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Holiness Historiography
As a Theological Framework for Understanding the Emergence of Christianity in Africa

by Robert K. Lang'at

Abstract

There is a scandal in African Christian historiography that has faded from the eyes of church historians and theologians in regard to the pietistic/holiness reading of African Christianity, which itself provides the most comprehensive framework for understanding mainline-evangelical-pentecostal-charismatic Christianities. This article argues that the doctrine and experience of holiness is central to understanding the process that has brought African Christianity to where it is today. This research sketches the twin challenges that face a study of the doctrine of holiness as a theological framework for understanding the emergence of Christianity in Africa: (1) those that are historiographical; and (2) those that are essentially historical. It also provides a clear demonstration of the tenacity of a holiness/revivalist reading of African Protestant Christianity.

Introduction

It is now a truism that "the center of gravity of Christianity" has shifted from the northern to the southern hemisphere with Africa playing a vital role in that transition. Andrew F. Walls in the 1970s was one of the first chroniclers to articulate this shift in the history of Christianity and to bring it to bear on church history texts. Walls underscored that this change implied that theology in the third-world was "worth caring about." In his most recent re-articulation, Walls has once again pointed out that "we have to regard African Christianity as potentially the representative Christianity of the twenty-first century."[1]

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[1] A.F. Walls, "Towards an Understanding of Africa's Place in Christian History," in *Religion in a Pluralistic Society*, ed. J.S. Pobee (Leiden: Brill, 1976), 180-182. Walls' later shows that he considers African Christianity axiomatic for understanding the nature of global Christianity in the twenty-first century. See "Africa in Christian History: Retrospect and Prospect," in *The Cross-Cultural Process in Christian History* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 2002), 85. Succeeding scholars have built their arguments on the significance of third-world Christianity in general, and Africa in particular, on Walls' thesis. These include William A. Dyrness, *Learning About Theology from the Third World* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1990), 13, who claims that the third-world church overshadows that of the west. Philip Jenkins' provocative book, *The Next Christendom: The Coming Global Christianity* (New York: Oxford, 2002), 3, discusses Christianity "going south," while A.H. Anderson's *African Reformation: African Initiated Christianity in the Twentieth Century* (Asmara: Africa World Press, 2001), 7, extends the same thesis to claim that ferment in the AICs, as "a major force in African Christianity today," is "one manifestation of shifting of the center of gravity of Christianity in the twentieth century from the North to the South."

But how are we to understand the historical and theological development of Christianity in Africa? If we were to choose one theological theme whose inner dynamics would help unravel the outward manifestations of Christianity in Africa in all its successes and failures, which doctrine, if any, would provide a better, integrated, interpretive framework for this "new Christendom?" This paper seeks to employ the often academically dismissed doctrine of holiness as an integrated, interpretive framework. But this essay bears in mind that there has been no absolute theological uniformity in the expression of holiness throughout the African continent and that the doctrine of holiness is not the only overarching framework that would serve interpretive purposes.

1. The Definition and Origin of the Term "Holiness"

The term holiness, or the experience of sanctification, is a religious term that is understood in a variety of ways by different religious movements. The term as used in this research is defined as a Christian spiritual experience related to, but distinct from, and subsequent to, "justification" as understood by a number of renewal movements in early church history such as monastic movements in antiquity, religious orders of the medieval period, the pietistic revivals of the eighteenth century and, most clearly for the modern period, by John Wesley in his twofold conception of soteriology.[2] The term "holiness" is elusive because it refers to a religious experience that the Bible and theologians conceptualize in a variety of ways. It has been referred to as the second work of grace, the second blessing, baptism with the Holy Spirit, full salvation, walking with God, Christian perfection, crucifixion of the flesh, purity of heart, cleansing, consecration and other synonyms. It takes a nuanced investigation to trace a particular thread of holiness interpretation through various writings and individual proponents. This doctrine has influenced and spawned other movements beyond Methodism, particularly in Africa. Though polemics tend to project theological distance from original Methodist understanding, the overall structure of the doctrine and the concretization of this reality in various contexts take similar patterns of manifestations. The doctrine has been perpetuated historically by groups of evangelical revivalists that see themselves as part of "the Holiness Movement." The latter is understood as a revival movement that grew, inspired by John Wesley's

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[2] See John Wesley, *Plain Account of Christian Perfection* (London: Epworth Press, 1952), 76. A number of scholars have analyzed the development of the doctrine of holiness in American Methodism. Though some of them see modification of the doctrine, particularly the late nineteenth century shift from the Wesleyan cleansing motifs to the Pentecostal "baptism of the Spirit" language, the essential components of a holiness theology that demands a religious experience in addition to original conversion did not change. The best study of holiness within American Methodism so far is that of John L. Peters, *Christian Perfection in American Methodism* (Salem, OR: Schmul Publishing Co., 1995).

teachings on Christian perfection or holiness, out of American Methodism from the 1830s and that influenced the larger Protestant world globally. It developed into two major subdivisions by the end of the nineteenth century. These two may be defined as "Wesleyan holiness," emphasizing instantaneous "entire sanctification" and "Keswick holiness," stressing gradual sanctification or simply "the higher life." Melvin E. Dieter has rightly alluded to the kinship of the two and thus argued:

> The postwar revival of holiness evangelism by the Palmers in England and Scotland after the American Revival of 1858 had done as much as anything else to prepare the way for the great explosion of the doctrine across England and the Continent in the 1870s. The revival meeting of James Caughey, the Methodist holiness evangelist, and the visits of American evangelists during the Second Great Awakening also helped to spread the dominantly Wesleyan perfectionist revivalism from the American movement across the British Isles.[3]

Several scholars have traced the theological roots of Pentecostalism to the radicalization of holiness theology. Donald W. Dayton has argued that the late nineteenth century triumph of Spirit baptism within the holiness movement paved way for the emergence of the Pentecostal movement. Vinson Synan's research affirms that in "the decades of the 1890s a major shift began to appear among many holiness leaders emphasizing the 'Pentecostal' aspects of the second blessing." African Pentecostalism, which often took the form of African Initiated Churches (AICs), drew its holiness theological heritage directly from American or western Pentecostalism or through radicalization of Keswick and Wesleyan/Methodist holiness theology in the African context.[4] This revivalist/holiness conception of the theology of the AICs has been identified by a number of scholars and in a variety of cases around the African continent. The current investigation is well served here by Charles E. Jones' 1987 bibliography in *Black Holiness: A Guide to the Study of Black Participation in Wesleyan Perfectionist and Glossolalic Pentecostal Movements*.[5] Jones used the facts of the segregative aspects of racism in the

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[3] Melvin E. Dieter, *The Holiness Revivals of the Nineteenth Century* (Lanham: Scarecrow Press, 1996), 128. The historical fact that African Wesleyan holiness revivals share commonalities with African Keswick holiness revivals warrants an integrated interpretive framework. Keswick holiness conventions that stirred a global holiness movement were in turn catalyzed by the American holiness revivalism of the late 19th century.

[4] See D. W. Dayton, *Theological Roots of Pentecostalism* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1987), 87-113 and Vinson Synan, *The Holiness-Pentecostal Tradition: Charismatic Movements in the Twentieth Century* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 50.

[5] Charles E. Jones, *Black Holiness: A Guide to the Study of Black Participation in Wesleyan Perfectionist and Glossolalia Pentecostal Movements* (Lanham: Scarecrow Press, 1987).

United States and colonialism in Africa as the basis of extracting black related materials from his previous bibliographic compendium, *A Guide to the Study of the Pentecostal Movement* (1983) and his monumental work, *A Guide to the Study of the Holiness Movement* (1974).[6] On one key point would Jones see the rationale for including what he termed "leader-centered bodies in Africa," which we are referring to here as "the African initiated churches." He has rightly stated that despite the fact that the "leader-centered" groups in Africa have "received much scorn from other black Holiness churches," their emphasis "on emotional experience, faith healing, and puritanical standards of behavior justifies their inclusion" in *Black Holiness*.[7] This research, therefore, intends to demonstrate the pervasive nature of the holiness concept through African Protestant Christianity.

