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## Pentecostalism, Capitalism and Globalization

Ashiraf Mugalula

- Research Fellow, Makerere University |Al-Mustafa Islamic College

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### Correspondence

Author:

Ashiraf Mugalula

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### Abstract

This paper focuses on Pentecostalism as a global religion and its relationship with capitalism as the religion of the modern state. As Walter Benjamin shows in *Capitalism as Religion*, capitalism is a pure cult without dogma. Despite my argument for capitalism as being interconnected with Pentecostalism, my central focus is on the nature of the state that permits capitalism as opposed to the nature of capitalism or protestant ethics as presented by Weber. Several scholars like Fred Jenga, Zemlicka Kevin, Samuel Mugisa among others have argued for the capitalist nature of Pentecostalism but none has interrogated on the state as structure that enables the free marketization of religion. I consider Karl Marx and Marx Weber but do not necessarily use them as blue prints for understanding the nuances that happen in the Ugandan context. I argue that the colonial religious protestant ethics is what is transferred (a with nuances of consumerism from the church pastors) to the postcolonial Pentecostal ethics. Put simply, the morals that Pentecostals uphold can be traced from the version of Christianity which started in Uganda in the 1880s. It is in the 1980s that pastor Simeone Kayiwa and others champion the movement and reestablish the values of Pentecostalism. Among the values of Pentecostalism are hard work, discipline and resilience. The values that borrow highly from the protestant ethics. The coming of the protestant ethics in the Ugandan context was because the colonial government, a protestant government which introduced those values within the territories of Uganda. It was from them that religion took a predominantly capitalist nature as opposed to the spirituality that had existed in Africa before their arrival. Secondly, by reading Pentecostalism and showing its relationship with globalization, democracy and media, I focus on how different states (regimes) shape different spaces through deregulated regulation and regulated regulation. This paper exposes the intricate relationship between Pentecostalism and the state which explains the widespread nature of Pentecostals.

**Keywords:** Pentecostalism; Capitalism; Globalization; Protestant Ethics; Colonialism; State and Religion; Uganda

## Introduction

### THE COLONIAL GOVERNMENT AND CAPITALISM

The coming of colonialists disguised as the coming of civilization. Central to this civilization was the exploitation of the natives. This exploitation took several forms from the exploitation of labor to the exploitation of raw materials and the market. Debates that exonerate the colonial exploitations such as Jean Francois Bayart have argued that Africans, even before the colonial invasions were engaged in activities that had such practices but all these debates ignore the element of a structured exploitation that happened to the continent. In 1880 with the coming of the British government, the central question was on how could they improve the human resource to create a labor force that was necessary for this exploitation? For the Imperial British East African Company (IBEACO), there was a need to first construct the railway from the interior to Mombasa. This violent practice included the eviction of masses and land grabbing until the railway was completed. In 1891, Sir G. Molesworth's letter to the English treasury requested for ammunitions, an engineer and conscripted local natives at the coast for this expedition.

The construction of the railway followed the flow of the British government into the interior for the exploitation of resources. Consequently, the question was, how could they a small group of people improve on their labor for the expansion of capital? The colonial government realized that it could depend on the protestant party for the creation of an employable workforce in the administration of the area through education and also encouraging of an employable work force that had not attended education. The extraction from both pools was promise of both the formal and informal labor. For the formal labor as will be explained, priority was given to the chief's children and converts who could then man the activities of the others. In newly encountered places, the colonial government established schools by the help of the christian missionaries to simply train their agents. As seen in his *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, Marx Weber opines that if the Catholics had taught that good works were necessary for one to be saved, the protestants taught that god would save those he had predestined to save and an evidence in their earthly success was necessary to attest to their calling. For this reason, the protestants went into accumulation as evidence that they had been called by God. To achieve this accumulation, an inculcation of pro-capitalist virtues was necessary to instill within the nativized missionaries. Most missionaries were highly thrift, hard workers and efficient. A case to consider is for Blasio Kigozi when he went to Ruanda. Blasio, as earlier explained was a child from the colonial christian education system from cathedral. A score of the missionary project, Blasio was convinced by David Livingstone that God had only one son and that son was a missionary. As a missionary, Blasio and others were taught values among which included hard work, resilience and patience. Blasio while in "Ruanda showed energy and enthusiasm in all that he undertook". He was most "anxious to combine head knowledge with practical work and his enthusiasm in this direction once led to trouble with the Belgian administration". This implies that Blasio had also learnt a few skills form the colonial government and desired to combine his spiritual and physical knowledge in the mission places. For all opposition Blasio experienced in the setting of these missions, he had bene

taught by Oswald Chambers that “*pain is ever the price of power*”. These lessons had granted him a resilient spirit in the face of opposition.

The missionaries had always survived on very minimal supplies from the colonial government but had been taught on how to survive by them. This survival on deficits installed in them a spirit of hard work to establish their own funds. This was crushed by the colonial government because it was not willing to let the missionaries establish themselves as a major economic factor within the colonies. The missionaries were hence left with one idea which was to master the art of survival in such deficit budgets. This explains how the thrift values were inculcated in them. For most of them, the absence of funds to secure their travels were not an issue since they had learnt to survive in the most minimal way possible yet produce as many converts as possible. While in Gahini, they managed, despite the presence of famine and other challenges, to construct literacy and evangelist training schools, a hospital and a church.

Beyond that hard work, Blasio had taught the Gahini mission teams against inappropriate behavior that included drinking and pride. To Blasio and Kosiya, it was necessary to respect one another and they had a zeal in witness and personal work. For this, Joe Church tells us that “the preaching of sin is never palatable to the natural man, so this renewed zeal and aggressiveness on the part of Blasio caused a fresh outbreak of opposition to him”. By questioning inappropriate behavior and leading by example, these missionaries created a labor force that was necessary for the expansion of capital. The case for Blasio Kigozi expands to the lived experiences of Nsibambi, Kivebulaya, Kosiya among others. For all missionaries, hard work, resilience and the preaching against unpalatable behavior was necessary for the establishment of a labor force.

Most importantly, these missionaries too were a labor force used to expand capital through their works. Behaviors such as drinking made the people miss out on the labor processions in a day. For example, the teachers that were reprimanded for poor results in the bush schools were the same teachers who were always in the drinking places. From the case of the Ugandan missions, it is clear that they were frugal hard workers and efficient in everything they per took. Beyond the masterly of such qualities, they embarked on question behaviors that would delay capital such as drinking, engaging in immorality, laziness, fighting and everything that would endanger the body of a person as a labor provider. The lessons from the protestant ethic have found their way to the pentecostals because as argued before, the pentecostals have a relationship with the protestants.

Further explaining the relationship, pastor Simeone Kayiwa the leader of the 1980s kiwempe movement and pastor Kayanja Robert, the pastor with the current biggest pentecostal church in Uganda, both have traces of their faith in the Anglican faith. The former as a leader of the cathedral choir and the latter as a reverend’s child. It is upon that interconnection of pentecostals to protestants that the colonial protestant ethics can shade more light on the neoliberal global marketisations that happened in the 1980s. In other words, the success of these global forces rested on the premises that the native missionaries had already mastered the protestant ethics for the success of capitalism in the day to day lives. Hence the colonial state and its nature are still responsible for shaping the behaviors of

the pentecostal religious tradition even in the 1980s when the neoliberal powers swept across the globe.

