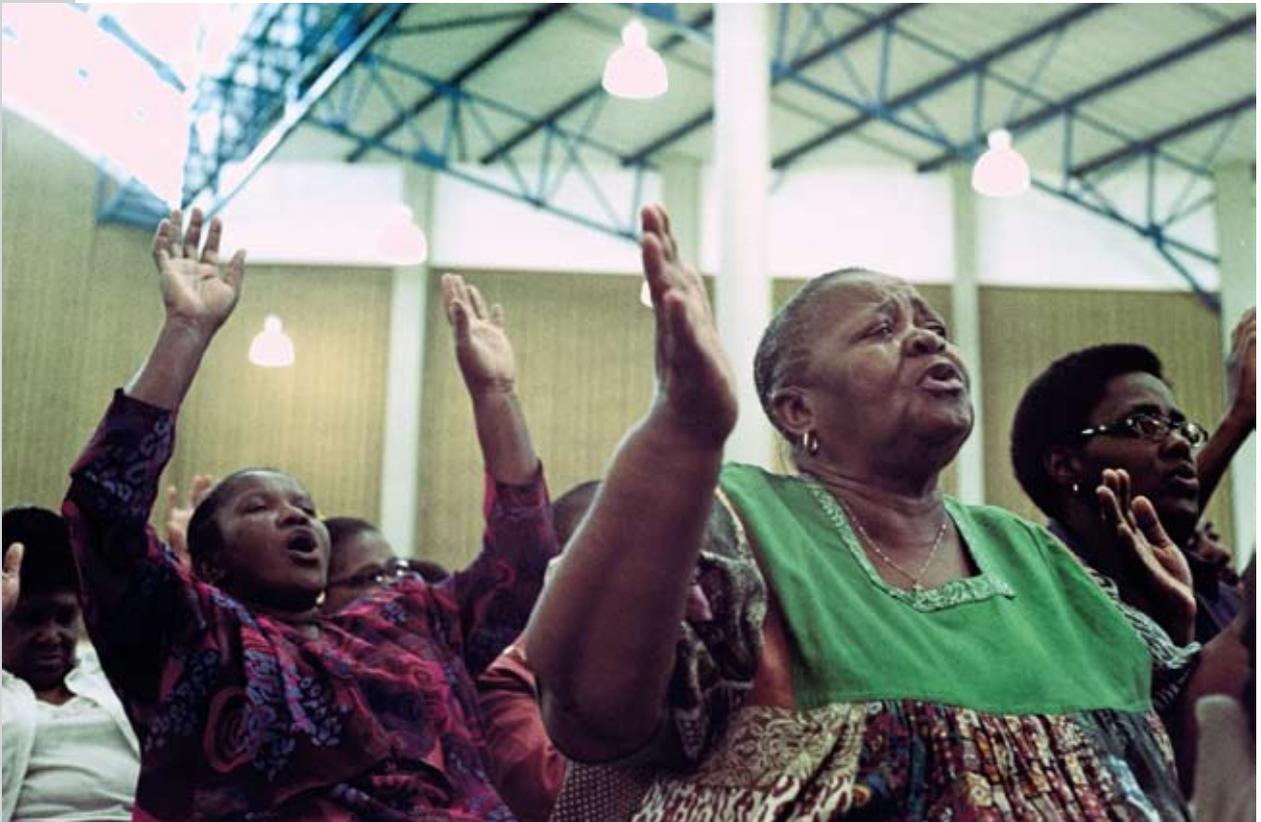




CENTRE FOR DEVELOPMENT AND ENTERPRISE  
Informing South African Policy

# DORMANT CAPITAL

Pentecostalism in South Africa and its  
potential social and economic role



March 2008

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Cover: The Grace Bible Church in Pimville, Soweto. Subsidiary buildings in the complex are still under construction.



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This report has been written by Prof Lawrence Schlemmer. The author has drawn very substantially on the overall direction given by Ann Bernstein, Prof Peter Berger and Prof James Hunter, written project reviews by programme co-ordinator Dr Stephen Rule, and background research reports written for this project. These reports and their authors are listed in Appendix 1. The author would also like to thank Lauren van den Berg for assistance in accessing background reading.

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## INTRODUCTION

One of the founding fathers of sociology, Emile Durkheim (1858-1917), was a confirmed atheist throughout his adult life, but he insisted that if religion did not exist, institutions would have to be created to fulfil the vital functions that it performs for society and for humanity. His observation, like that of many other impartial analysts of religious behaviour that have followed him, was that religion provides society with the underlying concepts and categories of thought through which people understand the social world around them<sup>1</sup>. Frank Parkin explains Durkheim's conviction more emphatically: in his view a society lacking religion would also lack a proper consciousness of itself, and would be profoundly pathological<sup>2</sup>. For Durkheim, religion not only strengthens the bonds between the individual and society but also strengthens the human psyche -- a believer '... who has communicated with his god is not merely a man who sees new truths ... he is a man who is stronger'. These views of religion as socially integrating, as a source of meaning and as a factor strengthening motivation for progress, are impossible to gainsay -- organised religion continues to defy countless past and present predictions of its demise in the face of modernisation, rationality and secularisation. Religious faith has larger numbers of voluntary and committed adherents today than ever before in human history.

Political and social leaders, economists and the myriad other experts working for human betterment, whether they are believers or not, would be wise not to ignore religious faith as a key element in their calculations. Faith in the modern world is a reality as pervasive and powerful as money, technology, procreation and social life itself.

It was this awareness that led the Centre for Development and Enterprise (CDE) to become interested in religious faith as a potentially powerful factor to be considered in public policy. This interest led to the research on which the report that follows is based, part of a programme of investigation into the impact of Pentecostalism in post-apartheid South Africa. The project is unusual for an organisation that hitherto has been wholly focused on issues of public policy in the field of governance and socio-economic development. But CDE has become increasingly convinced that inputs to development and progress in South Africa require more than the very necessary insights and strategies that the economic and socio-economic development disciplines can offer. Attention to the quality of morale and motivation in the population is equally important in addressing challenges in any society.

In this context, CDE's International Associate, Prof. Peter Berger of Boston University, has long alerted it to the impact of Protestant revival movements in Latin America, South Korea, parts of Eastern Europe and elsewhere. Of all the developments, the rapid growth of the Pentecostal churches, both on a worldwide scale and in South Africa, has been the most striking. A key question for CDE is whether or not this burgeoning movement offers prospects of a new thrust for social and economic development within South African communities. The significance and ramifications of this question can only be understood against the backdrop of broader patterns in South African society and its economy.

## South Africa's uneven development

On the broad assumption that religious conversion and revival can be particularly salient in places where populations, or sections of populations, can be variously stimulated to participate more fully in socio-economic development and progress in the modern economy, South Africa is indeed a significant location for studying the current and potential role of religion in the development mix. CDE has long viewed the uneven progress of development in South Africa with some concern.

Since 1994 the government has been exemplary in its aspirations for development and socio-economic progress for the mass of South Africa's people. Its oft-repeated manifesto of a 'better life for all' reflects a long-standing and genuine concern with the greatest good for the greatest number of South Africans, but as we will note below, concrete achievements have fallen far short of the ambitious intentions of policy-makers.

Among other constraints, a vital ingredient in development is all too often absent in current South Africa. This can be described as a serious asymmetry in what sociologists would define as human 'agency' or volition, and in particular a weakness in bottom-up impetus for development within communities themselves. There is a decided limpness in the quality of initiative for development among the so-called grass roots, generating great vulnerability among many millions of South Africans, as we go on to explain below.

South Africa in recent years has recorded sound if not spectacular GDP growth and with it burgeoning fiscal resources, significant amounts of which have been spent on subsidised housing delivery, a wide range of other state services for the poor and a very meaningful expansion of the 'social wage' – old age pensions and various welfare grants. The result has been that a very alarming growth in poverty up to 2000 has been curtailed to some extent. Levels of deprivation remain massive, however.

Major specific features of this situation include the following. Since 1995 the economy has created over 3 million jobs, reducing official unemployment from 30% in 2002 to 25,5% in 2006, but the absolute numbers of unemployed people more than doubled between 1995 and 2006. Furthermore, the official unemployment rate excludes 'discouraged job seekers' whose numbers boost the effective unemployment rate to some 40%, one of the two or three highest recorded rates in the world. One consequence is that the numbers of people living below a commonly accepted poverty line increased steadily from 17 million in 1996 to 23,5 million in 2004, amounting to some 50% of the population. Increases in welfare grants to more than 12 million people have significantly alleviated life-threatening deprivation but have done much less to erode this wider condition, and can also do little to provide meaningful and dignifying participation in the economy. Along with these trends income inequality in the society has deepened and the overall index of inequality, the Gini Coefficient, grew from 0,53 in 1996 to 0,64 in 2005<sup>3</sup>.

All this means that the benefits of South Africa's economic successes have been heavily concentrated among the old and new elites, middle classes and the unionised and relatively skilled blue-collar classes. The other half of the population lives in chronically con-

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strained circumstances, and the more fortunate among them are condemned to be more or less permanently dependent on state welfare, a situation that is often self-reinforcing because long-term unemployment steadily reduces employability. As a consequence of the condition of the bottom 50% of the population, the country's Human Development Index fell from 0,724 in 1995 to 0,666 in 2002 and has not significantly recovered since.<sup>4</sup>

One can argue that more rapid overall economic growth will create a tide that will lift all sections of the population, and this is broadly true for the medium to longer term. However, an extended time-scale is a problem in itself because the consequences of unemployment and socio-economic marginality can become chronic disadvantages in a competitive global economy. The power of the global 'knowledge economy' and a comparative weakness in the competitiveness of South Africa's manufacturing sector (relative to commodity exports and the service economy) means that the pattern of demand in South Africa will increasingly favour skilled and sophisticated labour, for which poverty and protracted unemployment are a poor preparation. South Africa's marginalized population would be slowest to benefit, and in its lowest layers of skills, will never benefit at all.

Trade unions both in South Africa and internationally have long lamented this pattern of development in post-modern economies. From an analytical perspective, David Apter of Yale University set out the implications in stark language. After reviewing the consequences in eighties Europe – relatively mild compared to those we have outlined for South Africa above – he spoke of the 'Specter of superfluous man ... the functionally superfluous ... represent for the rest of society the negative pole, a blight on the society, pariahs recognizable by self-perpetuating stigmata, ghettoised'<sup>5</sup>. Apter and the trade unions may have over-reacted as far as Europe and successful emerging economies of the world are concerned because subsequent productivity-based growth has reduced the size of the problem. For South Africa and a few other emerging economies, without the same variety of global comparative advantages and without the cushion of sustaining residues of peasant, village and family enterprise, Apter's description is tragically apt.

Most South African policy prescriptions are for larger and more ambitious state employment and development programmes. However, among the ironies of the South African situation is that the programme implementation capacity of the South African government is not keeping pace with the private sector driven growth in the competitive economy, due to a variety of factors including skills shortages. Among the most glaring skills deficits is a critical shortage of the competent programme managers who could run ambitious state development projects. The current performance of educational and training institutions is also nowhere near the international norm or what is required to transform the balance of formal skills in the foreseeable future.

Hence, the immediate and medium term outlook is that the current pattern of upwardly biased development in South Africa will be consolidated, one in which economic elites, the black and white middle classes and the skilled or unionised blue collar classes will at the very least retain their considerable material advantages over the remaining 40% to 50% of South Africa's population.

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The people in categories below the classes benefiting directly from the country's growth are not only captives of poverty, but they are also exposed to quite considerable stress. Their occupations, where they have them, are highly uncertain, they suffer daily survival anxiety, in urban areas they generally live in flimsy self-constructed shelters generously defined as 'informal housing' and survey after survey shows that tenuous expectations or hopes of 'service delivery' by government dominate all other concerns. The fact that this category of people has mounted no fewer than 6000 protests over service delivery in 40 towns since the start of 2004<sup>6</sup> is ironically quite reassuring because it at least shows that many of them have not yet sunk into helpless despair.

This major rift in South Africa, which the country's President has frequently deplored as a deep divide between a 'first' and 'second' economy, is not unfamiliar among emerging markets, but it is more marked in South Africa than it is in most Latin American and Eastern countries. This is due to the considerable sophistication of South Africa's first or formal economy, an extensive regime of labour regulations that have raised the cost of labour and discouraged unskilled formal employment and, as we have said, to very low levels of labour-absorbing rural peasant production, family enterprise and small-scale entrepreneurship in South Africa. Family enterprise and small scale entrepreneurship in South Africa compares unfavourably with that in broadly comparable economies in Latin America, the Indian Sub Continent, the Far East and even Eastern Europe.<sup>7</sup>

In respect of small business, government has long recognised the problem and since 1996 has launched a succession of initiatives to support small black business including relatively liberal access to soft loan-based start up finance and various training and mentoring programmes. Grass-roots entrepreneurship has produced successes but mainly where massive market-demand has virtually commanded a response, as with the previously informal taxi-industry (but even here the incidence of ownership external to poor local communities is significant). In general, however, small black entrepreneurship has languished, as illustrated by the following representative keynote research. In 2006 a major empirical study of small business in South Africa's most developed province, Gauteng,<sup>8</sup> showed that of the estimated one million small businesses in the province, 64% were informal street vendors and hawkers, with an estimated average income well below the poverty line. A further 18% of businesses were described as unregistered individuals, with an average monthly turnover of R2600 per month, which probably translates into a take-home income of not much more than R1000 per month, also below the poverty line. Only 17% of small businesses generated meaningful incomes – with an average turnover of R21 500 per month -- but these enterprises tended to be either white or Indian owned or were run by middle class entrepreneurs. With exceptions, obviously, despite a decade of well-intentioned support schemes, micro-business development among the poor has failed to meaningfully alleviate either poverty or unemployment.

Hence, given the contradictory pressures on government and the continuing skills-intensification of development in the core economy, it is unlikely that South Africa's underclass will be able to be meaningfully re-integrated by growth in demand from the core

economy in the short to medium term. **The main hope within this time scale seems to lie with the people themselves.**

### **Development from below: a role for religion?**

In most major respects the emergence of development initiatives among grass-roots communities has been disappointing. This is because most bottom-up initiatives require some form of mobilisation, which in South Africa usually has to be led by voluntary organisations in civil society. But voluntary organisation targeting the lower socio-economic levels has been weakening rather than strengthening, due to the departure of much of its erstwhile leadership to very rewarding jobs in the state bureaucracy. Civil society initiatives in South Africa today are dominated by ‘progressive’ special interest groupings (health lobbies, gender rights groups, a gay rights movement, anti-smoking lobbies, global warming activists, the mobilisation of people with HIV/Aids, etc.) and there is little sustained attention to general conditions in the urban and rural slums.

Against this background, two major conclusions may be drawn. Firstly, given the unlikelihood that the current economic growth trajectory in South Africa will significantly change its pattern of divisions in socio-economic rewards, and given the poor prospects for a marked improvement in the outputs of government grass-roots development initiatives (a task in which most governments tend to fail), unless poor communities in South Africa can generate the initiative for self-help and development within their own fabric, they will continue to lag behind the progress of the first economy. Hence it is important to scour the socio-economic fabric of poorer communities and emerging classes for indications of bottom-up initiatives and possibilities that can be encouraged. Second, and at the same time, given that any development takes time, the morale and cohesion of very poor communities has to be protected in the interim, yet in South Africa it is under constant threat of decay. Therefore it is equally important to scour the fabric of threatened communities for institutions and patterns of behaviour that can provide members with a sheet anchor of moral support to counter the corrosive effects of poverty and its associated stresses.

It is from these two major points of departure that CDE has turned its attention to the effects of religious organisation and faith commitments among rank-and-file populations. Obviously CDE and other agencies must continue to advocate for improved development policy and programmes of intervention, but it is equally clear that community-located counters to the corrosive effects of the country’s socio-economic situation on morale, the social fabric and the quality of economic motivation in poor communities, require urgent and equal attention.

CDE’s International Associate, Prof. Peter Berger, has provided critical guidance in this research departure. Berger’s widely known and admired books on the social significance of religious faith in world society<sup>9</sup> have, or should have, alerted social scientists to the pervasive impact of faith in all cultures and human endeavour. More specifically, it was

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work undertaken by Berger's Institute in Latin America that alerted CDE to the significance of the rapidly growing Pentecostal movement.

Berger has detected a very clear connection to development in the faith and practice of Pentecostalism. Describing it as a form of 'this-worldly asceticism' akin to the Protestant ethic, he uncovers an emerging cultural permutation that: 'promotes personal discipline and honesty ... (discourages) extravagant expenditures ... and teaches ordinary people to create and run their own grassroots institutions.'<sup>10</sup> Another prominent student of Pentecostalism in the world, David Martin also offers very suggestive conclusions about the association with development.<sup>11</sup> He speaks of a multi-faceted '... set of burgeoning affinities ...' (p.170) spawned by the movement and new aspirations opened to communities, including possibilities of connections between the spread of Pentecostalism in Latin America and a wider world of opportunity. Describing Pentecostalism as the '... religious mobilisation of the culturally despised...' (p.167) that releases them from '... ascribed categories and indelible markers into a dangerous and bewildering open-endedness...' (p.168) he points to a creative '... ambiguity ... more potent for change than confrontation of the status quo...' because in its very '...indirections...' it offers the chance of finding '... directions out...' (p.169). He sees the phenomenon as '...sufficiently adaptable to forge links with very different social formations ... Pentecostalism ... belongs by nature to open markets beyond all sponsorship ... it remains incurably pluralistic ...' and embodies a '... release of spirit in harness with the discipline that work and the market demand' (p.170) '... a conjunction of virtue and personal survival and betterment ... enough to sustain a confidence in the invisible hand of Providence ...' (p.172).

The work of Berger and Martin has been in locations far away from South Africa today. But their analyses have provided the hypotheses that have guided CDE's current research among members of the Pentecostal movement and other denominations in South Africa.

Some 80% of South Africa's population professes to be Christian<sup>12</sup>. Religion has had a sound track record in recent decades, sections of the established mainstream churches with international linkages having played a prominent role in opposing apartheid. But the more activist thrusts of that movement weakened themselves by becoming over-politicised and fixated on white racism, and hence lost momentum when apartheid was defeated. Religion has since dramatically lowered its profile in South Africa, significantly retreating into denominational enclaves. Furthermore, to some extent a flood of post-liberation political, developmental, ideological and quasi-intellectual jargon about poverty and inequality has usurped the social role of religion in South Africa. There is a hole to fill.

The 'hole' is a remarkable near absence of any transcendent goals or meanings prescribed in our public life. We have loads of 'development speak' and an even greater weight of promises of 'service delivery' that, as already pointed out, is coming close to becoming like an erstwhile Indonesian 'cargo cult' for the poor, but our politicians are scrupulously secular. The editor of South Africa's second largest Sunday newspaper says of the reigning political party: '*... its moral core is in deep hibernation -- paralysed by avarice, self-*

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*interest and the selective application of (its own) rules*<sup>13</sup>. The closest the political establishment comes to a transcendent position is when it talks about the virtue of ‘ubuntu’, a frequently advocated humanist position roughly equivalent to ‘empathy’ and with undertones of community solidarity. But all this is social rather than transcendent – it inspires no awe and is stripped of anything resembling holy fear of Higher Authority. The result is that our leaders play to expressed wants, to aspirations, to entitlement and sometimes to appetites and greed, but their words do not have any resonance beyond their partisan appeal. They do not play to conscience, to obligation (except the often emphasised obligations of the formerly advantaged whites to promote black interests) or to any sense of duty.

Somewhere in this emerging situation religion has at least a role to play in reminding citizens that there are goals, meanings and possibilities for self-development beyond political party-derived programmes and government-corporate partnerships. What today do bemused parents tell their children and what do new curriculum-loaded school principals tell their pupils, morning-prayer assemblies having been eliminated by progressive educationalists?

The purpose of this rather long digression is to make the point that religion has a massive role to play, for example something like that of Methodism in 19<sup>th</sup> Century England, with its emphasis on spiritually-based pastoral work among the poor. Possibly the closest we have is the rapidly growing revivalist movement in Pentecostalism.

This is not to conclude prematurely that the Pentecostal churches have any intrinsic claims or contributions that other denominations or religions cannot make. The focus on the Pentecostal churches rests largely on three major factors: the fact that they are growing most rapidly among all levels and communities in society (see ahead), their known ability to imbue followers with an intensity of motivation and their organisational entrepreneurship and flexibility, factors that can add significant weight to the combined impact of organised faith in our society.

If their role includes the encouragement of and inspiration for economic self-reliance in the marginal sectors of society, as it has elsewhere in the world, and includes the strengthening of identities that lie deeper than party and class, then they and other churches may well assuage justified anxieties about the country’s longer run future. It is these possibilities that have informed the research reported on here.

## **PENTECOSTAL AND BROADLY LINKED RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS IN BRIEF**

In this brief review we will not deal with some of the major controversies surrounding Pentecostalism and other evangelical revival movements. Because of an alarming ignorance of the nature of Pentecostalism in the mainstream churches and among most opinion leaders in South Africa it is necessary first of all to simply describe their history and features. For many otherwise well-informed South Africans, the Pentecostal churches are seen either as shallow, as emotively irresponsible or as a rather weird phenomenon –

mass congregations of suggestible ‘happy clappers’ pursuing Salvation through hysterical outbursts of disconnected spiritual passion while dreaming of prosperity. However, in order to properly understand the current and future implications of religious revival and religion in general in South Africa, some understanding of the roots and history of the movement has to be conveyed. We also need to introduce readers to categories of faith within the movement as a whole.

More controversial issues that are raised in the analysis of the Pentecostal churches will be debated in the closing sections of this analysis.

### **The Pentecostal churches**

The Pentecostal Churches have as their key focus the workings of the Holy Spirit as a powerful force among believers. It is frequently said that while the broader evangelical revival movement emphasises Jesus as the focus of faith, the Pentecostal movement emphasises the Holy Spirit. At its core is usually a re-conversion experience called ‘baptism by or with the Holy Spirit’, harking back to the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the first Christians in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost, or Shavuot (Acts of the Apostles 2–4). This experience is said to have been common in the Christian movement during its first generations, hence the new movement is often likened to ‘primitive’ Christianity. Specifically, the evidence of ‘baptism with the Holy Spirit’ takes the form of spiritual episodes, including trance states and the speaking in tongues unknown to the believer (glossalalia, speech in an unknown language, or xenoglossy, speech in a language known to others but not the speaker). Speaking in tongues is considered one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit described by St. Paul the Apostle (1 Corinthians 12), and Pentecostals believe that those baptized by the Holy Spirit may receive other supernatural gifts that purportedly existed in the early church, such as the ability to prophesy, to interpret speaking in tongues and to heal, hence leading to the Faith Healing characteristic of the Pentecostal churches.

The Pentecostals also emphasized and to varying extents still emphasise moral rigour, a literal interpretation of the Bible, and the commitment to seek salvation before Christ's Second Coming. During the 19<sup>th</sup> Century there had been notable precursors of the Pentecostal movement in some Protestant churches all over the world that we need not describe. The Pentecostal and closely associated Charismatic religious movements emerged fully in the United States by 1901, however, centred on the Bethel Bible College, a small religious school in Topeka, Kansas, which had witnessed spiritual episodes.

In 1906 the movement was strengthened by the addition of a black and multi-racial following that emerged after the Azusa Street revival in Los Angeles. This development, first called the Apostolic Faith Mission, became a great spiritual centre that for many years attracted rich and poor, blacks and whites, Anglos and Latinos, as well as many disaffected preachers from mainstream churches. It was perhaps no accident that the Pentecostal churches had their origins in locations of the Methodist Church, a church with its own history of Christian revival and Christian entrepreneurship in the face of the formal-

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ity of the established churches and with a tradition of faith healing in the Methodist Holiness Church.

In phases, Pentecostalism has grown powerfully ever since 1906, basically in reaction to the complacent, worldly, and coldly formalistic character of faith and spirit-deadening rituals that had come to characterise the established denominations. Offshoots of the Methodist Churches and Baptists in particular gave the movement impetus. The non-conformist urge energised these new churches, often established in informal premises, taking them further than their predecessors in their revival of earlier recorded forms of Christian practice.

At stages Pentecostals were deeply split by doctrinal differences, inter alia relating to the concept of the Holy Trinity, and have never successfully formed a single coherent organization; consisting instead of individual congregations coming together to found the various sub-denominations that constitute the movement today. The movement was to a degree consolidated in its broader commitments by opposition from established churches, having been dismissed as shallow by mainstream denominations and even denounced as heresy by conservative evangelical groups that rejected the notions of faith healing and speaking in tongues. However, as segments of the Pentecostal movement became settled in their new faith, their worship also became more formalistic and routine, as in the Apostolic Churches and the Assemblies of God, for example, and as had happened earlier to the Methodists in Britain and the USA.

