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3 From Mission Station to Tent Revival: Material Forms and Spatial Formats in Africa's Missionary Encounter

Though long neglected in sociological accounts of globalization, Protestant missions in Africa are one of the best examples of successful transregional institutional transfer in the history of globalization. In this chapter I argue that the success of Protestant missions in Africa depended both on the deployment of historically dominant spatial configurations and on the creativity of missionaries – both Africans and Europeans – in the development of new spatial arrangements. More specifically, Protestant missionary practices developed alongside the spatial boundaries and political nodes of European imperialism but also transcended these, creating missionary spaces that eventually thwarted imperial political projects. Developing this argument, I draw on the notion of "spatial formats",[1] which refers to spatial orientations that are relatively stable, have high social relevance, and are to various degrees institutionalized. A variety of spatial formats make up what one could call a spatial order. To this conceptualization I add the notion of material forms, by which I mean ensembles of physical, in particular architectural, objects that bundle social practices and contribute towards the consolidation of social categories and subjectivities, i.e. "Christians", "heathen", etc. These material forms, I suggest, are the building blocks of spatial formats, and turned out to be instrumental in the creation of more or less autonomous missionary spaces.

Over the last three decades, there has been a proliferation of studies concerned with issues of religion and space. Scholars from religious studies, sociology, anthropology, history, and geography have explored how religious practices

shape spaces and are shaped by them.[2] On the one hand, spatial processes shape religious identities, forms of belonging, religious aspirations and practices.[3] Chiefly, space affects religion by casting religious communities and their forms of sociality within particular spatial regimes, thus contributing to the territorialization of religious categories.[4] These regimes involve questions around places of worship as key sites for organizing religious communities, celebrating togetherness through shared religious rituals, and expressing and consuming religious aesthetics through forms of "architectural registration"[5] or decoration, especially in the context of festivals and ceremonies.

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2 See the edited volumes: J. Beaumont and P. Cloke (eds.), *Faith-Based Organisations and Exclusion in European Cities*, Bristol: Bristol University Press, 2012; I. Becci, M. Burchardt, and J. Casanova (eds.), *Topographies of Faith: Religion in Urban Spaces*, Leiden: Brill, 2013; H. Berking, S. Streets, and J. Schwenk (eds.), *Religious Pluralism and the City: Inquiries into Postsecular Urbanism*, London: Bloomsbury, 2018; J. Garnett and A. Harris (eds.), *Rescripting Religion in the City: Migration and Religious Identity in the Modern Metropolis*, London: Routledge, 2013; L. Gómez and W. Van Herck (eds.), *The Sacred in the City*, London: Continuum International, 2012; P. Hopkins, L. Kong, and E. Olson (eds.), *Religion and Place: Landscape, Politics and Piety*, Heidelberg: Springer, 2012; R. Pinxten and L. Dikomitis (eds.), *When God Comes to Town: Religious Traditions in Urban Contexts*, New York: Berghahn Books, 2009. See also the monographs: S. Bendixsen, *The Religious Identity of Young Muslim Women in Berlin: An Ethnographic Study*, Leiden: Brill, 2013; K. Knott, *The Location of Religion: A Spatial Analysis*, London: Equinox Publishing, 2005; R.A. Orsi, *The Madonna of 115th Street: Faith and Community in Italian Harlem, 1880–1959*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985; M.D. Stringer, *Discourses on Religious Diversity: Explorations in an Urban Ecology*, Farnham: Ashgate, 2013; I. Weiner, *Religion Out Loud: Religious Sound, Public Space, and American Pluralism*, New York: New York University Press, 2013.

Also see special issues in the journals: J.S. Bielo, "Urban Christianities: Place-Making in Late Modernity", *Religion* 43 (2013) 3, pp. 301–311; F. Dodsworth and S. Watson, "Reflections on the Material and Spatial Cultures of Religious Sites and Buildings in London's East End: Introduction", *Material Religion* 9 (2014) 1, pp. 4–9; D. Garbin, "Introduction: Believing in the City", *Culture and Religion* 13 (2012) 4, pp. 401–404; M. Oosterbaan, "Public Religion and Urban Space in Europe", *Social and Cultural Geography* 14 (2014) 6, pp. 591–602; M.A. Vásquez and J.D. Dewind, "The Religious Lives of Migrant Minorities: A Multi-Sited and Transnational Perspective", *Religion Global Networks* 14 (2014) 3, pp. 251–400.

