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doi:10.1017/S0022278X2200009X

'The memory of persecution is in our blood': documenting loyalties, identities and motivations to political action in the Ugandan Pentecostal Movement

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ABSTRACT

Much attention has been paid to the growth of Pentecostal-charismatic Christianity in Uganda and the way it has shifted over the past decades from being a minority religion to influencing and shaping the Ugandan public and political spheres. Most of the literature, however, associates the Pentecostal-charismatic dynamic public action with its motivation to promote conservative Christian values, especially around issues of sexuality, HIV/AIDS, reproduction and family values. This article extends this literature by providing a fuller explanation for the reasons behind its public transformation and its relation to power, in particular its loyalty to and support for President Museveni. Drawing on participant observation and interviews conducted over several years, this article argues that along with theological and moral explanations, it is important to understand how local and contextual dynamics interplay. Indeed, the uncertainties and memories of the difficult origins of the Pentecostal-charismatic movement and the lack of legal recognition as fully registered churches, still impact on the present and motivate them to be catalytic socio-political actors in need of forging strong connections with centres of power in Museveni's Uganda.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0022278X2200009X Published online by Cambridge University Press

INTRODUCTION

Entering the gate of Miracle Centre Cathedral, the largest Pentecostal[1] mega-church in Uganda, for the Sunday service at 8.00 am, I was carefully searched by armed guards with metal detectors (Sunday 17 February 2013, Kampala). They checked all my belongings, asked a few general questions about where I was from, why I was there, if it was my first time and then they moved on to the taxi that was taking me to church in the leafy and green hill of Rubaga in Kampala. Churchgoers were stopping by the long marquee at the right side of the main door not only to buy books and CDs by Pastor Robert and Pastor Jessica Kayanja, but also bars of soap, notebooks and other memorabilia with the logo of Miracle Centre, now a fashionable brand. After all, this is a church well known in the country for its glitz and glamour, at its services as well as at the frequent fashion shows and gala events organised by Pastor Jessica.

The service focused on Genesis 25:21, Genesis 27:1 and Genesis 27:23. The sermon, led by Pastor Jessica, centred on the story of Rebecca, Isaac and their sons Jacob and Esau, and the message was about broken promises and on the meaning of sacrifice, the difficulties of understanding our own path in life and the importance of keeping the faith. The passages that she read were projected on the maxi screen behind her. Through the microphone she said:

> People looked at this church [Miracle Centre], at people going to this church for the way we were dressed [with reference to the poor origins of this religious community]. But we have overtaken. It looked like we did not qualify, but we sacrificed … At the beginning this was a papyrus church, a *kiwenpe* church [poor church with no building]. At the time people would look at us and wonder what we were doing. We were not qualified by the look, by what we were saying, but we had our hands. We were qualified by our hands [reference to Jacob showing his hand to his father Isaac in Genesis 27]. The Lord knows your hand. We started to serve God. We started a small group here; there were four of us working hard. People were saying 'who are those ones singing like Americans?'

The origins of Miracle Centre are modest and a very different affair from the current mega building that accommodates 10,500 seats with Pastor Robert Kayanja an internationally acclaimed gospel preacher. As Pastor Jessica expressed in her sermon, these churches that spread across Uganda along with the third wave of Pentecostalism (Kalu 2008) were initially lacking in resources and were identified as poor religious communities. They were, in fact, commonly called *kiwempe* churches (*biwempe* in Luganda), or papyrus churches, as they were named after the simple papyrus reed structures used instead of proper brick buildings (Kalu 2008: 15). In the early days they were also known as *Mungu ni Mwena* churches, from the *Kiswahili* lyrics 'know that God is good', which was repeatedly sung with clapping by these church members in the street (Musana 2017: 102).

Pastor Jessica Kayanja's sermon highlights one important issue that is central in understanding the complex and diverse Ugandan Pentecostal movement that

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0022278X2200009X Published online by Cambridge University Press

emerged and spread towards the end of the 20th century. This is the importance of the memory of the genesis and struggle of the movement as minority churches emerging in an era of national devastation and then reconstruction, and as churches of humble means and limited resources in a hostile religious landscape already predominantly divided between Anglicans and Catholics.[2] Another fundamental issue is their difficult relationship to politics, and the hardship, fear and uncertainty experienced in the early days due to the direct persecution experienced under Idi Amin's regime when those churches were banned and oppressed (Pirouet 1980). From the outset Amin attempted to control and put pressure on all of Uganda's religious communities. In February 1977, for example, soldiers burst into the house of Anglican Archbishop Janani Luwum and interrogated him about a supposed plot to overthrow the regime. A week later the archbishop was arrested and then 'disappeared' (Leopold 2020: 276). In the early 1970s dozens of Catholic Combonis fathers were expelled by the Amin regime for their social political activism (Earle & Carney 2021: 31). However, according to Omara-Otunnu (1987) Anglican, Catholic and Muslim leaders remained relatively free to express their views as long as they did not stray from religious issues, while other not-officially-recognised religious groups, as the Pentecostals, were banned and had to operate underground to escape the threat of persecution. The feeling of uncertainty for those churches continued during the unstable times of the Obote II regime (1980–85), as narrated by Pastor Michael Kyazze from Omega Healing Church: 'There was no legality in practicing religion, people were still scared even when Idi Amin was gone, it was difficult. Guerrilla fighters during Obote II infiltrated in the new growing churches. The government was spying on us' (30 August 2019, Namasuba). It is only in the Museveni era that Pentecostals felt free to operate openly and subsequently flourish, as frequently recalled by participants.

> It was not until this president [Museveni] came in that there was freedom of worship. This nation went through serious oppression, and we could not find freedom. But this oppression prepared our nation for the great [Pentecostal] movement that you see today. After the 1986 transition, when the president took over, we had an opportunity, a pruning ground to usher in the revival you are seeing today. (Interview with a pastor, Life Line Ministries, 28 May 2013, Kampala)

The narrative of Museveni as the protector of the Pentecostal movement is so frequently re-stated in these religious circles that also younger generations, with no memories of the hardship of the origins, are accepting and influenced by it.