2. Ecclesiastical Historiographies of Africa

Those who struggle with nationalist versus missionary historiographies and issues of "indigeneity" prefer to emphasize African initiatives in Christianity at the expense of historical theological expressions during the colonial era. This represents the most dominant church historiographical method that focuses on African initiative and socio-political aspects of Christianity. Akin to this spirit was an argument represented in this statement: "an African church history that begins with missionary institutions - and especially those with missionary initiatives - is bound to stress the foreign nature of the faith."[8] This methodological proposal takes the poor as normative for theologizing, minimizes the role of western theologies in alleviating poverty, and sees the meeting point between Christianity and the African people as an encounter between two equally viable cosmologies. The starting point for African church history, therefore, is taken as "Africa and its cultures."[9] While the pursuit of the

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[6] Charles E. Jones, *A Guide to the Study of the Pentecostal Movement* (Lanham: Scarecrow Press, 1983) and *A Guide to the Study of the Holiness Movement* (Lanham: Scarecrow Press, 1974).

[7] Jones, *Black Holiness*, 188.

[8] Paul Jenkins, "The Roots of Church History: Some Polemical Thoughts," *International Bulleting of Missionary Research* 10, no. 2 (April 1986): 67-71. This view has provoked vigorous debate. Sanneh has called for western missions to be "unhinged from the narrow colonial context and placed in the much wider setting of African culture, including the religious background of the African societies." in "The Horizontal and the Vertical in Mission: An African Perspective," in *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 7, no. 24 (Oct. 1983): 165-171.

[9] Ogbu U. Kalu, "Church Presence in Africa: A Historical Analysis of the Evangelization Process," *African Theology En Route*, eds. Kofi Appiah-Kubi and Sergio Torres (New York: Orbis, 1979), 14. In Kalu's latest work, he takes "cognizance that nationalist historiography objects to predicting of African periodization on European events," but using a proverb that "the cricket whose son is roasted is part of the tradition of roasting crickets," he seems to have ameliorated some of his earlier sharper arguments. While discussing evangelical revivals and their fruit toward African missions, he thus notes

under-represented African initiatives in missions is noble in itself, in the move toward establishing "authentically" African Christian thought, theological themes that undergirded the missionary venture are often either ignored or dismissed because of their western origins. One of the major casualties of these reductionistic theories is the doctrine of holiness and its associated dynamics as they were implanted in Africa. Because of the inadequate "treatment of the dogmatic and symbolic content of the Revival movement in missionary Protestantism," as argued by Ranger,[10] the theme of holiness is given underdeveloped introductory acknowledgments and mentioned only in passing, often in derision, within larger frameworks of African ecclesiastical histories.

These historiographical problems are evident not only in the way African church history has been recorded but in the way a number of African theologians have prescribed theological methodologies for Africa. Three African theologians, Kwesi Dickson, John S. Pobee, and Itumeleng Mosala who have attempted to dialogue with evangelical piety in their theological proposals, are employed here to demonstrate the validity of the above observation. Dickson has argued against what he understood as imposition of a "western" form of soteriology. For him, this is exemplified in the fact that "the classical Protestant theological sequence of faith leading to salvation, followed by works and sanctification, which was the basis of missionary teaching," implied that "chronological distinctions exist between 'the so-called' stages in the Christian life". He viewed this as "highly questionable" because, for him, "in Africa life is seen as a whole, undifferentiated into religion and life, into life in the spirit and in the flesh; it would be alien to the African to cut up life into watertight compartments." The delineation of discipleship into steps of growth in grace, for Dickson, would be suspected for potentially leading to "serious contradictions in the African convert's life".[11] There was little attempt, in Dickson's corpus, to show how Wesley understood how the *ordo salutis* works, which may not have been as "compartmentalized" as Dickson would have us believe. Secondly, to argue that these soteriogical categories paved the way to a "compartmentalized world-view," and that Africans were entirely holistic in their world-view are contestable. In natural life, also mirrored in rituals and spiritual ceremonies, Africans understand life to be divided into steps that, though continuous, are each distinct from the other. These stages

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that as in the case of the watershed Berlin Conference of 1884-1885 and the First World War, "Africa was involved in all these." Ogbu U. Kalu, *Power, Poverty and Prayer: The Challenges of Poverty and Pluralism in African Christianity, 1960-1996* (New York: Peter Lang, 2000), 12-16.

[10] T. O. Ranger and John Weller, eds. *Themes in the Christian History of Central Africa* (Los Angeles: University of California, 1975).

[11] Kwesi A. Dickson, *Theology in Africa* (New York: Orbis Books, 1984), 96.

of growth begin with birth, puberty rites, marriage and death. Interestingly, the Methodist Church in Ghana, where Dickson comes from, actually had a head start with a commission in the 1940s recommending that the Bible message be adapted to all stages of growth as understood by Africans.[12]

In an article congenial to our specific theme of piety, Dickson has documented that Methodist missionaries and preachers in Ghana gave "much attention to Christian Perfection [and] personal journals and letters witness to their having been very conscious of this teaching as part of Methodist heritage." This historical reality, however, was perceived not to have constituted a positive development because of two issues raised by Dickson. These issues were stated as "that the Methodist preaching and teaching have not seemed to constitute a potential force for change in the context of Africa" and that "the edge of the teaching [of holiness] was blunted by the fact that the church tried to separate its members from the particularity of their circumstances."[13]

Itumeleng Mosala of South Africa is another contemporary African Methodist scholar who has concluded that the holiness or pietistic theology was basically irrelevant for any positive interpretation of Christianity in Africa. He has positively appropriated Wesley's theology as emphasizing individual self-worth. He has, nevertheless, been quick to say that Methodism does not provide "an alternative ideological framework in which that self-worth can be made a reality." Mosala borrowed deeply from Latin American and American Black liberation theology. It was in this process that Mosala basically saw John Wesley's theology of sanctification as insisting on the "sinfulness of the poor and the oppressed" thus fostering a "deceptive and oppressive egalitarianism." Wesley's "spiritual egalitarianism remained ideologically circumscribed and a prisoner of his conservative politics." Mosala, who has become convinced that black theology is "the theological discourse that has drawn attention to black people, their culture, history and struggles as a crucial part of the process of sanctifying the world," has come to the conclusion that South African Methodism had failed, "due to inability of the dominant Methodist doctrine to

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[12] I Will Build My Church: "The Report of the Commission Appointed by the Synod of the Methodist Church, Gold Coast, to Consider the Life of the Church" (St. Albans: The Campfield Press, 1948), 32. A critical analysis of this document has been done by F.L. Bartels who commented that this report was largely inspired by Maurice B. Taylor who was the chairman of the synod; See F.L. Bartels, *The Roots of Ghana Methodism* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1965), 218-222 and Robert T. Parsons, *The Churches and Ghana Society 1918-1955: A Survey of Three Protestant Mission Societies and the African Church which They Established in their Assistance to Societary Development* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1963), 156.

[13] Kwesi A. Dickson, "The Methodist Witness and the African Situation," in *Sanctification and Liberation,* ed. Theodore Runyon (Nashville: Abingdon, 1981), 198.

accommodate liberative theological practice." For him, the only way to enable Methodist theology to become a "liberative discourse" is to relocate it ideologically.[14] This is definitely a prescriptive theological historiography that seeks to point to the future rather than present accurate historical analysis.

