

the YWCA's increasing attention to its own practices with regard to race and the process through which the national association adopted the "Interracial Charter." She concludes with an epilogue in which she explores the difficulties the organization faced in implementing the ideals of the charter.

Robertson's work is well-researched, and she demonstrates great command of a complicated story that involves a national organization and local affiliates. Her insightful analysis would have benefited from attention to a number of additional areas, however. Because Robertson's focus is on the development of national policy, the book gives little sense of the culture and activities of the YWCA that promoted such intense dedication on the part of these women to its work. In addition, I wanted to know more about how the national association conveyed its ideals to the local membership, which she could have accomplished through an analysis of publications and attention to group activities and programs. Finally, a more explicit engagement of the category of "race" would have added texture to Robertson's thoughtful discussion. The book is concerned with white and black women, but a broader discussion of how these women theorized race, not only in relation to their own groups and interactions between the two, but also with regard to other racialized groups, would have been useful. Robertson chooses to emphasize, instead, the language the women themselves used, but this decision would have been made more meaningful by attempting to unpack the peculiar terms specific to the era—"race consciousness," "racial adjustment," even "the race problem"—and doing so would have helped place the work in the broader context of recent studies on the co-constitution of the categories of religion and race in American history. Despite these minor limitations, this book makes a valuable contribution to our understanding of American Protestant women's religious history and to interactions between black and white women in this important independent women's organization.

Judith Weisenfeld
Princeton University

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*African Gifts of the Spirit: Pentecostalism and the Rise of a
Zimbabwean Transnational Religious Movement.* By David

Maxwell. Oxford: James Currey, 2006. xv + 253 pp. \$26.95 paper.

The rise of pentecostalism as a global phenomenon has encouraged a similar growth in academic books on the subject. Africanist church historians and

social historians have recognized the influence of the movements throughout the continent and have done much to dispel the myths that pentecostals are theologically illiterate and socially naive. David Maxwell not only adds to the body of work available but argues for an understanding of pentecostalism beyond the dichotomies established in the literature to date. He studies its place within civil society and demonstrates the vitality of religious imagery, language, and leadership in African sociopolitical contexts.

Maxwell studies one pentecostal movement, the Zimbabwe Assemblies of God Africa (ZAOGA), from its roots in southern African pentecostalism from 1908, through its development among socially marginalized but aspirational Zimbabweans during the 1950s and 1960s, to its contemporary transnational expression throughout Africa and into Europe. Interviews and observation of church leaders and ordinary members, alongside ZAOGA's private papers, songs, and sermons, and its published tracts, pamphlets, and autobiographies, enable Maxwell to provide detailed depth of analysis. He is also broad in scope. Analyzing a single church provides a focus through which to understand power relations among some Zimbabweans and their reaction to the socioeconomic decline of their country. It also gives focus to the study of religious change in the wider pentecostal movement, though so disparate does this movement become that there is no attempt to cover it beyond its first forty years. Maxwell also says little about ZAOGA's relations with other churches in Zimbabwe.

Controversially for the study of African pentecostalism, Maxwell makes the case for a direct historical connection between continental movements and Azusa Street in the United States. However, he avoids polarizing the debate between those who see contacts with Azusa Street and those who want to emphasize the indigenous nature of pentecostalism by both connecting Azusa Street to previous revivals throughout the world and by demonstrating links between African pentecostal movements and African Initiated Churches, and thus to re-imagined forms of traditional African religions. He untangles the complex genealogy of southern African pentecostalism and charts ZAOGA's independency from white missionary influence through to a professional, wealthy, transnational organization, partially akin to the mission Christianity it originally rejected. In doing so he teases out again the relationship between local and global influences. He eschews the conceptual split between "classic" pentecostal churches, established by western missionaries, and "neo"-pentecostal churches, established by Africans, by showing that ZAOGA went through phases in which it was influenced by both. Maxwell suggests that for ZAOGA, these labels don't describe its essence but rather its progression. His methodology of studying one movement from all angles allows him to see the African agency where others have emphasized North American influence and to balance the influence of both.

Throughout the book, he continually attempts to avoid polarizing the debate. This demands some tightly worked arguments. For example, in chapter 6, in a passage that analyzes the management of political relations in Zimbabwe in the 1990s, Maxwell says, “There is a danger of exoticising African religion and politics by analyzing them in terms of local idiom” (149). He then summarizes the model of political influence adopted by ZAOGA from the “born-again” movement in the United States. Immediately, in the same short paragraph, he adds, “However, in Zimbabwe religious and political interactions are localized and specific” (150), and he shows how the Zimbabwean context enabled ZAOGA leaders to have a more personalized relationship with the political elites. In the hands of a less able scholar, these frequent passages that balance two opposing views might be accused of being contradictory or confusing. Maxwell, however, argues persuasively for a nuanced reading that analyzes the case on the ground and refuses broad generalities of interpretation. For Maxwell, ZAOGA is ultimately local *and* global, authoritarian *and* populist. It is the ways in which it is these things, at different times and in response to different contexts, that demonstrates its particular religious identity.

While Maxwell appropriately places his work within social history, rather than phenomenology, he exhibits a sympathy and understanding of the sincere Christian beliefs of ZAOGA members. He returns frequently to the gifts of the spirit as the driving force of the movement. He critiques the manipulation and emphasis on personal wealth by the leaders while acknowledging the missionary zeal of impoverished pastors who formed small rural churches. He describes ZAOGA members as understanding themselves to be modern Africans who admire technological and educational progress and who strive to achieve it but have lost faith in the Western development paradigm. He is less alarmed about prosperity teaching than other scholars in the field. He concludes that the prosperity preached in ZAOGA comes from a need for economic security in a volatile state rather than from a desire for opulence.

Maxwell’s arguments are carefully crafted, his style is accessible, and the individual stories en flesh the analysis. The publisher’s small typeface is hard on the eyes but probably makes the book slimmer and, therefore, cheaper. Readers new to the field of African pentecostalism will find that there is enough general background for a good introduction, while those more familiar with the subject will benefit from becoming acquainted with ZAOGA and the furtherance of the debate on the role of pentecostalism in Africa.

Emma Wild-Wood

Cambridge Theological Federation, U.K.