

Religion, culture, and development: The pneuma-diaconal perspective of African Pentecostalism

Peter White
Stellenbosch University
Stellenbosch, South Africa
pwhite@sun.ac.za

Abstract

We cannot realistically discuss development without factoring religion into the analysis. In the same way, we cannot design any economic development plan without acknowledging the influence of religion on its implementation. The fact is that, many economic development policies require a change from old values, attitudes, beliefs and behaviour patterns of the citizenry to those that are supportive of the new policy. Religious practices and beliefs have important consequences for the economic development of a community or nation. The relationship between religion and development is likely to be complementary as long as religious beliefs and practices promote 'moderation' rather than 'extremes.' This article therefore discusses how Pentecostalism has been used as a reference point in addressing religio-cultural and socio-economic needs of Africans. The study uses Spiritual capital theory and pneuma-diaconal mission theory to unearth the impact of African Pentecostalism in the socio-economic lives of Ghanaians and more especially Africans.

Keywords

Pentecostalism; socio-economic impact; African Pentecostalism; pneuma-diaconia; mission

1. Introduction

National development is the overall development or a collective socio-economic, political as well as religious advancement of a country or nation (White 2015:2). We cannot realistically discuss development without factoring religion into the analysis. In the same way, we cannot design any economic development plan without acknowledging the influence of religion on its implementation. The fact is that, many economic

development policies require a change from old values, attitudes, beliefs and behaviour patterns of the citizenry to those that are supportive of the new policy. Religious practices and beliefs have important consequences for the economic development of a community or nation. The relationship between religion and development is likely to be complementary as long as religious beliefs and practices promote 'moderation' rather than 'extremes' (White 2015:1-2).

The missional assignment of the church is transforming society through the good news, followed by the act of love. That is, the church participates in the mission of God (*missio Dei*) to transform society (Pierson 1989:7; Balia & Kim 2010:4, 31). This approach to mission is a contribution to national development through diaconal praxis.

Although there are many research articles on the Pentecostal phenomenon in Ghana and for that matter Africa, there is not enough study on the attempts of Pentecostal churches to bridge the divides between African culture, Christianity, and globalization in the context of spiritual capital theory. This study therefore seeks to explore the extent to which Africa Pentecostal Churches are burdened by history – consciously and unconsciously trying to bridge the gap between African culture, Christianity, and globalization. The study brings on board the fact that Pentecostal movements are not only interested in the spiritual well-being of their patrons but have also made some socio-economic developments in their missional context. The scope of this study is on Classical Pentecostal Churches and some selected mainline Neo-Pentecostal /charismatic Churches in Ghana and few examples from Nigeria. The article focuses on the pneuma-diaconal perspective of African Pentecostalism in addressing religio-cultural, socio-economic, and development challenges in Africa.

The article is divided into three main sections. The first part discusses issues on gospel and culture. It gives the background of what led to the emergence of Pentecostalism in Africa. This is followed by the emergence of African Pentecostalism in the light of the religio-cultural and socio-economic needs of Africans. The focal point of the second part is on the pneuma-diaconal mission perspective of African Pentecostalism, as well as the agenda for diaconal mission in selected African Pentecostal Churches in Ghana. The article concludes by discussing some of the various diaconal

approaches through which African Pentecostal churches have contributed to development in Africa.

2. Overview of Pentecostalism in Ghana

Ghanaian Pentecostals are referred to as a group of Christians who emphasise salvation in Christ as the basis for one to be filled with the Holy Spirit, and in which the ‘Spirit phenomenon’ (including speaking in tongues, prophecies, visions, healing and miracles in general) is perceived as in line with what happened in the Early Church in the Acts of the Apostles and accepted as a continuous experience in the contemporary church as a sign of the presence of God and experience of his Spirit (Asamoah-Gyadu 2005:12).

Long before classical Pentecostalism became formalised in Ghana, there were Pentecostal stirrings in some parts of the country, led by some indigenous prophetesses and prophets (Darkwa Amanor 2004). Pentecostalism in Ghana evolved in four phases (Omenyo 2006:5; White 2014:67–79):

- The emergence of the African prophets and charismatic personalities.
- Establishment of African Initiated Churches.
- Emergence of Classical and Neo-Pentecostal churches.
- Pentecostalisation of the mainline churches.