## POST-COLONIAL PENTECOSTAL REVIVAL AND THE PROTESTANT ETHICS EXPOUNDED

Protestantism was a seedbed of character traits and values that undergirded modern capitalism. Not to say that it was the only factor responsible for capitalism's expansion but it was among the other several factors responsible for such an expansion. As advanced by Bergit Meyer in *Pentecostalism and the Neo-Liberal Capitalism: Faith, Prosperity and Vision in African Pentecostal-Charismatic Churches*, capitalism when exported to the modern colonial state had significant continuities with the mission churches and the African independent churches. Kirby quoting Berger says that "contemporary Pentecostalism has an exceptionally high affinity with modern capitalism, going so far as to describe it as a carrier of modern capitalist culture in direct reference to Weber". This implies a further continuity from the protestant mission churches to the pentecostal churches that arose in the 1980s. In Africa these churches have spread phenomenally since the late 1980s, that is, "at a time marked by the IMF -instigated policies towards democratization, liberalization and commercialization of media, which entail the reconfiguration of post-colonial state and the emergence of a new public spheres which gave rise to religion". Drawing from the research conducted in the biggest church in Kampala and the mother church for all these current neo pentecostal churches, the first "byamagero" (translated as something full of wonder) performed by pastor Kayiwa and Kayanja were "byamagero" of finding employment for their flock. The latter found employment for a church member by encouraging him to sell second hand clothes while the former found employment for several people by encouraging them to attempt on government pioneered jobs.

In both contexts the essence of providing labor in a value chain is vital. One of the core lessons of pastor Kayanja to the new generation is to turn principles into pain. To him, the new generation must "turn principle into pain because its only principles which will help the next generation to perpetuate the move of God". He draws closely from the pain that Joseph suffered for the redemption of his brothers during a famine. For a more elaborate expansion on this, Joseph is a christian figure in the old testament who was sold by his own brothers into slavery. A time came when his brother's "nation" had been hit by famine so they had to move to other places to look for food. Among the places they moved to was Egypt where Joseph had been sold. At that moment through his hard work and capacity to interpret dreams, Joseph had risen from a position of a slave boy to a manager of the Egyptian treasures which included the food store. To pastor Kayanja, it was necessary for Joseph to pass through that torment if he was to raise to greater heights. Likewise, it is necessary for the young generation to convert their moments of pain into moments of victory. That is, "they should not sell out simply because the going is tough". One of the core values of the protestant reformation is asceticism. This value asserts that human beings should have severe discipline and avoid all forms of indulgence, typically for religious reasons. Weber's ascetic Protestantism was an all "encompassing value system that shaped one's whole life, not merely ethics of the job. Life was to be controlled the better to serve

God. Impulse and those activities that encouraged impulse, such as sport or dance were to be shunned”.

The privileging of the concept of inward ascetism as an “attitude that privileges hard work and reinvests its fruits rather than consuming them” was necessary for the growth of capital. The churches I met all encourage hard work and a puritan behavior that encourages the believers to dissuade from all earthly activities that have unnecessary expenditure but also those that have been branded as evil according to the bible standards. These behaviors include alcoholism that banishes the body from being employable in a work force as one spends more time in their subconscious mind, then domestic violence that can injure the body and prevent one from entering into the labor chain or even make one face the right hand of the state(prison cell) or sexual immorality that can later endanger the human body and make them face the left hand of the state(hospital). Conclusively, any behavior that yields to indirect and direct expenditure in regards to money or time without necessarily guaranteeing a return towards investment is critiqued as negative behavior. Condemning poverty explains why both pastors exemplified here and pastors in the villages that I encountered encourage hard work, go an extra mile to find employment for the flock, create entrepreneur projects for the church and encourage the right attitude towards in their preaching. They draw largely from Peter Berger’s study of the ascetic Latin American churches that “promote personal discipline and honesty, proscribes alcohol and extra-marital sex, dismantles the compadre system (which is based on Catholic practice and, with its fiestas and other extravagant expenditures, discourages saving), and teaches ordinary people to create and run their own grassroots institutions”. Such ascetic behavior implies that like protestant ethics that viewed the success of a believer on grounds of their material wealth, even the pentecostals believe that one is blessed and liked by God by virtue of their material possession. The insatiable desire for material possession promises a prosperity gospel that encourages hard work while on the other hand also encourages God’s intervention in the daily routine of the believers. “Over and over, people flock into the deliverance services and special prayer sessions offered by the powerful charismatic pastors who promise prosperity, protection and healing via powerful prayers”.

The pentecostal-working class Christians in Kampala are closely monitored through fellowship. For the churches around Kampala, it was visible that these are situated next to the city’s work place with several programs that range from morning glory, lunch hour and evening glory. On average, a believer in the city attends three services a day. The morning glory prepares his body and mind for the day’s labor, the lunch hour checks on them to make sure that they are still on track with the resilience and hard work values and the evening glory evaluates their day’s experiences. The research by *Center for Development and Enterprise* reported that pentecostalism generates personal agency, implying a more intense family life, working life and business activities that in turn approximate to the features of max’s Calvinism. The pentecostals have hence been vital in promoting an ascetic human resource value system.

However, for the Ugandan case, not all pentecostals can be read in the line of Max Weber, some especially the pastors espouse features that have been well stated by Colin Campbell. Features of extreme consumerism by the pastors that I will address.

The protestant ethics prescribed hard work and investment that could be seen by a missionaries that did not care about his dress code and preached wordy sermons to an audience seated on hard pews. Contrary to that, in the Ugandan context, it is possible to find a “preacher who has an exuberant appearance of the immaculately dressed born again pentecostal”. The pastors have expensive cars and probably in their latest models with even the village pastors cruising in roads that could perhaps not be fit for cars. They usually have high tech media houses that have actually been granted by the state to air the biggest percentage of the free to air television stations. Note that the average Ugandan may not be able to subscribe to monthly television channels but a free to air channels always exist for the average person and these free to air religious channels by calculation take ninety percent of the television’s stations.

Take for instance, pastor Kayanja has the Miracle center television, pastor Bujingo has Salt media, pastor Jackson Senyonga has Top television, pastor Wantaate of full gospel has Gugude television, pastor Sserwadda has TBS television and the list can go on. All these pastors too have very exaggerated housing, drive posh cars, have entrepreneur projects and much more. The success of these pastors is a promise to the success of their flock only if the flock are more resilient with the tithing and offering. God blesses those who bring to his house and never come to the house of the lord when empty handed. Their notion of consumerism and getting from the people is quite intentional to the extent that they have mobile money numbers running on their television screens, they have merchant codes for those who want to send money straight from their business and the churches have on the average the list basket collections as at least five in number with some other smaller bags that move around to gather more collections. During offertory, the scriptures evoked can lure one to hand in their transport fare in an aim to get that last blessing. In some “cultic” churches, people line up according to their amount of offering and also receive a unique prayer. The more the offering, the longer and louder the prayer with extra amenities of oil smearing or getting prayed for items like handkerchiefs among other objects. Similarly, these pastors mirror a high rate of consumerism in church when they enter into paying the amenities of electricity, water bills, improved sound systems, more elegant structures, more top-notch cameras among other things that do not necessarily mean an investment geared towards a return. Key to the protestant ascetics was that the fruits of the hard work be reinvested for more profits rather than consumed. The critic for Weber was to position ascetism over consumerism which all lead to the development of capitalism. If Weber focused on ascetism for the development of capitalism, Campbell advances the consumerism in the modern pentecostal churches as a necessity towards the growth of capitalism. Much as Gifford says that the pentecostal ascetic behavior instead hampers development and progress, I argue like Meyer that the assumption that ascetic behavior could limit the growth of capitalism as compared to the consumerist behavior instead evokes a critical nuanced study of different contexts and versions of these pentecostal churches. Quoted by Bergit, Campbell showed that next to the puritan ethic, a “romantic ethic emerged that eventually

gave rise to the spirit of modern consumerism”. This spirit makes people “strive for new experiences out of dissatisfaction with what they have and who they are, it espouses a hedonistic orientation and inexhaustibility of wants and engage in ceaseless consumption of novelty”.

