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RELIGIOUS ENTREPRENEURS IN GHANA

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This chapter is concerned with the relationship between entrepreneurship and religion.[1] It examines the making of Pentecostal churches and pastoral careers as a form of entrepreneurship and discusses what the religious dimension adds to our understanding of how entrepreneurship unfolds in Africa today. The chapter analyses in particular how striving for and attaining social and economic aspirations can be fulfilled through a pastoral career in Pentecostal churches in Ghana. What is remarkable is that young men and women are able to 'become someone' in society, achieve status and accumulate wealth through the making of pastoral careers in a general context where the possibilities for social rise are constrained.

The argument is that there is a strong link between religious entrepreneurship and social mobility, and that religious entrepreneurs draw on local categories of status and wealth that are recognized widely in society. Pastors are entrepreneurial when making their careers, and at the same time they depend on relations with senior people (e.g. through relations of apprenticeship). The point is that becoming a pastor is not only about creating a church or making a career, but also about how this form of entrepreneurship is recognized and how it resonates with other forms of attaining social status and ascending social hierarchies. I am concerned with how pastorship is created as a form of entrepreneurship and with how becoming a pastor is a way to "become someone" in society.

Pastoral career making involves processes of invention and creativity as well as processes of imitation and reproduction. Pentecostal pastors are creative when establishing their careers and founding new churches. They transcend social hierarchies (aged-based, professional), invent new

ways of being pastors, adapt the message of the Bible to the situation of their members (e.g. through their strong focus on success and wealth), create rules, and seek to establish a loyal church membership. Many also invest resources acquired through other activities in the making of new churches. Pentecostal pastors are particularly creative in their use of various media and when staging themselves as *new figures of success* (Banégas & Warnier 2001). That said, pastors also depend on social relations when constructing their careers, becoming involved in relations of apprenticeship and drawing on the legitimacy and charisma of senior pastors. They also draw on the past in the sense that the religious categories they invoke resonate within an already existing frame of reference.

Studies of entrepreneurs and entrepreneurship in Africa have traditionally focused on the economic sector (both formal and informal) (e.g Hart 1970; Jalloh 2007; MacGaffey 2002). Some have emphasized the role of social relations, kinship and migration networks, as well as traditional institutions in the development of new forms of capital accumulation. Anthropological studies have drawn attention to forms of entrepreneurship that unfold in cultural, social and political spheres and outside the business sector itself (Andrieu 2009; Fourchard et al. 2005; Banégas & Warnier 2001).

In this literature, however, entrepreneurship as a concept often remains undefined and implicit. The term is often used in cases where people or activities are unconventional or break with social norms. Also, entrepreneurship is thought of as occurring in times of crises and as being associated with a specific set of values. Hence, it is seen as the capacity to survive and even accumulate capital in such circumstances (MacGaffey 2002: 332; Saint-Lary 2009).

My approach to entrepreneurship lies within the broad anthropological understanding of the term. I take into consideration both recent expressions of entrepreneurship, but also acknowledge how these practices and ideas recapitulate already existing social categories, for instance the accumulation and redistribution of wealth. I see this approach as aligned with studies of social aspiration and social innovation (Barber 2006). I see creativity and inventiveness as part of social life more broadly, and not, as is commonly assumed, as based on individualism and contexts of crises. I am inspired by the approach of Ingold and Hallam (2007) on creativity and cultural improvisation.[2] They question the understanding of creativity as being necessarily linked

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[2] Although the authors do not deal specifically with entrepreneurship, their unpacking of the concepts of creativity and improvisation is relevant for the present chapter, as creativity is thought of as a central characteristic of entrepreneurship.

to the production of something new (as opposed to the reproduction and adaptation of something already existing) and write:

> anthropology can best contribute to debates around creativity by challenging – rather than reproducing – the polarity between novelty and convention, or between the innovative dynamic of the present and the traditionalism of the past, that has long formed such a powerful undercurrent to the discourses of modernity (Ingold & Hallam 2007: 2).

They suggest that improvisation as a concept (rather than innovation) better reflects the attempt to transcend the dichotomy between novelty and tradition, because improvisation alludes to the processes of cultural and social adaptation and re-making (which are also creative processes), whereas the term innovation is concerned with new products and end-results (ibid.).[3] They emphasize that creativity is relational, and challenge the idea of creativity as an individual skill.