> The pastors tell their congregation, many of whom are young, that in the past it was so difficult to have freedom to pray and that now we have this freedom. This makes Museveni appear so great, so the Pentecostals must keep him for fear. Even though the young people do not remember, and even if their parents were not Pentecostal then. That they are told they must pray for the continued freedom under the

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President and pray that the government does not change. (Interview with a journalist, *New Vision*, 23 May 2013, Kampala)

Much academic attention has been paid to the role of the HIV/AIDS pandemic in catapulting Pentecostal churches into the Ugandan public sphere (Sadgrove 2007; Gusman 2009; Cooper 2014; Boyd 2015; Valois 2015; Bompani 2016). At the beginning of the 21st century, they were well placed to access international funding and gain influence as local 'moral' actors given the political shift towards values such as abstinence and personal responsibility within funding streams such as the United States President's Emergency Plan for HIV/AIDS Relief (PEPFAR). This gave them the platform, and funding, to become visible, active public actors in Uganda, where they have continued to play this role, for example in launching 'moral' campaigns such as the crusade in support of the Anti-Homosexuality Bill (Bompani 2016). However, there are further contextual reasons that need to be unpacked in order to understand these religious communities' transformation into socio-political actors. First, the memory of their arduous origins, frequently articulated by religious leaders and church members, functions as a form of unifying foundational story that offers a shared identity and commonality to the otherwise diverse and frequently divided Ugandan Pentecostal community. Second, the anxiety generated by the memory of persecution at the hands of past political establishments and the feeling of uncertainty due to their legal status (as presented later in the article) are also important elements in understanding their involvement with politics and their vocal support of the Museveni regime in the present, in an attempt to seek protection and secure their legal recognition 'as their counterparts, the mainline churches'. This article aims to shed light on these understudied dynamics arguing that, along with theological and moral preoccupations, it is important to understand historical dimensions that continue to influence these churches in the present day. While its global character and international connections are important in understanding the Pentecostal movement, this article argues that it is also crucial to understand the contextual, micro-political interaction between churches and their relationship to the state, and to politics, in order to fully grasp their motivations and conditions that allowed them to become energetic public actors in contemporary Uganda.[3]

THE 'UNEASY' ORIGINS OF THE PENTECOSTAL MOVEMENT IN UGANDA

'The Pentecostal movement started in Uganda in the 1960s. The missionaries who initiated the movement in Kampala came from Vancouver, Canada. They came because their church received a vision to go to Uganda in 1955.' These are the words of Pastor Jotham Mutebi in describing the origins of his church, Makerere Full Gospel Church, not far from Makerere University main campus (interview with Jotham Mutebi, 30 August 2019, Kampala). The sounds of the heavy tropical rain and of the church chorus practicing on the

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0022278X2200009X Published online by Cambridge University Press

nearby redbrick building on a typical day at the church, almost drown out the feeble voice of the elderly pastor who was generously helping me to piece together the history of the Pentecostal movement in Uganda through his recollections and experiences. The missionary call from the Canadian church that Pastor Mutebi mentioned refers to Pastors Hugh and Audrey Layzell from the Glad Tidings Temple in Vancouver, who were sent by their mother church to plant a new religious community in Uganda after a church member, the assistant of the senior pastor, had a vision. In the *Gospel of Power* (Layzell & Layzell 2014: XX), an autobiography by the Layzells on their mission and time in East Africa, Maureen Gagliardi, the senior pastor's assistant narrates:

I felt the Spirit of God speak to me saying: 'I will lead this people yet to another country'. My immediate response was – which one? But no answer came. For the remainder of that day I fully expected the Lord to indicate the country to which He referred. As Sunday drew to a close, I began to realise that the answer would only come in God's own time and I would wait for it. The following Tuesday, as we stood to worship and praise God in our evening service, a foreign and unknown word appeared to me in vision. The word was 'UGANDA' in large dark letters with a light shining around them, similar in appearance to a meta sign with neon tubing behind giving an indirect lighting effect.

They then looked for the country on the map of Africa as, she recalled, she did not know where it was. They enquired with the Canadian government whether it would have been possible to travel and plant a church there. The answer was that 'it would be difficult, if not impossible, to get into that country' (Layzell & Layzell 2014: XXI). Pastor Layzell subsequently wrote to the British authorities in Uganda, at the time still a British protectorate, with the purpose of gaining permission to start a Pentecostal mission in the country. The request was denied with a reply that made it clear that the Anglicans and the Roman Catholics were the established churches and that they would remain the only Christian missions in the country. The Layzell family embarked anyway for East Africa, while waiting for a more positive response from Uganda. In 1956 they arrived in Kenya and hosted by other already established evangelical missionary churches from North America, they started to preach the gospel in Mombasa. In 1960,[4] under new global political circumstances amid the crumbling of colonialism, the Layzells finally received the necessary permit to undertake missionary work in Kampala (Layzell & Layzell 2014) where they stayed for 13 years, until Idi Amin's hostile policies towards foreigners and non 'traditional' churches (as the more established mainline churches are called in Uganda) were implemented at the end of the second year of his regime.

'Full Gospel Church missionaries were forced to leave and the church in Uganda became independent [from the Canadian mother church] in 1973, in April. We still receive some support but we are fully independent. When Idi Amin was overthrown in 1979, we reopened our churches and we started to operate normally' (interview with Jotham Mutebi, 30 August 2019, Kampala). Indeed, in 1973 Idi Amin banned 11 churches, or as they were

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0022278X2200009X Published online by Cambridge University Press

defined then, 'sects, with the accusation of being 'unlawful societies'' (Musana 2017: 106). Full Gospel Church was amongst these churches. In 1977 the ban was extended to another 27 churches and religious organisations, mostly Pentecostal, with the claim that they had international connections, especially with the USA, and they were undertaking underground politics in the country (Musana 2017). Idi Amin's 'paranoia' towards foreigners during his regime has already been well documented (Leopold 2020: 238). According to Kevin Ward, however, Amin was not preoccupied with the international connections of these churches, but was fearful of the potential of churches to create and multiply new centres of power, centres that could create opposition to his regime (Ward 2005: 115).

During our conversation, Pastor Mutebi confirmed that the colonial government did not welcome new churches into Uganda at the time. He mentioned the fact that the Anglican Church, through its political connections, fought hard to stop new forms of Christianity entering the country. The Head of the Anglican Church in Uganda at the time, Bishop Leslie Wilfrid Brown (1953–1965),[5] was previously stationed in India where Pentecostalism was growing since its introduction in the early 20th century, against the backdrop of the first wave of the global Movement. Several North American Pentecostal missionaries who had participated in the Azusa Street Revival visited India, from 1909 onwards. In the 1920s the missionary Robert F. Cook established the Indian branch of the Church of God in Kerala where, in those years, Brown became the Principal of the Kerala United Theological Seminary, after serving in the Diocese of Travancore and Cochin on the Malabar coast of India. After his experience in India, the bishop was preoccupied by the rapid Pentecostal expansion and he did not want to see the repetition of a similar flourishing in Uganda (from the letters of Bishop Brown, Divinity Library, Yale University, online, accessed on 5 March 2021). Historically both the Anglican and Catholic Churches enjoyed a near duopoly on the Ugandan religious landscape since Christianity first took hold in the Buganda monarchy (Mockler-Ferryman 1903), and played an key role in national politics (Ward 2008: 73–87). The colonial powers favoured the Anglican Church and Protestant chiefs, giving them access to land and working to retain their authority, creating much animus amongst the Catholics, the biggest religious group, and Muslims (Kasozi *et al.* 1994). The Anglican Church was perceived as a direct ally of the State also during the first decades of post-independence (Gifford 2000: 105) and this was institutionalised through the creation of Obote's Ugandan People's Congress (UPC) which was intrinsically linked to the Anglican Church of Uganda, while the opposition party, the Democratic Party (DP), also known as *Diini ya Papa* (religion of the Pope, see Alava & Ssentongo 2016: 680) has connections rooted in the Catholic Church (Ward 2005: 112). In the middle of the 20th century, newcomers, such as the Pentecostal churches, were perceived as a danger to those established gravitational centres.