To illustrate this, pastor Lubega in a village church started by driving an old Nissan double cabin which he sold off to buy a newer version of a Nissan which he also sold off to buy a version from Toyota and also recently sold it off to buy another version of Toyota. From this rate of product chasing, it can be predicted that he must sell that car to buy another version later on.

To Meyer, the born again have a “right to enjoy prosperity, including expensive consumer items, elegant clothes, a nice house, flashy car all by the grace of God”. Bergit expands on this by categorizing riches into two forms. The riches from God and the riches from Satan. If the protestant ethic paid attention to the inner self as opposed to the outward self, the pentecostals pay attention to both the in and out self. To Bergit, “the sinful inner state of the believer as such is not a point of much worry, the trouble rather lies in the continuous experience of afflictions, from sickness to poverty, which prevent the born-again believer from progressing in life”. The churches I encountered cherish the riches from God as those that came from persistent tithing and offering. The scriptural assurance of such riches is from the book of Malachi 3:10-12 that says

*“bring the entire tithe into the storehouse so that there may be food in my temple. Test Me in this matter, says the lord who rules over all ‘to see if I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you a blessing until there is no room for it all. Then I will stop the plague from ruining your crops and the vine will not lose its fruit before harvest...all nations will call you happy, for you indeed will live a delightful land”.*

To be able to engage in those practices of tithing and offering, one must be a worker. The riches from Satan on the other hand come from sacrifices of incentives to the devil. These are critiqued as short lived and vanity while the latter are appraised as generational.

Upon such backgrounds, “the puritan and romantic ethics co-exist, making the modern individuals not just an iron cage of economic necessity but a castle of romantic dreams ,striving through their conduct to turn the one into the other”. The ultimate success hence of a born again rests on the material incentives that expect or get from God and these are to be enjoyed as they purchase high end products and live a luxury life. To show this very clearly, pentecostals now organize music festivals that mirror the worldly ways of making money but also consuming their profits. In these festivals, a charge is put on entrance fees and upon entrance there are categories like Very Important Person (VIP) section and ordinary section. The places I attended, one in Nansana in Wakiso district by pastor Bugembe, a renown local gospel artist who organized the music festival in a way that is far away from the puritan ways.

Beyond the two models, Bergit critic both Max and Campbell for taking the “starting point that the religious roots that gave rise to the protestant ethic have died off, in a sense that the protestant religion played the role of midwife in the birth of capitalism but has since then lost its ground of existence in an increasing disenchanted world”. Weber must have written at the start of modernity and has by now lost the track since modernity is in its past stages. This implies that we keep lingering between the protestant ethics and the romantic ethics as illustrated by Campbell. To Bergit, if Weber and Campbell took at face value the rise of secularism, the current “prominence of religion provokes us to ask what maybe the future of the religious past and to answer this question, we need to grapple with the fusion between religion, politics, the market and entertainment. Since by now capitalism is already in place, we need to investigate the popularity of pentecostals by asking “how pentecostalism facilitates capitalism but also how the latter shapes the former, and perhaps most importantly, how both are enmeshed”.

In a way that the research, I found another very intriguing nuanced contribution of pentecostals that goes beyond ascetism for the flock and consumerism for the pastors This model lies largely in the capacity for those pastors to make contributions in moments when the state has a diminishing role. In the next section, I grapple with how to conceptualize this contribution—the confluence between asceticism and consumerism.

I argue that Pentecostalism in post-colonial Uganda is shaped not only on the neoliberal economic global framework but also structural nature of the state. The state as a violent secular state reproduced these religious revivals in an era of a neoliberal economy. That is, during 1970-79 when Amin had exerted physical violence on the pentecostals on behalf of the state, the pentecostals did not fall out because of their innate characteristics of individual worship but instead took an underground path. In the 1980s when the market was neo-liberalized an opened for democratization, the success of the pentecostals rested on the premise that they had survived a forced secularism and had factions from the different households and private spaces they operated. The neoliberal era simply gave them a chance to suffice to the public from their underground time. Most importantly, it came with new technologies in media that enabled their spread like a wild fire. This will be addressed later. For now, my interest is on the nature of the neoliberal era that scholars have presented as a deregulated timeframe yet I claim that even neoliberalism was influenced by the state, at least in Uganda. That is, despite the global wave, the Ugandan state had a role to play in the adoption, rejection and licensing of the neo-pentecostals market. Understanding particular contexts will enable us avoid generalized assumptions but deal with specificities as starting ground from which we can later interrogate the global.

Several scholars like Hildyard, Ong, Peck, Bayart, Dradot, Laval among others claim that neoliberalism is characterized by redeployment. Other like Clarke, Newman, Prasad and Hague argue that neoliberalism is characterized by the state. To Audier, the “independence of the economy was the major mistake of liberalism and a major cause of economic collapse; market order is not a natural order”. Quoting Hayek, Hilgers say that “it was necessary to create a political programme able to facilitate the emergence of spontaneous market order”. Beyond neoliberalism needing the state as space for pure competition, the

organization of this competition too needs an institutional approach that avails implications in terms of law, the market and regulated deregulation. Competition further needs the “state to be properly positioned to correct the natural phenomenon that hamper competition such as monopolies or price instability”. This implies that Competition and maximization become the organizing principle of the state.

What Bergit, Campbell and Weber did not consider in the nexus between religion and pentecostalism was the historicity of the state and how the state was an important element on organizing capitalism and religion. Likewise, how the state is also organized by religion through secularity. The current Ugandan state (regime) has provided a framework for the organization of the pentecostals under the NFBPC. Much as the churches are not necessarily audited by the state or even taxed, the state is the one that organizes the activities of the church through deregulated regulation.

Pentecostals have a functionalist perspective that is harnessed by the state and enables their survival alongside replication. It then becomes hard to read them as simply ascetic or consumerist. Bergit, Campbell and Weber only trace how these are enmeshed with capitalism. Bergit through an interconnected exchange, Weber through ascetic individual behavior and Campbell through extreme consumerism but none asks on the role of pentecostalism in regards to subsidizing the economy while there is a diminishing role of the state. I draw closely from the famous Karamoja project being ran by pastor Kayanja of Miracle Center Cathedral. This project mirrors the several projects undertaken by different pentecostal pastors who improve the livelihood of people that are not necessarily their flock but are part of the nation-state. How then do we understand such projects that aren't for consumerism or those that also challenge the ascetics?