In Ghanaian Pentecostal typology, the Classical Pentecostal Churches in Ghana are the four mainline Pentecostal Churches, namely Christ Apostolic Church International, the Apostolic Church – Ghana, the Church of Pentecost and Assemblies of God. The Neo-Pentecostals are charismatic churches and the Independent Pentecostal Churches are popularly known as “one-man churches.” However, some of the Neo-Pentecostal churches are now becoming mainline churches both in nature and administrative structures (White 2015a:2). In spite of these major categories of Pentecostalism in Ghana, Ghanaian church history has also shown that Pentecostalism is not limited to Classical and Neo-Pentecostal churches in Ghana but also it has influenced church traditions of the mainline churches in Ghana (Omenyo 2006; White 2017).

3. The gospel and culture

Though gospel and culture were ways moving on a parallel line, the western missionaries were antagonistic to the idea of a marriage between the gospel and the various cultures they encountered. The central challenge many of the western missionaries faced in Africa, is the issue of the relationship between Christianity and culture. They came in with the worldview that presents every aspect of African cultural practices as demonic. They forgot the fact that every culture has within its religious system, certain practices directed towards the achievement of what is considered as the highest good. In fact, religion, by its nature and purpose, should be holistic; addressing the total needs of the total person – spiritual, physical, and emotional – providing authentic answers for the person's everyday quests, fears, and anxieties (Larbi2001:26).

Studying the Acts of the Apostles, it was noted that the early church faced and addressed the challenge of gospel and culture both in Jerusalem and during the missionary journey of Apostle Paul (Acts 6:1–7, Acts 10–15, Gal 3:26–28). In their case, the issue most fundamentally had to do with the relationship between the Christian community and Judaism, especially in the matter of language, temple worship and law. Amid these challenges the church's leadership did their best to resolve the issue of gospel and culture, with the best example being the Jerusalem council meeting on the issue of circumcision (Acts 15).

In order to address the problem of gospel and culture, the importance of the contextualisation of the gospel became a view shared by African theologians. This led to terms such as *adaptation, accommodation, indigenization, incarnation, contextualization, and inculturation* (Bosch 2011:420–432). Though none of these approaches is perfect, the idea behind each of them is: how best can we present the gospel to suit the worldview and culture of people, communities and nations without compromising the essence of the gospel?

One of the approaches that has been strongly pushed in Ghana is inculturation (Osei-Bonsu 2005:1–5, 20). This term is commonly used in the Roman Catholic Church in Ghana to refer to the adaptation of the way Church teachings are presented to non-Christian cultures, and to

the influence of those cultures on the evolution of these teachings (Bosch 2011:447).

Sarpong, a Ghanaian missiologist and a former Catholic Arch-Bishop of the Kumasi Archdiocese of the Catholic Church, argues that by inculturation, the evangelizer seeks to present the gospel to the peoples of different religio-cultural contexts in such a way that they are not alienated from their own cultures but find their cultures enriched and fulfilled through the gospel (Sarpong 2002: 9–10). This was also a view shared by Schineller (1990:36–37).

According to Meyer (1999:216), the popularity of Pentecostalism in many parts of Africa may be due to their understanding that it deals with the spirit-world. African religions are largely about relationships: relationships between the human world and the spirit world; whether these are ancestral spirits, spirits of the land, water, or forest or strange spirits (Ellis & Ter Haar 2004:21–22). In view of these, African Pentecostalism was seen by many Africans, more especially black Africans as remedy to address their spiritual and socio-economic fears. This is partly because of the spiritual assurances they receive from practitioners and adherents of African Pentecostal Churches.

3.1 Emergence of African Pentecostalism in the light of the religio-cultural and socio-economic needs of Africans

Culture is the totality of the way of life of people through their experience and reflection in their attempt to fashion a harmonious co-existence between them and their environment; material and non-material (Ghana National Commission on Culture 2004:9). While African churches typically belong to one of three types, i.e. mainline churches (stemming from Western missionaries), Pentecostal churches and AIC's (Africa Instituted/Initiated Churches); all of them still share the African primal religion/worldview as their spiritual bedrock. Although there were some extremely puritanical approaches to African traditions among these churches, most of them were characterized by strong pneumatology and supernatural awareness, which can be ascribed to the traditional or primal religiosity that forms the foundation of African cultural knowledge and life. This explains why Pentecostal currents have been notably detected across all three ecclesiastical types (Chul-Soo Kim 2013:123).

Cultural worldview of a group of people can be defined as a mental model of reality, a framework of ideas and attitudes about the world, ourselves, and life. It is a comprehensive system of beliefs of people, communities and nations. People's worldview is affected by factors such as their inherited characteristics, background, experiences, life situations, their values, attitudes, the habits they have developed and more. It is included in culture as the structuring of the deepest level of presuppositions on the basis of which people live their lives (Rusbult 2013, Kraft 1996:52).

