

EDINBURGH COMPANIONS TO GLOBAL CHRISTIANITY

CHRISTIANITY IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA



Edited by

Kenneth R. Ross, J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu

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Contents

Series Preface	ix
Volume Preface	xi
Contributors	xiii
Introduction	
A Demographic Profile of Christianity in Sub-Saharan Africa <i>Gina A. Zurlo</i>	3
Christianity in Sub-Saharan Africa <i>J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu</i>	19
Countries	
South Africa <i>Tinyiko Maluleke</i>	43
Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia and Swaziland <i>James N. Amanze</i>	55
Mozambique <i>Isaias Paulo Titoce</i>	67
Zimbabwe, Zambia and Malawi <i>Hany Longwe</i>	74
Madagascar <i>Solomon Andriatsimialomananarivo</i>	87
Mauritius <i>Rodney Curpanen</i>	94
Réunion <i>Jacqueline Andoche and Valérie Aubourg</i>	97
Seychelles, Comoros, Mayotte and Saint Helena <i>Todd M. Johnson and Kenneth R. Ross</i>	101
Kenya and Tanzania <i>Wanjiru M. Gitau</i>	106

Rwanda and Burundi <i>Tharcisse Gatwa</i>	119
Uganda and South Sudan <i>Richard Nnyombi MAfr</i>	132
Ethiopia, Eritrea, Somalia and Djibouti <i>Tibebe Eshete</i>	144
Angola and São Tomé and Príncipe <i>Luciano Chanhelela Chianeque</i>	157
Gabon, Equatorial Guinea, Republic of the Congo and Democratic Republic of the Congo <i>Jean-Gottfried Mutombo</i>	163
Central African Republic, Togo, Côte d'Ivoire, Benin and Cameroon <i>Elias Kifon Bongmba</i>	176
Nigeria <i>Elijah Obinna</i>	189
Ghana, Liberia and Sierra Leone <i>Cephas N. Omenyo</i>	201
Senegal, the Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde <i>Simon Kossi Dossou</i>	214
Niger, Mauritania, Mali, Chad and Burkina Faso <i>Emmanuel Foro SJ</i>	225
Major Christian Traditions	
Anglicans <i>James Tengtenga</i>	239
Independents <i>Nicta Lubaale</i>	252
Orthodox <i>Ralph Lee and Daniel Seifemichael</i>	264
Protestants <i>Setri Nyomi</i>	277
Roman Catholics <i>Anthony Egan SJ</i>	289
Evangelicals <i>Anthony Balcomb</i>	302

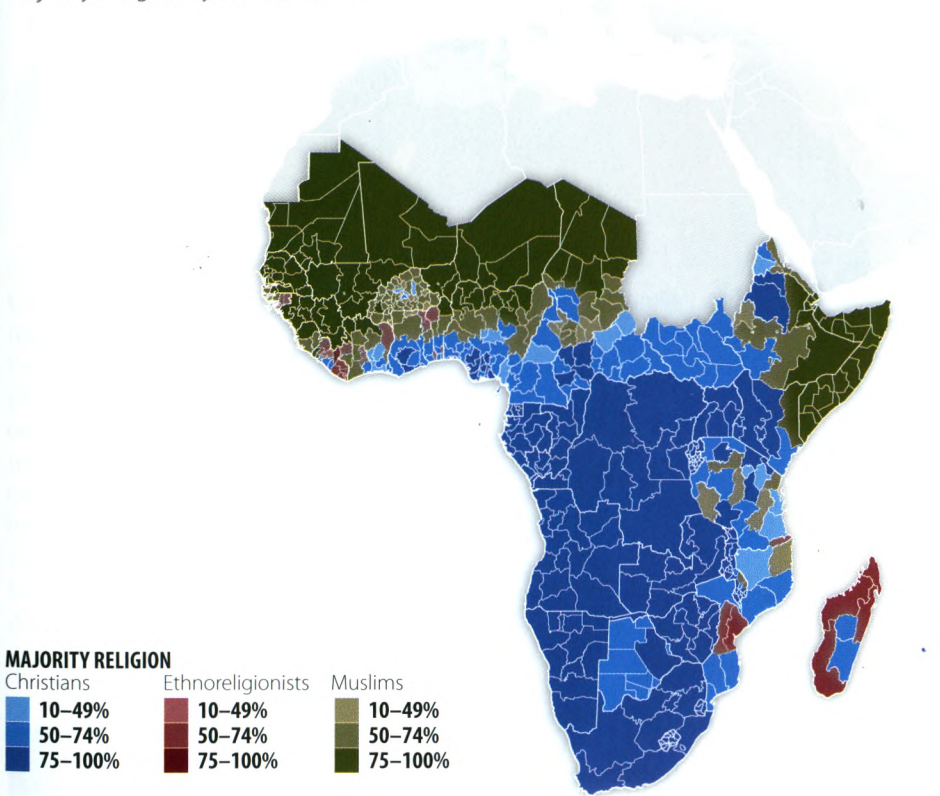
Pentecostals/Charismatics <i>Michael Adeleke Ogunewu and Isaac Deji Ayegboyin</i>	314
Key Themes	
Faith and Culture <i>Mary N. Getui</i>	329
Worship and Spirituality <i>John S. Pobee</i>	340
Theology <i>Francis Anekwe Oborji</i>	352
Social and Political Context <i>Musa Dube and Malebogo Kgalemang</i>	364
Mission and Evangelism <i>Esther Mombo</i>	376
Gender <i>Isabel A. Phiri and Chammah J. Kaunda</i>	386
Religious Freedom <i>Frans Veerman and Christof Sauer</i>	397
Inter-religious Relations <i>Evaristi Magoti Cornelli</i>	411
The Bible in African Christianity <i>Ukachukwu Chris Manus</i>	421
The Anthropology of Evil <i>Afe Adogame</i>	433
Migration <i>Amélé Adamavi-Aho Ekué</i>	445
Conclusion	
The Future of Christianity in Sub-Saharan Africa <i>Mercy Amba Oduyoye</i>	461
Appendices	
Christianity by Country	481
Methodology and Sources of Christian and Religious Affiliation <i>Todd M. Johnson and Gina A. Zurlo</i>	493
Index	511

Introduction

A Demographic Profile of Christianity in Sub-Saharan Africa

Gina A. Zurlo

Majority Religion by Province, 2015



Christianity, Islam and ethnoreligions (African traditional religions) are the largest religions in Sub-Saharan Africa. Christianity and Islam have increased their shares since 1970, while ethnoreligions have declined. However, many people observe elements of African traditional religion alongside Christian or Muslim practices.

Religions in Sub-Saharan Africa, 1970 and 2015

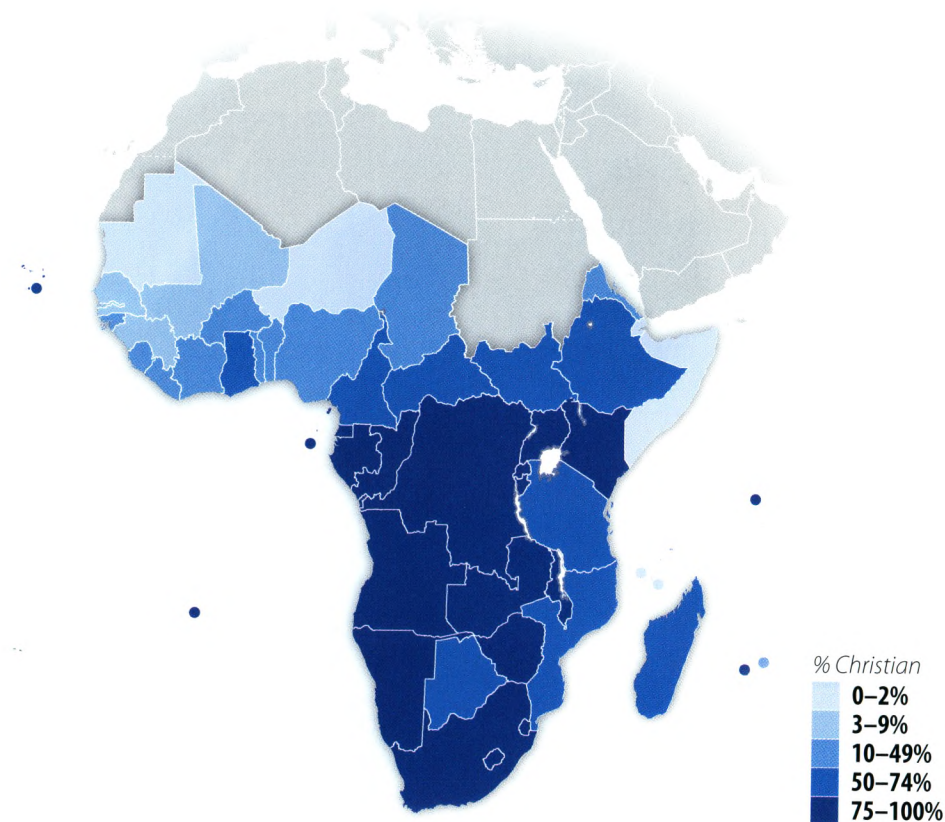
Religion	1970		2015	
	Adherents	%	Adherents	%
Christians	134,235,000	47.5%	564,536,000	58.7%
Muslims	71,714,000	25.4%	283,042,000	29.4%
Ethnoreligionists	74,443,000	26.3%	101,704,000	10.6%
Other	2,351,000	0.8%	13,005,000	1.4%
Total	282,743,000	100.0%	962,287,000	100.0%

Source: Todd M. Johnson and Gina A. Zurlo (eds), *World Christian Database* (Leiden/Boston: Brill), accessed March 2016.

Christianity in Sub-Saharan Africa, 1970–2015

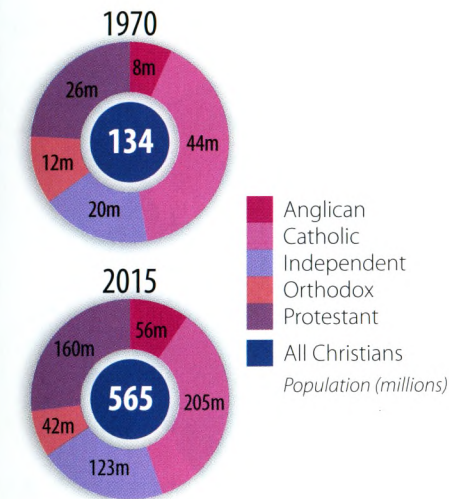
Christians by Country, 2015

565 Million Christians, 58.7% of Population



Overall, Christianity in Sub-Saharan Africa has been growing. From 1970 to 2015 the region's Christian population grew from 47.5% (134 million) of the total population to 58.7% (565 million), an average annual growth rate of 3.2%. Muslims represent around half that (29.4% in 2015; 283 million). Some of the least-Christian areas in Sub-Saharan Africa are found in Western Africa (which was 36.1% Christian in 2015), including Muslim-majority countries the Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal and Sierra Leone.

Christianity grew the fastest between 1970 and 2015 in Benin (averaging 5.1% per year), Guinea (5.0%) and Burkina Faso (4.8%). The only countries where Christianity declined as a percentage of the population are Saint Helena (from 99.4% to 95.8% Christian), Djibouti and Somalia. Decline in Saint Helena is due to natural demographic causes. In Djibouti it is because of emigration, and in Somalia Christians have been persecuted, leading to death and emigration.

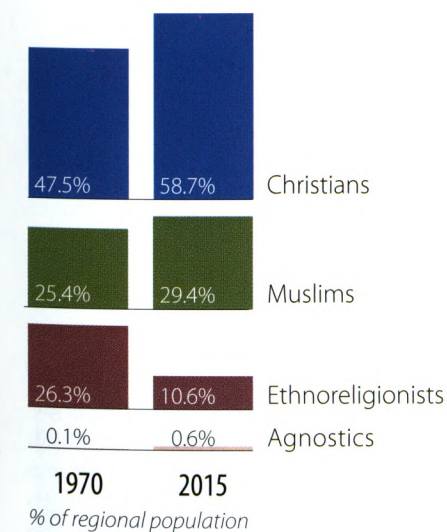
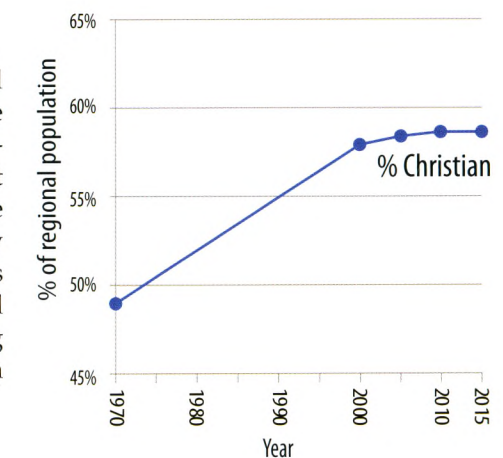


Major Christian Traditions, 1970 and 2015

Between 1970 and 2015, Catholics grew from 44 million to 205 million, now representing 36.3% of all Christians in the region. Independents have also increased, now representing 21.8% of all Christians. It is likely that these two traditions' shares will continue to grow in the future.

Christians, 1970–2015

Christianity in Sub-Saharan Africa had impressive growth throughout the twentieth century, with growth anticipated to level off into the twenty-first century. While less than 50% of the region's population in 1970, Christianity could represent more than three-fifths by 2050. Much of this growth will likely be due to high birth rates among Christians and more conversions from African traditional religions.



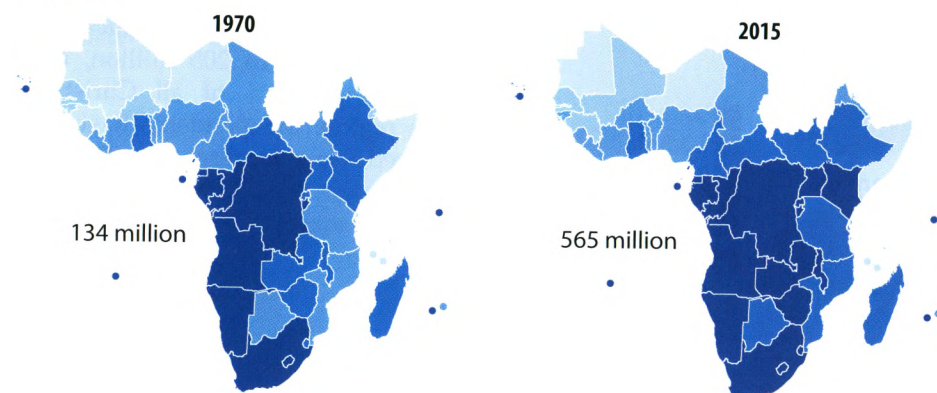
Religious Affiliation, 1970 and 2015

Both Christianity and Islam have made significant gains in the last 45 years, although conversions to Christianity in Middle Africa have given Christianity a slight edge. Ethnoreligions (African traditional religions) have been on the decline as more people switch to Christianity or Islam. Agnosticism is growing only slightly, and mainly in urban areas with the arrival of foreigners.

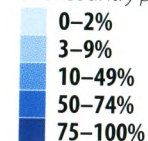
Note: Throughout this profile, traditions will not add up to total Christians in each region because of double-affiliation and the unaffiliated. Only the four largest religions are depicted.