I present a nuanced argument claiming that the Pentecostals' conduct is not merely driven or enmeshed with capitalism but may not necessarily be juxtaposed with communism or socialism. Rather it is best understood by considering the conduct of the different churches and analyzing the motivation factors for such cultures. Pastor Kayanja's famous quote for the project is Matthew 25:34-40 which states that

*“then the king will say to those on his right hand, come, you blessed of my father, inherit the kingdom of God prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me a drink, I was a stranger and you took me in, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me. Then the righteous will answer Him saying, Lord, when did we see you and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? When did we see you a stranger and take you in, or naked and clothe you? Or when did we see you sick, or in prison, and come to you? And the king will answer and say to them, Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me”.*

The current gospel on Miracle Centre television is to sow in the ripe-fertile grounds of Karamoja. Believers are urged to “make offerings to the church (next to paying tithes), submit themselves to fasting and other religious disciplines and to pray wherever they are,

be it at home, in the market or at work. Born again faith thus requires a propensity to give, ritual self-restraint and an overall alert attitude”. The seed offering given goes beyond the recipient nature of the people to the recipient end of the giver. That is, to bless a person here on earth promises a better place in the unseen world. To pastor Kayanja, the “heart of God is to feed his sheep”. During the protestant reformation’s emphasis on faith, Bergit quotes Asad who says that “the inner person became the privileged site of modern religion, and this implied that the relationship between the inward experience and outward behavior became problematic”. Further quoting Kaene, “privileging the inward above the outward gave rise to endless, at times desperate, meanderings about the authenticity and sincerity of faith and the fake nature of it at first sight appropriate behavior”. This explains why to some pentecostal pastors, the emphasis on the inner person with the denial of the worldly matters seems irrational. The born again believer hence believes that God materializes in his or her life and will ultimately bring prosperity. The Born Agains hence consider the outward person’s life before they consider the inward person because the success of the outward person attests (if wealth is got in the right ways) the promises of God to grant riches to people.

The presence of dying Karamojongs in a country harbored by such pentecostals hence becomes very perturbing. The believers that must-see prosperity in this context are the Karamojongs who cry in hunger due to prolonged drought, failed crops and famine. The people in the region feed on leaves for survival and this hunger threatens the survival of 1.2 million people living in the area. The Karamojong’s life must change from one of suffering to one that experiences God through his extended arm of the pentecostals. Pastor Kayanja’s project began in phases, the first phase was a bucket initiative that sent immediate food to respond to the crisis. “We have delivered 60 tons of a special protein nutrient rich blend consisting of a mixture of flours, milk, soy and calcium powder, natural sugars and vitamins. Mixed and warmed a serving of this blend is filling the hungry stomachs of over 6,000 children and adults daily”. The second phase is a project that promises the self-sustainability of the Karamojongs. Sending food to the region will “only alleviate the problem for the short-term and we must redeem time. People are dying daily. As we continue to feed more and more families, it is costly. Raising 10,000,000 ugx for the Karamoja cry project will enable us continue our feeding project and begin this next phase to equip the people with lifesaving tools”. For that reason, for the past two years, his outreach to the people using both media and television has been to provide financial support and prayers to the project. On average the needed money has been over ten billion Ugandan shillings to realize this dream with over five billion so far collected. Pastor Kayanja is extremely media conscious and his displays of the work so far done using media encourages faith and belief in people for their capacity to have agency to transform society. In other words, when they help Karamoja, they have helped God and if they help God, God must reward their work. He shares images of young children who were once dying and now playing happily, naked women who were dying with visible countable ribs when they are now clothed. Generally, the disturbing images of once dying humans that have been redeemed by the church’s collections prove that he has maximized on the resources given effectively and efficiently and also prove a miracle performed by the church to the suffering people of Karamoja. While the neo-liberalization of the economy enables him make use of the mass media and encourage collections beyond the Ugandan territorial space, Kayanja’s projects survive on

the premise that they support state in moments when it has a diminishing role. Second, they are successful because they address the human concerns that go beyond capitalism's consumerism and ascetic values. For all that impact, it is plausible that pentecostals keep attracting many people. Despite the case of a few people like pastor Kayanja and others, there are also others who simply manipulate the media for extortion and this category falls under the consumerist category. In the next section, I discuss the relationship between pentecostalism mediated by the media to become global and what this means for democracy.

## PENTECOSTALISM, GLOBALIZATION AND DEMOCRACY

The global era of democracy was central to giving prominence to pentecostal movements that the state had no problem with. Samuel Huntington has studied the movement of democracy to about thirty countries. The first wave was between 1828-1926 and the second was between 1943-1962. The third wave which characterized the rise of pentecostalism was 1974-1990. In this third wave, to democracy, there was a “declining legitimacy of authoritarian regimes; global economic growth, changes in the policies of external actors like united states [...] and changes in the doctrine and activities of the catholic church”. While there has always been a strong correlation between Protestantism and democracy because of the protestant emphasis of the individual as central, the catholic church had hierarchical structures. However, “between the 1960s and 1980s, the catholic church changed, both at the global level and at the level pronouncements of the popes and the Vatican council and at the level of popular involvement, giving rise to a new church that almost invariably came into opposition with the struggle against authoritarianism”. The church was central at the struggle against authoritarian regimes to the extent that in Korea and Latin America, the church lent its resources towards the radio stations, building and newspapers that critiqued the authoritarian regimes. In country after country, the “choice between democracy and authoritarianism became personified in the conflict between the cardinal and the dictator”. In Argentina, “after half a century of dictatorships and Peronism, democracy was restored, and structural changes paved the way for a certain “autonomation” of politics, law, economy, science and religion”. The autonomation of society in America, Africa and Asia under this third wave of democracy paved way for the reinvention of religion to have what scholars like Gifford and Hans have called new religious movements. Huntington had little specific study of Africa but South African theologian John de Grouchy has studied the relationship between Christianity and democracy across the world. While Gruchy and Gifford explore the church's considerable role in world and Africa's political transitions, I attempt to investigate on how these global forces instead shaped the state and church using Uganda as a vantage point. The third wave of democracy from the West swept across the globe and came with freedom of persons which also implied the freedom of human practice whence a free marker that is central to this freedom. Bergit asserts that the end of the cold world war in 1989 marked the rise of global culture of neoliberal tradition that stresses the freedom of the person to consume. This consumption rate made then

implied the advancement of technologies that could enable effective global consumption. One of these technologies was mass media.