A similar trend is clear in the interpretation of the East African Revival by scholars such as John Martin who have argued that in Rwanda eight out of ten people claimed to be Christian yet the country was beleaguered by ethnic purification in the same manner as the former Yugoslavia. These massacres, according to him, could be blamed on the shortcomings of the East African Revival Movement and missionary legacies for lacking social engagement, limiting stress on human rights, failing to give systematic instructions, retreating to "apolitical" pietism that substituted testimonies for Biblical instruction and for emphasizing private morality over structural evil or corporate sin. He has also asserted that these omissions led to naive obedience and 'cheap grace' "which did not convert racial bias, the feelings of ethnic superiority or the long-held grudges of one [group] of people against another."[15] What Martin chose not to discuss is whether ethnic clashes in this Central African region were not, in themselves, an advocacy of tribal ethos that were in essence going against the inter-tribal/inter-racial nature of the revivals.[16] One also wonders whether any systematic theological teachings would have averted ethnic cleansing in Rwanda any more than the experiential unity espoused by the revivals could have done. It must also be granted that the complex components of the holiness ethos can be skewed and abused as oppressive structures when taken in a non-holistic manner. Martin's critique cannot be the final word on revivalism and ethnic conflicts in Africa. The situation was much more complex and the doctrine of ethnic cleansing was, as a matter of fact, an antithesis to the doctrines of the revival, no matter how weak the latter were.[17] This writer finds Meg Guillebaud's

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[14] Itumeleng Mosala, "Wesley Read from the Experience of Social and Political Deprivation in South Africa," *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa* 68, no. 1 (September 1989): 86-90.

[15] John Martin, "Revivalism and Ethnic Conflict," in *Transformation: An International Dialogue on Mission and Ethics* (April/June 1995): 1-2.

[16] Sentiments similar to those of Martin have been stated by Mercy Amba Oduyoye. The missionary policy of "come apart and be saved," according to Oduyoye has resulted in enclaves called "Christian villages" which tended to run away from the social dimension of Christianity. See *Hearing and Knowing: Theological Reflections on Christianity in Africa* (New York: Orbis Books, 1986), 40. See also the writings of a leading East African novelist, Ngugi Wa Thiongo, *A Grain of Wheat*, in which one finds the holiness "apocalyptic version of the gospel" castigated for being "irrelevant to the struggle for political and economic independence," and for merely playing "into the hands of British colonialism."

[17] We have to consider, for instance, the "The Hutu Ten Commandments" enacted at the heights of political tensions, with an anti-Tutsi agenda on every point, as the very

analysis of the situation in Rwanda more convincing, because it recognizes that though missionaries put much emphasis on evangelism, social dimensions of the gospel were not neglected. According to Guillebaud, who also argues that the Revival was at low ebb in the Rwandan church immediately before the 1994 genocide, during its zenith "one deep-rooted evil which was tackled in the Revival was the evil of racism ... There was no room for divisions on ethnic grounds - there was no Hutu or Tutsi, Black or White, Burundians or Rwandan."[18] Even those who argue against the colonial abuse of the revivalist doctrines find in the former themes that catered for both Europeans and Africans. Despite his earlier disparaging of revivalism as a colonial tool a leading African novelist, Ngugi Wa Thiongo, has reappraised the East African Revival as being racially integrated, for influencing the spiritual formation of most of the African clergy of the major Protestant denominations and for having virtually no bureaucracy.[19]

Klaus Fiedler, a contemporary German theologian with a more positive appropriation of holiness as instrumental for missionary inspiration, has opined that holiness was a revival doctrine intended to criticize established church structures. As there were no such structures to criticize yet in Africa, missionaries, consequently, were understood to have found it unnecessary to focus on holiness during the early stages of their missionary work. Fiedler's study is based on three problematic presuppositions that saw the message as basically suited only for the missionary's homeland. Fiedler viewed holiness in Africa through the eyes of loosely defined "faith missions" principles that shut off "classical missions," and other denominational agencies, even within faith mission parameters. The missionaries therefore ''did not try to build holiness structures in Africa they were used to, such as conferences, camp meetings, and fellowship groups ... translate holiness literature into African languages, nor did they write their own holiness literature in such languages." Implicit in this thesis was a dual view of missions where "the larger holiness missions" are thought to have sought "to evangelize (non-European) non Christians and to spread the holiness message among the (European) Christians."[20]

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anti-thesis of the trans-ethnic community that the East African Revival had clearly articulated. See Hugh McCullum, *The Angels Have Left Us: The Rwanda Tragedy and the Churches* (Geneva: WCC Publications, 1990), 114-115.

[18] Meg Guillebaud, *Rwanda: The Land God Forgot? Revival, Genocide and Hope* (London: Monarch Books, 2002), 324. Meg Guillebaud is a third generation missionary in Rwanda. Her parents and grandparents were bred within the revivalist traditions and had major roles in the emergence of the EAR. Her book, based on family records, is a candid analysis of the relationship between the genocide and Revival.

[19] Ngugi Wa Thiongo, *Weep Not Child* (London: Heinemann, 1964), 26.

[20] Klaus Fiedler's 1991 D.Th. dissertation at the University of Heidelberg has been published as *The Story of Faith Missions: From Hudson Taylor to the Present Day Africa* (Oxford: Regnum Books, 1994), 53, 247-248.

3. The East Africa Revival and Holiness

In the twentieth century, particularly from the 1930s to the 1950s, there was a strong wave of revivals that swept the entire African continent such that the entire region rightly deserved to be referred to as "burnt-over", as if by the fire of the Holy Spirit. The most well-researched of these spectacular occurrences in the Sub-Saharan Protestant Churches is the influential East African Revival of the 1930s through the 1960s. This Revival spread religious fervor throughout mainline, evangelical and Pentecostal churches, as well as African Initiated Churches within the region.[21] The actual place and circumstances surrounding the beginning of the 1930s revivals, however, may not be well described by a monolithic interpretation that stresses an Anglican preference. Just as the emergence of Keswick in England led to a host of sanctificationist missionaries that went with the Church Missionary Society (Anglican) and numerous others that went with faith missions (non-Anglican missions such as Africa Inland Mission and China Inland Mission), the East African Revival depicts an ecumenical phenomenon that crossed denominational boundaries.

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[21] Jocelyn Murray has formulated a useful bibliography of studies on the movement through 1976. See Jocelyn Murray, "A Bibliography on the East African Revival Movement," *Journal of Religion in Africa* 8, no. 2 (1976): 144-147. First, she has shown that a number of European missionaries, particularly doctors, were involved. Bill Butler, a CMS missionary in Ruanda, outlined his involvement in the revival in his autobiography, *Hill Ablaze* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1976). See also Patricia St. John's *Man of Two Worlds: The Life of Ken Moynagh* (Worthing, Sussex: Henry E. Walker, 1976), a memoir of a missionary doctor's involvement in the revival. Second, Murray bibliography provides an ethnically diverse list of Africans who were involved in the revival. Joe E. Church, a C.M.S missionary doctor in Uganda, who was a key initiator of the EAR, authored several of them. His biographies are *Awake! Awake! The Story of Blasio Kigozi* (Kampala: Uganda Bookshop Press, 1937), the story of Yona Kanamuzeyi of Ruanda as *Forgive Them: The Story of an African Martyr* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1966), and *William Nagenda – A Great Lover of Jesus* (London: C.M.S. Ruanda Mission, 1973). Church's autobiography, *Quest for the Highest*, was published in 1981. Wanyoike Ernest in *An African Pastor: The Life and Work of Rev. Wanyoike Kamawe 1888-1970* (Nairobi: East African Publishing House, 1974) discusses the role of the revival in the life of this Kenyan minister. Third, Murray has shown that the revival was influencial during the Mau Mau upheaval and the State of Emergency declared by the colonial regime in the Kenya of 1952. Her list includes Bildad Kaggia's *Roots of Freedom 1921-1963* (Nairobi: East African Publishing House, 1975) which discusses the conversion of this freedom fighter in the East African Revival. Edith M. Wiseman's *Kikuyu Martyr* (London: Highway Press, 1958) describes the lives of Kikuyu Christians influenced by the revival and who were killed during the Emergency. Fourth, she has also included a Swahili hymn book KITABU CHA KUSIFU (Nairobi: Majestic Printing Works, 1972), which has the revival anthem, *Tukutendereza,* adopted from Keswick hymnody. For a view of the EAR during Idi Amin's regime in Uganda see Kefa A. Sempangi*, A Distant Grief* (Ventura, Ca: Regal Books, 1979).

