HOLY PRAISECO: NEGOTIATING SACRED AND POPULAR MUSIC AND DANCE IN AFRICAN PENTECOSTALISM

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Abstract: *One of the biggest attractions of the Pentecostal movement is its liturgy, which is partly expressed through music and dance. The growth of the popularity of Pentecostal music in Africa has been phenomenal. Its impact on the general music scene and the society in general is seen in the number of high profile secular or "juju" musicians who have become gospel singers, evangelists and pastors. It has also affected politicians and the celebrants of rites of passage who borrow freely from gospel music and dance. Focusing on this aspect of the movement, this article explores how Pentecostal music and dance traditions have attempted to supplant the "disco" music and dance of discotheques. It traces how the new musical tradition or gospel music originated and developed and how the Pentecostals who were initially wary of popular cultures negotiated between sacred and popular music and dance.*

Introduction

Media use in contemporary Africa has attracted much attention because the charismatic and Pentecostal movement has been the most avid consumer. Indeed, it is argued that media use is the most important explanation for the growth of African Christianity because it valorized the missionary strategy, radically reshaped the religious landscape, and enabled Pentecostalism to charismatize the mainline churches. Cephas Omenyo's study, *Pentecost Outside Pentecostalism* documents the trend

in Ghana. [1] A recent documentary by James Ault on African Christianity, shot in Ghana and Zimbabwe, illustrates how the liturgy, doctrine, ethics and other practices in the mainline churches resonate with Pentecostal spirituality, liturgy and theology. Two explanations argue that the missionary-founded churches are engaged in encapsulating strategy; that they retain their members by enlarging the charismatic space for the youth and women. The second explanation is that Africans have always been attracted to the charismatic and pneumatic elements of the gospel because these resonate with the goals and practices of traditional religion. This buttresses the argument that African Christianity is an extension of African traditional religion. People come to the charismatic churches to seek answers to questions raised within the interiors of the primal worldviews. The implication is that Pentecostalism is growing because of its cultural policy and attitude to indigenous worldview and culture. Therefore, how the movement mediates its responses to indigenous and popular cultures deserves attention.

The tendency has been to study Pentecostalism through space, describing its spatial and vertical expansion and its numbers. But most media studies focus on the glare of television and the technicolor of billboards showing the big man of God staring down on the traffic, promising liberation and prosperity. The goal here is to change the focus by studying the sounds of the born again through music and dance of the Pentecostals because the charismatic liturgy is one of the biggest attractions. Dubbed *"praise-co,"* Pentecostal music and dance traditions have attempted to supplant the "disco" music and dance of discotheques. A number of high profile secular or *"juju"* musicians (who create new rhythms from indigenous musical culture) have become gospel singers,

[1] Cephas Omenyo, *Pentecost Outside Pentecostalism: A Study of the Development of Charismatic Renewal in the Mainline Churches in Ghana*(Zoetemeer: Uitgeverij Boekencentrum,2002).

evangelists and pastors. Politicians and the celebrants of rites of passage borrow freely from gospel music and dance. The goal is to trace how the new musical tradition or gospel music originated and developed; how the Pentecostals who were initially wary of popular cultures negotiated between sacred and popular music and dance.

Ezra Chitendo aptly defines gospel music as

> an artistic product emerging from cultural workers who are influenced by the Christian cumulative tradition. These artists utilize various musical styles and instruments to communicate Christian themes. These include the *mbira* beat from a traditional Shona musical instrument, *sungura* or *museve* (like an arrow, it pierces the heart) from Zimbabwean popular music, rap and hip hop from African American culture, reggae from the African-Caribbean culture, Congolese *soukous* and other types. [2]

Popularity has its price and Pentecostal churches are now competing among themselves in adopting new musical and dance choreographies. The empire of popular culture has struck back and reshaped the character of the movement. The papal exhortation, *Ecclesia in Africa* (1995) had noted the use of media as a resource in evangelization but cautioned that media "constitute a new culture that has its own language and above all its own specific values and counter-values." (p.71). It could pose a challenge to Christian users.

The significance of the problem can be illustrated from the Republic of Congo where the Pentecostal/ charismatic devotees are called *bakristu* in

[2] Ezra Chitendo, *Singing Culture: A Study of Gospel Music in Zimbabwe* (Uppsala, Sweden: The Nordic Africa Institute, Research report No.121, 2002),14.

the Lingala language. One noticeable characteristic of believers who live in this musical culture is how they are struggling to draw a line between sacred Christian music *(mabino ya Nzambe)* and the polluting secular music *(mabino mabe)* which fill the air in the urban areas and percolate into the remote villages via radio and electronic technology. Yet the line is receding. The bakristu declare that the Holy Spirit *(Molimo Mosantu)* inspires a certain type of appropriate music while the evil spirit *(molimo mabe)* inspires different types of music and dance that seduce and ruin morals. Preachers eloquently entertain and exhort their audiences by choreographing diatribes against the influence of popular culture on believers. On the surface, it appears that the Pentecostals are merely reinforcing the old missionary cultural policy that condemned African indigenous cultures as being demonic. This paper argues that matters are more complex because music and dance constitute an important dimension in the prolific mass mediation of religion among the Pentecostals. The use of mass media has given the movement a higher public visibility, profile, and influence than their statistical share of the contemporary religious market would warrant.

Music and Dance in Missionary Rhetoric and Practice

It is germane to briefly explore the role of music and dance in Christian worship and the inherited missionary traditions at the background of Pentecostal attitude. Music has always been central in human expressions of heart-felt responses to the divine. Singing and liturgical dance serve as modes of praise and worship and as muscular strategies for inculcating the gospel message because they unite the body, soul and spirit during worship. They bring theological reflections about God and the relationship with human beings and the world of nature down from the intellectual level into the affective dimensions of the human person. Art, ritual symbols and dance elevate and expand spiritual horizons and express what the heart feels. But the missionary culture formalized

liturgical acts and reduced the emotive aspects expressed in dance. The restriction on the body movement may have deeper theological import about the conception of matter and spirit. Sinful flesh and soulish human emotions are contrasted against the Spirit. But missionaries added a racist, cultural nuance. In the crosscultural encounters, two things happened: on the one hand, the missionaries nursed a suspicion about indigenous religions especially the pervasive power of indigenous spirits, the noise of the hypnotic drums and the potential use of music and dance in achieving ecstasy, trance and prophecy. They sought to replace the indigenous musical traditions by inculcating Western traditions such as hymnody, organ, piano, choral music and brass band in the project to transplant Christianity.