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The Ugandan public was not new to charismatic expressions as it was already familiar with the popular East African Revival started in the 1930s in the region (Kalu 2008: 96). Revivalists were known for the conversion experiences of their members, the strong focus on discipleship and the individual's full and open confession of sins, including sexual sins (Bruner 2017), and for the chorus frequently sung in the street '*Tukutendereza Yesu*' (Musana 2017). Although these two movements remain distinct, terminologically, Ugandan Pentecostals are also commonly called *Balokole*, the 'saved ones' in Luganda, as the members of the charismatics of the Revival were defined. With similarities to Evangelical awakenings in European and American Protestantism of the 18th and 19th centuries, the East African Revival remained loyal to the Anglican Church of Uganda despite their criticism of the Church's 'hypocrisy', connections with colonial power (Peterson 2012), 'sleepiness', and incapacity to address social and political issues that emerged with the modernisation process of the early 20th century (Ward 1989). Most of the *Balokole* kept attending Sunday service in church, and attended the sacrament of Holy Communion, had marriages and baptised their children in church. After Independence, the period when Pentecostals started to appear in the country, *Balokole* became increasingly integrated into the life of the Church of Uganda where most of the high clergy came from the *Balokole* tradition. Perhaps the two best known churchmen from the Revival were Festo Kivengere and Janani Luwum who were assassinated in 1977 for challenging Amin's regime. When the Pentecostals started to establish themselves in the country in the 1980s, they were the main charismatic expressions in the streets of Kampala.

These were the challenging times of reconstruction. Miracles and the healing power attributed to the Pentecostal churches are recognised by many in the field as the driving force for their proliferation in the turmoil of the early post-colonial and reconstruction era:

> We suffered from many diseases in this country. Not just malaria and typhoid. Also, spiritual diseases. We did not have remedies for these spiritual diseases until the (Pentecostal) Church arrived. There were many people traumatised and there was a lot of poverty. There was the need for a lot of spiritual healing. We did not have money, we often simply sat on the ground [on papyrus mats]. It must have looked weird to see overflows of people sitting on the ground without a building. The main drive was the speaking in tongues, miracles, being healed … people found it different and it became a magnet. (Interview with Michael Kyazze, 30 August 2019, Namasuba)

'People were looking for signs and miracles in those times' reiterated Bishop Lubinga from the Remnants Haven Ministries International when discussing the origins of the movement (interview with Dickson Lubinga, 27 August 2019, Kampala). Miracles are an intrinsic and crucial component of Pentecostal theologies and praxes (Mohr 2013; Bialeki 2017). Miracles, as well as the presence of the Holy Spirit, the urge towards conversion and to

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evangelise while fulfilling God's plan (Marshall 2010: 206), are central in the Pentecostal experience of faith. Pentecostalism indeed could be presented as a culture of the miraculous emerging in late modernity (Comaroff 2009). In the Ugandan context of the post-Amin era where 'the everyday often has a truly apocalyptic quality' (Marshall 2010: 206), miracles represented a spiritual state of rapture from the adverse reality and an experience of holy grace in the adversities of the everyday (Marshall 2010).

But miracles in this Ugandan Christian community also play a unique role in providing a historical account of the genesis of the movement, an explanation of the successful planting and spread of those religious communities in particularly tormented times in the battered region. Miracles were not only associated with healing, but they were also testifying that Pentecostals' presence in the country was part of God's plan as these churches operated under the 'miracle of protection', as narrated by several participants, with divine forces allowing them to plant new communities and proliferate during times of terrible turmoil and hardship. The narrative that Pentecostalism could be initiated in the country in such difficult times through 'the miracle of protection' functioned as a sort of communal unifying story within such a diverse community of churches. For example, Pastor Symon Kayiwa, while living underground in the Namirembe Hills in 1977 (where he more recently built the Namirembe Christian Fellowship) kept an account of the miracles that were happening in the midst of social suffering as a testimonial of God's will and protection to those churches, a booklet later published under the title *Working Miracles* (Kalu 2008: 96). Stories of angels appearing on the roof of the Full Gospel Church, people hearing Pentecostal singing in deserted places, stories of preachers being shielded from bullets by invisible forces, and the sudden conversion of soldiers in the act of killing or punishing Pentecostal believers, are repeated amongst those churches. One of the most recounted stories is of the car accident involving General Mustafa Adrisi, who was vice president under Idi Amin (1977–78).[6] Pastor Mutebi recounted when, during Easter 1978, congregants met at the Full Gospel Church, despite the regime's ban. The local authorities found out and sent soldiers to the church:

> They took around 250 of us to the infamous Nakasero State Research Bureau. We spent a night there, but the day after they released some, young boys and young girls. Those ones who they recognised from the magazines as leaders of the church, were taken to Lusira maximum security prison. I was one of them. We have been told by Christian guards there in prison that their plan was to throw us in the lake [Lake Victoria] alive in sacks to kill us. But the miracle happened! The vice president [General *Mustafa* Adrisi, Vice President of Uganda from 1977 to 1978] who was also the Minister of Internal Affairs at the time, was coming back to Kampala to sign the order to kill us. On the day he was going to do it, he had a terrible accident. Later we were transferred to the police station. (Pastor Jotham Mutebi, 30 August 2019, Kampala)

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Bishop Lubinga reported that Adrisi said to Amin: 'Be careful of the born-agains, those people have power!' (Bishop Dickson Lubinga, August 2019, Kampala). The myth of the 'miracle of protection' and troubled origins play an important role in motivating churches' public actions in contemporary Uganda as it is around those shared stories that they find common cause that allow them to overcome their diversity and organise together. However, how their public role should be organised seems to be an element of contention and division.

