

15th GloPent Conference: Pentecostalism in Peace and Conflict

Book of Abstracts

KEYNOTES

Friday

Daniela C. Augustine

Reader in World Christianity and Pentecostal Studies in the Department of Theology and Religion at the University of Birmingham, United Kingdom

Making Love Visible in the Midst of War: Theological Reflection on Pentecostal Peacebuilding in East Slavonia as a Living Icon of Sobornost

The essay offers a theological reflection on the continuity between peacebuilding and holiness, experienced as Christoformaiton. Inspired by the peacebuilding agency of Pentecostals in Eastern Slavonia during the Third Balkan War, it depicts peacebuilding as a pneumatic, teleological movement of creation, guided by the Spirit toward its eschatological destiny. Reaching for insights from hagiography and reflecting on the socio-transformative capacity of holiness as incarnate love, the essay asserts the Spirit's uncompromised continuity between peacebuilding and Christoformation as a distinct mark of holy lives and holy communities. It concludes by highlighting some of the Eastern Slavonian Pentecostals' acts of peacebuilding, staging their saintly communities as a living icon of *sobornost* (of pneumatic conciliarity with the ethnic and religious other).

Jörg Haustein

Professor of Global Christianity in the Faculty of Divinity at the University of Cambridge and Fellow of Selwyn College, United Kingdom

Relocating Religious Agency: Ethiopian Pentecostals in Peace and War

“A Pentecostal PM with a Nobel Peace Prize and a penchant for war” – “The Chosen One who promised prosperity and delivered unrest” – “Religious nationalism is tearing the country apart”. Headlines like these tend to dominate analyses of Ethiopia under the leadership of Pentecostal PM Abiy Ahmed. While appealing in their simplicity, such narratives reveal little about current conflict dynamics precisely because they foreground the role of Pentecostalism. In doing so, they reveal limited understanding of religious agency: beliefs are treated as a separate vector of political action rather than examining how religious agency emerges through a multiplicity of social attachments. Drawing on Bruno Latour's concept of agency as emerging from being “plugged in” to social systems, this paper demonstrates that the Ethiopian Pentecostal politics of peace and war must be understood in their multiple attachments to ethnic nationalism, religious competition, economic aspirations, and institutional church politics. Rather than asking how Pentecostalism is influencing war and peace in the country, the paper traces how Pentecostal actors – including Abiy Ahmed – derive their agency from their various connections with the Ethiopian conflict assembly. This also has consequences for understanding the potential and limits of Pentecostal peace-building efforts as the paper will show in reference to recent initiatives. The paper thus demarcates the need for a more embedded understanding of Pentecostalism in the context of war and peace.

Saturday

Naar M'fundisi-Holloway

Vice Principal of Operations and Communications at Christ Theological College, Lecturer in Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity and an Action Researcher at the London Territorial Headquarters of The Salvation Army, United Kingdom

Pentecostals, Politics, and Peace: The Role of Zambia's Charismatic Leaders in Electoral Stability

The active involvement of the church in civic matters has contributed to the shaping of Zambia's political landscape. From the time when Zambia transitioned from a Colonial to a one-party state with Dr. David Kaunda in 1964 to a multiparty democracy under President Frederick J. T. Chiluba, the Pentecostal and Charismatic movement through the Evangelical Fellowship of Zambia (ECZ), one of the main church mother bodies in Zambia, has been an essential actor in peacebuilding initiatives. Having played a significant role in the peaceful transition from a one-party to a democratic government in 1991, to participating in the Oasis Forum during the 2001 elections, successfully opposing President Chiluba's bid to run for a third term, the Pentecostal and Charismatic leaders played a significant role in promoting peace and political order. Pentecostal and Charismatic Christians have polarising views on political matters. Despite this, they have consistently worked to prevent violence during elections by promoting reconciliation and acting as mediators in the rise of political disputes. This paper examines how Pentecostal and Charismatic leaders have contributed to peacekeeping and conflict resolution during elections and political tensions in Zambia. Initiatives such as the Oasis Forum in 2001, the 2011 National Peace Campaign, the 2016 Advocacy for Non-Violent Elections and the 2021 Coalition for Peaceful Elections to this cause will be examined. In addition to their electoral involvement, this paper will interrogate the theological and ideological motivations behind these peacebuilding efforts, examine why these initiatives emerged in Zambia's political landscape, what challenges and criticisms Pentecostals and Charismatic leaders face in their peacebuilding initiatives and how these efforts shape Zambia's identity as a Christian Nation. This study contributes to broader discussions on the role of Pentecostalism in peace and conflict, making Zambia a fascinating case study in African Pentecostal political engagement.

Chongpongmeren Jamir

Postdoctoral Fellow in Church History at the Inez and Julius Polin Institute at Åbo Akademi University, Finland.

Leap of Faith: Pentecostalism and Discourse on Religion and Politics in India

Pentecostalism in India has been referred to as “ministry churches”, focusing on remaking individuals rather than addressing social and political issues. However, the recent Pentecostal initiative of a political party in Northwest India represents a shift in Indian Pentecostal attitude towards politics. This shift is significant given the lack of antecedents of political activism among Indian Pentecostals and the absence of an Indian Pentecostal political theology. The shift, therefore, is best understood within the contemporary discourse on religion and politics in India and the increasing politicisation of religion in the culture. The growth of Pentecostalism and its influence among the low-caste communities in India have attracted attention in recent discussions on “politics of conversion” and “caste politics” in India. The rise of a “new caste division”, “Dalit Christians”, is seen both as an asset and a threat in the current political climate. In the light of this, a political turn in Indian Pentecostalism can be seen as a “leap of faith” to harness its potential as a religion of the poor and the low caste in India toward Christian advocacy.

PARALLEL PANELS

Overview

Session	Panel 1 Chair: Michael Bergunder	Panel 2 Chair: Andreas Heuser	Panel 3 Chair: Miranda Klaver	Panel 4 Chair: Wolfgang Vondey
Friday 15:30–17:00	Digital (link) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peter Althouse • Henrique Mata de Vasconcelos • Amina Lwikitcha Benoît 	Digital (link) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Boluwatife Joseph Ogungbemi • Gabriela Rinaldi Bittencourt • Thang San Mung 	Pacifism, Peacemaking, Prosperity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Micael Grenholm • Tesfaye Nenko Edema • Pascal Andréasson 	Hinduism and Conversion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Miroslav Atanasov • Aakeil Murray • Esa Autero
Saturday 9:00–11:00	Politics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emmanuel Kenin • Leonardo Marcondes Alves • Daniel Rocha • Gideon Tetteh 	Leaders, Prophets, Pastors <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teshome Amenu • Fredrik Berge • Theresa Mayer • Elias Schulze 	War and Violent Conflict <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gunilla Nyberg Oskarsson • John G. Maiden • Ove Gustafsson • Natalia Zawiejska & Ganna Tregub 	Racism and Antisemitism <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kwasi Boakye-Yiadom • Marlon Millner • Markus Lundström & Tomas Poletti Lundström • Hayford J. Addokwei
Saturday 11:30–13:00	Globalization <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Laura Hall • Sophia Omokanye • Songzan Xu 	Interreligious Relations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Akeem Adagbada • Maria Karlsson • Tomas Sundnes Drønen 	Gender and Embodiment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elsa Pereira • Kim Beecheno • Igor Jurekovič 	Identity and Pluralism <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Karl-Inge Tangen • Samuel Åsberg • Stian Sørli Eriksen

Each paper will be allocated a timeslot of 30 minutes; 15 minutes for the presentation, 10 minutes for questions and comments from the audience, and 5 minutes for preparations/change of speaker. We kindly ask speakers to comply with this timeframe and to plan your presentation accordingly.

Abstracts

Friday 15:30 – 17:00

Panel 1 – Digital

<https://uu-se.zoom.us/j/65520573653>

Peter Althouse

Oral Roberts University, USA

Spiritual Warfare, Deliverance, and the Charismatic Imaginary of Christian Healing Ministries

The charismatic imaginary is a socially constructed community, or network of communities, that envisions a particular constellation of norms, values, rituals, practices, ideas and resources. It is the way people imagine social existence, their expectations, how they relate to others, and how social images and media support their expectations. The charismatic imaginary is a complex heterogeneric subculture that is transnational, global, and multidirectional. One aspect of the charismatic imaginary is spiritual warfare, a symbolic conflict between demonic spirits and divine forces that is played out in the spiritual realm, but with believed implications for the material world, ironically intended to reduce personal and social conflict. This symbolic conflict potentially has individual, familial, communal, geographic, national, and global consequences. The charismatically endowed leader mediates the conflict through prayers, rituals, and teachings within the imaginary. Francis and Judith MacNutt are well-known charismatic exemplars who have transversed within and across this imaginary. Francis was a Roman Catholic priest and an early figure in the Roman Catholic Charismatic Renewal whose healing ministry crossed denominational and geographic lines. Later, Francis married Judith Sewall and together they established Christian Healing Ministries, a charismatic organization that provides healing prayer and deliverance onsite and through conferences across the United States and the world. They founded a school of healing prayer to teach people prayer techniques to advance healing and deliverance. The contention of this paper is that spiritual warfare as practiced by the MacNutt and participants of Christian Healing Ministries is a symbolic interaction of the charismatic imaginary that is expected by participants to have spiritual, social, material, and real-world consequences. However, these consequences re-entrench religious and political conservatism that exacerbates social progress thereby producing further conflict. Findings are based on participant observations and interviews.