In reaction to the loss of fervour, revitalization efforts have periodically appeared, leading to the creation of new Pentecostal denominations, thereby spreading its growth and propagating its organisational diversity.

Rapid growth of Pentecostalism in the late 20th century was not limited to its traditional constituency, however, and its mode of worship and spiritual emphasis, including speaking in tongues, spread (back) into the established Protestant and Roman Catholic churches. This important development from the 1970s onward led to the formation of Charismatic fellowships (from Greek 'charis' or gift) in most of the major older denominations. While many welcomed the new dimension of spiritual life that these fellowships represented, many older denominational leaders saw them as disruptive and as a result, many Charismatic members of mainstream churches left to form new denominations, also propagating the organisational diversity of the movement.

A sense of unity within Pentecostalism has largely rested on an amorphous 'spiritual union,' and less thought was given to church unification. Attempts to limit the multiplication of Pentecostal denominations and to heal divisions within the movement have never been completely successful. An overarching Pentecostal Fellowship of North America (PFNA) was established in 1948, however, but limited mainly to the predominantly white Pentecostal churches until the 1990s, when an effort was made to build relationships with the major African American Pentecostal churches. In 1994 a new interracial organization, the Pentecostal/Charismatic Churches of North America was formed. But these attempts

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at coordination have never produced the integrated influence achieved by the national and international ecumenical movements among the mainstream churches.

However, a missionary zeal centred on saving the world by saving souls has led to the planting of these new churches all over the world. Although exact statistics are difficult to obtain, it is broadly estimated that there are over 200 million members worldwide but probably more. Berger quotes an estimate by David Martin of 250 million<sup>14</sup>. There are congregations in more than 150 countries. The largest single Pentecostal denomination is assumed to be the Assemblies of God church, which together with the Church of God established large Spanish-language branches, and as a result completely new autonomous denominations formed in both Mexico and Puerto Rico. From these groups, Pentecostalism spread into the rest of Latin America, where it became especially popular in the latter decades of the 20th century. By then it had also spread widely into parts of Europe and the Far East. Wherever it spread a change in not only the religious but also the social and economic dispositions of its congregants could be noted (see ahead). The rapid growth continues to this day notwithstanding a lesser or greater degree of theological antagonism from the mainstream churches.

Pentecostal missionaries reached South Africa in 1907 and found a home in the mission established only a few years earlier by representatives of the Christian Catholic church, an American church that emphasized healing. In 1914 missionaries of the Assemblies of God strengthened the movement. The early leadership included the famous Pastor Nicholas B.H. Bhengu, a former Lutheran who joined the Assemblies of God. He was the first great African-born Pentecostal evangelist. Membership of the Pentecostal churches has grown steadily in South Africa (see ahead). Pentecostalism also exercised a profound influence on the development of the African Independent church movement after World War II and hence forms of Pentecostalism have become mass movements across sub-Saharan Africa.

Subtypes within the broad Pentecostal movement include the following major categories:

- *Classical Pentecostals* are those who are direct descendants of the 'first wave' of the Pentecostal revival in the early part of the last century. As mentioned these churches have formalised their liturgy and have established rituals. They can be seen to include the Apostolic churches and these are discussed in more detail below. Theologically they have all been influenced by pietism that emphasises Christ within the individual, has little concern for outward worldly affairs, and is focussed on the 'home in heaven'. However the Classical Pentecostals took this further and hold to the premillennial eschatology that teaches that the church will be 'raptured' or taken away before the end of the world and the second coming of Christ. This reinforces an other-worldliness and a large degree of withdrawal from the world, and a concentration on the future.
- The *New Charismatics* refers to those churches that emerged from the charismatic renewal of the sixties and seventies. While they are also influenced by pietism but they have a strong emphasis on the kingdom of God in the present, not the future,

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and they value engagement with the world. The New Charismatics are concerned with the immediacy of what God is saying to them. Their followers tend to be concentrated in the emerging and aspirant lower middle classes (older, long-established middle classes tend to be in mainstream denominations). Black New Charismatic churches are black versions of the white churches and also tend to develop middle class values, albeit with a distinctively ‘black’ flavour.

In comparison with the Classical Pentecostals, the New Charismatics are highly geared for growth and expansion in terms of their message, structures and organisation. At the core of their leadership is a team modelled on the ‘five-fold ministry’, as set out by Paul in Ephesians 4: the apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor and teacher. This ‘apostolic team’ is a highly mobile, trans-local instrument that works nationally and internationally to evangelise, plant churches, ordain elders, and give teaching and direction. Pentecostals thus have a highly marketable message and an extremely slick marketing method, hence their growth.

- The *Mega-Churches* are a development in the new Pentecostal movement that came about by direct or indirect association with the faith and prosperity message that came from the US and/or the televangelists of the late fifties, 1960s, 70s and 80s. These are discussed briefly below under the prosperity churches.
- *Community-based* churches are those that were defined by an inner city, neighbourhood or township base and are associated with the notion of the ‘storefront’ revival centres in the Azusa Street tradition. These are not so much a part of the charismatic renewal, which by definition was rather limited to the emerging middle classes, as they were a part of the earlier Pentecostal movement. In South Africa they are usually the churches in poor communities and are dominantly black or coloured although there are such churches in the poorer white suburbs of Gauteng.

### The Apostolic churches

Founded in SA by American Missionary John Lake in 1910, and an offshoot of the Azusa Street Revival, the Apostolic Churches are a long established and relatively powerful movement in SA. Broadly regarded as a Pentecostal church, this church grew strongly among both blacks and whites. According to the 2001 census, the Apostolic Church and related Apostolic Faith Mission had 5,9 million members combined<sup>15</sup>.

This doctrine also grew in the European new Apostolic Churches and has affinities both with the ‘Oneness’ Pentecostal Churches in the USA, formerly part of the General Assembly of Apostolic Assemblies, and with the Apostolic World Christian Fellowship.

A central doctrine is that of Apostolic Succession – the concept that the Apostles of Christ are represented, or have counterparts on earth, in the persons of the bishops or chief pastors of the church. This role of representing the 12 New Testament Apostles is crucial in that these representatives have the role of interpreting the Bible to the followers. The apostolic representative can also convey the gifts of the spirit of Christ through

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the practice of laying on of hands and the church followers are understood to have a deep sense of community and spiritual security. The Apostolic Pentecostal Churches that emerged in the USA were driven by the Unitarian or 'Oneness' conviction that Christ alone was and is the embodiment of God – in fact the belief is that Jesus is the name of God -- hence replacing the concept of the Holy Trinity, a belief that caused deep splits in the Pentecostal movement.

These churches, particularly those in Europe, were known for their socio-political conservatism – in fact the German Churches supported Nazi doctrines. More generally, the apostolic role of the churches' leaders has caused the Apostolic Churches to become relatively male-centred, hierarchical and formal, and in recent years the movement has lost followers to the more spontaneous and less male-centred newer Pentecostal Churches in South Africa.

### The Prosperity movement

Another sub-type of Pentecostalism is found in the so-called '**Prosperity**' movement. In its early forms Pentecostalism anticipated great trial and tribulation before the Second Coming of Christ, although a subsequent prediction was that the faithful would be spared the worst consequences. Nevertheless, the message was of great prior suffering and hence induced devout pessimism. By the late fifties, however, another interpretation of the Pentateuch (the first five books of the Bible) in particular was that God, or faith in God, empowers people to become prosperous (see Deuteronomy 30:9). This message started to have an impact on the persisting residues of Great Depression poverty, both in the USA, South Africa, and Sweden and among other places in South Korea, where it combined fluidly with a culturally grounded commitment to moral discipline and hard work.

Pentecostal tent ministries, often with American evangelists, caused great concern to the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa after the Second World War because of the perceived disruptive effects on poor families and their survival strategies of the great sense of elation and spiritual arousal induced in the congregations. Not only spiritual, but also sexual arousal was suspected. (This author was himself a young social worker in those days and at a time worked with local Dutch Reformed Churches to understand the effects. The author can attest to the near hypnotic effects and unpredictable consequences of rapidly alternating voice tones of American evangelists and Afrikaans interpreters in steaming hot tents in the Transvaal).

Then the broadcast sermons of the Reverend Oral Roberts, replete with testimonies of dramatic salvation from poverty, became popular and were widely emulated all over the world. The Full Gospel Businessmen International Fellowship was a further institutionalisation of the message, and the Word of Faith movement of Kenneth Hagin, Kenneth Copeland, the African American pastor Frederick Price and Ray McCauley in South Africa gave further impetus to the movement.

The basic formula was the biblical injunction to 'give so that you will or might receive'. A basic criticism by the established churches at the time was that the 'giving' served a

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primary purpose of funding the expensive media coverage of the message, and the lifestyles of the evangelists – a criticism that persists today. A deeper theological critique was, and still is, that the implication of the message is that God will respond to the commands of faith rather than being sovereign, that people are encouraged to claim dubious material success, and that the role of Christ as bearer of suffering, poverty and need obscures the essential Christian message of Christ's bearing of mankind's sins. Today Pentecostalism generally tempers the prosperity message to reconcile it with more fundamental Christian commitments, but there remain instances of entrepreneurial churches in poor or formerly poor upwardly mobile communities that are free to exploit this theme both for the benefit of the spiritual morale of the congregants and the expensive needs of the new church infrastructure and their pastors.

It is also often agreed, however, that the optimism so characteristic of these churches works independently to energise the congregants, with positive material consequences.

### **The Charismatic movement in the mainstream churches**

A general trend in organised Christianity must be added to this brief review. The greater individual assertiveness of all categories of people in market economies over recent decades has exposed even the most established mainstream churches, including Catholic and Orthodox churches as well as Jewish ministries, to bottom-up demands that services and liturgy respond to the need for a spiritual reinforcement of the personal aspirations of congregants. In turn this has opened the way to Charismatic elements, qualities and indeed full-blown sub-congregations being accommodated in many mainstream churches. This is a riveting development in organised Christianity. It has posed a particular problem in our research (to follow) in that much of the mutual distinctiveness of Pentecostal and mainstream congregations in modern urban society have become blurred and blended into one another.

### **African Independent Churches as an indigenous form of Pentecostalism?**

By the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Africans had begun to form their own independent churches. Some drew their inspiration from the early Pentecostal Assemblies of God movement (Pastor Bhengu in particular) combined with African American church models in the USA, including the Zionist movement in Illinois. At the same time there also was an urge to establish authentically African movements, attuned to the plight of African Christians as a subject people.

In Africa at large there are both Christian or partly Christian forms and neo-traditionalist movements. One of the two largest types is that of the Zion Christian Churches centred in South Africa. As said, the early origins of these churches in South Africa were deeply intertwined with protest and despair over the loss of land and autonomy under colonialism and white domination. In most of these instances an African religious leader emerged to speak to the followers in their own language, and these leaders came to be regarded as prophets of a new destiny for the people. The concept of Zionism is important in that,

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aside from the literal acceptance of part of the Old Testament, it signifies a distinctive sense of place, in recalling that God came down among believers in the temple of Mount Zion in Jerusalem. Hence these holy places are where followers experience the presence of God among them.

The Zion Christian Churches still have features in common with Pentecostalism, deriving from doctrinal influences that spread from the Azusa Street revival in Los Angeles from 1906 onwards, but more recent aspects of the charismatic revival have also influenced them. The common feature in most African Independent Churches is the insistence on strict moral codes for the followers, with smoking, alcohol, sexual liberty and the eating of pork severely sanctioned. There is no doubt that the members of the African Zionist churches have acquired a formidable reputation for moral discipline, a work ethic and effective social networks that facilitate finding employment and provide mutual support.

While the central basis of belief is the Bible, particularly the Old Testament, the biblical message has been reconciled with important aspects of African traditional beliefs. The members are wedded to African traditionalism and a communalist order. Their traditionalism is seen particularly in the acceptance of polygamy and in many, possibly deviant, cases the (informal) recognition traditional diviners in certain healing and exorcism rituals. An ongoing source of tension in the faith of many of these churches is an ambiguity regarding the ancestors. African Independent Churches formally regard the traditional spirit world as a source of evil power, but this very perception in a sense validates the forces in the traditional worldview. There is also a tendency to venerate the ancestors to the extent of according them a semi-sacred status and it may beg the question among followers of how the spirits of the ancestors inter-relate with the Holy Spirit of the Scriptures. Similarly, there is ambiguity in the significance of the church leaders. Some accounts of the leaders would seem to equate them with biblical prophets. The leaders are powerful patriarchs with hereditary status, and the social organisation of the churches tends to the authoritarian. While most observers agree that the leaders are not 'worshipped' in the sense of having divine status, they are deeply revered and to some degree seen as representatives of God on earth, occupying a special position between the divine and the earthly. The followers would question the need for categorical distinctions between the divine and the earthly and to this extent there may be distinctive religious syncretism in the African Independent Churches. Hence there is some division among experts on just how 'Christian' the African Independent Churches (or some African Independent Churches) really are. Whatever the case, the African Independent Churches are undoubtedly authentic, but highly indigenised forms of Christianity.

Notwithstanding their origins in despair and lament at their treatment by colonial and settler authorities, the African Independent Churches have not developed a theology of resistance or overt political protest. Like the Pentecostal churches, they became reconciled with secular authority, seeking spiritual rather than political compensations. In fact, during the earlier periods of apartheid, the relationships between leaders and the state authorities were often cooperative, although closer observers noted subtle ambiguity and concealed political commitments<sup>16</sup>. As one of our studies noted, some observers detected

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a re-appropriation of the symbolic language of the dominant order for alternative ends. In general, however, they were a far cry from any early form of liberation theology.

The African Independent Churches (and indeed many Pentecostals) find aspects of the new democracy anathema. This is mentioned by Paul Germond and John de Gruchy in their literature review for CDE in 2001: 'African Independent Churches also have an ambivalent attitude to democracy for the simple fact that the AIC's worldviews are very different from those that under-gird the Western-oriented concept of democracy'. The sentiment was also found by Riaan Ingram and colleagues in their interviews among 75 Pentecostal congregants, as evidenced by the following quotes, and in this regard the Pentecostals and members of the African Independent churches have very similar views: 'Christians and politics do not mix ... (they are) two different things... We have got democracy in our country but it is far against how God wants us to live ... The Bible says that you must respect your father and mother so that you can have eternal life while democracy says that you have a right to anything'. The problem for these faiths and for many other conservative believers in all faiths, are those policies that since 1994 have introduced distinctly US and European-based super-progressive left-liberal principles into laws governing abortion, gay rights and gay marriage, gender rights, children's rights and the like. For these believers traditional-religious authority is unassailable, and some are sinful.

This aspect of the African Independent faith, as well as the super-traditionalism of the church and its acceptance of ancestor spirits is, however, causing tensions within congregations and eroding support for the Church among better-educated adherents in the current climate. But the African Independent church is not alone in struggling with this dilemma.

There is a more pervasive underlying difficulty that traditional members of the African Independent churches have with democratic values. As two of the researchers on the CDE project explain it, the African Independent Churches adhere to a primal worldview in which tradition and communal values are absolute, whereas democracy assumes that the individual has choice and the right of dissent. This does not necessarily produce hostility to democracy but a lack of enthusiasm for its key assumptions. However, it should be said that South Africa's democracy is not exactly a strong example of the prevalence of individual agency and choice either, and there are sufficient elements of automatic solidarity in the major political parties to make a strongly nationalist democracy inoffensive even among devout members of the African Independent churches.

The following of the African Independent Churches grew to a massive extent during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. By late 2001 there were 6,9 million members of the African Zionist Churches combined, and in addition there were 2,1 million members of other Independent African Churches<sup>17</sup>. As CDE's research has emphasised, this growth was in large measure due to the fact that the churches offered urbanising adherents a portable framework of values and leadership structure in the church that emulated the kinship-based authority and structure of rural life. This framework also includes, or does not necessarily reject, the spiritually comforting presence of ancestor spirits. Hence the church was able to provide an all-embracing rural-traditional surrogate environment to people entering the po-

tentially alienating world of modern urban production and competitive economics. As already mentioned, however, after 2001 their numbers appear to have declined somewhat due to losses of membership to the Pentecostal churches<sup>18</sup> and due to rising levels of affluence and education with the implication that the adherents no longer need the supportive framework referred to above.

A noteworthy feature is the stark correlation between membership of the African Independent Churches and socio-economic status. Among Africans in the five lowest LSM (Living Standard Measure) categories, 15,6 % belonged to the African Independent Churches compared with less than 1% among Africans in the highest LSM category<sup>19</sup>. Membership of the African Independent Churches is dominantly very poor, lowly educated and communally oriented.

### **A word on the broader social role of these movements**

As reflected in many types of popular media today, there has been a general strengthening of overt interest in personal, emotional need-driven and, surprisingly perhaps, spiritual topics, encompassing themes from both the recognised religions and ‘new age’ spirituality. The world of inner experience has well and truly come out of the closet. At the same time, the democratisation of institutions has brought the concerns down from the levels of those of the elites, the powerful and the rich to those of ordinary people, including very poor people marginal to the major action in societies. While there has always been division, fission, schism and split in religion in general and Christianity in particular, it might have been expected that the tempo and variety of diversification would increase in the liberalising late 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. The establishment of new religious movements and denominations is thus a response to the situations and contexts of people who in earlier times had to bite their lips and pretend to follow orthodox lines.

Pentecostalism and the linked or similar movements outlined above are not ‘cults’ or alternative religions or forms of spirituality, indeed they claim to be the original forms of Christianity. They are (or were) sectarian breakaways from established denominations in which the broader truths accepted by established Christianity are not only accepted but also in many instances re-emphasised.

As sects they, and other sects, depending on their sustainability, have all joined a process in which they become increasingly established and formalised. Max Weber called it the ‘routinisation of charisma’<sup>20</sup>. The classical Pentecostal and similar former sects (Assemblies of God, Full Gospel Church, the Apostolic Church, etc.) are well nigh formal denominations, some with formalised liturgies, codes of worship and elaborate tertiary training institutions. The smaller Pentecostal ‘sects’, however, are the newer offshoots, perhaps repeating the process of formalisation. As sects they have the characteristics identified by Weber and other scholars of dynamism, a challenge to religious practice in its established form, relatively informal worship and organisation (but not necessarily liberal, sometimes authoritarian), a relatively exclusive membership characterised by high levels of commitment, a focused sense of self-identity and clear purity-pollution bounda-

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ries. In the case of the Pentecostals the dynamism is in the form of a devout revival of earlier practices and themes in Christianity, hence they are ‘revivalist’ sects or movements. They are also ‘fundamentalist’ in the sense of insisting on acceptance of the original and written meanings of aspects of the scriptures – the true and vital faith -- but not generally in the sense of doctrinal militancy. Generally they are characterised by emotional modes of religious expression -- enthusiastic congregational singing, spontaneous testimonies, prayer in unison, and extemporaneous sermons on simple biblical themes.

The emergence of these sects was spurred by the fact that the established denominations had become formal, cooler and patterned, in some cases highly ritualised or in the case of some, say, the Reformed Churches, quite abstract, complex and quasi-rational. The established denominations had become the havens of the core middle classes and the elites with a comfortable status in society and relatively few intense needs, whereas the less-secure poorer, marginal and disaffected classes and categories felt a need for religious experience that was more affirming in a personal sense, and hence these classes and categories responded to the more intense spirituality of the Pentecostal sects.

One other distinction is relevant. Bryan Wilson<sup>21</sup> distinguishes between four sub-types of Christian sects: ‘conversionist’ (the principle that by altering people faith alters the world), ‘adventist-revolutionist’ (the principle of preparing for drastic alteration and a radical new dispensation), ‘introversionist-pietist’ (the rejection of the world’s values and their replacement by inner resources) and ‘Gnostic’ (based on mysticism and esoteric beliefs). The Pentecostal sects are of the ‘conversionist’ type – they tolerate the world in a spirit of what Wilson refers to as ‘free will optimism’ that faith and the gifts of the spirit will, with conversion, transform sinful and unacceptable practices.

In terms of the classification of another sociologist, Roy Wallis<sup>22</sup>, the Pentecostal sects are ‘world-accepting’ as opposed to ‘world-affirming’ (perhaps the original Calvinists in particular) or ‘world-renouncing’ (the Pietists and Puritans). The world-accepting characteristic of Pentecostals is vital to an understanding of the broader implications of the movement for the future, and particularly for socio-economic development.

### **Pentecostalism and socio-economic development**

Pentecostalism can be broadly or loosely perceived as a third wave of Calvinist Protestantism<sup>23</sup>. The Reformation of 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century constituted the first wave. That evolution of an alternative form of Christianity countered Roman Catholic hegemony and its perceived abuses, and in the process fostered an approach to life that has come to be called the Protestant ethic, following the famous thesis of Max Weber – an ethic that directly and indirectly gave spiritual sanction to the rational pursuit of economic gain. As Peter Berger sets it out the ethic is characterised by ‘this-worldly’ (or world accepting) asceticism’, a disciplined and rational approach to work and to social activity including family life along and with a deferral of gratification and instant consumption. These habits promoted savings, capital accumulation and economic advancement, all in a context of a worldview free of magic and superstition – in other words a context that favoured pre-

dictability and rational planning. Berger adds that Weber also emphasised the education of children and the propensity to create voluntary associations of non-elite people.

Central to this ethic was a particular theological interpretation of Salvation that needs explanation, sometimes even among many of today's members of Reformed Churches. The interpretation, dating back to forms of early Christianity, is that humankind, being subject to the burden of original sin, can never be certain of God's mercy and Salvation, since only the 'elect of God' (the chosen) will be saved. The only candidates for God's mercy are those who lead exemplary and ascetic lives, and *possibly* there are in this world signs that a believer will be a candidate for God's mercy. Mortals can only demonstrate to themselves and their fellows that they are in reach of God's election by showing signs of divine recognition and blessing. This symbolism developed towards characteristics of super-respectability, prosperity and this-worldly material achievements as the signs. One should note that *core anxiety* about prospects of salvation in the process became a powerful driver of material progress through impelling the believers to follow the lifestyles described by Berger above.<sup>24</sup>

The Protestant ethic gradually declined after it has had its effect in the early stages of economic development and is thus present only in an attenuated form in mainstream Protestant churches.<sup>25</sup> In Pentecostalism, however, there is at least a parallel interpretation, namely that the Holy Spirit, after baptism in or with the Spirit, can display Gifts of mercy and salvation, and signs of these gifts are also found in demonstrations of exemplary behaviour, prosperity and progress in this world. Furthermore, the nature of Pentecostalism – individually located, voluntarist in religious election, populist and lay-orientated in self-organisation, activist and missionary in its orientation to the world<sup>26</sup> – comes close to the Calvinist pattern and places the movement broadly within Weber's description of the Protestant ethic.