The emergence of the Pentecostal Churches as well as the newer Charismatic Churches came as a way to deal with the wounds left by both the devastation of colonialism and colonial Christianity. Above all, these churches like all Christian churches, are trying to deal with the spiritual devastation that has come both with colonialism and post-colonialism. In other words, these churches stand right at the border where African culture, globalization and Christianity meet. They offer an attempt to mediate between the three worlds – both spiritually and economically.

The economic difficulties faced by many people in the colonial and post-colonial period have led many African Pentecostal churches to take the form of self-reliant businesses encouraging their members to imagine themselves as prosperous. An appreciation of the economic difficulties faced by many led some of these churches to style themselves as places of healing. Mwaura noted that the emergence of Pentecostal churches is characterized by a number of sociological, theological, political, economic, cultural and other factors. African Pentecostal churches exemplify the African struggle for self-identification and self-realisation (2007:5).

Pentecostals, like many African Christian churches, are scrambling to make sense of centuries of connections between Christianity and Africa, connections that have been in many ways, violent, and tragic. In some ways, these churches are attempting to step into the void left by African Religions, long-battered, and denigrated since the period of slavery.

Their public stern regard for African Religion is mitigated with a vigorous attempt to tackle the problems facing Africans which missionary Christianity is unable to deal with or countenance. Their awareness of survival and development issues assists their members to navigate the postmodern and post-colonial worlds. Their outrage at the dysfunctional

post-colonial state, the collapsing institutions, and processes send them and their adherents to the world of miracles.

African Pentecostal Churches exemplify the African struggle for self-identification and self-realisation. They represent a central development of Christianity in the Africa of the 20th Century. The Pentecostal movement has pointed to the direction in which broad sections of African Christianity are moving and therefore have testified to the existence of some generalised trends in the African response to the Christian faith (Bediako 1995:66). Furthermore, they represent a form of Christianity that the African can relate to in terms of worship style and expression of spirituality that addresses issues of demonic activity, poverty, disease and death as well as salvation of the soul (White 2014:84, Bongmba 2003:79).

In Africa Pentecostal Churches' attempt to address the religio-cultural, socio-economic and developmental challenges of the indigenes, they employed the concept of spiritual capital. Spiritual capital is premised on the idea that religions and religious communities represent an additional factor in economic development and ensuring social justice and equality.

4. Spiritual capital theory and pneuma-diaconal mission theory of African Pentecostalism

Spiritual capital theory is defined as the individual and collective capacities generated through affirming and nurturing the intrinsic spiritual value of every human being (Palmer & Wong 2013:1). It is the power, influence and dispositions created by a person or an organization or spiritual belief, knowledge, and practice (Liu 2008). Baker and Skinner (2006:11) interpret religious capital as the public interaction of faith-based groups with wider society rather than the creation of a more 'efficient' religious person. In a nutshell, spiritual capital is the practical contribution that faith groups make to society by creating networks of trust, guidance and support (Baker & Smith 2010:9). The major objective of the networks and support system is to address socio-economic and developmental challenges of faith communities and society.

Pneuma-diaconal mission theory in this article is defined as a missional approach that emphasizes transformation of society through Holy Spirit

inspired services to communities and individuals. It works among other things to ensure equality, human dignity, and justice in every context of ministry.

Pneuma-diaconal mission theory focuses on the wholeness in the world, sharing the hope of Christ and equipping others for healing and justice in the world. It builds bridges between the church and the world. Matthew 28:19 positions the Church, as *missio ecclesiae*, assigned to represent God and perform God's mission, not just proclaiming but ensuring transformation of humanity through the gospel. This involves the spiritual, cultural and socio-economic transformation of communities through the teaching and observation of Scripture. These assertions affirm the description of Missiology as the theology of the church-crossing-frontiers, expanding mission to new cultures, developing new churches and Christian communities.

Pentecostalism emerged amongst the poor and during the period Africans were a devastated situation from the mid-1970s to mid-1980s (Babatunde 2012:142; Miller 2009:278). In the light of this context, African Pentecostalism links itself to the needs of the destitute. Miller (2009:280) argues that Africa Pentecostal Christians inspired by the Holy Spirit and holistic missional ministry of Jesus Christ, seeks to address the holistic needs of their missional context.

The Pneumatological missional transformation and community development orientation of African Pentecostal Churches has to do mainly with the spiritual freedom to incarnate the gospel anew into the diverse cultures. Being Pentecostal would mean to affirm such spiritual freedom.

