CrossMark

larger senses of Africa – fits within the global politics of racialization and white privilege.

NICKY FALKOF
Department of Media Studies, University of the Witwatersrand
nicky.falkof@wits.ac.za
doi:10.1017/S0001972016000437

PAUL GIFFORD, *Christianity, Development and Modernity in Africa*. London: C. Hurst & Company (pb £18.99 – 978 1 84904 477 6). 2015, 187 pp.

What role can Christianity play in an Africa seeking modern development? This is the question Paul Gifford addresses in his most recent book. The book is structured around the argument that there is a major difference between an African 'enchanted imaginary' expressed in African Pentecostalism and a development-oriented Christianity exemplified by the Catholic Church in Africa. The first form of Christianity is deeply embedded in African religious world views, such as a belief in spiritual beings and witchcraft. The second form of Christianity is characterized by a strong focus on development and internal secularization. The argument of the book is that two dysfunctional forces – namely the enchanted religious imagination and a neo-patrimonial political culture – hinder Africa from joining that world and that Catholic Christianity fails to address this by focusing merely on development and inculturation.

Gifford begins with a call for a more diverse definition of Christianity in order to avoid analysing all forms of Christianity in Africa as a single category, as that entails the risk of essentializing our understanding of Christianity in Africa. Gifford argues that what is significant about Ghanaian Christianity, for instance, is not necessarily Christianity itself, but rather 'something local and cultural, something Ghanaian or African' (p. 5). Three chapters are dedicated to Pentecostalism in Africa, which the author approaches through a discussion of an African enchanted religious imagination in which spiritual forces are thought to strongly influence people and matters of the physical world. This is exemplified by the teachings of the Nigerian pastor Daniel Olukoya and his focus on destructive evil forces and spiritual warfare. Another prominent feature of Pentecostalism, the prosperity gospel, is also discussed, drawing extensively on the work of another Nigerian pastor, David Oyedepo. On the basis of this, Gifford argues that Pentecostalism in Africa and the enchanted religious imagination on which Pentecostalism draws enforce a belief in destiny rather than individual responsibility.

In the next four chapters, Gifford turns to the Catholic Church. Global Catholicism is presented as a disenchanted version of Christianity that has become internally secularized and which plays the role of a large development actor rather than a church. Gifford notes that there is a discrepancy between this disenchanted institutional Catholicism and the enchanted world in which numerous African Catholics live. He furthermore asserts that the Catholic Church's theological attempts to adapt to African religious practices, or inculturation, ignores the enchanted religious world view and therefore fails to address it. In the concluding chapter, Gifford returns to the initial question on the role of Christianity in developing Africa. Pentecostalism is understood as dysfunctional and harmful. And the Catholic Church, with its internal secularization and development focus, is unable to provide alternative answers to the enchanted religious needs of people in Africa.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0001972016000449 Published online by Cambridge University Press

The book is a continuation of Gifford's earlier work on Christianity in Africa, both in form and focus (*African Christianity: its public role*, 1998; *Ghana's new Christianity: Pentecostalism in a globalizing African economy*, 2004; *Christianity, Politics and Public Life in Kenya*, 2009, among others). With his extensive and long-term experience, the author is at home in the field – a field that is approached through personal experience, attendance at religious meetings, and religious texts. The arguments of the book are illustrated with an array of examples from various African contexts. The book does not pay much attention, however, to how these religious messages are understood and interpreted by churchgoers themselves, except for a few references to testimonies mediated through religious leaders. This is a drawback for the book. A discussion of how Christianity can contribute to modern development would benefit from a more refined historical and contextualized analysis of this enchanted religious imagination. Is it uniquely African? And how are these ideas translated into lived experience? By assuming that these questions are already settled, Gifford essentializes the enchanted religious imagination.

The book has many examples of where and how an enchanted religious imagination is expressed, but little about its historical roots and local variations. What exactly is local, cultural or Ghanaian about the enchanted imagination? This also reinforces the binaries of the secular/the religious and the enchanted/the disenchanted; it would be useful to transgress these binaries in order to reach an understanding of how the religious becomes political and vice versa. But such an analysis is not what Gifford is aiming at; he takes the enchanted religious imaginations as well as the African neo-patrimonial political culture as his premise. He adopts a non-relativist approach through which, in an open and clear way, he discusses what he perceives as hindering Africa becoming modern, from enforcing the rule of law and building up bureaucratic institutional structures. In that sense, the book offers an honest and well thought-through voice in a debate that often receives little focus in African studies: a voice that is concerned with the role of Christianity in Africa's development.

KAREN LAUTERBACH
University of Copenhagen
kjl@teol.ku.dk
doi:10.1017/S0001972016000449

ODILE GOERG, *Fantômas sous les tropiques: aller au cinéma en Afrique coloniale*. Paris: Vendémiaire (pb €22 – 978 2 36358 1 709). 2015, 285 pp.

Odile Goerg's new book on the development of film culture in colonial Africa is a brilliant work of scholarship that makes an important contribution to the ever-expanding field of African popular culture studies, and it should also be of great interest to scholars of postcolonial African filmmaking. Her research covers a wide array of sources, ranging from colonial archives to novels and memoirs, to personal interviews with African interlocutors who grew up steeped in the film culture of their homeland. Much of Goerg's evidence is drawn from Anglophone and Francophone West Africa, but the author also cites from sources relating to East, Central and Southern Africa, spanning the British, French, Portuguese and Belgian colonial possessions in these regions.

Within months of the first Lumière screenings in France in 1895, cinema arrived on the African continent, with screenings held in Cairo and Alexandria. Over the next two decades, periodic screenings in hotels and cafés would follow in major

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0001972016000449 Published online by Cambridge University Press