Henrique Mata de Vasconcelos

The Jesuit Faculty of Philosophy and Theology, Brazil / KU Leuven, Belgium

Theology of Creatural Experience: A Pentecostal Response to (Brazilian) Neocreationism in Dialogue with Gregory Palamas

The Brazilian Pentecostal tradition, due to a lack of its own Pentecostal theology of creation, turns to the Brazilian version of (American) neocreationism, a branch whose main proponents are primarily of the Presbyterian tradition and whose agenda is to institutionalise their religious beliefs in Brazil's public schools as an alternative to the theory of evolution. Their proponents were even chosen by former Brazilian president Jair Bolsonaro to fill major government positions, including Minister of Education and president of CAPES, the Brazilian institution that regulates postgraduate-level research in the country. This demonstrates that Brazilian creationism constitutes a political issue in Brazil as well. As a Pentecostal theologian, I argue that Pentecostal theology does not need to look for the neocreationism to learn about their faith in a Creator God and in creation. Instead, it needs an alternative theology of

creation, one that values both the religious experience of God and the Biblical text—two fundamental aspects of Pentecostal faith and tradition. With this aim, and in dialogue with the Byzantine Saint Gregory Palamas (1296–1357/1359), I propose *a theology of creatural experience*: the experience of having a Creator as the foundation of one’s own being and existence, of one’s personal existence, as well as the experience of being a creature who is part of creation. Creatural experience is what is ultimately behind narratives and theologies of creation, including Genesis 1. Moreover, this experience also includes the creational experience—the experience of creating alongside the Trinitarian Creator. I conclude that Pentecostals no longer need to seek in neocreationism a way to understand and express their faith and experience in creation and in the Creator. The theology of creatural experience, in Palamite language, is not just a response to creationism—it is more appropriate, profound, relational, and closer to Pentecostal spirituality than the current alternative.

Amina Lwikitcha Benoît

Protestant University of Central Africa, Cameroon

The Role of Congolese Pentecostal Churches in Conflict Management and Peacebuilding in Eastern DRC: An Approach Combining Faith, Leadership, and Community Action

Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) has been plagued by decades of armed conflicts fueled by political, ethnic, and economic tensions. In this context of persistent violence in North and South Kivu, Congolese Pentecostal churches, particularly CELPA (Communauté des Églises Libres de Pentecôte en Afrique) and CEPAC (Communauté des Églises Pentecôtistes en Afrique Centrale), play a key role in peacebuilding and social cohesion. This paper will analyze how these churches contribute to conflict management through their spiritual, social, and institutional influence. We will examine their involvement in community mediation, awareness campaigns for interethnic reconciliation, and assistance to victims of violence. By mobilizing faith and Pentecostal values, these religious communities foster resilience and social transformation. Through an assessment of the knowledge, attitudes, and practices of Pentecostal religious leaders regarding peacebuilding, we will highlight both the challenges and opportunities they face in a multifaceted crisis context. Furthermore, we will present a project led by the Faculty of Protestant Theology at the Evangelical University in Africa in Bukavu, which aims to strengthen the capacity of religious leaders in conflict prevention and resolution. Aligned with the theme of the GloPent 2025 conference, this presentation will emphasize the potential of Pentecostalism as a force for peace and social justice, in connection with research on peace and conflict studies. It will also provide a reflection on the strategies needed to make Pentecostal churches key actors in dialogue and reconciliation efforts in the DRC.

Panel 2 – Digital

<https://uu-se.zoom.us/j/68928420988>

Boluwatife Joseph Ogungbemi

University of Ibadan, Nigeria

Conversations on Poju Oyemade’s “The Platform”, and Their Relevance for Africa’s Development

Despite the end of colonialism in Africa, lack of visionary leadership, good governance and other vices still persists. Hence, truncating Africa’s development. This paper studies an initiative of a Lagos based

Nigerian neo-Pentecostal/Charismatic Pastor, Poju Oyemade, the convener of *The Platform*, a transnational and public forum where salient socio-economic and political issues are critically discussed, engaged and analyzed annually towards the growth and development of Nigeria and Africa. Poju Oyemade is also the founder of an international Christian congregation, The Covenant Nation (TCN) (1994 till date). Oyemade has displayed exemplary leadership and visionary qualities both in the religious and socio-political spheres. Among other initiatives and forums which he has established, his dream for a better Nigeria and Africa initiated the creation of *The Platform* in 2007. *The Platform* is inter-cultural, ethnic, religious and gender balanced in scope with the sole aim of seeing Nigeria, her citizenry and Africa at large, grow and develop. Dena Freeman's Pentecostal Ethic and the Spirit of Development is the theoretical framework for this study. The Content analysis technique is adopted to retrieve relevant information on Poju Oyemade and his popular *The Platform*, on X, Facebook, Instagram and YouTube as it contributes to politics, governance and creation of sustainable environments in national and transnational contexts. A number of indices on politics and governance would be extracted from conversations on *The Platform*, while inferences would be made from the recurring indices. Necessary recommendation would be made from the research outcomes.

Gabriela Rinaldi Bittencourt

Malmö University / Uppsala University, Sweden

Political Pentecostalism in Brazil: A Dog-whistle Rhetoric Analysis in Religious and Political Leadership

This paper intends to examine the rhetorical strategies employed by Pentecostal political leaders in Brazil, focusing on how they use dog-whistle politics to unite seemingly disparate groups - evangelicals and the conservative right - in a common discourse. The primary objective of this study is to analyse how multivocal appeals in the speeches and social media posts of three Pentecostal pastors, who also hold high political office, serve to strengthen the Christian nationalist narrative. Guided by Bethany Albertson's theory of dog-whistle politics, this analysis uses thematic content analysis to identify key rhetorical patterns. The study highlights four prominent themes in the rhetoric of these leaders: "defence of Israel", "defence of the traditional family", "patriotism" and "freedom of expression". These themes not only serve to reinforce the religious-political alignment but also illustrate how political leaders effectively craft messages that resonate with multiple, often overlapping, ideological groups. By examining these elements, the presentation provides insights into the strategic use of rhetoric to mobilise political support and illustrates the intersection of religion, politics and national identity in Brazil, matching the narrative of Christian nationalist.

Thang San Mung

Oral Roberts University, USA

Extroversion of Worship: Evangelistic Missional Aspect of Empowered Worship

The rise of Pentecostal-Charismatic revival has profoundly shaped contemporary worship, contributing to the movement's rapid growth in return. However, a key biblical element—witnessing—often becomes secondary, as worship turns inward-focused and entertainment-driven. This study explores the extroverted nature of Spirit-empowered worship, arguing that worship should inherently include evangelistic engagement. Two case studies from Myanmar illustrate this contrast: Full Gospel Assembly, which uses worship as a tool for outreach, and Van Kunga's community, which, though

spiritually vibrant, remains socially and evangelistically isolated. The paper further examines biblical foundations of worship as a missional activity. Isaiah 60:1-3 highlights the prophetic vision of worship as a light to the nations, indicating that true worship extends beyond personal piety to influence broader society. Jesus' Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6) reinforces this by emphasizing God's kingdom coming to earth, urging believers to actively engage in their communities. Paul's discussion in 1 Corinthians 14:23-25 underscores that Spirit-filled worship, including the use of spiritual gifts, should be intelligible and impactful for unbelievers, leading them to repentance. Through scriptural analysis, this study concludes that biblical worship is not merely an act of personal devotion but a dynamic practice with evangelistic and societal impact. Worship should not be an introverted experience that isolates believers but an extroverted engagement that draws others to faith. Contemporary churches must align their worship practices with this biblical model, ensuring that worship remains a powerful witness to the world. The paper employs a theological-exegetical approach supported by qualitative case studies and historical analysis to argue that worship should be missional in nature. Accordingly, the paper engages in a detailed interpretation of key biblical texts (Isaiah 60:1-3, Matthew 6, and 1 Corinthians 14:23-25) to establish the theological foundation for worship as a missional and evangelistic practice. This suggests a hermeneutical approach, analyzing Scripture in its historical, literary, and theological contexts. Further, the paper presents two real-world examples from Myanmar—Full Gospel Assembly and Van Kunga's community—to illustrate different expressions of worship for a qualitative case study. Besides, the discussion includes references to historical Pentecostal revival movements, cultural influences (e.g., the Jesus People movement), and broader church trends. This implies a historical-theological approach, situating the discussion within broader church history and contemporary practice. Above all, the paper contrasts introverted and extroverted worship, using theological reasoning to argue for the necessity of witnessing as part of worship. This reflects systematic theology, where doctrinal themes are synthesized to address contemporary church practices.