This line of thinking fits well with the overall argument of this chapter, namely that Pentecostal pastors are making careers and churches in a way that echoes the past and has significance within a wider social field. A number of scholars have emphasized the importance of social networks when engaging in entrepreneurial activities. MacGaffey (2002: 342), for instance, stresses the importance of personal relationships and kin obligations for the success of individual entrepreneurs in retail trade. However, the above point is different and further-reaching as it alludes not only to how entrepreneurial practices are carried out, but also to the more substantial issue of what creativity means and how it comes about. 'Relational' in the present case refers both to the importance of social relationships in carrying out certain activities and to the acknowledgement of the role of the social surroundings in making sense of these practices and the ideas that underpin them.

In the rest of the chapter I will briefly discuss the link between entrepreneurship and religion, and present the Ghanaian context in particular with regard to studies of entrepreneurship and a changing religious landscape. I will focus more specifically on an analysis of the making of Pentecostal pastoral careers and churches, and pastorship as a field of investment.

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[3] Ingold and Hallam have an interesting point on innovation (as a concept) being a backward reading of society, because the focus is on innovation as 'liberation from the constraints of a world that is already made' (Ingold & Hallam, 2007: 3). Whereas creativity, understood as improvisation, is seen as a set of processes of adaptation to a world in the making. In other words the term improvisation implies a more processual reading of creativity.

Entrepreneurship, Ethics, and Religion

The affinity between religion and economic strategies and rationalities is of central concern. The debate around this question is influenced by Weber's work on the protestant ethic and the rise of capitalism in Europe (Weber 2001 [1930]). Weber took interest in how religious ideas work in conjunction with a specific socio-political context in a way that leads to social transformation (Lambek 2002: 51). In an African context, the rapid growth of Pentecostalism has sparked renewed interest in this question (e.g. Comaroff & Comaroff 2003; Gifford & Nogueira-Godsay 2011; Meagher 2009; Meyer 2004). One strand of this literature understands the rise of the neo-Pentecostal movement as a response to the changing nature of capitalism and to the spread of a neo-liberal ethic. The Comaroffs' writing on the conjuncture between the rise of millennial capitalism and the increasing occurrence of occult economies is an example of this. Their main argument lies in seeing a new protestant ethic as a response to a new spirit of capitalism where spiritual rewards come instantly and take the form of material wealth (2003). This frame of explanation accentuates the irrational and the occult as responses to life conditions marked by lack, loss and disempowerment as well as to forces of global capitalism. And, as Coleman points out, this line of analysis seeks rational explanations as to *why* rather than trying to understand 'how Faith practices articulate the connections between "religious" and "economic" spheres of activity' (2011: 33).

In her work on Pentecostalism in Nigeria, Marshall takes religion 'as a site of action, invested in and appropriated by believers' (2009: 22), thus not viewing the Pentecostal movement as a response. However, when analysing ethics (the prosperity doctrine) she tends to see the Pentecostal ethic as a system of ideas that is isolated from other ideological frameworks and hence to dismiss its historical appropriation and embeddedness. On a different note, Meagher draws attention to the Nigerian informal economy where 'religious movements have given rise to distinctly Weberian "modernising tendencies"' (2009: 420). She also argues that these tendencies, to some degree, are undermined by religious entrepreneurs that seek to maximize their own benefit. By doing so, the Weberian rationalities and modernising tendencies are diminished. Whereas Meagher is concerned with the role of religion in the economic sector itself, I am more preoccupied with the social and economic processes taking place in the religious sector.

What I find useful about a Weberian approach with regard to entrepreneurship and religion in Africa is not so much his thesis that there is an affinity between a specific protestant ethic and capitalist economic behaviour, but rather the adoption of a more open and explorative approach

with respect to how certain sets of ideas and values become effective forces in history and how they are drawn upon in relation to social and economic activities. I am therefore not interested in discussing whether a certain set of religious ideas are conducive to economic development or are responses to new forms of capitalism. I am interested in looking into how pastoral career making draws on local understandings of wealth and status and in particular on the processes of improvisation that are part of this.

The Ghanaian Context

There is an important scholarship on entrepreneurs and strategies of capital accumulation in a Ghanaian context. Hart (1970, 1973) has drawn attention to the group of informal small-scale entrepreneurs. He points out that small-scale entrepreneurs contribute substantially to the Ghanaian economy, but also that they cannot be perceived as typical business men. They are rather 'anyone who controls the management of capital which he has invested in some enterprise in order to realize profit' (Hart 1970: 107). Often these entrepreneurs are 'part-time entrepreneurs' meaning that they have very diversified interests and are involved in a number of activities at the same time, e.g. a university lecturer investing in a small business. What is interesting about this perspective is that the focus is on activities rather than on a specific category of people, and that entrepreneurial activities are not seen as restricted to one field, but that they criss-cross several fields of activities.