Indeed, the importance of the spontaneous, bottom-up, unstructured and bold approach of the early days are still important motifs within the element of the Ugandan Pentecostal movement that dislikes the idea of creating a structured organisation, with a hierarchy and internal regulations that emulate the Anglican and Catholic counterparts (as discussed in the following section). These supporters of the 'simple faith', as it has been defined (Musana 2017: 107), also do not regard – to differing degrees – theological education and preparation as necessary. Contrariwise, some Ugandan Pentecostal churches, generally organised around Pastor Joseph Serwadda and his federation of churches, are strongly committed to regulating the education of clergy and developing an institutional unified body able to better access centres of power and to promote the interests, and secure the existence, of the Pentecostal community in the country. 'The memory of the persecutions is in our blood, it was an ugly experience being persecuted by the state. That is why we want to settle. In Rwanda they closed down one thousand churches [referring to closure of Pentecostal churches failing to comply with building regulations and for noise pollution in 2018]. I know that our president [Museveni] is different from Kagame, but we do not know who is coming after' (interview with Dickson Lubinga, 27 August 2019, Kampala). These contentious perceptions and discussions within the Pentecostal movement will be discussed in the following section.

IDENTITY AND BELONGING WITHIN THE PENTECOSTAL MOVEMENT

Belonging matters in religious affairs. Within the relatively young and very diverse Ugandan Christian Pentecostal community it is rare for churches to come together and overcome their differences, something that generally happens only around moral campaigns and fights to secure their collective legal recognition. For example, as explained by a pastor:

> We [Pentecostals] are together when we discuss certain issues, certain challenges. And other issues, due to our religious freedom, divide us and we divert. With the Bahati Bill [Anti-homosexuality Bill] you have seen all the Pentecostal churches coming together and saying the same thing … Another thing that makes us united is some political issues. For example, the government requires us to register every year while the Protestant, the Catholic and the Orthodox don't! We found that our freedom has been limited. (Pentecostal pastor, 10 February 2013, Namuwongo)

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These contestations within the movement are driven by differences that have historical, theological and spatial roots,[7] as well as leadership clashes between pastors. The Ugandan public is accustomed to hostility amongst Pentecostal pastors and public disputes, sometimes even ending up in court, in what became known as the 'pastors war'. One of the most famous cases of public confrontation amongst pastors illustrates the tensions within this religious community. Between February and April 2009, some young men linked to the Miracle Centre Cathedral accused Pastor Robert Kayanja of sexual abuse. Accusations of sexual immorality are not infrequent amongst pastors (Tamale 2009: 49–57; Valois 2016). These young men sought and found spiritual and financial support in challenging Robert Kayanja from four well-known Pentecostal pastors, Solomon Male, Bob Robert Kayiira, Michael Kyazze and Martin Ssempa, all of whom have strong connections with the influential National Fellowship of Born-Again Pentecostal Churches (NFBPC) of Uganda. Pastor Joseph Serwadda of the Victory Christian Centre and leader of the equally influential Born-Again Faith Federation (BAFF) in Uganda strongly rejected accusations against Kayanja in those years, along with other supporters of Kayanja, accusing rivals of seeking to damage his reputation ahead of a visit by popular American preacher Benny Hinn, hugely popular in the country, to his church (Tamale 2009). The four pastors were later charged with filing false accusations against Kayanja when the young men withdrew their accusations. The legal case concluded with the four pastors being accused of defaming Pastor Kayanja and they were sentenced to 100 hours of community service. In December 2019, 10 years later, Pastor Michael Kyazze used social media to apologise to Pastor Kayanja and his family for his role in the court case, calling for forgiveness. The Kayanja affair highlights the ways in which political alliances play out and evolve within the Pentecostal movement in Uganda, underlining that this is not by any means a coherent, organised religious institution of one voice. Following these, sometimes messy, machinations and making sense of them, is certainly a challenge for any external observer.

A further division within the community is the history of planting of churches, with a clear distinction between those planted in the second and in the third waves of global Pentecostalism (Asamoah-Gyadu 2002).[8] Throughout the second wave of global Pentecostalism new churches were planted in Uganda through missionary work in the 1950s and 1960s. These churches are generally more formally organised with, for example, councils of elders (Isiko 2019: 101) and formal theological training. The third wave of global Pentecostalism, that had a huge influence on the growth of African charismatic Christianity, initiated a far greater number of churches towards the end of the 1970s and 1980s. Churches of the third wave viewed second wave churches in often derogatory terms – as 'international' or 'missionary' in contrast with their 'local' and 'spontaneous' origins. Second wave churches view their origins with pride and with a sense of 'establishment', 'organisation' and 'status' conferred through their connections with international churches and sometimes also resources. For

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example, in the words of Pastor Mutebi of the Full Gospel Church (the first Pentecostal Church planted in Uganda):

> We are not from the third wave. PAG (Pentecostal Assemblies of God)[9] is from Azusa, the first revival. Papyrus churches came during the 80s. These are indigenous churches that emerged when the economic conditions in the country were terrible. There was no material to buy and to build proper buildings. They used papyrus to build their churches. We were not papyrus churches. We had our own buildings (Interview with Joseph Mutebi, 2019, Kampala)

Immediately after the establishment of the Full Gospel Church, other Pentecostal churches arrived. Elim Church was planted in Uganda in 1961 through the work of American missionaries, Arthur and May Dodzweit, of the Elim Missionary Assemblies (EMA) (Center for Global Christianity and Mission, online resource). In 1967 the Kenyan evangelist Joseph Kayo started the Young Christian Ambassadors' fellowship in Nabumali, Eastern Uganda. This vibrant fellowship grew between 1969 and 1971, when the Amin regime prevented further expansion. The 'Young Christian Ambassadors' later became the Deliverance Church in Uganda (Musana 2017: 105). The Redeemed Church arrived in 1972 in Kibuye, an area within the capital city, through the preaching of an international charismatic pastor, John Obiri Yeboah, a well-known prophet from Ghana (Gifford 1998: 157–68) who left Kampala at the time of Idi Amin, famously prophesying that the dictator would fall in 1979. While at the airport, prophet Obiri famously left his shoes outside the aircraft saying: 'Even the dust of the city (Kampala) is not fit to stay with [me]' (interview with Dickson Lubinga, 27 August 2019, Kampala).[10]