The neoliberalism mixed with democracy implied a free religious atmosphere which gave room for different states to revise policies which were otherwise authoritarian to the religious sphere. In Uganda, Amin's regime had banned religious revivals but this era opened to the state a freedom of worship which meant the return of the religious revivals in the public spaces. These religious revivals banked on the presence of the revised tech in the mass media to spread across the nation, region, continent and globe. This success of the global wave partly explains why in 1988, the Kampala press announced the celebration of peace and security by the Uganda people during NRM's second anniversary. Despite such attempts towards peace in a recently war-torn country, Mamdani presents that while the NRA was celebrating its success that the peasants had termed peace and security, another category of people were in the north lamenting the success of NRA. To Mamdani, "the social character of the Holy Spirit Movement was different from that of the rest of the rebel groups that opposed the NRA, and that it was a political failure of the NRA not to have recognized this distinction, and worked out different tactics in dealing with the holy spirit movement". Central to his realization is that in that democratic wave as Uganda was struggling with the very concept, the rise of such movements attests to the country's efforts towards religious freedom and his observation on the failure of NRA to handle the movement in a diplomatic way shows that the state as a site for the law and violence was sure to only grant religious freedom to sects that were not opposition to it. The failure of the state to handle the Holy Spirit Movement (HSM) as a social movement but as a rebel group has been critiqued but most importantly shows how the Ugandan state was grappling with democracy. For the religious movements that the state had not branded as rebel for their lack of direct interest in power, the state simply regulated by virtue of registration. This implies that at a global analysis, the wave of democracy from the West was central in shaping the activities of different nation states but that wave was also reinterpreted across different countries as they grappled with their democracy. In the Ugandan context, the wave was localized by the NRM to regulate groups and person that did not oppose the state, in other words, it was a regulation by the state even in media consumption.

### **Pentecostalism and Media**

All media is censored by Uganda Communications Commission (UCC). In the 1980s and the 1990s when state reorganized the forms of worship, the underground home fellowships re-emerged as the numerous independent, indigenous pastor-led Biwempe (papyrus mats-built). Locally established, indigenous-led Pentecostal churches and ministries in Kampala include among others Namirembe Christian Fellowship under Pastor Simeon Kayiwa, the Rubaga Miracle Centre of Pastor Robert Kayanja, Liberty Worship Centre of Pastor Imelda Namutebi, the Prayer Palace Kibuye founded by the late Apostle Deo Balabyekubo now under Pastor Gervase Musisi, Victory Christian Centre of Pastor Joseph Sserwada, Christian Life Church Bwaise of Pastor Jackson Ssenyonga, Christianity Focus Centre of Bishop David Kiganda, the Synagogue Church of all Nations under Pastor Samuel Kakande, Global Gospel Healing Ministries of Bishop Patrick Makumbi, Canaan Ministries of Pastor Aloysius Bujingo, Phaneroo Ministries of Apostle David Lubega, and Zoe Ministries run by

Prophet Elvis Mbonye. All these pastors are popular media figures with most of them owning their own media stations for example, channel 44 also known as miracle TV for pastor Kayanja, Dream TV for apostle Joseph Sserwada, Top TV for pastor Jackson Senyonga, Kingdom TV for pastor Kiganda, ABS TV for late pastor Augustine Yiga and now possessed by a son also a pastor, STV for pastor Kakande, Salt TV for pastor Bujingo, pastor Mbonye always uses NTV, Life TV for Pastor Tom Sembera, Glorious Times TV for pastor Kakande Samuel, Fresh TV for pastor Twaha Muzira, Manifest TV for apostle Grace Lubega. Then there are other television stations that belong to christian bodies such as Shiloh TV for Namirembe Christian Fellowship, also tagged to pastor Simoen Kayiwa, KS TV for the good news evangelical ministries but can be tagged to pastor Brian Mwesige, HG TV for Holy Ghost Healing Tower Ministries but can be tagged to pastor Deo Ssemakula, Rest TV for Kansanga Miracle Centre but can be tagged to pastor Isaac Kiweweesi, Light house TV that is open to all pentecostals, Record TV that belongs to the Universal Church of the kingdom of God. If start on the radio channels owned by the pentecostals and general christian body, the list can be endless. I will list a few without tagging the individual ownership. We have Spirt FM, Inner man FM, Record FM, Kampala FM, Heart FM, Grace FM, Mercy FM, Fire FM, Favor FM, Dunamis FM, Salt FM, Mighty fire FM, Imani FM Peace FM, Top FM, Kingdom FM, Family TV, Power FM, Alpha TV, Impact TV and the list goes on even to localized radio frequencies.

The evolution of mass media in Uganda traces back to the colonial government. The government allowed media stations of the newspaper that were predominantly used by the Anglican, Muslims and Catholics. The growth within the media houses and specificities of the evolution can be found in Jenga's thesis. By the 1990s when the neoliberal wave swept across the globe, there was a shift from the predominance of the mainstream religions in using media to the marginal religions. In fact, the current report of Uganda Communication Commission has the pentecostal medias flood the market both in radio and television. Earlier on, I have stressed that the government allowed the use of the medias as the basic free to air channel following the subscription fees that come on other channels. For this effort, it is very clear that the state can allow the media channel to be free because the christian literature helps to build attitude and construct human beings who have fundamental values. These media channels have been vital in exporting and importing a rhetoric that supersedes the territorial spaces of Uganda. Jenga pays attention to the effect of the rhetoric that is shared on these media stations in these pentecostal churches but I focus on the globalization tendency this presents.

In the Ugandan context, the media house has been fundamental in exporting, importing and sharing information at a global level that has reduced the world to a village. In one of BBC's documentaries about a renown pastor called TB Joshua (of Nigeria and who had a very huge church called the synagogue church of all nations), the centrality of media and camera recordings were very necessary in expanding his church locally and globally. Whether the miracles and rhetoric were "true" or not, the centrality of those technologies in binding the globe is clear when he later gets visitors from all over the world like England, America, Korea, Uganda among others to visit his church because of the camera and media recordings. Consequently, Uganda has one pastor Kakande who is a

strong follower of TB Joshua, reproducing the very miracles he performed, using media and having the exact church branding of TB Joshua. Today the global rise of pentecostalism is still anchored on the considerable role of the media with the Ugandan state allowing for populations that cannot afford the high-end media channels consume majorly the christian literature on free to air television channels. For Jenga, the studies on media and religion across different contexts gave “limited attention to the socio-economic, and cultural contexts. The socio-economic, political and cultural context in which media operate influences how media covers particular phenomenon, or how media is used”. His intervention hence provides a “detailed socio-economic, political and cultural context of Uganda in which Pentecostal religious groups and figures operate and create their mediated rhetoric”. Jenga implies that these preachers have mastered the socio-economic, political and cultural contexts to craft an appropriate rhetoric that appeals to the people. While Jenga pays attention to those contexts, he does not investigate the conditions that make or enable such contexts.

Firstly, the state as a power decides what the Uganda audience should and can consume. Borrowing from the media censorship that happened with BBS, Red paper and other radios that broadcast politically framing messages, the bans on such media houses and the UCC direct regulations prove that the existence of these media channels is only granted by the state. Why are pentecostal media channels granted by the state? The pentecostal media channels not only dissuade the public from the on-going atrocities of the state but also encourage docile modes of engagement with the state. That is, in faces of failed state operations, the media channels encourage prayer, fasting among other actions that do not necessarily question state power. Consequently, the availability of those media channels and their rhetoric appeal to the people because it has been presented as the normative trend and gained popular opinion.

Secondly, the state’s logic of secularity that it inherited from the colonial state allows for the state’s intervention on religion through secularity. This implies that the state laws are not religious bound but also that religious activities are not free from state control. The state controls all sects except that censorship is put to those it has branded as its enemies. With the state’s control of pentecostals through the NFPBC, it only makes sense that the populist pentecostals can formulate as many media channels as possible which in a long run make them more popular—globally and locally.