In her earlier study of migrant cocoa-farmers, Hill (1997 [1963]) shows how the cocoa-farmers are 'remarkably responsive to economic incentives' (ibid.: 3) and 'capitalist' in the sense that they pursue economic interests and the accumulation of capital. Moreover, she underlines that both ideas and institutions were flexible and adapted to the economic situation. As Austin points out in the introduction to a reprint of Hill's classic book: 'her usage [of the term capitalist] was close to a common understanding of the word "entrepreneur": connoting risk-taking, long-sighted, and innovative (at least in adoptive and adaptive senses: the exotic crop, the modified institutions)' (Austin 1997: xviii). Likewise, Hill's use of the term 'capitalist' alludes to specific values and economic rational behaviour and not to specific structural relations between employer and employee (*ibid.*). What is useful about Hill's approach for the present analysis is the insistence on existing institutions as being flexible and conducive to undertaking entrepreneurial activities.

Another historic group of entrepreneurs were the so-called *akonkofoɔ* (businessmen in the early colonial period), who challenged prevailing ideas and norms on the consumption and recognition of wealth in Asante[4] (Arhin (1976/77, 1986). In pre-colonial Asante there was strict social control on the redistribution and consumption of wealth. The Asante state controlled accumulation and access to wealth (McCaskie 1995). Wealth was considered to be for the benefit of the community rather than of the individual. A wealthy person's ability to reach equilibrium between accumulating for himself and the community was central in terms of legitimizing the wealth and the authority that followed on being a 'big man' (*ɔbirɛmpɔn*) (McCaskie 1983). In the beginning of the twentieth century, with a changing economic context due to the introduction of a cash-based economy and a boom in commercial cocoa production, the *akonkofoɔ* managed to escape the moral constraints attached to accumulating wealth (McCaskie 1986, 2000). They insisted on accumulation for personal consumption and were against the taxes that had been imposed by the Asante state. Moreover, they were modern versions of the pre-colonial 'big man' in the sense that they adapted the social norms attached to the social position of being a 'big man'. Wealth was still a sign of social standing, and the public display of it was a central element in the recognition of this position (McCaskie 1986).

Allman and Parker (2005) touch upon the link between religion and entrepreneurism in their work on *Tongnaab* (a god and ancestor shrine from north-eastern Ghana). They show how this shrine was taken from the Northern Territories to colonial Asante and the Gold Coast by 'ritual entrepreneurs'. They emphasise the flexibility of the shrine and how it was adapted to new regional contexts. The religious entrepreneurs offered protection against witchcraft, which was in increasing demand in times of growing economic activities, easier access to wealth and social instability (due to colonialization) (2005: 128-129). Rituals for spiritual protection were commercialized, based on the understanding that people needed protection against witchcraft (*bayi*). However, the initiators of anti-witchcraft cults were not the only religious entrepreneurs in colonial times. There were a number of prophets (such as Sampson Oppong and Wade Harris) who travelled around the country and succeeded in converting many people to the established Christian churches, again with the underlying aim of providing protection against witchcraft. As Allman and Parker underline, 'the spectrum of innovative ritual responses to the threat of *bayi*

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[4] Asante refers to a pre-colonial kingdom located in central Ghana. I did most of my fieldwork in and around Kumasi, which was the center of the historic kingdom of Asante.

ranged from exotic savannah deities through growing numbers of itinerant Christian preachers and indigenous prophetic churches' (2005: 136).

More recently, accumulation of wealth, entrepreneurship and religion have been linked to the fast-growing Pentecostal sector within Ghanaian Christianity. In Ghana, as well as in other African countries, Pentecostalism has grown significantly over the last three decades, especially the so-called neo-Pentecostal churches.[5] This particular strand of Protestant Christianity has developed from a missionary import that valued ascetics and a strong belief in the afterlife to its more recent version as independent churches that focus much more on success and wealth in this life (Asamoah-Gyadu 2005a; Gifford 2004; Maxwell 2006; Meyer 2004). These churches include both a huge number of small and independent churches, as well as a number of so-called mega-churches that in many ways resemble large business corporations.