3 P. Van der Veer, "Urban Aspirations in Mumbai and Singapore", in: I. Becci, M. Burchardt, and J. Casanova (eds.), *Topographies of Faith: Religion in Urban Spaces*, Leiden: Brill, 2013, pp. 61–71.

4 D. Hervieu-Léger, "Space and Religion: New Approaches to Religious Spatiality in Modernity", *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 26 (2002) 1, pp. 99–105.

5 C. Knowles, "Nigerian London: Re-Mapping Space and Ethnicity in Super Diverse Cities", *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 36 (2013) 4, pp. 651–669, at 652.

On the other hand, spatial processes are themselves shaped by religion.[6] Religious traditions, including above all nationally dominant religions, have often left durable spatial and architectural imprints, which in turn have major impacts on societies' definitions of their cultural identities and self-understandings in relation to the nation states in which they are embedded and to the different populations inhabiting them. Demographic changes, missionary incursions and other migratory movements challenge such definitions, as new religious traditions often vie for political and symbolic recognition in particular spatial contexts. Such public recognition inevitably requires changes of identity markers and spatial regimes, as it comes with new forms of the visibility of religions[7] in public space. Thomas Tweed has famously suggested that religious life is chiefly about "crossing and dwelling", in other words about movement and the creation of permanence in relation to the sacred and transcendence.[8]

With a few exceptions,[9] however, spatial accounts of religion and anthropologies and sociologies of Protestant missions have developed relatively separated from one another, and mutual confrontations have been few and far between. In particular, anthropological and sociological studies of Evangelical Protestant missions have a rather contemporary focus, being concerned mainly with ongoing missionary efforts out of the US, or so-called reverse missions, initiated by Asian and African Christians in the West. This chapter seeks to fill this gap by providing a sociological analysis of the rise of Protestant spaces in Africa from the eighteenth century onwards. My account is based on a close reading of the historical record of Protestant missions, mainly in Eastern and Southern Africa, as it has been elaborated in the works of historians, and on its confrontation with theories of religious space. I scrutinize the main elements of these theories and identify and elaborate on the notions I see as central for examining Protestant mission spaces in Africa.

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6 M. Burchardt and M. Westendorp, "The Im-Materiality of Urban Religion: Towards an Ethnography of Urban Religious Aspirations", *Culture and Religion* 19 (2018) 2, pp. 160–176.
7 N. Göle, "The Public Visibility of Islam and European Politics of Resentment: The Minarets-Mosques Debate", *Philosophy & Social Criticism* 37 (2011) 4, pp. 383–392.
8 T. Tweed, *Crossing and Dwelling. A Theory of Religion*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007.
9 J. Comaroff and J.L. Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution: Christianity, Colonialism, and Consciousness in South Africa*, vol. 1, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991; W. Keane, *Christian Moderns: Freedom and Fetish in the Mission Encounter*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007.

Religion, Space, and Missions

Broadly speaking, there are two modes of the spatial organization of social relations.[10] First, there are social relations that are condensed in and bounded by a well-defined territory, which they span and in which their definition is often equivalent to cultural and political definitions of membership based, for instance, on descent or citizenship. Largely overlapping with political authority, this kind of spatial organization is historically expressed in the sovereign territorial nation state in which culture, society, polity, and authority are isomorphic and grafted on one another. This is the quintessential container space. Second, social relations can be organized through deterritorialized forms that do without territorial enclosures, inhabiting instead far-flung networks. These social relations pivot on an ontology of "flow spaces", and diasporas and capital are viewed as their most significant manifestations.[11]

This dual conceptualization is also useful to illuminate basic features of the macro-spatial organization of religion. In the international political system that emerged following the end of the European wars in 1648 through the Peace of Westphalia and was characterized by newly founded notions of territorial and political sovereignty and evolving ideologies of national cultural homogeneity, religion became a central feature of nationally demarcated container spaces.[12] Through the principle of *cuius regio eius religio*, national sovereigns acquired the power to define the religion of the state and religion was henceforth chiefly perceived, organized, and managed along territorial lines. Religious minorities were mostly forced into illegality or exile, persecuted or evicted. Territorially bounded religious relations of this type are fundamental to Durkheim's notion of religion as a community cult.[13]

However, alongside the Westphalian system of managing religion we see the rise of transnational religious networks, which – usually on the basis of older, pre-Westphalian forms of translocal connectivity – consolidate religious life through flow-spaces. Two types of religious community are central for flow-space religion. On the one hand, there are transnational religious networks in which religious

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10 H. Berking, "Contested Places and the Politics of Space", in: H. Berking et al. (eds.), *Negotiating Urban Conflicts: Interaction, Space and Control*, Bielefeld: transcript, 2006, pp. 29–39.