When other studies of the East African Revival, mostly among mainline Anglican, Lutheran, Methodist and Presbyterian churches,[22] are added to the scarcely touched primary materials of the smaller Wesleyan holiness missions operating in the same location, a complex and yet very compelling holiness picture of East African Christianity is revealed. A Protestant church that was most unreceptive to the revival was the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania. With the arrival of Bishop Bengt Sundkler, however, this church welcomed the revival and Sundkler himself made significant theological contributions to the revival. Josiah Kibira, one of the key leaders of the church, has stated that despite some weakness, the revival saved the Church from "spiritual decay."[23]

The kaleidoscopic nature of this revival was demonstrated by the presence of people of different social levels and from various religious backgrounds. There was a strong feeling that this movement would be a vehicle for church unity in East Africa. In Ruanda-Urundi (as these central African nations were known then), the formation of the Protestant Alliance was spawned by a desire to recapture the unity of New Testament Christianity. Joe Church's words at the close of the Muyebe Alliance Conference in 1942, illustrates this desire more vividly:

> The final Breaking of Bread taken by a Methodist, a Baptist and a C. of E. layman, with Africans and missionaries seated around a big room, was the nearest we probably will ever get to those earliest days of Christianity, after the Love Feast was instituted by our Lord.[24]

In Kenya, "The Deed of Foundation and the Deed of Church Order" of the British-related Methodist Church has paid homage to the doctrine of holiness but for a long time most of the Methodist adherents in the country have "forgotten" this heritage. The irony is that the Methodists' theological

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[22] Festo Kivengere, who emerged as a key exponent of Keswick holiness in East Africa and perhaps the most renowned product of the East Africa Revival, indicated in an interview that though "the Lutherans, found it hard to move fast at first," the revivals have not only spread geographically to many areas of Uganda, Tanzania, Zaire, Ghana, Ethiopia, Ruanda, Burundi and Malawi but that even the strength and sustenance of the Kenyan church during the Mau Mau nationalist uprisings was due to "Presbyterians, Methodists, Anglicans and others" who had been blessed through the revivals. Of course, the Methodists of Kenya at this point were not drawing their sanctificationist doctrines direct from their founder John Wesley but as mediated through the Keswick movement. See Festa Kivengere, "The Revival That Was and Is: An Interview with Festo Kivengere/' *Christianity Today* 20, no. 17 (May 21, 1976): 10-14.

[23] Josiah Kibira, “The Church in Buhaya: Crossing Frontiers” in *The Church Crossing Frontiers: Essays on the Nature of Mission in Honor of Bengt Sundkler,* eds. Peter Beyerhaus and Carl F. Hallencreutz (Uppsala: Almqvist & Wiksells, 1969), 189-205.

[24] J.E. Church, *Quest for the Highest* (Exeter: Paternoster Press, 1981), 194.

self-understanding in Kenya derives holiness from the Keswick wave through the East African Revival and not from their original Wesleyan roots implied in "The Deed." Methodist revivalists sponsored the famous Kaaga Convention in April 1953. This was modeled after the Keswick Convention and was held in the middle of the State of Emergency declared by the colonial government in response to political agitations. Fred W. Valender, a Methodist missionary in Meru, who had himself become one of the revivalists, indicates that the movement arrived from Rwanda into Meruland in the late 1940s.[25]

The Free Methodist Church is one of the earliest holiness breakaways from the Methodist Episcopal Church in the American context. John Haley's thesis, corroborated through both Free Methodist and Anglican original documents, has it that the East African Revival began at Free Methodist stations in Muyebe in Ruanda-Urundi when the missionaries themselves began to pray and confess their own lack of spiritual grace. They confessed their divisions, their spiritual coldness, and their materialistic ambitions. Soon "the native teachers and evangelists, and then the lay members also began to pray" for an experience of the same reality. Then from here, according to Haley, "this revival has spread to other missions in the territory and up into Uganda." This Free Methodist missionary, as reported by Meg Guillebaud, "emphasized the need for the holiness of God to be reflected by holy living," and used these perfectionist principles to negotiate unity among the missionaries of the CMS who had been deeply divided over the revivals. Smith reports that in June 1945, as a result of Haley's prayers, "God's love was shed abroad" in their hearts by the Holy Spirit. The Wesleyan interpreters of the East African Revival tell us that

> in 1946 more than one missionary expressed deep gratitude to J.W. Haley for bringing the missionaries together in real prayer for a revival. One hears Anglicans, Baptists and Lutherans pray together for a revival by the power of the Holy Spirit in good old-fashioned Methodist terms.[26]

The "Ruanda Movement," as the East African Revival was commonly called in Kenya in the 1930s, reshaped the theologies and ecclesiologies not only of the Methodist/Wesleyan and Anglican churches but also, least

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[25] Deed of Foundation and Deed of Church Order for the Constituting of The Conference of the Methodist Church in Kenya (London: Waterlow & Sons, 1966). See also Fred W. Valender, *A Mustard Seed: How it Grew into the Methodist Church in Kenya* (Seaton Delaval: Christian Aid, 1987), 62-76.

[26] The quotations above can be found in Byron S. Lamson, *Lights in the World: Free Methodist Missionary Work* (Winona Lake: General Missionary Board, 1951), 168-173 and Guillebaud, *Rwanda: The Land God Forgot?* 115.

expected, of the Presbyterian Church. There is, therefore, a significant body of research that has recently begun to investigate the extent to which the revival influenced East African Presbyterianism. This church draws the large bulk of its membership from the Kikuyu ethnic group. As the church was facing numerical decline and reversion to "drunkenness, filthy customs and even to polygamous life," the revival introduced the holiness doctrine of "the power that cleanses sin and enables one to experience victory."

The concept of cleansing, as David Githii has articulated, resonated well with this context, and many were "eager to accept the message of being washed by the blood of Christ" because, "after all, the concept of cleansing power of the blood from all kinds of guilt had deep roots among the Kikuyu and many other tribes in Kenya."[27] But it was also a decisive switch of authority and symbolism from animal sacrifices to the ultimate sacrifice of Christ. This explains why there was a significant conflict between the Mau Mau oaths and the revivalist ethos. The Kikuyu martyrs of this period would die pronouncing to the Mau Mau advocates: "I have drunk the blood of Christ, how can I take your blood of goats?"

Derek Peterson's study of the Tumutumu Presbyterian Church, though done with a reductionistic sociological view of the revival that saw the East African Revival as a way that "Gikuyu women and men talked about moral and economic change," also revealed the appropriation of the sanctification motifs in an African context. Because the Gikuyu society knew that sorcerers sucked the life out of their neighbors, adding to their own wealth at the expense of others, the "Revivalists [in this context] thought their salvation cleansed them of the pollution of sorcery ... [and the] Revivalists' public confession of sin looked like cleansing ceremonies." After token resistance, Chogoria (1948), North Kiambu (1949), and other presbyteries incorporated "the Movement” within their own church lives. Consequently, as MacPherson has argued, "the church and the revival came to terms" through a mutual agreement where "the need of the church to accept revival and for the revival movement when it comes to operate within the church" was acknowledged. To a significant extent, "the Revival made an essential contribution to the life of the Presbyterian Church in Kenya, and to all the churches in East Africa which came to terms with it."[28]

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[27] David M. Githii, *The East African Revival Movement and the Presbyterian Church of East Africa*. Th. M. Thesis, Fuller Theological Seminary, 1992, 39-45.