Major Christian Traditions, 1970 and 2015

Christians

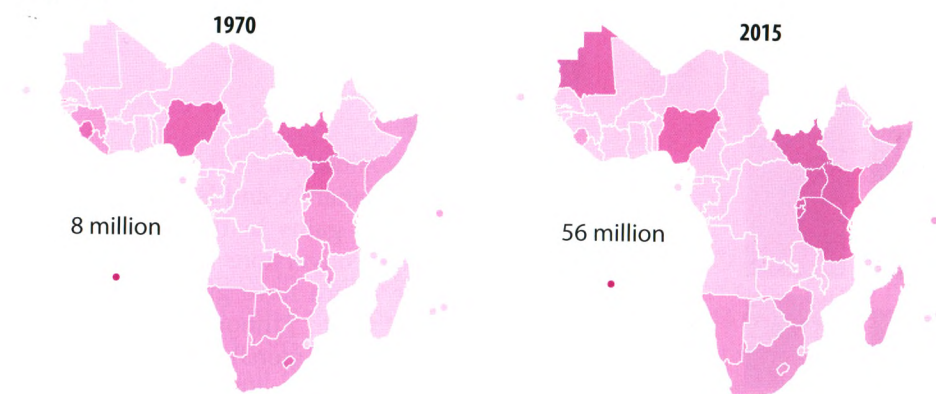


% of country population

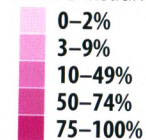


Christianity continues to grow in Sub-Saharan Africa. Most Christians are concentrated in the South, Middle and East, while the West is more closely affiliated with Islam. There were no significant changes between 1970 and 2015 except a deepening of Christian affiliation in Middle, Eastern and Southern Africa.

Anglicans

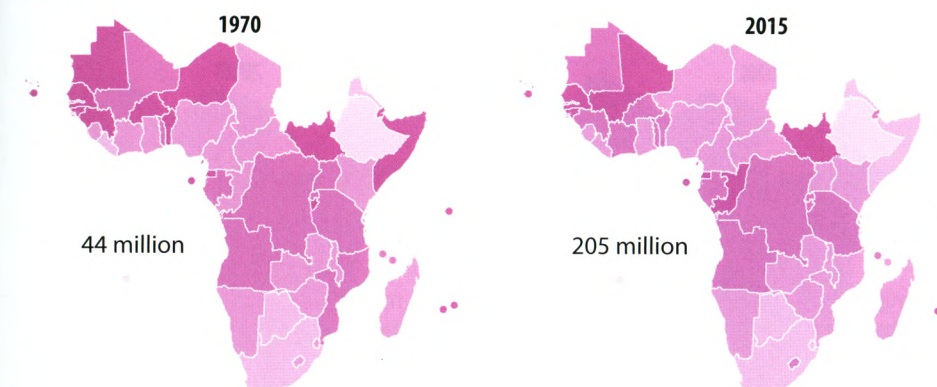


% of Christian population

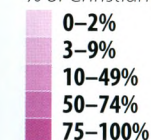


Anglicanism has grown substantially in the region since 1970. Some of the largest Anglican congregations in the world are currently found in Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania. The number of Anglicans in Africa far outnumbers that in Europe and North America, and this trend is likely to continue in the future.

Catholics

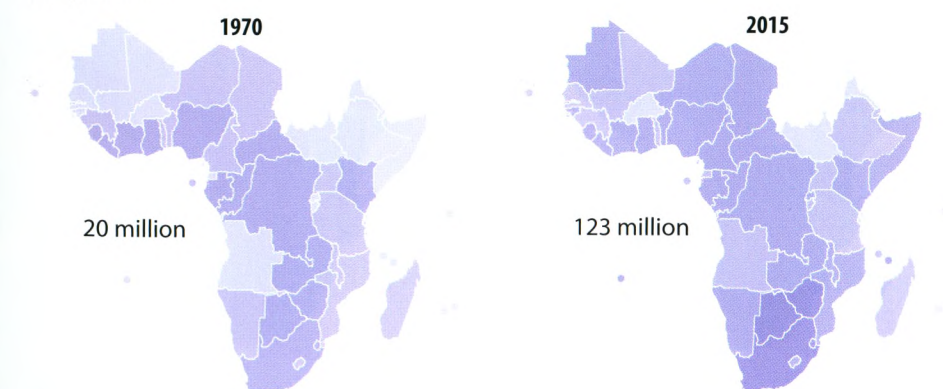


% of Christian population

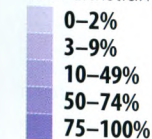


Catholicism has grown in Sub-Saharan Africa because the tradition has adapted to local culture; since the Second Vatican Council, the Catholic Church has stressed that one does not need to cease being African to become Catholic. Africa is home to many historical Catholic churches as well as newer ones introduced during the colonial period.

Independents



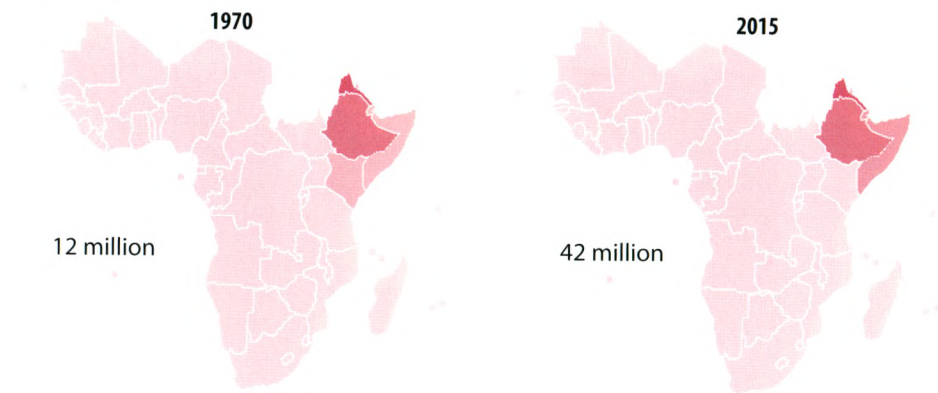
% of Christian population



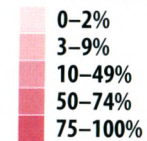
Independent Christianity continues to represent a large portion of Christians in Sub-Saharan Africa (22%, up from 15% in 1970). Botswana had the highest percentage of Independent Christians in 2015, at 61%, followed by Swaziland at 54% and Zimbabwe at 51%.

Major Christian Traditions, 1970 and 2015

Orthodox

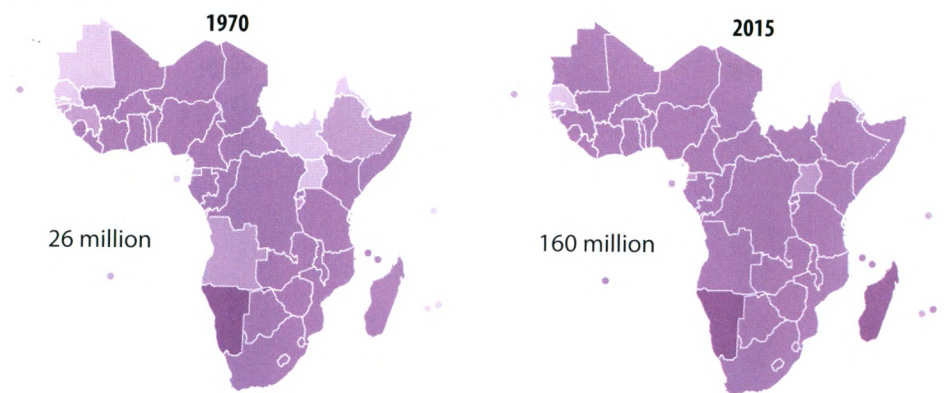


% of Christian population

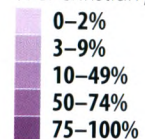


Orthodox Christianity in Sub-Saharan Africa is concentrated in the east (16% of all Christians in Eastern Africa). Ethiopia and Eritrea have the largest Orthodox populations by percentage of all Christians, 91% and 67%, respectively. There has been recent migration of Orthodox Christians in Eastern Africa due to drought and famine, which explains the increase seen in Somalia and Djibouti.

Protestants



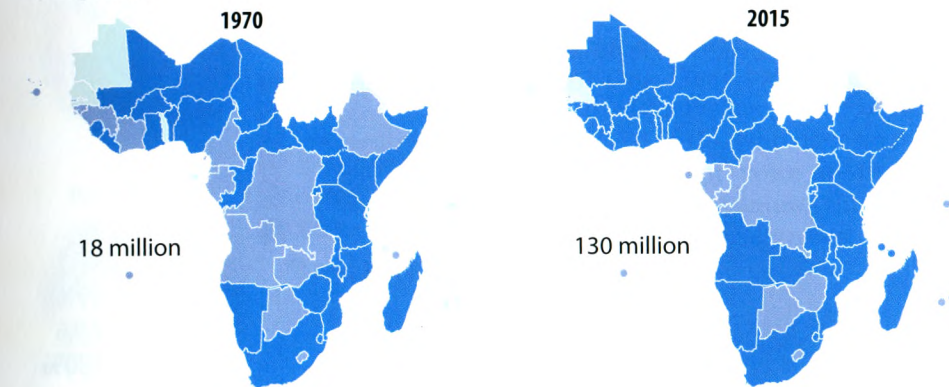
% of Christian population



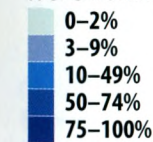
Protestants' share has declined in some countries—such as Botswana, Congo and the Democratic Republic of the Congo—due to faster growth of Independents, Anglicans and Catholics. The country with the highest Protestant percentage (among all Christians) in 2015 was Namibia (67%). Eastern Africa has more than five times as many Protestants as Southern Africa.

Movements Within Christianity, 1970 and 2015

Evangelicals

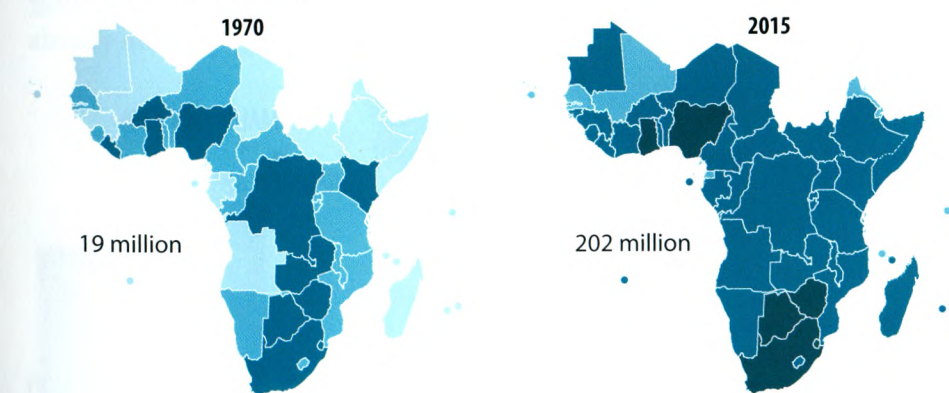


% of Christian population

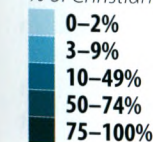


Evangelicals grew substantially between 1970 and 2015, from 6% of the population to 14%. This corresponds with the growth of Independent churches, which are typically Evangelical in theology and outlook. Some of the most dramatic growth of Evangelical Christianity has occurred in Ghana (from 5% to 20% Evangelical), Angola (3% to 18%) and Rwanda (6% to 20%).

Pentecostals/Charismatics



% of Christian population

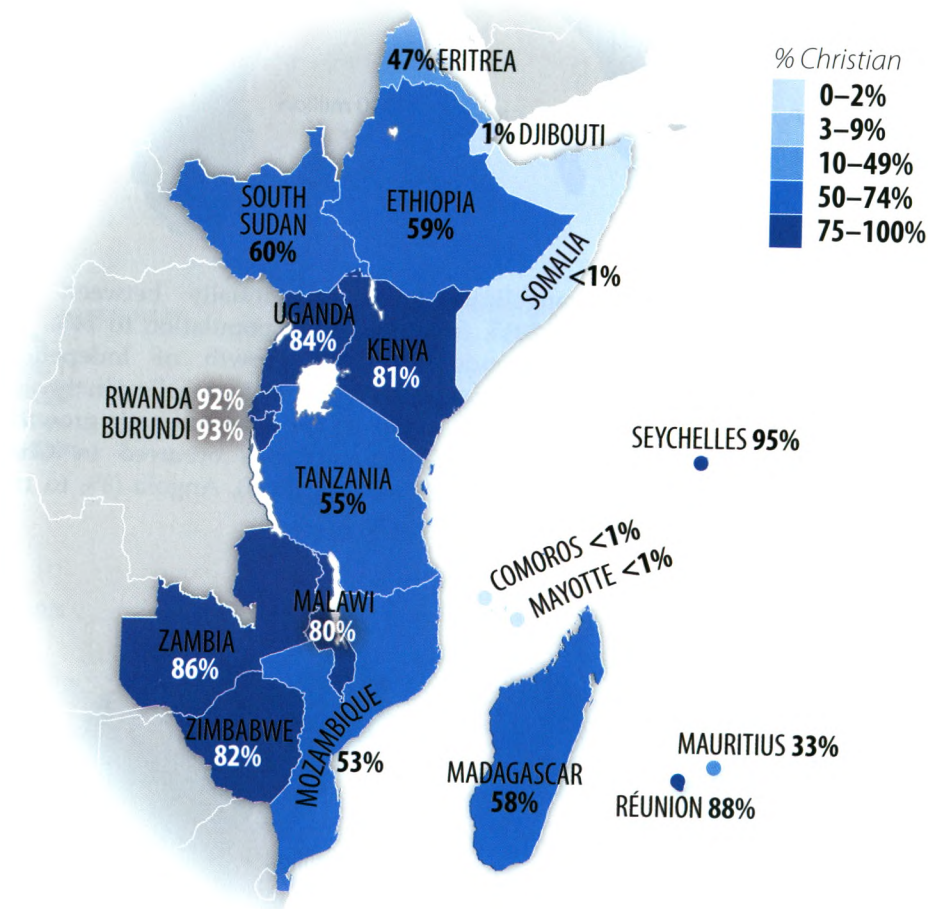


In 1970 Sub-Saharan Africa was 7% Pentecostal/Charismatic, growing to 21% by 2015. Southern Africa has a historical presence of Pentecostals/Charismatics, particularly in South Africa, but still saw Pentecostals/Charismatics grow to 56% of all Christians by 2015. The largest relative growth was in Southern Africa, where Pentecostals/Charismatics jumped from 18% of the population in 1970 to 46% in 2015.

Christianity In Eastern Africa, 1970–2015

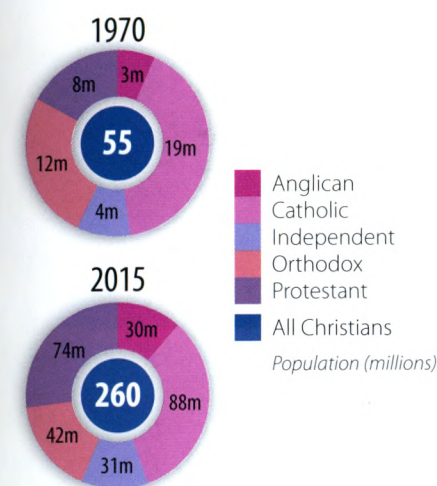
Christians by Country, 2015

260 Million Christians, 65.9% of Population



Eastern Africa's population, which has tripled since 1970, is now nearly 395 million, 65.9% of whom are Christian in 2015 (up from 49.7% in 1970). One major political change has been the creation of South Sudan, which split from Muslim-majority Sudan in 2009. South Sudan has a long history of Catholic and Anglican missionary work and is 60% Christian (7.5 million) in 2015.

Eastern Africa is home to several countries that are 80% or more Christian including Kenya, Malawi, Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Yet it is also home to Muslim-majority countries such as Somalia and Djibouti, where minority Christians are under great persecution from extremist groups. Ethiopia is the largest country in the region with nearly 100 million people, most of whom are Orthodox (39%) or Muslim (34%).