One of the characteristics of the neo-Pentecostal churches is their apparent flat and flexible organisational structure that is little formalized and where church members and lay people have easy access to positions of responsibility and leadership. This has been termed 'the democratisation of charisma,' which implies that ordinary church members are understood to have direct access to God without mediation by a pastor (Asamoah-Gyadu 2005a). At the same time, though, these churches are organised around one pastor (founder and leader) who has a number of junior pastors below him or her. In Ghana they are commonly known as 'one-man churches' and the influence, status and spiritual power of these pastors is one of the most dominant features of the neo-Pentecostal churches (Gifford 2004; Maxwell 2006; Meyer 2005). In many instances the name of a pastor is a stronger brand than the name of a church, indicating that the pastor represents a personification of spiritual power. It is through contact (both physical - by the laying-on of hands - and social) that the pastor mediates spiritual power. Spiritual power is believed to be essential for obtaining success in e.g. doing business, education and being protected from evil forces. This role as a mediator between the spiritual and the material world gives the pastor a powerful position in society (Asamoah-Gyadu 2005b). There are parallels between the role played by prophets in the spiritual churches, traditional diviners and the neo-Pentecostal pastors. In their role as religious experts they draw on their access to the divine in the

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[5] Pentecostal Christianity in Ghana can be divided into different groups. The first group - the classical Pentecostal churches - was established mainly by foreign missionaries in the first half of the twentieth century and includes churches like the Assemblies of God and the Church of Pentecost. The second group is the neo-Pentecostal churches that have been on the rise in the last three decades. These churches span from larger mega-churches to small 'one-man' churches that meet in classrooms and garages. Here I deal with the latter group of churches and mostly with the small and middle-sized ones.

provision of religious services (Asamoah-Gyadu 2005b). More generally, Christianity has played a huge social and cultural role in southern Ghana and in Asante since the beginning of the twentieth century. This aspect of the Ghanaian context has obviously also prepared the ground for the proliferation of Pentecostal churches and pastors.

Pastoral careers have to be understood both in relation to the historical role of religious entrepreneurs and experts, but also in the context of the more recent socio-economic situation. The rise of many neo-Pentecostal churches occurred at a time of economic decline and political instability (in the 1980s). During the 1990s Ghana underwent structural adjustment programmes and a liberalization of the economy. This meant a decline in employment opportunities in the public sector and consequently also access to a common way to achieve social mobility (which had for long been associated with education, diplomas and employment as a civil servant) (Osei 2004). At the same time, and with the more open and plural public sphere, new ways of social ascension were emerging. Founding a church thus represents a new way of becoming important in society, or becoming a new figure of success as Banégas and Warnier (2001) have pointed out. Pastors, movie stars, football players and musicians are new types of popular leaders that accumulate wealth and gain power in ways that are different from the more traditional and well-established power structures (Marshall-Fratani 2001: 27).

Pastorship as Entrepreneurship

The most well-known Ghanaian Pentecostal pastors (such as Mensa Otabil, Nicholas Duncan Williams, and Dag Heward-Mills) are known as charismatic, flamboyant, rich, influential and highly visible in public space (De Witte 2003; Gifford 2004). In addition to these top pastors, there is a large group of pastors who are either associate pastors (serving one of the big pastors) or founders of smaller independent neo-Pentecostal churches. This group of pastors can be compared to other middle-level social actors, a 'mobile, entrepreneurial, urban-oriented, aspiring strata' (Barber 2000: 2). In this chapter, I focus on this level of entrepreneurial pastors that aspire to religious leadership.[6] They create their pastoral careers through personal relations, by claiming

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[6] The following is based on interviews and informal conversations with thirty-seven pastors [thirty-two men and five women]. The pastors had either been employed prior to becoming pastors or engaged in pastoral careers straight after leaving school. Most pastors had some formal education and had finished secondary school. A third had left secondary school after the first level and in this group unemployment is generally high. Half of the pastors I talked to had been either to university or a technical school. Some had had public sector employment before entering into pastorship and had left

access to spiritual power and through the creation of new churches. The way in which they do this is entrepreneurial, the term understood as re-inventing, adapting and imitating already existing practices and cultural categories.[7] These up-and-coming pastors aim, moreover, to attain more status; they are socially mobile and invest dedication and resources to achieve their ambitions (Lauterbach 2010). With regard to their background or family relations, they do not belong to the highly educated elite, nor do they occupy political power positions within their home communities or extended families. Many have attended primary and secondary school and some qualify as 'early school leavers'. Some of the pastors have been involved in small business activities (shops, trading) and some have been employed as e.g. teachers and accountants, but have left these careers to become full-time pastors (cf. below). It should be noted, however, that not all pastors aspire to religious leadership. Some pastors work as part-time or associate pastors and pursue other pathways to generate income (e.g. farming, doing business, and education). Still, the status as pastor conveys standing and recognition.