Referring to Latin America, Peter Berger detects that Pentecostalism is closely associated with a desire for education, a strong work ethic, individualism, and an affinity for democratic politics. He refers to a 'wildfire expansion of Pentecostal Protestantism' that constitutes a 'cultural revolution, sharply deviant from traditional High Church Latin American patterns'. The new culture

'... promotes personal discipline and honesty, proscribes alcohol and extra-marital sex, dismantles the compadre system (which ... with its *fiestas* and other extravagant expenditures discourages savings) and teaches ordinary people to create and run their own grassroots institutions. The roles and contribution of women in society are recognised and expanded, as is the importance of education for children. It is a culture that is radically opposed to classical *machismo* ... women take on leadership roles within the family, 'domesticating' their husbands ... and paying attention to the education of their children.'<sup>27</sup>

Where the macro-economy offers opportunities, Berger points out that '... one can observe a positive correlation with social mobility and with it a truly novel phenomenon in Latin America – a growing Protestant middle class, economically productive and increas-

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ingly assertive politically.<sup>28</sup> Berger thus refers to Pentecostals as possessing a ‘comparative cultural advantage’.<sup>29</sup>

Berger argues that it is not necessary for entire populations to adopt a Protestant ethic for development to take place: a highly active minority or ‘vanguard’ can serve as the vehicle for development. Similar vanguards – the Huguenots in Prussia, Jews in Poland, Armenians in the Middle East, Jains in India and overseas Chinese in SE Asia – have spurred development.<sup>30</sup>

Harvey Cox points to the transformation brought about by Pentecostal churches in Korea: ‘Members learn from the absolutely dazzling organisation genius that these churches demonstrate’.<sup>31</sup> Paul Gifford continues:

‘...hundreds of thousands of people whose parental culture, if not their own, had been rural and traditional learned the bottom-line skills of a modern, market economy. They learned to communicate a simple message; to organise promotional efforts, make lists, use telephones, to solve personality clashes in task orientated groups; to coordinate efforts both horizontally and vertically, to set goals and reach them; and to come to meetings on time, run them efficiently and then to implement decisions made there. This training constitutes a ‘concentrated crash course in what millions of others who fill the lower and middle echelons of modern corporations learn at business schools and sales institutes.’<sup>32</sup>

In Latin America, David Martin argues that the ‘monopolistic’ nature of Catholicism has ‘inhibited differentiation and has tended to give rise to rival secular monopolies under the aegis of the state’.<sup>33</sup> Paul Gifford (citing David Martin) points out that Pentecostalism, on the other hand, helps to build strong, autonomous civil societies, as in these churches individuals

... learn how to function democratically; they elect their own officers, they learn to exercise leadership themselves, thus developing leadership skills. They learn to participate in, and run meetings, to conduct business, to handle money, to budget, to plan, to compromise, to formulate and ‘own’ a course of action, to implement it, to critique results, to change direction in the light of experience.<sup>34</sup>

Moreover, Pentecostalism takes the form of a ‘protective social capsule’ by allowing marginalized people such as rural-urban migrants to acquire ‘new concepts of self and new models of initiative’ ‘in an atmosphere of hope rather than despair’.<sup>35</sup> In Guatemala, Pentecostal networks

... provide an intensive and extensive information service and offer a kind of insurance as well as the emotional support of stable relationships. Beyond that they inculcate North American norms of behaviour and educate members in such matters as household budgeting, social comportment and table manners. To this one would add the way in which membership in Protestant groups provides a marriage and sexual discipline and along with that some break in the cycle of endemic corruption.<sup>36</sup>

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One should expect mechanical consequences, however. Martin offers a balanced qualification of the patterns noted above:

... the impact of Pentecostal Protestantism varies according to the local channel most receptive to it, and this is true both economically and politically. ... In one situation it may console and buttress those who lose from social change; in another situation it may select precisely those that can make the most of chances that change offers to them. ... But the personality it nourishes will be one with a new sense of individuality and individual worth and, therefore, possessed of a potential for assessing its own proper activity, in which will be included activity in the economic realm. Experience of the way social mobility has come about elsewhere, as well as common sense, suggest that the capacities built up and stored in the religious group may take two or three generations to come to fruition.<sup>37</sup>

### Pentecostal churches in South Africa

As we have said, in recent years the number of people in South Africa who have joined Charismatic or Pentecostal Christian churches appears to have grown rapidly. Pentecostal and Evangelical Christianity are the fastest growing faiths in South Africa according to the censuses. A comparison of the 1996 and 2001 Census breakdowns of the population according to religious denomination in South Africa gives an indication of growth over 5 years:

**Table 1: Members of religious denominations in SA, 1996 and 2001**

	1996	2001	Growth 1996–2001
SA population	40,58m	44,82m	10,5%
All Christians	30,6m	35,8m	17%
Pentecostal churches (Classical, mega and community churches)	2,2m	3,7m	65%
All Apostolic churches	4,7m	5,9m	25%

*Source: Statistics SA, Census 1996, 2001.*

What the accuracy and precision of the censuses are one will never really know, but the indications from these figures are that both the old and the new Pentecostal movements are growing far more rapidly than the Christian community as a whole, which in turn is growing more rapidly than the population. Furthermore, the figures for the Pentecostal churches may be underestimates because the 2001 census also records 2,9 million ‘other Christians’, many of who are evangelical churches but some of which could also be smaller Pentecostal community churches<sup>38</sup>.

Membership of South African Pentecostal churches and evangelical movements recorded under ‘other Christian’ – i.e. unaffiliated – churches, rose by 48% between the 1996 and

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2001 censuses while traditional mainstream Christian churches saw no growth at all in their members.<sup>39</sup> If the growth rate in the table above is sustained, the number of South African Pentecostals (excluding the Apostolic churches) will reach almost around 10 million by 2011 – almost one-fifth of the population.

South African Pentecostal churches are strongly influenced by global Pentecostalism, with particularly dominant strands coming from the United States, and also from Latin America, especially Brazil, as well as West Africa, especially Nigeria. However, the Pentecostals in South Africa have some features that are unique to Africa, namely a degree of cross-fertilisation between Pentecostals and the African Independent Churches in the black township settings.

A number of authors and observers have pointed to the difficulties posed in identifying the various forms of the Pentecostal-Charismatic Movement. This is particularly complex not at the level of the mega churches or the classical old Pentecostal churches, but rather amongst the community-based and township churches, where the lines between the Pentecostal churches and the African Independent Churches can be blurred. Allan Anderson conducted an extensive study of the religious fabric of the people of Soshanguve between November 1990 and April 1991.<sup>40</sup> A total of 1633 families from 254 churches were interviewed. He found several Pentecostal church types that focused on experiences of the Holy Spirit, either individually or communally. These were ‘Pentecostal Mission churches’ started by the missionaries and ‘Independent African Pentecostal churches’ which closely resemble the Mission churches, but are independent from them (like the Grace Bible Church). But he also found large areas of convergence between the Pentecostal ‘spirit-type’ churches and the Zion Christian Church. Furthermore, in the township church culture there can also be overlaps between Pentecostals and certain local mainstream Protestant and Roman Catholic churches. Given the partially shared roots of the Pentecostals and the African Independent Churches the overlaps are not surprising.

Features of the liturgy and practices of the township Pentecostal and African Independent Churches that tend to overlap include the following:

- **Healing:** In the ZCC and St Johns AFM churches, poor black Africans become involved in healing ministries and they themselves receive healing through their communities. Some researchers contend that the healing rituals are a means whereby their social realities are ‘reinvented’. There are known facilities in Pentecostal churches for assisting drug addicts and prostitutes towards rehabilitation and there is evidence of Pentecostal churches having initiated food garden projects to assist poverty and HIV/AIDS-stricken households. In some Pentecostal churches, however, HIV/AIDS is perceived as a punishment from God for sin, regardless of how it was contracted. Sometimes the sin concerned is ancestor worship. This we encountered among rank and file congregants in Hout Bay in informal comments made during interviews. One of the Pentecostal congregants interviewed by Riaan Ingram and colleagues expanded by saying: ‘... there is a debate (among us) that Aids is a punishment from God to the people of earth because of all their sin’. These views are certainly not the formal position of the churches. It should be said, however, that the

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kind of congregants referred to often feel besieged by the extent of social and moral decay in their surrounding communities and punitive views about sexuality and HIV/Aids are not surprising.

- Poverty outreach: Pentecostal and some African Independent Churches are also involved in poverty alleviation activity. A key strategy is tithing: church members are taught to give generously to church work and through this to overcome their own material poverty. Women's prayer meetings are an important means of support and solidarity in a male-dominated world and male Pentecostals emerge as less 'predatory' and more family-orientated. A Johannesburg church for refugees serves to integrate its members socially and economically into the South African host society from a comfortable base with familiar rituals and shared cultural backgrounds. The 'Back to God' movement linked to Pentecostal churches reports successes in reducing crime in some areas.
- Shared recognition of a range of demons and evil spirits that are particularly African and owe their identities to deeply rooted traditional myths and beliefs. It often seems the case that the issue of ancestor worship or veneration divides the Pentecostals from the African Independent Churches more clearly than their demonology.

The blurring of features between township Pentecostal churches and African Independent Churches is least evident in the mega churches of the prosperity type. These churches have a markedly American flavour that has been a feature of Pentecostalism among white congregations and they thus have more in common with similar churches in the world than with township Pentecostals in South Africa. However, there are wide variations in the way in which the prosperity message is conveyed. Pastor Ray McCauley of the South African Rhema mega-church holds that prosperity is granted to Christians in order that they can help others. This contrasts with cruder forms of prosperity theology that declare rather simply that poverty is a result of sin and lack of faith while health and wealth are a sign of God's blessing.

A key feature of organised religion and the Pentecostal faith in South Africa is that individual denominations have never had to fight any official opposition to their existence and practices. This has resulted in the exceptional pluralism of religious practice and organisation in the society and out of this pluralism many convergent features in Christian practice have emerged.

Against this background we turn now to the new research undertaken under the auspices of CDE and the insights that flow from it.

### THE CDE RESEARCH PROGRAMME<sup>41</sup>

In collaboration with Prof Peter Berger of Boston University and Prof James Hunter of the University of Virginia, CDE commissioned a range of papers on major dimensions of

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the activity of the Pentecostal churches in South Africa. The individual investigations are listed below.

- Tony Balcomb, 2005, Interviews with South African Pentecostal pastors and leaders – Analysis and Impressions.
- Phil Bonner, Tshepo Moloi & Godfrey Dlulane, 2004, Faith for Development: Provisional report on Pentecostal churches in Tembisa and Katlehong.
- Timothy Clynick & Tshepo Moloi, 2006, Anointed for business: South African 'new' Pentecostals in the marketplace.
- William Domeris, 1999, The church and the spirit of entrepreneurship: A study of selected Christian communities in South Africa.
- William R Domeris & Paul Germond, 2006, Pentecostal/Charismatic Christianity– A South African Survey.
- Paul Germond & Steven de Gruchy, 2001, Review of the literature on the social contribution of African- initiated churches (African Independent Churches) in South Africa.
- Riaan Ingram, Hudson Mathebula, Lehasa Mokoena & Attie van Niekerk, 2004, The impact of Pentecostalism on society, with special reference to their impact on black economic empowerment, Witbank, a case study.
- Riaan Ingram, 2006, The Social, Economic, Politic and Personal Potential of Pentecostalism.
- Lawrence Schlemmer & Monica Bot, 2004, Faith, Social Consciousness and progress: a case study of members of the Pentecostal, African Zionist and other churches in Hout Bay, South Africa.
- Lawrence Schlemmer, 2006, The wider impact of Faith: An investigation among members of Pentecostal and other denominations in Gauteng.
- Attie van Niekerk, Montagu Murray & Lehasa Mokoena, 2006, Views of Politicians and Social Activists from a Charismatic and Pentecostal background.

The review and analysis that follows will be based very largely on these research inputs and the conclusions drawn by the authors. Other research consulted will be separately referenced. The reports are not an *integrated* set and vary in their goals and thematic coverage. The analysis is, however, focused on the insights particularly relevant to our central thesis, that of the socio-economic and socio-political implications of features in the Pentecostal churches for South African society.

## THE FLAVOUR OF THE NEW CHURCHES: PROJECT VISITS

On completion of the formal research interventions in August 2006, four Pentecostal churches were visited in the Johannesburg region. The first visit was to the previously mentioned mega church called the Rhema Church. This is a nationally known congregation situated in a middle class suburb of the city. Attendance at the 10:00 service on a Sunday entailed walking into a large auditorium set amidst other impressive buildings, which could seat some 3000 to 4000 people. It is a state of the art auditorium with comfortable seats, carpeted floor, and excellent audiovisual equipment including two very large screens. The auditorium that day was packed with not a seat to spare, with many people standing in the doorways. Congregants were overwhelmingly black Africans of all ages, especially parents and their children, somewhat unexpected in the middle of the still dominantly white northern suburbs of Johannesburg. The attendees were particularly well dressed and many people arrived in expensive luxury and sports utility vehicles. A number of buses had clearly brought people from the poorer black townships some 20 km away.

The service began with about 30 minutes of singing led by two choirs. There were two lead singers – the woman resembled a ‘country and western’ star although the man was less colourful, with guitar players and other performers on the stage. The first short song was in an African language and the rest of the songs were all in English. Many of the songs were the same as those sung in other highly contemporary Johannesburg churches and in equivalent mega-churches in the United States. The experience for a newcomer was rather like a ‘rock concert lite’. After the singing, announcements were made of various initiatives and self-help/ learning groups and activities taking place within the Rhema community over the next week. These ranged from charitable giving and assistance, to membership of an entrepreneur’s network and to bible study and home cell meetings during the week in member’s homes to study and get to know one another. Inspirational messages could be accessed by texting a request by cell phone at a cost of R10 (\$1.40). Part of the proceeds of this was to be directed to charitable initiatives. The sermon, given by the founder of the church, Pastor Ray McCauley was the highlight of the service punctuated by enthusiastic participatory exclamations from the audience. The essence of his message concerned the need for people to have confidence and to overcome the obstacles they perceive to exist in their life, however large they may be. He received the loudest reaction when he identified one of these obstacles as getting out of debt. He said that people should not look back, they had already travelled a long way ‘out of slavery’ and better things were to come. He indicated that with their belief in God and with His help, they could overcome all and that a better future was available to everyone.

The second church visited is one of many located in Hillbrow, a densely populated high-rise inner-city zone. Until the 1980s the area was home to large numbers of European immigrants and had a continental flair, hosting the best bookshop in the city, a large music store, speciality restaurants and the first all night eatery in the city. Since the late 1980s and as a result of desegregation and other factors affecting the city and its growth, the area now struggles to cope with an influx of much poorer residents, especially from

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neighbouring states, Nigeria and the Francophone countries of central and West Africa, who live in massively overcrowded apartments. The streets are not clean, health regulations are flaunted and many much smaller establishments catering for a downmarket clientele have replaced the middle class shops. The pastor of this church, called the Harvest Bible Church, has the title of 'Bishop'. He is an immigrant from Malawi who had 'planted' the church seven years previously in response to the request of a woman whom he had helped. The congregation had grown sufficiently to transform his life and material circumstances. Initially he had shared a small apartment across the road from the church but now he is able to live in a middle class suburb some 10-15 minutes drive from the church. His children attend a private school located close to the church and run by a Pentecostal Christian. His church meets in a formal building, next to a formerly grand Lutheran church, and he claimed to have a growing congregation. His services are in English and his pastoral work covers many areas including finding jobs for congregants in an area where unemployment exceeds 30%; talking about HIV/AIDS and sending people to the city clinic across the road for anti-retroviral treatment. Asked about the issues of abortion and gay relationships, he said that these were not sermon topics, but points of private discussion with people who had problems in these areas. He claimed that the previously rampant crime in the area had declined noticeably since the establishment of the church.

The third field trip consisted of a visit to Soweto, the sprawling Johannesburg low cost township of well over 1 million people. The pastor lives in a new area on the western periphery. He and his wife (a fellow pastor in the church) live in a brick-walled and modestly furnished four-roomed house. A large poster of Martin Luther King making his *I have a Dream* speech adorns his lounge wall. His congregation of 200 has purchased land for a new church building and auditorium to hold 20,000 people. The optimism involved in this purchase was especially striking in view of the fact that his church had recently suffered a breakaway when one of its members decided to lead a large number of congregants out to start a new church. As with the other pastors visited, the message conveyed is that the Lord and the church empower individuals with the capacity to take control of their own lives. A particular feature of this church was that a Bishop in the USA had laid hands on the local Bishop at his consecration. The pastor suggested that this had established a link with the 'apostolic succession' claimed by Catholics and Anglicans. Unlike most Pentecostal churches, this church makes use of clerical vestments similar to those used by the mainstream sacramental churches.

The fourth church visited, Global Harvest Church, is located in Tembisa, a township located east of Johannesburg. The pastor had grown up in a family that belonged to the Methodist Church. In the late 1980s he was born again and studied to become a Pentecostal pastor. He resigned from his job in 1994 and began working as a pastor of eight people in a fulltime capacity. He used his retirement package to buy the church currently used, and although the area was considered unsafe, he believed it was the right place. Prior to purchasing the building he preached from an office building, close to other churches. He purchased the building and land for R100 000 (\$14 000) and the church moved to the new location in 2001. The congregation now comprises over 350 people, mainly Tembisa residents in the 17-35 year age group. According to the pastor unemployment is very high

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in the area (approximately 80%) but at a claimed 60-70% it is lower among his church members. Employment is promoted but given the limited job opportunities, many members can only hope for contract/temporary work. Members are encouraged to tithe and to live within their limited means. Music appears to be central to the church with two organs, drums and guitars available for playing at services. Home visits appeared to be utilised initially to expand the membership base and members are encouraged to share their experiences of being reborn with the community. The pastor works closely with the local police force and visits prisoners on a weekly basis. He is involved with TEASA (The Evangelical Alliance of South Africa), and attends weekly meetings with approximately 30 pastors to discuss issues of relevance and challenges facing the churches.

Prior to accepting membership at the church, potential members are given an opportunity to meet with the pastor, who explains membership requirements and presents each new member with a membership booklet. A key requirement for membership is that members denounce ancestral beliefs and commit themselves to refrain from participation in related traditional practices. The pastor explained that certain traditional rituals require full family participation and when he had moved to the Pentecostal movement, this proved to be a source of conflict between him and his family because of his refusal to engage in these practices.

The church's opposition to lifestyles involving promiscuity, homosexuality and abortion are clearly explained to potential members. With regard to HIV/AIDS, the church opposes government's view on condoms and instead promotes abstinence. The government's national anti- AIDS campaign slogan is modified to A for abstinence, B for be faithful and C for Christ, instead of condoms. The area in which he works is plagued by a high crime rate but this has not affected him. He argued that pastors should visit the prisons to determine which of their congregation members are involved in crime and to take an active role in their rehabilitation.

The pastor indicated that he is prepared to 'lay hands' on members to pray for healing from HIV/AIDS but he is aware of the limitations regarding faith healing as ambitious as that. He said that counselling is provided and that they also offer services at clinics that provide counselling and encourage the embracing of religion for HIV/AIDS patients. He actively promotes the church's views on monogamy and abstinence prior to marriage in the hope that it will play a role in prevention, but in the reality of a pandemic, counselling is the key activity. He chooses to avoid public discussions on AIDS so as not to make HIV positive members feel uncomfortable. At a subsequent workshop with CDE researchers, the pastor responded to a question on how he dealt with sin by saying that he left it to visiting preachers, effectively sub-contracting that part of the 'business' to others. His aspiration is to grow the church and encourage suitable members to assume careers in the field. Once they are educated he hopes to erect tents throughout the township that will act as satellite churches, once again building a membership base as he did through home visits. He is optimistic about the future of his church and about the prospects of the Pentecostal movement in the area.

## THE PASTORS AND THEIR INTERACTION WITH SOCIETY AND SOCIAL LIFE<sup>42</sup>

This discussion is based on the interviews and report of Tony Balcomb of the University of KwaZulu-Natal (See footnote). The pastors interviewed were drawn from four categories of Pentecostal churches – classical, new charismatic, community-based, and mega-church. These have already been referred to in section 2 and readers should glance back at points made about the different types of Pentecostal churches in particular.

### The overall message

Essential to the Pentecostal message is what one may call a **theology of encounter**. The experience of Paul on the road to Damascus (Acts 9) is the prototypical Pentecostal experience. A person is arrested by the Holy Spirit and presented with the demands of the risen Christ to surrender his/her life to him in obedience. A response is demanded – either to accept or reject it. To accept means to re-orient oneself, from that moment on, around the immediacy of the presence of Christ in your life. To reject is to choose the way of ‘self’ and to deny the demands of the ‘Other’. The message, once delivered and received, develops and grows within the lives of believers in a multiplicity of different ways with diverse and sometimes unintended consequences. With realisation of self-worth there comes, first of all, a sense of agency. The individual need not be a victim of circumstances. Life becomes imbued with a sense of meaning, a sense of purpose. What is most important about the Pentecostal message, as characterised here, is that it finds reception across the social spectrum, among the poor and the rich, the powerless and the powerful and among black and white. It can be adopted by anyone who needs the message and can mutate into incentives for the poor to become rich, the rich to become richer, and the powerless to become powerful. It can mutate into different ideological and doctrinal expressions and is manifested in a range of social interventions. It is, psychologically, an extremely helpful message. Some examples of the interview responses are:

Nicholas Zane (Harvest Bible Church, Hillbrow):

*‘People did not need another church but they needed healing, comfort, reassurance, to repent of their sin, and they could not find these things in mainstream churches. There was a great hunger, which we could meet. We offered hope, assurance, healing, - they came to us as though they were coming to a hospital – therapy, counselling, healing. Because of the many testimonies, it has grown. It has grown by word of mouth – one tells the other. We preach repentance, forgiveness, and to believe that you yourself can do it. People can do it for themselves. Our philosophy is – do not give me a fish, teach me how to fish. This message is especially relevant in Hillbrow. There are people from all over Africa in our church. Everybody comes through our church. The situation of the inner city needs a strong and clear message. This Jesus is not just a history or a theory, he is a reality. He is a real person that we can relate to.’*

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Mcaubrey Somthunzi (Zoë Bible Church, Protea, Soweto):

*'The main message is that God wants us to reach our potential, .... If a church member wants to become a politician they are usually afraid to do so but we say that this is a Godly calling. Imagine if the president and other leading people are born again – imagine what is going to happen! Also people think that money is evil. But we say if God wants to bless you with these things then you must get them. As long as they do not possess you. You must possess them.'*

Freddy Basina (Global Harvest Church, Tembisa):

*'God called me to work with the poor. My main message is one of hope. I tell the people that their opportunity will come. The Lord will turn their situation around. There is no other message for people in this township. Hope for those who are jobless, hope for those who are homeless, hope for those who are sick, hope for those who aspire to better their situation in life. We don't know when or how it is going to happen but we tell them that it will happen.'*

Modisa Mzondi (Let My People Go Ministries, Mohlakeng):

*'The essence of our message is freedom from mental slavery. The church is situated in informal settlements where people feel that they are third class citizens. This is why we need to preach the message of freedom from mental slavery. Teach youth to go beyond perpetual dependency. They must be free from the idea that they should be employed by white men. We are trying to teach the young people to do things for themselves. They must be independent.'*

Trevor Ntlahola (Vineyard, Pimville, Soweto):

*'The message of the church is to take the teachings of Jesus as seriously as those of Marx, Slovo, and Mandela. This means taking care of the poor. We use our money to take people to school, AIDS care, university, food, etc. We are here because we love Jesus and this means that we must love the poor.'*

Vusi Dube (Ethekeweni Community Church, Durban):

*'...mission is to take the message that Nicholas Bhengu preached to the 'Red people' of the Eastern Cape forty years ago – to be proud of being an African and to empower yourself'*

Peter Rasmussen (Hillcrest Christian Fellowship, Durban):

*'The essence of the message is Col 1:27 – Christ in me the hope of glory. That is the potential of a human life with Christ in that life. The transforming power of Christ in a life is preached in a thousand different ways. A human*

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*being is a spirit, soul, and body. As far as the spirit is concerned this is Christ's work completely, when it comes to the soul we have to collaborate with God and together we need to transform our lives, the way we live, this means we do business differently, we do marriage differently, we do kids differently. Our lives must transform, there must be fruits to be seen. This is not some kind of legalistic thing – it is entirely up to Christ in me to change the way that I think, feel, and will. I live by the word, I live with integrity, I have a plumb line, which is the word of God. This means that I do business with integrity, as well as everything else. Not this typical 'don't ever do business with a Christian' type of idea. For me that is discipleship. Don't do what I tell you to do, do what I am doing. Look at my life and see how God is transforming me.'*

Entrepreneurship is a central feature of these churches. This is noticeable in three areas - the churches themselves have usually come about through a considerable amount of entrepreneurship, there are many entrepreneurs in their membership, and skills training in entrepreneurship features as most important single intervention after addressing issues relating to HIV and AIDS.

Balcomb observes that among the churches situated in poorer black townships or the inner city, there is a fairly mobile membership, and the pastors are preoccupied with preaching and giving people an initial 'lift' into greener pastures through a variety of educational interventions.

The 'mega' churches consist of large congregations of people mainly from affluent social backgrounds, have a distinctly 'rich' feel about them, and are under strong 'one man' leadership that casts itself in the mould of a CEO of a multinational corporation.

The message of these churches is very positive and affirming. It takes on a variety of forms and permutations, depending on the context in which it is being expressed, around the theme of self-worth and positive engagement with life. The protagonists of this message believe that it is essentially new and that God wants to do new and fresh things in their lives every day. Their worship is designed to attract and entertain and their ethos is highly voluntarist. They make conscious attempts not to be 'religious' in the conventional sense, modelling themselves rather along the line of a family, community, business, or all three. Church is seen as a lively and self-affirming continuation of every day life where one should be subjected to as little discomfort as possible and where one can be encouraged, instructed and confirmed in one's ambitions and worldly pursuits.

In all the churches there is a strong emphasis on family values, resulting in intolerance of departures from a conservative norm. There was minimal intervention before April 1994 but since then there has been opposition to the liberal constitution where it contradicts basic Pentecostal values and with the liberalising tendencies of the present democracy. For most Pentecostals freedom of expression amounts to pornography, freedom of choice amounts to abortion, freedom of religion amounts to idolatry, and non-discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation amounts to sodomy.