But a new wind blew from the Vatican II's cultural policy. In *Ecclesia in Africa,* the pope called for 'a serene and prudent dialogue' with indigenous religion that will avoid negative influences and 'foster the assimilation of positive values' from indigenous religion whose agents should be 'treated with great respect and esteem' (p.67). The affirmation exploded a liturgical revival, new musical traditions and Christian art in the late 1960s. [3] The Congolese 'Zaire Rite' show-cased the vernacularization of the mass that included the inculturation of indigenous lyrics, rhythms, percussion and symbols, sanctioning a deviation from inherited patterns. Moreover, dance was woven into the Christian liturgy as a central feature. The opening procession involves all the ministers doing a step dance together with spears as symbols of the chief who holds a carved stick with horse hairs. The presider kisses the altar north, east, south and west. The Gloria is a circle dance around the altar for the incensing. It was in these heady days that *The Missa Luba* won an international acclaim. It was produced without any Western

[3] F. K. Lumbala, *Celebrating Jesus in Africa: Liturgy and Inculturation* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1998).

instrument. The *kyrie*, Gloria and credo have the framework of a *kasala* of the Ngandanjika (Kasai).The *sanctus* is fashioned after the farewell song of a Kiluba woman. Outside the Congo, the success of the liturgical revolution could be seen in the allegro dance in Ethiopian churches, an ecstatic dance reminiscent of David's praise-leaps, in the ingoma dance in Malawi sourced from the traditional Ngoni warrior dance, and in the odwira dance in a Kumasi Roman Catholic mass. The argument is that there were precursors to the musical evolution catalyzed by African Pentecostals.

Admittedly, it could be said that the African Instituted Churches had contested the missionary traditions and grew in numbers because their African music and dance liberated and created a new phase of African response to the gospel. In the process of decolonization, missionary-founded churches came under increasing pressure to device encapsulating strategies. Meanwhile, cultural nationalists in the new African states patronized creative indigenous music, thereby exacerbating the pressure towards inculturation. The Congolese *rhumba* and *cha-cha-cha* and the West African *High-life* were the sounds of cultural nationalism and political independence. Nationalism also fuelled ethnomusicology signified in the creative achievements of J.H. Nketia of Ghana. [4] In southern Africa, guerilla wars produced "songs of struggle" that resembled the nationalist choral music of the Biafrans during the Nigerian civil war, 1967-1970. A prominent Biafran artist was a former leprosy patient, Ikoli Harcourt-Whyte (1905-1977). The war music tended to use Scriptural passages and exhortations in plaintive lamentations, wondering when God will intervene to save His suffering people. Typical is Harcourt-Whyte's song in Igbo language: *rue ole*

[4] J.H.Kwabena Nketia, *The Music of Africa* (New York: Norton, 1974); C.Michael Hawn, *Gather Into One: Praying and Singing Globally* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2003): 104-188 are two chapters on African Christian music.

mgbe, obim?= When, Oh my heart?. From here, other songs moved to reassure the audience that God sees the suffering of the oppressed, hears their cries, feels their pains and will come soon to save! By the 1970s, popular culture was challenging Christian music to shift from its missionary moorings. Charismatic youths built upon the precedents and gradually nudged the Pentecostal movement into an increasingly ironic compromise with popular culture.

Contrary Winds: Characteristics of Pentecostal Ideology on Music, Dance and Popular Culture

Africa's new Christianity was caught between contrary winds: the "born again" movement grew out of evangelical spirituality, and 'set to work' the translated missionary gospel. They, therefore, shared certain missionary cultural attitudes towards indigenous cultures. They realized the impact of music and dance as two powerful tools for winning souls and for attracting the masses, especially women and young people. They were aware of the psychological effect of music and dance in worship, in accessing the supernatural world and in effecting conversion and healing. But they feared the negative dimensions, the idolatry embedded in the sources and goals of indigenous music and dance and in popular culture. This produced a dialectic that sought to distinguish between the sacred from profane, to protect members from the immoral life style in club crawling, wasteful lifestyle, the allure of neon lights and from the message and medium of popular culture. Pentecostals faced a dilemma especially in village contexts where indigenous music and dance served as cultural anchors, identity markers, ingredients of indigenous religion and major sources of entertainment. In the nation state, rulers used traditional cultures as markers of identity and instruments for mobilizing the people and for consolidating legitimacy. Meanwhile, socio-economic stress, urban anomie, civil wars and failed states eroded traditional values, created new secular ethics and created the crave for

solace and pleasurable relief in pulsating music and dance. By the 1980s globalization and media technology invaded Africa bringing more liberal lifestyles from the western world to the doorsteps of avid consumers. New technology changed the mode of cultural production and mass mediation of Christianity. How did these forces impact the negotiation between sacred music and popular culture?

The Context: A Profile of the African Cultural Environment

The argument is that a study of sounds -music and dance- enables the exploration of African Pentecostal attitude towards indigenous cultures and to popular culture. It will demonstrate how the *bakristu* negotiated the challenges of a complex and changing cultural ecology. But there are a number of aspects to this: first is *the profile of the African cultural and moral environment* that is constituted by three interpenetrating "publics": the indigenous village public, an emergent cultural public created in the encounter between the indigenous and the western cultures, and the external western public that is maintained by multinational corporations, international organizations and other agents of globalization that operate with a western mindset. Foreign education and global forces keep the character of the western public in Africa's present as an influential space because of the amount of resources that it controls. However, the most powerful moral universe is the emergent public that is neither primal nor western, a veritable mélange of both. One of the songs by the Afro-jazz artist, Fela Ransome Kuti dubbed it, *shakara* culture (lacking stable roots), spawned in the *sabon gari* (strangers' quarters) of the urban environment. It has its own value system bred in the anonymity of the town. Studies on African urbanity have described the strangeness, allure, opportunities, challenges and ephemeral quality of this environment. Under the imprint of Heinneman's Africa Writers series, novelists such as Wole Sonyika in his The Interpreters, Alex la Guma's *Down Second Avenue*, Cyprian

Ekwensi's *Lokotown* and *Jagua Nana* have recreated the noise, bustle, smell, slums and chaos in African cities. As a society is thrust into the enlarged or re-organized macrocosm, new lifestyles and ethical options are spawned.[5]