The pneumatological missional worldview of African Classical Pentecostal churches is grounded on the fact that, the activities of the Holy Spirit in the missional mandate of the church include among other things, attracting people to Christ, convicting them of truth, regeneration, baptism, indwelling, filling, sealing, guaranteeing, spiritual gifts, fruit of the Spirit, helping to understand the Scripture, and empowering believers. African Pentecostal practitioners point to the scriptures, particularly to Pauline thought, as the primary source of authority in matters of faith. For them, every time the apostle Paul uses the expression 'spiritual' it refers to the working of the Holy Spirit (Asamoah-Gyadu 2013:11).

The pneumatological focus on Christian mission recognises that mission is essentially Christologically based and relates to the work of the Holy Spirit to salvation through Jesus Christ. This is done through the participation of the Church in God's ongoing work of liberation and reconciliation through the Holy Spirit. It includes discerning and unmasking the demons that exploit and enslave people (White 2018:131).

Reading the missional agenda of Jesus Christ in Luke 4:18, one is tempted to state that his missional call is in the context of pneumatic approach to transforming lives and Society. Exactly we read:

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, To set at liberty those who are oppressed (Lk 4:18).

It is clearly noted in Luke 4:18 that Jesus' approach to holistic transformation is first of all to preach the gospel through the power of the Holy Spirit. Through the pneumatic preaching of the gospel, lives would be transformed and liberated. There cannot be proper development without the transformation of the minds of the people concerned. Transformation of the mind brings liberty from bondage and colonial mentality. The Holy Spirit decolonizes the minds of people through the gospel and this therefore gives room for personal development and in effect leads to community and national development (White 2018:132–133).

4.1. The Agenda for diaconal mission in selected African Pentecostal Churches in Ghana

“Christ wants his church not to be meaningless in society or to be pushed to the periphery ... [but] ... to be right at the centre of things, right where the action is” (Hendriks 2010:275; Sarpong 1990:9). Kudadjie and Aboagye-Mensah (1991:33) state that the church has a valid case to be involved in the affairs of the state in all aspects including national politics. As a matter of fact, only the gospel can change human hearts, and no influence makes people more human than the gospel does. Yet we cannot stop with verbal proclamation. In addition to worldwide evangelization, the people of God should become deeply involved in relief, aid, development, and the quest for justice and peace (The Lausanne occasional paper 21, 2003).

The church is called to service (*diakonia*) in every geopolitical and socioeconomic context; living out the faith and hope of the community of God's people and witnessing to what God has done in Jesus Christ (Walls & Ross eds. 2008:35, 46–47). Through service the church participates in God's mission. The church is called to be a diaconal community manifesting the power of service over the power of domination; enabling and nurturing possibilities for life; and witnessing to God's transforming grace through acts of service that hold forth (World Council of Churches 2013:68). The Third Lausanne (2010:13–14) refers to this approach to mission as a "godly fulfilment of the mandate to provide for human welfare." In this mandate, God's people are commanded – by the law, prophets, Psalms, Wisdom, Jesus, Paul, James and John – to reflect the love and justice of God in practical love and justice for the needy.

The word "development" has a dynamic connotation and refers to a process of change, growth, progress or evolution, although originally used to connote a process of societal change. Development has been primarily linked to economic modernization in the developing countries after the Second World War, where it was originally defined as involving growth and industrialization. This definition has now been broadened to connote a multifaceted process that comprises social, cultural, gender, political, environmental as well as economic dimensions (Mohan & Stokke 2000:247; Todaro & Smith 2006:17).

Diakonal mission approach in this article is in reference to service or ministry-oriented approach to mission which seeks to improve quality of life for the poor, as well as changes in attitudes and structures which perpetuate injustice. I submit to the fact that faith-based organizations (FBOs) play a crucial role in supporting processes to end extreme poverty and advance the sustainable development goals. For decades, faith communities have been delivering humanitarian and development services in areas where even governments didn't have access. FBOs can inform and nurture people's understanding of the good life, their hope, their self-esteem and belief in their own dignity and rights and to be resilient in times of distress. Therefore, the role of FBOs is directly relevant in development policy making and implementation (Fykse Tveit 2016).

Although it is a fact that only the gospel can change human hearts, yet we cannot stop with verbal proclamation. In addition to worldwide evangelisation, the people of God should become deeply involved in relief, aid, development and the quest for justice and peace. This approach to mission is known as a godly fulfilment of the mandate to provide for human welfare.