When doing fieldwork among smaller neo-Pentecostal churches in Kumasi I was astonished by the enthusiasm and eagerness with which young pastors created new churches. Many had been part of larger churches and had served under a senior pastor. But they all had ambitions of creating their own churches and of becoming a 'big man of God'. Some of these young people had little financial means, but they still managed to make churches in classrooms, garages and storerooms. Some invested money from business activities, some got support from family members, and others again relied on acquaintances abroad and whatever they could collect from a few church members. Their paths were not straightforward. They explored different ways of becoming a pastor, belonged temporarily to several churches, moved in and out of churches, some failed and some eventually managed to create a church of their own. They were flexible and creative in their endeavour to become pastors.

At the same time, these pastors were largely involved in and dependant on relationships with senior pastors and family members when establishing their careers. This dependency was about

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these jobs to take up a full-time pastoral career. At the same time, though, some were involved in small businesses as a supplement to their pastoral work. Many had been abroad (often as part of their pastoral training) or had aspirations to go abroad.

[7] Interestingly many pastors describe themselves as entrepreneurs. On a church's webpages the pastor is described as follows: 'Reverend Dr Victor Osei is the visionary man of God whom God has used to establish the Family Chapel International. He is an author, entrepreneur and public speaker. He is happily married with 7 children' (http://www.familychapelint.com/#!the-spa, accessed 13 March 2013).

getting both material and moral support, but the social relations also served as a form of recognition of their status as pastor. In this way, there was a tension between autonomy (creating one's own church and career) and dependency (relying on others for support and respect) (Le Meur 2008).

Besides, as indicated in the introductory part of this chapter, pastors engage in processes of imitation and reproduction. They do this in two senses. First, they build on and reformulate already existing social norms and ideas that have a specific resonance in Asante, e.g. concerning wealth, power and the role of religious leaders. When staging themselves as important 'men of God', they draw on a historic understanding of religious experts as persons that mediate between the physical and the spiritual worlds. Also, while accumulating wealth and referring to wealth in church services they build on a broad understanding of wealth that makes sense in that particular context. In other words, when creating new institutions and new positions of power and status, they also introduce and rephrase existing understandings of what it means 'to become someone' in society. This refers to Ingold and Hallam's (2007) point that creativity is not only a process of creating something novel, but also of improvisation. Second, pastors copy what other pastors do: how they comport themselves, how they preach and how they present themselves publicly. As one pastor explained: 'even the way I talk, the way I relate to people, the way I do my things, if you just see him [the senior pastor] you will see a bit of him in me'.[8] Several pastors explained how people thought they resembled a famous pastor in the way they preached. This is seen as a sign of recognition and approval of their status.

The Creation of Pastoral Careers and New Churches

Pastors' ambitions to start their own churches or engage in pastoral careers are often triggered and explained by a vision, a dream or a calling from God. It is seen as a path in life, a destiny which is pre-determined and cannot be refused – refusing it is understood as something that will cause failure in life. A pastoral calling is confirmed by others, and this is a way to prove the genuineness of the calling to the social milieu. A female pastor explains how her call was foreseen by someone else and thereby legitimated:

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[8] Interview, Kumasi, 22 February 2005. This pastor was responsible for a branch of one of Kumasi's biggest neo-Pentecostal churches. At the time of the interview he was thirty-two years old and married. He later established his own church. Apart from being a pastor he was also involved in business activities and travelled a lot to Europe.

> The wife of my head pastor had a vision in 1996 about me. I owned a provision shop with things like soap …. People were coming in their numbers. This means I had something good to offer people. After I was told the vision my husband encouraged me to go to the Bible school to know more about God and how to deal with people.[9]

The fact that it is the wife of the head pastor who had the vision is important as it serves as an acknowledgement of the calling by someone in a high position. It is also interesting that a link is made between being able to perform materially and being able to perform spiritually. This pastor had been successful in her business and this success is perceived as being transferable to her pastoral work. This is explained by her knowledge and skills of how to engage with people and not because she possesses special economic skills or follows a certain economic rationale. She knows the value of personal relationships and 'had something good to offer people', as she says. Many pastors refer to the value of social relationships and networks in the making of their careers, and some argue that social relationships are more important than money. In this sense wealth is understood in a broad sense and as including more than money.