From this moral perspective, it is as if the urban is a deviation, lacking authenticity, a veritable wasteland inhabited by "black Englishmen" who were neither English nor authentic Africans. Changing value systems ensured that people did things in the emergent public that they would not dare to do in the indigenous or western publics. In the latter they would be imprisoned; in the former, the gods who served as the policemen would kill the culprit with a lightning thunderbolt. But the emergent public was regarded as the *white man's world* where people did the *white man's work* and lived in "half London." To foray there successfully was an achievement to be celebrated with the flute and drum. People learned to loot in the emergent public without due repercussions in the primal context as long as they were not caught and brought home and shared the wealth with the kinsfolk. The interplay between the three publics has been used to explain the breakdown of social control models and the moral collapse in contemporary culture. James Ferguson has theorized the cultural dualism in rural connections and urban styles in his book, *Expectation of Modernity*. He urges that urban scholarship should focus on circular migration rather than rural-urban migration precisely because most African migrants spend the period in the urban environment in planning the re-entry or return to the homesteads. So, he designed the character of urban life as a spectrum from two polarities, the cosmopolitan capability and localist capability. As a town dweller showed a high cosmopolitan style and urban competence, the risk may be

5 R.W. Hefner, *Conversion to Christianity: Historical and Anthropological Perspectives* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993).

a decreasing capability to perform localist expectations. Villagers often label such people as being 'lost.'[6]

The pastoral challenges for African Pentecostalism arose from the three contexts: the resilient African indigenous cultures, urbanity and its *shakara* (rootless) culture and imploding global culture. One must not presume a higher degree of urban ethos than exists in Africa or ignore the force of cultural villigization of the modern public space. Most of the inhabitants of the towns carry medicine made in the villages to empower their successful forays in the towns. As Ellis and ter Haar observed,

> Many Africans today who continue to hold beliefs derived from their traditional cosmologies apply these to everyday life even when they live in cities and work in the civil service or business sector. Religious worldviews do not necessarily diminish with formal education.[7]

The hybrid character of the African urban informed its musical and dance traditions and created a challenge for Pentecostal ethics and liturgy.

The Changing Sounds of African Popular Culture

To understand the pressure of popular culture on Pentecostal music and dance, we take the example of the decennial changes in West Africa. In the 1950s, the high life genre was dominant. It is a musical genre that fuses African rhythms with the western. In its early days, the sound had a few variations generally combined with multiple guitar rhythms with a brass band backing as well as various percussion instruments. The term

[6] James Ferguson, *Expectation of Modernity: Myths and Meanings of Urban Life in the Zambian Copperfield* (Berkeley,CA: University of California Press,1999), chapt.,3

[7] Stephen Ellis and Gerrie ter Haar, *Worlds of Power: Religious Thought and Political Practice in Africa* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 51.

highlife perhaps referred to the lifestyle of European elites in the 1920s. Soon, the guitar-based style incorporated elements of swing, jazz, Cuban rhythms and local street tunes. Between the 1960s and 1970s, the varieties of highlife proliferated from the simple forms by E.T Mensah (Ghana) and Victor Olaiya (Nigeria) to creative use of indigenous music and dance in the hands of Ramblers International (Ghana), Rex Lawson (Nigeria) and Professional Uhuru Dance Band (Ghana). Victor Uwaifo of Nigeria popularized Edo (Bini) indigenous music and vernacular in his brand of highlife. But Congolese music held its own in popular music charts. The 1970s belonged to new musicians who had imbibed pop musical traditions from the West and mixed this with South African Zulu rhythms. It was called Afro-pop featuring electric guitar interlaced with African chanting amidst a backdrop of percussion instruments and a horn section. I am describing the music of Osibisa group. African American influence became popular with its "soul-to soul" music.

The genesis of gospel music's engagement with popular music in most of Africa could be traced to the 1980s. Typical was Genesis Gospel Singers whose song *"Momma Mo Akoma Ntutu"* (Ashanti: Don't let your heart be troubled) won acclaim perhaps it comforted people amidst the collapse of Ghanaian economy and political turmoil. Gradually musical artistes shifted from the clubs to the churches. Reggae grew popular as Bob Marley and the Wailers reflected the resistant spirit that empowered people amidst the crises of the continent. He appeared to be wailing against failed rulers of soft states and their white patrons. The major shift in musical production was also significant in this period as waxing of vinyl records gave way to cassette recording and the growth of cassette market. Emigration broadened the range of musical creativity. As British immigration laws barred Africans, Germany opened. Soon, a genre of immigrant highlife emerged that was nicknamed, "burgher highlife"-this used synthesizers and drum machine beats instead of the traditional percussion instruments. It became popular in West Africa.

The 1990s witnessed the emergence of "Raglife" as reggae was transformed into hip-hop. The reigning genre was "hip life", an amalgamation of highlife and hip-hop. The Ghanaian artist, Reggie Rockstone was one of the earliest pioneers. This signaled a profound form of African American cultural influence on African youths. Some started to rap in vernacular languages. This genre survived into the end of the millennium as hip hop mixed with gospel music in a transformation that signified that the Pentecostal movement changed character in every decade, compelled to negotiate with the enthralling power of popular culture.

Anatomy of Pentecostal Responses to Popular Music and Dance

Pentecostal ambivalent attitude to popular music and dance partially arose from its complex cultural discourse. To start with Pentecostal attitude to indigenous worldviews: Pentecostals show a sensitive appreciation of the language of power in indigenous worldview. This subtlety has ignited a debate about Pentecostal cultural discourse. Pentecostalism has been characterized in conflicting ways: some argue that it is world-rejecting and anti-modern; that it urges the born again Christians to break completely with their past and their families and become individualistic; and that it demonizes indigenous cultures and worldviews, and therefore, constitutes a regression in the development of an indigenous African Christianity. Critical cultural revivalists engaged in state mobilization insist upon this image. Meyer's studies, based on the Evangelical Presbyterians of the Volta region of Ghana (scions of the Bremen Mission) have been influential in domesticating the argument that Pentecostal experience is reinforced with a new life compass that is personal, cultural, social and economic; that the movement mounts moral boundaries that redefine the person and the relationship with the social structures; that it is a religious tradition that essays to erase the cultural traditions by challenging accepted notions of

community, kinship and tradition. Pentecostal cultural ideology challenges the rites of passage and the rites of the agricultural cycle that are embedded in the indigenous worldviews. David Maxwell adds that Pentecostalism embodies symbols of resistance to established religions and wider social system, and has its roots in counterculture and anti-establishment ideology. He agrees with Meyer that the movement urges members to effect a rupture or *make a complete break* with the physical and spiritual past. This ideology turns the past into a morally suspect category. Thus, life problems are projected onto hostile forces from one's past that aggressively visit the contemporary generation with afflictions.[8] Solution is achieved by driving out the past from the present. Usually, witchcraft (a terminology that is often used loosely) serves as an illustration of Pentecostal attitude to indigenous cultures and worldviews. Pentecostal response, variously named as deliverance, witchcraft cleansing, witchcraft eradication, land cleansing and exorcism is promoted under the glare of television because healing is the strongest concern in Africa. From here, an instrumentalist discourse images the movement as being youthful in character, appealing to the urban, mobile, professional class that avidly consumes the resources of modernity and externality; that it is materialistic, provides hope in the face of economic collapse, and serves as the vanguard of globalization process.