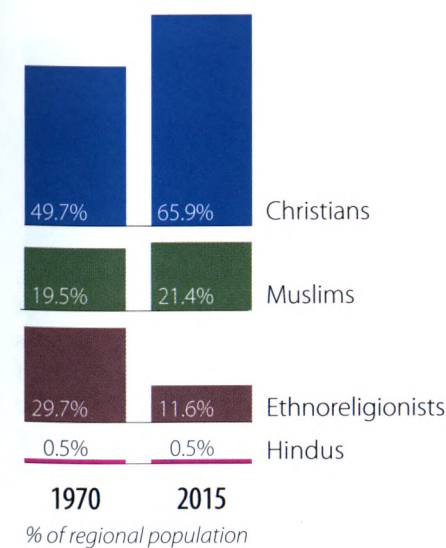
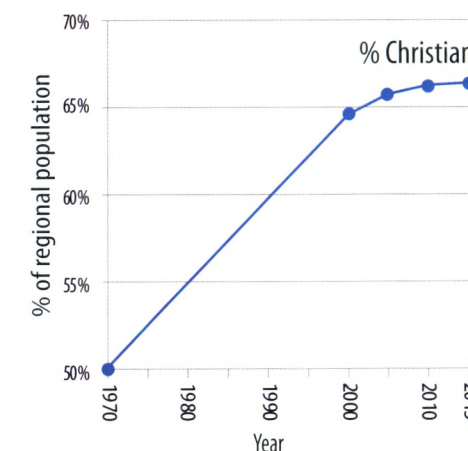


Major Christian Traditions, 1970 and 2015

Catholicism is the largest Christian tradition in Eastern Africa (34% of all Christians). There has been significant growth of Anglicans (from 5.6% in 1970 to 11.5% in 2015), who have an increasingly prominent voice in the global Anglican Communion. Independent Christianity has also grown, from 8.0% of all Christians to 11.8%.

Christians, 1970–2015

Eastern Africa has had a substantial Christian population since at least the fourth century, and looking to the future it is likely to remain so. The region is likely to grow from 65.9% Christian in 2015 to nearly 70% Christian by 2050, mostly due to Christian births in already majority-Christian countries.



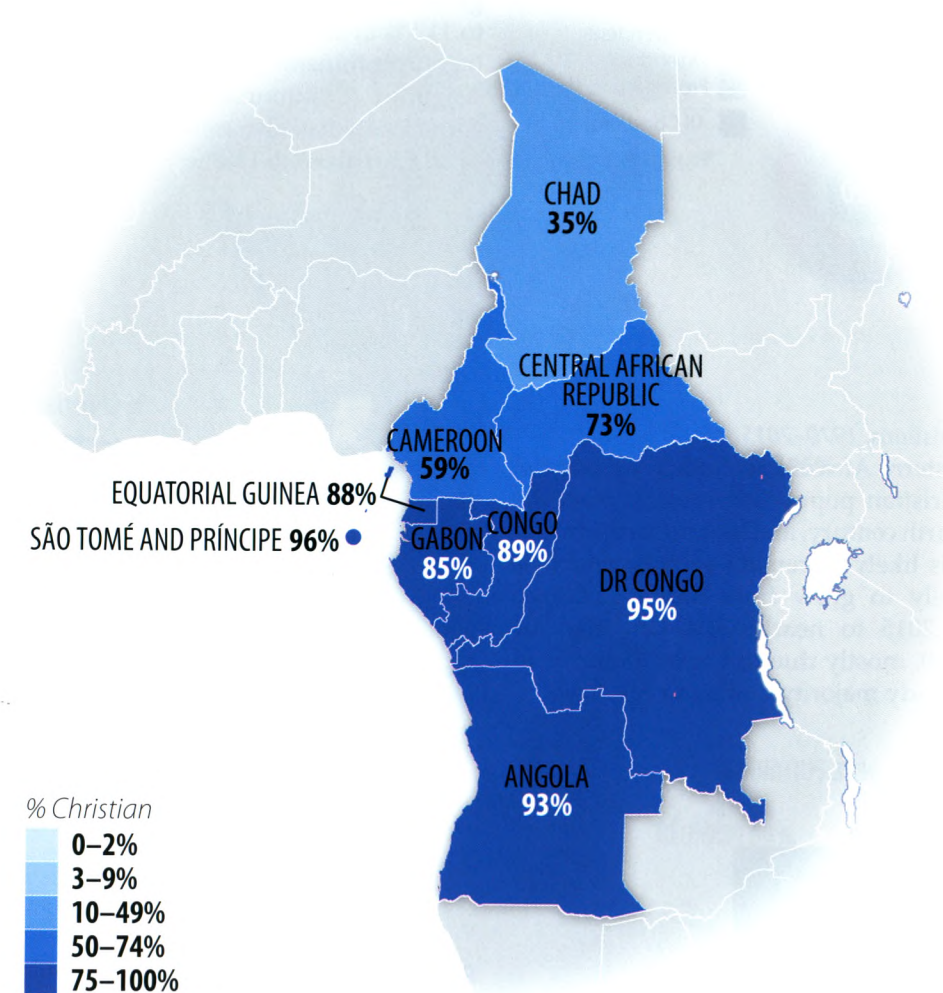
Religious Affiliation, 1970 and 2015

In 2015 the largest religions in the region are Christianity (65.9%), Islam (21.4%) and ethno-religions (11.6%). Traditional African religions are decreasing in share because of conversions to Christianity and Islam, though many adherents continue to hold on to some traditional beliefs and practices.

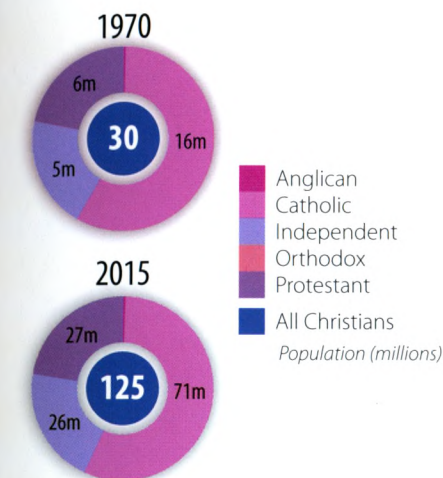
Christianity in Middle Africa, 1970–2015

Christians by Country, 2015

125 Million Christians, 82.5% of Population



Middle Africa is the most Christian region on the continent: 82.5% of the population, or more than 125 million adherents. Catholicism is the largest tradition (56.2% of all Christians), with longstanding Catholic involvement starting with missionaries and colonisers in the fifteenth century in Angola and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). Despite being more than 95% Christian, the DRC is one of the most violent nations in Africa. Both Catholic and Protestant Christians, especially in the east, have faced extreme persecution—including rape and murder—in recent years by rebel groups. Many refugees have fled to Burundi, Rwanda and Uganda, and at least 2.7 million are internally displaced within the country.

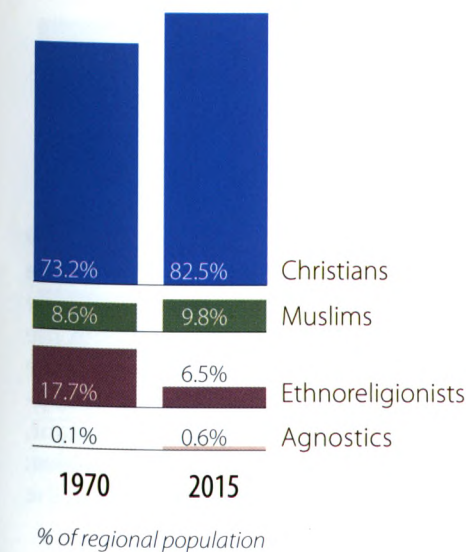
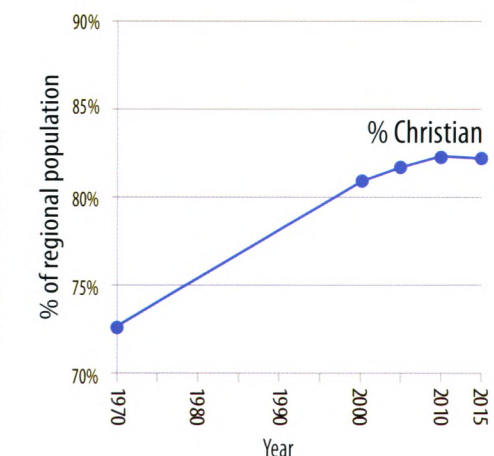


Major Christian Traditions, 1970 and 2015

Catholicism remains the largest Christian tradition in Middle Africa, growing from 16 million to 71 million between 1970 and 2015. Independents and Protestants have also experienced growth, in particular Kimbanguists in the DRC.

Christians, 1970–2015

Christianity in Middle Africa grew from 73.2% of the population in 1970 (30 million) to 82.5% (125 million) in 2015. The fastest Christian growth in the region was Chad, which grew at a rate of 4.0% per year between 1970 and 2015. Chad is now home to nearly 5 million Christians, although they only represent 35% of the population.



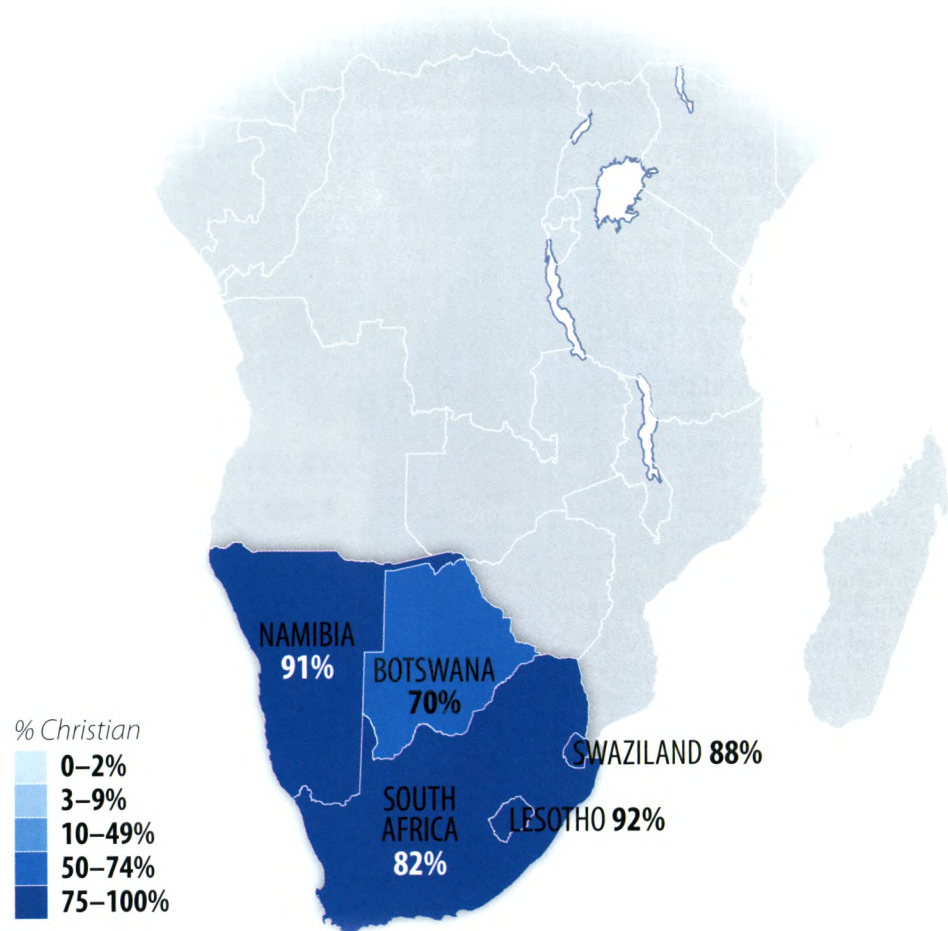
Religious Affiliation, 1970 and 2015

Ethnoreligionists' share of the region's population is continuing to decline as more people convert to Christianity. By 2050 it is likely that the region will be less than 3% ethnoreligionist, down from nearly 18% in 1970. Christianity and Islam had average growth rates that were similar (between 3.2% and 3.3%) over the period 1970–2015 and are predicted to continue (averaging between 2.6 and 2.7% per year) over the period 2015–50.

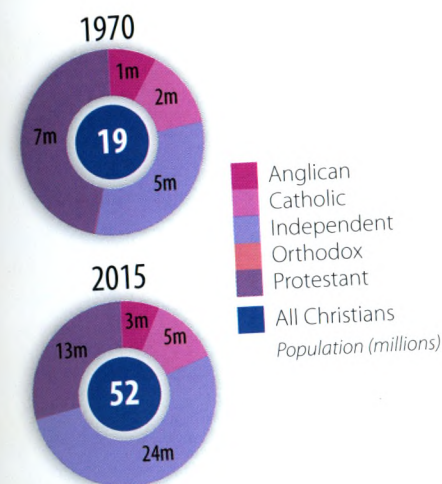
Christianity in Southern Africa, 1970–2015

Christians by Country, 2015

52 Million Christians, 82.4% of Population



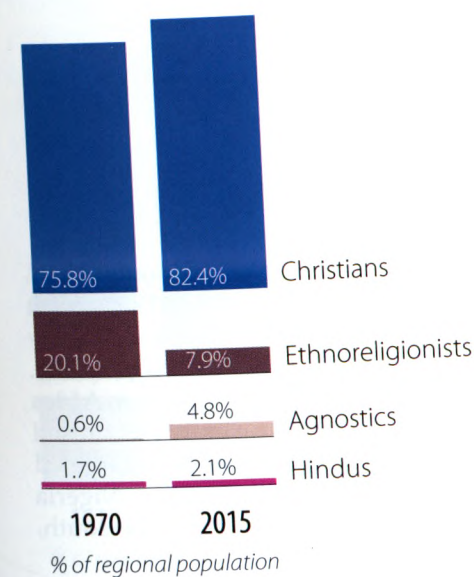
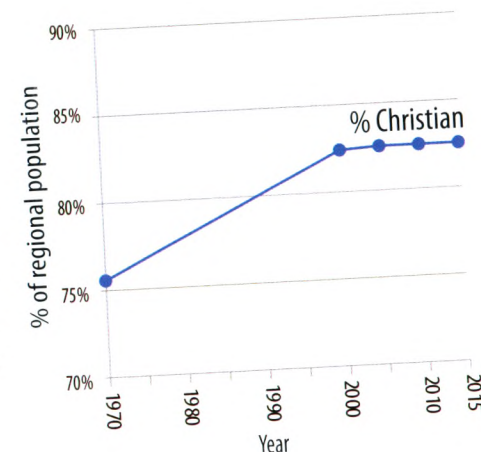
Christianity in Southern Africa grew from 75.8% of the population in 1970 (19 million) to 82.4% (52 million) in 2015, with anticipated growth into the future (84.5% in 2050). The religion has been growing at almost the same rate as the general population (2.2% per year versus 2.0%), and all five of the countries in the region are at least 70% Christian. There is much less inter-religious diversity in the region (only 7.9% ethnoreligionist) as well as intra-religious diversity. Independents make up more than 47% of all Christians there, and almost 25% are Protestant. Southern Africa has fewer Catholics than any other region in Sub-Saharan Africa; the Anglican share of the population is also low. Nearly 56% of all Christians in the region are Pentecostal or Charismatic.



Major Christian Traditions, 1970 and 2015
The largest share of Christians in Southern Africa are Independents and many are members of Zion churches, Assemblies of God congregations or other Holiness–Pentecostal denominations. The percentages of Protestants, Anglicans and Orthodox have declined since 1970.

Christians, 1970–2015

Southern Africa was the most Christian region (75.8%) in Sub-Saharan Africa in 1970. Christianity has continued to gain in proportional share of the population, although Middle Africa was the most Christian region in 2015. Looking toward 2050, Christian growth is likely to continue but could plateau as the pool of potential converts diminishes.