Common origins and similarities in structure and theological underpinnings draw together second wave churches, giving them a sense of belonging, which in contemporary times is organised and given voice through the Evangelical Fellowship of Uganda (EFU), to which PAG is also affiliated. The EFU, initiated in 1995, is known for not being as 'politically active' and engaged in public debates. More recent, third wave, Pentecostal-charismatic churches, emerging from the turmoil of the 1970s and the 1980s (often also known as 'indigenous born-again churches'), are largely organised into two affiliations:[11] The National Fellowship of Born-again and Pentecostal Churches (NFBPC), led by Bishop Joshua Lwere since 2013, and the Born-Again Faith Federation (BAFF) led since its origin by Dr Joseph Serwadda. In 1989, only three years after Museveni came to power, Dr Paul Kawanga Semwogerere, who at the time was the Minister of Internal Affairs, Dr Kizza Besigye, the then Minister of State, and Ibrahim Mukiibi, the then Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, proposed a new bill to govern and regulate non-governmental organisation (NGO) activities in Uganda. The bill was passed into law the year after through the Non-Governmental Organizations Registration Act, requiring all NGOs to register under the Ministry of Internal Affairs. 'Untraditional' churches (in the Ugandan sense of all the non-mainline missionary churches such as the Anglican and the Roman Catholic Church)

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including Evangelical-Pentecostal churches, were required to register under this law.[12]

The early Pentecostal churches such as Elim, Full Gospel Church, Deliverance Church and those others under the PAG umbrella had initially registered under the Ministry of Justice as trustees and companies because they needed to have some legal basis. In 1990, all churches were required to register under the new NGO Act and they had to cancel and invalidate their previous certificates to renew as non-governmental organisations. The certification lasted for one year, to be renewed annually, making the process time-consuming and bureaucratic (to register as an NGO costs approximately 100,000 Ugandan shillings). Many small churches overcame this through affiliating to existing churches (fieldwork interviews, 2013–2014; 2019). In order to complete the registration, founders and directors have to show proof of Ugandan citizenship.

In the same year of the Non-Governmental Organizations Registration Law, the National Fellowship of Born-Again Pentecostal Churches (NFBPC) was established, partly as a response to the new legislation. It was originally started by Simeon Kayiwa, head of the Namirembe Christian Fellowship, and Dr Joseph Serwadda of Victory Christian Church, amongst others, with Simeon becoming the chairperson, and Serwadda the General Secretary. NFBPC was initially started as an idea of the then Minister for Security, Balaki Kirya; as a Pentecostal believer himself with connections to the political establishment, he advised Serwadda and Kayiwa to start an organisation that would represent the diverse community and liaise with the government in post-reconstruction Uganda, at the time still defined by suspicions against these rapidly growing unstructured religious organisations. Furthermore, Kirya advised the formalisation of the churches' more practical work such as the delivery of health, education and other assistance to their members. 'At that time the government were interested in security and the *Balokole* [i.e. Pentecostals][13] were looked on as a security threat because little was known about them. So, in order to get the government to understand what they were doing and what they were about, Kirya advised Serwadda and Kayiwa to organise as a fellowship' (Semakula Gyagenda, at the time personal assistant to Presiding Apostle Serwadda, 11 June 2013, Kampala). As we will see in the following section, in the period of early reconstruction the ruling party (National Resistant Movement (NRM)) and Museveni were suspicious of churches as independent centres of power (Ward 2008), as groups in need of control (Bompani 2018). The relationship with Pentecostal churches started to change and they gained presidential trust later on when it became clear that they could become allies and liaise between state and society (Bompani 2018).

Respondents described the first decade of the National Federation as not particularly significant, as the NFBPC was mainly providing support to their own churches in difficult times and not trying to develop a strong political and public voice. Furthermore, membership of the National Fellowship was nominal and church members were not formally registered or bound to it. In March 2000, though, with the national and international visibility of the

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Restoration of the Ten Commandments of God cult, led by Father Joseph Kibwetere, Father Dominic Kataribabo, Father Paul Ikazire and Sister Credonia Mwerimde, the National Fellowship became more active in support and in defence of the Ugandan Pentecostal community. The cult was established in Kanungu, in the Western region and regularly registered as a Pentecostal church under the NGO Registration Act.[14] On 17 March 2000 the news broke on national media that the membership committed mass suicide while other bodies were found in the proximity of the church building, totalling 799 deaths (Venter 2006). The NFBPC became vocal in dissociating this cult from the Pentecostal community. 'So, the National Fellowship resurrected, and comes back from inactivity, to come out with a statement that they were remobilising and disowning this man [Kibweterere], because everyone associated this man with *Balokole*. The National Fellowship resurrected itself to fight against this association' (Semakula Gyagenda, 11 June 2013, Kampala).

In 2001 the National Fellowship invited President Museveni to attend a service at Prof. Simeon Kaywa's church, the Namirembe Christian Fellowship. This is recorded as the first, of many, presidential appearances in Pentecostal churches. It was during the electoral campaign and in front of the church membership that the President was asked to remove the annual renewal for Pentecostal churches through the NGOs Regulation Act, as it was creating a dual treatment for different Christian denominations in the country, as mainline churches were exempted from doing so as they had been registered as trusts and not NGOs (Isiko 2019). 'And according to Article 29 of 1C of the Constitution, there should be freedom of worship in Uganda, and this should be properly extended to Pentecostal churches too. So, the President promised it would happen and made it part of his presidential campaign' (Semakula Gyagenda, Born Again Faith Federation, 11 June 2013, Kampala). But the presidential electoral promise was not realised post-election.

In February 2006 Museveni was invited again by the National Fellowship to the large Namboole Stadium in Kampala for a Pentecostal gathering and, on that occasion, he promised to reconsider the abolition of the annual renewal for Pentecostal churches. Then, he commissioned three of his ministers, Dr Ruhakana Rugunda, the Minister of Internal Affairs, the then third deputy PM and Minister of Information and National Guidance, Ali Kirunda Kive Jinja, and the then Minister of Ethics and Integrity, Dr James Nsaba Butoro, to work and realise his promise. Urged by the ministers, Dr Serwadda was appointed chairman of a national taskforce to unify all Pentecostal churches and fellowships into a unitary national organisation, but many refused to commit and sign a binding agreement, seeking instead to reclaim their identity from mainline churches and assert their diversity and informal nature (Isiko 2019). In this moment of confrontation, Dr Serwadda[15] separated from the NFBPC and initiated a new Fellowship that would bring together all the Pentecostal and Evangelical churches keen to create a formalised and accountable network able to negotiate with the government and to sit in relevant

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religious organisations, as per the Inter-Religious Council of Ugandan (IRCU). In February 2009 the Born-Again Faith Federation (BAFF) was officially launched with Dr Serwadda becoming the Presiding Apostle and main public voice.