[28] Derek Peterson, "Wordy Women: Gender Trouble and the Oral Politics of the East African Revival in Northern Gikuyuland," *Journal of African History* 42 (2001): 469-489; E. N. Wanyoike, *An African Pastor* (Nairobi: East African Publishing House, 1974), 196; and R. MacPherson, *The Presbyterian Omrdl in Kenya* (Nairobi: The Presbyterian

4. Revivalist Versus Africanist Paradigms: AICs and Holiness

There is a general assumption in the historiography of much of African Christianity that African Initiated Churches were founded as reactionary, sectarian, anti-missionary, anti-white, Africanist and rebellious movements that sought to supplant missionary theologies through a reversion to African cultural practices, or a revival of 'tribal *zeitgist*' as David Barrett would argue. This, consequently, has led to denigration of their theology as an attempt to move away from 'orthodox Christianity' to the African traditional past. The former Anglican Archbishop of Cape Town, Desmond Tutu, recalled the days when "the so-called 'mainline' churches looked down disdainfully at the odd phenomenon called independent or indigenous churches." They were known as movements "with hardly any decent theology, often led by illiterate persons, with an odd mix of clearly pagan beliefs," and were at best syncretistic and heretical.[29] All these caricatures may or may not have been accurate generalizations. They were at best misleading and have precipitated much propaganda from the 'mainstream' churches, including from respected scholars, against those on the fringes of African Christianity. But, even those who have been attempting to positively appropriate the AIC theology, perhaps out of a genuine effort to establish an authentic African religious experience, have propagated the Africanist paradigm. Scholars such as Linda E. Thomas, for instance, tend to emphasis the African cultural origins of AIC theology.[30] The pejorative aspect is, however, changing partly because the center of

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Church of East Africa, 1970), 126. MacPherson reports that "in the late 1940s, the Revival added a new dimension to the quest for union as was thus understood to foster genuine indigenous expression of Christianity in East African forms of worship, discipline and organization." This was celebrated as undercutting the perpetuation of forms developed by various Churches overseas and imported into Kenya by the missionaries. The fellowship and catholicity engendered by the movement continued in the "post-Revival Church." In 1951, a small clique of ministers began to contemplate church union. Their efforts culminated in the famous Kirk Session held at St. Andrews' Presbyterian Church in Nairobi which made the proposal that "there should be one church (in East Africa) with no distinction on race or color." The revival was, therefore, at once a solution to the growing colonial racism and to the perennial tribalism. Welbourn saw this movement as "the only religious society which genuinely passed tribal boundaries" and as "one of the most vital Christian movements in East Africa". A study of the official doctrinal documents of the Presbyterian Church of East Africa (PCEA), therefore, may not yield much of a holiness disposition. There was, however, a decisive holiness influence through the East African Revival to the extent that this church's official decision making organs were thoroughly informed by this piety. See R. MacPherson, *The Presbyterian Church in Kenya* (Nairobi: The Presbyterian Church of East Africa), 1970, 126.

[29] Tutu, the forward to *Afro-Christianity at the Grassroots: Its Dynamics and Strategies*, ed. G. C. Oosthuizen, M. C. Kitshoff and S. W. D. Dube (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1994), vii.

[30] Linda E. Thomas, *Under the Canopy: Ritual Process and Spiritual Resilience in South Africa* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1999).

gravity of Christianity has not only shifted from the northern to the southern hemisphere, but has shifted within the south itself, from the mission-founded churches to the African initiated bodies as argued by Philip Jenkins. He has argued quite convincingly that:

> To use the language of revivalism, Africa has now for over a century been engaged in a continuous encounter with Pentecostal fires, and the independent churches have been the most obvious products of that highly creative process. In American terms, much of the continent has served as one vast, burnt-over district.[31]

This shift in African Christianity is so radical that an African church leader who has published on holiness does not come from the holiness movement as we traditionally know it, but from an African initiated church which grew out of the *Aladura* movement of Western Africa. This is William F. Kumuyi, the founding pastor of the Deeper Life Bible Church in Lagos, Nigeria, the largest single congregation in Africa.[32] While there are definite complexities and no simplistic proposal can be made that applies in every case, there is compelling evidence that suggest some AICs are no more 'African Indigenous Churches' than the Church of the Nazarene is an 'American Indigenous Church'.

Did African independence always produce independence in personnel and in theology? Was an African initiative always synonymous with indigeneity and always equal to a rejection of the 'foreignness' of the gospel? Recent research on indigenous movements elsewhere has shown that having indigenous leadership or being an indigenous initiative was not always synonymous with indigenous theology. David Bundy has offered a useful review of Mark R. Mullins, *Christianity Made in Japan: A Study of Indigenous Movements* which does two major things. The first is expanding "Wesleyan/holiness and Pentecostal" hermeneutical categories in Japan beyond the "foreign dependent and/or foreign mission founded institutions" to include "indigenous movements as well." The second expands Mullins' thesis to other regions of the world thus revealing "that 'indigeneity' is a much more complex factor than has been generally recognized." Thus Bundy rightfully says that there are Wesleyan/holiness, Keswick Holiness, and traditional Pentecostal aspects to the development of the African Initiated Churches. Although Mullins' sociological studies of indigenous Christianity in Japan tilt toward the concept that these movements were founded by "charismatic individuals who accept the Christian faith but reject the missionary carriers and their 'Western' and 'doctrinal' understanding of religion," a significant portion of the movements he documented in Japan grew out of the holiness revivals within missionary

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[31] Philip Jenkins, *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 51.

[32] See William F. Kumuyi, *Holiness Made Easy* (Lagos: Zoe Publishing Co., 1980).

structures and carried similar visions into the new.[33]

Andrew Walls has noted that "perhaps the African Independent Churches, so often considered as 'a place to feel at home' as indigenizing, even as syncretizing movements, should also be looked on sometimes as radically reforming biblicist movements, the Anabaptists of Africa."[34] They were an "African Reformation" as mirrored in Allan Anderson's more recent work.[35] Walls' and Anderson's assessments of AICs compare them to the Reformation rather than to revivals. But my argument here is closer to that of scholars like Akin J. Omoyajoyo who sees AICs as a reflection of "the Montanist Movement of the early church or as I may add 'the Pietists of Africa', indeed the ultimate development of the revivalist theology in this fertile African soil."[36]

In order to understand the theology of the AICs one must suspend any radical delineation between their theology and that of the mainline or historical churches. Kwame Bediako has given a well-articulated critique of the mainline/historical church view of the AICs represented by scholars such as Christian Baeta who have seen these groups as "a grave menace to the normal development of a healthy Christianity" in the continent.[37] We, therefore, concur with Bediako's analysis that:

> The distinctions between the historical churches, of missionary origin, and the independent or African instituted churches, have since become less meaningful, as features which were once thought to be characteristic of the latter have been found to be shared also by the former. The significance of the independents, therefore, has been that they pointed to the direction in which broad sections of African Christianity were moving, and so they testified to the existence of some generalized trends in the African response to the Christian faith in African terms.[38]

It is not only from the mainline denominations that the AICs tend to be

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[33] See Mark R. Mullins, *Christianity Made in Japan: A Study of Indigenous Movements* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1998), 32. See also David Bundy, "Defining Wesleyan/Holiness Identity: The Historiographical, Theological, and Missiological Challenges Posed by Indigenous Traditions, The Case of Japan," *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 35, no. 1 (Spring, 2000), 256-261.

[34] Walls, "Africa's Place in Christianity," *Religion in a Pluralistic Society*, 188-189.

[35] Allan H. Anderson, *African Reformation: African Initiated Christianity in the Twentieth Century* (Asmara: Africa World Press, 2001).

[36] Note the title for Anderson's book *African Reformation*, and Akin J. Omoyajowo, "An African Expression of Christianity," in *The Challenge of Black Theology in South Africa* edited by Basil Moore (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1973), 90.

[37] Christian G. Baeta, *Prophetism in Ghana: A Study of some Spiritual Churches* (London: SCM Press, 1962), ix; Kwame Bediako, *Christianity in Africa: The Renewal of a Non-Western Religion* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1995), 65-66.