Another important aspect of how younger people become engaged in pastoral careers is the prospect of how fast they can rise in the hierarchy and become recognised as pastors. The smaller and more informal the churches are, the easier it is for aspiring pastors to fulfil their ambitions of becoming someone. There are two common trajectories. Some young pastors start out by serving under a senior pastor and then move away when they are mature enough to start a church on their own. Others start by joining or forming more informal groups (fellowships or prayer groups) or join newly started churches that do not have a strong leadership. This provides the possibility of obtaining a leadership position at an early stage in their careers. Within the more traditional institutions (family, chieftaincy) there is a strong age-based hierarchy where one rises, for instance, through attaining a certain life stage.

One pastor narrates his pastoral calling and why he left the church of which he was a member:

> It was something I never thought of. It was a sudden thing. I just felt the call deep within me. It tormented me for a long time, but I was stubborn because I didn't like it. The issue is that I didn't like my church, I liked the fellowship more. My church did not encourage young pastors or should I say I could not worship God the way I wanted in the church. They were

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[9] Interview, Kumasi, 1 September 2005. This pastor became a pastor at the age of forty-two. When I met her she was forty-seven years old. She was married to a pastor and had four children. She had been to Bible school. Before becoming a pastor she had a small shop that one of her brothers was now looking after.

old-fashioned. They weren't active. At the fellowship I was a pastor, but in my church I was recognized as a member.[10]

This pastor clearly distinguishes between being recognized as a pastor and being seen as a church member. Junior pastors working in more well-established churches would often complain that they are not allowed to preach and that the roles they are playing are 'backstage' as compared to the senior pastor. They could, for instance, be responsible for certain activities, for leading prayers and for accompanying the head pastor on trips. But they would rarely be given the responsibility of preaching, even if the head pastor was travelling. This indicates that preaching is the stage at which to prove oneself, to prove charisma, to show spiritual power, to prove knowledge of the word of God and to prove the ability to interact strongly with the church membership: in other words the core of being a 'big man of God'.

One pastor, who was originally a part-time pastor in the Methodist church, broke away to establish a church on his own. He explains this act both by visions indicating that he had to move, but also, more indirectly, by internal problems in the church. He accounts:

> […] I went to school, finished the A level and then I had the calling to enter into full-time ministry. Initially we were with the Methodist church, but at a point we had a vision to do something […] I decided to establish this church two years ago. We had some problems in the Methodist church, but it didn't move me to leave. We were praying for the Lord's direction. Through some prophecies and dreams I put it all together and saw the direction so I had to leave […] It was just some internal wrangling. It was like the pastor who came in was a new pastor and when he came he took some group of the leader, so we were divided. Some with him and others against him. It brought a lot of controversies. But really that wasn't why I left. Maybe it was a stepping stone. It made us to think and pray to God for another direction and by his grace we were led to this place.[11]

To move away involves leaving a well-established structure, finding a building, creating a new church membership, as well as making and setting up rules and institutional practices. Newly established pastors move away from their senior pastors in order to affirm their positions as 'men

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[10] Interview, Kumasi, 12 September 2005. This pastor was twenty-five years old when I met him. He was leading a small and newly established church with two other young pastors. Before that, he had been member of a well-established church and a fellowship. He had finished senior high school and had been to Bible school.

[11] Interview, Kumasi, 24 August 2005. When I met this pastor he was thirty-four years old , married and had four children. He has finished high school and holds a diploma in theology. He was born and grew up in Kumasi, but his home town is in the Brong Ahafo region.

of God' and this is often their only possibility for growing and reaching the level of being a 'Big Man'.

To break away involves institutional separation and a re-making of the relationship between junior and senior pastor. An apprenticeship relation that is clearly hierarchical is transformed into one of more mutual recognition and less dependency. However, younger pastors still recognize the pastors who trained them as their 'spiritual fathers'. In this way they draw on their legitimacy and at the same time contribute to affirming the senior pastors' position of spiritual and social authority. There is awareness from the senior pastors that up-and-coming pastors might pose a challenge to their positions. One of the pastors referred to was incited to start a church of his own (a branch church of the mother church) by his senior pastor. He explains:

> I think I went with him [senior pastor] and have been with him for about fifteen years. He then told me to pray if this was where I wanted to be so that I can get a place to start my ministry, I can go and do it, but I said I don't want to do it because I normally travel outside and come back. But he thought I was matured enough to handle a group and that there was no need to continue to stay under him, since that will be underutilizing my potential, so I should move out. So I and some few people were given the opportunity to start our ministry. So I came here to start mine. It was not easy.[12]

