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Introduction

Oya-Hazel Gumede and Mario Vega represent a new kind of global evangelical. Oya-Hazel grew up in apartheid South Africa. The product of a teenage pregnancy, she was raised by her grandmother in a township called Gezinsila, which literally translated to “wash your filthy dirt.” Tragedy marked her life: her mother died of HIV/AIDS, and her father, whom she did not know well, and two of her brothers became victims of the violence that marks post-apartheid South Africa.

In the midst of these hardships, Oya-Hazel had a teenage conversion experience to Pentecostal Christianity. Even before her conversion, Oya-Hazel decided she did not want to become trapped by the spiraling consequences of unwise decisions. She thus opted not to become sexually active as a teenager, a decision that ran counter to the norm in her neighborhood. Oya-Hazel also did well in school and fondly recalls the days her grandmother slaughtered a chicken to celebrate a good report card. Oya-Hazel’s newfound faith community reinforced the life decisions that she was making and provided a new spiritual dimension that further motivated her. Buttressed as she was by faith and an instinctive avoidance of constraining social entanglements, Oya-Hazel came of age at the dawning of the new, democratic South Africa, where exciting opportunities opened up before her.

Now in her early forties, Oya-Hazel’s intellectual gifts, charisma, and growing pedigree have given her entrée into the cohort of upwardly mobile black South Africans who are helping to craft a new nation. Oya-Hazel’s professional activities in South Africa include becoming engaged and involved in the South African executive administration, through working in the office of then First Lady Zanele Mbeki (wife of former South African President Thabo Mbeki), and serving as an advisor for various government ministries. Oya-Hazel has also remained deeply engaged in her faith community, serving as the dean of a church’s local Bible Institute and on boards of various Christian organizations

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across the country. More globally, she has represented South Africa at the United Nations, often represents South Africa at international conferences, and travels into Africa for different business ventures. In 2012 she was named to the Forum of Young Global Leaders, which is part of the World Economic Forum. She traveled to Mexico to participate with other “young leaders who share a commitment to shaping the global future” (Forum of Young Global Leaders 2012). Even in her professional circles, Oya-Hazel freely identifies herself as a follower of Jesus.

Mario spent his childhood in San Salvador, El Salvador’s capital city. He was shy and introverted as a child, and when Mario reached his teen years he fell into the wrong crowd. Mario began to use drugs, and by the time he was sixteen he was selling drugs. Eventually Mario’s cousin confronted him and took him to church. Mario soon converted to evangelical Christianity, leaving the drugs behind.

Five years later, God told Mario to become a pastor. Mario obeyed, and the church he served grew quickly. Then, when the mother church of this independent Salvadoran denomination, Elim, had a leadership crisis in the late 1990s, they called Mario to become the head pastor. This ushered Mario into a position of public prominence: Elim is currently one of the ten largest churches in the world, with a congregation of roughly 110,000 people. And when the FMLN, a left wing political party that was formerly a coalition of guerilla organizations, won the 2009 presidential elections in El Salvador, Mario delivered the prayer at then President-elect Mauricio Funes’s inauguration. Such intersections with political and social spheres are now part of Mario’s regular routine.

Evangelicalism has grown rapidly across much of the Global South over the past century. The movement changes as it grows, just as the national and international contexts around it continue to evolve. New converts now maintain a different relationship with mainstream society. Even those who have grown up within the movement are finding new expressions of the faith as they seek to navigate their contemporary contexts. The stories of Oya Hazel and Mario demonstrate these changing trajectories and dynamics, and they reflect the new environments in which they live.

As this evolution takes place, the “new centers” of evangelicalism (NCEs) are becoming socioeconomically diverse, better connected internationally, and increasingly socially engaged. Evangelical leaders and entrepreneurs in these contexts are busily building organizations on a grand scale: booming mega-churches in middle class suburbs now balance the numerous storefront churches that continue to dot the poorer sectors of society. No longer content to simply tend to their own flock, such congregations engage in significant social ministries and will on occasion even partner with the state. Evangelicals are also broadening their horizons geographically; their institutions now have transnational identities, and their members cross national borders with regularity. Taken together, these trends and activities are recreating evangelical identity, and they are reorienting the movement’s social and political location.