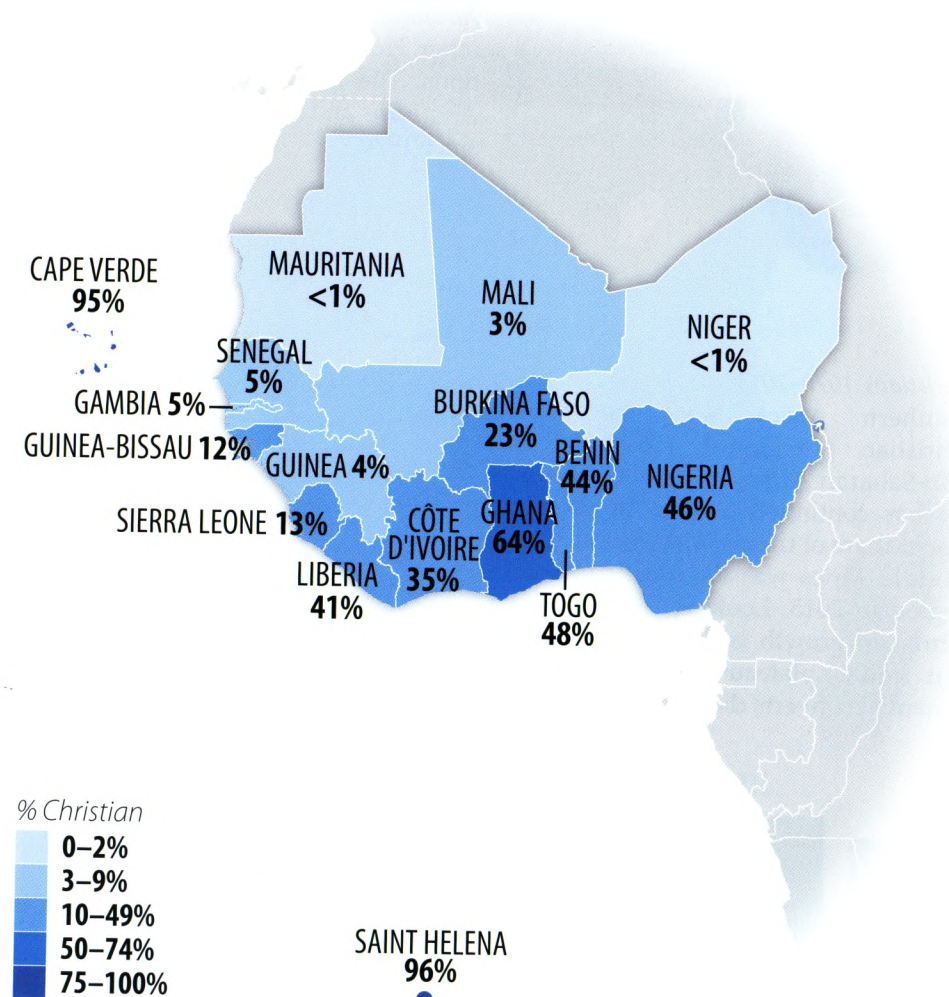
Religious Affiliation, 1970 and 2015

Southern Africa has the highest percentage of both agnostics and atheists in Sub-Saharan Africa. Together they comprise 5.0% of the population. There is also a sizeable Hindu population due to the Indian presence in South Africa. Smaller populations of other religions also exist, including Jews, Sikhs and New Religionists.

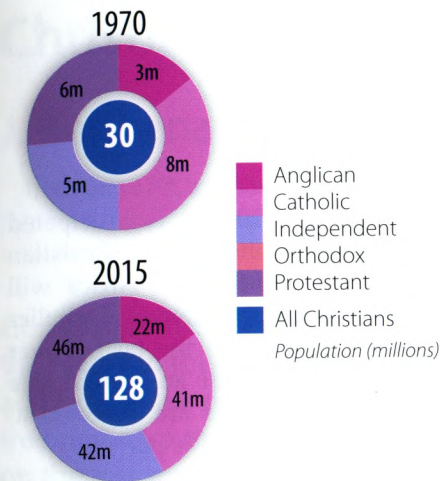
Christianity in Western Africa, 1970–2015

Christians by Country, 2015

128 Million Christians, 36.1% of Population



Western Africa is the least Christian region of Sub-Saharan Africa, only 36.1% Christian (128 million) in 2015 (although up from 28.4%, 30 million, in 1970). Most Western Africans are Muslims (183 million) and many countries have extremely small Christian proportions, such as Mauritania (<1%), Mali (3%) and Niger (<1%). Having positive Christian–Muslim relations is absolutely critical in Western Africa since these two religions exist intimately side by side. This proximity has caused violence in many cases, such as in Nigeria, where extremist groups have targeted Christian churches and kidnapped young girls from Christian families. Nigeria is nearly evenly split between Muslims in the north and Christians in the south, making it a particularly important place in terms of inter-religious relations.

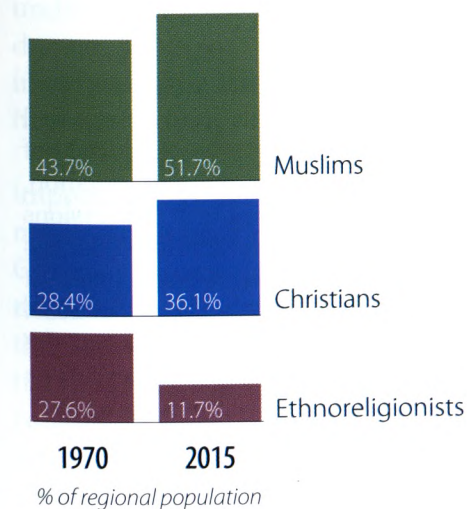
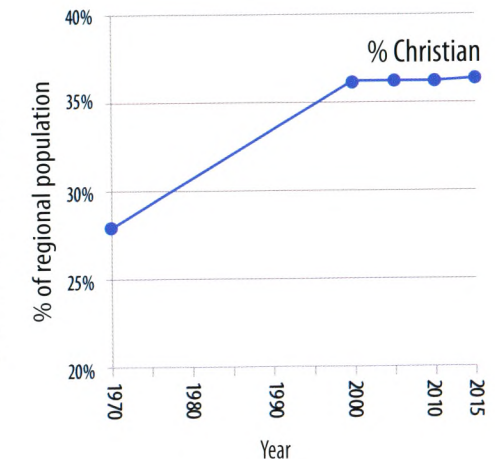


Major Christian Traditions, 1970 and 2015

Western Africa has a more even distribution of Catholics, Independents and Protestants than other regions in Africa. Each of these traditions represents 11–13% of the total population. Independents made great gains between 1970 and 2015, now representing a third of all Christians. Nearly 60% of all Christians are Pentecostal or Charismatic, spanning all major traditions.

Christians, 1970–2015

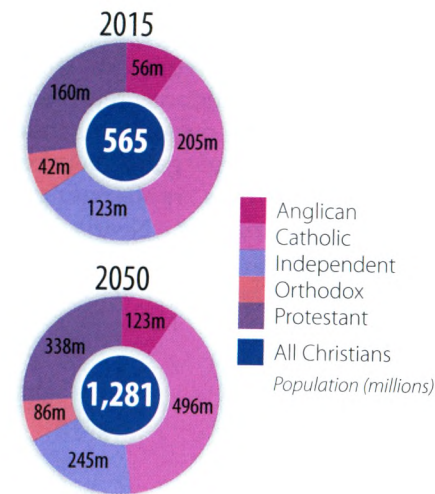
Growth of Christianity in the region has been due to high birth rates in countries like Ghana and Nigeria and Evangelical mission church-planting efforts in Muslim-majority countries. The region's Christian growth between 2015 and 2050 is likely to remain at the same rate as the general population's, averaging 2.4% per year, compared to Muslim growth of 2.7%.



Religious Affiliation, 1970 and 2015

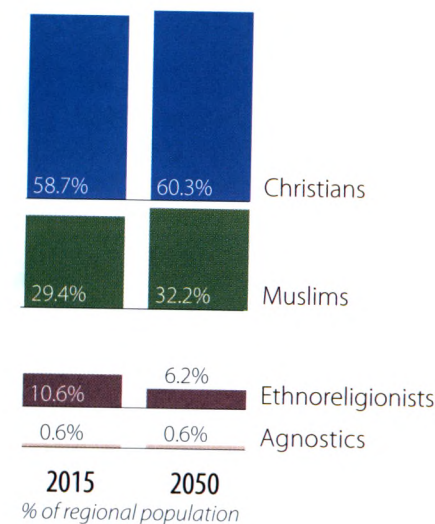
Muslims are the majority in Western Africa (51.7%), followed by Christians (36.1%) and then ethnoreligionists (11.7%). Between 1970 and 2015 Christianity grew at a faster rate than Islam (because of conversion), but looking toward 2050 it is likely that Islam will grow faster because of higher birth rates.

Future of Christianity in Sub-Saharan Africa, 2015–2050



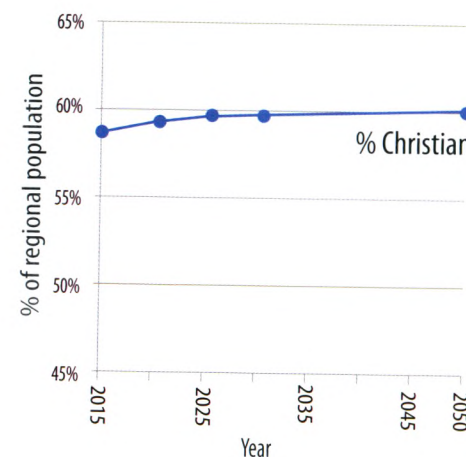
Christians, 2015–2050

Christianity is expected to increase slightly in Sub-Saharan Africa between 2015 and 2050, from 59% (565 million) to 60% (1.3 billion). There is little regional variation in this trend, although Eastern and Middle Africa are expected to grow slightly faster. In 2050, Middle Africa will have the highest percentage Christian (86%), followed by Southern Africa (84%).



Major Christian Traditions, 2015 and 2050

Looking toward 2050, it is anticipated that the proportions of major Christian traditions in Sub-Saharan Africa will largely remain the same. Catholics are expected to grow the fastest over the 35-year period, at an annual rate of 2.6%. Independents are expected to grow the slowest, at 2.0% per year.



Religious Affiliation, 2015 and 2050

In 2050, Christianity and Islam will have slightly larger proportions of Sub-Saharan Africa's population, largely due to continued conversions from ethnoreligions. Ethnoreligionists are expected to decline from 10.6% of the population in 2015 to 6.2% in 2050. Christianity is likely to remain the largest religion in Sub-Saharan Africa in 2050, with 60.3% of the population.

Christianity in Sub-Saharan Africa

J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu

Christianity has assumed a central role in African life and thought, and the essays in this volume speak to various aspects of that development. (In addition to the resources mentioned in this introductory essay and those that make up the volume, *African Christianity Rising*, a documentary film on the history of Christianity on the continent produced by Jim Ault and available on DVD, is also an invaluable resource for understanding the developments discussed here.) This introduction does not necessarily discuss or summarise the contents of the individual essays that follow because they speak for themselves. Instead, it attempts to provide in broad strokes insights into some of the non-quantitative indices that serve to illustrate the importance of Africa as a geographical centre of world Christianity. We begin from the Edinburgh 1910 World Missionary Conference and the early Western missionary evangelisation of Africa, moving through early attempts at African initiatives in Christianity to the rise of contemporary Pentecostalism. At each stage this introduction also draws attention to conferences and writings on Christianity in Africa as evidence of the growing importance, significance and impact of the faith through the twentieth century. The essay also pays attention to some of the new issues in ecclesiology, such as the debates over gay/lesbian ordination and the contentious matter of the prosperity gospel, and their implications for understanding the growth of Christianity in Africa. In doing this, the introduction spotlights Africans as leading some of the faith's most important innovations, on the continent and beyond, without taking the rich mission history in Africa's Christian heritage for granted.

The sheer numbers of its professing Christians today represent one important reason for taking Africa seriously. Even the lands of the former missionaries now play host to different kinds of non-Western immigrant Christian communities, many of them formed by Africans operating in their midst. Historically, it has been impossible to ignore Christianity in the making and development of the African continent into the modern nation-states we have today. Virtually all of Sub-Saharan Africa's post-colonial political leaders were educated and trained through Christian mission schools and, following the military dictatorship regimes of the 1970s and 1980s, the historic mission denominations of Africa in particular

played key roles in the transitions to democratic systems of government. The recent example of South Sudan is a classic case. Whether we talk of development in terms of education, political democratisation, health systems or other forms of social development, therefore, the influence of the church has loomed large in African public life. Literacy in colonial languages for conducting business in the modern world and the reduction of vernaculars into writing are also in Africa traceable to the presence of Christianity, although they are hardly bereft of indigenous collaboration.

Fifteenth-century Sub-Saharan Africa had already encountered Christianity in various locations through the work of Portuguese Roman Catholic merchants and the chaplains who accompanied them. In places where the slave trade took hold, every fort or castle had a chapel, and so indigenous people, in spite of the negative witness and effects of trade in human beings, knew that white slave masters prayed to a Supreme Being who was supposed to be loving and caring.

It is important, however, to establish from the outset that Christianity has had a much longer history on the continent than in the regions of Europe and North America that later became known as the traditional heartlands of the faith. The New Testament account of Pentecost lists Libya and Egypt as locations from which people had assembled in Jerusalem when the Holy Spirit fell, leading to the formation of the church. When persecution broke out a little later, Philip found himself in the Samaritan regions under the compulsion of the Holy Spirit, and there he ministered to and baptised an Ethiopian eunuch of important political standing. In the early post-biblical history of Christianity in Africa, a number of important church fathers, including Tertullian, Cyprian and Augustine, were of African descent. Because of these historical links between the church in North Africa and that of the ancient world, Christianity in Africa can by no means be treated as merely a colonial legacy. Important as these ancient and early histories may be, that which engages our attention here is the development and growth of Christianity in Africa from the closing decades of the twentieth century.

Indigenous Agency and Christian Growth

Our interest is in indigenous agency and the religious impact of Christian religious innovation in Africa. This is because although nineteenth-century European missions obviously played their part in the spread of the faith, modern African Christianity has been sustained and developed primarily as a result of African ingenuities. The individual mission histories of Christianity across the continent reveal that the church has spread principally through lay activities, with civil servants, settler farmers and itinerant traders – many without formal education – establishing preaching

posts and communities of worship wherever they have been. When their message has taken root, they have either requested trained support from mission stations in urban towns or, in some cases, called for missionary support. One of the biggest churches in Africa today, the Church of Pentecost – a Classical Pentecostal denomination with branches in virtually every African country – has its roots in the relationship between Peter Anim of the Gold Coast (Ghana since 1957) and the British Pentecostal missionary James McKeown. This goes back to the late 1920s, when Anim invited the British Apostolic Church to send a missionary to help with a small prayer fellowship he had started. The British church sent McKeown and the collaboration resulted in the formation of at least three apostolic churches, with the Church of Pentecost as the largest. Given such developments, the future of world Christianity, in terms of growth, seems likely to belong to the non-Western regions of the world.