A different interpretation of the cultural discourse argues that Pentecostalism has grown because of its cultural fit into indigenous worldviews and its response to the questions that are raised within the interior of the worldviews. It asserts that the indigenous worldview still

[8] Birgit Meyer, "'Make a complete break with past' :Memory and Post-colonial Modernity in Ghanaian Pentecostalist Discourses" *Journal of Religion in Africa,* 28,3 (1998):316-349; David Maxwell, "Witches, Prophets And Avenging Spirits," *Journal of Religion in Africa,* 25, 3 (1995):309-339.

dominates contemporary African experience and shapes the character of African Pentecostalism. It interprets African Pentecostalism as the 'setting to work' of the pneumatic semen of the gospel in Africa, at once showing how Africans appropriated the gospel message, how they responded to the presence of the kingdom in their midst, and how its power transformed their worldviews. Exercising a measure of agency, African Christians absorbed new resources generated internally and externally in reshaping their histories. The face of Christianity acquired a different character in the encounter because it was now expressed in the idiom of the African world. This means that the conversation partners in shaping Pentecostal ideology and praxis are the indigenous religions and cultures, the experiences of individuals and communities in the contemporary cultures, the competing religious forms in urban and rural contexts, biblical resources, and the pneumatically-driven Pentecostal image of the church. These are not discreet categories but shape the being, saying and doing of the Pentecostal movement.

The Pentecostals reinterpret indigenous worldviews in three ways: by deploying the covenant idea derived from the Old Testament, by mining the indigenous worldview for swaths of resonance with the Bible, and by reinforcing the conception of evil and the demonic in the indigenous belief that the human life journey is precarious. The covenant idea works in two directions: by affirming God's immanence, interest and lordship over the *oikumene* and human affairs, it encourages human creative response to society. By affirming the purity of the creator, Pentecostal cosmology images existence as a spiritual encounter or a warfare between the forces of evil and God. The supernatural world intervenes in the human world and protects the hapless human being through the Holy Spirit, the power and the blood of Jesus. These concerns constitute the content of sacred musical lyrics, choreography and dance because the Pentecostals perceive urban contexts are a melting pot of indigenous religious powers that have converged into a powerful site.

Cameos of Pentecostal Response

The argument here is that the study of dance and music enables us to explore how African Pentecostals negotiate the intersections of religion, media and culture, and how they reconstruct both African and Christian cosmologies. The major contested sites are (i) the source of music and dance because religious expression sources its modes from the culture. Therefore, Pentecostalism re-appropriates indigenous and secular music for Godly use through the ancient process dubbed as "spoiling the Egyptians.' (ii) Since they appreciate the power of music and dance and the prolific creativity in Christian liturgy, they endeavor to structure its usage so as to maximally achieve the functions of reinforcing boundaries of exclusion and inclusion, constructing identity, building community, converting souls to Christ, and achieving contact with the supernatural. (iii) They reinvent popular music by blending various traditions. The end-product of the three models of adaptation, structuring and reinvention was the ironic growth of an emergent gospel music industry. The emergent tradition brought popular musical and dance tradition into the sanctuary and reshaped of Pentecostal liturgy and vocabulary. In so doing, the alliance with popular culture divided the movement as early adopters are alleged to be carnal Christians (Lingala: *bakristu ya nsuni*), the victims of the power of popular culture. Their churches are nicknamed, *les eglises chaudes"*, hot churches. Attitude to music, dance and fashion reflect the differences in ethics and spirituality, and the measure of divisions and rivalry within the Pentecostal movement. It betrays the need for a typology, periodization and biography in studying the movement. But the emergent genre that was always fluid and creative captured the profane space, as we shall demonstrate later.

In all these, the role of music and dance for diasporic African Christianity has received little attention. Galia Sabar's research on some Ethiopian immigrants in Israel identified a quadruple marginalization: black, undocumented, Christian, and socially peripheral community. Even

Arab Christians discriminate against African Christians. The dream of the holy land jars prominently against the reality. Galia Shabar and Shlomat Kanari paint a very touching picture of African communities in Israel where music becomes a key force of survival. Some of the leading musicians could use this as an instrument to rise from their marginalized existence and may acquire the capacity to travel to other parts of the world. [9] Music becomes, solace, survival tool in the liminal existence, and the means for climbing the socio-economic ladder. Christian songs provide opportunities for the artistes.[10]

The Economics of Gospel Music

Some would argue that this was a pyrrhic victory. Pentecostal use of music and dance blurred lines between entertainment and worship. It betrayed how the medium could serve as a resource: valorizes pace and breadth of religious communication, deals with the problem of the relevance of the church in a changing culture, confronts the generational gap and serves as an inculcation tool. Yet it could challenge the message and representation of the gospel, reshape the character of the movement, and create the specter of the tail wagging the dog when popular culture drives the life of the church. For instance, if hip hop music could attract young people to church, does that sanctify it from its secular origin as a music designed to make the hip to hop? In recent times, churches celebrate 'U2charist,' that is celebrating the eucharist with the music, lyric and dance by U-2 pop group. Does this secularize the gospel? Even

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[9] Galia Sabar and Shlomat Kanari, " I'm singing my way up: The significance of music among African Christian immigrants in Israel"*Studies in World Christianity,*12,2 (2006):101-125; V.Lantenari, "From Africa into Italy: The Exorcist-Therapeutic Cult of Emmanuel Milingo" *New Developments ed* Clarke, 1998:263-284.