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Why are these changes occurring, and what are the consequences? A number of paradigms are competing to explain the emergence of global evangelicalism and the broader category of global Christianity. Scholars have linked evangelicalism's global expansion to U.S. military interests, U.S. cultural influence, or both. Others have framed the growth as a prominent component of religious fundamentalism's emergence across the globe. A third school of thought posits that the Pentecostal explosion is the religious extension of modernity into cultures that have heretofore resisted it. A fourth perspective argues that the massive demographic shifts within global Christianity have wrested control of the religion away from the West. In this conception, Christianity is dominated by new faces, and it is primarily a faith of the Global South and East. All of these paradigms have merit, and they are carefully considered in Chapter 1. Few, however, shed great insight on the internal dynamics of global evangelicalism that interest this study, nor the religious motors of change that drive them.

Robert Wuthnow (2009) has recently introduced a fifth paradigm that captures part of this picture. Wuthnow shows the extent to which global flows of goods, people, services, and communication exist within Christianity and argues that these flows connect Christians in different parts of the globe. He further demonstrates that Christianity's growth in the post-colonial Global South is happening in concert with expanding global flows to these regions; it is not happening, as has been claimed elsewhere, because agents of Western Christianity have withdrawn from these regions. To buttress his argument, Wuthnow points to American churches' increased religious spending, increased numbers of full-time missionaries, the explosion of short-term mission teams, and heightened interest in humanitarian causes across the world. All of these represent mechanisms by which American religious influence, buoyed by the country's considerable cultural and economic power, is being felt beyond its own borders.

Wuthnow's interest is, however, primarily in showing the global outreach of American churches. He stops short of making key claims about the kind of impact and change that such activities might be having in NCEs. In some respects, I pick up the story where Wuthnow left off, but I reframe his global flows as one of a number of religious social forces, both international and local, that are changing the reality of faith communities in two particular places: El Salvador and South Africa. Put differently, I identify the global and local religious forces at work in NCEs, the impacts that they have, and how the trends they initiate are being played out.

El Salvador and South Africa are particularly interesting cases for a number of reasons. There are striking similarities between the two: the evangelical movement has thrived in both countries and now constitutes at least a quarter, or in El Salvador's case at least a third, of their national populations (IUDOP 2009; Johnson 2014; Pew Forum 2011; Teichert 2005). El Salvador and South Africa also have surprisingly similar histories over the past half century. This has made them comparable politically and economically as well as religiously, as Elisabeth

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Wood (2000) has demonstrated. And yet the contrasts between the two are many. African and Latin American cultures are clearly distinct, and as the evangelical faith is integrated into each, different dynamics within the same global movement emerge. The legacy of different colonial histories, one Spanish and the other British and Dutch, also persists. Finally, geopolitical locations still matter; sharing a hemisphere with the United States has implications for El Salvador that South Africa need not address. These comparable yet contrasting dynamics make the two cases excellent fodder for a cross-continent analysis of a global religious movement.

OLD TIME EVANGELICALISM

The term “evangelicalism” is notoriously difficult to define and overlaps considerably with terms like Pentecostalism and Christianity. I explain the meanings of each more fully in the following chapter, but put briefly, evangelicals have a high regard for the Bible and feel compelled to share the “Good News,” or the “evangel” of Christ’s death and resurrection. Pentecostals share these beliefs but emphasize the work of the Holy Spirit and have enthusiastic worship practices that not all evangelicals share.

Pentecostal evangelicalism is the strain that dominates today’s NCEs, and it has a history of multiple beginnings. John Wesley’s Aldersgate experience in 1738 and the 1906 Azusa Street Revival in Los Angeles are important moments in Pentecostal history. So too are independent manifestations of the Spirit that occurred in locations across the Global South. India, Chile, (Sepulveda 2011), Uganda (Cassidy 1989), and South Africa (Elphick & Davenport 1997) are just a few of the locations that witnessed their own “manifestations of the Spirit.” These events soon became interlinked, and a truly global religious movement emerged.

Classical Pentecostal denominations were a critical early component of today’s evangelical communities. These include but are not limited to the Assemblies of God, Four Square Gospel Churches, Apostolic Faith Mission, Church of the Nazarene, and the Church of God in Christ. Such denominations originated in, or were heavily influenced by, the 1906 Azusa Street Revival and from there spread quickly around the world.

Classical Pentecostalism is, however, only part of the story. In some regions of the globe, they are predated by ancient Christian communities of non-Western origin (Sanneh 2003; Walls 2002). Local manifestations of the evangelical movement were often rooted in these longstanding traditions. In other areas, Western missionaries made inroads into local cultures, planting mission churches and starting other types of non-Pentecostal, evangelical congregations. Even today’s main-line churches had a role to play, as Anglican, Lutheran, Presbyterian, Methodist, and Baptist denominations created a context in which an evangelical faith could be cultivated and nurtured. None of these actors experienced the kind of growth witnessed within classical

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Pentecostalism, but they were critical to establishing the early context of the global evangelical movement.