11 M. Castells, *The Rise of the Network Society*, 2nd edn, Hoboken: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010.

12 P. Beyer, "Questioning the Secular/Religious Divide in a Post-Westphalian World", *International Sociology* 28 (2013) 6, pp. 663–679.

13 J. Casanova, *Public Religions in the Modern World*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011; E. Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*, J.W. Swain (trans.), New York: Dover, 2008.

commitment and ethnic membership are entangled, or virtually identical as in the case of Jewish or Armenian diasporas. On the other hand, transnational religious communities can be characterized by a near-complete differentiation of ethnicity and religion, as in the case of Roman Catholicism (although locally, alignments of ethnicity and religion often re-emerge over time). In both cases, however, feelings of belonging and cultural proximity among persons are severed from physical proximity and territorial enclosure.

Furthermore, in order to elucidate forms of religious agency in the spatial structuration of religion it is important to distinguish between, on the one hand, the ways in which spatial regimes impinge on religious forms of belonging and practices and, on the other, the spatial strategies of religious actors themselves; a binary that is slightly different from that of spatial order and spatial format. By spatial regime I mean territorial and non-territorialized forms of spatial governmentality in which spaces are assigned particular usages and which operate through regulations of ownership and property, differentiated access as well as codifications of tolerated forms of identity, behaviour, and appearance. Spatial regimes traverse multiple social and political scales ranging from urban governmentalities to global forms of spatial structuration. If various spatial regimes are entangled in a mutually reinforcing fashion, their totality constitutes what Middell calls a spatial order.[14] Urban governance around planning and zoning, for instance, involves numerous regulations on places of worship or on where, when, and how to conduct public religious ceremonies, processions, and rituals. These must, in turn, in many societies comply with national regulatory regimes around religion and supranational normativities such as the global human rights regime.

Spatial strategies, by contrast, refer to the ways in which religious communities conquer and preserve space, defining it in religious terms or challenging existing definitions. Thus far, most scholars have construed such strategies in terms of "place-making". Drawing on Tweed's theory of religion, Vásquez and Knott, for instance, conceptualize the "place-making" strategies of migrant religious groups in global cities as something that encompasses both dwelling, which includes mapping, building, and inhabiting, as well as crossing "in so far as it is inextricably connected with mobility".[15] Similarly, Garbin has defined place-making as "the appropriation and experience of place through various religious activities".[16] However, the one-sided focus on diaspora or migrant religious communities has

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14 Middell, "Raumformate", p. 3.

15 M.A. Vásquez and K. Knott, "Three Dimensions of Religious Place Making in Diaspora", *Global Networks* 14 (2014) 3, pp. 326–347, at 327.

16 D. Garbin, "Introduction: Believing in the City", *Culture and Religion* 13 (2012) 4, pp. 401–404, at 401.

tended to leave out of sight other religious traditions, in particular those that are already deeply embedded because of their long historical presence and routinized relationships with traditional (chieftaincy) or modern (state) authorities, and those groups that may not aim for or engender permanent spatial presences. Expanding on notions of place-making, it seems useful to add two other distinct spatial strategies: place-keeping and place-seeking.[17] By place-keeping I mean religious investments designed to preserve urban presences across changing political and cultural conditions and to reproduce symbolic power. Place-seeking, by contrast, refers to spatial strategies that produce ephemeral and evanescent presences as a result of spiritual notions that champion embodiment and mobility over emplacement.

Significantly, spatial strategies not only seek and result in the siting of social forms such as religious ceremonies or of institutional forms such as churches or mosques. As emphasized above, they also produce material forms – bundles of material objects that enable particular institutionalizations of religion. These material forms evolve alongside and are to some extent tied to dominant spatial formats. Conversely, changes of spatial formats often require the invention of new material forms. Thus, as a material form the mission station was a quintessential building block of Protestant missions in the age of European colonial rule, while its demise and the rise of African-initiated Christian traditions came along with the mission station's dissolution and subsequent replacement by other material forms such as tent revivals and storefront churches.