[10] Galia Sabar, "African Christianity in the Jewish State: Adaptation, Accomodation and Legitimization of Migrant Workers' Churches,1990-2003",*Journal of Religion in Africa,*34,4 (2004):407-437;idem.,"The African Christian Diaspora in the Holy Land" Religion In The *Context of Migration eds.* A Adogame and C. Weisskoppel (Bayreuth: Bayreuth African Studies, 75: 2005):155-190.

more insidious, technology has exposed the hidden dangers in musical lyrics and rhythms. It has betrayed the masking of lyric underneath hypnotic rhythms. By back-fast- tracking, the real lyric could be heard. Satanists are alleged to indulge in this fad. The growth of the gospel music industry has raised the question about money and mass mediation of religion. Meanwhile, image problems arise when "psalmists' become pop stars. Media pander to materialism, financial gain, focus on the individual's desires, and quest for prosperity. Does this culture contest the holiness ethics prescribed for Levites or the frugal injunctions against materialism when Jesus sent the disciples on mission?

The rebuttal is that entertainment appears crucial for the survival of religion in the market place of culture; it is an inculturating pathway for touching youthful audience already enmeshed, wired, in the electronic culture, and bored with the equally-packaged institutional religion. Religion and popular culture are meshed to attract the youths.
Quentin J. Schultze in *Televangelism and American Culture: The Business of Popular Religion* builds on two dimensions: the connection between business, commerce and televangelism, and the utilization of popular cultural techniques in mass mediating religion. Therefore, there is a reciprocal influence that religion and popular culture have on each other in creating a Christianity wherein it is difficult to distinguish popular entertainment from religion. The cultural production analysis is further pursued by Michael Warren's *Seeing through the media: a religious view of communications and cultural analysis* without focusing on any particular religious group. But Jeremy Carrette and Richard King, *Selling Spirituality: The Silent Take-over of Religion provides* the flip side of the coin by arguing that the secular corporate interests have taken over spirituality to subvert individuals, seduce them into consumerism; that advertisements utilize its cultural cachet and brand products by associating them with personal fulfillment, inner peace, happiness, and

success in relationships. Management efficiency is packaged as religious paths to enlightenment. [11] They conclude that the market has taken over the responsibility of religion, and neo-liberalism attempts to revalue all values and define the goal of life itself. The convert and consumer are one.

Finally, a historical perspective is essential for two reasons: cultural analysis should include historical analysis that places media in their cultural contexts. [12] Indeed, there should be a three-level analysis of (a) the history of the medium or technology involved, and the institutions that support it; (b) the immediate and intermediate points of production process; and (c) the point of consumption of particular media/cultural products. [13] From this perspective, the technology changed enormously as recording studios proliferated. Electronic production was less cost intensive than record waxing studios. The market was unregulated and entrepreneurs could produce musical cassettes and videos on cash-and-carry basis, feeding the market without much investment. The shape of the consumers changed in critical mass and nature. The major changes including the use of media started after 1980s, and since then, the creativity in gospel music has escalated. Three important changes occurred in the 1980s: an emergence of highly educated, young adults

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[11] Michael Warren *Seeing Through The Media* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International,1997),63

[12] Stewart Hoover, Mass *Media Religion: the social sources of the electronic church* (London: SAGE Publications,1988),14

[13] Michael Warren, *Seeing Through the Media: A religious view of communications and cultural analysis* (Harrisburg,PA: Trinity Press International,1997),106. Schultze, Televangelism and American Culture (Grand rapids: Baker,1991); Carrette and King, eds. Selling Spirituality (London: Routledge,2005); Frederick, *Between Sundays: Black women and everyday struggles of faith*(Berkeley, CA: University of California Press,2003); Martyn Percy, "The Church in the Market Place: Advertising and Religion in a Secular Age" *Journal of Contemporary Religion,* 15,1 (2000):97-119 shows that much of what televangelists do in the USA and Africa (such as faith healing, miracles and appeals for money)are banned by the watchdog, Code of Advertising Standards and Practice, in Britain. These are regarded as exploitation of human inadequacy and degradation of the people it appeals to.

who established their ministries. Many had contacts with Western, especially American televangelists who introduced media use in religious communication. The democratization process dubbed as 'the second liberation of Africa' included the liberalization of the state's stranglehold on the media sector, the dismantling of state monopolies, and the commercialization of air time and ownership. The media landscape opened to a cacophony of sounds. One index is the number of radio stations in West Africa: this increased from 40 in 1993 to 426 in 2001: sixty community radio stations in South Africa, Uganda had 117 private FM stations by 2002, Mali had over 100, Niger constructed 200 new local rural FM solar stations. A wisecrack quipped that Africans had more radio stations than portable water.[14] Besides talk, radio promoted music and dance.

Contentious Lyrics and Contested Sites:

In the 1970s when the youthful charismatic movement exploded all over Africa, the temper of the movement was prominently puritan, drawing clear boundaries between the born again experience and the dire alternative of going to hell. Rijk van Dijk has described the disconcerting habits of the young preachers, aliliki in Blantyre, Malawi. In Kenya, they dubbed themselves as Guerrillas for Christ and notably offered harrowing diatribes against indigenous religious practices and symbols. In Nigeria, one of their songs acknowledged that there is power all over the world but that God's power is the strongest; or, as another song put the matter, 'Jesus power-super power.' It, then, names the powers of the native doctor, the Ogboni secret cult, and other sources of power. At the mention of each nodal point of power, the singers would bend down and gesture that this is a low-level and useless type of power. At the mention

[14] R.I.J Hackett, " Devil Bustin' Satellites: How Media Liberalization in Africa Generates Religious Indigenous Intolerance and Conflict",7-8.

of the power of Jesus, they all would raise their hands with a shout of victory![15]

A particular source of power caused much concern, namely, water. There is a strong belief that spirits inhabit rivers, streams, lakes and other bodies of water; that these spirits serve as daughters of the female earth deity that controls fertility and morality. Water spirits are connected with sexuality, beauty, art, music and dance. Water spirits are patron saints to artists and fashion designers and musicians. [16] They inspire and teach the votaries songs through dreams or ritual. A Nigerian pop artist, Victor Uwaifo, wrote a song, *Guitar Boy*. He beckons the protagonist, Guitar Boy and admonishes him thus: 'whenever you see Mami Wata, never, never you run away.' He claims that Mami Wata, the goddess of the sea, inspired his music. Other musicians and painters make the same claim that artistic gifts are sourced from the spirit world. Pentecostals, therefore, become suspicious of the source and goals of popular culture-its art, fashion, music and dance. Dancers are imaged as possessed and unstable people. The peripatetic lifestyle, constant travels by music troupes, use of alcohol and drugs, and sexual mores indicate an instability consonant with possession by marine spirits. The negative, gendered dimension was against women artists because no self-respecting, married woman will go to clubhouses or sing and travel with men. The emergence of respected female artistes took much longer to consolidate in the African artistic scene. This image makes popular,