This development is a surprising element in world Christianity, because virtually no one saw it coming. For many years Sub-Saharan Africa was the recipient of Western missionaries, to the point that the word 'mission' became synonymous with Christians from the global North heading southward, with a good proportion tasked with the Christianisation (and, by implication, civilisation) of the then 'dark' continent. The efforts of the Church Missionary (now Mission) Society, together with those of mission agencies from Bremen, Basel, London, Hamburg and Rome, are fairly well known and documented, and there is no need for them to be discussed here. Today, a number of modern Western interpreters of world Christianity, including the late David B. Barrett, Richard Gray, Philip Jenkins and Wesley Granberg-Michaelson, join their African compatriots in speaking of Africa as a major Christian heartland. Even many countries with large Muslim populations, such as Senegal, the Gambia, Nigeria and Sudan and South Sudan, have a noticeable Christian presence. On the documentation process from the African side, but not in any particular order, we can mention the following: Lamin Sanneh, Ogbu U. Kalu, Jesse N. K. Mugambi, Mercy A. Oduyoye, Emmanuel Bolaji Idowu, John S. Mbiti, Jean-Marc Éla, Christian G. Baëta, Kwesi A. Dickson, John S. Pobee and Kwame Bediako. They are among those who have devoted much of their writings to the interpretation of Africa's emergence as a leading player in world Christianity. In the closing decades of the twentieth century, when the continent had clearly become a major centre of Christian activities, these voices, along with many others, drew attention to the roles that Africans, as agents of Christian religious adaptations, have played; indeed, Africans have been of greater importance in the spread of the faith than missionaries from the West, whose roles as historical transmitters were often exaggerated in the literature.

Christianity as Africa's Religion

The sheer numbers of publications in the last half-century dealing with developments within contemporary African Christianity collectively testify to the importance of Africa in world Christianity. Four of these and how they sought to capture and articulate developments within twentieth-century Christianity in Africa set the tone for what followed. These seminal works are: *Christianity in Tropical Africa* (C. G. Baëta, ed.; Oxford University Press, 1968), *Christianity in Independent Africa* (Edward Fasholé-Luke et al., eds; Rex Collings, 1978), *African Theology En Route* (Kofi Appiah-Kubi and Sergio Torres, eds; Orbis Books 1979) and *African Christianity: An African Story* (Ogbu Kalu, ed.; Africa World Press, 2007). Three important points should be noted about these publications: firstly, the essays were mainly published papers from conferences on African Christianity; secondly, they spanned a period of almost half a century; and thirdly, all these publications brought together carefully edited essays by both Western and African scholars. The texts are indicative of the awareness that Christianity in Africa had started developing as a non-Western religion at the time. In the time span in which these books were published, a number of publications from scholars on both sides of the Atlantic also emerged. Some of these not only reflected on Christianity as a Western missionary enterprise but also challenged the inability of missionaries to promote a Christianity that took African cultural values seriously. One of the consequences of Western Christian hegemonic tendencies in Africa was the exclusion of South Africa from conferences deliberating on African Christianity, because of apartheid.

The four publications listed above amount to a historical collection that points to the growing importance of Christianity on the continent. Virtually all of them refer to the settlement of freed slaves in Sierra Leone at the end of the eighteenth century and the work of Samuel Ajayi Crowther of the Niger Mission as significant developments in the history of African Christian mission. What the essays in the present volume do is demonstrate that in spite of the strong presence of Islam and a multiplicity of non-Christian new religious movements, Christianity remains an influential faith in twenty-first-century Africa. What gives us the African Christianity brand is that – whether they belong to historical Western mission denominations or one of the multitudes of African Initiated Churches, including the Pentecostal/Charismatic traditions – ordinary Christians have, since the late nineteenth century, been fashioning expressions of faith that can appropriately be called post-Western and post-Enlightenment. So, in many ways, what we are witnessing is the pilgrimage of Christianity as it weaves its path out of the dominance of modern Western culture and beyond the framework of the modern Enlightenment, with its anti-supernatural worldviews, which threatens to edge God out of His own creation.

The overall tenor of the essays in this Sub-Saharan Africa volume of the Edinburgh Companions to Global Christianity is that ordinary African Christians continue to seek to demonstrate that, as Christianity becomes a non-Western religion, it goes through religious metamorphoses of immersion in the prevailing cultures of the societies in which it finds itself. This important point was completely lost on the delegates at the Edinburgh 1910 World Missionary Conference, a landmark in world Christianity to which we now turn.

Edinburgh 1910 and Africa

The Edinburgh 1910 World Missionary Conference, which shut out African voices as far as indigenous Christian agency was concerned, was a turning point in the history of world Christianity. However, by the time of that gathering, the developments that were to lead to Africa becoming a major Christian heartland had already started. Ethiopianist and nationalist churches had started in Western and Southern Africa, and independent itinerant prophetic figures were at work in Liberia, Ghana, Côte d'Ivoire, Kenya, Uganda, the Belgian Congo and virtually all of Southern Africa. The absence of African representation at the Edinburgh 1910 Conference did not mean that Africa was not discussed. There were missionaries at the Conference who were supposed to represent the continent. It is the exclusion of Africans that has made the current growth in Christian presence even more surprising. The churches in Africa were deemed insufficiently advanced to merit their own representatives. This was not simply because African churches were young in years, but also because their members were thought to be starting from much further back in the process of human development than were Christian converts from Asia. The Western European construction of Africa as a dark and backward continent affected many things, including thoughts on mission. At the time when the Edinburgh 1910 Conference was in session, however, African Christians had already taken charge of their own spiritual destiny through religious innovation.

This is significant because the fear at the Edinburgh 1910 Conference was that Africa was going to develop into a 'Muhammadan' continent. To some extent this fear was not unfounded. One of the prime motivations for Evangelical revivalism in Ethiopia, for example, was to halt the spread of Islam in the region. A number of more recent Islamic initiatives across Africa – such as the use of electronic media for disseminating Qur'anic teachings, the establishment of Islamic international schools and universities, and the conscious efforts at political participation – are indirect responses to and contestations of the presence of Christianity within the public sphere. Even the heightened activities of some forms of militant

and extremist Islam could in some senses be construed and explained as a response to the overwhelming presence of Christianity within the public sphere.

In the imagination of the developed world, Africa remains a tragedy, a continent still reeling from the effects of slavery and colonialism while now locked up in an economic quagmire that is evident in endemic poverty, systemic corruption, squalor, depressing medical infrastructure and economic deprivation. In the midst of this gloomy socio-economic outlook is one area in which the continent has within the last century developed as a shining example: the growth and influence of Christianity as a non-Western religion. The schools and institutes of world Christianity that have emerged across the Western world usually have a strong orientation towards the study of Christianity in Africa. Africans staff many of their professorial chairs. Much of this success has come through the Christian religious innovations that led to the rise of the independent church movement just around the time of the Edinburgh 1910 Conference.

Evangelisation, Formal Education and Christianity

The provision of formal education was the principal means by which Western missions undertook the task of evangelisation. Evangelisation through formal education helped to open up the continent of Africa to modern development and participation in the processes of globalisation. From the middle of the nineteenth century, West African Christianity, for example, had become synonymous with English culture because the new African elite were virtually all people who had been 'civilised' by passing through the portals of the church. The key African names included Samuel Lewis, Samuel Ajayi Crowther, Samuel Johnson, Thomas Babington Macaulay, James Johnson, Nathaniel King and James Africanus Beale Horton. Here we find English nomenclature, English language, English manners and modes of dress adopted in Africa rather than imposed. An indigenous clergy was soon to develop with the ordination of Crowther, a former Yoruba slave boy, of the Church Missionary Society, as the first African bishop of the Anglican Church. The numbers increased in the next four decades, with several receiving training at Fourah Bay College in Sierra Leone. Others had the opportunity of training in Britain. The early political leadership of post-independence Africa, to cite but one critical example, was made up almost entirely of people who passed through Christian mission schools: Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana, Félix Houphouët-Boigny of Côte d'Ivoire, Jomo Kenyatta of Kenya and Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia are notable examples. Houphouët-Boigny expressed eternal gratitude to the Catholic Church by putting up the world's largest Catholic basilica – the Basilica of Our Lady of Peace – in Yamoussoukro, his home town.

Western Christian missionaries might have provided the resources and impetus for the Christian evangelisation of Africa, but the spreading of the message outside the mission stations was always the work of indigenous lay people. In Sub-Saharan African countries like Ghana, Nigeria, Malawi, Botswana and Kenya, for example, catechist training was an integral part of the teacher training curriculum. Lusophone African countries like Mozambique had the same experience. The idea was that since schools had been established in most rural communities, teachers serving these institutions needed to be trained so that they could double as church catechists and caretakers. Public schools – primary, middle and secondary – thus became the main source of members for the churches. Children attending a particular mission school grew up with a set denominational identity, as Catholic, Presbyterian, Lutheran or Anglican. Until the middle of the twentieth century, when private schools started in several Sub-Saharan African countries, it was impossible to find any civil or public servant without some connection to a historic mission denomination through education. The downside was that there was little emphasis on Christian conversion in the conservative Evangelical sense. The rise of non-denominational educational institutions has therefore meant that denominational loyalties are being gradually eroded, and although by no means comparable to the situation in Europe, historic mission denominations can no longer count on their schools as ready sources of automatic church membership. The transformation of mission schools into government-sponsored institutions means that church control over them has waned. Unless they make a vigorous attempt at direct evangelisation, the historic mission denominations might not be able to sustain the numbers that made them a force in post-colonial African public life.

Ethiopia and Ethiopianist/nationalist churches

The story of Christian innovation in Africa following the work of early-nineteenth-century Western missionaries has often been told from the viewpoint of the African Independent Church movement. Ethiopia, a country that was never colonised, took the lead in becoming an icon of African religious innovation. The early result of the attempts to 'Africanise' Christianity in terms of leadership was the rise of the Ethiopianist or nationalist churches as they were called in South Africa and Western Africa respectively. Their emergence was triggered by questions of ecclesiastical control, often prompted by poor race relations between missionaries and African clergy. This was the first African response to European missionary work. The point at issue in the rise of Christian Ethiopianism in Africa was that, after a century of missionary work on the continent, Africa's Christian leaders began decrying the fact that indigenous peoples bore the brunt of

the Christian mission enterprise but they remained nameless, as unsung heroes, in a missionary historiography that placed the missionary at the centre of the story. In Nigeria, a certain David Vincent Brown seceded from the mission-related Baptist Church to start the Native Baptist Church in 1888. To give some bite to his African Christian affirmative action, Brown even changed his name, dropping the colonial Christian tag and becoming known simply as Mojola Agbebi. In the then Gold Coast (Ghana), highly educated Methodist ministers Samuel Solomon and Mark Hayford became leaders in the nationalist church movement. Samuel Solomon, for instance, followed Agbebi in changing his name to a local one, Attoh Ahumah. The desire to 'Africanise' Christianity thus started with Christian elites, originating from the continent, who detested the European religious hegemony in Africa. Thus, when in 1892 Mangena Mokone, the Wesleyan minister in Johannesburg, resigned in opposition to racial segregation to establish a new 'Ethiopian Church', it became part of something very significant that had already started happening in African church life.

The Ethiopianist movement was biggest in South Africa because of its racial policies. Throughout the continent, the Ethiopianist/nationalist churches offered a Christian religious dimension to the political movements that were agitating for independence. It is the ecclesial statement made by the establishment and presence of the new churches that is important for our purposes here. The Ethiopianists were ahead of their time in their perception of Christianity as a non-Western religion and their desire to fashion an authentic African response to the good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ. A number of the Ethiopianist/nationalist churches disseminated their ideas through church newspapers. It is the agitation for the abrogation of the colonial project that gave rise to these Ethiopianist/nationalist Christian religious movements in Africa towards the end of the nineteenth century. Africa's Christian elite, seeking religious independence, accepted an Ethiopian identity first because of the statement of the Psalmist, 'Ethiopia shall stretch out her hands to God' (Psalm 68: 31). Added to the biblical note was the fact that Ethiopia, on account of its resistance to colonisation by Italy at the end of the nineteenth century, had become a symbol of African liberation. Ethiopia, then, gave to Africans a natural sense of cultural, political and ecclesial identity.

Ethiopia is significant in the history of Christianity in Africa in other respects. The place of the Orthodox Church as a state institution means Evangelical movements, including their Pentecostal/Charismatic variants, have often been viewed as fringe phenomena. Yet Evangelicalism is very significant in Ethiopian Christianity today. Evangelical Christians, said to constitute less than 1% of the Ethiopian population in the early 1960s, now number in the millions. Ethiopia offers a different scenario when it

comes to Christian religious innovation. In other African countries, new religious movements emerged as an encounter between Christianity and primal religions, but in Ethiopia the encounter was between the Orthodox tradition and European Protestant missions. Today, several centuries later, the Evangelical movement in Ethiopia has come to the fore by contesting the ground held by an Orthodox Church that has enjoyed state patronage for the greater part of its history. The result is that independent Christianity in Ethiopia continues to blossom in the midst of persecution from the Orthodox Church as a state institution.

Protestant missionaries introduced Evangelical Christianity to Ethiopia from the West, but its growth and expansion resulted mainly from indigenous efforts. This growth is linked to the rise of a radical Pentecostal movement in the 1960s. By the early years of the twentieth century, a new Christian movement with a strong Evangelical orientation had already emerged within the Orthodox tradition. The Ethiopian Evangelical Mekane Yesu Church stressed personal salvation in Jesus Christ and openly questioned traditional church practices such as the Mass for the dead, which in the Orthodox Church was believed to possess the power of redeeming souls from *seol*, the Amharic equivalent of purgatory. It questioned the theological validity of the intercessory role of Mary, and although saints were honoured, the Mekane Yesu Church did not share the theological position that saints could be invoked to act on behalf of believers. The growth of Pentecostalism as a largely independent initiative of young educated Ethiopian Christians has been an important factor in the expansion of Evangelicalism in Ethiopia.

If the rise of Ethiopianist/nationalist churches was the first response to Western Christian hegemonies in Sub-Saharan Africa, the second was found in the rise of indigenous independent church movements that became known in the academic literature simply as African Independent/Initiated/Instituted Churches.

African Independent/Initiated/Instituted Churches

Coming on the heels of the historic mission denominations and the Ethiopianist/nationalist churches, the African Independent Churches (AICs) started emerging in the second decade of the twentieth century. By the 1930s, the East African Revival had already broken out in Kenya, Rwanda and neighbouring regions and the Independent church movement had become symbolic representatives of what it meant to be an African church, with possible lessons for world Christianity. Again, to use publications on religious history and phenomena as a barometer of importance, some of the most important works on the Independent church movement came from Europeans who were amazed at the level and impact of

African-initiated Christianity on the continent. The list includes Harold W. Turner's *History of an African Independent Church: The Church of the Lord Aladura* (two volumes, Clarendon Press, 1967), David B. Barrett's *Schism and Renewal in Africa: An Analysis of Six Thousand Contemporary Religious Movements* (Oxford University Press, 1968), Bengt Sundkler's *Bantu Prophets in South Africa* (Oxford University Press, 1948, 1961), John Peel's *Aladura: A New Religious Movement Among the Yoruba* (Oxford University Press, 1968), Marie-Louise Martin's *Simon Kimbangu: An African Prophet and His Church* (Blackwell, 1975) and Sheila S. Walker's *The Religious Revolution in the Ivory Coast: Prophet Harris and the Harrist Church* (University of North Carolina Press, 1983). David Shank's 1994 book *Prophet Harris: The 'Black Elijah' of West Africa* (published by E. J. Brill) includes much informative data not available to previous writers on this iconic Charismatic prophet.