African Protestant Missions in Spatial Formats

The dominant pattern of Protestantism's spread in Africa during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was that it evolved alongside the transformation of European empires into modern colonizing nation states or, as Middell puts it, "nation-states with colonial annex spaces".[18] Missionary Protestantism thus drew on and deployed two dominant spatial formats that emerged at the conjuncture of modern globalization. Protestant missionaries typically became active in areas in which colonial officials had already established outposts. Such spatial strategies had the benefit of providing a minimum of physical safety for missionaries. During the colonial period, missionaries often operated under the direct protection of, or even as allies of, the colonial regime, and so their ability to establish outposts was

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17 I. Becci, M. Burchardt, and M. Giorda, "Religious Super-Diversity and Spatial Strategies in Two European Cities", *Current Sociology* 65 (2017) 1, pp. 73–91.

18 Middell, "Raumformate", p. 19.

ultimately protected by force.[19] Indeed, frequently the missionaries, like the colonial settlers, were armed or accompanied by armed contingents. In other cases, missionaries actually acted as brokers in the establishment of colonial relationships between locals and Europeans and of colonial authority. Because of the major emphasis they put on translations of the bible into African vernaculars as a precondition of bible reading and Africans' salvation, they were often comparatively quick in learning African languages. This enabled to them to communicate and interact with African power holders such as chiefs and notables to a much greater extent than colonial officials. Through these interactions missionaries sometimes paved the way for (often unequal) agreements between both parties on the basis of which colonial authority was erected.

Furthermore, Protestant missionaries bought into and promoted the vision of conversion to Christianity as fundamental to achieving Western civilization as a presumably particularly high level of the realization of humanity.[20] In fact, the notions of Europeans' "civilizing mission" in Africa and "Christian mission" became so closely entangled that they were, in the eyes of many Europeans, only thinkable as mutually reinforcing: Protestant meant civilized and vice versa. The ideas of the successive expansion of Western civilization and of Protestant Christianity were thus parts of the same spatial imagination whereby Africa was mapped and divided into those zones which already had Christianity and those zones still to be conquered. As Petzke argues in his work on mappings and statistics in nineteenth-century Evangelical missions in British colonies, maps and statistics became not only mutually supporting technologies that rendered populations legible in religious and demographic terms.[21] They also provided tools that allowed missionaries and others to imagine religious conversions as constitutive of competitive religious markets in which actors competed over souls to be counted, whose location formed particular religious geographies.

Significantly though, Protestant missions among Africans and the establishment of the mission station crucially depended upon a transformation of the links between political membership and religious belonging that occurred during the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. Well into the eighteenth

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19 In the early missionary period, as L. White shows, missionaries such as David Livingstone could be abandoned, driven out, or killed when their trade goods and their arms ran out. See L. White, *Magomero: Portrait of an African Village*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987.

20 Comaroff and Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution*.

21 M. Petzke, "Visualisierung und Differenzierung Zur wahlverwandtschaftlichen Beziehung bildlichen Eigensinns und der Konstitution eigenlogischer Sinnsysteme am Beispiel der Religion", *Soziale Systeme* 18 (2012) 1/2, pp. 119–152.

century, being Christian was conceived of in Britain as being inseparably tied to the civil status of being a free citizen. Thus, conversion to Christianity – also in the colonies – was seen as involving the acquisition of a bundle of political rights. This conception at first severely constrained the scope of Protestant missionary activities.[22] In the British case, it was usually limited to the colonial compound and those who lived in it, e.g. Portuguese traders or other non-African nationals. In particular, it seemed impossible to engage in proselytizing activities among slave populations, since conversion required freedom, or – in the eyes of colonialists, in particular agricultural entrepreneurs – worse: it was seen as producing it. A Christian convert could no longer be a slave. It was only through the gradual disembedding of religion from the imaginary and political apparatus of civic rights that missionary efforts could target broader African populations. In the wake of these changes, the material form of the colonial compound lost its role for the Protestant missionary enterprise and paved the way for the rise of the mission station and its establishment along the frontiers of European colonialism.

Another spatial format that Protestant missionaries deployed but also helped to construct was the colonial trade network made up of interlinked series of trading posts. Trading networks were one of the main elements that linked dispersed local populations of Africans to imperial economic circuits. Protestant missions were often established along these trade networks, since trading posts made accessible a number of amenities, in particular the necessary infrastructural and logistical conditions (roads, farm animals) that supported missionary projects. Conversely, missionaries were themselves instrumental in creating locations that could later become trading posts. Through their promotion of a rationalized work ethic, Protestant missionaries encouraged African converts to engage in the production of goods which they would then be able to sell on local but transregionally integrated markets. Thereby they contributed to the introduction of monetary economies and commerce, on the basis of which permanent trading posts were then established.