During a moment of exception (COVID-19 pandemic), there was another diminishing role of the state in controlling information flow. The state made attempts to control the populist media channels such as WhatsApp and Facebook but failed to succeed. During the pandemic, the censoring nature of the state was felt when it put a ban on so many activities including the any form of church gathering. What happened was Beyond the mainstream media presented by Jenga, that is; television and radio stations, Pentecostals reinvented the other media channels that were easily accessible to them. These included face book channel, WhatsApp channel, Instagram, twitter pages among other channels. Some groups I found myself in for virtue of having visited those churches and had my contact and other personal information taken down at their door entrances include Mutundwe Christian fellowship,

Rock of Ages Family Ministries, Christ Our Way Church, Phaneroo ministries, Christos Rhema Church, Divine Church and the list goes on. The liberalization of the economy enabled the producers of products to envision individual access modes that would be consumed as a form of media in the globe. The above-mentioned software inventions come America but have been well deployed by the Africans particularly Uganda pentecostals to share religious rhetoric that ranges from the vintage points of cultural, economic, political and social. The mainstream media houses have direct state control while the populist informal media channels are not necessarily under direct state control.

Failed state control of populist individual media channels explains why when pastor Chris Ohklome preached a controversial message in regards to managing the corona virus, the state could not easily stop that information flow. To pastor Chris, believers should dissuade away from such state interventions like vaccination because his conspiracy theory informed him that the West was simply trying to create bio-medical products that could later reduce the population of Africans but also make an entrance towards a new world order he called the 5G network. When the Ugandan state wanted to control people's access to Facebook towards elections, the general population resolved to using an app called VPN that could allow for people to bypass state censorship and use the channels. This shows the failed state attempts on limiting information flow and the increase of globalization. This increased mediation (using of populist streams like WhatsApp and Facebook, twitter) of people with information without state regulation decenters the state as an entity that organizes consumption and information flow. It further proves the global nature of pentecostal discourse since as I have explained, the channels have been very well maximized for evangelical and fellowship reasons. In the next section, I show how the presence of pentecostalism as a global religion makes attempts towards creating global subjects whose identity transcends many intersections to only focus on the religious identity.

### **Pentecostalism and Identity—Moving towards Global metaphysical Identities?**

The Post Colony lingers in the legacy of bifurcation which pentecostalism attempts to break by presenting a universal subject. The division along these lines promises violence unless deliberately acted upon by the state. To its subscribers, religion(pentecostalism) promises a universal identity. This identity is framed along the modern ubiquitous terms of equality, liberty, and freedom. These when combined reproduce a democratic state. Democracy as global call had the Christianity play a role towards it. Looking at De Grunchy's case studies, there is a variety of the role played by christian denominations in the democratic processes. In other words, the churches played midwives role of democratic transition and reconstruction. Much as Grunchy is aware of such a positive role, he is also aware of their "failures, silence, co-optation and excessive circumspection". This section is not interested in the functional element of Christianity but rather in the structures that shaped that Christianity to have both the agency and activist roles. Put simply, the section looks at how the institutional religions have upheld the colonial modes of bifurcation for inclusion and exclusion. I juxtapose that structural religious predicament with the relative freedom enjoyed by the pentecostals in addressing such political, socio-economic problems.

I will draw from the case studies of Rwanda and Uganda and the role of main stream churches in maintaining bifurcations. In Rwanda, the Belgian government singled out the Tutsi as the supreme human category over the Hutu and the Twa. They deployed the Hamitic hypothesis for this categorization and deployed biological determination that evoked phenotypical features in defense of their ideologies. By selecting the Tutsi, they as well placed them in better education systems and most importantly for this discussion, they placed the Tutsi as the leaders of the church. In the Belgian administration, like in Uganda, the church was central in educating and creating the middle class who were very necessary in the expansion of capital. It is Gerard Prunier in *the Rwanda* crisis who explains that the church was the chief machinery of colonial hypocrisy that bifurcated people. The church used its rhetoric to mystify society rather than demystify it. In the church itself, the system was unscaled since the bishops were predominantly Hutu but within a mainly Tutsi clergy. The silence of church was most felt during Habyarimana's regime when, in "return for the prestige and influence that went with unchallenged control of education, health and development generally pastoral letters deliberately remained vague and non-specific, falling far short of denouncing those responsible for evil, even when they were widely known".

The silence of the church rested on the grounds that it was under the state and its control. Further, the dominance for the Tutsi clergy symbolized an imbalance of Christianity in promoting equality. The similar case happened for Buganda. Since Buganda acted as the first missionary encounter place and a Centre for the expansion of the gospel in other parts of the country and region, the Baganda shared a prioritized and naturalized biological qualification to not only "civilize" others but to also violently enforce such colonial epistemes. They preached the gospel, operated schools as school heads (even Blasio Kigozi was a head master of some village school), headed hospitals and much more. This importance given to Buganda to civilize the Ankole, Tooro, Nyoro and other tribes was later reinvented and complying tribes were also placed on top hierarchies such as the Tooro tribe over the Batwa among others. The colonialists simply used divide and rule after which they consolidated categories as frozen. That is, a time came when a muganda could not operate a church in Ankole or Tooro or when a mutoro could not operate a church in Buganda. Freezing identities explains why the Namirembe cathedral rejected bishop Sabiiti as a bishop because he was from Ankole yet Namirembe had kept its legacy as a Buganda base. What then happened was the establishment of All Saints cathedral which is also marred by westerners preferably the Ankole tribe. The politics of ethnicities still plays a major role in the inclusion and exclusion from such top positions as bishoprics or any promotion of people in the church society. Put differently, the church has been at the center of maintain particular legacies which, drawing from the samples conducted with the pentecostal church, it promises a turn towards political theology.

The first case study I read is pastor Kayanja's publication "*Re-addressing the Imbalance*" where he grapples with issues of poverty, sickness, nepotism and corruption that hover around Africa. Much as Kayanja uses theological underpinnings to understand the problems, he also counter-argues the colonial epistemes that shape the very tendencies. When telling Africans to dissuade away from the slave mentality, he says that those who enslave others always attempt to destroy their cultures and make them forget their history

and backgrounds. For that reason, “many Africans have succumbed to the wrong mentality that we are a slave force of the world. This is wrong. We are not a slave force, we are the labor force, and the laborer is worthy of their hire”. This he says is a wrong mindset that does not allow people to think about their potential and what they can achieve. On challenging the modern library, pastor Kayanja says that Africa was not always backward, divided and confused as has been portrayed. There were transportation means in Africa by that time contrary to the popular beliefs and tales depicting Africa as a jungle. When talking about Africa, he evokes its position before hegemony to challenge the dominant narratives about what the colonial archives reported on Africa. Much as he can be read as an apologist for Africa and hence derivative in his response, it no doubt that he challenges the colonial archive to posit the African identity as not the cursed race but a global race that was simply politicized. These struggles to re-center Africa have taken different shapes which have the element of divinity at the center of them all.