Panel 3 – Pacifism, Peacemaking, Prosperity

Micael Grenholm

Lund University, Sweden

Swedish Pentecostal Pacifism: A Curious Outlier

It is well-established that many Pentecostal denominations in North America and Europe were officially pacifist and urged its members to refuse to bear arms during the early half of the 20th century, something that changed in most countries in the aftermath of World War Two. Swedish Pentecostalism, however, is a curious outlier. Even though it never had an official pacifist stance as it formed no denomination, it was responsible the largest group of conscientious objectors in Sweden in the early 1970's, at a time when most other Pentecostal movements had left pacifism behind. This was in spite of Lewi Pethrus, the unofficial but undisputed leader of Swedish Pentecostalism, being a vocal non-pacifist who criticized conscientious objection. Why was pacifism this widespread among Swedish Pentecostals in the early 1970's? What were their motivations to conscientious objection, and how did they spread? How did Swedish Pentecostal pacifism develop over time, and what caused it to change? In an attempt to answer these questions, I have gone through interview protocols and other relevant material concerning conscientious objectors at the War Archive in Stockholm. These were produced by two government agencies responsible for administering arms free service between 1966 and 1995. This paper will present a statistical overview of Swedish Pentecostal conscientious objection as it developed over time in order to see when and where it was the most popular. It will also present qualitative content

analysis of these documents, trying to identify pacifist motivations and how they relate to Bible usage, church preaching and Pentecostal theology. I will relate the results to the theories of Christian pacifism developed by Lisa Cahill and test her ideas on nonviolence, biblical interpretation and empathy.

Tesfaye Nenko Edema

Ethiopian Full-Gospel Believers' Church, Ethiopia

The History of the Prosperity Gospel Movement in Ethiopia and Hawassa

The prosperity gospel movement, emphasizing material wealth, physical health, and social success as indicators of divine favor, has experienced significant growth in Ethiopia, particularly in the city of Hawassa. Rooted in the global Pentecostal and charismatic revivals of the late 20th century, the prosperity gospel was introduced to Ethiopia through televangelists and satellite broadcasts in the late 1990s and early 2000s. Churches such as Winner's Chapel International played pivotal roles in its early establishment. The socio-economic landscape of Hawassa, marked by high unemployment and economic uncertainty, has further fueled the appeal of prosperity theology, positioning it as a dominant force within the city's Pentecostal community. The theoretical framework of this study is anchored in John Piper's critique of prosperity theology, which he argues distorts biblical teachings on suffering, discipleship, and God's sovereignty. Piper (2015) asserts that the prosperity gospel replaces the true gospel of salvation with a message centered on physical health and material prosperity, which he contends is "no gospel at all" (Piper, 2015, p. 56). Jason DeRouchie (2018) provides a biblical-theological perspective, demonstrating how prosperity theology misinterprets Old Testament covenant blessings, applying them universally in ways that neglect the New Testament emphasis on spiritual growth through suffering and obedience. Additionally, Michael Otieno Maura (2021), in collaboration with other African theologians, critiques the prosperity gospel's impact in Africa, warning against its commodification of faith and its departure from the Christ-centered gospel message (Maura, 2021, p. 134). Methodologically, this study employs a qualitative approach, utilizing historical analysis, theological discourse analysis, and ethnographic research to examine the spread and impact of the prosperity gospel in Hawassa. Interviews with church leaders, content analysis of sermons, and participant observation in prosperity-driven congregations form the core of the research methods. This study contributes to a nuanced understanding of how prosperity theology interacts with Ethiopia's religious and socio-economic landscape, while also addressing critiques of its commodification of faith, locally termed *beltsegena*.

Pascal Andréasson

University of Gothenburg, Sweden

Peace in the Pentecostal Narrative and Peace as Missional: Some Concepts for a Pentecostal theology of Peace

In my presentation I will follow the method of Wolfgang Vondey and his claim: "Pentecost is the core theological symbol of Pentecostal theology, and its theological narrative is the full gospel". I will present and discuss some key-elements in forming a Pentecostal theology of peace, focusing on peace as missional and peace in context of the classical Pentecostal narrative of baptism in the Spirit using the pattern in Acts chapter 2, 8, 9, 10 and 19. Grace Milton, building on Walter Brueggemann and his reflection about the concept of shalom, sees conversion as a process with subsequent conversions of shalom. In her study she shows how shalom is received at the initial conversion brought to the believer

by the Spirit. But the peace of God in the power of the holy Spirit expands both beyond shalom and conversion. At Pentecost there is a radical transformation of the disciples also in aspects of portraying God's peace. Until then they have a mindset where a following of Jesus, even the crucified and risen Christ, can partner with arms and violence. And they are still deeply nationalistic at heart at the Ascension of Jesus. But from Pentecost in Jerusalem, Acts 2, they receive power in the holy Spirit to live in Christ peace to love and bless their enemies. It has often been said that Pentecostalism is "a religion made to travel", but while much focus has been on the saving mission and power-element of the holy Spirit, little focus has been on the peace of Christ in the power of the holy Spirit as missional and contagious.

Panel 4 – Hinduism and Conversion

Miroslav Atanasov

University of Colorado, USA / International College Beijing, China

Pentecostal Revival in Punjab Since 2011 and Its Transformative Impact on the Socio-Religious Landscape of a Sikh-Dominated Region in India

Over the past fifteen years, the northern Indian state of Punjab has witnessed a significant rise in conversions to Christianity, particularly within the Pentecostal-charismatic movement. This phenomenon is especially striking given that the majority of Punjab's population adheres to Sikhism, with Hinduism constituting the second largest religious group. The rapid Pentecostal expansion in this context has generated considerable attention, debate, and opposition. A key factor contributing to the mass conversions is the role of ministries, which emphasize charismatic worship, miraculous healings, and hope of spiritual and social renewal. The movement has found particular resonance among lower-caste Dalit communities and economically marginalized rural populations. Reports of the conversion have been widely disseminated through social media, often by critics who express concerns regarding the erosion of traditional culture and identities. Some estimates suggest that the Christian population of Punjab has increased nearly tenfold within this period as a result (from approximately 1.26% in 2011 to an estimated 13–15% in 2025). This paper examines the revival from multiple perspectives, including the religious and socio-economic factors, the key figures driving the movement, and the challenges posed by opposition from both adherents of Punjab's dominant religions and leaders of mainline Christian denominations. Particular attention will be given to the indigenous nature of the movement, which allows converts to retain their names, turbans, and other distinct cultural markers. Additionally, the paper will assess the implications of this movement for broader issues of peace and conflict in a region known for its historical and religious complexities. The study will utilize a combination of existing literature, social media sources, and qualitative interviews with leaders and new converts. The project would be preliminary step to a future, more extensive field study aimed at providing a deeper understanding of the movement and its potential long-term impact on Punjab's religious and social landscape.

Aakeil Murray

The University of the West Indies, Trinidad and Tobago

Theorising Pentecostal Conversion amongst Hindu Families in Trinidad through the Lens of Luke 14:26

This work takes a historical and theological approach to examine the complexities involved in conversion to Pentecostalism within Hindu families in Trinidad in the latter half of the 20th century to recent times through the lens of the biblical scripture Luke 14: 26. The article explores the Classical Pentecostal call for the abandonment of other religious beliefs and the wholesale adoption of Pentecostal theology by converts as the driving force for rigid religious separation by converts living in predominantly Hindu households. The work also gives particular focus to the impact of these conversions on the execution of Hindu rites and rituals performed within these households, the shifting of family bonds and the impact on religious harmony and unity in multireligious Trinidad. These matters are assessed within the larger context of Pentecostal expansion in this period of Trinidad's history through the work of the Pentecostal Assemblies of the West Indies and other Pentecostal organizations in Indian dominated areas and the activism and growing prominence of the Hindu community on the national landscape. A variety of underutilised primary sources from the archives of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada, the Pentecostal Assemblies of the West Indies, the West Indies School of Theology and a number of interviewees were consulted for this research.