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22 S. Nelson, "Empire and the Global Millennium: Inventing Modern Evangelicalism on the Frontiers of the Confessional State, 1688–1745", unpublished manuscript. The term compound refers to a walled territory which concentrated functions and people.

Material Forms: The Rise and Fall of the Mission Station

Recent anthropological and sociological scholarship[23] has fostered our understanding of the role of material objects in religious interaction, in particular in mission fields. In her work on religious aesthetics, Birgit Meyer discusses "sensational forms", modalities of mediation between human beings and transcendence. "Sensational forms", Meyer argues, are "authorized modes for invoking and organizing access to the transcendental that shape both religious content (beliefs, doctrines, sets of symbols) and norms. Involving religious practitioners, practices of worship and patterns of feeling, these forms play a central role in modulating practitioners as religious subjects."[24] The notion of material form should be seen as complementary to Meyer's concept and is meant to capture the social impact of the spatial extensions of particular socio-material arrangements, especially the casting of converts as Protestant Christian subjects.

The basic material form that sustained Protestant missions locally and out which they eventually developed their own spatial format was the mission station. Typically, it was made up of a church building, a school, workshops as well as dwellings, and later on also a hospital or medical dispensary. Early converts were often women seeking to escape from abusive marriages; they also included subordinate chiefs and their subjects, or generally less affluent people in search of alternative ways of achieving status.[25] Converts were generally expected to live at the mission station. They were thereby spatially separated from their surrounding societies in an effort to construct exemplary communities in which all aspects of life were distinctly Christian. Through the introduction of new calendars (weekdays) and mechanical clocks[26] converts would also orient themselves towards and enact different temporalities. Through their

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23 B. Meyer, "Aesthetics of Persuasion: Global Christianity and Pentecostalism's Sensational Forms", *South Atlantic Quarterly* 109 (2010) 4, pp. 741–763; W. Keane, *Christian Moderns: Freedom and Fetish in the Mission Encounter*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007; G. Zubrzycki, *Beheading the Saint: Nationalism, Religion, and Secularism in Quebec*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016.

24 Meyer, "Aesthetics of Persuasion", p. 751.

25 R.W. Strayer, *The Making of Mission Communities in East Africa: Anglicans and Africans in Colonial Kenya, 1875–1935*, Albany: SUNY Press, 1978, p. 3.

26 See J. Comaroff, "Missionaries and Mechanical Clocks: An Essay on Religion and History in South Africa", *The Journal of Religion* 71 (1991) 1, pp. 1–17; K. Atkins, "'Kafir Time': Preindustrial Temporal Concepts and Labour Discipline in Nineteenth-Century Colonial Natal", *Journal of African History* 29 (1988), pp. 229–244.

submission to Christian rituals (baptism etc.) they were inserted into new cosmologies and lineages. And through their engagement with Christian aesthetic practices around clothing, hygiene, architecture, and design they were also visually distinguished from other Africans.

John Comaroff, analysing the missionary encounter with Griqua and Tswana peoples in early nineteenth-century South Africa, has succinctly described how missionaries sought to create an exemplary model of a coherent way of life, a "total reconstruction":

> [F]ar from limiting themselves to religious conversion, the evangelists set out, at once, to (1) create a theater of the everyday, demonstrating by their own exemplary actions the benefits of methodical routine, of good personal habits, and of enlightened European ways; (2) banish "superstition" in favor of rational technique and Christian belief; (3) reduce the landscape from a chaotic mass of crude, dirty huts to an ordered array of square, neatly bounded residences (with rooms and doors, windows and furniture, fields and fences), enclosure being both a condition of private property and civilized individualism, and an aesthetic expression of the sheer beauty of refinement; (4) recast the division of labor by making men into hardworking farmers and bringing women "indoors" to the domestic domain, much along the lines of the English middle-class family; (5) encourage these families to produce for the market by teaching them advanced methods, the worth of time and money, and the ethos of private enterprise – the explicit model being the late British yeomanry (see above); all of which (6) demanded that Africans be taught to read and reason, to become self-reflective and self-disciplined. It followed, as axiomatic, that "heathen" society would be forever destroyed.[27]

Making a similar observation concerning nineteenth-century German pietist missions among the Ewe on the Gold Coast, Birgit Meyer argues that the objects of Christian material culture – clothes, furniture, building materials, money etc. – were fundamental in shaping Africans' perceptions of Christianity and the meanings of conversion: "Western education, new clothes and money clearly implied each other and constituted a newly evolving nexus of 'civilization'."[28]

Importantly, because of their nature as condensed material forms, mission stations gave missionaries relatively far-reaching power and control over converts. This enabled them to turn mission stations into laboratories for the creation of an integrated yet spatially circumscribed Protestant world, in which spatial and symbolic boundaries were collapsed and the community of converted Christians set apart from the wider society.