These historical and theological works focused on their subjects' ingenuity as religious reformers on the continent and provided clear evidence that Christianity in Africa had, through the AICs, become a genuinely African experience. Furthermore, the AICs had provided the 'raw materials' out of which the discipline of African theology developed. This movement was especially significant in South Africa, where European forms of the faith had excluded Africans from fellowship on account of the various apartheid regimes. Academic discussions on theological incarnation, contextualisation, inculturation and oral/grassroots theology used the ministry of the Independent church movement as a practical example of what Africans considered important in the Christian experience. In Southern Africa the churches associated with that movement were known collectively as Zionist churches and in Eastern African countries like Kenya as Roho (Holy Spirit) churches. In Ghana the AICs referred to their movement as Spiritual churches and in Nigeria as the *Aladura* (people of prayer). The single most important factor defining these new religious movements was the integration of Charismatic experiences – especially healing, prophecy and ecstatic dances – into Christian worship. These churches have been so important to the transformation of the religious landscape of Sub-Saharan Africa that they remain some of the best-studied movements in the Christian history of the continent.

In the rest of Sub-Saharan Africa, the origins of the AICs lay in the work of African itinerant prophets – William Wadé Harris of Liberia, Garrick Sokari Braide of Nigeria, Simon Kimbangu of the Congo and Isaiah Shembe of South Africa. The impact of these charismatic prophets on Christianity in Sub-Saharan Africa has been phenomenal. Laying claim to different crisis-related conversions and Holy Spirit-inspired Charismatic experiences and graces, many travelled within their countries with large followings, preaching the gospel and challenging people to abandon traditional

resources of supernatural succour in favour of belief in Jesus Christ as Lord. The ministries of such itinerant prophets were deemed a threat to the existing mission churches; for example, the Catholic Church in the Belgian Congo persecuted Prophet Kimbangu until he died in prison. Healing and prophecy remained the stock in trade of the Independent churches that emerged from the work of indigenous itinerant prophets and changed the face of Christianity in Africa. In a theological sense, the AICs are critical in demonstrating the real spiritual hunger that Christianity encountered in Africa and sought to satisfy. The movement 'Charismatised' the religious landscape of Sub-Saharan Africa and tilled the soil in which contemporary Pentecostal Christianity has developed.

Pentecostal/Charismatic Movements

There is a relationship between the rise of Ethiopianism, the emergence of the Independent church movement and contemporary African Pentecostalism. When Mensa Otabil, a Ghanaian Pentecostal, wrote *Beyond the Rivers of Ethiopia* in 1992 (Pneuma Life Publishing), he was recalibrating the ideals of an older generation for our contemporary period. In spite of any continuities between the theological emphases of the AICs and Pentecostalism, Pentecostal/Charismatic churches and movements challenged their compatriots to move away from the traditional religious-cultural symbols and idioms in which their Christianity was expressed. It was only a matter of time, however, for the Pentecostals in Africa to be seen as contemporary versions of the same old thing. The biblical emphases on speaking in tongues, prophecy, healing, visions, revelations, exorcism and the like that characterised the AICs have continuities in the spirituality of both the Classical and contemporary Pentecostal movements of indigenous origin. The major areas of contention, as far as the Christianity of the AICs was concerned, included the use of sacramentals such as holy water and anointed oils as therapeutic substances. Even these have been incorporated into contemporary Pentecostalism, with the rise of healing and deliverance ministries taking care of the shortfalls of the gospel of prosperity. If the material prosperity that must accompany the exercise of faith and the faithful payment of tithes and offerings does not occur, the popular contemporary hermeneutics goes, then it means witches and demons are holding back one's blessing and need to be taken care of in ever-developing rites of exorcism, healing and deliverance.

The characteristics of the new Pentecostals are clear: a charismatic, gifted and entrepreneurial leadership; urban-centred mega-sized congregations, an attraction for Africa's educated and upwardly mobile youth; innovative and extensive use of modern media technologies; and the preaching of a gospel of prosperity. The ministry of the prophet, which was an important

hallmark of the classical Independent churches, is now also a central feature of contemporary Pentecostalism. Prophet T. B. Joshua of Nigeria is perhaps one of the most popular examples of a modern-day Pentecostal prophet. Prophesying and conducting exorcism services on television is new in African Pentecostalism. Add that to the use that the new churches make of other media resources, such as the Internet, with their professionally designed and constantly updated web pages, and the saturation of the airwaves with church services and Pentecostal gospel music, and one gets a sense of how Christianity in Africa has been transformed into a public religion. Within the public sphere, contemporary Pentecostal pastors exert their influence on Africa politics. Several politicians consult T. B. Joshua. Much attention was paid in 2010 to pictures of Goodluck Jonathan, the then President of Nigeria, kneeling in public for prayer as he received blessings from Pastor Enoch A. Adeboye. An attempt by the late President of Zambia, Frederick Chiluba, to publicly bring his Charismatic Christianity to bear on political life backfired on several fronts. Nevertheless, it is public knowledge that Africa's political leaders now count on the spiritual services of Pentecostal/Charismatic pastors in the same ways that traditional chiefs sought the help of Muslim clerics and shrine priests to shore up their power bases.

African Christianity and the African Worldview

This volume's rich diversity of essays, exploring the histories, development, theological orientations and impact of Christianity in Africa, collectively tell an important story, describing what may conveniently be termed African Christianity. We have argued so far that this is Christianity that partly owes its culture to the Western missionary enterprise but which in many places on the continent has resulted from indigenous initiatives and primal realities. At the time of the Edinburgh 1910 Conference, the historic mission denominations had started coming under African leadership and new Christian religious innovations were occurring under the inspiration of indigenous Christian leaders. This melting pot of churches and new Christian movements means the continent now boasts a massive Christian presence, unparalleled in the history of the faith, with Africans at the heart of developments. The recognition of the historical influence of European Christianity is visible in the numbers of churches, educational institutions and medical facilities bearing the names of Christians from those parts of the world. In virtually every African country, one can encounter, in a remote village or town, mausoleums where the mortal remains of white Christians who laboured and passed on in Africa have been interred. Such burial places are still in use, as leading clergy take their places of rest alongside missionaries – for example at an old Baptist missionary cemetery

on the campus of the Nigerian Baptist Theological Seminary in Ogbomosho and in several Presbyterian strongholds in Ghana.

The growth of Christianity in Africa means that it has become impossible to sustain the sharp distinctions by which Westerners defined the faith in terms of liberals, Evangelicals, Pentecostals and Charismatics. The religio-cultural world within which African churches operate is one with emphasis on the manifestations of supernatural power and the integration of Charismatic renewal into worship. This approach is, for example, changing the nature of ecclesiology as defined in the Western world, making a strict typology virtually impossible. For most people, as long as their existential queries are being answered satisfactorily, one system of worship and belief would not necessarily negate another in their experience of Christianity. Africans are notorious for accumulating in their personal worlds different streams of Christianity without regard to their types, doctrinal differences or emphases. The Western missionary influence on Christianity in Africa has by no means waned completely. The traditional Western mission denominations maintain their historical links with 'mother churches' in Europe in particular. New Independent churches and Classical Pentecostal denominations of various kinds also develop strategic fraternal ecumenical relationships with churches across the North Atlantic for whatever benefits they hope to obtain. By and large, however, Christianity in Africa remains the product of African initiatives in religious innovation and evangelisation.

Whatever its origins, the one thing that is common to the histories and trajectories of Christianity in Africa is the way in which traditional worldviews have influenced the appropriations and expressions of Christian spirituality. In other words, Christianity in Africa has been expressed primarily through African cultural values, presuppositions and idioms, making it a truly and genuinely African endeavour. The options for the pneumatic versions of the faith in Christian religious innovations, for example, has always resulted from an amalgamation of the biblical and African worlds and their sensitivities to the presence of supernatural realities behind and within the universe. In short, the African universe is one that is alive with the presence of supernatural powers, and when access to vernacular translations of the Bible indicated that this was so also in the biblical world, it was only a matter of time before African Christians were claiming encounters with the Holy Spirit and breaking free from the apron strings of mission Christianity to start new ecclesial communities that took indigenous worldviews seriously.

In the past, Roman Catholicism was considered the most foreign of the historic mission denominations in Africa. Most of its agents remained white Western fathers until early in the twentieth century. The Mass was said in Latin and liturgical accoutrements and regalia were all visibly

Roman in appearance. Today, through the writings of the late historian of African Christianity Adrian Hastings of the UK, Archbishop Emeritus Peter K. Sarpong of the Kumasi Archdiocese in Ghana, the Presbyterian scholar of Ghanaian Catholicism Pashington Obeng and Catholic scholar Laurenti Magesa of Tanzania, we have abundant documentation of the successful inculturation of Catholicism across the continent. A number of other studies produced by Catholic insiders underscore the fact that, through a systematic vernacularisation of the Catholic faith since the Second Vatican Council (1962–5), Africans have built their own brand of the worldwide Catholic faith that is recognisably Catholic and African at the same time. In *Asante Catholicism* (1996), Obeng demonstrates how Archbishop Sarpong, himself an Oxford-trained religious anthropologist, translates his anthropological ideas on the ground with African traditional songs, religious symbols, gestures, modes of worship and other paraphernalia introduced into the Catholic Mass among the Asante. During Corpus Christi processions, for example, the body of Christ is now enthroned in a chief palanquin to indicate that Christ is King of Kings.

An important constant in African Christianity is the reality of the supernatural as inseparable from everyday life. Divine healing thus remains an important category in all forms of Christianity in Africa. Thus African Catholic grottos have acquired a non-denominational character, with Christians of all traditions patronising them as places of intercession for their health and related problems. On the streets of Africa, popular Catholicism is expressed through a loose devotion to Mary, seen in her image portrayed through art in public places and in the rosary, which people carry in their cars and on their persons for spiritual protection against evil. The strong belief in the power of the supernatural also explains why prophecy, divine healing and visionary ideas that have fallen out of fashion in traditional Western Christianity still permeate the religious practices of both old and new churches in Africa. Further, the oral nature of African cultures means, for example, that indigenous Christians are able to respond rather more quickly and easily to various forms of Evangelical Christianity, which emphasise on the experiential aspects of the faith.

Bible Translation and Religious Innovation

The emphasis in this volume on the indigenous dynamics that underlie the growth of African Christianity does not mean that European contributions have not been significant. One of these is in Bible translation. As they translated the Bible into non-European languages, Western missionaries and their African collaborators became champions of non-Western cultures, emancipating indigenous languages to literary levels and enabling people to apprehend the gospel in their mother tongues. The translated Scriptures

helped African Christians to appreciate the affinities between the biblical and their own primal worldviews and inspired new ways of viewing the gospel. This commenced a process of reflection that impacted the personal and cultural spheres of life, enabling the renewal of Christianity. Thus Andrew Walls, Lamin Sanneh and Kwame Bediako, in their influential writings on this issue, make a connection between the translation of the Bible into various vernaculars and the growth of Christianity in Africa and its translation into African Christianity. It is to the undying credit of the modern missionary enterprise from the West, and to the lasting benefit of the newer churches that have resulted, that the value of the vernacular Bible for converts was recognised quite early. There is probably no more important single explanation for the massive presence of Christianity on the African continent, it is often asserted, than the availability of the Scriptures in many different vernaculars.

African Migrants and Christianity

Africans have also carried the gospel beyond the continent. Migrant Christians and their churches have, since the closing decades of the twentieth century, emerged as the representative face of the faith in Europe and North America. Many have referred to this development as 'reverse mission' or the church 'beyond Christendom' and there are cogent reasons for that. African Catholics, Methodists, Anglicans and Presbyterians have established versions of these denominational churches in the lands of the missionaries who first evangelised the continent. In Western Europe, for example, Ghanaian Methodist and Nigerian Anglican congregations constitute some of the largest religious communities. That some Westerners do not recognise the new African mission churches as authentically Methodist or Anglican only reinforces our earlier observation that African Christian innovation must not be limited to the formation of Independent churches. Distinctive forms of Methodism, Anglicanism and Lutheranism, qualitatively different from those initially received, have taken shape in African societies. Now African migrants in Western countries are establishing branches of these denominations, offering forms of worship that have been developed in the African context. Additionally, a number of such historic mainline denominations with white European membership are now led by African pastors. If one adds to the African presence and involvement in historic mission denominations the numbers of independent Pentecostal/Charismatic churches that have formed in Europe and North America over the last 30 years, we gain a sense of the seismic change that has occurred in the Western Christian religious landscape due to migration.

The point here is that when we talk about African Christianity today, it is important to have in mind both the growth of the church on the continent

and the establishment of diaspora churches by Africans living abroad; the development of Christianity as an African religion is also seen in the lives of African Christians living abroad, who constitute much of what is described as immigrant Christianity in the Northern continents today. Not only are abandoned industrial sites, cinemas and warehouses now housing churches in Africa, but also in the various Western diasporas Africans have reclaimed and refurbished empty church buildings, restoring them to their former sacred purposes as places of worship. In many senses African Christians, through a process of religious globalisation, have helped to reshape what it means to be Christian in the modern West. To that end, there is wisdom in calls for a new understanding of migrants' churches, not as ethnic enclaves but rather as conscious attempts to re-sacralise the West through active Christian witness. This is evident in a number of ways. In British Columbia, Canada, Samuel Owusu, a Ghanaian, leads one of the largest ethnically mixed congregations, the 1,000-member Calvary Worship Centre, with members from 75 nations. In London, Pastor Matthew Ashimolowo's 12,000-member Kingsway International Christian Centre is the single largest Christian community in Western Europe, with members drawn mainly from the African immigrant community. In Eastern Europe that honour belongs to another Nigerian pastor, Sunday Adelaja, whose Embassy of the Blessed Kingdom of God for All Nations boasts a congregation of more than 25,000 members, overwhelmingly made up of white Eastern Europeans.

Thus we cannot talk about world Christianity today without reference to the African Christian presence in the modern West and East. The scholarship African migrant Christianity has attracted within the last two decades is testimony to its extensive influence on the world stage. In the rise of African migrant Christianity we have a taste of its grassroots and popular influence. As often happens in both rural and urban Africa, the majority of African migrant Christian congregations have been started by ordinary lay people seeking a more enchanted religious context in which to express their faith. The demystification of the Bible and the transformation of sacred spaces for secular and mundane purposes in the developed world leave new African immigrants traumatised. The reason for this trauma is not difficult to find. The 'fact' that Christianity is a white man's religion and it is through him that God reached out to those living on the 'dark' continent is firmly etched in the popular mind. So to travel as migrants – whether in search of work or education or simply to visit on a short-term basis – and to find that the church buildings in 'God's continent' are now brothels, old people's homes, Buddhist and Hindu temples, mosques and restaurants is a trauma that many an African Christian is not able to come to terms with. African Christians leading churches in the West today see

their efforts, born out of a deep-seated sense of calling and purpose, in terms of a rescue mission to the secular industrialised world.

Contemporary Issues in Ecclesiology

The changing face of Christianity in Africa has placed quite a number of new and challenging issues on the agenda of the church. Some of them were made 'challenges' due to an initial hostile attitude towards African traditions and cultures on the part of Western missionaries. One of these is the matter of polygyny, which has always been a fact of African cultural life. Two centuries after the encounter with Western Christianity, the church in Africa has not been able to articulate a solid theological response to this issue. Churches still exclude polygynists and their extra wives from receiving Communion. Additionally, marriages rooted in elaborate traditional systems involving whole communities and bringing two spouses and their extended families together – which were considered valid before the arrival of Western missionaries and colonial administrators – are today not considered proper unions until they have been brought under the authority of the church in Western-style weddings. Shaming (through immediate excommunication) young women who get pregnant outside marriage is quite common in African churches. In almost all the major denominations, those who have not 'blessed' their marriages through church weddings are excluded from leadership, and the church is struggling to articulate a solid biblical and theological direction on these matters.