Esa Autero

South Florida Bible College & Theological Seminary, USA

Hermeneutics of Anti-Christian Violence and Acts 16:16-40 in India

India has a long history of Hindu Christian conflict and anti-Christian violence. The seeds of the conflict may be traced to colonial expansionism in the 16th and 19th centuries. The expressly religious nature of the conflict emerges more clearly in the 1920s and 30s with the development of Hindutva ideology. According to Bauman (2020) the first severe incident of anti-Christian violence occurred in 1982 in Mandaikadu village, Tamil Nadu. Nevertheless, it was not until the late 90s that the violence began to escalate dramatically culminating in the Kandhamal riots in 2007-2008. Recent years have seen yet a further increase in anti-Christian violence (EFI 2023; Sahoo 2018; Bauman 2020; 2015). Though there is some variation in the form of violence, Pentecostals and charismatic Christians bear the brunt of it (Bauman 2015; 2020; Sahoo 2018). Pentecostal targeting has variously been explained by their aggressive evangelism, demonization of Hindu gods, reception of foreign funds, or low caste status (Dalits, Adivasis, or lower castes). This paper looks at anti-Christian violence through the lens of empirical hermeneutics (de Wit et al. 2004; de Wit and Dyk 2015; Autero 2016; 2017). This method combines empirical field research with biblical studies with the aim of understanding hermeneutical processes of the participants. The researcher conducted three focus group interviews in North India using Contextual Bible Study model (Mlilo 2011; Lawrence 2009; Autero 2016) to investigate how Pentecostal believers interpret Acts 16:16-40 in a context of anti-Christian violence. While two of the groups had not experienced direct and collective anti-Christian violence, one group had been victims of a vicious attack just a few months prior to the interview. The data analysis focuses on the Pentecostal meaning-making and use of Scripture with an emphasis on participants' perceptions on anti-Christian violence. Research into the ordinary Pentecostals' hermeneutical processes in the context of anti-Christian violence has the potential to contribute to understanding sources of communal conflicts and developing strategies for peace and cooperation.

Saturday 9:00 – 11:00

Panel 1 – Politics

Emmanuel Kenin

Oral Roberts University, USA

“Agent of Peace Campaign”: An African Pentecostal Response to Election Related Violence in Ghana

This paper attempts to contextually evaluate the Church of Pentecost’s (CoP’s) “Agent of Peace Campaign” as an African Pentecostal response to the spate of violence during political elections and transition of power in the West African nation of Ghana. The objective of this research is to demonstrate that the CoP’s “Agent of Peace Campaign” has over the years contributed significantly to curbing the numerous cases of election related violence and fatalities in Ghana. The study adopts a phenomenological approach in examining the impact of the CoP’s “Agent of Peace Campaign” on Ghana’s peaceful elections and political transitions over the past two decades. The key findings of this study indicate that there is a nexus between the CoP’s “Agent of Peace Campaign” and the peaceful elections and political transitions in Ghana. The CoP, an indigenous African Pentecostal Church has been able to provide a contextual response to election related violence, an existential security threat that has often been the bane of many African nations as far as peace and security are concerned. This study demonstrates that the CoP has been able to successfully provide a relevant African Pentecostal response to a national security threat through her “Agent of Peace Campaign” project. This project has been widely accepted by all the major stakeholders in Ghana’s political class as an important intervention in the nation’s electoral process.

Leonardo Marcondes Alves

VID Specialized University, Norway

Between the Sword and the Cross: A Paradox of Peace and Violence in Brazilian Pentecostalism

In Portuguese, the idiomatic expression “*entre a cruz e a espada*” refers to the dilemma of choosing—and sometimes losing – between two alternatives. This idiom uncovers the paradox of Pentecostalism in Brazil, acting simultaneously as an agent of peace and reconciliation and a source of violence and conflict. Drawing on a literature review and analysis of public discourse, this paper, informed by the Anthropology of Peace and Violence, explores how Brazilian Pentecostalism navigates the complexities of a society marked by urban violence, drug trafficking, domestic abuse, and political polarization. While Pentecostal churches support individuals struggling with poverty, addiction, and violence, their emphasis on spiritual warfare can also contribute to social exclusion and conflict by allowing a coexistence of militaristic and even criminal lives with a converted identity. Conversion narratives often demonize “the other,” fostering an us-vs-them mentality that can legitimize violence. The targets are usually sexual minorities, Afro-Brazilian religions, and people with progressive political leanings, making violence legitimate even against close kin. On the other hand, the small Pentecostal church is often the only local institutionalized agent with the potential for peacebuilding through community outreach, conflict resolution initiatives, and advocacy for social justice. This analysis engages with Viviane Costa’s (*Traficantes evangélicos*. HarperCollins Brasil, 2003) controversial concept of “Evangelical drug gangs” and the complex interplay between Pentecostalism, violence, and social control in marginalized communities. The rising demographic growth of Pentecostalism makes it necessary to understand its role in micro and macro political scales—from individual congregations to

national political movements—within its terms. By examining this tension between peace and violence, the paper describes the dynamic interplay between religion, social change, and conflict in contemporary Brazil.

Daniel Rocha

University of Modena and Reggio Emilia, Italy

“Times of Peace and Prosperity are Coming”: Eschatological Expectations and Political Engagement in Brazilian Pentecostalism

For a long time, scholars have identified premillennialist eschatology as central to shaping Brazilian Pentecostalism’s political disengagement and sectarianism. This eschatological position, along with the belief in Christ’s imminent return, framed human efforts to transform society as futile, emphasizing soul salvation amid anticipated moral decay and wars, with peace being a hope reserved for the millennial kingdom of Christ. However, since the late 20th century, a gradual shift has occurred. Major Pentecostal denominations now actively engage in Brazil’s political-electoral process, challenging earlier assumptions about their apolitical stance. This paper examines the relationship between eschatological beliefs and political engagement in contemporary Brazilian Pentecostalism by analyzing the discourse of leaders from major Pentecostal denominations during a meeting described as a “prophetic act,” held between pastors and former Brazilian president Jair Bolsonaro on June 5, 2020. This case study reveals how dominionism and a “postmillennial ethos”, as termed by Jullie Ingersoll, have gained prominence in Pentecostal political discourse. Findings highlight a growing focus on dominionism, where believers perceive themselves as agents of social transformation, tasked with establishing God’s kingdom on Earth. This narrative shifts away from emphasizing future chaos and tribulation, instead promoting spiritual warfare victories that pave the way for an era of peace and prosperity through political and cultural dominance. Importantly, this transformation has unfolded without abandoning premillennialism, which remains the official theology for most Pentecostal churches. This study highlights the limitations of theology alone in explaining Pentecostal political practices by situating the impact of eschatological beliefs within broader institutional, social, and cultural dynamics. It emphasizes how religious commitments evolve over time, adapting to changing social realities, transforming horizons of expectation, and contributing to a more nuanced understanding of religion’s role in shaping political life.

Gideon Tetteh

University of Eastern Finland, Finland

Electoral Prophecies, Neo-Prophetic Churches, and the Future of Pentecostal Influence in Ghana’s Democratic Process

This paper discusses the intersection of neo-prophets’ electoral prophecies, partisan politics, and Ghana’s democratic process. It presents how the performative and authoritative nature of these prophecies can escalate political polarization and create conflict, contrasting with the historically reconciliatory role of mainstream Pentecostalism in national peacebuilding. Despite these challenges, it also discusses how the influence of neo-prophets can be harnessed for constructive peacebuilding efforts. By integrating neo-prophet’s authority within broader frameworks of ethical leadership and conflict-sensitive engagement. Pentecostals in Ghana have played a critical role in fostering peace and conflict resolution mainly through the contributions of the Ghana Pentecostal and Charismatic Council.

However, the rise of neo-prophetic churches, led by a new generation of prophets, presents a challenge to this legacy. Neo-prophets since their emergence on Ghanaian religious scene have increasingly engaged in Ghanaian politics through electoral prophecies; predictions about election outcomes that often spark public debate. These prophecies, when framed as divine revelations, potentially influence on voter behavior, fuel political tensions, and even undermine democratic stability. The research is a qualitative and uses techniques of online ethnography. The research material consists of, for example, videos of neo-prophets' electoral prophecies on YouTube's videosharing platform and interviews and online articles published by press/media. This paper will contribute to the understanding of Global Pentecostalism in peace and conflict by exploring the unique contribution of Pentecostal engagement with politics, peace and conflict processes in Ghana. It will give a critique on how and why electoral prophecies by neo-prophets may promote or challenge Pentecostals' historical role in peace and conflict resolutions focusing on the realities of the evolving religious landscape.

Panel 2 – Leaders, Prophets, Pastors

Teshome Amenu

VID Specialized University, Norway

Pastor or Prophet? Exploring Leadership Roles in the Ethiopian Evangelical Church

This study examines the evolving leadership dynamics within the Ethiopian Evangelical Church (EECMY), focusing on the interaction between ordained ministers, prophets, and elders in select congregations. Drawing on qualitative research methods—including semi-structured interviews and participant observation—the research investigates the influence of traditional leadership structures, Pentecostal-charismatic practices, and broader socio-cultural factors on congregational leadership. The findings reveal tensions between formal leadership, as represented by seminary-trained pastors, and informal prophetic figures who, despite lacking official recognition, exert significant spiritual influence. The study also highlights the role of the Council of Elders, whose administrative authority often overlaps with spiritual leadership, creating further complexity. By analyzing leadership through the lenses of contextual theology and leadership models—including transformational and servant leadership theories—the research underscores the necessity of culturally responsive and theologically grounded approaches to church governance. This study contributes to the field of Practical Theology by demonstrating how Pentecostal-charismatic movements has reshaped leadership patterns in the EECMY, often leading to conflicts between institutional and spontaneous spiritual authority. It argues for a balanced leadership model that integrates pastoral oversight, prophetic gifts, and traditional elder wisdom to ensure both doctrinal stability and congregational vitality. The research offers practical recommendations for fostering leadership cohesion and theological integrity within rapidly growing evangelical churches in Ethiopia.