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27 J.L. Comaroff, "Images of Empire, Contests of Conscience: Models of Colonial Domination in South Africa", *American Ethnologist* 16 (1989) 4, pp. 661–685, at 673–674.
28 B. Meyer, "Christian Mind and Worldly Matters Religion and Materiality in Nineteenth-Century Gold Coast", *Journal of Material Culture* 2 (1997) 3, pp. 311–337, at 158.

However, mission stations became socially significant and historically influential only after African converts had managed, through sustained struggles against racial prejudice among some European missionaries, to achieve higher status and become evangelists and pastors, able to institute "daughter stations" in other villages and areas. Through this opening up of new sites, the mission station was transformed into a modular spatial form that was horizontally replicable across vast territories and time spans. This meant that converts' orientations towards Protestant socio-material forms became more routinized as they acquired higher degrees of social relevance and institutionalization over time.

At the same time, the territorial spread of Protestant Christianity resulted in sharper distinctions between "Christian spaces" and "traditional spaces". Christian ritual and worship, involving Sunday services but also dynamically evolving religious fellowships, bible-reading groups, and other types of religious sociality, not only had their distinct spaces and localities but were also systematically, albeit negatively, related to *non*-Christian rituals and practices that had their own sets of localities. In southern Africa, Christians were admonished to stay away from sorghum beer-drinking rituals and from ancestor worship in general. They were also discouraged from using the services of traditional healers and medicine men. In addition, certain sites were known to be prone to the malign activities of witches from which – in the eyes of many African converts – one had to stay away in order to be safe. Thus, a whole spatially configured world was erected in which distinct sites were afforded differential moral values according to the kind and degree of spiritual danger accruing from them.

In some cases, pre-existing ritual sites were resignified within newly evolving Christian maps. Thus, for instance, when I visited the mountain village of Mbaga in Northeast Tanzania, villagers brought me to a high rock from which, according their reports, in pre-Christian times twin babies had been thrown (and thus killed) as their birth was assumed to bring misfortune to the village community. As the villagers told me, this practice had been abandoned with the arrival of the Lutheran missionary Jakob Dannholz who declared it to be a superstition. Dannholz, who had been a member of the Leipzig Missionary Society, had founded the mission station in Mbaga in 1908. Further conversations with villagers showed that accounts of his arrival and life in the village were an important element in Mbaga's oral memory and that his efforts to cease the practice of twin sacrifice had turned the rock into an emblematic site of Mbaga's Christian modernity.[29]

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29 In the mission's record it was babies whose teeth emerged in the wrong order that were thrown from the rock. The Mission re-enacted the (former) practice in photos and a silent film in 1927. See A. Jones (ed.), *Through a Glass Darkly: Photographs of the Leipzig Mission from East Africa, 1896–1939*, Leipzig: Leipziger Universitätsverlag, 2013, pp. 14–16.

If Protestant spaces were progressively differentiated from the spaces of African ritual life (centred around ancestor worship), African traditional authority (around chieftaincy), and African medicine (around traditional healers), to a large degree they converged with the spatial format of European colonialism and its in-built binary of centre and periphery. Mission stations were European enclaves. They regularly reported to the European head offices of mission organizations, of which they saw themselves as outposts. This was a situation in which social interactions in the mission field were broadly embedded in a given spatial format, which they therefore reproduced.

Over time, however, Protestant missions spread in more variegated ways that clearly transcended the mission station as the dominant material form. These new ways also transcended notions of Protestant mission and of Protestantism itself. Chiefly, this was the result of waves of African appropriation and reworking of Protestant practices, beliefs and theologies. Initially, African appropriations constituted a response to racial prejudice against Africans' pursuit of leadership positions, as mentioned above. The result was the emergence in the late nineteenth century of what in Nigeria was called the African Church Movement. As Horton writes, "Yoruba congregations resented the European monopoly of church authority; and their resentment was exacerbated by strongly authoritarian patterns of church organization."[30]

In southern Africa there were similar collective efforts to extend Africans' control over the organization of religious life, beginning in 1892 with what were called "Ethiopian Churches".[31] These were inspired by American forerunners such as the African Methodist Episcopal Church and became part of African liberation movements.[32] These churches, later termed "African Initiated Churches" in religious studies scholarship, emerged as forms of resistance against their subordination, the segregation of white and black congregations and the incipient modes of proto-apartheid that they represented.[33] New forms of Christian prophecy arose that questioned European prerogatives to define ritual and doctrine and the mission churches' denial of the existence of African spirit worlds. In the eyes of Marxist anthropologists, these churches paved the way for trans- or post-tribal African solidarities and affiliations and therefore became one of the ideological

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30 R. Horton, "African Conversion", *Africa* 41 (1971) 2, pp. 85–108, at 86.