All of the informants had strong views concerning the political situation, but many struggle to understand how their theological convictions can be translated into practical social intervention. Social interventions seldom take them too far out of their comfort zones. Although there are some exceptions, Balcomb perceives in these churches a lack of any tradition of social and political engagement, as well as very little theological training and engagement with the broader Christian tradition in the modern world. There is thus minimal historical consciousness of such engagement. Pentecostals are very much people of the present, and the future, but not of the past.

### CONGREGANTS

The acid test of religious culture and values and their consequences are the responses of rank and file members and congregants. Studies among leaders (in this case pastors) and other more specialised interviews tend to present the most developed and sophisticated forms of religious understanding that are necessary for insight into the ways in which a religious faith is structured and oriented. But it is only among the rank-and-file members that one can gain an understanding of the extent to which the elements of the faith have penetrated down into the fabric of society. For this reason, although the content in the sections that follow at times may lack the depth of the responses of, say, the Pastors, it does approximate the impact on society.

The congregants were covered by the two surveys of Schlemmer and colleagues, one of these in Hout Bay<sup>43</sup> and the larger one in Gauteng<sup>44</sup> and in a focused investigation among 75 Pentecostal and Charismatic members of 25 congregations in Durban, Johannesburg and Pretoria, conducted by Riaan Ingram and his colleagues. Both the surveys used semi-structured interviews with many open-ended questions allowing qualitative replies, which were probed for additional depth and content. Riaan Ingram and his colleagues used less-structured interviews that were written up by Chris Claassen (of CDE) using the interview transcripts<sup>45</sup>. These latter interviews used a narrative approach, because telling stories is a natural way in which people make sense of themselves, and 'giving testimony' is familiar to the Pentecostal experience.

Because of its comprehensive coverage of the project themes and its representative sample, the Gauteng survey results will be taken as an anchor for the analysis. Where other reports contradict the survey findings, this will be mentioned and fully accommodated in the final discussion.

The following methodological points are very important to the analysis that follows. Firstly it has to be borne in mind that the results are based on cross-sections of church members encountered in a general sample of the population. Unlike the case in many other studies of congregants, they have not been selected as typical or leading examples of the 'faithful'. They are a thoroughly mixed group and social reality at large is always rather muddier than it appears to be when target populations are specially selected. Second, the sample of Pentecostals contains congregants from small community churches founded by entrepreneur pastors without much training, from other community churches

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that are breakaways from the African Independent churches, from very long-established 'classical' Pentecostal churches, with theological colleges and a history in South Africa dating back to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, from mega-churches in which pastors have consummate preaching and pastoral skills modelled on leading evangelists in the USA and from charismatic former mainstream church breakaway groups. It would be unusual to encounter a consolidated and clearly crystallised religious culture in such a mixed group, but this diffuseness is the reality of the broader movement.

Third, we should note that because of the extensive range of themes covered in this survey, it is impossible to cover the congregants in the depth achieved in any of the other contributory reports. More general patterns are recorded and discussed here, with a little more detail provided on selected topics. Fourth, because of the range of topics covered and the sampling strategy in which Pentecostals were identified in a filtering and follow-up procedure, cost constraints limited the overall sample size. The limited size of the sample has in turn limited the statistical sophistication of the analysis – for example, we could not perform typical three-way tabulations in which, say, socio-economic status could be controlled while investigating the effects of two variables on each other. This type of analysis was attempted in places but the results were based on such small cell-sizes that they could not yield statistically significant outcomes.

Finally, the results in the surveys are often distinguished in terms of race. The racial categorisation may be unfortunate but it adds precision to the insights because of the widely varying religious culture and the large socio-economic difference between Africans and others. Here it is also important to note that among African congregants their religious culture was often initially shaped by the powerful impact of the African Independent Churches, an influence that is missing among white, coloured and Indian respondents. A glance at the sub-sample sizes and their socio-economic features in the black and suburban components in the Gauteng survey show just how different the lives of people in the two kinds of areas must be: see table of sample realisation below.

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**Table 2: Sample realisation according to socioeconomic categories<sup>46</sup>**

	Dominantly black areas: n 206					Mainly white but mixed suburbs: n 144			
Denominations & sub-sample sizes <sup>47</sup>	Old Pent. n32	New Pent. n83	Main-stream n47	Af. Ind. n28	None/ Other n16	Old Pent. n15	New Pent. n41	Main-stream n77	Other/ None N11
Educational level	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Primary or less	6	7	4	7	6	-	-	-	-
Some high school	31	33	32	68	56	7	12	13	36
Gr.12/tech.equivalent	47	39	49	14	25	80	37	39	9
Post-school Dipl.	13	12	9	7	13	7	20	22	9
University Degree	3	10	6	4	-	7	32	26	46
	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Gross Household Income per Month	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Up to R1249	31	25	23	36	38	-	-	1	-
R1250 – R2499	25	22	26	14	19	-	-	3	-
R2500 – R4999	16	34	26	32	25	-	7	5	-
R5000 – R9999	25	13	19	14	13	20	15	16	18
R10000 – R14999	-	2	4	4	6	20	14	16	27
R15000 – R24999	-	2	-	-	-	40	27	18	18
R25000 – R34999	3	-	-	-	-	13	24	20	-
R35000 or more	-	-	2	-	-	7	12	20	19
Not answered	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	3	17
	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Type of housing	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Informal shack	3	13	-	14	-	-	-	-	-
Room	6	7	2	4	6	-	-	-	-
Small flat (tenement)	3	2	-	4	6	-	5	3	-
Large flat apartment	3	6	2	-	-	7	2	4	9
Low cost mass housing	53	51	64	50	44	-	-	1	-
Medium suburban	19	13	15	25	31	60	51	35	64
Large suburban	13	7	17	4	13	33	41	57	27
	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

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The three sets of results in the table above reflect the very large socio-economic differences between mainly black and still largely white areas. In the mainly white but integrating suburbs the median household income is R18 000 per month, compared with R2 400 per month in the black areas. Unemployment in the suburbs is under 2% but in the black areas it is as high as 24%.

Looking particularly at the Pentecostal church members, in the suburbs the old Pentecostals are slightly less affluent and less educated than the new Pentecostals and other denominations. New Pentecostals, despite slightly above average education, are less affluent than mainstream church members.

In the black areas there are no clear patterns of differences in income except that the African Independent church members are somewhat poorer than others. Members of the African Independent Churches are also significantly less well educated than average, but the differences between other denominations are marginal. Non-churchgoers have very high unemployment and old Pentecostals have less unemployment than others.

The most important feature of these results, however, is that the similarities in socio-economic circumstances between the old and new Pentecostal churches and mainstream denominations within both black and suburban areas are far greater than the differences. Only the members of the African independent churches are meaningfully poorer than other Christians. The largest differences are between the suburbs and black areas. The black areas as opposed to the integrating suburban areas are really different social worlds and comparisons between them must be made with this reality in mind.

The results reviewed here combine the responses of congregants from the various subtypes of the Pentecostal church family, with distinctions made only between the classical (old) and the other (new) churches. As already stated, the latter included congregants from the mega churches, the new charismatic churches and the community-based churches. Conceptually, the categories in the new churches should have been distinguished in the analysis but this proved to be a futile exercise. This was due mainly to small sub-sample sizes but as Balcomb observes in the previous section, Pentecostals are often highly mobile and they can and do move between churches. Many congregants in the mega-churches and in the new charismatic churches are recent recruits from other churches and they cannot be expected to rapidly absorb the religious culture of their new centres of faith. Then again, some of the community churches tend to emulate the new charismatic churches and the mega churches because they are talking points and are the trendsetters. With a great deal more time and double the resources we could have sampled 'ideal types' not only of the congregants but churches as well, resulting possibly in the precision required to systematically compare the different cultures, but this would have been a much larger undertaking. This research will have to stand or fall by attempting to make generalisations across the internal religious variety in the Pentecostal movement, with exceptions made only for the contrasts between classical and new churches, and between Pentecostal churches and other denominations, including the African Independent Churches.

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The blurring of religious categories is somewhat reduced if the results are analysed separately for the poorer, dominantly black townships and the now increasingly multi-racial and middle class suburban areas, as has been done below. This broad distinction tends to crystallise the often unique character of the Pentecostal community churches in black areas in which residues of the African Zionist faith and rural-traditional beliefs exist among poorer township residents, a majority of whom, for example, still include traditional medicine and healing in their menu of health practices.

### Priorities of faith

An item used in the surveys can serve as an anchor for this analysis, since it was a key item on which emphasis was placed in interviews. It asked respondents to consider and prioritise the key impacts and their needs and motivations in their pursuit of faith. Note that the non-churchgoers in the table include many people who are Christians or who follow other faiths and Atheists/Agnostics, most of whom have some kind of personal credo or belief system anyway. The results, aggregated for maximum clarity, were as follows in tables 1a and 1b.

**Table 3a: The meaning of religious faith: suburbs**

Choice between alternatives presented	Old Pent.	New Pent.	Other Christian	All Charismatics	Non churchgoers
	%	%	%	%	%
Emotional support (Comfort and strength to cope)	60	59	66	58	18
Morality (Supports moral and upright life/ overcome temptation and weakness)	47	20	32	32	9
Spiritual Inspiration (Inspires daily with presence of Holy Spirit)	20	46	18	42	-
Achievement (Confidence to succeed and discipline for hard work)	27	30	36	28	45
Love (and respect for others)	33	34	30	28	18
Charity (Care for the weak and needy)	13	5	10	8	18

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**Table 3b: The meaning of religious faith: black townships**

Choice between alternatives presented	Old Pent.	New Pent.	Other Christian	African Independent Churches	Non-churchgoers/ Traditionalists
	%	%	%	%	%
Emotional support (Comfort and strength to cope)	56	54	75	64	25
Morality (Supports moral and upright life/ overcome temptation and weakness)	38	47	36	42	31
Achievement (Confidence to succeed and discipline for hard work)	44	41	38	36	38
Love (and respect for others)	25	33	28	39	25
Spiritual Inspiration (Inspires daily with presence of Holy Spirit)	16	18	17	7	--
Charity (Care for the weak and needy)	13	5	6	11	6

The results in the tables also give a broad overview insight into the ways in which the Pentecostals differ in their concepts of the rewards of faith from other denominations and non-churchgoers. It is worth summarising the responses in the order of priority that emerges:

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Classical Pentecostals in the suburbs:	<i>Emotional support/ Morality/ Love/ Achievement/ Spiritual inspiration/ Charity</i>
Classical Pentecostals in townships:	<i>Emotional support/ Achievement/ Morality/ Love/Spiritual inspiration/ Charity</i>
New Pentecostals in suburbs:	<i>Emotional support/ Spiritual inspiration/ Love/ Achievement/ Morality/ Charity</i>
New Pentecostals (community churches) in townships:	<i>Emotional support/ Morality/ Achievement/ Love/ Spiritual inspiration/ Charity</i>
All Charismatics:	<i>Emotional support/ Spiritual inspiration/ Morality/ Achievement and Love/ Charity</i>
African Independent Churches:	<i>Emotional support/ Morality/ Love/ Achievement/ Charity/ Spiritual inspiration</i>
Other Christians in suburbs:	<i>Emotional support/ Achievement/ Morality/ Love/ Spiritual inspiration/ Charity</i>
Other Christians in townships:	<i>Emotional support/ Achievement/ Morality/ Love/ Spiritual inspiration/ Charity</i>
Non-Churchgoers and Traditionalists in townships:	<i>Achievement/ Morality/ Emotional support/ Love/ Charity/ (no priority to Spiritual inspiration)</i>
Non-Churchgoers in suburbs:	<i>Achievement/ Emotional support, Love and Charity/ Morality/ No response on Spiritual inspiration.</i>

These results give a perspective on other findings, as we will see. For the moment what they show is that for all Christians, the universal contribution of faith to the human psyche – **comfort and strength to cope, or religion as a refuge from stress and uncertainty** is the top priority among the needs. This is often unfairly referred to as a ‘soporific’ or as the ‘crutch function’ of religion. The results suggest that only the non-churchgoers do not prioritise this function of religion in the lives of ordinary people.

The new Pentecostals in the suburbs and the Charismatics, also suburban, give a clear second priority to spiritual inspiration and its rewards. Reading these results with others shows very clearly that it is this feature of the new or newer Pentecostal movements that set them apart from all other denominations, including the classical and poor community-based churches. This spiritual arousal is combined with very intense religious commitment, almost all of them have experienced rebirth and salvation and there is a pervasive sense of the immediacy of contact with the Holy Spirit. Along with the emotional rewards of faith there is a conviction among new Pentecostals that their faith is the utter and sublime truth, a truth that for them is palpable and very literal in what it reveals about the concept of the Almighty. The old Pentecostals in the suburbs are religious by most standards but compared with the new Pentecostals they can sound almost secular at times.

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In the black areas there are some differences of nuance between the patterns compared with the suburbs. Once again the new Pentecostals in the community churches show the greatest intensity of faith, but the old Pentecostals and the mainstream congregations are very similar in a close second place. When it comes to the frequency of prayer the Separatists are in the lead. Across the denominations, the congregants in the black areas are more intensely involved in their faith than in the suburbs, except for suburban new Pentecostals.

For all other Christians, **morality** and **achievement** alternate as the second priority. In the poor townships it is achievement, obviously inter-related with the desperate need to escape poverty. Among the suburbanites it is also high in the priorities but not as intensely felt because of the relative prosperity in these areas.

One should perhaps not read too much into the achievement theme in these responses. The degree to which it is emphasised may be related more to a general need disposition than to a religious stimulus for material advancement. Later results will shed more light on this.

**Christian charity** is generally low in the priorities among all respondents. One of the sad realities of South Africa's situation is that because of the pernicious effects of crime, pervasive sexually transmitted disease and morally unregulated sexual activity, interpersonal violence, etc. the poor and the needy are not necessarily seen as the deserving poor. As a matter of fact it is probably closer to the truth to say that with the exception of encapsulated rich liberals and ideological socialists, Christians feel somewhat besieged by the pathologies in our social fabric and that this hardens them against the needs around them.

### Key features of religion and faith

In table 2a and 2b below we set out major features of the religious faith and practice.

**Table 4a: Religious commitment in the suburbs**

	Old Pent.	New Pent.	Other Christian	All Charismatics	Non-Churchgoers
	%	%	%	%	%
Religious belief 'very important to you'	67	85	68	84	36
Attend services weekly or more	40	71	38	60	Nil
Say prayers: daily or more	87	100	83	96	56
Bible is literally true	73	78	65	80	18
God as supreme being (vs 'life force')	93	98	92	96	36

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**Table 4b: Religious commitment in the black areas**

	Old Pent.	New Pent.	Other Christian	Separatists	Non-Churchgoers
	%	%	%	%	%
Religious belief 'very important to you'	84	93	81	75	19
Attend services weekly or more	68	81	68	74	Na
Say prayers: daily or more	71	88	72	93	55
Bible is literally true	88	90	77	79	19
God as supreme being (vs. 'life force')	97	100	98	96	63

The results are self-explanatory. Here we see again the relatively greater intensity and conformity to fundamentalist or revivalist doctrines among the new Pentecostals and the Charismatics. This applies even more so to the Pentecostals in the community churches in the black areas, but all the Christians in the black areas are very high in the intensity of their conformity to fundamental tenets.

The intensity of faith among new Pentecostals is associated with a higher level of claims of rebirth in Christ than the in other denominations. This extent of this dramatic change to what is often a new life and outlook is very high:

<b>Conviction of having been reborn in Christ or 'saved'</b>	<b>Suburbs (%)</b>	<b>Black areas (%)</b>
Old Pentecostal	33	65
New Pentecostal	88	81
Charismatic	78	n/a
Separatists	n/a	71
Mainstream churchgoers	62	43

There are complex reasons why some of the classical Pentecostals do not share the experience to the same extent as the new Pentecostals in the suburbs, usually associated with the mediating role of the 'Apostolic' leaders role in the Apostolic churches. In the Assemblies of God and Full Gospel churches this factor is less relevant, and even the Apostolic churches in the black areas converge with the other classical churches.

The extent to which mainstream churches have been drawn closer to the religious culture of revivalism is apparent in these results, in the suburbs even more so than in the black areas. How are the Pentecostal churches different to others in everyday experience?

Distinguishing features of faith are most clearly the following:

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- **Old Pentecostals:** adult baptism/ rebaptism and a conviction that their church has the most valid and purist doctrines
- **New Pentecostals:** they also have the conviction that their churches have doctrines closest to the truth, but also value interpersonal warmth within the congregation and the intimacy of contact with God and the Holy Spirit.

Nothing comparable to these attributes stands out among the mainstream churchgoers. Their emphasis on richness of tradition is almost matched by similar feelings among the new Pentecostals. The mainstream churchgoers are most likely to say that their churches do not offer anything particularly special.

A key issue for old Pentecostals is clearly adult baptism but there are other ways in which people might feel that they have been ‘reborn’ in Christ, and clearly these feelings are widespread:

In the black areas, the motivations for joining tend to give less emphasis to the spiritual intensity of Pentecostalism than is the case in the suburbs. In identifying distinguishing features of their churches, however, black Pentecostals certainly stress the factor of spiritual intensity. What is interesting, furthermore, is that some old Pentecostal churches appear to accept ancestor worship and that there is minority mention of the fact that new Pentecostal churches accept bigamy. These findings reflect the fact that churches cannot escape the consequences of the often blurred distinctions between Christian and traditional beliefs in the black communities, to which we referred in an earlier section.

### **Patterns of recruitment into the churches**

Members are drawn into new Pentecostal churches from mainstream churches, older Pentecostal churches but also from other new churches. There is no doubt that the new Pentecostal churches compete vigorously not only with older churches but also among themselves for membership. This competition tends to improve the ‘product’ as it were and frequent references to the ‘professionalism’ of the new churches, including some poorer community churches, illustrates the extent to which the congregants respond to well-organised services, well-rehearsed choirs, extramural activities and all the other elements of a well-planned package of attractions.

When asked why they had joined their new denominations the following were emphasised by suburban congregants:

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	SUBURBS
Old Pentecostal	Interpersonal warmth in the congregations Feelings of personal liberation Introduced or convinced by friends
New Pentecostal	Discovery of spirituality, immediacy of the word of God Interpersonal warmth Introduction by friends

In the black areas the motivations for joining Pentecostal churches introduced the factor of faith healing among other reasons:

	BLACK AREAS
Old Pentecostal	Introduction by friends, with nothing else standing out
New Pentecostal	Introduction by friends The attraction of deeper spirituality Faith healing The 'professionalism' of the new church
Separatists	A need for faith healing Introduced or convinced by friends

The fact that faith healing is so prominent a reason for joining in the black areas undoubtedly relates to higher levels of ill health and corrosive life stress in these relatively poor communities. Although not as prominent, when talking about the ways in which their churches are different to mainstream churches (see ahead) the old and the new Pentecostals, as well as the Separatists frequently mention faith healing and 'miracles' – experiences that only the charismatic groups in the mainstream churches would share. The 'professionalism' of the Pentecostal churches helps them to attract members from the less-actively organised Separatist churches.

A factor in the attractions of **some** of the older Pentecostal churches in the black areas is that they are very similar to the Separatists in mentioning that their churches accept the reality of **ancestral spirits** and with it some degree of ancestor veneration or perhaps worship. This is not the case with the new Pentecostals whose churches are known to strongly oppose any acceptance of ancestor worship. None of the Pentecostal churches formally approve of ancestor worship but it is a powerful reality in the poorer black congregations and here they tend to yield to the expectations of some congregants.

### **The impact of their faith on the lives of congregants**

This was a key aspect of the investigation and the results are worth presenting in detail because, being based on an open question requiring spontaneous answers, it fairly reflects the complexity of the impact.

The clearest finding in table 3 is that the new Pentecostals, in both the suburbs and the black areas are most likely to have experienced changes in their lives as a consequence of their membership. Beyond this the impacts are an accumulation of much more modest tendencies. In fact, the table of spontaneous responses illustrates that one must beware of any over-crystallised conclusions that would present all new Pentecostals as playing one or another ideal type of neo-Calvinist or other hypothesised role in society. As with most social phenomena, the detail is less crystallised and at times messy, allowing for varying interpretations. (See table 3 overleaf).

For example, a cynical reader might conclude that no more than a minority of 20% of suburban new Pentecostals, 23% new Pentecostals in the black areas and around 35% of Separatists claim large or small improvements in their financial or occupational circumstances and not be very impressed. However, another more realistic interpretation would be that it is remarkable in a highly competitive market economy, that as many as 20% to 35% of members of these churches can claim that their faith has assisted them to make material progress. This is not to sniff at in a society with entrenched poverty and unemployment.

In the black areas these felt benefits are shared with the members of the mainstream denominations, suggesting that the positive economic impact is not limited to the Pentecostal churches.

Summing up, the detailed responses allow one to conclude that somewhat significant minorities of new Pentecostals feel that their faith has given them material rewards. Furthermore, slightly larger minorities experience greater self-confidence and determination. Others claim that they are more relaxed and patient in their working lives and even larger proportions are more trusting of colleagues and associates. This is all valuable social capital. On balance, these results, which being based on open questions, avoided any upward bias due to suggestions that would have been contained in structured response alternatives, leave one in little doubt that there is a significant felt impact of faith on current or likely future economic and life circumstances.

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**Table 5: Impact of faith on the lives of congregants across a series of life domains**

(Open questions were posed separately for each domain)

Impacts in domains	Old Pent.	New Pent.	Other churches	Old Pent.	New Pent.	Other churches	Separatists
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
<b>FAMILY LIFE IN GENERAL</b>							
No change	20	17	46	38	16	25	15
Spiritually deeper, no longer hungry	-	36	19	-	14	15	5
Optimistic, confident	20	8	4	5	6		-
More trusting in fellows	20	8	4			5	
More family love, peace	40	17	17	38	46	40	50
More moral discipline	-	6	2		8		15
More accepting, patient	-	6	4			5	
<b>UPBRINGING OF CHILDREN</b>							
No change	80	31	46	58	34		38
Give more positive, confident outlook	20	-	-		2		
Communicate, guide	-	8	11	8	7		6
Discipline	-	8	5	25	7		6
Imbue closeness to God	-	31	24	-	34		13
Respect for others	-	8	3	8	7		6
More time with children		8	-		2		19
Allow autonomy		4	5				
Trust God to care	-	4	-				
<b>YOUR WORK AND CAREER</b>							
No change	80	25	58	48	36	35	45
More coop/harmony	-	-	4	5	9		5
More determined	-	11	-	14	2		-
Confident of success	-	6	-	5	12		-
More self disciplined		3	6			5	
More accepting, patient	20	14	4	5	5	5	
Calmer in conflict	-	8	2		9		5
Get more respect				-	5		5
Have got promotion				-	-		10
Work for God	-	6	4	5	6		4

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PERSONAL ECONOMIC SITUATION							
No change	100	53	85	67	57	35	65
Big improvement, more money to invest, pay for home, help others		11		15	15	10	15
Slight improvement	-	6	-	5	8	20	10
Able to give to church	-	3	-				
Work harder	-	6	-	-			5
Have faith it will improve	-	-	2	-	-	5	5
Accept what God decides	-	14	-	-	5		-
Situation still stressed	-	3	2	5	12	25	-

As we have noted, the impact is not necessarily limited to the new Pentecostal churches -- members of mainstream churches are also affected in the same way, and all the Christian denominations, including mainstream and Separatist members, talk with feeling about the emotional and spiritual support that they derive from the fellow congregants. This support combines with the feeling of having the strength to cope, and a measure of practical and material help from fellow congregants as one of the key conceptions of what faith means in their lives, although one must add the element of self-discipline particularly among the old Pentecostals.

**Moral views and the social fabric**

As may be predicted from Balcomb's interviews in the previous section, a dominant impression gained in conversations with Pentecostals, in both the surveys and the narrative interviews, is a fairly uniformly strict approach to personal morality. The results already discussed show that it is not the top priority but it is of very high salience nonetheless. The respondents require little encouragement to inveigh against worldly frailties and the evils of alcohol, drugs, extra or premarital sex, corruption in public life and all manner of other dubious habits. Indeed from the narrative accounts of their conversion experiences it was evident that very many had found a refuge from temptation and moral weakness in joining their congregations. In fact an overall impression from all the research among congregants is that for many of them the immediate reason for their entry into the Pentecostal and African Independent Churches had been a collapse of health due to their previous lifestyles. Therefore, quite closely associated with moral rebirth was often the testimony of having been healed from physical ailments and improvement in health

In the suburbs, Pentecostals in all groups overwhelmingly regard the following as either wrong for everyone or wrong for themselves:

**Divorce, sex before and outside of marriage, pornography, homosexuality and same sex marriages, birth control for teenagers, drug-taking, consumption of alcohol, taking or giving small bribes, tax evasion, non-payment of service charges, non-**

**payment of parking fines, and even very small 'sins' like not keeping promises, retaliation when treated badly and the use of bad language.**

They also generally oppose marriage between blacks and whites, although this characterised mainstream as well as Pentecostal congregants. One must bear in mind, however, that the small sample sizes did not allow the results in mainstream denominations to do justice to the much more liberal views among upper-middle class Anglicans and Catholics.