One of the most contentious issues between the two Federations is the nature of Pentecostalism itself, the way Pentecostal churches should be organised and conceptualised, made liable to congregational scrutiny, undergo theological training, and have formalised links to politics and to other churches (and especially mainline churches) through inter-religious councils. While BAFF is a strong promoter of a regulatory framework for Pentecostal expressions, NFBPC is deeply in opposition. This contrast became particularly visible in light of the proposed National Religious and Faith Based Organisations (RFBOs) policy (Directorate for Ethics and Integrity, Office of the President 2019) led by the ex-Minister of Ethics and Integrity, Father Simon Lokodo. The draft policy shared with religious leaders in July 2019[16] proposed to reform the legal status of the Pentecostal churches and their need to register as NGOs, an ongoing worry for this religious community, through the creation of a new agency based in the Directorate of Ethics and Integrity that would register, monitor and approve new religious organisations or new churches, and oversee the operations of all the RFBOs in Uganda liaising between them and the government. In order to be recognised by the agency, all the RFBOs were expected to comply with certain criteria decided by the government (although the governmental framework was not defined yet, great emphasis was given to theological training), strengthen the partnership with government (especially in terms of service delivery and development projects) and promote 'unity within diversity', guaranteeing respect of other faiths and denominations (Policy Draft 2019: 16. Fieldwork material).

Pastors belonging to the two National Fellowships tend to externalise their differences around the support to the policy in a performative way using mass media such as television, radio, newspapers and social media (Bompani &Terreni Brown 2015). Their presence and occupation of media channels is considerable and their diversity and differences are familiar to many beyond their religious communities. The Ugandan Pentecostal Church is not only a material business, as defined by many (Valois 2017), but also a show business and spectacle in a space mainly around Kampala, that is highly competitive from the religious market perspective. According to Isiko:

Special programmes are arranged on church owned television and radio stations to perpetuate these conflicts, under the disguise that they are 'teaching' their flock something current. For example, an Impact Radio [owned by Serwadda's church] and television talk show programme, dubbed '*ebifa munzikiriza*', literary meaning 'what happens in faith', is preoccupied with glorifying the goodness of the proposed Religious and Faith Based organisations' (RFBOs) policy, while castigating those who are against it. Another media programme called '*Nasirika Obwedda*', literary meaning 'I had all this long kept silent', was Pastor Joseph Serwadda's response

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to his critics and nemesis, Pastor Bugingo, who had for a long time preoccupied himself with preaching ill about his ex-spiritual mentor [as Busingo and his wife Teddy broke away from Serwadda's Victory Christian Center in 2010[17]]. (Isiko 2020*a*: 9)

The proposed policy created new expectations for the supporters of this long-expected change, when (allegedly 50,000) pastors from all over the country gathered with President Museveni in September 2019. Museveni, however, in his speech registered disapproval with the policy, finding the issue of theological training and the division between the two Pentecostal groups in relation to the policy particularly problematic: 'Pastors against the policy moved away with satisfaction that they had won the President's support' (online conversation with Dr Alexander Paul Isiko, 25 September 2020, University of Kyambogo). Pentecostals became an increasingly important electoral group to win over for the NRM and President Museveni chose to avoid a controversial and polarising policy for the religious voters in delicate moments such as national elections.

Pentecostal churches in Uganda have historically been divided in different ways, along the lines of the second and third waves of global Pentecostalism, around the personalities of pastors, by theological underpinnings and more recently across the two main national federations, who have different understandings of how Pentecostal churches should be organised. Besides moral campaigns, what continues to bring them together is seeking protection from and connection with the state, which in Uganda means mediating a relationship with Museveni and his family.

RELATIONS WITH POLITICS AND THE MUSEVENI FAMILY

In January 2021 the ruling party and Museveni were reconfirmed in power for a sixth term, after violent elections during which 54 people were killed and more than 1000 arrested (Abrahamsen & Bareebe 2021). In early February, soon after the proclamation of victory by the Electoral Commission and in the face of much negative press, Pentecostal pastors visited the State House in Entebbe to congratulate the president and his wife, Janet Kainembabazi Museveni. In a joint statement read by Pastor Robert Kayanja, the Pentecostal religious leaders commended the leadership of Museveni, the religious freedoms that he allowed in the country and his role as a protector of the Pentecostal community, reiterating the long-standing solidarity between them and the President:

Today we come first to congratulate you upon your victory. Our relationship with you and the NRM government is not a seasonal affair but a lasting and deep partnership for our country. Your victory is ours, Uganda's and for Africa as well … It proved that when Godly people are in leadership, the people rejoice. As a father of the nation, like Moses in the Bible says God has used you to deliver several freedoms in this country including the freedom of worship among others. (*The Observer*, 5 February 2021)

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While Pentecostal churches have evolved their political stance under Museveni, the relationship between Museveni and Pentecostalism, or more generally religion, is not always linear and deserves some explanation, although it can be largely inscribed within his general political pragmatism[18] that characterises his years in power.

Yoweri Kaguta Museveni hails from a Muhima family from Ankole, in south-western Uganda from a pastoralist class, the Bahima. His parents belonged to the Balokole Revival of the (Anglican) Church of Uganda. In the 1930s and 1940s the Revival had a strong influence on the Bahima, who had previously not engaged with Christianity. His name, Museveni, comes from the 'Seventh Regiment of the King's African Rifles', the British colonial army in which many Ugandans served during the Second World War. The Seventh Army was a popular name circulating in Uganda in 1944, the year of his birth. His 'Christian' name Yoweri (Joel) is a biblical Old Testament name, likely given at his baptism as a child. Museveni attended a Church of Uganda (the Native Anglican Church for Ugandans) primary school, but for his secondary studies he went to the government school in Mbarara, in the South West region. This school had a reputation as much more liberally minded than the mission schools at the time, but still with a largely Protestant Christian ethos. Museveni was by this time a revivalist Christian, a leading figure in the school Christian Union. He was also politically conscious, and broke with the Christian Union when at a national conference they rejected his campaign to condemn the Rhodesian Unilateral Declaration of Independence[19] (Museveni 1997). In a time of political changes and decolonisation in Africa, Museveni found the Evangelical and Revivalist turn away from politics to be unacceptable. Increasingly, this distanced him from Christianity, especially during his years at Dar es Salaam University, where leftist politics generally, and the FRELIMO[20] struggle against Portuguese colonialism in particular, influenced the first generation of independent East African leaders. In addition, the political movement in Uganda itself, while not anti-Christian was strongly 'secular' and 'socialist' in its broad ideological rhetoric, not least within the main Protestant party, the Uganda People's Congress (UPC). The creation of the Democratic Party, with strong Catholic backing, was specifically designed to counter the secularism of the UPC. Museveni, as a Protestant, was at the time linked with the UPC.[21]

When Museveni came to power in 1986, his past as a guerrilla and his espousal of secular socialist politics made the churches somewhat suspicious of him. The Christian elite were particularly alarmed by the setting up of 'political camps' for the education of government officials and school teachers, along with basic military training designed to mobilise the population to resist fascist and authoritarian dictatorships such as those of Amin and Obote II. The main camp was at Kyankwanzi, in the Luwero Triangle, north of Kampala, where Museveni started the guerrilla movement in 1981. A number of Church of Uganda and Catholic priests did attend these courses, but without the approval of church hierarchies, who feared that 'siasa' (in Kiswahili 'political education', on

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the model of socialist Tanzania) was an indoctrination into secular unchristian ideas, and in competition with their own Christian education (conversation with Dr Kevin Ward, 16 August 2017, University of Leeds).