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[15] Rijk van Dijk, "Young Born Again Preachers in Post-independence Malawi" *New Dimensions in African Christianity* ed. Paul Gifford (Nairobi: All Africa Conference of Churches, Challenge Series,1992):55-79; Richard Showalter, *The Spiritual Awakenings in Kenya,1970-1980: Sketches of some radical believers* (Thika, Kenya: RBM,1983); Klaus Hock, "Jesus Power-Super Power: On the interaction between Christian fundamentalism and new religious movements in Africa" *Mission Studies,*12,1 (1995):56-70.

[16] Deidre Badejo, Oshun: *The Elegant Deity of Wealth, Power and Femininity* (Trenton,NJ:Africa World Press,1993).

secular music suspect for the born again. It is presumed that those who patronize secular music live wasteful lives. A song says that the long ties and cosmetics worn by city dwellers are embellishments that mask their wayward living.

Katrien Pype pursues another dimension of the questionable sources. Captivating dance movements of secular popular artists in the Republic of Congo are described as *"mystique"* because they contain idioms understandable only by those whose eyes can pierce into the supernatural world. For instance, a popular song, *fungola marmite* (Lingala: *open the pot*) is actually referring to cannibalism in witchcraft rituals. She illustrates this contentious, questionable source as follows:

> An example is the worldly dance *nkila mogrosso* (the big tail), produced by the orchestra of Papa Wemba, which seems to force everybody to dance it-its captivation of the onlookers worries newborn Christians. This name of the dance refers to a man's genitals and its movements express an orgasm: dancers are engaged in sensuous hip circling, bring their hands to their breasts/chest and distort the face in sexual delight. The dance is widely popular among the young, but is despised by Pentecostals and elders.[17]

Christians interpreted the contention between them and secular culture as a fight between God and the Devil. Beyond the lyric, the choreography of the dance became a contentious site.

Equally dangerous is the linkage between the music inspired by cultural nationalism and indigenous cults. It must be realized that not all forms of

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[17] Katren Pype, "Dancing for God Or the Devil: Pentecostal Discourse on Popular Dance in Kinshasha", *Journal of Religion in Africa*,36,3/4 (2006): 296-318;see,p.309.

art in Africa had religious meaning. Aesthetics drove some forms of artistic expressions. Other musical and dance traditions interpreted the socio-political fortunes of African states. Songs of protest and songs that mirrored the confusion in the people's minds attracted patronage. In a popular song, *Which Way Nigeria?,* the artist Sony Okosun shared the heart-rending dilemma of a collapsing, soft state under a military dictatorship. But many songs and dances were linked to indigenous religious roots. Ezra Chitendo's research on Zimbabwe mentions two:

> the institution of the shavi (alien spirit) whereby the spirit of a cultural outsider possessed a Shona medium, was an avenue for bringing in new musical practices and dance styles... Ceremonies held in honor of such spirits were characterized by performances of music and dance from the spirit's own cultural traditions.[18]

Instruments such as drums and *mbira* were associated with musical instruments and rhythms used to honor ancestors. A second illustration is the famous *chmurenga* music in Zimbabwe. This refers to a great Shona warrior and legendary hero, *Sororenzou Murenga* whose prowess gave birth to a musical tradition among nationalists. The lyric inculcates values of struggle and liberation. Aspects of this music and dance were used during the nightly *pungwe* ceremonies. *Pungwe* started as a witchcraft detection ritual. During the war of liberation, it was used to detect saboteurs and deployed against Christianity. Pentecostals were initially suspicious of both because of their tainted origins. The irony is how gradually both *chimurenga* and *pungwe* were adapted into charismatic night vigil dances and technique.

[18] Chitendo, Singing Culture, 2002:25,39

Holy Shuffle and Beat with Message

Armed with these negative images, African youthful Pentecostals of the 1970s distanced their liturgy from traditional and secular music and dance. They were not enamored to the hymnody and choirs among the missionary established churches. Instead, they wrote choruses and scoured the Bible for passages that could be easily turned into choruses. They adopted the guitar accompaniment from early Western revival campaigns and soon added the keyboard. Some of the new music appealed because of the vernacular. Most were in English. The dance was nicknamed as *holy shuffle*. Sometimes, they took the military imagery seriously enough to shuffle faster like recruits in a military parade. The brethren admonished new converts against the "spirit of jazz" and the hidden spiritual powers in reggae. The growing numbers in the charismatic movement ensured that key artists and bands caught the commercial eyes of the few recording companies and could wax records that sold enough to make some soloists and bands popular among the brethren. The level of the technology and the holiness ethic kept the musical tradition modest. Indeed, the artists emerged from the ranks of choirs of the mainline churches but the name of a band would indicate its core message, for instance, *Songs of the Cross*. In West Africa, many were students from High Schools. In Zimbabwe, one of the early leaders of "beat with a message" was Joseph Manyeruke who came from Salvation Army roots, had little education, and served as a gardener and housekeeper for white settlers. His early productions, *Chirenna Patembere (A disabled person at the temple, 1984) and Zakewo (Zaccheus,* 1986) were typical of the music of this period. Chitendo stresses the blending and sharing of many musical traditions including Zulu gospel and African-American traditions in southern and central Africa where labor migrants spread both Pentecostalism and inherited musical traditions into various parts of the neighboring countries. Quite notable is the role of handclapping in this early period. Many styles of

vigorous handclapping derived from indigenous musical tradition supplied the background rhythm, sometimes without any instruments.