The other case study is a pastor at Kiwujja pentecostal church in Mpunge district in Kyaggwe subcounty. While the place has several mainstream churches with natives of the area as the church leaders, the case for kiwujja is a bit different. The pastor is a Rwandese and can barely speak Luganda fluently but has a mega church that has hundreds of Baganda natives who are not even found as the population of the mainstream churches. This pastor claims that when God called him, he told him that he would send him to a new place and grant him a new family and this new family would not even look into his ethnic lines. The popularity of a Rwandese pastor in a typical Buganda setting evokes us to wonder the qualities that makes this inclusion fluid. Firstly, if this pastor had been within the traditional churches, his ascension to the clergy-ship would be made difficult since the clergy-ship in traditional churches favors the natives of the land. Jacob Katumusiime’s thesis entitled *“Beyond Religio-Cultural Violence: A Historico-Political Re-contextualization of the Movement for the Restoration of the Ten Commandments of God”* explores the politics of such clergy-ship across different Ugandan contexts to show how ethnicity and tribe are evoked at moments of such appointments.

The last and broad case I explore is the one of Watoto church. The centrality of this church rests on the premises that it is in the middle of Kampala town, foreign and elitist yet it has managed to attract several people to its community. Watoto has many outreaches in the country starting from villages to district levels. Watoto church is an “English speaking, cell-based community church celebrating Christ, growing and multiplying as each one reaches one; touching those around them with love of Jesus, bring healing to the cities and nation”. The church started in the 1980s as local church to share the love of Jesus, bring healing to the people and help rebuild the nation. Most important, Watoto has a very connected web of home cells that is almost invisible to the public. In 1988, Gary Skinner heard God whisper about the orphan crisis as a result of AIDs and this made them start an orphan project in 1996 in Buloba village as their first home. The trend to rescue these orphans kept on and various homes were opened in Ssubi and Bira as well as other places for Watoto babies. In Gulu, Watoto started a project Gulu in 2009 following the resurgence of the Lord’s Resistance Army. Watoto like miracle center and other churches have been at the center of improving the livelihoods of so many people and societies in Uganda. This can

be well understood as liberation theology and moral economy. Attempts by the church to alleviate economic and social conditions of people using a grassroots approach. Despite such attempts, I am more interested in the possibility of looking into the Pentecostal's capacity to formulate new globalized identities. This I interpret as attempts by the church to improve the political atmosphere by affecting the inclusion and exclusion matrixes that were established during colonial times. The issues I explore in Watoto are its open theatrics, a performance called *Unfailing God* and also its leadership. On leadership, I draw from is the appointment of pastor Julius Rwotlonyo in Watoto church's main branch in Kampala shortly after Gary and Marilyn Skinner (also its founders) had left. The church had other pastors from different ethnicities and races but because the appointment in such a pentecostal churches is not premised on ethnic considerations rather, the holy spirit appointed pastor Julius Rwotlonyo, a northerner to lead a mega church in the central (Buganda). This is just one case but consequently, the appointment of several church leaders I encountered in pentecostal churches was premised on their capacity to perform a miracle, make prophesies and speak in tongues and any special gift from the holy spirit that others did not have. Leadership among pentecostals is for the edification of the church and any church leader hence is not got by virtue of their ethnic composition, wealth or social status by virtue of how they can claim to have a divine authority over them. The Watoto church has diverse populations that compose of both the pentecostals and non-pentecostals but preaches a rhetoric of unity of the body of Christ while silencing all other identity matrixes that would have risen.

The second observation I made was from the open theatrics I attended during the Christmas festival. In this performance, the underlying rhetoric was the universal humanity who all answer to the sovereign God. The scenes had people within different states who has power and control but these two were answerable to the ultimate sovereign. At the end of that performance, pastor Rwotlonyo Julius made his commentary as "we have a dream to make sure that Africa does not stay the same in the pits of race that it was placed into. We have a dream to fight poverty and improve our lives beyond what happened to us and God is on our side and we shall make it". This implies that they are aware as a christian pentecostal community of the evils of epistemic hegemony and they are willing to face those doctrines deploying theatre from below. The same church has an annual open theatric called *Heaven Gates and Hell Flames*. In this performance there two elements unique about it. The most important is that it is free and it is of standard quality. I shall explore the performance as a case study later in this paper. The two factors are responsible for swaying thousands of people to town to watch this performance, both pentecostals and non-pentecostals. The rhetoric in this performance though is what transposes attitudes and changes people's lives. The message is about the predestined end of mortal man and after his end, there are two paths he must take. The path to heaven which is a well embellished place with gold, silver, lights and angels. It is a path for those whose lives were pure or just while living on earth. The path to hell which is very underrated and full of black coal and fire with images and caricatures of the devil and demons is a path for those whose lives were impure and unjust while on earth. The entrance to either path is not racialized/ethnized or classified and neither is the participation in the acting process. The overall message is a universal human figure that is answerable to an overall monitoring God who awaits to ward everyone depending on their human deeds. The case for Watoto is simply a mirror of so many

Pentecostal free access performative attempts in society that aspire to align the masses with another power. This theatrical agency, among other factors has attracted many people towards pentecostalism which makes the faith aspire to be read as part of Uganda's popular culture.

### Attempts towards Heaven Gates and Hell Flames Description

By providing the vivid description of the play, I am hoping to entrance my reader into the theatrical setting and show an understanding of how theatre deals with the concept of reinforcement (both positive and negative) to ensure appropriate behavior or advance a particular behavior. Behaviorist scholars such as John Watson and B.F Skinner study how reinforcement is achieved socially in society. Mitchell Foucault and Althusser on the other hand also study how reinforcement is achieved through the state institutions. The idea is to read the theatre as a place for reinforcement beyond entertainment.

The red curtains are flagged side by side and a stage can be seen. On it are two varying settings of a whole stage that is almost twelve meters wide. On the right side, the first setting takes about three quarters of the stage and has a royal blue material filling its surface. The background wall is made of silver. On that wall is a golden open door which has golden stair cases leading towards it. Along the stair cases lies three longitudinal pairs of poles that have around a distance of two meters between each pair. These poles form a raw that demarcates the entrance to the door. The door entrance curtains are fine linen in white. On the right the silver wall is a table of about one meter in height and length covered in white linen and a golden stripe that is rolled from down to the top of the table causing stripes through the white line able cloth. On a table is a big golden book wide open. Above the table lies a layer of the silver wall which makes the table hang in space like the stair cases. At the right and left corners of the stage lie two white boards from which action shall be projected and then the physical setting will act as the scene for judgment. These boards are like two screens and each takes three meters long and around five meters wide. The second setting is right below the left board and this has black and red walls immediately after the white board. Chains and other hangings of tartars can be seen all over the place and the floor is dark.