It was thus that the foundations of NCEs had been laid by the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, although Asian, African, and Latin American evangelicals remained remote outposts of their global faith community throughout the first half of the twentieth century. In these developing country contexts, evangelicals were particularly poor, uneducated, marginalized, and reclusive. They were considered to be the “yahoos” of society as they conducted noisy, sometimes chaotic religious events in public spaces and avoided, or were denied access to, mainstream social institutions. Such a popular religious movement had little appeal to educated and more powerful members of society; these more sophisticated sectors tended to either chuckle at evangelical antics or look upon them with disdain.

Post–World War Evangelicalism

The post–World War II period brought both consistency and change. Much of evangelicalism’s identity remained the same, but this was a period in which accelerated expansion occurred. In Latin America, reasons for (and rates of) growth were different from country to country, but it was nonetheless a region-wide phenomenon. In Africa, the time line for classical Pentecostalism was different: the Azusa Street Revival denominations gained a stronger early foothold, especially in southern Africa, but they also generated splinter groups that came to be known as African Independent Churches (AICs) (Anderson 2004). Partly because these splinter movements did not stay within the broader faith community of the earlier groups, strong growth did not occur within evangelical Pentecostalism beyond its early establishment. Growth did, however, accelerate again roughly a decade later than it did in Latin America (Martin 2002). That this expansion coincided with the rollback of formal colonial structures is interpreted by many as no accident. The end of formal colonialism began with the emancipation of Ghana in 1957 and concluded with the end of apartheid in South Africa in 1994. The number of African Christians increased perhaps a hundredfold during these years.

A larger evangelical population enabled the movement to have more clearly identifiable but always flexible characteristics. The first and most obvious of these was that evangelical growth occurred predominantly in poor neighborhoods and villages. Evangelical conversions often occurred in moments of crisis, frequently brought on by severe poverty, intense social conflict, or both. The movement as a whole represented a “walkout” on society (Martin 1990), essentially inviting marginalization and oppression from the dominant religious and cultural groups. Converts thus tended to be those with little to lose even when evangelicals grew to be upwards of 10 percent of national populations. Poverty, after all, was (and is) rife throughout the Global South and certainly far more prevalent than even the largest religious movements. But it was during this

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period that humble evangelical churches became fixtures in slums and poor villages across the developing world.

A second prominent feature of evangelical communities during the Cold War was their flat, relatively egalitarian social networks. Conversion to evangelicalism often included extrication of individuals from (usually the bottom of) religious and social hierarchies. The lay-driven congregational forms of evangelicalism were not based on such vertical relationships, even if significant power was wielded by the local pastor. As Martin (1990) noted, local evangelical pastors may wield power autocratically, but the organizational structure in which they do so causes centralized authority to be spread out and multiplied. Gender relationships within nuclear families were reordered among new converts (Brusco 1986), and scholars of that time period went so far as to say that many men were essentially domesticated when they became evangelicals. Such results may well be a motivating factor for women's central role in the spread of evangelicalism. The general effect led Martin (1990) to claim that the evangelical movement carried within it values of greater social equality.

Third, pre-1990 evangelicals were characterized by their ascetic practices and social withdrawal. Although not always identified as such, these two characteristics were closely connected. For evangelicals, extramarital sexual relations and any form of alcohol consumption were clearly taboo. In most cultures, dancing was also prohibited. This meant that evangelical converts stopped frequenting mainstream public spaces such as bars and canteens, opting instead for church meetings four to five nights a week. The church meetings increased social capital among evangelicals, but it often sidelined them from creating bridging relationships with actors of influence in the broader community. Add this to the fact that evangelicalism remained a minority and often a scorned religion during the time period, and it was clear that evangelical retreat to congregational life, in part made necessary by restrictions on mainstream cultural activities, set them apart from broader social events, processes, and activities.

Such social tendencies affected evangelical political life. With the exceptions of Brazil, Guatemala, Zambia, and a few other notable outliers in this respect, early evangelicals chose not to participate in existing political structures. This did not imply that they were uninterested in creating positive social change. On the contrary, they were highly interested in doing so. But they believed that converting ever higher ratios of the public to evangelical Christianity was the most effective way of ameliorating social ills such as violence, corruption, and inequality (Smith 1994).