Holy Praiseco: Appropriation and Cultural Reinvention

The periodization differs slightly among African countries but generally, a major shift occurred in the charismatic movement from the 1980s that changed the musical tradition. The greater degree of exposure with the American gospel scene and media technology could be illustrated with the career of Benson Idahosa. When Benson Idahosa linked with Bakker's Praise The Lord ministry and televangelist project, he opened the door for the proponents of the faith/claim theology and changed the character of Pentecostalism dramatically in seven ways: the rise of

i. the mega church with thousands of members and branches;
ii. the rich Big Man of God;
iii. mega projects- elaborate church center, bible school, businesses, elaborate stadia outreaches;
iv. increased access to electronic medium: radio, television, video, and audio cassettes; print media: glamorous house magazines, handbills, posters, billboards, books; clothes: T-shirt, caps, haute couture fashion; and music by a choir made up of a "thousand voices";
v. radical shift in ecclesiology from congregational polity to episcopacy with centralized, bureaucratized administration;
vi. emphasis on five-fold ministry—prophets and apostles controlled evangelists, teachers, and deacons (lower cadres of church workers). The wife of "the man of God" organized sodalities for women;
vii. titles became important as many acquired doctorates either honoris causa or by outright purchase. Idahosa became a "reverend, doctor, professor, and archbishop"!

The shift in ecclesiology, the importance of titles, and the size of projects were connected with attention to the high profile and visibility of a ministry. High visibility, iconic image tangoed with intense spirituality to draw public, national, and international attention. These were essential for getting the political ears of the government to listen to pastors who control a large constituency of voters. Enlarged scale and increased advertisement yielded more devotees and income. Admittedly, media and mega-infrastructure were cost intensive projects. Marleene de Witte studied the Altar Media built by the Ghanaian pastor Mensah Otabil, and concluded that

> through mass mediation of religion, a new religious format emerges, which although originating from the Pentecostal-charismatic churches, spreads far beyond and is widely appropriated as a style of worship and of being religious. [19]

The religious trend reflects the shifts in popular culture in the social, political and economic spheres. Both the secular and religions entrepreneurs use the same communications strategies and interact closely.

The arguments here are that the combination of all these dimensions changed the interface of Pentecostalism and media, and produced a creative reinvention of popular culture in Pentecostal musical and dance traditions. The numerical growth of the movement, the tendency to splinter like the *amoeba proteus,* the alluring but stressful exposure to media popularity, bred rivalry and catalyzed creative experimentation with different genres of music-dance. Pentecostals deployed a number of

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[19] Marleen De Witte, "Altar Media's Living Word: Televised Charismatic Christianity in Ghana" *Journal of Religion in Africa,* 33,2 (2003):172-202idem., "The Holy Spirit on air in Ghana", *Media and Development,* 52,2 (2005):22-26.

strategies: appropriation and reinvention, "spoiling the Egyptians' by excavating indigenous religious and social idioms for symbols and rhythms, blending of musical traditions, broadening the space for female artists and the use of music-dance for evangelization. Pentecostals used music –dance to responding to issues connected with rites of passage and celebration of the agricultural cycle-matters are important in everyday African life. As Katrien Pype put it, " the dance performances in these Pentecostal-charismatic churches are not only some of the main technologies for creating a religious self, but they also reveal the most important themes of Kinshasha's Christian culture." [20] By the 1990s, reggae, cha-cha-cha, and jazz became acceptable. Soon, musicians dug deep into indigenous music and appropriated both the lyric and rhythm. Praise names used for the deities, kings, titled men and indigenous spirits were exploited to praise God. God became the paramount chief, king of smaller kings, the one to whom people could run for refuge, the voice that ended all pleas and gave justice, the river that broke the bridge, the flare of lightning that reveals the path on a darkling plain. A popular tune "Darling Jesus" portrayed Christ as a lover, friend and husband. He was showered with significant images in a song that sounds like romantic songs. Ghanaian cultural scholarship has paid attention to the idiomatic vernacular in Christian praise songs by Efua Kuma just as Ntsikana's legacy among the Xhosa in South Africa. His songs are preserved in the Methodist hymn book. The dance styles from many ethnic groups were appropriated. In Ghana, worshippers wave the handkerchief and gyrate to the tune of *Ga kpalugo*, the fishermen's dance. The Christianization of the indigenous forms increased their popularity.

As the popularity of gospel music rose, many secular musicians started tracing their roots back to the church. In Nigeria, exponents of the "juju

[20] Pype, "Pentecostal Discourse on Popular Dance in Kinshasha", *JRA*, 36, 2006:302.

music" and other forms of popular music such as Kris Okotie, Sonny Okosun and Ebenezer Obey converted to Pentecostalism in the early 1990s and set up ministries that brought this form of popular culture into the mainstream of Christian music. The born again Christian no longer needed to patronize the discotheque and club house or even dance to indigenous music because there are Christian worship and praise songs using the same rhythm and words. Many have commented on the lively, cathartic liturgy of Pentecostal churches. Don Miller intoned that 'like upstart religious groups, they have discarded many of the attributes of establishment religion. Appropriating contemporary cultural forms, these churches are creating a new genre of worship music.'[21]

The Pentecostal psyche did not quite abandon the dichotomy between sacred and profane music but broke loose from the avoidance technique. Instead, they reconstructed the indigenous music for Christian use within a decade. Music and dance styles from African indigenous cultures completely transformed the liturgy and mood of African churches. Offering times were declared to be blessing times when people dance out of the pews to the altar and celebrate God's goodness in the past, present and future.

Emergent Pentecostal Music and Popular Culture

The impact of the new Pentecostal music swept into the village publics and reshaped the celebration of rites of passage. Soon, politicians adopted gospel songs in their campaigns either by borrowing the lyric and changing the words or by posing as honest born again Christians. For instance, in Nigerian patois or pidgin English, where the Pentecostals declare that "Jesus, you don win; kpata kpata you go win again" (Jesus,

[21] Donald E. Miller, *Re-inventing American Protestantism: Christianity in the New Millennium* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press,1997),1

you have won again, and whatever befalls, you will win again), the politicians would replace Jesus with the name of the politician or symbol of the political party declaring that no matter what happens (kpata kpata) they will win. Marleen de Witte captures the significant shift, namely, that Pentecostals created a popular culture that others imitated:

> In this new public sphere religion intertwines with both national politics and commerce and entertainment. Charismatic Pentecostalism is part and parcel of the business and entertainment culture of the commercial media, just as entertainment, business, and marketing are integral to charismatic churches. Its impact, then, lies not only in its institutional forms and rapidly growing number of followers, but also in more fluid forms of consumer culture and entertainment business. Through the media, it has widely diffused influence on general popular tastes and styles that may not be religious per se, but are clearly shaped by charismatic-Pentecostal discourse and practice. [22]

Other major changes included technological development, production, distribution, and gender ideology.