Many of the interviewees had strongly condemnatory views on HIV/AIDS. A number regarded AIDS as a divine punishment for immoral behaviour,<sup>48</sup> which of course runs counter to prevailing official and professional views that sufferers should not be stigmatised in any way and that greater openness is key to combating the pandemic. However, all the respondents felt that abstinence is the only way to prevent AIDS, while some felt that God could cure it, and the idea of debating the issue in open community forums was anathema.

The new Pentecostals in particular seem to have taken over from the conservative Reformed Churches to become the new pillars of well-nigh punitive morality in suburban South Africa today. One can be forgiven for describing them as puritanical. Among the new Pentecostals there are slight but interesting deviations from this pattern. While they come close to typically puritanical views on issues of sin and moral behaviour, they have a somewhat more generous attitude to gender rights, sexual openness, and even birth control as issues of public policy.

But these contradictions aside, they are more heavily moralistic than the old Pentecostals and the mainstream denominations. The morality they espouse is of such rigour that it could only be observed in the mutual sanction of tight community interaction and continual reward for virtue. The old Pentecostals are almost worldly and tolerant by comparison.

Morality is one area in which the Pentecostals of all races are generally in concert. The patterns in the black areas are essentially the same as in the non-black suburbs – the moral views are unyieldingly strict. One suspects that the emphasis on punitive morality is a compensation for moral failings in the surrounding communities. The new Pentecostals are not generally stricter than the rest but they are on matters of interpersonal behaviour -- breaking promises and retaliation for insult or injury.

The new Pentecostals, however, tend less than others, except non-churchgoers, to believe in strict discipline in the upbringing of children.

As we have already suggested, in the suburbs the classical Pentecostals are mellower than new Pentecostals on moral issues but in the black areas the differences between old and new Pentecostals are hardly perceptible.

It is worth repeating, however, that in regard to the upbringing of children the new Pentecostals are less strict and tend slightly towards progressive views on childrearing.

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The responses and narrative accounts of Pentecostals on moral issues suggest that their new commitments offer fail-safe protection from worldly temptation and that they are indeed personally transformed and strengthened. But it would be naïve to assume that moral salvation is that easily guaranteed. This author's previous experience as a social worker in areas in which Pentecostal churches were strong was that relapses were common, accompanied by even greater guilt and remorse, sometimes leading to a progressive collapse of self-confidence with tragic consequences. Pastors were often embarrassed by the frequency of relapses, but some of them had developed superlative techniques in pastoral counselling that yielded far greater successes in cases of alcoholic relapse than any secular professional therapies. Some of these techniques would not have been publishable in counselling textbooks, being quite brutal in breaking down any semblance of self-deception and thereafter using faith to rebuild shattered personalities.

To repeat an important point made earlier, among congregants substantially drawn from communities in which social problems abound and teenage pregnancy, marital breakdowns, alcohol and drug abuse are common if not rampant, there is a perception almost of a state of siege. The restrictive morality of the Pentecostal churches has always been vital in providing a bulwark against what is often surrounding moral chaos, protecting at least a portion of the communities from the debilitating effects of moral decay. The financial and energy savings alone in eschewing expensive depravity must amount to significant social investment, quite aside from the fact that the absence of a guilty conscience and relief from the low level interpersonal conflict associated with lifestyle excesses increases self-confidence and interpersonal trust. In any event, greater self-confidence and self-esteem seem to be common consequences of the rebirth and baptism in the spirit (see ahead), and this is reinforced by the pride in exemplary behaviour. Hence the moral propriety that is typical across the Pentecostal churches is 'functional' for the preservation of domestic and community resources and social capital of all kinds.

There are downsides however. In the Hout Bay survey in particular the moral consciousness of the Pentecostals segregated them from their surrounding communities. In fact in response to a question about conditions in the communities a frequent response was that the people deserved to rot in a Hell of their own making – an intensely unsympathetic response. As the results on priorities in faith have shown, brotherly or sisterly love for all fellow human beings tends to fly out of the window. One can just imagine how these sentiments were received in liberal upper-middle class Anglican and Catholic congregations a short kilometre or two away.

### **Personal identity and happiness**

We have already seen evidence of the optimism and confidence associated with the new Pentecostal membership in particular. The following results more than confirm this pattern:

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<b>Personal happiness: 'very happy'</b>	<b>Suburbs (%)</b>	<b>Black areas (%)</b>
Old Pentecostals	13	19
New Pentecostals	44	28
Mainstream churchgoers	33	13
Separatists	n/a	14
Non-churchgoers	nil	nil
(All Charismatics)	34	n/a

In the suburbs, the levels of personal happiness and optimism of new Pentecostals, Charismatics and mainstream churchgoers are quite dramatic. It is less so in the black areas – the much more difficult economic circumstances of people inevitably depress their mood. But they are relatively very happy people nonetheless. The new Pentecostals are happiest and the Separatists, who struggle in life, least happy. What is most remarkable, however, is the comparison with non-churchgoers whose happiness levels are way below that of all active churchgoers. When probed, the personal happiness and the optimism of the new Pentecostals seem to be drawn directly from their faith. The activity that provides them with most satisfaction, in their words, is being a ‘witness for Christ’ in the world. Relatively speaking the old Pentecostals are more inclined than others to be buoyed by family life whereas the Separatists are more oriented to job rewards than others.

As regards feelings of their lives having improved over the past 5 years, the picture changes. The new Pentecostals still emerge with the most positive feelings but because this item allows for a contribution by material considerations, the differences are less dramatic than with happiness. The non-churchgoers are also quite positive. The most negative group is the suburban classical Pentecostals, whose very conservative values make them feel rather uncomfortable in the new South Africa.

<b>Life has improved over the past 5 years</b>	<b>Suburbs (%)</b>	<b>Black areas (%)</b>
Old Pentecostals	33	78
New Pentecostals	63	74
Mainstream churchgoers	52	60
Separatists	n/a	64
Non-churchgoers	54	50
(All Charismatics)	58	n/a

Other responses indicate that perceived trends in income, standard of living, occupations and business activity had been most favourable for new Pentecostals and mainstream churchgoers and least favourable but still positive on balance for non churchgoers and old Pentecostals. When asked about the next five years, however, the picture changes again.

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<b>Expectations that life over the next 5 years will be better</b>	<b>Suburbs (%)</b>	<b>Black areas (%)</b>
Old Pentecostals	33	88
New Pentecostals	61	84
Mainstream churchgoers	49	70
Separatists	n/a	75
Non-churchgoers	54	63
(All Charismatics)	56	n/a

Black respondents are much more positive than the suburbs. Hope seems to spring eternal for poor black people, and to the extent that the Pentecostals are more optimistic than others, strong religious faith seems to support the buoyant expectations. Here again the suburban old Pentecostal members are relatively depressed. Their tougher conservative realism leaves them with a great deal to feel uncertain about with respect to the future.

In probing responses to questions posed it seemed as if perceptions about personal skills and abilities seem to interact with the positive views of the past, present and future and with personal happiness. A direct question was also posed:

<b>Personal skills and abilities have improved</b>	<b>Suburbs (%)</b>	<b>Black areas (%)</b>
Old Pentecostals	40	38
New Pentecostals	59	52
Mainstream churchgoers	49	38
Separatists	n/a	46
Non-churchgoers	35	19
(All Charismatics)	54	na

We see here that perceptions of personal skills and abilities have improved most strongly for new Pentecostals, charismatics and Separatists and have been positive for old Pentecostal and mainstream churchgoers as well. The trends have been marginal for non-churchgoers, however. Clearly religious faith is having a consistently positive effect on perceptions of personal adequacy. This ties in with the self-confidence that the faithful have expressed elsewhere. As Balcolm and the other projects have indicated, these sentiments add up to a perception of ‘personal agency’, along the lines of the quotations by congregants interviewed below:

*‘My personal life was very poor, since I had no ability to discover my goals. God woke me up from idleness and enabled **me** to establish my priorities. I have realised my dreams and I am in the process of making them come true.’*

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*'The church to which I belong also builds my character. We are taught to be leaders.'*

This, together with the patterns of response outlined above, provides clear evidence of the Pentecostal influence in combating the powerlessness and personal alienation so typical in the economic inequalities and the breakdown of social fabric that has occurred in South Africa. In particular the quite commonly articulated goal among new Pentecostals of acting as a 'witness for Christ' is arguably the most powerful bulwark against any feelings of powerlessness and meaninglessness, and at the same time a powerful support for personal morale.

### Community outreach and volunteer work

Many of the interviewees in all the studies said that they began doing volunteer work with their communities after their conversion. However, the evidence from the surveys, that in Hout Bay in particular, would suggest that the 'communities' involved in outreach were generally the communities of the saved or the churches' fellow humanity that might be assumed to follow. One index of this is the extent to which the respondents in the largest survey (in Gauteng) participated in the activities of voluntary organisations that are after all the typical way in which churches pursue their social mission:

Proportions of people belonging to voluntary organisations and associations	Suburbs %	Black areas %
Old Pentecostals	33	31
New Pentecostals	24	35
Mainstream churchgoers	34	45
Separatists	n/a	29
Non-churchgoers	18	25
(All Charismatics)	28	n/a

The results above apply to all types of organisations. We note that new Pentecostals in the suburbs lag the mainstream churches and the old Pentecostals in participation in organisations. The profile is a little healthier among new Pentecostals in the black areas. However, it is clear that the new Pentecostals, comparatively speaking, are not joiners and this raises the question already posed earlier as to whether or not the Pentecostals are 'encapsulated' in their faith to the extent that they are passive in civil society.

The claims of many Pentecostal pastors are that their members are vigorously involved in church based community outreach. An index of this is the participation in pastoral organisations linked to the work of the church. However, only some 10% of black and suburban new Pentecostals mentioned organised pastoral involvement, rather less than one might have expected. In fact the general picture emerging is that most church members in gen-

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eral, Pentecostals included, are rather more inwardly directed compared with the better-educated secular middle class, and as such they are relatively encapsulated in their personal worlds of faith.

### Social 'capital'

While voluntary activity is the expenditure of social capital, individuals and communities accumulate social capital in the form of supportive resources held by social networks, families, community organisations and the quality of their linkages. Increasingly it is recognised that social capital is as important as financial capital for the 'enterprises', both business and otherwise of individuals. Although social capital has deeper ramifications than friendship, numbers of friends are a simple index of networks available to support individual enterprise.

<b>Social capital: average number of close personal friends</b>	<b>Suburbs (%)</b>	<b>Black areas (%)</b>
Old Pentecostals	7,7	6,1
New Pentecostals	8,5	2,9
Mainstream churchgoers	8,1	2,1
Separatists	n/a	3,3
Non-churchgoers	3,4	9,3
(All Charismatics)	8,5	n/a

The situation in the suburbs is directly reversed in the black township. In the suburbs the new Pentecostals are as active socially as any other denomination and the non-churchgoers are relatively isolated. In the black areas only the established old Pentecostal church members have a normal profile in terms of friends while the new Pentecostals are relatively socially isolated. In fact the non-churchgoers have a very large number of friends compared with all the religious categories.

The reason for this is that the social environments in which the new Pentecostals in black areas find themselves are to a lesser or greater extent areas stressed by social and moral decay, and the community churches are small, encapsulated and besieged communities. The situation is more normal for the old Pentecostal churches that are large by comparison and hence members are less socially encapsulated.

### Social trust

Another take on this situation is to examine social 'trust'. This is a diffuse quality of social capital but it is vital nonetheless because relations of trust are hugely supportive in most kinds of human enterprise, business or otherwise. Trust allows people to grant

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credit, make concessions and share resources, personal, practical and material. The following data are a brief index of trust:

<b>Suburbs: proportions finding most new people they meet to be:</b>	<b>Old Pent.</b>	<b>New Pent.</b>	<b>Mainstream churchgoers</b>	<b>Non-churchgoers</b>	<b>All Charismatics</b>
Trustworthy	93%	66%	66%	80%	70%
Warm, friendly	87%	81%	75%	100%	80%
Helpful	93%	78%	77%	90%	80%
Not selfish	87%	61%	66%	62%	70%

<b>Black areas: proportions finding most new people they meet to be:</b>	<b>Old Pent.</b>	<b>New Pent.</b>	<b>Mainstream Churchgoers</b>	<b>Separatists</b>	<b>Non-churchgoers</b>
Trustworthy	69%	72%	66%	64%	43%
Warm, friendly	75%	83%	77%	86%	44%
Helpful	81%	83%	70%	79%	44%
Not selfish	72%	80%	72%	68%	56%

Among the new Pentecostals, blacks are more trusting of and open to strangers than their counterparts in the suburbs, who reveal a touch of caution. The old Pentecostals in the suburbs, however, are ahead of all other categories in the degree of trust. It does not seem to be an outflow of faith, however, since the suburban non-churchgoers have high levels of trust as well. It is the black non-churchgoers who without the support of congregations have to exist in some fairly broken down communities that have the least amount of trust.

There are also more general impacts of faith on social capital, however. As we have seen in results presented many of the Pentecostal respondents reported that their relationships improved after being born again. Some of the male interviewees spoke about how they stopped mistreating their wives and started providing and caring for their children. Others mentioned how their negative attitudes to other people changed for the better. Improved relations with colleagues at work were another frequent mention. In both the surveys in Gauteng and Hout Bay it was very clear that workplace relations improved resulting in a sounder adjustment to occupational demands, with obvious career benefits. In fact it was noteworthy that the punitive moral attitudes often expressed in the community setting were not expressed in respect of occupational and workplace affairs.

Among churchgoers, clearly, an immediate social resource is the local congregation and as such is a vital source of social capital. We explored the benefits derived from their congregations in qualitative questions that are not suitable for tabular presentation here but which yielded following trends:

### **Support from the local congregation**

- Some 80% of new suburban Pentecostals felt that they received support from fellow church members, not as many as among old Pentecostals but more than among mainstream churches. In the black churches everyone felt that they received support except among old Pentecostals, but even among them 91% felt that the congregations were supportive. Hence black churches seem to have higher congregational solidarity than suburban churches.
- The dominant form of support was spiritual: support in prayer, etc.
- Following this as was solidarity and comfort. The black new Pentecostals emphasised this more than others although the mainstream churches also emphasise it significantly.
- Moral direction and counselling in times of weakness and temptation was also prominently mentioned by all congregations.
- Around 18 -20% of the new black Pentecostals mentioned practical or material help or help in finding a job. This was on a par with other black Pentecostal congregants and the Separatists but below the level of practical support in the mainstream churches. In the suburban Pentecostal churches the level of practical support was significantly lower, probably because of the greater material resources of these churches. The old Pentecostals were closer to the higher level of support typical in the black communities.

Detracting somewhat from social capital was fairly frequent mention of intergenerational conflict within the wider family as a result of conversion. In the black areas very many respondents pointed out that being ‘born again’ led to conflict with their parents over the rejection of traditional customs such as ancestor worship and the use of *umuthi* (traditional medicine) for healing. There were also a few cases where parents or husbands who belonged to a mainstream church did not like their children or wives attending a different church.

On balance the levels of social capital available to the Pentecostal congregants are mixed and not significantly more than in other denominations. The non-churchgoers in the black community are the category of greatest social deprivation.

### **Encapsulation**

In the discussion above we mentioned the danger of communities of faith encapsulating members and causing them to withdraw from the world, in contradiction to the more general stance of Pentecostals in accepting the world (See earlier chapter on Pentecostalism in the international setting).

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We posed an indirect question to see whether or not the experience of revivalist faith steers its supporters away from worldly concerns. The question was ‘to what do you feel most responsible? In other words to what do you feel most committed?’ The results were as follows:

**Table 6: Focus of responsibility and commitment among congregants**

Focus of responsibility	Suburbs				Black areas				
	Old Pent.	New Pent.	Main-Stream	Non Church	Old Pent.	New Pent.	Main-Stream	African Indep	Non-church
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
God	13	49	33	9	34	57	51	36	13
Wider family	93	63	68	55	88	66	72	64	56
Closer family	53	83	74	100	41	45	57	57	56
Friends	47	32	43	36	19	8	6	14	25
Local community	-	15	4	9	16	16	21	21	25
My country	7	2	9	-	13	12	6	4	13
All humanity	13	15	12	27	13	29	28	29	25
Co-workers	7	2	7	-	-	1	-	-	-
My career and future	47	27	42	55	66	64	53	50	81

To digress for a moment, these results provide many interesting perspectives on South Africa’s socio-political culture. Nationalism is dead, and South Africans are remarkably cool about abstract or local solidarities (the local community, co-workers, etc.), notwithstanding constant political pleas in that direction. Commitments to careers and individual opportunity vie with family loyalty for priority.

Only in the black community in general does God command moderately significant commitment. All humanity also features at a moderate level among black commitments. The suburbs are emotionally relatively detached from God, and humanity, however, but they do allow close friends to share their commitment at a significant level.

Against this background of relative general withdrawal into careers and family concerns, the new Pentecostals present an interesting profile. In the suburbs about half state a commitment to God (49%) but their immediate families followed by their wider families are their dominant concerns (83%, 63%).

In the black areas the new Pentecostals (largely the community churches) also remember God (57%) but it is their careers and their wider families that grab their key interest and commitments (64%, 66%).

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The old Pentecostals, black and suburban, seem to take God for granted, and their key commitments are directed at their wider families, immediate families and their careers, with the suburbanites allowing close friends in as well.

What this adds up to is that among all latter day Christians, Pentecostals included, the local communities, the condition of the country and its mass of humanity are after-thoughts, relatively speaking.

On the question of ‘encapsulation’, for the new Pentecostals God is on their minds more than among any other Christians, but faith does not capture their commitment (i.e. encapsulate them) as much as the family, and the black new Pentecostals are almost as intensely concerned about their careers as the non-churchgoers. Among the suburban new Pentecostals, a commitment to God is also strong behind family commitments, but careers are a fourth order emotional priority with humanity and the community and country even lower. The new Pentecostals may therefore be the denominational group that is most encapsulated by family, kinship and religion itself. One should not expect them to rush out to serve their communities, their country or fellow South Africans. This ties in with the relative lack of commitment to voluntary activity in the community.

### Economic patterns and responses

#### The economic circumstances of church members

Before commencing we should once again consider the economic circumstances of the congregants (see the table of sample results according to socio-economic circumstances early in section 6). Our survey data can also be expressed as follows:

SUBURBS				
	Old Pent.	New Pent.	Mainstream Churchgoers	Non-churchgoers
Mean household incomes	R18 700	R21 100	R22 700	R22 600

BLACK AREAS					
	Old Pent.	New Pent.	Mainstream churchgoers	Separatists	Non-churchgoers
Mean household incomes	R3 400	R3 310	R3 460	R3 210	R3 108

As we have said, the differences in income levels between the suburbs and the black areas are dramatic. Although most black congregant households may not be in dire poverty their family budgets are extremely tight. The differences between denominations within race groups are not large, however.

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Reported income data in surveys have limitations because wealthier people tend to minimise their incomes. They seldom include investment returns, rental returns and other non-salary based income. A better grasp of the material realities of the denominations in South Africa can be obtained from independent data on living standards and possessions.

In 2003, the very large and reliable national advertising survey AMPS (All Media Products)<sup>49</sup> included religious denominations in its questions, that allows an opportunity to compare church members in terms of their Lifestyle Measures (LSMs – a combined index of income, assets, expenditure and buying behaviour). The national results for late 2003 were as follows:

**Table 7: SA distribution of lifestyle measures (LSM) by selected large church denominations (n 25 000)**

LSM groups	Anglican	Catholic	DRC	Methodist	Apostolic	African Indep	Pentecostal	None
<b>African adults</b>	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
1-5	71	70	73	65	82	88	59	85
6-8	26	27	26	32	18	12	34	14
9	2	2	1	2	-	-	6	1
10 (high)	1	1	-	1	-	-	1	-
<b>White adults</b>	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
1-5	-	2	2	1	4	-	2	2
6-8	38	36	37	27	52	-	46	35
9	22	26	30	29	26	-	23	26
10 (high)	40	36	31	43	18	-	29	37

These last results are of cardinal significance. Among Africans in table 5 above we note that the Pentecostal church members by 2003 had started to break clear of the herd of poverty. In all the other denominations, except Methodists, 70% or more of the congregants are in the bottom five LSM categories, compared with only 59% among African Pentecostals. The only denomination in which there was more than a minuscule presence in LSM 9 was the Pentecostal church. The closest to the Pentecostals is another (but much earlier) revivalist church, the Methodists. Even the much-vaunted Calvinism of the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) does not lift it clear of the super-established Catholics and Anglicans.

Among whites, still the vast majority in the suburbs, the Pentecostals do not stand out. The wealthiest churches are again the Methodists (a change from its working class origins), the Anglicans and the Catholics, although their wealth is challenged by that of the secular non-churchgoers. But one can already see the Pentecostals moving clear of Apos-

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tolic churches. We also have to bear in mind that the Pentecostal members in the AMPS survey included both old and new churches. Unfortunately the data do not allow the classical Pentecostal churches to be separated, and the new suburban Pentecostals have probably already closed the wealth distance to the mainstream churches, as our own data above would indeed suggest. In any event, it is remarkable that the combined Pentecostal churches have moved so close to the socio-economic levels of the highly established middle class suburban denominations.

### Lifestyle patterns

We asked respondents what they would most like to spend money on. It is not necessary to present detailed results here since the replies were fairly predictable, but the following trends are relevant to the topic of our analysis:

In the suburbs:

- Old Pentecostals tended to emphasise savings and investments and overseas holidays more than the average. A significant minority among them also mentioned saving for or intentions to emigrate, which might explain the above average interest in holidays abroad.
- New Pentecostals spoke little about holidays but spend their money on home improvements, education and children's education in particular. They do seem to have a modest weakness for consumer durables.

In black areas:

- Old Pentecostals tend to emphasise savings and investments, children's education, the purchase of vehicles and home building or renovations more than the average. They also appear to actually save much more than other categories. The old Pentecostals give very distinct indications of a relatively strong accumulation ethic
- New Pentecostals claim to be more motivated to help the needy, orphans, etc. than other categories. Nothing else stands out in their responses. They do however, save more than the average, although much less than the old Pentecostals
- The mainstream churchgoers also emphasise investment and savings, children's education, and to some extent charity. They do not appear to save very much in practice, however
- The Separatists are mildly interested in starting their own businesses, in buying vehicles, renovating or building houses. They do not save very much
- Non-churchgoers are most interested of all in starting their own little businesses, in sharing income with their wider families, in improving their dwellings and in buying consumer durables. These people actually save least of all, however.

Hence, if there is a clearly defined development and accumulation ethic in the black areas, it is most likely to be found among the old Pentecostal denominations. They seem to have much the same profile as the one that was idealised with respect to Separatist-Zionists in past decades. If we have a modest quasi-Calvinist ethic in the black areas, one might look for it among the old Pentecostal sects. In the white areas the Pentecostals do not have a marked accumulation ethic, but they do spend meaningfully on children's education.

### Savings

**In the suburbs**, when asked about their actual savings, the old Pentecostals saved least, and new Pentecostals also saved less than average. The actual savings rates of old Pentecostals in the suburbs are also determined by their household economic circumstances, which in our sample are slightly tighter than average. The comparison of averages is, however, significantly influenced by very high savings rates among non-churchgoers, largely because this category included some seriously wealthy people who boosted their average level of savings. The old Pentecostals have a stronger motivation to save than average, while the new Pentecostals have a lower inclination to save. **Contributions to the church absorb significant amounts that might otherwise be available for saving.** Charismatics save significantly more than non-charismatic Pentecostals, although they do not emphasise this in their spontaneous accounts of what they would like to spend money on.

While the new Pentecostals were less interested than average in savings, holidays abroad and emigration, the targets of the old Pentecostals, they made higher than average mention of expenditure on education, self-improvement, housing and house renovation. They also spend significantly on durable items, motorcars and adult 'toys'. The new Pentecostals do not appear to be ascetics. They did however make above average mention of charity and donations to worthy causes (within the church context).