31 B.G.M. Sundkler, *Bantu Prophets in South Africa*, 2nd edn, Cambridge: James Clarke & Co, 2004, pp. 56ff.

32 G. Oosthuizen, "Indigenous Christianity and the Future of the Church in South Africa", *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 21 (1997), pp. 8–12, at 8.

33 N. Etherington, "The Historical Sociology of Independent Churches in South East Africa", *Journal of Religion in Africa* 10 (1979) 2, pp. 108–126, at 120–121.

carriers of African nationalism.[34] Thereby they signalled a crucial moment in the emancipation of Christianity from European colonialism.[35]

Towards the middle of the twentieth century, the rise of Zionist churches – another and more lasting secessionist movement – gave further impetus to the Africanization of Protestantism. Also viewed as "healing churches", they insisted on their prophets' abilities to identify the roots of this-worldly misfortunes and to remedy them through divine healing, drawing on syncretic combinations of worship of the (Christian) Holy Spirit and ancestral spirits.[36] The most pronounced, and since the 1990s most influential, form of African Christianity of Protestant origin has been Pentecostalism. Each of these appropriations of Protestant Christianity both *depended upon and reinforced* the invention and promotion of new material forms. As African pastors became more numerous, they multiplied their ministries in African towns and villages, "planting" ever more churches. While schools and hospitals remained important elements of missionary Protestantism's material form (until nationalized in some African countries after independence), they lost their significance in African-led churches. Instead, for these churches, bible colleges became more central places. At the same time, urbanization processes decidedly changed Protestantism's spatial configuration. In Southern Africa, it came along with new binaries whereby Protestantism came to be seen as an urban religion and cities, more generally, as Christian spaces.[37]

In these cities, since at least the 1970s the "tent revival" has been a major element in the repertoire of evangelical Christianity and has embodied a spatial form that emphasizes "placelessness", in other words, the notion that people who heard and responded to the call of the Holy Spirit come together in an improvised, non-permanent place to worship God. Simultaneously, spatial strategies were geared towards other non-permanent, or less permanent, material forms. As new churches began to mushroom, pastors in inner cities began to rent space for worship rather than building from scratch. The outcome was the storefront church. In suburban or peri-urban areas and informal settlements, by contrast, building has remained the norm, but the imaginaries and practices of building have changed.

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34 J. Comaroff, *Body of Power Spirit of Resistance: The Culture and History of a South African People*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985.

35 T.O. Beidelman, *Colonial Evangelism: A Socio-Historical Study of an East African Mission at the Grassroots*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982.

36 J.P. Kiernan, "The African Independent Churches", in: M. Prozesky and J.W. de Gruchy (eds.), *Living Faiths in South Africa*, Cape Town: David Philip, 1995, pp. 116–128, at 126.

37 P. Mayer, *Townsmen or Tribesmen: Conservatism and the Process of Urbanization in a South African City*, Cape Town: Oxford University Press, 1971.

Most of the Pentecostal churches in the informal settlements that continue to sprawl in Southern and Eastern Africa were constructed out of used leftover materials: pieces of wood, fibre boards, corrugated iron, pieces of plastic and canvas covers of all kinds. These were objects, that residents or members of congregations found in the open veld as leftovers from abandoned construction sites or buildings. But they were also sold by petty rubbish entrepreneurs, who tried to make a living out of collecting and trading these parts, knowing that demand clearly exceeded supply. Interestingly, though perhaps not surprisingly, these were the same kinds of materials that newly arriving residents of informal settlements used to build their first small houses. In other words, church constructions strongly resembled residential homes and other buildings in these areas. From the outside it was usually nearly impossible to tell whether a building was a home or a church. This resemblance, however, was a reflection not only of material scarcity and necessity but also of the multifunctional nature of these places.