Fredrik Berge

VID Specialized University, Norway

Charismatic Leadership in Colonial, Post-colonial, and Civil-war Côte d'Ivoire.

In Côte d'Ivoire, Pentecostal and charismatic Christianity is a dominant force within the Protestant churches. I am writing a chapter that aims to provide historical context for the current situation by offering a reading that traces key lines of development in the emergence of Christianity and

Pentecostalism in Côte d'Ivoire, from the colonial period to the present day. As my PhD project focuses on the role of the Pentecostal pastor in Côte d'Ivoire, I present my historical sketch with special attention to the role of charismatic leadership figures within both churches, prophetic movements, and the political arena. In this conference paper, I will focus on the relationship between Prophets/pastors and political structures, tracing some lines of peace and conflict. My paper begins in the colonial period with the emergence of Christianity through the influence and leadership of the prophet Harris. I will further describe how the Harris revivals contributed to the establishment of both the Catholic and Protestant churches, while simultaneously giving rise to a distinct form of African Christianity, represented by the Harris church and various prophetic movements. In the concluding section of my paper, I explore the depiction of religious leadership during the Civil War era (2002-2011) in contemporary research. My analysis centers on the involvement of Pentecostal pastors and their engagement with the pre-war identity politics rhetoric referred to as “ivoirité,” as well as their public participation in the political discourse leading up to the 2010 post-election crisis.

Theresa Mayer

Universität Tübingen, Germany

“God’s Mouthpiece to Men, and Men’s Mouthpiece to God” - Prophets in Kenya as Religious Leaders

In recent years, there has been a remarkable rise in the popularity of prophets in Newer Pentecostal Churches in Kenya. Through self-identifications and external designations by their followers such as “God’s mouthpiece” or “Oracle of God”, prophets claim a special relationship with the divine and derive a particular kind of religious leadership and authority from this. This research project, based on eight months of ethnographic fieldwork in Nairobi, adopts a praxeological perspective to investigate how prophets actively construct their leadership roles through performative practices, rather than merely asserting their religious status. It further asks which narratives are created to legitimize religious leadership and provide spiritual guidance to their followers. The study also explores the role of gender dynamics in shaping leadership styles and examines how such styles can be both empowering and conflict-prone. Initial analyses indicate that prophets’ actions oscillate between a mediating function between God and man, claiming moral authority, and reinforcing hierarchical power structures. On one hand, prophets provide spiritual guidance, empowerment and moral frameworks that support their followers in navigating familial, financial, and health-related challenges. On the other hand, the study also provides a critical reflection on the delicate balance between spiritual mentorship and the potential for power abuse. This research, focusing the complex processes in constructing religious authority, sheds light on a highly contemporary and controversial phenomenon that is reshaping the Pentecostal landscape in Nairobi and other parts of Africa.

Elias Schulze

University of Cambridge, United Kingdom

The Advent of the “Megaprophet”: Formations in Africa and Novel Categorization in 21st-Century Global Pentecostalism

This paper introduces the concept of the “megaprophet”—a distinct category of global Pentecostal leader whose influence transcends traditional church structures, shaped by the digital age. Unlike megachurch pastors, the megaprophet wields authority through digital platforms rather than institutional pulpits. Early figures like TB Joshua pioneered media outreach through VHS tapes, but today’s

megaprophets leverage YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok to expand their reach. This study explores how they use digital media not only to grow their following but also to position themselves as global prophetic authorities. Their appeal often hinges on performative prophecy, viral spectacle, and claims of supernatural knowledge rather than theological depth. Although this emergent category has global expressions, notably in the Americas, this paper centers on the African phenomenon, examining controversial figures such as Prophet Uebert Angel and Prophet Passion Java of Zimbabwe, Prophet Shepherd Bushiri of Malawi, and Prophet Lovy Elias, a Kenyan-American. Through their ministries, digital charisma and viral prophecies generate transnational followings, positioning these prophets as both spiritual and aspirational figures with global influence. The megaprophet's ministry is often theatrical and transactional, employing practices such as digital seed sowing, pay-per-prophecy models, and livestreamed miracles—signals of a commodified sacred economy. This raises critical questions: Does this hyper-spectacular, monetized expression of faith represent a transmogrification of Christianity—where Pentecostalism mutates into a hyper-individualized, digitally mediated spiritual marketplace? Rooted in African prophetic movements, this paper contributes to understanding how digital charisma and the attention economy are reshaping 21st-century global Pentecostalism.

Panel 3 – War and Violent Conflict

Gunilla Nyberg Oskarsson

Institute for Pentecostal Studies, Sweden

The Pentecostal Church ADEEP in Burundi and Its Counterpart in The Swedish Pentecostal Mission during the Genocidal Events in 1972

In 1972, the East-African country Burundi became the scene of massive violence. In response to a localized Hutu-led insurrection, causing thousands of deaths among Tutsi, anywhere from 150,000 to 200,000 Hutu civilians were massacred at the hands of a Tutsi-dominated army. The years following independence had seen a drastic transformation of the parameters of conflict. At the same time as different Tutsi fractions were fighting for the power, there was a steady rise of Hutu-Tutsi enmities and more or less a systematic exclusion of Hutu from positions of power, an exclusion that finally led to insurrection in 1972. In this article the focus is on Pentecostal Church ADEEP and the Swedish Pentecostal Mission to Burundi during the short-lived insurgency and the following repression. ADEEP had been founded by Swedish Pentecostal missionaries. According to the book *Burundi 1972: Au bord des genocides*, the centre of the Hutu rebellion should be two Pentecostal centres in the southern part of the country. A Pentecostal parliamentarian is said to have been one of the leaders of the rebellion. When it comes to written material in Pentecostal archives, most of that material is today to be found only in Sweden. Being a Swede and able to read these documents my intention is to present what these sources reveal to a broader international circle of readers. I have also interviewed Swedish missionaries and Burundian Pentecostals. My intention is to use these interviews and the Swedish sources, in order to follow up the statements made by the researchers mentioned above. In what way were Pentecostals active in the insurgency and/or in the repression? How did the Swedish missionaries and their sending churches in Sweden react? The overall aim is to contribute to the field of research focusing on the role of Pentecostal churches in a country affected by serious social unrest.

John G. Maiden

The Open University, United Kingdom

Spiritual Warfare and Reconciliation: Charismatics, Imagination and the Island of Ireland during the Troubles

The charismatic renewal on the island of Ireland emerged against the backdrop of the early years of political and sectarian conflict ('The Troubles') in the North, and violence involving Irish Republicans paramilitaries, Protestant loyalist paramilitaries, and the British State. The prayer meetings, communities and conferences of charismatic renewal became a context for significant grassroots ecumenical interaction between Protestants and Catholics in both the North and South, including in urban zones of high political and 'community' tensions, such as Belfast and Derry/Londonderry. This charismatic activity can be seen as an example of what peace and conflict theorist Roger Mac Ginty calls "everyday peacebuilding" (2014). This paper explores the imaginative resources put to use by Protestant and Catholic charismatics involved in this reconciliation and peacebuilding, and the ways in which charismatics related the work of the Spirit to history/myth, place and land. To do so, it looks at the ways Protestant and Catholic charismatics during the Troubles joined together to appropriate the myth of Saint Patrick in rhetoric concerning the unity of Irish Christianity the possibility of spiritual victory over political forces of conflict and division. It examines, too, the ways in which charismatics attached, ritually and symbolically, spiritual significance to *places*, such as the Hill of Slane, where Patrick was said to have lit the Paschal fire in 432 AD. The paper will demonstrate how these imaginative resources contributed to the distinctiveness of charismatic renewal on the island of Ireland during the Troubles, as charismatic Christians emphasised 'healing the land' over political solutions to sectarian strife.

Ove Gustafsson

Uppsala University, Sweden

Pentecostals at the Brink of Civil War in South Africa 1988-1990: The Confrontation between the Church Alliance of South Africa, (CASA), and the Relevant Pentecostal Witness, RPW, 1988-1990, with Special Reference to the South African Church Struggle in Relation to the Swedish Pentecostal Movement.