In the black areas savings are hugely restricted by the much lower household incomes. Nevertheless, the old Pentecostals save more than average and are also more strongly motivated to save. The new Pentecostals also save a little more than average but it is less important as a priority than among the old Pentecostals.

### Work ethic

A range of responses across items in the surveys gave evidence of a heightened work ethic among both old and new Pentecostals, in both the suburbs and the black areas. In some results it was expressed as 'determination' or 'hard work', but more often than not it was implicit in their commitments to the future security of their families or in their confidence that their new approaches to challenges would achieve occupational success. The African Independent Churches also displayed many of these sentiments.

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### The indirect effects of spiritual composure

Even more important than the work ethic are the changes in their approach to life and social interaction that congregants themselves report. In response to various survey items they remarked on the fact that they had become more patient and tolerant in their interaction with colleagues, experienced better human relations and faced stress and challenges with spiritual fortitude and utter confidence born of spiritual strength. One could even say that some had become rather 'laid back'. This obviously has consequences of a practical and material kind.

### Financial responsibility and redirected or delayed gratification

The firm personal morality of Pentecostals also plays its part. The self-discipline and moral rectitude translates into financial responsibility and obviously a redirection of goals and energies that would otherwise involve expensive and enervating habits – drinking, parties, gambling and sexual adventures. The consequence is a pretty good emulation of the early Calvinist 'this worldly asceticism' (albeit with a self-reported weakness for 'boys' toys' in the suburbs). There are obvious implications for material advancement and no further comment is required. These attitudes were usually expressed as self-evident virtues, however, and there was certainly no early Calvinist rationale. We cannot recall any respondent saying that material well being was hoped to indicate the prospects of being included in the 'elect of God' or as a reassurance that one may have escaped the condition of original sin. In fairness it is doubtful that even the early Reformed congregations in Europe would have articulated these complex theological rationales.

### Improved financial security

Many of the survey respondents described how their financial situations had improved after their conversion, and although there were some cases of financial success, many just reported that they no longer worried about money. **An emphasis on education would be compatible with the overall orientation**, and some of the interviewees noted how they sacrificed to educate themselves. Others emphasised how important it is for their children.

The mix of indications reported leaves the authors in no doubt that the religious 'chemistry' at work among Pentecostals accumulates in various ways, to indicate that they are more likely than not to be a stabilising factor in the social fabric, but also to make the economic progress that their predecessor revivalists in the Methodist churches have clearly accomplished.

### Socio-political dynamics

Aside from a minority of new Pentecostal churches mainly in selected areas of Johannesburg, the Pentecostals are notoriously averse to talking about or occupying their minds with politics. Given their spiritual consciousness and family-centred orientations this is

understandable. Hence our approach was rather broader than a typical political attitude poll.

### Ideals and orientations in development

#### *Suburbs*

The idealism of the new Pentecostals in the suburbs rubs off on their views on progress in South Africa. They set greater store by achievements in the field of education, general welfare, race reconciliation, equality and the elimination of poverty than other denominations. The old Pentecostals, on the other hand, are more cynical about these public issues and are far more concerned with their families, their community situation and their ethnic identity, although even they could not be described as reactionaries or typical conservatives. In fact the old Pentecostals show considerable understanding of the need for affirmative action and issues like gender rights.

The new Pentecostals have generally contradictory views on social development. The social idealism mentioned above co-exists with a belief in self-reliance, in firm principles of right and wrong, social discipline and in the need for spiritually based action. At times their responses sounded almost like original Calvinism. But all this is mixed with social concern and their ever bright, buoyant and optimistic outlook. The old Pentecostals are more consistent and less inclined to be transported or carried away by their spiritual mission.

The powerful role of spirituality in their conceptions of development moves the new Pentecostals to favour alternative cures (faith healing) over modern medicine, which is generally rejected by the old Pentecostals.

Both the new and the old Pentecostals are much more likely than mainstream churchgoers to believe in divine support in entrepreneurship, although they also emphasise hard work and determination. None of the Pentecostals are fatalists in the sense of handing over responsibility to God (although here and there the new Pentecostals use phrases that might suggest this).

In the suburbs the new Pentecostals, as part of their overall mindsets, are significantly more positive and optimistic about trends in the country than others. They provide no political basis for this optimism and to some extent it exists simply because they prefer to look on the bright side of most problems wherever possible.

This optimism does not mean that the new Pentecostals, or any other category of respondents, whether in the suburbs or the black areas are uncritical about political tendencies and trends. Politicians and officials are most certainly not admired and problems like crime, corruption, unemployment, disease and levels of public morality are deplored.

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### *Black areas*

When asked about what the components of a better life would be, the new Pentecostals tended to emphasise elimination of poverty and the struggle for survival more than average, while the old Pentecostals emphasised jobs and accountability by politicians. For the Separatists the issues of above average mention were crime prevention, equality and education.

But when asked how they would judge progress, the new Pentecostals settled on religious values and faith. The old Pentecostals and the Separatists were much more focused – the economy, science and technology, self-reliance in the population and equality.

Only the Separatists give prominence to black economic empowerment and in fact the old and new Pentecostals play down affirmative action. The new Pentecostals trust faith healing and alternative cures – something they share with the old Pentecostals and the Separatists, and they are inclined to be slightly more fatalistic, but cannot be described as comprehensive fatalists. Few in the religious categories are inclined to leave development to governments – they want to take charge of their lives, contradicting the slight tendency to fatalism among the new Pentecostals somewhat. The new Pentecostals are also most inclined to suggest that God's guidance is important in entrepreneurship (but they do emphasise hard work as the critical factor).

In the black areas, as we have alluded there is a great deal of dissatisfaction over the quality of governance and service delivery, but generally on most other issues the black areas are less critical than the suburbs. The non-churchgoers, a category that contains most of the respondents with left-leaning or activist interests, are even more dissatisfied than the Pentecostals.

For all the churchgoers in the sample, the impression one gets is that politics, while important, is far from being a key issue in their lives.

### Overall life satisfaction and satisfaction with trends in South Africa

The relegation of politics to a sphere of superficial consequence and the sensitivity of Pentecostals to social and human conditions leads to some contradictory results when they are asked conventional questions on political satisfaction or otherwise.

<b>Moderate to high satisfaction with trends in SA</b>	<b>Suburbs</b>	<b>Black areas</b>
Old Pentecostals	27%	59%
New Pentecostals	59%	53%
All other denominations	38%	68%
Separatists	n/a	50%
Non-churchgoers	36%	31%

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The new Pentecostals, flowing perhaps from their overall optimism, are significantly more positive and optimistic about trends in the country than others. They provide no political basis for this optimism and to some extent it exists simply because they prefer to look on the bright side wherever possible.

This optimism does not mean that the new Pentecostals, or any other category of respondents, whether in the suburbs or the black areas, is uncritical about political tendencies and trends. Politicians and officials are most certainly not admired and problems like crime, corruption, unemployment, disease and levels of public morality are deplored.

The filtering effect of religious consciousness is seen most clearly among the Separatists, whose circumstances and low levels of education create severe problems in their lives. Yet they are not significantly less satisfied than the new Pentecostals. On the other hand the absence of a religious cushion is clearly evident among the non-churchgoers, whose lower levels of satisfaction show that politicians should be very worried about political debate stripped of ameliorating sentiment that religion, among other things, can add.

The results above are all based on judgements of social and policy trends in the country and do not reflect reactions to personal circumstances which, as we have seen, operate within a different dynamic.

### Levels of interest in politics

As regards levels of interest in politics, dissatisfaction might to some extent turn religious respondents off instead of activating them. We see this in the fact that in the suburbs the least satisfied people, such as the suburban old Pentecostals, tend also to be least interested in politics.

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<b>Level of interest in politics – very and somewhat interested</b>	<b>Suburbs</b>	<b>Black areas</b>
Old Pentecostals	27%	69%
New Pentecostals	56%	68%
Mainstream churchgoers	56%	68%
Separatists	n/a	64%
Non-churchgoers	36%	63%

The black congregants are clearly more interested in politics than the suburban congregants. The reasons must include the fact that in the black townships the populations are far more subject to the vicissitudes of governance than in the private sector-dominated suburbs. Unlike in the suburbs, the levels of interest in politics in the black areas bear little relation to satisfaction or otherwise with trends in the country.

Returning to the suburban Pentecostals, many old Pentecostals tend to be people with fairly traditional views, who can be very cynical about current politics. The new Pentecostals, however, seem to be similar to the mainstream church members among whom there is a lively interest in the moral and humanitarian implications of politics. They clearly include as many politically ‘concerned’ Christians as one finds in the mainstream churches. Whether they display their interest by participating in politics or not is another issue.

For example, Pentecostals, both old and new, are slightly less inclined than other denominations to vote in the most recent elections – the local government elections - and this is notwithstanding the fact that the new Pentecostals have about the same level of interest in politics as the mainstream churchgoers:

<b>Proportions who voted in the municipal elections</b>	<b>Suburbs</b>	<b>Black areas</b>
Old Pentecostals	47%	69%
New Pentecostals	46%	71%
Mainstream churchgoers	60%	81%
Separatists	n/a	75%
Non-churchgoers	63%	63%

Detail in the responses to survey questions reflected high levels of disaffection with party and electoral politics among all Pentecostals, black and suburban, although it must be said that this attitude may be common among all South Africans at the moment. Would a wider choice of religious candidates increase their enthusiasm to vote?

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<b>Proportions more likely to support a religiously like-minded candidate</b>	Suburbs	Black areas
Old Pentecostals	13%	59%
New Pentecostals	68%	46%
Mainstream churchgoers	49%	40%
Separatists	n/a	54%
Non-churchgoers	45%	6%

The emphasis on a *like-minded* candidate should be noted. The un-stated qualification here is that such a candidate should be a person of similar doctrinal persuasion as theirs. South Africa has many political priests and on the whole they have probably deeply aggravated people of the persuasion of the Pentecostals. The old Pentecostals in the suburbs, for example, seem to think that anyone likely to enter politics would be something of a religious fraud.

Feelings of rejection of politics or disapproval of the performance of local government or behaviour of politicians were explored and the results showed some variations between the categories in the sample. These negative sentiments seem to be highest among members of the mainstream churches, and apply to 78% of those who did not vote. This is followed by 60% among the old Pentecostals, 57% among the Separatists and is fairly low among the new Pentecostals at 38%.

When respondents were asked whether or not their interest in politics had increased or declined over the years, quite strong variation emerged between the denominations in the black areas, as follows:

<b>Declining interest in politics</b>	Suburbs	Black areas
Old Pentecostals	27%	22%
New Pentecostals	29%	37%
All other denominations	27%	30%
Separatists	n/a	46%
Non-churchgoers	27%	44%

Overall, these figures for declining interest are high in a country that so obviously faces political challenges of governance and development.

All these results taken together show some stark contradictions. Levels of interest in politics in black areas are higher than they are in the suburb despite fairly widespread criticisms and rejection of politicians and the poor performance of government in service

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delivery in black areas. Levels of voting are high and it is only among black Separatists and non-churchgoers that signs of a withdrawal from politics are evident. Members of the old Pentecostal churches are more politically engaged than the new Pentecostals, and would also be most inclined to support a candidate that shared their religious views. Overall, however, in black areas there is nowhere near the amount of rejection of or alienation from politics that characterises the suburbs. Political dissatisfaction in the black areas is not associated with political alienation as it is among minorities. This is presumably because black voters know that they need government to provide very basic services and benefits and perhaps because they still feel that they have leverage – something with which by no means most black intellectuals would agree with currently.

### Ideological tendencies

Taking all indications into account, the Pentecostals generally favour self-reliance in people and communities. As we will illustrate below the old Pentecostals have a somewhat state-centred approach to politics, but this does not negate the principle that people must take responsibility for themselves.

#### *Suburbs*

As one might have expected, there are few clearly defined political tendencies reflected in the views of congregants. Hence it is very difficult to categorise any denominational category as conservative, liberal or left leaning. Even the old Pentecostals, although generally conservative, are not opposed to welfare or to gender rights, for example. Although more positive about public affairs in general, the new Pentecostals cannot remotely be categorised as government supporters or necessarily as government opponents, for that matter. More generally, this survey suggests that unlike the situation in the latter years of apartheid, religiously engaged people are not mobilised politically to any discernable degree. The upper-middle class congregations of the established churches are an exception to this in the sense that there is more interest in politics and human rights issues, but these deviations generally do not extend to the established denominations at large.

**The new Pentecostals** are distinguished by their relatively strong concern with social issues and community life. They are distinctly more likely than the average respondent to endorse: free education for the poor, higher standards in education, welfare support for the poor, reconciliation between the races, and measures to ensure equality of opportunity. Nevertheless, there is very little to indicate that the new Pentecostals have any intrinsic interest in politics and they certainly do not evince any coherent ideological mind-sets. In fact, in common with many members of other congregations, they show signs of general disaffection with, if not feelings of alienation from, high key political matters. Only the old Pentecostals are more alienated from politics than the new Pentecostals. The interest of the new Pentecostals in politics seems to be an offshoot of their views on Christian responsibility. What appears to matter to them is the perceived impact of policies on people and a generally non-ideological perception of the consequences of policy.

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Less markedly, the new Pentecostals were also more likely than average to emphasise social discipline and good order in society as well as affirmative action for previously disadvantaged people. The new Pentecostals were more concerned than any other category that religion should have a strong influence in policy and public affairs. They are disinclined to rely on the state, but at the same time less insistent on influence by followers rather than proactive leadership.

One reaches the conclusion that the suburban new Pentecostals have fairly politically correct attitudes, but that these attitudes have low salience because of the higher intensity of their spiritual lives.

**The old Pentecostals** in contrast, are less concerned with public issues, more cynical about politicians and able to withdraw from politics more readily than new Pentecostals. The old Pentecostals are very strongly in favour of bottom-up democracy, emphasising accountability to and influence of followers in the political process. At the same time, the old Pentecostals are quite inclined to favour state provision of services – perhaps a residue of the state-centred policies of the past. They are also significantly more likely than members of other denominations to endorse the protection of language. To some extent this is because they are predominantly Afrikaans-speaking. The old Pentecostals are mildly likely to support affirmative action for people disadvantaged by apartheid, which is curious because this principle often contradicts the protection of white ethnic culture -- in education for example.

### *Black areas*

As in the suburbs, there are few clearly defined political tendencies reflected in the views of black members.

Although the black **new Pentecostals** are relatively more positive about the way the country is going than the suburbs, they cannot remotely be categorised as government supporters or necessarily as government opponents. There is none of the merging of liberation consciousness and religious practice that one found in some churches during the apartheid period. There is no hint of political mobilisation among the respondents.

The new Pentecostals, along with all others, have a firm commitment to accountability of politicians and what we have termed bottom-up democracy. They show less interest in strong leadership from politicians than even the suburbs. The daily diet of verbiage from South African political leaders and the voluminous policy documentation that emanates from the political establishment generally leave the Pentecostals rather cold. It seems clear that new Pentecostals tend to be more satisfied than others about most things, but homosexuality, lack of moral censorship, crime, public morality, health policy and poor government performance tend to push them to their limits, as is the case with the old Pentecostals. The **old Pentecostals** are clearly extremely negative about crime, public morality, health policy, the quality of government leaders and government service delivery.

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In the black sample as a whole the following, and entirely expected rank order of major priorities emerged:

**Less crime, more job opportunity, strict equality of opportunity irrespective of race, avoiding racial preferences in general, more and better education, and general socio-economic progress and the reduction of poverty.**

Among old Pentecostals, the results were basically similar to the general views except that they also gave strong endorsement to the restoration of the death penalty and **very** strong support for the elimination of racial preference. The new Pentecostals also mirrored the general pattern, but with stronger endorsement of education, of welfare, the provision of basic needs and faster general socio-economic progress to eliminate poverty.

In general, these patterns in the survey results are generally those uncovered in the other studies as well. However, we should note that in the narrative interviews of Ingram and colleagues, a subset of the responses among black congregants suggested sympathy for socialist ideals. Some of the interviewees likened Jesus to a communist or identified communist themes in the Christian message. This is not unique to Pentecostals, however, and even in the conservative Afrikaans Reformed Churches an affinity for egalitarian ideology is fairly pervasive. Many categories of Christians have expressed reservations about the capitalist ethic. It is a latent contradiction in Western Christianity that has broadly come to terms with the market system, but retains strong misgivings about the profit motive.

### Reactions to current major political issues

Two key questions that are frequently asked in public debate were posed to congregants early in the interviews. Paraphrased for the sake of brevity, one was: *‘what is holding the new South Africa back from realising a better life for all?’* And the second: *‘what are the components of a better life for all?’*

Surprisingly perhaps, on the first, the Pentecostals did not distinguish themselves from other respondents to any significant extent except that the suburban old Pentecostals mentioned political greed much more than others. The other answers fell into the categories of reaction that permeate discussion in the whole society – unemployment, crime, corruption, lack of government capacity and competence, etc. The everyday reactions of the society at large are also the reactions of the Pentecostals and few of them challenged conventional wisdom by raising religious or spiritual alternatives as principles of explanation.

The same applied to their responses to the second issue – a better life for all. The same categories of response that are found in the responses of the public at large appeared in the responses of Pentecostals. Among suburban respondents not a single person swept the conventional political critiques aside and said, for instance, that only God and faith could ensure a better life for all. In other words their reactions to the standard terms of political

debate reflected a general consensus. The Pentecostals have not secluded themselves from the everyday culture of complaint about conditions and delivery.

However, when soon after these two questions, they were asked a more abstract or general question about '*how to judge progress in a country*' the key differences between conventional political debate and the Pentecostal consciousness emerged in the suburbs. No fewer than 47% and 49% of old and new Pentecostals in the suburbs spoke of belief in God and Faith, compared with only 29% among other Christian denominations. In the black areas, the religious responses were at less than half the level in the suburbs and the new Pentecostals distinguished themselves only very marginally.

Hence one might conclude that the parameters of political debate in South Africa are so strong and penetrating that they enclose even the most devout of black Pentecostals. Suburban Pentecostals, however, have a somewhat schizoid reaction – they follow conventional wisdom, but at a point a parallel (spiritual) rationale surfaces to displace the conventional political wisdom. These two levels or spheres of reality are held in suspension as it were, and one has to accept that there is a dual mode of response to politics in the suburban Pentecostal churches.

### **Other investigations among congregants**

Little needs to be said about the study in Hout Bay since it was essentially a pilot investigation preceding the larger study in Gauteng discussed immediately above and the findings in the main did not differ from those just set out. Being a study in smaller community, however, with more face-to-face interaction between members of the Pentecostal churches in different socio-economic classes and more forced interaction between church members and drug and crime subcultures, the Hout Bay study gave a clearer insight into how membership of the Pentecostal Church is able to cushion adherents from some extremely destructive influences in adjacent communities. Despite its idyllic natural setting, Hout Bay manages to bring all the sharply contradictory elements of South Africa into closer interaction than is the case in most other cities. As already noted it was particularly in the Hout Bay setting that many Pentecostals, when asked questions about the surrounding community said that people who lived in sin could not expect Christian charity.

The focused qualitative investigation among 75 congregants in Johannesburg, Pretoria and Durban conducted by Riaan Ingram used a much more open-ended narrative approach in the interviews and this offers the opportunity to assess whether a different method changes the nature of the reality uncovered.

However, great similarities between the two types of investigations emerged in the following results applicable to new Pentecostals in particular:

- The effect of faith in boosting self-confidence, self-esteem and strengthening personal agency and determination
- More harmonious family and other relationships, including work relationships

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- Much greater self discipline in regard to alcohol, drugs, pre or extra marital sex and life's other temptations.
- A quasi-Calvinist pattern of deferred gratification, leading to an improvement in financial security and material conditions in the family. Not yet mentioned is the fact that comments in both studies strongly suggest that 'tithing' acted as a spur to deferred gratification, financial planning and discipline in handling family and personal finances.
- Partly as a result of the preceding factors, both studies reflected improved occupational success and both studies frequently suggested an improved work ethic
- An emphasis on the importance of education, either for themselves or their children
- An experience of an improvement in health
- Stern, conservative values in respect of public morality, a proscription of corruption and criticism of the government's stance on capital punishment, abortion, gay rights and progressive rights issues
- Outreach and volunteer work in the community among the poor, but very largely contained within the church community, as well as strong mutual support within the congregation

More evident in some of the narrative accounts of the congregants than in the larger survey were aspects like:

- Socialist ideals: some congregants opposed capitalism because of its materialism, profiteering and lack of compassion
- The experience that their faith had helped them to overcome the psychological oppression of apartheid and had fostered a spirit of reconciliation. However, these sentiments were implicit in the responses in the larger study as well and did not emerge clearly because of the nature of the questions
- A measure of hostility to victims of HIV-Aids. A number regarded the disease as divine punishment for a sinful existence.
- Some evidence emerged of beliefs in magic and superstition among congregants. This was also evident in the Hout Bay study among people who were formerly members of the African Independent Churches.
- There was mention in the smaller investigation of intergenerational conflict with parents following the 'born again' experience and it's associated belief changes, particularly the rejection of traditional customs.

The general picture, however, is that the results of the smaller focused qualitative investigation and the larger semi-structured survey very strongly confirm each other. The results

in the larger study have more permutations, but in terms of key features a fairly consistent picture of the consequences of Pentecostal worship has emerged.

But before leaping to over-simple conclusions, however, we have to bear in mind that the larger study shows that these consequences are not necessarily unique to Pentecostalism. Not only are Charismatic influences currently present in most denominations, but many of the features identified as typifying Pentecostals appear to a lesser or greater extent in other denominations as well, including some of the very mature denominations like Anglicans, Catholics, Methodists and the Reformed Churches. No doubt the same applies to categories of the Jewish, Hindu and Muslim faiths, although our restricted sample sizes made it impossible to establish.

## **FOCUSED INVESTIGATIONS**

### **Charismatic and Pentecostal politicians and activists**

Interviews were conducted with 25 politicians or other social activists who are Pentecostal or Charismatic Christians, most of them black. As might have been expected the conversations did not yield a uniform response. While most saw the hand of God in the country's peaceful transition from apartheid and expressed the conviction that God had worked through politicians to achieve His ends, some of them clearly felt that reconciliation in South Africa was incomplete and that God's purpose would only be served if there was more repentance by whites and more comprehensive reconciliation (obviously one would encounter much less of this sentiment from white Pentecostal activists). Others tended to be more concerned about specific challenges to Christianity or morality in the country.

Broadly speaking there seemed to be four major lines of thought. Differences were not necessarily only between interviewees, but appeared as more than one point of view in some of the individuals interviewed. The differences were between a bottom-up approach of responding to specific challenges of poverty, disease, crime, violence and corruption as opposed to two over-arching approaches. One such over-arching approach was that of seeking to influence political conditions through changing the morality and value-systems in the population or helping to develop the nation by giving it purpose and values – a spiritual engagement of political or policy issues. Another over-arching approach was more judgemental or slightly more aggressive in that it endorsed a degree of political solidarity between churches and non-Christians in pressurising for change – perhaps a protest role or a search for leverage in public affairs. Finally there was also evidence of a conventional anti neo-liberal/anti capitalist conviction that portrayed the government as conniving with capitalism in elite formation. As already mentioned earlier, in Pentecostalism as in many other denominations, one encounters an undercurrent of 'socialist' interpretation around the role of Jesus.

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Another way of depicting differences in approach is to say that while one or two had far reaching goals of working towards a Christian State, including a solidarity with secular and non-Christian activists, most people interviewed had more modest goals of supporting general fairness and respect for human rights in which they could freely express their own particular religious views and values.

Hence a Christian commitment that is politicised within a framework of alternative ideology is present next to a larger commitment to social change and justice that is expressed through the medium of the Christian faith. The latter includes an almost idealist-spiritual view that conversion to Christianity could so change the personalities of the oppressed that they could achieve liberation without confrontation or violence and bloodshed.

In these interviews a common feature was deep concern about poverty and conditions of life among the poor. As one would expect there was also a great deal of concern about HIV/Aids, but a division appeared that was also found among congregants, namely that alongside the concern there was also censure. One respondent put it that too many South Africans saw in political liberty a freedom to practice sexual licence.

Do the activists and politicians differ from the rank and file, and if so, how? Obviously there are relatively more ordinary congregants who have an aversion to and mistrust of politics than one finds among the activists interviewed. The activists are highly unlikely to be politically withdrawn as are many congregants. But not all Pentecostal congregants eschew political issues, and among the non-withdrawn Pentecostals and the activists there is very considerable convergence.