The political process, on the other hand, was viewed as part and parcel of these kinds of problems. Evangelicals avoided political systems because of their perceived (and real) corruption; they reasoned that they could not help but become corrupt themselves if they became politically active. Based on this logic, numerous denominations even prohibited their members from voting. Extra systemic political activities, such as armed insurrection or public protest,

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were also generally not considered options. This was especially so for Pentecostals, who carried strong traditions of quietism and even pacifism.

When in the 1980s some evangelicals began to think differently about these issues and to seek strategies by which they could have a voice in the national political discourse, they often chose to start evangelical political parties. This strategy was only viable in countries where the electoral and political party system permitted new parties to enter the scene. Such parties allowed evangelicals to steer clear of the this-worldly corruption that surely accompanied mainstream party involvement. But most evangelical parties garnered such a small number of votes that they did not last more than an election cycle or two. There were some exceptions to this rule, of course, and as time wore on, more evangelicals realized that their primary strategy to create social change, evangelism, might need to be accompanied by political engagement to be effective. This set the stage for new strategies to be introduced after 1990.

A final evangelical characteristic of this period was an entrepreneurial bent. The impetus to create new organizations seems to be part of the evangelical DNA. New churches were springing up at remarkable rates. Some of these were the result of Western missionary initiatives, but most were not. Evangelicals in NCEs were also active in local economic entrepreneurship. One of the earliest scholars to study Latin American evangelicalism, Willems (1967), used the term “penny capitalism” to describe evangelical initiatives in Brazil and Chile. Although Willems used this term to indicate that evangelicals’ ascetic behavior had only a limited impact on their economic advancement, numerous authors since then have argued for a link between present day evangelicalism and Max Weber’s Protestant ethic. Indeed, Peter Berger is fond of saying that “Max Weber is alive and well and living in Guatemala.” In pre-1990 Africa, however, this case was more difficult to make. The impulse to start new churches was certainly evident, but other forms of entrepreneurship were obscured by competing cultural values and practices. Still, examples could be found where entrepreneurial impulses led to modest religious and economic organizational formulations throughout the developing world.

RELIGIOUS SOCIAL FORCES

Today, a number of these characteristics no longer apply to evangelicals living in places like El Salvador and South Africa. Any effort to understand why rapid changes are occurring in NCEs must acknowledge that there are many different factors in the global, national, and grassroots environments that are spurring the evangelical movement in new directions. Global political realities, such as the end of the bipolar world system and increased religious freedoms in many national contexts, certainly play a role. So too do international and national economic trends, including reduced barriers to trade and the increased presence of multinational corporations across Africa, Asia, and Latin America. Even social trends, perhaps most notably variations in birth rates and increased

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transience around the world, impact the shape and nature of national faith communities.

Such political, economic, and social dynamics intersect with the *religious* social forces that are most directly affecting evangelicalism. A religious social force is one in which religious symbols, resources, actors, or organizations are in motion and are setting other (in this case religious) symbols, actors, or organizations in motion. Such forces can be global or local. They can be ideational or material. An important premise of this book is that such forces, although they do not act to the exclusion of other types of social forces, are formative in determining the direction of change in NCEs.

But where exactly do religious social forces come from? Why are they so important in creating change within faith communities? Perhaps the best method to answer such questions is to list the most prominent religious social forces currently at work in NCEs and to introduce them in categories that will help to map the terrain that they cover.

Global Religious Social Forces

There are three basic kinds of global religious social forces. Religious transnational networks that penetrate national evangelical communities like El Salvador and South Africa are the first. Evangelicals in these regions have had transnational ties since their genesis, but today's faith communities take advantage of the many globalizing trends in society to create tighter and more wide-ranging connections. Evangelical activities and relationships that cross borders include participation in the international political economy, international connections between local congregations based in the United States and other countries, and the creation and maintenance of international nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and other ministry organizations (Reynolds & Offutt 2014). At the grassroots level, migration worldwide has rapidly increased since the early 1990s, and ease of travel and communication now allow migrants to maintain community across borders (Levitt 2007). Religious networks and organizations of all types, including evangelical ones, are deeply embedded in this larger social phenomenon (Cadge & Ecklund 2007; Ebaugh & Chafetz 2002; Levitt 2007; Sheringham 2013; Wuthnow & Offutt 2008). These and other types of transnational networks are allowing foreign influences to affect local evangelical communities from multiple directions and at multiple levels.