[38] Bediako, *Christianity in Africa,* 66.

dissociated. There have been concerted efforts, perhaps out of embarrassment from being associated with these “Bantu movements,” to dissociate them from what Donald Dayton has called their “distant cousins,”[39] American Pentecostalism as represented by their mission agencies in Africa. Allan Anderson, who has also argued for the distinction between evangelical and Pentecostal in Africa, has identified three broad categories of Pentecostals in South Africa: the Pentecostal mission churches which are predominantly white, independent Pentecostal churches under black leadership, and Indigenous Pentecostal-type churches, also known as ‘Spirit’ or ‘Zionist Churches’.[40] He has used the Pentecostal category to challenge F. P. Moller’s enigmatic and ahistorical thesis that “the only groups in Southern Africa which can be classified under the heading Pentecostal are those linked with white churches”. Moller excluded “all the Bantu groups” whose ecstasy was thought to be “better explained in the light of their heathen background.”[41] Moller was not alone in his assessment. Gary B. McGee has argued that inclusion of “African Zionists, Kimbanguists, and Spiritual Baptists from the Caribbean” among Pentecostals “stretches the definitions beyond utility.”[42]

4.1 The Holiness Movement in Central Africa

A methodology that tends to rely on the latter more polemical phases of the AICs in Africa in order to state the purpose for their existence when the original revivalist intents had become obscured is misleading. Efraim Andersson provides a good example of those who intend to show “the radical differences between a true revival and the messianic movements.” Andersson used a dual litmus test in order to elucidate an authentic revival: that of “the ethical standards” and that of “the relation to the whites, especially the mission and the missionaries.” He has rightfully stated that “in its original form Nguzism

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[39] Dayton, *Theological Roots of Pentecostalism*, 143.

[40] Allan Anderson, *Bazalwane: African Pentecostals in South Africa* (Pretoria: University of South Africa, 1992), 2-7.

[41] Walter J. Hollenweger, *The Pentecostals* (London: SCM Press, 1972), 171. The possibility of an African provenance of the global Pentecostal movement is still a contentious issue. Leonard Lovett argued for the black origins of the movement in Vinson Synan, *Aspects of Pentecostal-Charismatic Origins*; Cheryl Sanders argued that Pentecostal features such as trances, ecstatic speeches, and rituals have their origin in African traditional religions, *Saints in Exile: The Holiness-Pentecostal Experience in African American Religion and Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 8.

[42] Gary B. McGee, “Pentecostal Missiology: Moving Beyond Triumphalism to Face the Issues,” *Pneuma* 16:2 (1994), 275-81. On this point, we agree with Anderson’s assessment that with some qualifications there are historical and theological connections between classical Pentecostal and the AICs that Moller, McGee and others fail to recognize. See Allan Anderson, “Stretching Definitions? Pneumatology and ‘Syncretism’ in African Pentecostalism”, *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 10:1 (2001), 98-119.

possessed many characteristic features of a revival," and that "Kimbangu's attitude to the missionaries was from the onset positive."[43] But what carries the day in a large section of AICs' historiography is the false perception that AICs from the beginning displayed a deep gulf between religion and morality on the one hand, and an increasingly anti-white attitude, on the other. Both the missionaries and the colonial masters saw them as anti-white, proto-nationalist, religiously syncretistic, and as threats to the mission churches.[44]

The prophet movements in the Congo, as paradoxical as it may sound, therefore, can be better studied within the context of the holiness missions that flooded this "heart of Africa" in the late nineteenth century. Although meant to ridicule the missionary theology of conversion as sometimes "too optimistic," the following words of Efraim Andersson are helpful in linking the theology of the Prophet movements with holiness revivalism. Andersson claimed, "evangelical missionaries with more or less Pietistic leanings did not set out for the Congo in order to transform its inhabitants into nominal Christians." He held that the Banza Manteke revivals started as sporadic occurrences that soon became "general and permanent mass movements, forming the background from which the first prophet movement emerged."[45] Andrew MacBeath, who described this revival within the Baptist Missionary Society, clearly showed that the Congo events were inspired by the growing global holiness networks and particularly informed by the Keswick "higher life" movement.[46]

A survey of the missionary literature tends to support an Africanist and anti-missionary interpretation of the Kimbaguist movement. But when this evidence was compared with the Kimbanguists' self-understanding, a different picture emerges. The Kimbanuists appreciated that missionaries came to shine the light of the Gospel but the Kimbanguists themselves did not see their movement as a renewal of African traditions but as an attempt to renew authentic missionary Christianity. These Africans believed "the missionaries did not obey the voice of the Lord," because

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[43] Efraim Anderson, *Messianic Popular Movements in Lower Congo* (Uppsala: Almqvist & Wiksell), 1958, 42-47. Nguzism refers to an AIC in the Congo.

[44] See Jocelyn Murray, "The Kikuyu Spirit Churches", *Journal of Religion in Africa*, Vol. 5.3 (1973), 198. See also J.P. Kiernan, *The Production and Management of Therapeutic Power in Zionist Churches Within a Zulu City* (Lewiston: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1990), 17. Kiernan has persuasively argued that a survey of literature on beliefs, patterns of worship, sentiments and behavior in the African Independent Church movements for anti-White rejection, "produces very little evidence."

[45] E. Andersson, *Messianic Popular Movements in Lower Congo*, 42-47.

[46] Keswick holiness was instrumental for this revival because Andrew MacBeath, who was the key leader, was associated with Keswick himself. He wrote a biography of one of the key leaders of Keswick. See Andrew MacBeath, *W. H. Aldis* (London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1949).

they did not evangelize extensively into the villages, and thus "many villages showed not a single convert." So this movement began, at least as they understood themselves, not by calling on Africans to return to their traditions, but by counteracting the same traditional values that popular missionary literature usually presented them as preserving. It is in this light that it makes sense to see them as renewing the missionary message because the failure of the missionary method had meant "the people as a whole did not leave their wickedness; fetishism, dancing, drinking and witchcraft."[47] Kimbanguism may be better understood, at least in its initial stages, as neither "an anti-white movement nor only negative reaction to white religious, political, or social exploitations." Kimbangu himself rejected "tribalism as a rigid and divisive sociological construct." They displayed, as George B. Thomas concluded, a "genuine African Christian life style in terms of personal self-discipline and organizational self-determination," seeking to emphasize the "inter-tribal and inter-racial character of the church" and sanctification as a key tenet.[48]

4.2 The Holiness Movement in East Africa

Cynthia Hoehler-Fatton described the Spirit Church movement in East Africa as "possession by the Holy Spirit". She attributed this phenomenon to the combined impact of the East African Revival of the 1930s, ecstatic African independent churches, and Pentecostal missions in Africa.[49] This points to the fact that these movements actually represented different versions of holiness theology, each controlled by their individual contextual needs. Welbourn and Ogot have given a credible account on how Marian and Otto Keller, Canadian holiness Pentecostal missionaries, who established a mission in Nyangori near Kisumu (western Kenya) were instrumental in the introduction of spontaneous worship that led to the liturgical basis for the emerging independent African Israel Church, Nineveh (AICN). But the process that led to AICN's formation was much more complex and shows a spiraling of theology from the American holiness movement conception of sanctification, to Pentecostalism, and finally to an African initiated church. The process that had already taken place in the west was being repeated, conditioned by a particular social

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[47] A pamphlet by Dialugana Salomon, the second son of Kimbangu, was quoted verbatim by John M. Janzen, “The Tradition of Renewal in Kongo Religion” in *African Religions: A Symbosium* edited by Newell S. Booth (New York: Nok Publishers, 1977, 73, and clearly states the pietistic requirements of Kimbanguism.

[48] George B. Thomas, “Kimbanguism: Authentically African, Authentically Christian, ” in *African Religions: A Symposium,* edited by Newell S. Booth (New York: Nok Publishers, 1977, 275-293.