Charismatic Cassettes

Technological developments created new models of production, distribution, and consumption of music. A lucrative industry was conjured into existence. Africans have manifested greater cultural agency with audio and video cassettes and music than with television. Technological development replaced waxed records for audio cassettes. This changed the music market. Video cassettes added a new feature that

[22] De Witte, "Holy Spirit on Air in Ghana" *Media and Development,* 52,2 (2005),26.

enabled consumers to access gospel music more widely. In African countries, audio materials whether sermon tapes or music are easily dubbed or pirated, and widely used in homes, schools, in motor parks, offices, taxis, and buses. The retreat of the state from control over media and the accessibility of cheap media technologies gave rise to a new image economy.[23] It should be added that Muslims abandoned old taboos against electronic media to imitate Christians. Charles Hirschkind has examined the use of cassettes in public piety in Egypt where Muslims developed a genre known as Cassette-Dahwa built around sermon tapes to be used in fulfilling the duty to actively encourage fellow Muslims in the pursuance of greater piety, and to evangelize.[24] The chants could now be heard in all manners of places.

All over the continent, radio is the fastest means of disseminating information. From the inter-war years it has served as a prized possession in many homes, a veritable symbol of modernity. Many agro-industrial development projects include the distribution of radio to rural farmers, and the proliferation of NGOs in the 1990s further broadened the use of radio in the hinterlands. Missionary-founded churches tend to depend on government patronage to access the radio network but while small Pentecostals aggressively buy time to air pre-taped programs, the bigger ones set up their private radio stations. Beyond music, the political overtone is clear in the call-in and response programs that excite public interest and open the space to ask penetrating questions about faith and politics. In South Africa, however, broadcasting is still controlled by the

[23] Jordan D. Smith, "The Arrow of God: Pentecostalism, Inequality, and the Supernatural in South-eastern Nigeria" *Africa,*71,4 (2001):587-613; Akoko Mbe, "New Pentecostalism in the wake of the economic crisis in Cameroon", *Nordic Journal of African Studies,*11,3 (2002):359-376.

[24] Charles Hirschkind, "Cassettes Ethics: Public Piety and Popular Media in Egypt" *Religion, Media and the Public Sphere.* eds. Birgit Meyer and Annelies Moors (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press,2006):chapter one

state, and there is an ongoing struggle to change from the apartheid tradition and from new forces of secularism to an inclusive mediation of diverse religious faiths.[25]

African Pentecostals use media as complementary to their ministries, extending their public presence, and as a signifier of the relative importance of a ministry. Street preachers in Nairobi, Harare, Blantyre and bus preachers in Nigeria are examples of the expanding strategies for personal witness and soul-winning focus of mission. There is a twist: the bus preacher sells natural, non-chemical, herbal products, food and hygienic materials to sustain himself in a tent-making ministry. Orality and proclamation buttressed by an emphasis on vigorous homilectics are very important in Pentecostal missiology. He also sells Pentecostal music tapes. The *taxi talk* and music are key strategies for evangelization. But motor park Christianity is worthy of scholarly research precisely because it reveals the tensile strength of the gospel as travelers avidly purchase religious materials. Could it be that the uncertainties of road transportation heighten anxieties and the resort to charismatic spiritual solace? Ironically, the distributors of Pentecostal cassettes in the motor parks are not believers though they can sing all the songs in full-throated ease. The new Christianity provides the vendors with job! It enables the movement to penetrate social consciousness, contribute to the economy and to popular cultural production.

The content of Pentecostal music-dance tradition requires attention. It was to convey an urgent message of salvation with catchy tunes and enriched African rhythm. Popular songs range through a wide gamut of

[25] R.I.J. Hackett, "Mediating Religion in South Africa: Balancing Air-time and Rights Claim" *Religion, Media and The Public Sphere.* ed Meyer and Moors (2006):chapter 8; Robert B. Horwitz, *Communication and Democratic Reform in South Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press,2001).

salvation message: fertility, healing, praise and thanksgiving, meaning of suffering, deliverance from suffering and poverty, death and judgment, repentance and the imminent return of Christ, the joys of eternal life and the ephemeral nature of worldly materials.

Conclusion

To tie the loose ends: the public presence of religion in the information age compels the examination of heightened relevance of the media in contemporary missiology and the co-optation of popular culture in religious representation. This trend has been heightened by the salience of Pentecostalism and its use of media in contemporary African religious space. In many places media access has become easy because of an unregulated environment, retreat of the state, economic liberation and democratization process. Pentecostals have grabbed a wide swath of the new space because of a muscular evangelistic goal. The political space has broadened and many new voices and players essay to be heard and seen. Birgit Meyer and Annelies Moors argue that the media provide a political dimension for new religions; that by deliberately and skillfully adopting various media technologies, new religions create an alternative politics of belonging, legitimization, means of public articulation and establishment of authenticity. They employ different styles grounded in public culture to present themselves as alternatives to both the secular establishment and mainline churches that are ambivalent to spending large budgets on advertisement. Pentecostals form new religious- based identities, claiming their own public sphere. They use cassettes and videos as instruments of Christian education. [26] People learn the language, ethics, and community style of the new religion. Media attract and encapsulate the new converts. Other religious groups such as the Muslims have adopted the same strategies. Media intensify the politics

[26] Birgit Meyer and Annelies Moors, eds. *Religion, Media and Public Sphere* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press,2006).

of difference, enhance the spread of radical social and religious movements, engage in transnational networking and fuel religious activism.

Ironically, while participating in global cultural process, media enables protagonists to challenge those processes through a process of selection, establishment of parameters of relevance and creatively forging new products. Religious expression cannot be heuristic but must perforce engage popular culture. Pentecostals have been immensely creative in popular cultural production. They have demonstrated that a sanitized approach could be defeatist. By privileging evangelism (even if it causes reaffiliation), Pentecostals have been creative in their response to popular culture: use of print, electronic, audio, visual and oral media. Scholars still to understudy the colorful linguistic and symbolic productions of the movement, especially in their use of diatribe. But there must be attention to the fact that media technology can be both a resource and challenge. This reflection has focused on music and dance as pathways for exploring Pentecostal cultural discourse and negotiation of the rocks and sharks in popular culture. On the whole, African Pentecostalism has changed tremendously as it constantly re-tools to meet the greatest challenge of the contemporary period, namely how to use media as an instrument for engaging the structures of society in a holistic mission.