The performance begins with the narration of the history of the fall of man by an omniscient narrator and this story line is projected on the boards. The boards project two seemingly naked people, man and woman in a very beautiful garden which has all versions of green. The golden sunrays hit the raised land scape and the sky is seen kissing the earth at its horizon. A beautiful water fall can be seen betwixt two green planes flowing through it. As the two strolls in the grasses of the garden, touching the grass tips with the lazy swinging of their fingers, they reach what is seen as a fruit. Then comes an invisible voice that convinces the lady to pick and eat that fruit saying "eat it, you will be like God". Immediately after she eats the fruit, the sounds of mockery and laughter can be heard coming from that invisible voice and the whole tranquility of the garden shifts to a desert marred by lack of pastures, food and water, cracks be seen dividing the earth and a violent noise is heard from the back

ground. The human race is depicted as being caught between wars, violence of all forms, famine and hunger-stricken kids are shown. Kids, who are pale, with eyes that protrude out of the sockets, dry red lips, oozing nose, countable hair, stick like hands and legs with ribs that protrude as if for a census and stomachs that are as big as sacks who squat down for inability to stand. The sound of a flute can be heard in the background and it climaxes at violent scenes and goes low at scenes without action. Then comes a man along the street who walks dragging his cross as he looks at the suffering people. The omniscient narrator tells us that that is the father's story of justice and grace, it is also a story of love. The lights fade out and open us to a physical scene at the stage where a man is beaten by a shouting mob, behind him lays a cross. As he is beaten and insults can be heard being hurled at him, a mocking laughter replaces every groan he produces from the heavy loads of sticks that strike his back. He is placed on the cross-shaped wood and nailed, arms apart and legs together, a thorny crown is placed on his head and liquids poured on his body that force a gnashing sound out his blood-filled mouth. His clothes, all thread bare and whips marks can be seen on his body. As if struggling with speech, his last lines are "father, forgive them, they do not know what they are doing". His head drops as if incapable of staying firm- perhaps he is dead. To confirm this, one of the soldiers who were initially beating him with the mob pushes a one-meter sharp pointed arrow into his ribs and they ooze water and blood separate.

The dim lights get turned on as the invisible voice gives a victorious but scornful laughter saying "he is dead, I won, worship me, I won". In that unclear vicinity, three moving shadow-like figures can be seen moving on stage and celebrating a victory and bowing in honor or worship to one of those dark figures. Then that dark figure with a red tongue and cloth covered in a dark cloth points at the audience saying, "you are all mine". The dim lights then start flickering and are replaced with a white light that show the beauty of the first scene and the man who was initially celebrating his victory points at the audience, as if he is seeing someone and starts shouting 'ahh, I saw you die, I saw you die". In amidst that shouting, the sound is tense with raised notes. As he keeps shouting a man in white walks to the stage. At the stage, besides the three pairs of rods that demarcate to show the entry to the door at either side stands composed people who are embellished in white clothes and have wings which they begin to flap as the man in white clothes and a golden crown walks to the stage. Approaching the man in black who cannot stand on his feet when this other man comes, the sound of triumph is heard from the background and the men in black can be seen groaning and mourning before the victorious man, using his hands, send them off to the left direction as if casting them to hell.

The victorious sounds gradually transpose into an "hallelujah hymn". The victorious man while smiling in full acceptance of his works holds a big bunch of keys in his hands which he raises as if his victory marker and angels are now seen standing on the heaven's side of the stage, flapping wings and enchanting. At the door now stands the two angles who hold a sword, they then cross their swords forming a canopy that Jesus would then use as entrance to the heaven doors. The lights fade out and the omniscient narrator can be heard saying that whoever receives Jesus Christ will receive eternal life. The audience gives a loud applaud at the end of this scene. Several other scenes start with the projection of varying activities that

all lead to death in one way or the other. At the climax is the judgment which also is a physical setting. Virtuous men are rewarded with heaven and the vice-full are sent to hell. As the show comes to an end, outside, another que worth thousands of people forming folding lines waiting to be admitted by the young ushers at the entrance who direct where people go. In that que, one is first admitted to the tents section, then from the tent where they wait for about an hour, they finally enter the small doors and seat, one after the other so as to ensure the efficient use of space within the theatre. When all the seats are occupied and the room is mixed with all forms of smell and chattering, the lights are turned on and a precursor to the play is given. This usually takes at most fifteen minutes as the eager masses are simply waiting for the performance. The performance starts afresh when the red curtains are flagged side by side and a stage can be seen.

### Locating the Performance in Broader Debates

The debate on African literature is inexhaustible as much as the debate on the origin of Christianity. The euro centrists claimed that there was no literature in Africa because what they met did not fit the literary canons they had designed for what is literal. The apologists for African literature claim its existence before canonicity and usually end up in author writes back modes of contest and presenting the orality of most African literal works. On the religious question, the Euro- centrists claim that “religion” the christian religion came to Africa with the coming of colonialism and that pentecostalism, aversion of Christianity began with the Azusa street demonstrations in America. The idea is Africa being a receiver and not taking part in the formations of certain traditions such as literature and religion. On the other hand, the apologists for Africa before western hegemony claim the presence of Christianity in areas of Ethiopia even before European invasions. Further still, they claim the start of African pentecostalism by Africans as part of the decolonization process within the religious terrain. Two things are important for those debates, firstly is that African ‘literature and religion’ cannot be understood in binaries of being African or foreign but in broader powers of exchange that shape both literature and religion. Martin Bernal in *Black Athena: the Afroasiatic roots of Classic Civilization* expounds the idea that questions of origin are not simply about origin but political question that claim the powers on who and what shapes what. Second, on both the literary and religious landscape has been the capacity for Africans to adapt the content to fit their hermeneutics and contexts. This then makes us question on whether the presence of African or European ‘literature and religion’ is something to discuss.

Looking at *Heaven Gates and Hell Flames*, an initially European drama, adapted by African script writers and presented in Ugandan English with locally sensible contexts for Uganda and a universal theme of ‘sovereignty’, how do we locate or understand this annual performance at Watoto church?

Locating that drama in the ‘beyond the post colony’, looks at literature and religion as having a matrix of relations in the formation of what can be called popular in the

postmodern-state. This is because the play has been re-invented with new scenes across the country in different places besides Watoto church. For all its viewers, this kind of performance enables people to view themselves differently. That is, as a metaphysically universal figure. By appealing to an identity that is beyond the physical realm, the Pentecostals not only break the singular assumption of existence and history but also view themselves as transcendental beings. Emphasis on their transcendence is what enables them foreground their unity and simplify the tensions of their physical diversity. This explains how they can survive the bifurcation of race, gender, class, tribe or ethnicities imposed by the modern state.

Conclusively the rhetoric of the Pentecostal church has been keen to demonize the bifurcation standards that are privately evoked in mainstream churches. The methods towards these have ranged from church sermons to performances with performances attracting several people beyond the Pentecostals. Free affective performances explain Pentecostalism's global nature which in turn affects its local nature. In the next section, I explore the relationship between Pentecostalism and popular culture.

## Conclusion

This paper has explored the intricate relationship between Pentecostalism, capitalism, and the modern state, using post-colonial Uganda as a primary vantage point. By tracing the historical trajectory from colonial Protestant ethics—which emphasized asceticism, hard work, and resilience to build a labor force—to contemporary Pentecostalism, it is evident that these religious traditions are deeply enmeshed with capitalist expansion. Today's Pentecostalism fuses these historical ethics with modern consumerism and the prosperity gospel, turning religious spaces into sites of both spiritual and material investment.

Furthermore, the widespread success of Pentecostalism is not merely a byproduct of global neoliberalism; it is actively facilitated by the state's strategy of "deregulated regulation". In areas where the state's welfare role diminishes, Pentecostal institutions step in, undertaking substantial socio-economic projects and utilizing both mainstream and populist media to expand their influence globally. Ultimately, through mass media and affective theatrical performances like Heaven Gates and Hell Flames, Pentecostalism actively challenges the colonial and state-imposed bifurcations of tribe, race, and ethnicity. By appealing to a universal, transcendental identity, Pentecostalism positions itself not just as a religious movement, but as a powerful socio-political force shaping the global, postmodern state.

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