The senior pastor, who is the founder of one of Kumasi's biggest neo-Pentecostal churches and from a Kumasi elite family, had himself followed the same trajectory. He had trained and been an apprentice under another well-established pastor, then came to a point where he was seen by others as posing a threat to the power position of the pastor in charge. He left and created a church on his own, starting in a canteen, with only nineteen members.[13]

Establishing a new church is seen as a necessary step in the trajectory of a pastoral career. It is associated with hard work and little income in the early phases. But, as mentioned earlier, it is a way for young people to achieve social aspirations and status. Drawing on the insights of Ingold and Hallam (2007), I argue that the establishment of new churches and pastoral careers is not only a matter of creating new institutions, breaking social bonds and exploiting opportunities for individual profit-making. There are concurrently processes of imitation and improvisation at

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[12] Interview, 22 February 2005. See footnote 9.

[13] Interview, Kumasi, 3 February 2005.

stake, for example, with regard to how social positions are recognized and legitimated and related to this the accumulation and redistribution of wealth.

This leads me on to discuss how wealth is understood in this context. In the literature the neo-Pentecostal churches are perceived as having a strong focus on money and prosperity (Gifford 2004; Meyer 1998). My argument is that it is not only the accumulation of money that is important, but the link between wealth (in a broad sense), status and power. Pastors draw upon the historic meaning of these concepts and improvise and adapt these to new religious and socio-economic contexts.

Pastorship as Investment

Contrary to the picture often painted (in Ghanaian public debate and in some academic work) of pastors as being abundantly rich and accumulating capital for individual consumption, the young pastors that this chapter deals with often had little income and what they had was rarely generated from their work as pastors. At such an early stage in their careers, they were rather investing capital themselves into setting up churches or making themselves visible as pastors in the public sphere (e.g. being on radio or television, appearing on banners and publishing books). They would use income from other sources when founding churches. As mentioned above, a young pastor created a church on his senior pastor's initiative. He explains how he managed to get finances for setting up the church:

> And then I started building this. Normally, the kinds of people I have are new converts, people who are students, people who are not working. So I had the opportunity with my background, because I go to London most of the time. I also go to Germany to go and do some programmes. So when I come [back to Ghana] I use the money I have to pay for this and start the building. Because people naturally haven't enough to give. Now, people are coming gradually, but they are not financially strong. So I thought well, every money I get I will bring it in. Sometimes I bring 3,000 euro, 2,000 euro, 2,000 pounds, 1,000 pounds and just put it in. That's why we have got this far. And then I have been buying instruments. Generally, it is a cost, but if you put in your money and God bless you, things work out.[14]

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[14] Interview, Kumasi, 22 February 2005. See footnote 9.

This pastor's way of rationalizing builds on the principle of 'giving and receiving' that is part of the neo-Pentecostal ideology (Asamoah-Gyadu 2005a; Maxwell 2006: 149). One has to plant a seed (invest money to serve God) in order to harvest (receive resources and success in return, which is seen as God's blessing). In this way of thinking, founding a church is seen as an investment. Pastors bring in various resources, construct buildings, buy instruments and get church members. The members will eventually pay tithes and other offerings (in cash) and the investment will bear fruit. Not all pastors have capital to invest in building churches; they instead receive financial and material contributions from family members, friends or church members living abroad. Some would be involved in other activities (e.g. poultry farming, running a canteen, running a print and photo copy shop) to generate income.

Some pastors had been accountants, shopkeepers or had jobs as civil servants before they became pastors. They abandoned these apparently attractive employments to become pastors, which implied risk-taking and a less stable income. Their strategy was instead to diversify their sources of income. They would generate money through preaching in other churches and by doing 'programmes' (preaching in churches at special events), starting a Bible school, and some would receive 'chop money'[15] from church members that they had prayed for or had helped in any other way.

These relations of giving (investing) and receiving constitute a form of spiritual economy that is based on reciprocity, but also on ideas of rewards from God. This parallels the classical anthropological literature on gift-giving, where religious beliefs underpin gift-giving relations (Mauss 1954). In the cases presented in this chapter, it is not only the object that is being exchanged that has a religious meaning, but also the reciprocal relations of exchange themselves. These, for instance, can involve a religious leader, a church member and God. This implies that it not only a relation of exchange between two parts (based on social obligations), but one that also involves God. This means that a return not necessarily comes from the one who receives, but can come from God and be perceived as a reward or a blessing.