Through such spatial and material transformations, the mission station was gradually unbundled. This unbundling made possible the rise of the flamboyant variety of spatial repertoires and sacred geographies that has become one of the hallmarks of contemporary African Pentecostalism on the continent and beyond.

In an ironic turning of the tables, some African Pentecostal churches have adopted the historical Protestant emphasis on map-making not only in their efforts to plant churches, win converts, and save souls in Africa but also in the reverse mission campaigns in Europe. As the work of Afe Adogame[38] and Kim Knibbe[39] shows, mapping Christian and heathen territories is a practice with profound theological implications for churches such as Nigeria's Redeemed Christian Church of Christ. One of its official goals is to "plant churches within five [sic] minutes' walking distance in every city and town of developing countries and within five [sic] minutes' driving distance in every city and town of developed countries".[40] As Knibbe argues, "'producing locality' is not the unintentional by-product of everyday routines and spatial practices but the outcome of a process that I want to characterize as mapping, creating persuasive images of the space in which people find themselves, their location and role in it. These maps are not 'just'

38 A. Adogame, "Raising Champions, Taking Territories: African Churches and the Mapping of New Religious Landscapes in Diaspora", in: T.L. Trost (ed.), *The African Diaspora and the Study of Religion*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007, pp. 17–34.
39 K. Knibbe, "'We Did Not Come Here as Tenants, but as Landlords': Nigerian Pentecostals and the Power of Maps", *African Diaspora* 2 (2009) 2, pp. 133–158.
40 Ibid., p. 148.

rhetorical devices, but can mobilize people's imaginations, resources, and time to create 'facts on the ground'".[41]

In addition, similar to traditional healers, Pentecostal pastors engage in practices that map urban spaces according to their spiritual value and in relation to the kind of danger that might occur at specific sites. Through prayer walks and other ritual practices, they seek to transform urban spaces into safe spaces.[42] Such *place-protective practices* constitute one of the most immediate and powerful ways in which Pentecostalism plays out in urban space. Engaging as they do with the very concrete materiality of the city, Pentecostal practices of prayer and blessing reflect forms of making religion publicly visible at specific urban sites that Pentecostals view as morally dangerous or spiritually uncanny. Identifying these sites as having these negative qualities, Pentecostals mobilize a complex set of theological ideas and moral norms, which leads them to understand material manifestations of misfortune as being the result of witchcraft, in other words: of malign spiritual forces.

Conclusions

Although in the long run missionary Protestantism did succeed in establishing itself in African society, it is important to recall that this was by no means a straightforward development. Instead, early missionary efforts were mostly frustrated, and in many cases, missionaries failed to win converts. Moreover, one could justifiably question whether the current transformations of Christian landscapes in Africa support the idea of the successful spread of Protestantism, or whether it was rather the case that the more Protestant Christianity was embedded in African institutional life and subjectivities, the less Protestant it became. Nevertheless, there are lessons to be learnt about how its spread in Africa, regardless of the theological transformations that occurred in its wake, hinged upon entwinements with spatial formats and material forms.

First, as the analysis has shown, material forms function as building blocks of spatial formats – but can support and be inserted into more than one spatial format at the same time. Mission stations were part of colonizing nation states and their imperial annex-spaces. But they were also critical elements in commercial

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41 Ibid., p. 147.
42 M. Burchardt, "Pentecostal Productions of Locality: Urban Risks and Spiritual Protection in Cape Town", in: D. Garbin and A. Strhan (eds.), *Religion and the Global City*, London: Bloomsbury, 2017, pp. 78–94.

and trade networks. This suggests that different spatial actors – industrialists and trading companies as well as European national governments – enlisted mission stations in their own spatial projects. At the same time, missionaries used the opportunities that these spatial projects offered in terms of saving souls and successively transforming their religious maps.

Second, it was the *flexibility* and *creativity* in the imagination and elaboration of material forms and the enactment of religious ideas that afforded them collective meaning, thereby contributing to the success of Protestant Christianity. While the mission station was instrumental in anchoring Protestant Christianity at some point, its later demise opened up spaces for the rise of a host of other material forms (tents, storefront churches, megachurches, prayer camps, and prayer cities), which, together with other factors, eventually facilitated the spectacular rise of charismatic Christianity at the global level. The burgeoning anthropological literature on Pentecostalism, space, and materiality reflects this. However, in order to make far-reaching theoretical claims about the entwinement of material forms, spatial formats, and the ability of transnational religious movements to embed themselves in new societies, it would be necessary to explore cases in which failed religious efforts were linked to the lack of creativity or adaptability in producing material forms.