Although it might have chosen an independent path in many ways, including the incorporation of traditional ideas and practices into Christian worship, the church in Africa has not been impervious to the influences of cultural changes in the West. A critical area in which this Western influence has been evident is the issue of homosexuality. The worldwide Anglican Communion has had a tough time working together since the Episcopal Church (USA) ordained its first openly gay bishop, Gene Robinson, in 2003. Members of the Anglican Communion in Africa have on the whole rejected any attempt to get them to endorse the practice of homosexuality as an alternative sexual lifestyle, and much less to accept practising homosexuals as priests. A critical voice in the debate has been Nigerian Archbishop Peter Akinola. The Working Committee for the Primates of the Global South has been 'appalled' that the Episcopal Church ignored the pleas of non-Western compatriots not to consecrate openly gay bishops. Archbishop Benjamin Nzimbi of the Anglican Church of Kenya said the consecration of a gay bishop had created an avenue for 'the devil to enter the church'. What has contributed to the importance of Africa in the debate are the numbers of Anglicans on the continent. The figures from Nigeria alone indicate that the UK has ceased to be the heartland of world Anglicanism.

On a visit to any African city, even the casual observer can miss neither the still-in-active-use cathedrals built by Western missionaries in the early decades of the twentieth century nor the new theatre-like 'cathedroms' of the contemporary Pentecostal and prosperity-preaching Charismatic ministries. Their imposing billboards (often featuring their founders or leaders) compete with those mounted by corporate establishments like Coca-Cola and Adidas. In between the two types of worship places are those of the older AICs and the Classical Pentecostal denominations, ranging from simple shed-like structures to renovated warehouses and recognisably modest church buildings of different sizes and colours. The overall negative effects on African economies are hard to estimate, but most of the industrial properties and sites that have been closed down in Sub-Saharan Africa have now been transformed into meeting places for mega-sized Charismatic ministries. One of these, named simply the Quodesh ('the Lord's Holy Hill'), belonging to the Lighthouse Chapel International in Ghana, has a 5,000-seat cathedral and four smaller chapels on the same property that accommodate between 300 and 500 persons each. Much bigger facilities of that kind exist in Zimbabwe, South Africa, Kenya and Nigeria. Two of the most impressive belong to the Redeemed Christian Church of God, led by Enoch A. Adeboye, and the Living Faith Church Worldwide, led by David O. Oyedepo. Additionally, conservative Evangelical para-church movements like the Scripture Union are still functional in Africa's high schools and universities, helping to put on the table a 'religious buffet' that even the best of typologies and quantitative data find difficult to capture in its entirety.

The significance of the church in Africa is evident in other respects as well. Church leaders have been vociferous in arguing that projects sponsored by Western institutions are often left in the hands of foreign experts paid disproportionately high salaries and allowances but with little knowledge of the issues on the ground. In response, it is very instructive to note that when the World Bank was looking for alternative partners for the management of resources for development in Africa, religious institutions, including churches, became the obvious choice. African governments of both the military dictatorial and democratic types are known to be very corrupt. The church, although not completely absolved from blame in this direction, is seen as a more dependable partner in social and economic development. This is not simply due to moral considerations but also because the allegiance to the church of ordinary Africans tends to be much stronger than to the state.

A new phenomenon that has developed in African Christianity and which we can safely consider in the arena of development is private higher education. In addition to the efforts of the historic mission denominations

in various countries, contemporary Pentecostal churches are also involved. The Central University College of the International Central Gospel Church in Ghana and the Covenant University of the Living Faith Church Worldwide in Nigeria are two of the best examples in this area.

Conclusion

When we consider Christianity in Africa, the qualitative indices that help us to identify it are many, but perhaps at the core are the ways in which the African traditional worldview or primal imagination has remained resilient in the expressions of the faith across denominations. Vestiges remain of Western European mission influence on Christianity in Africa, but through a combination of factors, including access to the Bible in vernacular languages and indigenous initiatives in Christianity, Africans have taken the faith to different levels. Christianity today is a non-Western religion and Africa has been a key player in that development. In keeping with its pneumatic orientation, for example, healing camps in Africa function as spiritual medical centres where the sick, afflicted and physically and emotionally troubled are quarantined for extensive prayer sessions in bouts of exorcism and deliverance. All these developments must be considered in any discussion of Christianity in Africa. In other words, it is impossible to describe any form of indigenous Christianity in Africa without reference to the ways in which it has been influenced by traditional religious ideas and the independent trans- and non-denominational institutions and structures that operate within the religious environment. Even the historic mission denominations have been stirred into emulative action, and their previously rigid liturgical services have now been relaxed to accommodate informal praise and worship services with mass spontaneous extempore forms of praying introduced into Christian worship by the African Independent Churches.

There have been failures along the way, as the churches in Rwanda and Burundi in particular attempt to come to terms with the roles they played in the genocidal conflicts of recent years. Many have also pointed to the endemic corruption, unhygienic communities and political and other socio-economic quagmires in which the continent finds itself, in spite of the dynamic presence of Christianity. After all, as we have noted, it is impossible to talk about any kind of development in Africa without reference to the presence of Christianity. Much needs to be done if Christianity is to sustain its credibility as a God-given blessing to a continent with its fair share of endowments. The hope is that numerical growth and dynamism will be translated into concrete action, so that the abundance of life promised by Jesus Christ for those who come to Him may be realised in lives and communities to the glory of God and the blessing of His people.

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South Africa

Tinyiko Maluleke

Unlike in North Africa, where Christianity arrived as early as the first century, Christianity came to Southern Africa on the back of colonialism. Such Christianity had little to do with the people subjected to colonialism, at least initially: it was settler Christianity, served by settler churches and pastors who represented imperial powers and provided spiritual services to the settlers. However, such is the nature of the Christian faith that the churches serving European settlers across Southern Africa had to answer the question of whether to confine their work to the settlers or expand it to include the colonial subjects, the Africans.

When the Dutch established a permanent station at the Cape of Good Hope in 1652, they soon brought a minister of religion, but only for themselves. It took the settler church more than 100 years to start engaging in formal missionary outreach, first among the imported slaves and thereafter among the local African populations. Christian mission was not, though, one of the aims of the Dutch who settled in the Cape. Their initial interests were commercial and economic. After all, the Cape was supposed to be only a halfway station between India and the Netherlands.

African Religion and the Reception of Christianity

African historians, religion scholars and theologians have long taken issue not so much with the historical fact or the role of the settler church and imperial religion in the transmission of Christianity to the locals but with the presumption, often unstated, that the religious history of Africans begins with the arrival of the colonial settlers. The non-acknowledgement of the religions with which the slaves came, and those of the indigenous peoples, is often experienced as an attempt to suggest that whereas Europeans came with religion, the locals had little, if any, concept of religion. Many books on Christianity in (South) Africa contain the usual disclaimer about a lack of sources on the religions of local people at the point of contact with settler Christianity. Clearly, the religions and cultures of the locals were not of much interest to either the colonial settlers or the settler church and its officials. Indeed, indigenous peoples' supposed lack of capacity for religion was an aspect of the self-serving justifications for both slavery and colonialism. What has continued to irk interested observers is the complicit

and continued neglect of these religions by scholars and researchers. In part this grievance is at the heart of the emergence of African Theology, Black Theology, Contextual Theology and Feminist Theology.

Correcting this theological and historical neglect in order to show the continuities and discontinuities between Christianity and African religions has occupied the attention of many first-generation scholars, such as John Mbiti (Kenya), Bolaji Idowu (Nigeria) and Fabien Eboussi Boulaga (Cameroon), to mention but a few. In South Africa, this scholarship is eminently represented by the work of Gabriel Setiloane on the concept of God among the Sotho-Tswana and to some extent by Desmond Tutu in his emphasis on the role of *Ubuntu*. The main aim of these scholars has been to posit a rational, rich and old account of African religiosity, philosophy and cultures. Incidentally, this was also the mission of the first generation of African creative writers, including Chinua Achebe (Nigeria), Ngugi wa Thiongo (Kenya) and Ayi Kwei Armah (Ghana). In South Africa, writers such as Sol Plaatje, author of the first full-length English novel by an African (*Mhudi*, 1930), and Es'kia Mphahlele pursued a similar agenda.

They sought to portray the disruption that occurred to African life as a result of colonialism and the introduction of Christianity and Western culture. The point about pre-existent African religions is not merely to assert African religiosity, but also to point out that both the transmission and the appropriation of Christianity would not have been possible if Africans had had little or no religion before the arrival of Christianity. Christianity owes its reception and growth in South Africa to African religion and culture. Missionaries in Africa never had to invent a new word or concept for God because the locals already had an equivalent concept in their own languages.

Clearly, the biggest casualty of the growth of Christianity has been traditional African religion. Centuries of stigmatisation, harassment and structured suppression through, among others, the systems of education, health, economics and agriculture installed by successive colonial and

Christianity in South Africa, 1970 and 2015

Tradition	1970		2015		Average annual growth rate (%), 1970–2015
	Population	%	Population	%	
Christians	17,181,000	76.4%	44,690,000	82.0%	2.15%
Roman Catholics	1,589,000	7.1%	3,722,000	6.8%	1.91%
Orthodox	30,000	0.1%	30,100	0.1%	–
Independents	4,698,000	20.9%	22,240,000	40.8%	3.52%
Protestants	6,464,000	28.7%	10,464,000	19.2%	1.08%
Anglicans	1,236,000	5.5%	2,850,000	5.2%	1.87%
Pentecostals	4,358,000	19.4%	26,330,000	48.3%	4.08%
Evangelicals	2,898,000	12.9%	5,337,000	9.8%	1.37%
Total population	22,503,000	100.0%	54,490,000	100.0%	1.98%

Source: Todd M. Johnson and Gina A. Zurlo (eds), *World Christian Database* (Leiden/Boston: Brill), accessed March 2016.

apartheid administrations have forced traditional African religions to operate underground – in front, behind, beneath and between Christianity and other ‘established’ religions.

Without taking away from the contributions of famed Christian missionaries like Robert Moffat, David Livingstone and Henri-Alexandre Junod, the truth is that Christianity took off among Africans only in the twentieth century, once African evangelists and African missionaries entered the fray. It was the likes of Nicholas Benghu, Calvin Maphophe, Ntsikana, Albert Luthuli and Tiyo Soga who helped make Christianity at home in South Africa.

Strictly speaking, it makes little sense to discuss Christianity in South Africa separately from Christianity in Southern Africa. Many of the founding missionary organisations sent missionaries to more than one country in what is now known as the SADC (Southern African Development Community) region. As a result, many mainline churches are spread across the region.

Inspired by a similar movement in the United States (led by the likes of James Cone) and the Black Consciousness Movement in South Africa, South African Black Theology radicalised the discussions. The categories of race, class and gender as well as Marxist analysis were added to conventional theological methodology. The charge here was not merely that colonial Christianity had either misunderstood or neglected African religious reality but, rather, that it was wilfully complicit in the racial, class and gender marginalisation of black peoples. One area of focus for South African Black Theology has been biblical hermeneutics. For black theologians, if the Bible were not going to be one more oppressive document, new and other ways of reading it had to be found. In this regard Black Theology has developed reading methods that include reading against the grain, gendered readings, reading behind the text, reading the silences and reading in front of the text. Some of the most vocal proponents of South African Black Theology include Bonganjalo Goba, Mokgethi Mothlabi, Takatso Mofokeng, Manas Buthelezi, Madipoane Masenya, Denise Ackerman, Christina Landman, Simon Maimela, Itumeleng Mosala and Steve Biko, as well as the author of this chapter.

The New Mainline

Perhaps the story of the largest Christian denomination in contemporary South Africa, the Zion Christian Church (ZCC), best illustrates the point about African agency in the growth of Christianity in South Africa. Travelling the 500 km stretch of road from Johannesburg to Beitbridge at the border between South Africa and Zimbabwe is precarious at the best of times. In the days leading up to Good Friday and all through the

Easter weekend, the road is extremely congested, making travel on it, slow, stressful and dangerous. This seasonal migration, first from south to north and a few days later from north to south, is a function of several factors. It is a legacy of the colonial migratory labour system, which included the targeted conscription of young men from rural South Africa and from neighbouring countries to work in the mines of Johannesburg after the discovery of gold in 1886. Similar patterns of labour migration are still in place today. There is, however, also a religious dimension to the annual Easter weekend traffic snarl. Less than 30 km outside the town of Polokwane in the province of Limpopo, on the road that connects the town of Tzaneen to Polokwane, are the headquarters of the ZCC. According to the 2001 census, the ZCC had a membership of nearly 5 million. Its headquarters, now known as Zion City of Moria, sprawl over an unremarkable hill, originally known as Thabakgone. The new name derives from the biblical place where Abraham was tested by God through the command to sacrifice his son Isaac. Moria has become a great place of pilgrimage for ZCC members. The Easter weekend is the pinnacle of several annual pilgrimage moments in the liturgical calendar of the ZCC.

Such is the importance of these pilgrimages for ZCC members that they travel in their thousands to Moria by mini-bus, bus, train, car, bicycle and on horse, donkey or foot. Over the Easter weekend, the dominance and impact of the ZCC on the road that connects Johannesburg to Polokwane is almost total. Not only does it affect traffic flow, it also impacts the businesses by the roadside and in the towns located along or near it. The periodic influx of pilgrims has a particularly strong impact on the town of Polokwane and its surrounding villages. Both small and big businesses look forward to the annual injection of patronage they receive during each pilgrimage. For the pilgrims themselves, this is the time and place for learning, edification, rejuvenation, inspiration and healing. Legend has it that when the leaders of the ZCC go banking after each pilgrimage their chosen bank is closed to the public for a whole day, in light of the amount of cash they have to deposit. This is probably nothing more than legend – but it speaks to the other power of the ZCC, its business side, its effort to forge a life and ecclesial model of healing, economic and spiritual self-reliance.

The founder of the ZCC, Engenas Lekganyane (c. 1891–1948), is an important figure in South African Christianity. Currently, the church is divided into two factions that live peacefully side by side, the main (Star) faction and the smaller St Engenas (Dove) faction, named for the badges members wear and led by the grandsons of the founder, Ramarumo and Joseph Lekganyane, respectively. Established in 1910, the ZCC is a kind of metaphor for the seismic changes that have occurred in South African Christianity over the past century and half. With roots within the Lutheran,

Apostolic Faith Mission and Presbyterian traditions, the ZCC speaks to the rise of Pentecostal, Charismatic and African Initiated Churches in African Christianity. Hundreds of other Zion-type churches also exist.

In terms of numbers at least, the churches comprising the Pentecostal, Charismatic and Zion types constitute the vast majority, and therefore the representative church type, in South African Christianity today. The pulse, energy, cadence, shape and form of South African Christianity are to be found within, between and among these churches. This is a remarkable turn of events. Over the past 100 years, conventional church classification has been turned on its head. In terms of numbers, Zion-type and Pentecostal churches have become the mainline churches, while the historic mission churches now form part of a receding minority. The explosive growth of the former types of churches in Africa and other parts of the global South is one of the major factors that accounts for the shift of Christianity's centre of gravity from North to South.

Laying aside the question of whether the political orientation of some of these churches is progressive or not, these churches could never be said to be politically or socially insignificant. They are bridge builders between the old ways of Africa and the new world Africans find themselves in, the modern and the post-modern, the despair of the present and the hope for a better future. They are on the cutting edge of current spiritual innovation and renewal. Their organising themes are those of healing and self-reliance, encompassing both the spiritual and the material realms of life.

Over the past 25 years, we have seen various politicians acknowledge, not always in so many words, the political significance of the ZCC as they have joined the pilgrims and sought the blessings, the podium or an audience with the leadership of this church. On 20 April 1992, Nelson Mandela addressed his fellow pilgrims and the ZCC church leadership in Zion City Moria, basing his speech on a passage from the fifth chapter of the book of Lamentations.

We have come a long way from the days when African Initiated Churches used to be roundly called sects, supposedly designed to transport African Christians back into the world of 'animism'. Notably, the ZCC now has branches in several neighbouring countries in Southern Africa.