The political situation in South Africa was on the brink of civil war at the end of the 1980s. It was a time when the politics of repression and of resistance reached their zenith. In this turbulent and polarized society, Churches and Ecumenical organizations positioned themselves, in support of the apartheid regime or the anti-apartheid movement. Pentecostals had for a long time been silent but during the 1980s leaders among the Pentecostals began position themselves visavi internal segregation and discrimination and a violent society with State of emergency, 1985 – 1990. In the 1980s the struggle for unity in the Pentecostal churches, encouraged more outspokenness against apartheid. During 1988 a document called A Relevant Pentecostal Witness was launched. The group behind the document represented opinions among leaders from several Pentecostal movements. Pentecostals, the Rhema Bible Church and the Dutch Reformed Church and others formed the Church Alliance of South Africa, with a clear anti-sanction and a pro-government agenda. The purpose of this paper is to discuss two issues. First, I will analyze the relationship between the Church Alliance of South Africa, CASA, and the Relevant Pentecostal Witness, RPW, concerning origins, rhetoric and political functions. Secondly, I will highlight the interaction between RPW, CASA and wider international networks. CASA prioritized opinion formation in three countries of strategic importance, the US, Great Britain and

Sweden. I will highlight the South African church struggle between CASA and RPW in relation to the Swedish Pentecostal Movement.

Natalia Zawiejska & Ganna Tregub

Jagiellonian University, Poland

Pentecostalism as a Practice of Crisis and War: View from Ukrainian Pentecostals in Poland

The decade of conflict in Ukraine coincides with the profound transformation of Ukrainian Pentecostalism. This formative period started with the Revolution of Dignity in late 2013 and early 2014 and evolved into the Russian-Ukrainian war, initiated as a hybrid operation in 2014, escalating into a full-scale invasion in early 2022. In such perspective war, conflict and Pentecostalism became intertwined in the last years. The changes we refer to in the case of Ukrainian Pentecostalism, are not that much about the rapid growth or expanding territorial coverage but more about the structural, ideological and teleological principles of Pentecostalism in Ukraine. We suggest that the conflict in the case of Ukrainian Pentecostalism became part of Pentecostal ontology and cannot be reduced to the external factor or action–reaction nexus. From this perspective, it is justified to speak about the Pentecostal infrastructures of conflict and war and the practices and relationships it enables. Therefore we also intend to look at the recent transformations and changes that occur in Ukrainian Pentecostalism from the perspective of social practices. We suggest that the changes we refer to are practices of conflict that are embodied in various ways such as Pentecostal networks, mission, social engagement, built infrastructure, refugee structures, chaplaincy, church planting, relations with host structures outside Ukraine and interference with foreign aid and relief organizations. We approach Ukrainian Pentecostalism as a multipolar and polycentric religious field that might be encountered in Ukraine and also beyond – in a range of migrant and refugee churches. Yet all the churches are closely related and bonded in several transregional and transnational networks and flows. We construct our argument drawing on extensive ethnographic fieldwork conducted in 2023 and 2024 in Ukrainian churches and communities founded by refugees and forced migrants from Ukraine in such Polish cities as Krakow, Lublin and Warsaw.

Panel 4 – Racism and Antisemitism

Kwasi Boakye-Yiadom

McMaster Divinity College, Canada

“Is God with Us or with the Oppressor? ”: Theology of Domination and Frank Chikane’s “Blind Spot”

This paper highlights Pentecostals’ posture toward peace-building initiatives, freedom, and justice using South Africa’s (SA) apartheid system as a case study. My approach is an assessment of two themes. The first theme is the theology of domination, and the second is what Frank Chikane has termed Pentecostalism’s “Blind Spot.” Chikane suggests that these themes are the bane of modern-day Pentecostalism. For him, many Pentecostals believe that it is not their calling to engage in social issues like anti-racism, anti-colonialism, and peace-building. This attitude is Pentecostals’ “Blind Spot” (Chikane 2009: 259–276). Moreover, in 1975, he observed dissonance in the psyche of some believers when White SA Pentecostals referred to anti-apartheid agitators as terrorists and asked for prayers against them. He describes this dissonance with the question, “Is God with us or with the oppressor?” (Chikane 2009: 11–24). This description is at the heart of the theology of domination, a deficient

theology of war typified by Christian views on the Israel-Palestinian war (Braverman 2020: 246–247). I argue that the Pentecostal experience (with emphasis on the body of believers speaking different tongues and yet united) offers a strong substructure where believers can establish peace and equality. Yet, this was not the case in the Apostolic Faith Mission (AFM) Church in apartheid South Africa. Through questionable theologies and attitudes, the AFM institutionalized the ideals of the architects of apartheid (Anderson 1992:7–8). The lesson is that Pentecostals should be intentional about supplanting old racist theologies with non-racist ones. I re-examine the utopia of *Isaiah's Eschaton* as a solution to the dystopia from Babel. The result of this re-examination provides a theological response to the problem of the theology of domination.

Marlon Millner

Wesleyan University, USA

Fighting Words: Racialization and Theological Grammar in the Early Pentecostal Teachings of Charles Fox Parham and Robert Clarence Lawson

Despite many writings by historians and theologians, there is very little clarity on the relationship of racialization and anti-Blackness to the formation of early Pentecostalism in the United States, and how that formation shapes practices of racialization in different Pentecostal formations around the world in the early 20th century. This paper attempts to cut through the historiographical debate and theological elision through a close reading of two early interlocutors of Pentecostalism. Charles Fox Parham's is better known in the scholarly literature as a central, if contested figure to the formation of what is considered classical Pentecostalism. Parham's notion of the Bible evidence of the baptism of the Holy Ghost as speaking in other languages unknown to the speaker is seen as central. Less closely examined are Parham's interests in British Israelism, dispensationalism and therefore, racialized notions of the church as the bride of Christ. Parham also showed some interest in teachings that emerged shortly after the Azusa Street Revival on baptism in water in Jesus's name. This interest in what has come to be known as Oneness Pentecostalism, or Apostolic Pentecostalism might be the most obvious link to Robert Clarence Lawson. Lawson, a pioneer in early Apostolic Pentecostalism, like Parham, had unique beliefs about Jews and the bride of Christ, especially as articulated in his anti-racist book *The Anthropology of Jesus Christ Our Kinsman*. Rather than reading Lawson as marginal to someone like Parham, I will read them contrapuntally as contesting a theological grammar around the church as the bride of Christ with clear racial and racist implications, which continue to inform Pentecostal/Charismatic formations, like white Christian nationalism and the New Apostolic Reformation in the US.

Markus Lundström & Tomas Poletti Lundström

Mid Sweden University / Uppsala University, Sweden

Anti-Jewish Racism in the Pentecostalism of Lewi Pethrus

While critical Pentecostal studies have increasingly covered anti-black racism in the movement's legacy, the issue of anti-Jewish racism has remained largely unexplored. Historical research has investigated linkages between racialization of Jews and the premillennial dispensationalism that propelled Christian Zionism during the formative years of Pentecostalism. This conference paper outlines how Pentecostal perceptions of Jews developed alongside the lead-up, outbreak, and aftermath of the Holocaust – the infamous incarnation of modern racism epitomized during the Second World

War. The paper disentangles the nexus of Christian Zionism and political antisemitism by analyzing the teachings of pastor Lewi Pethrus (1884–1974), an early international organizer and Swedish Pentecostalism's grand old man. By examining Pethrus' books, articles, editorial work, archived sermon manuscripts, and private correspondence, the paper highlights a racialization an ambivalent understanding where Jews represented both a threat and a promise: Jewish power posed a threat to Swedish culture through a degenerative and anti-Christian agenda; relocation of Jews to Palestine bore the promise of God's plan for universal resurrection. With this theological outlook, the Pentecostalism of Lewi Pethrus included resistance against the alleged Jewish agenda to challenge Christian values and undermine the Swedish nation. Pethrus Christian Zionism harmonized with the idea of repatriation, a racializing logic for excluding people by linking them to an imagined homeland. In this sense, Pethrus' dispensationalist Jews-to-Palestine call – based on Jer 16:16, by which Pethrus identified with Zionism's fishermen rather than antisemitism's hunters – remained his political solution to the so-called Jewish question and served as a leitmotif to his Pentecostal politics of national rebirth.

Hayford J. Addokwei

Fuller Theological Seminary, USA

Core Identity and Identity Politics: German Protestant Missiology in Light of the Us-Against-the-Rest Dichotomy

This study examines how German Protestant missiology portrays Africa and its people and how this portrayal impacts the relationship between contemporary German missiologists and theologians, and African missionaries living and working in Germany. The fundamental premise that Evangelical/Protestant in Germany is a construct of German Protestant identity as white, culturally shaped by Martin Luther's theology, and has no members of color stands in sharp contrast with the universal Christian church orthodoxy of membership from every nation, all tribes and peoples and languages in a unified Body of Christ (Rev. 7:9). The paper builds on Gustav Warneck's (1834–1910) monumental *Evangelische Missionslehre*, which remains widely accepted as a compendium for missiology in German Protestant circles to this day. It also draws on historical, archival, and contemporary literary data analysis to investigate the continuity of missiology in the nineteenth century and its relationship to contemporary missiology. My thesis statement is that German Protestant missiology on Africa and its people encompasses an exclusive cultural identity definition of an 'us-against-the-rest' dichotomy, with the 'Us' encapsulated in the singularity of the Euro-Western white race, on the one hand, and the 'Rest' enclosed in a plurality of the diverse non-white races, on the other. Considering the shift in Christianity's center of gravity and the reversed migratory missionary movement's impact on global Christianity, this 'us-against-the-rest' dichotomy is in dissonance with the global Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity's missional effort in forging a sustainable Christian environment of inclusivity that orients towards global justice. The implication of this dissonance is the exacerbation of societal conflicts and tensions and the widening of the chasm between the 'Us' and the 'Rest' (them)—a counterproductive stance to the global church's call as the salt and light of the world (Matt. 5:13-14) and its missionary endeavor to foster unity amid the rich ethnocultural diversity.