Religious symbols are a second global religious force. Symbols entering national evangelical communities in the Global South carry religious meaning, and they are powerful enough to reorient how faith communities think about the sacred and ultimately how they structure their social lives. They travel through the transnational networks just mentioned, or they come as free-floating signifiers, passing through mass media and other tools of global communication (Csordas 1997). One group or constellation of symbols that has particularly impacted national evangelical communities has become known as the prosperity

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gospel. Its message has been refined in places like Tulsa, Oklahoma, at the late Kenneth Hagin, Sr.'s Rhema Bible Institute (Harrison 2005) and has been exported all over the world. Other symbols invading evangelical communities in the Global South and East include a call to do missionary service in "the four corners of the earth," the Christ as a highly relational figure, and the conception of prayer. These symbols have served as catalysts for certain forms of social organization within and beyond national evangelical communities.

Resources, a third global religious social force, also flow into the NCEs. Such resources may be knowledge based, material, or human. They include people, products, money, services, and information. They often flow from North to South via evangelical denominations, from migrants back home to their families, from evangelical NGOs to sites of disaster or places in need of economic development, and from missionary or ministry organizations to people they wish to serve. Specific resource flows include missionaries and NGO personnel, educational material, relief supplies (such as food, blankets, and clothing), and information or knowledge about the broader world. These resources are sometimes spread more or less evenly throughout evangelical communities in places like El Salvador and South Africa; at other times, they are consolidated in the hands of leaders and used to create or maintain power. In both cases, transnational resources are helping to foment change in the Global South.

Local Religious Social Forces

When transnational networks, symbols, and resources arrive in the NCEs, they intermingle with local religious forces. Such forces often look similar to those that operate globally: local symbols commingle with global symbols and local resources complement global resources. To return to the prosperity gospel example, some sectors of African Christianity had independently developed corresponding themes of prosperity in their own understanding of the faith (Marshall-Fratani 2001; Maxwell 1999; Meyer 1998). Local and global prosperity symbols then merged, the synergy of which has had powerful cultural implications. But the prosperity gospel is not alone in seeing its formation come from multicultural negotiation of meaning. Any time religious people and ideas cross cultural borders, they encounter different meaning systems, and their own meanings must be renegotiated. This occurs daily and in manifold ways as local and global forces meet in the new centers of evangelicalism.

It is critical for those examining the impact of global forces, whether religious, political, or economic, to recognize and acknowledge that the local communities with which they interact have been socially sustainable for a very long time. Local decision making occurs on an ongoing basis. A long history of social learning predates any form of global interference. There are almost always longstanding local institutions around which civil society has been built. Local churches are often among the most important of these types of institutions, and while they certainly change in the midst of globalization, they maintain a sturdy

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and distinctly local identity through it all. These facts should, in fact they must, force scholars to be modest in the claims they make about globalization's mono-causal ability to create change. They should also prompt scholars to take into account locally driven dynamics of change and to examine the interaction these might have with the forces of globalization.

Within NCEs, the most important local religious social force continues to be evangelicalism's entrepreneurial spirit. This again is consistent with evangelicalism at least since Willems's writings, but whereas in the previous era entrepreneurs were operating with sparse local resources, evangelicals today are grabbing hold of the transnational symbols and intellectual and material resources that populate their newly globalized environments to build ever larger movements, religious organizations, and businesses. The change in the scale of entrepreneurial products is such that it is significantly changing the institutional makeup of the faith community.

Evangelicalism is a movement that exhibits remarkable global coherence, but the diversity among national faith communities remains strong. These differences can be attributed in no small part to other local religious social forces, including the different ways such communities choose to structure social relationships, varying cultural norms that develop within religious communities, longstanding local organizations and institutions, important local religious symbols that have possibly been borrowed from religions of a bygone era, and a plurality of beliefs within the broadening tent of evangelical doctrines. In addition to the national political economies that also influence the trajectories of local faith communities, such local religious social forces work with and against the global religious social forces at work in the NCEs.

Stepping Stones of Social Change

As synergies are developed between local and global religious forces, national faith communities begin to change in size and social location. The dramatic increase in the number of evangelicals in the Global South and East has been well documented. Many believe there are more than 500 million Pentecostals worldwide (Pew Forum 2011), and their most explosive rates of growth are found in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. In Latin America, for instance, 64 million evangelicals are creating a new religious pluralism in the region (Allen 2006). In Africa, adherents of the Christian faith grew from 30 million in 1945 to an estimated 380 million in 2005 (Carpenter 2005), with particularly sharp growth in Pentecostal churches and denominations. These developments make the South more important within global Christianity (Jenkins 2002) and make evangelical communities more prominent in the national societies that house them. For these reasons, the movement's growth has grabbed headlines and captured the world's attention even as other forces spur more significant change within the communities themselves.