The Evangelicals

Evangelicals are generally understood as those Christians who promote conversion and missionary activism, attach a special importance to the Bible and lay a special emphasis on Christ's sacrifice on the cross. Within South Africa, Evangelicals are organised across several denominations and interdenominational organisations such as: the Church of England in South Africa (CESA), led by Bishop Frank Retief; the Rhema Church,

led by Ray McCauley; Africa Enterprise, led Michael Cassidy; the Back to God Movement, led by the late Nicholas Bhengu; and the Evangelical Alliance of South Africa (TEASA), led by Moss Ntlha. Frank Chikane's Apostolic Faith Mission, the Assemblies of God denominations and the Church of the Nazarene are some of the prominent denominations among the Evangelicals.

The grouping called Evangelicals is varied. While they share, to varying degrees, the four characteristics highlighted above, their social impact and interventions are uneven. Some, such as CESA, are politically conservative. Others are more pragmatic; for instance McCauley in the apartheid years was not radically opposed to the regime and is now close to the Zuma government. Cassidy's Africa Enterprise has always sought a 'third way' position for its adherents, neither radical nor conservative. Bhengu and his Back to God movement, within and beyond the Assemblies of God Church, sought to establish an alternative community of believers beyond the divisions and exigencies of the politics and political arrangements of the time. Perhaps the best-known among the radical Evangelicals is Frank Chikane, leader of the Apostolic Faith Mission Church (closely aligned to TEASA) and former General Secretary of the South African Council of Churches, who became Director General in the Office of the President in post-apartheid South Africa.

From Bhengu's opposition to racial segregation within the Assemblies of God to Chikane's well documented opposition to apartheid and currently to Ntlha's public opposition to urban road tolling, Evangelicals have been a vociferous group within South African Christianity. With the proximity to political power that the likes of Chikane and McCauley have achieved since the advent of democracy, the Evangelicals are more powerful than ever.

The Old Mainline

While the ZCC is numerically dominant and growing in influence, traditional mainline Christianity – the Roman Catholic Church, the Anglican Church of the Province of Southern Africa, the Methodist Church of Southern Africa, the Reformed and Presbyterian family of churches, the Pentecostal churches as well as the Charismatic churches – maintains a formidable presence in the country. Many of these churches were in the forefront of the church struggle against apartheid. These are the churches that gave us the likes of Allan Boesak, the former President of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches; Brigalia Bam, who worked for the World Council of Churches (WCC) in Geneva for 21 years; Barney Pitso, a comrade of Black Consciousness leader Steve Biko and a WCC staffer himself; Jean-François Bill, a Presbyterian and leader of the South African Council of Churches; as well as Anglican Archbishop Emeritus Desmond

Tutu, Nobel Prize laureate. Nelson Mandela was brought up as a member of the Methodist Church of Southern Africa and remained a member to his death. Combined, these churches have more members than the ZCC. More importantly, these churches continue to exercise tremendous moral influence nationally and internationally.

But there is a catch. Some of the old mainline churches, notably the Dutch Reformed Church, supported the apartheid system. While from among this group of churches came some of the fiercest opponents of the apartheid ideology, calling it a heresy, it was nevertheless from this group of churches that the apartheid ideology was created – at least its theological justification – and staunchly defended. Some churches in this group might not have defended the system, but they were embroiled in it and therefore compromised by it. It is in the light of this that the role of such church leaders as Beyers Naudé and Johan Heyns of the Dutch Reformed Church and Frank Chikane of the Apostolic Faith Mission Church becomes noteworthy, given the official stances of the churches from which they came. Similarly, the role of such Reformed theologians as Willem Saayman, David Bosch and Klippien Kritzinger, who were openly critical of the stance of their own churches, is remarkable.

The old mainline churches were therefore internally conflicted regarding not only their stance in relation to apartheid ideology but also in relation to their theologies, as well as their visions of the role of the church in society. The fact that apartheid found overt and elaborate support from at least one so-called mainline church has proved costly, as many have concluded that all of Christianity was implicated and therefore fundamentally compromised.

The period since apartheid in South Africa has been a time of serious introspection and regrouping for old mainline Christianity. A particularly thorny issue is the legacy of the role of Christianity in colonialism and apartheid. This legacy continues to haunt Christianity in South Africa.

The crisis in mainline Christianity is made worse by the waning strength of ecumenism, not only in South Africa but also internationally, since the end of both the Cold War and apartheid. The waning fortunes of ecumenism have often been described in terms of diminished funding, but the crisis is more than merely financial. Reflection on ecumenical theology has itself become impoverished. Perhaps mainline Christianity has not responded effectively to the fundamental issues of the twenty-first century, such as environmental sustainability, the HIV/AIDS pandemic, inequality, poverty and sexual orientation.

The South African Council of Churches has become a much smaller and weaker entity than it was at the height of the struggle against apartheid. Other ecumenical structures such as the Institute for Contextual Theology, which

oversaw the crafting of the Kairos Document in 1985, have disappeared. The Federal Theological Seminary, in which the likes of Desmond Tutu and Khoza Mgojo (members of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission) once taught, has collapsed. With the demise of several ecumenical platforms has emerged the re-marginalisation of radical prophetic theologies such as Contextual Theology, Black Theology and African Theology.

Additionally, the past two decades have also been a time of change, as many of the older church leaders and theologians either retired or took up other positions outside the church setting. Frank Chikane became Director General in the Presidency of Thabo Mbeki. Brigalia Bam became chairperson of the country's Independent Electoral Commission. Barney Pityana became chairperson of the Human Rights Commission and later principal of the University of South Africa. Desmond Tutu became the chairperson of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. These experienced, well known and very able leaders were suddenly no longer available to the churches. The churches had to find new, often younger, and definitely less known and less experienced leaders.

Strangers in Our Midst: Immigrant Churches

Owing to porous borders, the exact numbers of immigrant Christians remain as elusive as the exact number of immigrants in South Africa. While the country might not have the highest number, continentally, it has one of the highest numbers of economic and war refugees from other countries. Indeed, the Johannesburg metropolis has long been a continental, global and regional magnet for immigrants – a sanctuary for refugees fleeing repression, famine and economic deprivation. For many Southern Africans it is the city of dreams, as a result of which the rate of urbanisation has been high. Since the end of apartheid, other major cities, like Pretoria, Durban and Cape Town, have become truly cosmopolitan. As a consequence, several immigrant churches have emerged in these cities. While a few of these are part of the so-called mega churches, many are smaller, ordinary churches that hire church or industrial sites, or pitch tents in open fields.

Among the more flamboyant of these is the Christ Embassy International, the church of Chris Oyakhilome, a Nigerian known as Pastor Chris, which has branches in South Africa, the UK, Nigeria and the USA. The same applies to David Oyedepo's Winners' Chapel network of churches, which is spread across several cities globally, including Pretoria and Johannesburg. The current Chief Justice of South Africa, Mogoeng Mogoeng, is a member of this church, in which he also serves as a preacher. Mogoeng is also well known for his outspokenness on matters religious. Mmusi Maimane, the leader of the Democratic Alliance (South Africa's

official opposition party), is a pastor and preacher in Liberty Church, a Charismatic church established by D. J. McPhail.

These two immigrant churches of Nigerian origin are illustrative of a new breed of 'international', Charismatic and immigrant African churches making their presence felt on the South African church scene. While the vast majority of their members are immigrants, their intention is to recruit locals as well. The Synagogue Church of All Nations, of Temitope Balogun (T. B.) Joshua, is another such church with a substantial following within South Africa. However, for all their spiritual credentials, there is an intricate and fundamental business and entrepreneurial side to these churches which goes a little further than the conventional. Some of the leaders are worth millions in US dollars, if periodic *Forbes* magazine calculations are anything to go by.

Perhaps one of the best illustrations of an immigrant church in South Africa has been the Johannesburg Central Methodist Church. It was founded in the late 1880s, shortly after the discovery of gold in Johannesburg. At the height of the apartheid system, this was a whites-only church, deep in the heart of the city. After the end of apartheid, it briefly became a mixed congregation. Soon the white members left in droves and it became a black church. With the onset of inner-city decay it gradually became the church of the city's poor. This was to change, after 2008, when South Africans started attacking foreigners – the so-called xenophobic attacks. The Methodist bishop in charge of the church, Paul Verryn, opened the doors of the church as a sanctuary and refuge for immigrants and foreign nationals fleeing from attacks in South Africa and from poverty and conflict in their own countries. This situation led to the emergence of two distinct groups attached to the congregation: conventional church members and those who literally and daily lived in the church – members and dwellers. The former were mainly South Africans, while the latter were non-South African. Tensions started building between the two groups and between the church leadership and the city municipality.

This led to great controversies about what could and could not be done in church, about cleanliness and godliness, and – from the side of the local government and municipality – about safety and about crime in the city. Verryn has been unrepentant, arguing that, in welcoming refugees and immigrants, the Johannesburg Central Methodist Church was doing what all other churches and municipalities ought to be doing. The Johannesburg Central Methodist Church has become one of the largest and best-known immigrant churches in Johannesburg. Its ministry highlights the question of what it means to be church in urban South Africa in the twenty-first century, in the face of xenophobia and homelessness. Few churches have highlighted these issues as prominently in post-apartheid South Africa.

The Future in the Present

In spite of the fact that South Africa has one of the most progressive constitutions, patriarchy, gender discrimination, homophobia and racism continue to be serious problems within the South African society and churches. The laws have changed but human behaviour lags behind. Even at the best of times, the relationship between the church and liberal democracy is fraught with tensions. These tensions are heightened in South Africa because of inequality and the legacy of legalised racism.

Few South African church leaders have demonstrated that it is possible both to be Christian and to espouse some of the so-called liberal democratic values as well as Desmond Tutu has. His faith in God and his trust in the Bible are almost child-like, but he is a fierce defender of the dignity of the gay, the women, the children, the poor and the oppressed in South Africa and beyond. It is perhaps thanks to him and his like that the role of the church in the struggle against domination, colonialism and apartheid continues to be widely acknowledged.

All four South African Nobel Peace laureates (Albert Luthuli, Desmond Tutu, F. W. de Klerk and Nelson Mandela) are protégés of Christian churches and products of missionary education. In all four of them are represented also the tensions within South African Christianity. Luthuli, de Klerk and Mandela were politicians who were nevertheless deeply influenced by the Christian traditions of Congregationalism, the Dutch Reformed Church and Methodism, respectively. Tutu, the Anglican Archbishop, was influenced also by his Methodist upbringing and the African Initiated Church in which his grandfather and uncle ministered.

To see the present and future of the church in South Africa, we must return to the traffic snarl on the road to Zion City of Moria near Polokwane. The future is on display equally among the pilgrims of the Shembe Church – the Nazareth Baptist Church – as they go to worship at EkuPhakameni in Kwazulu-Natal province. We see the ugly side of that future when members of these churches literally fight proxy succession battles outside the courts of the land, on behalf of one or the other son of the founder.

The future of the church in South Africa seems to lie between the burgeoning Pentecostal and Charismatic churches. These are the churches, mainly, of the youth. The devotion and dedication of their members has become legendary, if also tragic. The amounts of money they raise for the church leaders, and the risks they are prepared to take in the process, are enormous. We have seen the ugly side of these churches in tragedies such as that witnessed on 12 September 2014, when 84 South Africans died after a poorly constructed guesthouse belonging to T. B. Joshua collapsed on them in Lagos while on pilgrimage to Joshua's Synagogue Church of All Nations (SCOAN).

The rise of the so-called 'prosperity gospel' churches has become a key challenge. In recent times, some of them have included weird if also demeaning practices. An incident widely reported in the media during 2014–15 involved a young pastor from Garankuwa, outside Pretoria, who ordered his congregants, the vast majority of whom were young women, to eat grass and later to drink petrol as a bizarre form of proof of faith and healing. This prompted the South African Commission for Cultural Linguistic and Religious Rights to launch, during 2015, a nationwide investigation into the commercialisation of religion.

The intersection between economic desperation and religion is clearly an important area in which we may search for ways of understanding some of the extreme religious practices. We could also search for clues to these in theories about toxic leadership and the dysfunctional co-dependent relationships between leaders and followers. Similarly, collapsing cultural structures and dysfunctional state processes and institutions, as well as rampant corruption, seem to drive some African Christians towards a need for miracles and immediate signs of divine intervention, perhaps as forms of relief from the desperate situations in which they find themselves.

A Profile

What, then, would be the profile of a representative South African Christian? She is a young woman. She is part of the overwhelming majority of the population: women and youth. She could be a member of one of the old mainline churches. She is more probably a member of the ZCC or a member of Liberty Church in Randburg, outside Johannesburg. Her Christianity is made up of various influences. In her is the influence of the spirituality of her missionary-educated mother, who died a leader of the women's group in the black part of the Dutch Reformed Church or similar. Formally, the young woman has left mainline Christianity, but the habits of mainline Christianity remain strong. The choruses that sustain her and fellow members of her Charismatic or African Initiated Church are excerpts from old hymns written or translated by the first generation of missionaries from the hymnals of their European home churches.

How and where does the young South African woman practise her faith? In several places and ways. Her Bible is permanently in her handbag. She is a member of a church that meets in a particular coach of the train in which she travels to work. In the 50 minutes from her departure to arrival, a complete church service, sometimes with Holy Communion, is held inside the moving train. Out in the open veldt, she meets with fellow members of her church every Sunday, all dressed in white, to worship and to receive faith-strengthening water and anointing oils. Maybe she attends Pastor Chris's Christ Embassy Church in Randburg. After much loud singing

accompanied by musical instruments, she joins her fellow worshippers to watch Pastor Chris preach to them, dressed in his trademark suit, as his picture is beamed via satellite on a big screen. He is preaching to them from London. But the congregation act as if he is in their midst. So does he. More crucially, both assume and insist that Christ is in their midst.

But perhaps the young South African woman Christian is rural and poor. She is a member of the woman's group of her local church, a mainline church. She sings choruses as she carries water from the local fountain and collects firewood from the forest nearby. Her hope is to go to heaven. But before that, she plans to go to university in Cape Town, where she can study medicine, so she can return and serve the locals who are dying prematurely from entirely preventable diseases. And yet, the young South African Christian continues to believe deep down what her grandmother used to tell her, namely, that rivers are alive, lakes are sacred, animals are like humans and the skies can talk back when upset.

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Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia and Swaziland

James N. Amanze

This chapter examines the status of Christianity in four countries in Southern Africa: Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia and Swaziland. The four countries share a Christian history going back to the first half of the nineteenth century. Much of the missionary work that was undertaken in the four countries was pioneered by missionary societies from Europe and America. Their legacies in the missionary field linger to the present day. Brief consideration will be given to the history of the churches in each of the four countries before turning to their current status and their contribution to socio-economic development, with a focus on education and health, as they work in partnership with their respective governments. The chapter also examines the ecumenical efforts made by the churches to work together in order to promote church unity in their respective countries.

Botswana

Botswana is a predominantly Christian country situated immediately north of South Africa. It came under the influence of Christianity in the first half of the nineteenth century through the missionary activities of Robert Moffat, David Livingstone and other representatives of the London Missionary Society (from 1817). They succeeded in establishing what is known today as the United Congregational Church in Southern Africa (UCCSA). Their arrival opened the missionary field to other churches, namely the Dutch Reformed Church (1871), the Lutheran Church (1891), the Anglican Church (1900s), the Seventh-day Adventists (1922), the Roman Catholic Church (1928), Pentecostal churches (1930s) and the Methodist Church (1940s). It should be noted that though Christian values have permeated every aspect of Tswana society, Botswana Christians continue to observe many African traditional religious practices alongside Christianity, especially during such crises as sickness and death. This is particularly the case among African Independent Churches (AICs), which have been formed by Africans in order to worship God and practise their Christianity in African ways.

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