As we see above the activists take fairly clear positions. They tend not to favour capitalism, being drawn to a mildly socialist welfare orientation, although a few felt that there were more authentically Christian solutions to poverty than social grants. They are opposed to what they see as the government's capitalist promotion of a wealthy 'empowered elite'. But they are nothing more than mildly left leaning and sharp radicalism that could distance the activists from rank-and-file co-believers is a minority phenomenon.

Most of the activists clearly see a Higher Hand driving politics, which becomes a conduit for God's influence. On a continent with a reputation for 'big man' leadership and an accentuation of political charisma, this is a welcome stance and signifies that religion is a counter to the adulation of 'people's heroes' and demagogues. In this sense Pentecostal activism is a reinforcement of healthy democracy. In the stances of most activists interviewed it is certainly a counter to political force and violence – in their words faith is a better alternative than aggressive mobilisation.

One or two of the African activists displayed a fairly clear black consciousness position -- not an aggressive position but a clear conviction that aspects of African indigenous culture and practice had much to offer, economically and otherwise. Others felt that African traditions were inappropriate for devout Christians – hence reflecting a very long-standing tension among black intellectuals in South Africa.

Generally, the activists seem to be quite humble or gentle, despite their clear convictions- 'let us be the salt that influences politics', said one. Most of the congregants would have agreed with him. But where there is a significant divergence between the activists and congregants is on the intensity of moral conviction. Many of the activists share the concerns of congregants that government is failing to provide a moral compass, but from the verbatim answers of congregants we detect that there is probably much more passion in the moral conservatism of the congregants than there seems to be among the activists. This does suggest that on a national scale the moral conservatives among the Pentecostals (and in some other denominations, excluding upper middle class liberal churches) might very well feel that their 'righteous anger' about the social and moral climate in the country is not articulated strongly enough by more activist leaders. They probably would like something rather closer to the spirit of the moral majority movement in the US, for example.

### **Pentecostal businessmen**

Interviews were conducted with 25 businesspeople with Pentecostal or Charismatic church links took place in the Johannesburg and Ekurhuleni metropolitan areas. Once again most of them were black. As with all religious businesspeople, Pentecostal businessmen take varied stances as Christians in the business context. One seems to be a semi-withdrawn role of surviving in an evil or alien place -- 'prisoners' said one -- with as little interaction as possible. Another is one of acceptance of business without trying to change it, but applying Christian values and standards in their personal responses to the situation. Then there are two more directive roles, one more radical than the other, in which the Pentecostal businessperson will bear witness for Christ and work in the full power of the Holy Spirit. Both involve purposive Christian behaviour in business, the one to bear witness and to try to exercise spiritual influence and the more radical one to attempt to transform the business workplace to fully align it with Christian practice. The latter would be a case of Christian ministry in the business context, or bringing the 'Kingdom of God to the heart of the city' to use a quote of the author of the research paper.

The drivers of the more activist Christian positions are those who have the experience of having been born again in Christ. In the interviews, as with the interviews with political activists, there were answers that suggest that some of the businessmen feel a degree of discomfort with people 'born again' because there is some one-upmanship in the way people who are born again respond to other Christians.

Obviously, the more activist roles tend to be less frequent unless the business is self-contained and the owner is in full control. What was often left un-stated in the interviews, however, is that Pentecostal businesspeople are simultaneously serious entrepreneurs who run businesses for a legitimate profit – a form of functional schizophrenia. This is a necessary tendency found frequently among religious people in business, namely that of maintaining a division of roles: one religious and the other entrepreneurial.

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What the businessmen did not express clearly is the neo-Calvinist conviction that dedication and profit in business is a sign of God's Grace, and that their success in business is a sign of their devotion. It is a spirit that exists in the prosperity-oriented churches and it may exist among the businessmen, but the format of the interviews did not draw it out.

## DISCUSSION OF THE PENTECOSTAL IMPACT

### Pulling key findings together

Firstly we should remind ourselves again of the rapid recent growth of the movement. Pentecostal and Charismatic movements have grown by a factor of nearly eight in Africa since 1970<sup>50</sup>. In South Africa membership of South African Pentecostal, Apostolic Faith Mission and other revivalist and unaffiliated churches rose from 4,6 million in the 1996 census to 6,8 million in the 2001 census – 15% of the population -- while traditional mainstream Christian churches saw no growth at all in their numbers<sup>51</sup>.

We must also recall an earlier section of this report showing that, among Africans, the Pentecostal churches are the only major religious grouping in which congregants had significantly broken through into the more advanced lifestyle (or LSM) categories by 2003. One cannot say whether the churches recruit selectively, whether the congregants have made significant socio-economic progress, or both, but whatever it is the Pentecostal churches could be positioned as role models of social progress.

The insights emerging from the CDE research programme cannot be repeated in detail here, but it is necessary to capture some major trends. We will proceed through the various studies concentrating on the survey among congregants in Gauteng simply because it covered the greatest variety of topics among broadly representative samples of congregants.

### Pastors in the New Pentecostal churches

The research among pastors, mainly of the new Pentecostal churches, centred on what the researcher, Tony Balcomb, described as the **theology of encounter**. This perspective is rooted in the experience of Paul on the road to Damascus (Acts 9), in which the believer surrenders his/her life to the risen Christ in obedience. The new spiritual awareness develops and grows within the lives of believers in a multiplicity of different ways with diverse and sometimes unintended consequences. A key feature is the realisation of self-worth and a sense of agency, with the believer no longer a victim of circumstances. It emphasises positive engagement with life and openness to new and fresh insights into the world of immediate and everyday experience. Hence it is life embracing and at least world accepting. The services are intended to attract and entertain and the ethos is highly voluntarist. They make conscious attempts not to be 'religious' in the conventional sense, modelling themselves rather along the lines of a family, community, business, or all three. Church is seen as a lively and self-affirming continuation of every day life where

one should be subjected to as little discomfort as possible and where one can be encouraged, instructed and affirmed in one's ambitions and worldly pursuits.

Entrepreneurship and response to opportunity is a central feature of these churches. This is noticeable at three levels: the churches themselves have usually come about as a result of individual religious entrepreneurship, there is a considerable amount of entrepreneurship in the membership and in some of the churches entrepreneurship skills training features as an important intervention in the lives of congregants.

The research also gave evidence of a strong emphasis on family values accompanied by marked moral conservatism. For most Pentecostals the new freedom of expression in South Africa is feared to encourage pornography, abortion on demand, alternative sexual preference and idolatry.

Although Pentecostals were generally politically inactive before the first democratic elections in April 1994, since then a few prominent leaders have aligned themselves with the spirit and goals of liberation from apartheid. At the same time opposition to the South Africa's socially 'progressive' constitution has been expressed because it is seen to encourage rights above obligations, to challenge the authority of God and to contradict the moral values commonly associated with Christian virtue. Many of the pastors interviewed had firm views concerning the political situation in South Africa, but with exceptions most preferred to emphasise spiritual rather than social and political convictions. Their political reserve can be criticised as a spiritual comfort zone but at the same time, overt political stances by religious leaders are always difficult to reconcile with spiritual commitments and create stress among congregants.

### Congregants

Because much of the evidence is based on a broadly representative survey in Gauteng, the congregants discussed are drawn from the full Pentecostal spectrum: older 'Classical' churches (Assemblies of God, the Full Gospel Church and including Apostolic churches), new Pentecostal churches in the middle class suburbs, so-called Mega Churches and small community churches mainly in poorer black areas. Charismatic groupings in the mainstream churches were also covered. Because of marked differences in community culture and the culture of worship between poor black areas and substantially white middle class suburbs, the analysis distinguished between these two types of areas.

#### *The black Old Pentecostals*

These congregants yielded a fairly clear profile. They reflected a propensity to save money despite being among the poorest respondents, an above average commitment to children's education, a determination to shape their own lives, an above average tendency to translate faith into discipline, hard work and an interest in studying and improving themselves and a clear conception of what business success requires. They also understand that education is by no means only about hard skills but must imbue wisdom and judgement.

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They have large numbers of close friends within the church community and with this a relaxed, trusting and positive attitude to new acquaintances. Despite deep faith, there is no slavish reliance on divine guidance but a clear concept that God helps those who help themselves. All told they were perhaps closest to the ideal type of an early 'Calvinist' approach to life, without the same theological/doctrinal underpinnings, however.

### *The black New Pentecostals*

Although there are many black Pentecostal churches that have an 'up-market' character and therefore resemble the suburban new Pentecostal churches, the majority of black congregants are in smaller churches better described as community churches. This summary is dominantly of the congregants in community churches.

Their recruitment into the congregations was often precipitated by life crises and illness, and the faith healing offered by the churches was a major attraction. Many of them are also converts from the African Independent churches and many experienced inner conflict because of a simultaneous emphasis on Christian and African spiritual cosmology. These new Pentecostals are highest in spiritual capital and they have a strict moral conscience. Their religious experience is the most intense of all. They are also more altruistic than average and most inclined to believe in good works. They are generally more encapsulated within their religious activity than old Pentecostals and do not have the same level of commitment to shaping their own lives. They tend to hand over to a spiritual agency more than the old Pentecostals, and also emphasise spirituality most in the upbringing of children. Almost inadvertently, their faith gives them self-confidence.

Their social capital and networks are rather weak, however, having less close personal friends than, but similarly low levels of involvement in voluntary organisations to Old Pentecostals. Although they are most dissatisfied with policies and politicians they are also very patient and accepting in their work and lives generally. They enjoy high levels of personal happiness. They do not seem to have the same level of challenge as old Pentecostals, and may tend to be rather too 'other worldly', sheltered by their faith.

### *The suburban Old Pentecostals*

Analysing the suburban (in contrast to the township) congregations requires a change of gear. Although many of the suburban households are not affluent and a significant minority are financially constrained, they are nonetheless relatively comfortable and worlds apart from the material conditions in the black areas. Hence the issue of socio-economic development is much less pressing.

To understand the old Pentecostals one has to bear in mind that perhaps a majority of the congregants come from a background in the Dutch Reformed Churches (DRC). It is inevitable that many features of Afrikaans community life have remained as part of the culture of these churches. For many their withdrawal from the DRC was for personal reasons and because the DRC in past years tended to be rather abstract and complex in its doctrines and biblical interpretation. They sought a warmer and more supportive church cul-

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ture. Furthermore, many of the Old Pentecostals are from working class backgrounds and they might have experienced a measure of discomfort in a Calvinist setting that tended, inadvertently, to emphasise middle class respectability.

Today the old Pentecostal churches have many of the features of new Pentecostals that will be discussed below. The old Pentecostals, however, have an even greater concern with the wider family, with immediate families and with community life across religious boundaries. Hence they are also more involved in civil society at large than new Pentecostals. They are less religiously idealistic than the new Pentecostals and for many of them Afrikaans ethnic consciousness is almost as important as their spiritual commitments. This also contributes to a fairly high level of dissatisfaction with public policies in the new South Africa.

They reflect a great emphasis on personal discipline that translates into hard work and occupational commitment. However, they are morally more tolerant than the new Pentecostals, some of them to the point of accepting premarital sexuality and alternative lifestyles. Their spiritual commitment, however, is virtually as strong as that of new Pentecostals and it is also their top priority, despite other commitments. Today the congregants tend to be the epitome of solid citizens, well organised, usually avoiding debt and eschewing extravagant lifestyles. Their churches and services are formalised to the point that a middle class Methodist, for example, would find large parts of the services very compatible. The Old Pentecostals, however, retain the dimension of an immediacy of connection with the Holy Spirit and the propensity for spiritual episodes among the congregants.

### *The Suburban New Pentecostals*

The new Pentecostals are positioned midway between the old Pentecostals and the mainstream denominations as regards socio-economic level. They do have more university degrees, however – although not at the level of upper middle class Anglicans or the upper middle classes among non-churchgoers.

New Pentecostals are more interested in politics than any other denomination, although they have a tendency not to vote. The new Pentecostals would vote if suitable religiously oriented candidates were to stand. They are however the group most satisfied with trends in the country. This is despite high levels of dissatisfaction with crime, health policies, public morality and government performance generally. Hence their satisfactions tend to derive largely from the economy and their own adjustment to the opportunities and constraints in the society. This suggests that they are much more materialistic than their overt commitments would suggest. They are also happier than the mainstream church members in their personal situations.

As regards the criteria they would adopt in judging progress and a better life for all in South Africa, the new Pentecostals are progressive in that they endorse better education, more generous welfare provision, anti-poverty strategies and affirmative action for previ-

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ously disadvantaged people. They are also inclined to support charity. They are, however, cautious about state involvement in social affairs.

They have many friends in their congregations and luxuriate in the warmth of the religious community, but tend to be less trusting of people and cautious with strangers than the old Pentecostals. Although they value education and express an interest in further education for themselves, they are not exactly burning with ambition to make personal material progress. This is because they are so thoroughly captivated by their spiritual rewards. Of all categories in the sample the new Pentecostals are most enmeshed in their relationship to God, which to them is immediate and joyous. Nearly 90% of them regard themselves as having been saved and reborn.

The spiritual rewards of their faith tend to dominate their answers to how their lives have been changed by the church. They seem to live in a constant state of spiritual arousal. At the same time, this immersion in the experience of the Spirit seems to impart a confidence and even a determination in their working lives. Similarly to the findings in the Hout Bay study, it is almost as if their spiritual lives release their energy and performance in material things because these things mean so little. The new Pentecostals have experienced material progress, which they attribute to their faith. Hence in their choices about spending money they include quite a lot of consumer durables and adult 'toys'. They are not rounded ascetics by any stretch of the imagination.

But there are some fairly large contradictions in their lives. Amidst all the warmth, the solidarity within the religious community and their progressive concerns about poverty, inequality and with racial reconciliation, they erect some very hard barriers. Some 70% of them regard inter-race marriage as a form of sin and their relative caution with strangers is another barrier. The moral fortress that they build is the most impregnable barrier of all, and this is a dubious side of the dynamic of intense religious experience among all the religious categories. The new Pentecostals are more puritanical on moral questions than any other denomination. Although South Africa desperately needs more moral sanctions on a whole range of behaviours, the new Pentecostals are in some ways reminiscent of the morally and socially conservative 'bloukies' of several decades ago. It is possible that the progressive veneer and the expressions of concern about poverty and race relations amongst New Pentecostals is a front to disguise some very hard and judgmental people.

### *The African Independent Churches*

These churches are included in this review because part of their early origins was in the mission outreach of the Azusa street Pentecostal revival, although they define themselves as an authentically indigenous and African branch of Christianity. They have many of the orientations of the old black Pentecostals but have a handicap in that the main attraction of their religion is its promise of working miracles and curing illness, which are played down in the old Pentecostal churches today. Their background in African traditional values and rituals takes them a little too much out of the mainstream of development.

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What their faith does give them is confidence that they can succeed – in other words abundant spiritual capital. On the other hand, their faith comes a little too close to being a crutch in life, a feature that derives from the fact that many of them converted to African Zionism in a search for relief from ill health and the stress of poverty.

There appears to be considerable religious tension within these churches because some of them, or some of the congregants, have a ‘dual spirituality’ in that they embrace both Ancestor Worship (or exaggerated reverence for ancestral spirits) and the Christian Trilogy. The criticisms directed at these churches by the Pentecostal churches in particular have caused many congregants to leave the African Independent Churches and join Pentecostal churches. Another tension is the fact that the ‘social’ culture of the African Independent Churches is dominated by the culture of deprivation and poverty in the black areas, and this tends to eject better-educated members who also join either the mainstream denominations or Pentecostal churches. Of all the churches surveyed, the African Independent Churches have the lowest mean educational levels.

On the other hand, their strict moral codes and self-discipline reminiscent of the Old Pentecostal churches, as well as considerable support from congregant networks, have endowed the ‘Zionists’ with an enviable reputation as employees. Hence their economic circumstances are often higher than their educational levels would predict.

### Overarching features of Pentecostalism emerging

The Pentecostal churches, and those more recently established in South Africa are controversial and are likely to remain so for a long time. It is remarkable how little South Africans in general and members of the mainstream churches in particular know about Pentecostal churches and their congregations. Exceptions are the well-organised large mega churches under the leadership of nationally known pastors with unquestionable communication skills and persuasive messages, with respect to which theologians, intellectuals and ordinary people are quite deeply divided.

Media coverage of Pentecostal churches presents a very contradictory picture of the movement. Most frequently carried are brief and over-simple accounts of the flavour of services in which the spontaneity, emotional arousal and dramatic expressions of spiritual ardour are played up. Readers are not frequently reminded that these features are not new or ‘alternative’ expressions of Christian spiritual passion, but stretch back to the very beginnings of organised Christianity. Hence the image created is often of deviant or even ‘primitive’ forms of worship<sup>52</sup>. Mainstream Christianity has changed considerably in recent decades and established rituals are blended with informal Christian fellowship and generally warmer communication within services, but many still expect church services to be at least ‘dignified’. By these standards the Pentecostals are excessively spontaneous -- Nomavenda Mathiane has called the message ‘red-blooded spiritual sustenance’<sup>53</sup>. But Dr. Isak Burger, President of the Apostolic Faith Mission correctly points out that the Pentecostal faith may be ‘childlike’ but it is far from ‘childish or superficial’<sup>54</sup>.

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By far the most criticism is directed at the so-called ‘prosperity message’, however. For example the *Sunday Times* carried the prominent headline ‘Evangelists prey on a nation seeking succour: Pentecostal churches, with their promises of prosperity and easy solutions are booming in Nigeria<sup>55c</sup>. The story may well have been about Nigeria but the concern is local as well. The well-known South African religious journalist Anastasia de Vries calls it the assumption that the faithful have a right to lay claim to prosperity<sup>56</sup>. Pastor Moss Ntlha, General Secretary of the Evangelical Alliance of South Africa is himself critical of some local Charismatic churches: ‘the balance sheet of the church has overtaken the spiritual well-being of members ... they are run like commercial vehicles’<sup>57</sup>. He is emphatic that the prosperity message should not be seen as basically anything more than the biblical concept of ‘as you sow, so shall you reap’<sup>58</sup>, but the concern is pervasive, fed by appearance of great wealth and expensive technology in some mega churches.

Perhaps the greatest concern, and one that this author encountered as early as the nineteen fifties, is that some of the entrepreneurial pastors in smaller community churches enrich themselves at the cost of devout but naïve followers. There is much to be said for religious entrepreneurship in the establishment of new denominations in concert with followers with intense spiritual needs – there is merit in pluralism, diversity and competition in most spheres of life – but the concern is about the ever present possibility of a profit motive. This tendency is apparently a major problem in some neighbouring countries like the Democratic Republic of the Congo, for example and many of these ‘religious entrepreneurs’ are arriving in South Africa as unrecorded immigrants. These problems do not appear to be serious in South Africa at the moment, but it would be hazardous to ignore them.

There is no doubt, however, that the positive impacts of Pentecostalism outweigh the concerns. To a lesser or greater extent all the Pentecostal churches reviewed above are characterised by a moving sense of spiritual encounter and a corresponding sense of joy, happiness and optimism among the congregants. More often than not, these reactions are associated with feelings of self-confidence, self-esteem and a sense of viability – what we, following Martin<sup>59</sup> have described as ‘personal agency’. The moral discipline at the very least preserves energy that finds alternative outlets in a more intense family life, in working life and business. These common themes boil down to something approximating to original Calvinism as described by Max Weber – a sense of purpose and therefore confidence in worldly engagement, strengthened by this-worldly asceticism.

David Martin, in the work referred to above (the World their Parish), has in various places identified specific impacts of Pentecostal movements in Latin America and elsewhere. Our studies have confirmed many of these impacts in South Africa. He mentions, for example, that Pentecostalism in the USA, although vibrant, is subordinate in status among denominations. The same applies in South Africa – the mainstream churches usually command attention from the media whereas the Pentecostal churches are overlooked. He also notes that the Pentecostal economic virtues are discounted by the liberal establishment, and the same may be said for South Africa where liberal corporate capital oper-

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ates at a level of sophistication that obscures the valuable feeder effect of small enterprises as foundations for a market economy.

A very important function of Pentecostalism that Martin isolates is that Pentecostalism has provided an avenue for the recognition and integration of marginalized people: he calls the movement '...the mobilisation of the culturally despised (p167)'. The Pentecostal churches have performed this role in various ways. The narrative interviews by team member Ingram have confirmed this with reference to the former exclusion of many aspirant people by apartheid. A number of the respondents described how their conversion helped them overcome the crippling sense of racial inferiority, with which apartheid burdened them because they were black. It has also done much the same for former traditionalists who have been able to facilitate their own modernisation by moving from African Independent Churches to Pentecostal community churches. Earlier, the Assemblies of God, the Full Gospel Church and the Apostolic Churches provided a refuge for poor and struggling Afrikaners who felt uncomfortable in the abstract formality of the Reformed Churches. And in all groups at all times the Pentecostal churches have offered the intensity of spiritual support that has enabled people whose lives have been disrupted by disease, alcoholism, family breakdown and other ills to recover self-respect.

At another level Martin notes that contrary to superficial perceptions, the ecstatic spiritual release in Pentecostal faith actually complements self-control and discipline in other spheres of activity, something that may also be observed in the South African setting. We have to note, however, that the extent to which the effective doctrines in the individual churches spur economic aspirations and motivations to succeed in business and to become prosperous, varies between church sub-types. The prosperity message is played up in some and played down in others but the underlay of the prosperity orientation is general.

All these features are a counter to the glorification of wealth for its own sake, the rush for new consumer technologies and to the obsessive lifestyle and image concerns that characterise new class formations. Needless to say they could also counter the faddish rush into new age alternative palliatives even in the older middle classes. Most critically, however, these features of Pentecostalism provide a very genuine relief from the stress of grinding poverty and could throw lifelines of identity to the 30% to 40% of South Africa's population that is sidelined by most of the new development and opportunity in the country. As such they could be a vital counter to the political opportunism or the over-politicisation of social issues that one finds in South Africa.

This last comment, however, immediately raises the important question of whether or not Pentecostal movements serve the purposes of political and economic hegemonies by taking mass demands and protests out of the equation. Is the movement politically conservative in its ultimate consequences? We will return to this question later. . .

A further word of caution is necessary at this point. Organised religion in South Africa is highly pluralist and there is no stuffy ecclesiastic hierarchy in a denominational monopoly imposing doctrinal conformity or social norms. Even at the height of apartheid the

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governing party-linked Dutch Reformed Churches had to compete in a wider religious marketplace. Hence there is and always was much less consolidated opposition to the growth of the Pentecostal churches than there was, say, in Latin America in past decades. This also means that the attractions of Pentecostal services are somewhat less unique than they are in societies formerly characterised by doctrinal conformity. Hence the impacts of Pentecostalism are also the impacts of many other denominations today. For example, a glance at results of the survey for which there was no space for discussion will show that Catholic and Dutch Reformed congregants are at least as likely as Pentecostals to feel that their faith sanctions a commitment to personal careers and future prosperity. If spiritual liberation and personal empowerment are the issues, then all denominations tend to be converging.

The impacts of the Pentecostal churches, therefore, have to be seen in a wider context of the role of organised Christianity, and indeed other worshippers of the God of Abraham - Jews and Muslims - should be drawn into consideration as well. But while not unique in impact, the Pentecostal churches represent the most consistent and intense emphasis on the power of the Gifts of the Spirit. As such they do have a highly significant *potential* role. Will this potential be realised?

### The broader impact of religion

Before answering the question posed above we have to note that a key feature of Pentecostalism has long been noted in religion in general, namely the 'redemption lift' long associated with conversion to Christianity.

This draws attention to the broader dimension of the findings of the Gauteng survey in particular, from which a preliminary conclusion was that religion trounces politics in the search for the better life. For a whole variety of reasons, the expectations raised by faith do not seem to end in the kind of disillusionment that politics can generate. Perhaps this is because the ways of the Almighty are too mysterious to generate categorical expectations and categorical disappointments. Both in the townships and in the suburbs, the responses suggested that religion had achieved far more in improving lives and morale than have the political programmes and promises in the past few years in South Africa at any rate. The buoyant mood among the faithful contrasted significantly with a relatively hesitant mood among non-churchgoers. The suburbs and the black areas feel oppressed by crime, the opportunism of politicians, unemployment and lack of delivery by government, but personal spheres of life seem to be insulated from these harsher realities. Certainly, the insulation offered by faith seems thinner in the black areas than in the suburbs but it is effective in ensuring overall well being nevertheless. South Africa's over-politicised and quite myopically secular media miss this point almost completely.

