic Church, he shows how in the midst of the precarities and insecurities of the run-down Zimbabwean economy, the church is able to promote its theology of prosperity at various levels: at the individual level by forming new subjectivities and motivations, at the social level by networks of social-capital resources and at the institutional level by providing entrepreneurship training and business support and a large-scale housing cooperative. In this, the chapter illustrates how agency is produced in African Initiated Christianity, thus enabling people amidst virtual state failure to take development into their own hands.

Taking a grassroots perspective in his distinguished church leader's essay, Danie C. van Zyl (Chapter 20) draws on his vast experience in working with African Initiated Churches in South Africa to highlight important desiderata for development cooperation. They are *ex ante* substantiated by the narration of three life journeys – two church leaders' and the author's own. In the same vein as, for example, the contributions by Ouedraogo (Chapter 16) and Taru (Chapter 19), van Zyl highlights that state-driven development efforts and international development cooperation need to take into account the individual and social dimensions. Development, in his view, is only sustainable if local ownership as well as mutual trust between all stakeholders are ensured and if the agenda is set by the local communities and individuals themselves.

Taking the ideas brought forward by van Zyl to a more conceptual level and tying together threads of thoughts from the preceding chapters, Nadine Bowers-Du Toit (Chapter 21) asks how African Independent Churches foster the decolonisation of development. In this her contribution challenges the very notion of development itself, which she sees as western, secular, and still influenced by its historical roots in modernisation theory. Informed by postcolonial theory, she highlights the Independent Churches' contributions at the ideological and the institutional levels. Bowers-Du Toit argues that African Independent Churches have the potential of redefining the notions of development in accordance with religion and local culture (*contextuality* and *spiritual worldview*). On the more pragmatic side, the contributions to decolonising

development pointed out by the author relate to *contextuality, independence*, and ‘development from below’ (Swart, Chapter 4): empowering the people themselves to act and ensuring that the agenda is set by the local community.

Notes

Some of the arguments in this text have been previously made in the policy briefs ‘Was sind African Initiated Churches?’ Kurzstellungnahme 02/2018 des Forschungsbereichs Religiöse Gemeinschaften und nachhaltige Entwicklung and ‘Religion Matters – African Initiated Churches Matter!’ Kurzstellungnahme 03/2018 des Forschungsbereichs Religiöse Gemeinschaften und nachhaltige Entwicklung as well as the article ‘Afrikanische Freikirchen – Partner in der Entwicklungszusammenarbeit: Mit Gott zu mehr Wohlstand’, Herder Korrespondenz 01/2019, 25–28. Much of the content of this chapter also entered into the report ‘Potenziale der Zusammenarbeit mit African Initiated Churches für nachhaltige Entwicklung. Ergebniszusammenfassung des Forschungsprojekts und Handlungsempfehlungen für die deutsche Entwicklungspolitik’, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, 2019.

- 1 Also Orthodox Churches, e.g. in Egypt and Ethiopia, are churches founded in Africa independently of modern-time missionary movements. However, with respect to their history and theology they are fundamentally different from the churches initiated in Africa in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Hence, they are not included in the definition of African Initiated Churches here. Similarly, the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa and its split-offs such as the Nederduitsch Hervormde Kerk van Afrika are not considered part of African Initiated Christianity here due to their European provenance.
- 2 The term ‘Ethiopian’ stems from Psalm 68, verse 31 (KJV): ‘Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God’ (Sundkler 1961, 39).
- 3 For an outline of Aladura theology, see Ositelu (Chapter 11, this volume).
- 4 There are some exceptions, such as the Redeemed Christian Church of God (Adeboye, Chapter 7, this volume; Adedibu, Chapter 8, this volume), whose social service arms receive international development funding. OAICs’ development programmes are also financed with international funds, particularly from religious development organisations in Europe and North America.
- 5 This resonates well with Berger’s similar argument regarding Latin American Pentecostalism (Berger 2010).
- 6 In this section we rely on arguments previously made in Öhlmann *et al.* (2018).

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