The central point is that pastoral career making is not only an investment in financial terms. It is also an investment in one's status as pastor or religious expert. Becoming a pastor also means attaining social status that is recognized not only by members in church, but more widely in society, e.g. by friends and family members. Present day Pentecostal pastors draw upon and

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[15] In a Ghanaian context the term 'chop money' means allowances to buy food and for housekeeping.

combine features of two historic figures: the religious expert and the 'big man'. On the one hand they play the role of the religious expert, mediating between the spiritual and the material worlds, and are in this way key to people's success in life. They have the ability to bring about change and to provide protection. They possess the knowledge of the word of God, and knowledge is historically linked to power (Akyeampong & Obeng 1995). Moreover, pastors follow the model of the 'big man' as they seek to attain wealth (understood in a broad sense as time, people and money). They are concerned with how this wealth is redistributed, perceived by others and with displaying wealth publically (Lauterbach 2006).

Conclusion

This chapter has analysed the making of pastorship and pastoral careers as a form of entrepreneurship. I have argued that religious entrepreneurship is best understood as an intersection between changing socio-economic circumstances and already existing ideas and practices. By seeing entrepreneurship as relational processes of improvisation rather than merely as the invention of something new, I argue that religious entrepreneurship and particularly the making of pastoral careers has resonance with the past. It is a possibility of realizing aspirations and attaining social mobility that is recognized in society because it builds on and re-adapts (improvises) already existing ideas around being a 'big man' and a religious expert.

Although the making of pastoral careers is not directly linked to economic enterprise per se, there are connections between the religious and economic spheres that can shed new light on the diverse ways in which entrepreneurship unfolds in Africa. This touches upon our interpretation of a religious ethic and the affinity with economic practices. My analysis builds on an understanding of this relationship as open and historically/contextually defined, rather than religious ethics (or the prosperity doctrine) as a response to a certain moment in time. In this way my approach is different from that taken by e.g. the Comaroffs, but also, though in a different way, from the analytical frame proposed by Marshall. Although she emphasizes religion as a site of action that has a particular meaning for believers, her analysis comes to portray Pentecostal ethics as a system in itself and hence as isolated from other social spheres that inform ethics. This implies that the intersection between the religious and economic spheres stand out as being more schematic and less adaptive. Meagher on the other hand proposes an analysis that takes its point of departure in asking a more open question of how the economic and religious spheres influence

each other and then studies, in a way more empirically informed, how a Protestant ethic is expressed.

In my analysis of pastorship as entrepreneurship I argue that the making of pastoral careers involves both establishing new institutions and seeing the church as an area of investment, and at the same time engaging in relations of apprenticeship and dependency. In their striving for social mobility pastors break away from senior pastors because these are seen as a hindrance to opportunities for growth. However, after establishing a new church and moving onwards in their pastoral careers, there is still a need to maintain and recreate bonds of support and dependency with senior people. This is done in a flexible way that both permits the young pastors to grow, and also confers some of the credibility of senior people on the young pastors. It is a re-invention and transformation of junior-senior relationships.

Pastors draw on various social networks and are creative in the sense that they set up new churches and establish themselves as leaders by bringing in whatever resources they have at their disposal. They are often involved in several activities to gain resources to invest in their pastoral careers. Pastorship is both a way to attain social mobility and something pastors invest in, but it is moreover a life trajectory or destiny that one cannot refuse. Moreover, the investment is perceived as a gift to God and is part of a spiritual economy. Pastorship differs from other forms of economic engagement as it involves the spiritual realm and forces that are not seen by the pastors as negotiable in the same sense as being part of a social or economic network is.

It is in particular the apparent eagerness and ease with which pastors create new churches and thereby new sources of income that make one think of Pentecostal pastors as entrepreneurial. But, as the analysis has shown, making pastoral careers is not only about following certain economic values or rationales, but also about knowledge and adaptation of social rules and conventions that are historically embedded in Asante society. Pastors combine forms of entrepreneurial and economic strategies (e.g. investment in churches) with their knowledge of and engagement in social practices so that their pastoral activities make sense in a broader social setting. Pastors are acknowledged as religious experts not only in their churches, but also in their social surroundings. Therefore the entrepreneurial dynamic lies not only in the relation between pastors and their members, but also more widely with regard to the role religious entrepreneurs play in society and the legitimacy and status with which they are ascribed. Becoming a Pentecostal

pastor in present day Ghana is therefore a way to 'become someone' in society that improvises and re-makes the historic figures of the religious expert and the 'big man'.

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