There is independent evidence of even more tangible effects. In the field of physical and social health, in which one knows that interaction with the psyche is powerful, the impact of religion seems incontrovertible. A recent review of 669 mainly medical studies pointed out that religious faith is related to beneficial outcomes in the areas of hyperten-

sion, longevity, depression, suicide, sexual behaviour, alcohol and drug use, youth delinquency, well-being, hope, self-esteem and educational attainment.<sup>60</sup> In each area, between 68 and 97 percent of the studies found a positive effect. Religious faith has also been linked to educational attainment in a survey of 19 studies.<sup>61</sup>

In the survey results we were surprised at how little impact political disillusionment seemed to have on personal morale among believers as opposed to non-churchgoers. Politics invades the attitudes of all people but among churchgoers in particular it is relatively superficial. Signs of acute political aggravation were most common among non-churchgoers

Religious commitment in general imparts a buoyant mood and spiritual ‘capital’ seems to be correlated with social capital, confidence, patience and fortitude. Religion seems to insulate people from political and economic stress even without ‘other worldly’ seclusion or fatalism. The people interviewed were quite open to responding to political issues, but perhaps at somewhat more of a distance than non-churchgoers.

Very importantly in view of the general theme of this study, all categories of churchgoers reflected sentiments of self-reliance – a critical finding in view of the mass dependence on state support in the population at large. This tendency can very easily be seen as a ‘panacea for the masses’ in crypto-Marxist terminology, but we did not get the impression that religion is a soporific and a source of generalised false consciousness. As already suggested, what religion does seem to do is insert a cushion between the individual and the realities of economics and politics without obscuring the latter.

In common with most modern societies, South Africa is characterised by ‘bigness’ – big political parties with the resources to manipulate the voters to whom they are theoretically accountable, big and pervasive bureaucracies with complex rules and regulations that take government even further away from the people and regulations and super-modern corporations with sophisticated advertising and PR and whose policies are dictated by global competition well beyond the grasp and the choices made by local populations. None of these developments are intended to be undemocratic, but the consequences severely test the capacity of voters and civil society to hold these over-arching structures accountable. Twenty years ago David Apter of Yale (quoted earlier in another context) formulated among others one key criterion to distinguished effective democracies from their often well disguised but fundamentally less democratic and flawed counterparts. This criterion was whether, as a consequence of how pervasive formal and informal leverage is patterned, societies (the people) are the ‘independent variable’ in the system of power and control, or whether that status resides with the state or state-linked corporate structures<sup>62</sup>. Where societies are not the overriding factor but the ‘dependent variable’ and the consolidated structures are the independent variable with volition and ultimate leverage, neither elections nor constitutions can counter the pervasive manipulation of outcomes that can rob a society of its ownership of itself.

This is why organised civil society is the final safeguard of democracy. To be effective, however, civil society normally either has to possess the social capital and human re-

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sources of middle class networks, or it has to possess ‘community’ – the cohesiveness, mutual support and sense of purpose of, for example trade unions, other voluntary associations and cultural associations or religious congregations.

South Africa, despite its early promise as a new democracy and a largely free print media, at times veers uncomfortably close to being the kind of society in which the people and their associations are the ‘dependent variable’. The results of this investigation, however, have accumulated across themes to lead us to the conclusion that pervasively in religion in general and Pentecostalism in particular, there is a *potential* to alter the skewed balance between the state and its structures on the one hand, and the volition and purposes of ordinary people and communities on the other.

### Can the social potential of Pentecostalism be realised?

The potential impact of the Pentecostal churches on our politics and democracy is an area of huge conceptual and potential practical importance for development. In this sphere, however, the direct impacts are likely to be limited. Religious parties are notoriously unsuccessful in South African politics. The African Christian Democratic Party, despite a potentially wide appeal, has never been able to achieve more than trivial success at the polls. It is almost as if the agendas set by the ideological heavyweights in our politics, loved or hated, are taken for granted. So although significant proportions of Pentecostals say they would support religiously like-minded candidates, in any actual test at the polls those religious candidates would probably be seen as not tough or ruthless enough to compete. In any event, the interaction of Pentecostals with party politics elsewhere in Africa raises doubts about the movement’s capacity to withstand the pressures that arise in Africa’s extremely muscular political competition. Katharina Hofer, in a study of the political role of Pentecostals in East Africa concluded that ‘*Pentecostalism’s ‘invisible institution’ (its networks of influence) ... which expands into parliaments, administrations and business sectors ... is organised along the lines of established power structures ... (and they) do not forge counter-elites ... They are clientelistic and develop within the same social and political structures as the power domains they aspire to*’<sup>63</sup>. This is all too reminiscent of the white wings of the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa that became absorbed into the circle of structures that backed the government, consequently dividing the Reformed churches. One can anticipate similar divisions appearing in the Pentecostal movement if some of the churches are drawn into party politics in South Africa. .

Political activism by the Pentecostal churches or any other church in South Africa will be more effective and less dangerous for the values of the churches and their cohesion if it is channelled indirectly, through community agencies or even simply in coherent independent political preferences exercised by congregants.

In respect of engagement with **development** one has to be equally cautious. We have to take the conclusion reached by Balcolm on page 32, section 5, that the Pentecostal church in South Africa ‘lacks any tradition of social and political engagement ... (and also has)

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little engagement with the broader faith'. The inconsistency of survey responses in respect of development issues confirms Balcolm's conclusion. The main thrust of Pentecostal activity in this regard would seem to be within the congregations. Caution would be indicated for other reasons as well. South Africa has a veritable phalanx of state and state-linked development agencies with a propensity to absorb independent initiatives or to act as gatekeepers in granting access to resources and even to established networks in local areas. We will return to possibilities of engagement in development initiatives, however.

Another cause for caution is the possible erosion of the present intensity of religious commitment -- the process of the routinisation of charisma, already referred to. Pentecostalism might follow the same course as Methodism, which saw an eventual loss of activist momentum in England and the USA, with the congregants remaining socially influential but in a much more diffuse way.

Closer to home, for several decades many people, including this author who detected promising signs as early as the fifties, expected the African Independent Churches to come to the fore playing an active, organised role in community mobilisation for development. It has never really happened. But our own survey results showed a lower level of unemployment relative to educational attainment among the African Independent Churches. This modest achievement has existed for decades although they are still dirt poor, employed or not. Their influence on the social fabric has been positive nonetheless.

These qualifications and cautions notwithstanding, we are optimistic about the impact of Pentecostalism on social life and development in South Africa. We have various reasons for this optimism that we may state or restate as follows.

Firstly there is the morality and life orientation of the typical congregants revealed in our research. These results broadly confirmed Peter Berger's depiction of the Calvinist social character set out to frame his review of Pentecostalism in Latin America, which we repeat: 'This worldly asceticism ... A disciplined attitude to work, an equally disciplined attitude to other spheres of life, a deferral of instant consumption ... savings, eventually capital accumulation and social mobility'<sup>64</sup>. Our results showed this is more or less applicable to other denominations as well, including mainstream churches, but the fact that the consequences of Calvinism have become generalised beyond the Reformed Churches does not detract from its importance in the Pentecostal context.

Second, there is another feature of our results that may be as powerful a basis for optimism in respect of the Pentecostal movement and development as the previous features. This refers to inadvertent effects of faith that can often be more salient than organised goal-seeking activity. In the study in Hout Bay, Schlemmer and Monica Bot concluded of the Pentecostals that '*it is almost as if their emotional rejection of worldly concerns relaxes them and releases energy for the same worldly matters, precisely **because these things mean so little to them.***' In other words, the relaxed and patient approach to work and life that so many Pentecostals reported may make them more effective as individuals in responding to challenges. Perhaps it is this quality of motivation that has produced the

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remarkable upward shift in lifestyle (LSM) scores among Pentecostals that we reported in an earlier section.

Third, yet another factor, noted by David Martin in his review of the movement, is that Pentecostalism ‘works by constant adjustment on the ground ... (it) belongs by nature to open markets ...’<sup>65</sup> This entrepreneurial feature of the movement that has been noted in various ways in our research implies a mode of response among pastors in the churches that is likely to have underlying effects on the mindsets of congregants that will incline them not to moral flexibility but to strategic adaptability, with obvious implications for development.

This entrepreneurial quality of the Pentecostal, that Martin also calls ‘voluntaristic and competitive pluralism’ will to a degree allow the movement to renew itself continuously, protecting it from formalisation and operational conservatism that Weber noted in religious denominations in general (see earlier discussion on Weber’s ‘routinisation of charisma’).

Fourthly, development assumes that social decay and debilitating aspects of community life be countered, and the Pentecostal moral discipline that we have pervasively recorded in our findings promises this. Peter Berger describes the effect in a compelling way:

As long as the individual can indeed find meaning and identity in his private life, he can manage to put up with the meaningless and dis-identifying world of the mega structures. ... The situation becomes intolerable if ‘home’, that refuge of stability and value in an alien world, ceases to be such a refuge – when, say, my wife leaves me, my children take on life styles that are strange and unacceptable to me, my church becomes incomprehensible, my neighbourhood becomes a place of danger, and so on.<sup>66</sup>

Pentecostalism, and other denominations, as our findings show, has indeed protected the family, the home and the personal spheres of (growing) millions of people by ensuring harmony and protecting the personal space from stress. Growing segments of the population will at least be sealed off from the effects of the serious socio-economic alienation in South Africa that we discussed in the first section.

Hence Pentecostalism reveals promising signs of a positive role in development. We still cannot be sure that this role will materialise on a scale significant enough to erode the constant social reinforcement of poverty among our under-classes. Pentecostals are likely to have greatest effect if they are able to extend an existing mode of influence into a wider propagation of goals and targets in our democracy and economic patterns at community-level. Alan Aldridge has noted one of the most powerful effects of Pentecostal activity is where it is able to impose its own definition of a situation in its spheres of activity and interaction<sup>67</sup>. The problem in South Africa is that despite large Pentecostal numbers, their definitions of situations and challenges are largely unknown within local politics or organised development activity.

This raises the issue of the relative seclusion (not withdrawal) of Pentecostal churches from public debate on community issues. Pastors do speak out and at times intervene in community matters, but those that do are usually in the larger churches with a public profile. The community churches that are closest to the real needs have almost no profile at all. Furthermore, the media exposure of a coordinating body, the Evangelical Alliance of South Africa is minimal and it is not well known for raising issues for public debate very consistently.

This means that the messages that could be important are lost to the general public and decision makers. One can understand that a public role comparable, say, to that of the Anglican Church, is not the preferred mode of interaction of Pentecostals. Furthermore, they do have the problem that Martin mentioned for the USA that they do not have the status of the mainstream churches and this makes it difficult to penetrate the media. It is probably up to the media to do something about this rather than the Pentecostal churches themselves. Fortunately the newspapers, particularly the Afrikaans press, are improving their coverage of local religious activity, mainly because they have realised that public interest in religion outstrips most other topics for readers.

One of the strengths of the prosperity churches in mobilising the energies of congregants for commercial and occupational success is unfortunately one of the more controversial aspects of Pentecostalism, as we have pointed out and as the churches themselves have admitted. This image would make it difficult for the movement as a whole to cooperate with the ecumenical agencies of the mainstream churches in any public action. Pastor Moss Ntlha, general secretary of the Evangelical Alliance has himself expressed concern in this regard that we have already quoted<sup>68</sup>. In any case some key aspects of the potential contribution of the Pentecostal churches might be overshadowed by the much greater public profile of heavyweights in the mainstream churches and the more politicised approaches that characterise mainstream ecumenical agencies. Another danger is that the particular quality, passion and flavour of the Pentecostal churches and their congregations might be obscured.

### **Final thoughts on the potential of Pentecostalism: possibilities emerging**

As researchers who are not at all involved in the Pentecostal movement, we have reflected on our finding and would like to see a more public role for the movement in interaction with civil society and community level development initiatives. We share the conviction expressed in Mr. Tony Blair's Commission for Africa that nationalism, and the various adapted forms of socialism that Africa has produced have exhausted their utility as frameworks for progress and as inspirations for development that will make a difference to populations at large<sup>69</sup>. We agree that there is in the social fabric of Africa a vacuum that religion can fill.

The spectacular growth of the Pentecostal movement in Africa and in South Africa, and the increasing prominence of the movement in missionary outreach might be expected to

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begin to fill this vacuum, but will they? Churches are prominent in peacekeeping in Africa and in crises of famine and human rights, but as yet we are not convinced that the churches have been able to put their stamp prominently enough on development initiatives of an ongoing kind. A further step needs to be taken.

Our results in this study and those of others very clearly reflect the fact that the Pentecostal churches, in their modes of religious and pastoral organisation and in the spiritual, moral and social capital of their congregations, have a massive contribution to make to bridge South Africa's divide between its first and second economies. We are also convinced that there exists no more effective counter to the self-reinforcing alienation of the poorest people than that which faith offers its congregations.

We may be sure of our conclusions, but notwithstanding the growth of the movement, we are not sure that the Pentecostal churches will respond to the challenge. This is not an indictment – it arises from the simple and perfectly understandable fact that pastors and congregations have an intensity of involvement with their faith and pastoral work that displaces strategy for development and intervention. This concern has to be debated with the churches themselves – possibly our concerns are unwarranted, and there may also be more community outreach activity than we are aware of. However, if it indeed were to be the case that strategic intervention is not part of the menu of faith, perhaps some facilitation would not be out of order.

Churches have a role in welfare provision but welfare has become so bureaucratically entangled that churches might not wish to participate, and welfare is not in the spirit of the Pentecostal development ethic in any event. We would rather see an involvement for interested congregations or church groupings around the challenge of community level job creation and self-reliance. The practice of Pentecostal congregants becoming involved in the organisational structure of their churches equips them with organisational, human and administrative skills that would be very useful in the field of micro-business development or cooperative production, for example. How might this involvement occur?

Both government (local, provincial or central), and the corporate sector in its social investment programmes, might consider that the resources and expertise for community level and small entrepreneurial development that they bring to bear can be significantly enhanced by working with community congregations like those of the Pentecostal churches.

For example, if material and strategic cooperation between relevant government agencies, corporate business and a volunteer panel of the Pentecostal churches could be established, could the churches collectively not nominate experienced people from their ranks to be trained as facilitators and trainers on community-level programmes, to be funded by the government agencies and/or corporations? Both government and corporations might find that the success of their ongoing activity in the field can be significantly enhanced. This suggestion is deliberately vague because the detail and thrust of any initiative must be planned cooperatively.

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To consider this and other possibilities for a more proactive role in development for the Pentecostal churches we might suggest that a consultative group from the churches be established. We would be happy to contribute our insights from this study for consideration.

Another need is for more prominent media exposure for the Pentecostal churches that would enable them to have a greater impact on the ways in which the prominent actors in society think about development. The South African mainstream print media are good in that they carry a variety of viewpoints but nonetheless the content tends to be concentrated on corporate activity, inputs of mainstream economists, party political inputs and range of alternative or dissenting views that are either fashionably post-modern or adapted socialist protest. The mix is gratifying, but a *non-politicised* spiritual dimension is missing. We believe that the public intellectual life of South Africa would be enriched if, for example, the Pentecostal churches were to establish a communications panel that could respond to situations that arise or perhaps if individual churches were to be invited to prepare statements or reactions to events that move them, and that the communication panel simply conveys these to the media. This latter possibility would in any event be in the pluralistic mode for which the Pentecostal churches are well known.

Finally, in the medium term a situation could very easily arise in which South Africa's 'civil society' and voluntary sectors, including the churches, will be called upon to play a key role in mediating tensions and combating disintegrative tendencies in the country. Secular civil society may be least able to play this role, since significant parts of it are bound into partisan organisations of various kinds. The churches have played this role in the past and a time may come when the role has to be repeated, hopefully with less intrusion from highly ideological sources, both right and left. Ultimately, the largest challenge that South Africa faces is the integration of the socio-economically divided and alienated sectors of our economy and society, and of all the denominations, the Pentecostal churches are probably best able to reach out into the displaced world of South Africa's marginalized communities.

For the rest, the Pentecostal churches should go on doing what they are already doing so well – protecting the social fabric from further decay and giving people who are otherwise sidelined in our society, a sense of purpose and mission. What they deserve, however, is more recognition from major role-players in our society that they, the churches, have a role where grandiose policy has failed.

## **APPENDIX 1: BACKGROUND RESEARCH REPORTS**

- Tony Balcomb, 2005, Interviews with South African Pentecostal pastors and leaders – Analysis and Impressions.
- Phil Bonner, Tshepo Moloi & Godfrey Dlulane, 2004, Faith for Development: Provisional report on Pentecostal churches in Tembisa and Katlehong.
- Timothy Clynick & Tshepo Moloi, 2006, Anointed for business: South African 'new' Pentecostals in the marketplace.
- William Domeris, 1999, The church and the spirit of entrepreneurship: A study of selected Christian communities in South Africa.
- William R Domeris & Paul Germond, 2006, Pentecostal/Charismatic Christianity– A South African Survey.
- Paul Germond & Steven de Gruchy, 2001, Review of the literature on the social contribution of African- initiated churches (African Independent Churches) in South Africa.
- Riaan Ingram, Hudson Mathebula, Lehasa Mokoena & Attie van Niekerk, 2004, The impact of Pentecostalism on society, with special reference to their impact on black economic empowerment, Witbank, a case study.
- Riaan Ingram, 2006, The Social, Economic, Politic and Personal Potential of Pentecostalism.
- Lawrence Schlemmer & Monica Bot, 2004, Faith, Social Consciousness and progress: a case study of members of the Pentecostal, African Zionist and other churches in Hout Bay, South Africa.
- Lawrence Schlemmer, 2006, The wider impact of Faith: An investigation among members of Pentecostal and other denominations in Gauteng.
- Attie van Niekerk, Montagu Murray & Lehasa Mokoena, 2006, Views of Politicians and Social Activists from a Charismatic and Pentecostal background.

## ENDNOTES

- 1 Emile Durkheim (1915) *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, London. Allen and Unwin
- 2 Frank Parkin (1992) *Durkheim*, Oxford. Oxford University Press
- 3 See South African Institute of Race Relations (2005) *Fast Facts*, Johannesburg, September
- 4 UNDP Human Development Reports, 1995 onwards.
- 5 David Apter (1987) *Rethinking development: modernization, dependency and post-modern politics*, Newbury Park. Sage, chapter 10.
- 6 A record compiled by an Institute for Development Studies at the University of the Free State, presented on SABC Afrikaans morning radio on September 26, 2007
- 7 This has been repeatedly demonstrated by the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM), which shows South Africa as below the median among countries in terms of early entrepreneurial activity; see the GEM South Africa Report, 2006, UCT Centre for Innovation and Entrepreneurship, in which South Africa is ranked 30<sup>th</sup> out of 42 countries.
- 8 Finmark Trust (2006) *Finscope Small Business Survey Report Gauteng 2006*, Johannesburg. The survey was based on a representative sample of 2001 small entrepreneurs.
- 9 Including PL Berger (1967) *The Sacred Canopy: Elements of a sociological theory of religion*. New York: Doubleday, and (1971) *A Rumour of Angels: Modern society and the rediscovery of the supernatural*. Harmondsworth, Penguin.
- 10 Peter Berger (2004) 'Max Weber is alive and well and living in Guatemala: the Protestant Ethic today', paper prepared for a conference on the norms, beliefs and institutions of 21<sup>st</sup> century capitalism: Celebrating Max Weber's the Protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism, Ithaca, New York, 8 October.
- 11 David Martin (2002) *Pentecostalism: The World Their Parish*, Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, chapter 8.
- 12 Stats SA, population census 2001
- 13 Tim du Plessis in *Rapport*, June 24, 2007
- 14 Peter Berger in 'Max Weber is alive and well and living in Guatemala', p3. See earlier full reference
- 15 Stats SA, 2001 Census
- 16 See a very perceptive article on the complex and easily misunderstood political stances of the African Independent church by Anthony Butler in *Business Day*, September 17, 2007.
- 17 Stats SA, 2001 Census
- 18 Ams survey 2003 b
- 19 Ams survey 2003 b
- 20 Max Weber (1922/1968) *Economy and Society: an Outline of Interpretive Sociology*, New York: Bedminster Press.
- 21 In Bryan Wilson and J Cresswell (eds) (1999) *New Religious Movements: Challenge and Response*, London: Routledge.

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- 22 Roy Wallis (1984) *The Elementary Forms of the New Religious Life*, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul
- 23 The argument is lucidly set out in Peter Berger, *Max Weber is alive and well and living in Guatemala: The Protestant ethic today*, Paper prepared for conference, The norms, beliefs, and institutions of 21st-century capitalism: Celebrating Max Weber's the Protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism, Ithaca, NY, 8 October 2004
- 24 Note: from here on this section closely follows Dr. Stephen Rule's review of inputs to the project.
- 25 Peter Berger, *Max Weber is alive and well and living in Guatemala: The Protestant ethic today*, Paper prepared for conference, The norms, beliefs, and institutions of 21st-century capitalism: Celebrating Max Weber's the Protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism, Ithaca, NY, 8 October 2004
- 26 Timothy Samuel Shah, *Evangelical politics in the third world: What's next for the 'next Christendom'?*, *The Brandywine review of faith and international affairs*, Fall 2003, pp 21-30
- 27 Berger, *Max Weber*, p 4.
- 28 Berger, *Max Weber*, p 4
- 29 Berger, *Max Weber*
- 30 Berger, *Max Weber*
- 31 Harvey Cox quoted in Gifford, *Pentecostalism*
- 32 Gifford, *Pentecostalism*
- 33 David Martin, *Tongues of fire: The explosion of Protestantism in Latin America*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990, p 278
- 34 Paul Gifford, *Pentecostalism and public life*, Keynote presentation: Pentecostal-civil society dialogue, October 18 2004, Lagos, Nigeria.
- 35 Martin, *Tongues*, p 284
- 36 Martin, *Tongues*, p 218
- 37 Martin, *Tongues*, pp 231-232
- 38 Stats SA, 2001 Census
- 39 *Statistics SA, Census 1996 & Census 2001*
- 40 Allan Anderson (1992) *Bazalwane: African Pentecostals in South Africa*, UNISA: Pretoria, 1992
- 41 The financial assistance of the Pew Foundation in the USA is gratefully acknowledged
- 42 Tony Balcomb, with the intention of discerning the basic message of Pentecostal and Charismatic (Pentecostal) churches. This includes how they understand themselves in relation to the Christian mission in general and in South African society in particular, how they structure and embody themselves organisationally, and the sorts of interventions they are making into their communities. The study comprises an analysis of interviews conducted between September and November 2005 with 30 Pentecostal pastors based in the Johannesburg and Durban areas.
- 43 Hout Bay sample was 120 comprising 62 Africans and 58 so-called coloureds. It was a quota-controlled sample drawn from a random selection of churches.

## ENDNOTES

- 44 The Gauteng sample was a stratified random area-based sample of Gauteng households, but with a 'snowball' to strengthen numbers of members of 'non-classical' Pentecostal churches. Because the snowball cases were selected around random starting points they are also as representative of the population of Pentecostals in Gauteng as was possible to achieve under the circumstances. The final size of the sample was: 206 black people in dominantly black areas; 144 minorities and a small handful of blacks families in largely middle class 'suburbs'; TOTAL 350.
- 45 Ingram et al. Sample was a quota controlled sample of 75 people of all races in all major divisions of the Pentecostal churches.
- 46 Occupational level was not included because so many female respondents were unemployed or in ad hoc employment
- 47 Members of the new Pentecostal churches were deliberately over-represented
- 48 This pattern was also found in the unstructured narrative interviews of Ingram, in which AIDS was discussed in most, but not all, interviews. As the interviewers used an ad hoc, unstructured approach to elicit cooperation and honesty, there were no specific questions on AIDS or any other issue that were asked in all interviews.
- 49 SA Advertising Research Foundation, 2003, Amps survey 2003 b
- 50 World Christian Encyclopaedia (2001), World Christian Database (2006) quoted in Pewforum website (2007).
- 51 *Statistics SA, Census 1996 & Census 2001*
- 52 Walter J Hollenweger quotes Niebuhr on the '... spontaneous form of worship, quite often of a primitive kind' (1972) *The Pentecostals*, London. SCM Press
- 53 Nomavenda Mathiane writing in Mail and Guardian, 11-17 November 2005.
- 54 Quoted by Anastasia de Vries in Rapport, September 19, 2004.
- 55 Sunday Times: Insight, March 27, 2005.
- 56 Rapport, September 19, 2004
- 57 Moss Ntlha in Business Report, March 19, 2006
- 58 Quoted by Anastasia de Vries in Rapport, September 19, 2004
- 59 David Martin (2002) *Pentecostalism: the World Their Parish*, Oxford. Blackwells
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