With a strong emphasis on reconciliation and tolerance, the early policies of the NRM attempted to bring together people with different political, ethnic and religious affiliations (Bompani 2018). One of the NRM's first promises for transformation was to put an end to the religious and sectarian divisiveness that has defined the Ugandan public sphere since pre-colonial times, when Christianity first took hold in the Buganda monarchy (Mockler-Ferryman 1903). Sectarianism was seen as particularly blatant during the second Obote regime (1981–85) when Catholics, despite being the largest religious community, were persistently marginalised by Obote and his largely Protestant UPC government. The Resistance Movement, while fighting in the bush, had welcomed people of all faiths, and wanted to establish a political climate which was resolutely non-sectarian. So, the Movement actively put itself forward as an alternative to the old sectarianism of UPC/DP. However, over the years, Catholics have continued to be somewhat distrustful of Museveni's claims to be non-sectarian. He was born a Protestant, and his main collaborators remained largely Protestant over the years (although as far as their community is concerned, they are not necessarily active members of the Church).

Museveni rapidly toned down the rhetoric which seemed to marginalise the churches as he quickly recognised that Uganda's strong religious communities would be better conciliated than opposed. He also recognised religious communities important role in the development process of national reconstruction, given their involvement in key areas such as education, health and basic needs in support of their communities (Bompani 2018). In 1994 all churches were invited to participate in the Constituent Assembly (Freston 2004). This process of active 'reintegration' of religion into public affairs almost 10 years after Museveni took power, signalled the recognition that, contrasted with the absence of other non-governmental actors, churches were playing a fundamental role in connecting the State to citizens and that the initial post-liberation suspicions towards the divisive power of religion were starting to vanish.[22]

In the following years Museveni began to attend important church functions, such as the consecration of bishops, and make speeches about the importance of the Church in building Uganda from a material perspective as well as in terms of moral guidance. Later on, he started to attend public Pentecostal gatherings, as for example when in October 2012, in Pentecostal style, he famously repented of his sins and the sins of the nation at the Jubilee Night of Prayers in Namboole Stadium during the 50th independence anniversary celebrations. For some time, he personally did not indicate that faith was important in his life, but gradually this element has reasserted itself and strategic associations to faith groups in key moments have become a recurrent theme within his political strategy. Janet Kainembabazi Museveni, his wife and serving minister in several governments, remains much more public in her faith as a Pentecostal believer and she publicly and regularly professes support for the Pentecostal movement.

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With Museveni's daughter having founded a Pentecostal church of which she is now pastor, the Covenant Nations Church, there has been some speculation that Museveni may have embraced the Pentecostal faith himself. However, the president has never proclaimed himself as a member of any Christian denomination.

Pentecostalism in Uganda grew on a wave of global factors as well as in many other African contexts (Comaroff 2009; Anderson 2013) but also on the wave of rapid national change. Indeed, Pentecostal churches fitted well within the NRM's rhetoric of nation building and they grew in step with it. Their focus on radical reconstruction, their strong focus on the future and shaping of the youth, on economic advancement, and the redefinition of social ties and expectations against the backdrop of rapid urbanisation and broader changes (Boyd 2015: 14) were perfectly aligned with Museveni's neoliberal politics. At a national level these churches also benefited from other factors such as, for example, their positioning beyond the old political-religious divides of the Anglican and Catholic Churches, embracing the NRM's discourse of unity, and proximity to the party in the first 20 years of Museveni's rule. Furthermore, those churches have never challenged the existing political establishment (Freston 2004: 142; Gusman 2009). Thus, Pentecostal churches ostensibly remained in line with Museveni's consistent stance and preoccupation that religious and cultural leaders should not interfere with politics (Bompani 2018). Museveni's 'ambiguity', or better, his political pragmatism, can help us to explain his involvement with to the Pentecostal movement as well:

> The President meets 'enemy' pastors, causing confusion as to whom might be his favourite. For example, he has visited Robert Kayanja, generally thought to be close friends with the first family but also visited Pastor Samuel Kakande, described as a cult, and a problematic figure, by the NFBPC. He has attended crusades organised by Pastor Jackson Ssenyonga, yet also meeting delegations from Brother Ronnie Makabai, the former's nemesis. (Isiko 2020*a*: 9)[23]

With their growing numbers and visibility, Pentecostals started to signify emergent voting capital. As Hefner (2013: 16) puts it: 'Megachurches mean followers, and their numbers tempt politicians and pastors to dream of power-bloc deals'.

Within the free religious market established in the neo-liberal Museveni era, struggles to capture the President's interest stem from the fact that an alliance with government brings protection and safety for the Pentecostal community, an important but under-studied factor in understanding their public activities in the past decades. Furthermore, this alliance brings opportunities to navigate political networks to enable pastors to gain public visibility and legitimacy and even open up financial avenues to become centres of economic accumulation (Downie 2015; Bompani 2018). Association with the first family, or having their members attending a church service or religious event, is a powerful signal of success in the competitive Kampala religious scene. The growing desire of churches to wield political influence is ever more closely associated

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with a performative closeness to Museveni and his family and collaborators. Uganda is, after all, still a space for big-man political figures, as well as big-man religious leaders.

CONCLUSION

Data on the exact number of Pentecostal believers in Uganda are not available[24] and the majority of Ugandans remain Catholic or Anglican. However, Pentecostalism is clearly the fastest growing denomination with the greatest impact on the country's public affairs, positioning their moral conservative perspectives to influence family law, divorce, sexual rights and procreation at the centre of the national agenda (Gusman 2009; Boyd 2015; Valois 2015; Bompani 2016; Kintu 2017). It is interesting to see how over the course of a few decades the Ugandan Pentecostal community managed to grow from an underground minority religious group into a national agenda- and policy-setting movement, intimately connected to the centre of power.