Saturday 11:30 – 13:00

Panel 1 – Globalization

Laura Hall

The Open University, United Kingdom

Is Pentecostalism Global when the Media Network isn't?

As a network of networks Pentecostalism transgresses geopolitical, cultural and socioeconomic boundaries. My research focuses on the global circulation of Pentecostal digital media and the visual cultures associated with this. Pentecostals were early and innovative adopters of digital media, but this is (simply) the latest technological innovation in a rich media history. Early hopes of digital media fostering a renewed global connectedness have, however, been displaced by visions of digital media as sites of disinformation and conspiracy. Governments, and social media companies, routinely create new invisible boundaries and borderlines in the digital world, based on shifting boundaries in the non-digital realm. When, amidst scandal and controversy in its leadership, Hillsong Churches in Russia and Ukraine found themselves part of the same global network of media circulation, but on opposing sides of a territorial conflict, I began to wonder about the limits of Pentecostal media networks. Much is made of the role and availability of mass media in enabling Pentecostalism to be global but how are Pentecostals in the same networks navigating global connectedness, not only in the face of global conflict, but in light of geopolitical disruptions and fractures to digital media circulation. Is Pentecostalism truly global if, or when, the media network isn't? Drawing from my research using digital media methodologies I will discuss examples from Pentecostal networks operating across geopolitical divides, using digital media outputs as the source of my analysis.

Sophia Omokanye

Institute for World Church and Mission, Germany

Performing the Nigerian Pentecostal Global: Transcending Local Travel Restrictions Towards Global Mega-mobility

Building on the ways that social scientists theorize the relationship between the global and the local, this article introduces the spatial imaginary 'Nigerian Pentecostal Global', which goes beyond the ideas of the 'glocal'. Based on analysis of a Nigerian Pentecostal church service in Abuja, Nigeria, this article ethnographically unpacks the ritual enactment of citizenship and the practice of making mega-mobility accessible for everyone. By focusing on how the Nigerian Pentecostal Global is performed, narrated, marketed, verbalized, and legalized on stage, I trace how Pentecostalism mediates globality and mega-mobility through the body of a female church leader called the 'First Lady of Global Evangelism'. Alongside the First Lady's embodiment of the global, the celebration of receipt of citizenship becomes a powerful tool to transcend a Nigerian locality portrayed as unprogressive, static, and immobile. Nourished by a 'Western' image of advancement and mega-mobility, participating in a Sunday service results in being incorporated into the mega-mobile Pentecostal community of visa-free travelers.

Songzan Xu

University of Cambridge, United Kingdom

Jesus People in a Chinese Diaspora Church: A Case Study on the “Elden Hall Revival” in Los Angeles (1968-1974)

The Jesus People Movement is widely recognized as a significant event in the Euro-North American Charismatic renewals of the 1960s and 1970s. However, existing analyses often constrain the movement within Euro-American evangelical and Charismatic frameworks, overlooking the transnational knowledge exchanges and missionary flows that shaped its development. One such understudied influence is the Local Church movement (LC), a transnational Christian movement initiated by Watchman Nee in China and expanded to Southern California under Witness Lee’s leadership in the 1960s. This paper examines the interactions between the Jesus People and the LC in Los Angeles, focusing on the Elden Hall Revival (1968–1974), a period marked by physical manifestations of the Holy Spirit. Drawing on archives such as the *Hollywood Free Paper*, *Jesus People Magazine*, and *The Stream*, it analyses how the LC absorbed waves of Jesus People and how these individuals contributed to the revival’s emergence. The paper also explores the complex theological exchanges between the LC and the Jesus People, particularly their reception of Witness Lee’s pneumatology. Through this case study, the paper illustrates the multi-directional flows and interactions between Chinese Christianity and American Charismatic renewals. It further contributes to epistemological discussions by challenging both Euro-North Americancentrism and indigenous-centrism in global Pentecostal studies.

Panel 2 – Interreligious Relations

Akeem Adagbada

University of Cambridge, United Kingdom

The Naming of God: Pentecostalism and African Traditional Religion: Insights from Tope Alabi

Tope Alabi, is a popular contemporary Nigerian Pentecostal gospel singer, actress and film music composer. She has been one of the main proponents of using “traditional” Yoruba lexicons originally intended for ancestors and divinities (orisa), such as, Yoruba poetry and praise songs (oriki), invocations, incantations and praise-prayer songs, to contextualise and indigenise Christian Yoruba gospel music. In 2007, she released the single Mimo L’oluwa from her album, Angeli Mi. In Mimo L’oluwa, Alabi praised and reconstructed an oriki of Olorun Olodumare (the Almighty God). In this song, she names God by drawing largely from the oriki of Sango, the god (orisa) of thunder and lightning. The question of the name of God amongst the Yoruba goes as far back to the nineteenth century missionaries which also majorly dominated the theological inquiry of African theologians during the cultural nationalist period. For example, Bolaji Idowu published *Olódùmarè: God in Yorùbá* belief in 1962. Often the scholarly discourse has accused these African “cultural-preoccupied” theologians of introducing an elitist and top-down inculturation model that has often been met with indifference or resistance by African Pentecostals. However, this paper will examine and contend that Alabi’s Mimo L’oluwa is disrupting many of the scholarly assumptions about African ‘traditional’ religion and African Pentecostalism. If Pentecostals such as Alabi are now engaging with deeper questions of contextualisation, indigenisation and yearning for Yorubanisation, then there is a challenge to the definition of who and what is a Pentecostal.

Maria Karlsson

VID Specialized University, Norway / ALT School of Theology, Sweden

Perceptions of “the Other” Expressed by Ethiopian Pentecostals Involved in Interreligious Peacebuilding

Literature on Pentecostalism and peacebuilding is scarce and although Pentecostalism is known for its transformative power it is not necessarily perceived as a peacebuilding force. In many African settings, Pentecostal churches are prominent actors in civil society and constantly growing in numbers, but numerous African countries are also scarred by internal and external conflicts. Because of their growing influence Pentecostals could have an important role to play in peacebuilding, but they are also being described as reluctant to ecumenical involvement, opposed to inter-religious dialogue and negative towards traditional religions, all of which are considered important elements in peacebuilding, at least in many African settings. What would Pentecostal motivation for peacebuilding look like - theologically and practically? It is widely recognized that Pentecostalism by no means is a movement or phenomena that can be easily described or generalized. The numerous contextual and theological variations within Pentecostalism lead several scholars to prefer the plural term Pentecostalisms and call for more empirical Pentecostal research to give voice to this variety of expressions. Pentecostalism in Ethiopia is relatively under-researched despite its growth and increased influence in the society. Ethiopia is also a country marred by conflict. Researching Ethiopian Pentecostal peacebuilding would therefore be relevant for several reasons. This article wants to contribute to research about Pentecostalism and Peace by discussing and reflecting theologically about perceptions of “the Other” expressed by Ethiopian Pentecostals involved in an Inter-religious peacebuilding project. How do they view the religious, ethnic or secular “Other” and what motivates or hinders peacebuilding and coexistence? The empirical material is collected through observations and interviews and the topic will be discussed in dialogue with Pentecostal theology and theories from religious peacebuilding, mainly by John Paul Lederach.

Tomas Sundnes Drønen

VID Specialized University, Norway

Migration, Pentecostalism and Islam in Northern Cameroon

Cameroon has until recently been an island of political stability in a Central-African region that has experienced civil wars, coup d'états, and violent Muslim extremism. The last decade, however, political conflicts and Boko Haram terrorism has also invaded the Cameroonian soil. Due to internal and external political crises, combined with the Boko Haram terror-attacks in the extreme north, Cameroon by early 2024 hosts more than 2,2 million forcibly displaced persons in addition to almost 500.000 refugees. Many refugees and forcibly displaced people seek to leave the refugee camps run by UNHCR and the areas troubled by terrorism and ecological crises in order to settle either on the countryside further south, or in the three big cities Maroua, Garoua and Ngaoundéré. With a weak governmental administration unable to offer social security for these migrants, individuals and civil society are challenged to integrate the newcomers into villages and towns where resources already are limited. In this paper I will investigate the approach of some protestant churches in northern Cameroon and see how different theological and social approaches impact their encounter with the migrants. Whereas the established missionary churches have administrative resources and international networks that help them deal with the migrants, the newly established Pentecostal churches use their entrepreneurial skills to integrate the newcomers. We shall also briefly look into how a Pentecostal theology of ‘guesthouse’ and ‘refuge’ is about to be developed in northern Cameroon.