[49] Cynthia Hoehler-Fatton, *Women of Fire and Spirit: History, Faith, and Gender in Roho Religion in Western Kenya* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 73.

context in Africa. Welbourn was surprised that "the outpouring of the Spirit which occurred in Kaimoisi in 1927, came not directly from institutional Pentecostalism but from the much more austere background of Friends Africa Mission."[50] We do recognize here, however, that the latter was a product of the nineteenth century holiness influence on Quakerism. For Welbourn, whose analysis seems to lack an historical awareness of the kinship between Holiness and Pentecostal movements, Arthur Chilsons' revival preaching with its emphasis on receiving the Holy Spirit seems to have influenced the emergence of ecstatic experiences among the Africans.[51]

"Fellowship" and "unity", so characteristic of the holiness revivals, soon was broken. As Rasmussen mentions, "the issue that was to cause the disunity was the very same spiritual experience that missionaries and African Christians had been seeking for years." Kefa Mavuru, a former High Priest of the African Church of the Holy Spirit attests that Arthur Chilson's "Pentecost" revivals were decisive for the beginning of "the Holy Spirit Churches" among the Luhiyas of western Kenya. As was the case in South Africa with the formation of *Unzondelelo* (Native Home Missions (sic), the forerunner of Ethiopianism in South Africa), so the Spirit Churches in western Kenya were formed within the context of the Native Prayer Conference in 1927. The missionaries were wary of the movement turning into a "wild-fire" because of lack of supervision since at this time the natives could "not carry on the work alone." But supervision precipitated a number of separatist prayer cells. Jefferson Ford attempted to reconcile the groups but the eventual result was that most of those who remained were those with better "educational and social stratification." Although each group emphasized different aspects of the doctrine of holiness, it is clear that this polarization hid the fact that there were theological continuities between the Holy Spirit Churches and that of the mother Quaker Church. "Ezekiel Kasiera confirms that the evangelical theology preached by the Quaker missionaries, and especially that preached by Arthur Chilson, was not very different from the message of the Pentecostal missionaries at the neighboring Nyangori mission station."[52]

4.3 The Holiness Movement in West Africa

The trends observable in East and Central Africa were also very prominent in the founding of a West African form of "spiritist churches," the Aladura Movement. Holiness revivals swept villages in western Africa

[50] F.B. Welbourn and B.A. Ogot, *A Place to Feel at Home: A Study of Two Independent Churches in Western Kenya* (London: Oxford University Press, 1966), 73 ff and 74.
[51] Ane Marie Bak Rasmussen, *A History of the Quaker Movement in Africa* (New York: British Academic Press, 1995), 59.
[52] Rasmussen, *A History of the Quaker Movement in Africa,* 59-64.

that eventually led to the formation of the Aladura prayer groups.[53] Lamin Sanneh talks of "The Revival of 1930," which informed the theology of Josiah Olunowo Oshitelu and his Church of the Lord (Aladura). This revival was simultaneously a pronouncement of judgment on African idolatry and native medicines and the proclamation of a form of a four-fold gospel that "upheld faith healing and baptism of the Spirit, and taught about the gift of prophecy." What must be emphasized even more is the fact these ecclesiastical and missiological processes were catalyzed by the confluence of three major versions of holiness in the African context.[54]

Although the Aladura movement found its ultimate flowering in the 1930s, its rudiments were found in the holiness revivals of the late nineteenth century. Robert Wyllie's studies on Southern Ghana reveal that these new movements fit very well into the Methodist holiness context. They are at best "lineal descendants of mission Christianity which employ a particular interpretation of the Christian faith." Wyllie argues that Wesleyan Methodists were the dominant mission of the region in question and they offered a "doctrine of grace and sanctification." In order for what has been described as "efforts of early converts to operationalize Methodism," to offer *JI* spiritual power, Methodism was "scanned" for its potential. Thus many of the early "spiritist prophets ... had been catechists or members in the Methodist mission." [55] A renowned African Ghanaian scholar, Kofi Appiah-Kubi, points out that "for these Indigenous African Christian churches Jesus Christ remains the supreme object of devotion. He is the Savior, the Baptizer in the Spirit, the Soon-Coming-King, and the Healer."[56] The evidence for revivalist theological themes is so overwhelming that even a casual look at the names of the spiritist/zionist churches in Africa reveals a pattern of their theology that is parallel to the radical developments in the American holiness movement in the late nineteenth and early twentieth

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[53] C. O. Oshun has argued that Aladura was a Christian revival movement in “Aladura Presence and Revivals in a Colonial Situation: A Conflict Model in Mission,” in *African Church Historiography: An Ecumenical Perspective*, ed. Ogbu U. Kalu (Nairobi: East African Publishing House, 1988), 197-219.

[54] Lamin Sanneh, *West African Christianity: The Religious Impact* (London: C. Hurst & Company, 1983), 185-186. The founder of the Christ Apostolic Church, Isaac Akinyele, saw the Great Revivals of 1930s to 1950s as "unmistakable signs of God's blessing"; See" Ayokundu Ogumati, Pastor and Politician: Isaac Akinyele, Olubadan of Ibadan (1862-1955)," in *Varieties of Christian Experiences in Nigeria,* ed. Elizabeth Isichei (London: Macmillan Press, 1982), 134-135.

[55] Robert W. Wyllie, *The Spirit-Seekers: New Religious Movements in Southern Ghana* (Missoula, Mo.: Scholars Press, 1980), 5.

[56] See Kofi Appiah-Kubi, “Indigenous African Churches: Signs of Authenticity,” in *African Theology En Route: Papers from the Pan-African Conference of Third World Theologians, December 17-23, 1977, Accra Ghana*, eds. Kofi Appiah-Kubi and Sergio Torres (New York: Orbis Books, 1979), 117-121.

century. AICs such as *Life Salvation Church, Christian Holiness Church*, *Divine Healer Church* reveal the striking prominence of the themes of salvation, sanctification, and healing, though these are sometimes expressed in deeply African terms. Furthermore, several AICs added "the New Jerusalem," or "Zion" to their names as in *The New Jerusalem Apostolic Church in Zion*. This shows a great anticipation of the eschaton or the second coming of Christ with the establishment of "the New Jerusalem" in "Zion."

The West African Aladura Movement was not the exclusive result of the Wesleyans. Keswick holiness was at the wellspring of the African Church Movement in Yorubaland, Nigeria. But when the Keswick 'Missioners' arrived in Lagos and Freetown in 1886, 1888 and 1889, they found circumstances that were different from those in the British Isles and they "were surprised to find that they were not confronted with the lapsed masses as in England." Nigerian Christianity, however, had its own problems as defined by the missioners. Outside Holy Johnson's parish, the missioners found what they understood as unattended "habitual sinning among the Africans."[57] The revival message thus needed to be re-articulated in the new context, a process that did not always sit well with the high church missionaries within the Anglican mission. Webster's thesis recognized the central role of Keswick holiness in the emergence of the African Church Movement, to the extent that he concluded his study with these words: "the African Church Movement was the result of the positive impulse generated by the revival movement of the 1880s in Lagos." If, however, his overstatement of the connection between Keswick revivalism with shifting missionary policies to the effect that the "Keswick revival produced a generation of missionaries willing to use moral reasons to deny black leadership, and supporting imperial expansion as a means to the evangelization of Africa" is taken seriously, it could lead to the premature conclusion that the African Church Movement rejected holiness as an imperialist doctrine.[58]

4.4 The Holiness Movement in Southern Africa

It is also in this sense perhaps that the *Mai Chaza Church* in Zimbabwe should be understood. The emphasis on the "new messiah" in the person of the founder, Mai Chaza, as taking the place of Christ, as in a number of AICs, is an overstatement in this case.[59] It seems inconsistent that the Mai Chaza

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[57] E. Ayandele, *The Missionary Impact on Modern Nigeria* (New York: Humanities Press, 1966), 175-187. Holy Johnson is interpreted as a reformer and not a revolutionary within Anglican Church structures and also described as "fervent, puritanical figure, a zealous reformer" in J. F. Ade Ajayi, *Christian Missions in Nigeria (1841-1891): The Making of a New Elite* (London: Longmans, 1965), 235.

[58] James Bertin Webster, *The African Churches Among the Yoruba, 1888-1922* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964), 191, 44.