As the article has demonstrated, however, their public action is not only motivated by their moral values and the need to impose them on society. Their energetic public work is also fuelled by reasons more embedded within their unique national history and specific relation to power. The troubled origins of the movement still play a fundamental role in shaping their actions aimed at seeking legal recognition and at creating strong connections with centres of power. Persecution by the state in the 1970s and the many challenges in their early days, along with stories of miracles and divine protection, form a sort of founding myth, constantly narrated in these communities, that functions as a unifying force across these diverse (and sometimes contrasting) churches. Even if divided in theology and practice, none contests the role that Museveni played in allowing them to establish themselves and flourish in the country. Celebrated as a sort of protector of the Pentecostal community, Museveni benefits from this relationship in many ways, from their support of his leadership to the growing voter bloc they represent. This relationship becomes even more relevant during his sixth mandate when opposition against his regime is growing, among disaffected young people in particular (Abrahamsen & Bareebe 2021).

The literature on public religion in Africa is growing. There is a sense, however, that within this literature there is still room to produce studies that carefully unpack why certain religious expressions become public in specific times and what diverse forms of encounters allow them to do so. Often those explanations lie in the stories and narratives that churches reproduce and share in the politics of the everyday amongst their members.

NOTES

1. In this article I will interchangeably use Pentecostal and born-again churches to refer to Pentecostal-charismatic churches from the so-called second and third waves of Pentecostalism that so much influenced, and still does, the African continent. The choice is dictated by the fact that in Uganda this

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is the general way in which those churches are called, along with *Balokole* to mark the connections with the charismatic East African Revival.

2. At the time the public sphere was predominantly influenced by Christian actors and organisations belonging to the Anglican and Catholic churches (Gifford 1998; Ward 2005) more than other existing religious groups.

3. Although there are correlations with the way Global, and in particular North American, Pentecostalism incorporates political threats in their spiritual practice, the elaboration of these particular challenges are re-shaped and narrated through local idioms, events and images linked to the Ugandan post-colonial unstable history and style of storytelling. For similar analyses on the importance to consider the local, see Haynes (2021).

4. Full Gospel Church in Kampala was incorporated under the Unlimited Companies Act in October 1960 and became the first 'Pentecostal' Mission or church to be granted that legal status in Uganda. That is also why 1960 is a symbolic year in the Pentecostal Ugandan communities and it is celebrated.

5. Divinity Library at Yale University, microfilmed and digitised archives of the Church of the Province of Uganda (Anglican) held at Uganda Christian University UCU in Mukono. Letters of Bishop Brown and Church's documentation depicting the relation between Christianity and Politics at the time; <https://web.library.yale.edu/divinity/uganda-archives>.

6. There were strong suspicions, although Adrisi never directly accused the president, that the car accident had been orchestrated by Amin. Indeed, this episode generated a lot of discontent amongst soldiers loyal to Adrisi and this brought many to mutinee, with many fleeing to Tanzania after Amin's consequent repression (see Southall 1980).

7. In an interview, Dr Paddy Musana also introduced the idea of 'ethnicity' as a factor of division across churches and church leaders, but I was not able to verify that (interview with Paddy Musana, 28 August 2019, Makerere University).

8. It is commonly recognised that there are three broad categories, or waves, of Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity: the classical Pentecostalism derived from the Californian Azuza Street revival at the beginning of the 20th century, the second wave of Charismatic Christians between the 1950s and 1970s, and the third wave of neo-charismatics that grew from the end of the 1970s, especially in the Global South (Anderson 2013).

9. In 2020 they counted more than 5000 churches across Uganda with a community of 1,645,000 people, according to their website (accessed on 28 July 2020). PAG started in Kitsabasi in the ranges of Mt Elgon in Bugisu region in the 1940s by a few Ugandans and over the years, it has spread throughout the country. It was registered with the government of Uganda as a corporate body in 1966, followed by NGO registration in 1991 under the Non-Governmental Organizations Registration Statute.

10. Some evangelical churches also arrived in this time. The Baptist Church Mission, for example, was initiated by American missionaries who were fleeing from the turmoil in Congo in 1962.

11. The large Pentecostal Miracle Center Church of Pastor Robert Kayanja that, according to a participant 'is happy being alone'.

12. The Ugandan government allowed the longest established religious groups to obtain legal entity status under the Trustees Incorporation Act. The Catholic Church, Orthodox Church, Anglican Church and the Uganda Muslim Supreme Council registered under this provision; however, Evangelical and Pentecostal churches register with the Ministry of Internal Affairs' Nongovernmental Organizations (NGO) Board, which requires yearly registration renewal. Registration with the NGO Board provides certification that allows churches to access donor funding (Hackett 2011).

13. Pentecostal churches in Uganda are also often called *Balokole* with reference to the East African Revival movement that spread in the region at the beginning of the 20th century. However, this was a different movement from the Pentecostal one (see Wild-Wood & Ward 2012; Bruner 2017).

14. 'The then RDC Resident District Commissioner (RDC) of Kanungu, Kitaka Gawera, advised the NGO board not to register them as a group because he suspected they were not doing the best thing. When Kitaka was moved, another RDC came in, Mr Kamakyerere, and the cult were swift and got hold of him to win his confidence and recommend them for registration, which was done' (Semakula Gyagenda, Born-Again Faith Federation, 11 June 2013, Kampala).

15. A few participants also mentioned the power-struggle within the previous National Fellowship organisation and Dr Serwadda's personal desire to emerge as a leading figure on the national scene.

16. 'The National Religious & Faith Based Organisations (RFBOs) Policy, 2019 [draft]'. Fieldwork material.

17. And funded their own church, House of Prayer Ministry International (HPMI) with a quite popular radio station, Salt FM, and TV channel SaltTelevision. Busingo also became popular for his tumultuous

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marriage and to question the King James version of the Bible around the translation of the word Spirit with Ghost.

18. As widely defined in academic literature (see Oloka-Onyango 2004).

19. The Unilateral Declaration of Independence was a statement adopted by the Cabinet of Rhodesia on 11 November 1965, announcing that Rhodesia, a British territory in southern Africa, was then becoming an independent sovereign state.

20. The Portuguese Frente de Libertação de Moçambique (FRELIMO) was founded in 1962 as a nationalist movement fighting for the independence of the Portuguese Overseas Province of Mozambique.

21. Although in terms of Ankole politics, the Bahima, despite being Protestant, were regarded as sympathetic to DP, largely because UPC in Ankole was dominantly Bairu, and was also against the Mugabe, the traditional (Hima) ruler of Ankole.

22. The new Constitution was ratified in 1995 and the following year presidential elections were held (Hansen & Twaddle 1995).

23. Paper later published in a shorter version (Isiko 2020*b*).

24. Although the National Population and Housing Census 2014, published in 2016 indicates 11% of the citizens, data on Pentecostals are quite blurred and they do not take into account the problematic way in which questions were posed. For example, questions on religious affiliation are not posed individually but rather one person responds on behalf of all members of the household (McKinnon 2020). Indeed, it is commonly believed that the number of Ugandan Pentecostals is higher than that.

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