Panel 3 – Gender and Embodiment

Elsa Pereira

University of Porto, Portugal

Pentecostal Women: Past, Present, and Future – Stories of Life, Histories of Society

This paper results from the research I am conducting on the role of women in free evangelical churches. My research focuses on a qualitative study across Portugal, Sweden, Germany, Italy, and Bulgaria. Among 52 interviews conducted with evangelical leaders in these countries, 16 were with women. Additionally, I conducted eight more interviews with Portuguese evangelical women over 70 years of age. These women experienced the April Revolution, civil wars in African countries, or apartheid in South Africa. From these 24, I selected 6 life stories of Pentecostal women: three from Portugal, two from Sweden, one from Germany. These individual narratives also tell the stories of the social, economic, political, religious, migratory, and institutional dynamics of the societies of these countries, but also within an increasingly globalized context. The “choices” of these women highlight the (pro)active and entrepreneurial paths of female actors within religious contexts, especially Pentecostal ones, as they climb the ladder of gender inequality. This ladder is not purely a consequence of religious theologies and rituals, but results from a combination of macro, meso, and micro social factors that we will describe. Reflecting on each generation represented, I will outline a typology of modernity. Being aware of the dialectics, between society and religion can be an internal leverage to unlock female agency while deconstructing stereotypes about religious experiences, for those who observe them from the outside. There are women who have learned to use their vulnerabilities to open doors in the seemingly male-dominated religious world. Finally, we will also reflect on how the individual nature of talents and gifts of the Holy Spirit that underlie Pentecostal theologies fits within the contours of liquid modernity, contributing to the fact that these churches are among the fastest-growing worldwide.

Kim Beecheno

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Shaping Postfeminist Pentecostal Marriage on Social Media in Brazil

Drawing on research on the heavily mediatised neo-Pentecostal church the Universal Kingdom of God (UCKG), founded in Brazil, this paper examines the way in which marriage is structured and presented to followers through the church’s concept of “Intelligent Love”. The paper focuses in particular on Cristiane Cardoso, daughter of the church’s leader, (Edir Macedo), and Renato Cardoso, her husband and leading pastor of the church. Together they have become ‘faith celebrities’ by amassing a huge following both in person and on all the different mediums they use to teach their followers about the ideal feminine and masculine Pentecostal subject, through their courses “Godllywood” and “Intellimen”. This paper argues that the couple’s rhetoric and advice is strongly post-feminist, arising during a period of strong public debate and concern over gender roles and gendered relations and the strengthening of anti-feminist discourse in the country. The couple inspire neo-liberal and post-feminist rationalities for self-governance fusing consumerism, self-improvement, body discipline and makeover technologies as strategies for fostering spiritual development, rather than being merely worldly diversions. But the processes of beautification, body stewardship and self-discipline have gendered, racialised and classed implications for the church’s mainly low-income, black and brown followers who are encouraged into a form of ‘aspirational whiteness’ consistent with the church’s neo-liberal focus on social ascension and prosperity theology.

Igor Jurekovič

University of Ljubljana, Slovenia

The Making of the Christian Charismatic Body

One of the most important strands of inquiry within Pentecostalism studies has been the theoretical and empirical focus on embodiment, which does not only promise to enrich scholarly understandings of Charismatic Christianity, but also help build a contemporary theoretical apparatus, which would conceptualize the role of the body in religious phenomena more accurately. In this light, the presentation will present findings of a PhD study into the making of the Christian Charismatic Body within three Christian Charismatic communities in Slovenia. In terms of methodology, the study consists of participant observation sessions and interviews with leaders and members of a Pentecostal Church, the Catholic Charismatic Renewal community, and a neo-charismatic community Christian Centre. In this paper, I will propose that, firstly, my research corroborates previous studies of Charismatic embodiment, which point to the process of a particular priming of bodily senses and sensualities, and, secondly, that this process of attaining a particular body logic is both similar and different in significant ways within the researched communities. This will be done via a conceptual discussion of different, empirically supported dimensions of the Christian Charismatic Body. Additionally, I will claim that studying the Charismatic body can illuminate an important dimension of religious conversions.

Panel 4 – Identity and Pluralism

Karl-Inge Tangen

Norwegian School of Leadership and Theology, Norway

SERVE – a model for conflict transformation

This paper explores how the Pentecostal-Charismatic tradition might offer resources for addressing identity-based conflicts. It presents a practical theological and philosophical reflection, using Jay Rothman's description of identity-based conflicts as a point of departure to examine how Pentecostal theologians can contribute to what John Paul Lederach calls conflict transformation. The theological foundation of this study is the SERVE framework developed by Tangen and Kaluzi, alongside key aspects of Miroslav Volf's, Amos Yong's, and Luke Bretherton's political theologies. By defining spirituality as ways of relating to the sacred or ultimate concerns, the paper argues that epistemic pluralism—rather than assumed notions of spiritual unity—offers the most effective foundation for conflict transformation. Nevertheless, overlapping consensus can be identified and nurtured through (visionary) dialogue on shared aspects of communal life. The paper will demonstrate that such engagement requires the cultivation of shared virtues, particularly hospitality and attentiveness to the distinctive traditions involved. At the same time, Pentecostal facilitators can benefit from broader models of conflict transformation, including principles of external accountability.

Samuel Åsberg

Uppsala University, Sweden

Difference, Dialogue and 'Working Together': Church and World in the Pentecostal Political Theology of Amos Yong

British ethicist and theologian Luke Bretherton aptly captures the challenge of a contemporary ecclesial political theology in stressing the need to “coordinate pursuit of the kingdom of God (and a distinctive form of life) with pursuit of penultimate goods held in common with non-Christian others through constructing a common life that is secular yet open to theological claims” (Bretherton 2019, 10). As part of a PhD research project examining the political theology of pentecostal theologian Amos Yong in light of the challenge outlined by Bretherton, this paper specifically analyzes how the relation between the church and its surrounding world appears in Yong’s writing – a relation that in significant ways shapes how both sides of the coordination are construed. It identifies two trajectories in Yong’s work, representing somewhat divergent ways in which this relation appears – one pertaining to his view of theology and questions of identity and communal boundaries, present particularly in his foundational writing on theological method and hermeneutics as well as his theology of religions, and one pertaining to the place of the church in his political theology. In addition to presenting some issues of their own, it will be argued that the trajectories, when taken together, seem to point to a tension in Yong’s work. In short, where one finds within his broader theological writing a certain optimism regarding the possibility of dialogical encounters and the overcoming of differences and boundaries, there is within his political-theological writing instead an at times overly dualistic and conflictual construal of the church-world relationship. Ending on a constructive note, in closing the paper will briefly gesture toward possible avenues for addressing the issues identified, which, if heeded, might also help to alleviate the tension.

Stian Sørli Eriksen

VID Specialized University, Norway

From Times of Conflict to Places of Refuge: Spirituality, Fellowship and Integration among Migrants from Challenging Backgrounds in Norwegian Pentecostal Churches

Though causes of migration in European contexts vary, a great number of migrants come as refugees, asylum seekers or as other kinds of migrants from backgrounds and places marked by war, conflict or other kinds of personal or social trauma. For example, comparable to similar migration movements in other European countries, in the Norwegian context, last decades’ crises in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Myanmar, and the Ukraine have brought migrants from these backgrounds to Norway and the other Nordic countries. Many of these migrants come from Christian backgrounds, including Pentecostal-charismatic backgrounds. While research often has focused on how Pentecostal-charismatic migrants establish international or ethnic churches led by migrants from similar backgrounds, there has been less emphasis on how Christian migrants take part or integrate in Pentecostal-charismatic churches in the host country. This paper addresses the experiences and narratives of Christian migrants coming from a selection of challenging backgrounds, asking if or how Pentecostal churches in the host country represent places of refuge for these migrants and contribute positively to their spirituality, fellowship and integration. The paper also asks how these experiences affected how to relate to their challenging transnational home contexts. Drawing from interviews and conversations with migrants from such backgrounds and who had become part of Norwegian Pentecostal churches, the paper looks, in particular at how being part of the Norwegian Pentecostal

church provided spiritual and social resources that potentially affected their ability to cope with their challenging home contexts, contributing to their restoration or healing. In light of key Pentecostal theological perspectives, the paper describes and discusses the role of faith, spiritual practices, such as prayer, and Christian fellowship and friendships, both with regard to given local contexts as well as social and spiritual resources for healing more generally within the wider context of Pentecostalism.

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