[59] Marie-Louise Martin, "The Mai Chaza in Rhodesia" in *African Initiatives in Religion*,

movement, which began within Methodism in Rhodesia as "a great movement strongly oriented toward combating heathen practices" such as those associated with ancestor veneration and traditional medicines would replace Christ with a human messiah. It would also seem inconsistent that, like the holiness missionary churches, the movement that used a Methodist hymn book and hoped to "carry out ... preaching and healing within the framework of the Methodist Church," emphasizing abstention from strong drinks and tobacco, and enforcing monogamous marriages, would be interpreted as holding onto African traditional practices. The genius and at the same time the trouble of the Mai Chaza movement is in the synthesis of African sacral traditional kingship with the Old Testament notion of God's holiness and the messianic concept of the New Testament. Also in a region that had few modern medical facilities, articulation of the use of biblical healing within a Bantu philosophical framework where all diseases were seen to have spiritual causes is an indication of great ingenuity.[60]

In order to demonstrate the emergence of revivalism as a crucial theological framework for the AICs, we will use the example of the spiritual journey of Petrus le Roux, a white Dutch Reformed Church missionary to the Zulus who (quite unexpectedly and in a way that defies our traditional understanding of "Zionism" in South Africa as an African initiative) established the first Zion in South Africa. I am fully aware of the danger of appearing to de-emphasize African initiative, but it is my argument that this is the only way we can begin to understand the theology of the AICs.[61]

Bengt Sundkler, a Swedish Lutheran missionary bishop in Africa, stated that between 1885 and 1915 most of the missions that went to South Africa "were the outcome of radical revivals in Europe and America of the 'Holiness' Pentecostal and Apostolic Faith type." The South Africa General Mission, under the patronage of Andrew Murray, was a Keswick holiness mission that organized the Dumisa Training Institute. Several Zulus who later became "Separatist Church" leaders received their initial theological training at Dumisa.[62] "Zionism", a term that has taken on an Africanist connotation, was perhaps taken from holiness mountain top experiences. Like a number of other "primitivist" terminologies that coloured the nomenclature of the AICs,

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ed. David Barrett (Nairobi, Kenya: East Africa Publishing House, 1971), 109-110.

[60] Martin,"The Mai Chaza in Rhodesia," 112-117.

[61] Kevin Ward once argued that the East African Revival was an African initiative "within the pattern of Evangelical Awakenings which have been a feature of European and American Protestantism since the 18th Century. See "*Tukutendereza Yesu*, The Balokole Revival in Uganda" in Zablon Nthamburi, ed., *From Mission to Church: A Handbook of Christianity in East Africa*, (Nairobi: Uzima Press, 1991), 113.

[62] Bengt G.M. Sundkler, *Bantu Prophets in South Africa*, (2nd edition, London: Oxford University Press, 1961), 28.

"Zionism," must be disconnected from the prevailing African chauvinist historiography which views it as advocating African pagan practices.[63]

Sundkler himself talks of "a bewildering preponderance of churches calling themselves "Zion," "Jerusalem," "Apostolic," "Full Gospel" and "Pentecostal."[64] Though Sundkler tends to unnecessarily tilt towards an Africanist interpretation of the Zionists, he also commented, "obviously the pattern of Protestant revival meetings shows through in some of the [Zionist] services here described." But for him the Zionist churches were just wading "through the ashes resulting from such [revival] fire."[65] In other words they did not represent "real revival." Sundkler has since ameliorated his earlier stance and moved toward placing Zionist origins within the holiness revivals. This change was clear in his convincing argument which describes the first Zion in South Africa as the interracial "movement of the Spirit" following the Boer war at Wakkerstroom (Rapid Stream) in the Transvaal. In order to do that, he vividly described the "metamorphosis" of Petrus Louis le Roux from a Dutch Reformed minister through "Zionism," to the presidency of the Apostolic Faith Mission as a crucial turning point in South African church history.

Bengt Sundkler tells us that Le Roux met Andrew Murray, a man Sundkler describes as having "infused a spirit of revival into the Dutch Reformed Church," at Wellington Missionary College, South Africa. It was there that "Le Roux became one of his [Murray's] fervent disciples,[66] studying his many books with their holiness-Keswick message." Murray introduced Le Roux to a number of western holiness and healing propagators such as William Boardman. Le Roux's further theological development involved immersion in Pentecostal literature such as the pamphlet, *Divine Healing* by William Boardman, and Alexander Dowie's series, *Leaves of Healing* from Zion City, Illinois. Le Roux imbibed Dowie's "theocratic message with its four-fold Gospel of Jesus as Saviour, Sanctifier, Healer and the Coming King." It was these teachings that created the theological tension between Le Roux and the DRC that later led to his resignation as a missionary of the church.

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[63] The appearance of the name within the holiness movement took prominence as Pentecostal language began to emerge within the revivals. For instance in the United States the paper *Tennessee Methodist,* managed by B. F. Haynes, in 1891 changed its name to *Zion's Outlook* when the Methodists withdrew their support because of his emphasis on a controversial teaching of holiness. The Pentecostal Alliance that supported this paper finally joined *the Pentecostal Church of the Nazarene*. See *Holiness Organized or Unorganized? A History of the Pentecostal Mission, Inc. 1898-1915* (Nashville: Trevecca Press, 1977), 29.

[64] Sundkler, *Bantu Prophets*, 47-48.

[65] Sundkler, *Bantu Prophets*, 242-243.

[66] David J. Du Plessis has argued that Andrew Murray's ministry had made an indelible impression upon him. *The Spirit Bade Me Go: The Astounding Move of God in Denominational Churches* (Plainfield: Logos International), 56-57.

Upon his resignation, Petrus le Roux joined with Johannes Buchler (a Congregationalist minister who embraced Dowie's fourfold gospel), Edgar Mahon (a former holiness Salvation Army officer), and Dowie's emissary, Daniel Bryant, to become the organizing forces behind "the Zulu Zion." Upon the arrival of classical Pentecostalism, espoused especially through John G. Lake,[67] Le Roux moved from Zionism to Pentecostalism in a process that was sparked by racial preference and a search for respectability. He later became a leading figure in the Apostolic Faith Mission (AFM). But out of Le Roux's Wakkerstroom's Zionist vision grew key African Zionists. It is my contention here, that whether one follows Alexander Dowie's or Andrew Murray's influence on Petrus le Roux, and hence on the first South African Zion, the end result indicates historical and theological kinship among these seemingly contradictory trajectories. Thus Sundkler's conclusion, though overstated to de-emphasize the African and stress white initiative in Zionism, is right in principle in that "the beginnings of Black Zion were not as exclusively African as one might presume."[68]

Conclusion

There is a scandal in African Christian historiography that has blinded the eyes of church historians and theologians towards a pietistic/holiness reading of African Christianity. In and of itself a holiness reading of African Christianity provides the most comprehensive framework for understanding mainline-evangelical-pentecostal-charismatic Christianities. This research argues that the doctrine and the experience of holiness is central to understanding the process that has brought African Christianity to where it is today. This research sketches the challenges that face a study of the doctrine of holiness as a theological framework for understanding the emergence of Christianity in Africa. It also proposes the tenacity of a holiness/revivalist reading of African Protestant Christianity. I have, therefore, argued in this paper that our study of African Christian experience must take into account its holiness theological character: both missionary and nationalist. One cannot fully understand the emergence of evangelical missionary Christianity in Africa as well as prophet-healing Aladura churches in West Africa, Spirit Churches of East Africa, Zionists in Southern Africa and Prophet movements in Central Africa in their historic and contemporary expressions of Christianity without also understanding their roots in protest within the holiness movement.

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[67] For revivals in South Africa under John G. Lake see Cathy Crompton, *God in Action: Revival in South Africa* (Port Elizabeth, South Africa: Crompton Ministries, 1993).

[68] Bengt Sundkler, *Zulu Zion and Some Swazi Zionists* (London: Oxford University Press, 1976), 13-67.