Although there are some reported cases and concerns on how some Africa Neo-Pentecostal/prophetic ministers abuse their ministerial offices for personal gains and commercialization of the gospel, many of the Classical Pentecostal Churches and some of the mainline Neo-Pentecostal churches in Africa are doing well as far as their corporate social responsibility is concerned.

In Ghana, the Assemblies of God (AG), was the first Classical Pentecostal Church to start practicing social evangelism (Diaconal mission) in the Northern Region of Ghana. As early as 1948, the female missionaries of AG organised literacy classes for the indigenous women, while the men organised work crews, teaching their male counterparts to make swish blocks, door and window frames, and roof trusses. This improved the economic lives of the people tremendously. Between 1948 and 1950, the missionaries built three clinics in the Northern Region of Ghana to address health challenges (The Assemblies of God 1981:12)

According to the history of the Church of Pentecost, the vision for social evangelism was started in 1945 by James McKeown and was affirmed in his letter to the churches in 1957, but could not materialize due to various challenges (Chairman's Circular 1957). The 1979 General Council meeting, held in Accra, created the Pentecost Relief Association; but its name was changed the following year to the Pentecost Welfare Association (PENTWAS) at the 1980 General Council meeting (The Church of Pentecost 1983), and was later registered as Pentecost Social Services (PENTSOS) in 1992. Since its inception, PENTSOS has been actively involved in socio-economic transformational mission agenda in diverse ways (The Church of Pentecost 2019c).

The Christ Apostolic Church International has established a unit for diaconal ministry called Christ Apostolic Agency for Relief and Development (CAARD). Over the years CARRD has contributed in many

ways such as giving donations to deprived communities, health institutions, and especially developing the human capital of farmers in the deprived communities in Ghana.

4.1.1. Development and diaconal ministry through provision of Education and scholarship

In Ghana, the Church of Pentecost is making a lot of impact in their contribution to social development, as part of their missional agenda to preach the gospel, they have established schools from the basic to tertiary levels. The Church currently manages over 80 Basic Schools, 2 Senior High Schools at Koforidua and Kumasi, 3 School Complexes at Goaso (Brong-Ahafo Region), Gbawe (Accra), and Asante Mampong (Ashanti Region), and a University at Sowutuom, Accra. There are also educational support schemes to support brilliant but needy students at the PENTSOS Directorate and in some of the Church Areas and Districts (The Church of Pentecost 2019a).

Similarly, the Christ Apostolic Church International has also established schools in several parts of Ghana as well as a University College located in Kwadaso, Kumasi. They have also established scholarship facilities to help brilliant but needy students (The Christ Apostolic Church International, 2019). Other Churches like International Central Gospel Church (ICGC), Perez Chapel have also established University Colleges in Ghana. These contributions are serving as opportunities for manpower development and places of employment.

Moving to other parts of Africa, we have read of the social impact and contributions of Pentecostal churches such as the Redeemed Christian Church of God, Living Faith Church Worldwide (Also known as Winners Chapel International) in Nigeria. The social impact of Winners Chapel International was clearly noted by Bishop David Oyedepo in his book titled *On Eagle's wings* (2013: 175–177).

4.1.2. Development and diaconal ministry through provision of healthcare facilities

The Church of Pentecost, in her concern for holistic wellbeing of its members and their missional communities, has contributed immensely in the area of health and wellness. Further to this, disease prevention, health

promotion, rehabilitation and excellent curative care are the thematic areas of the Church's healthcare policy. The Church currently has one Hospital (Pentecost Hospital at Madina, Accra), seven Clinics at Kpasa in the Volta Region, Kasapin in the Brong-Ahafo Region, Yawmatwa, Tarkwa and Enchi Kwahu in the Western Region, and Twifo-Agona and Ayanfuri in the Central Region. Plans are far advanced to upgrade the Clinics at Tarkwa, Kpasa and Ayanfuri to full Hospital status (The Church of Pentecost 2019b).

The provision of these health facilities has contributed to healthcare delivery in many of the poor communities in Ghana. The Church of Pentecost Hospitals and Clinics are established to provide affordable and quality health care to all persons, especially the poor and the marginalized. They serve, predominantly, the poor communities. Furthermore, the presence of the health facilities has given opportunity to health professionals to be employed. The same cannot be said of the Christ Apostolic Church International and the Apostolic Church, Ghana.

In spite of the fact that the Christ Apostolic Church International has not establish hospitals and clinics, at the climax of their centenary celebration on 12 November 2017, the church donated four ambulances to the Government of the Republic of Ghana to support emergency health care delivery in the country (White 2019:7).

In Nigeria, the Redeemer's Health Centre of the Redeemed Christian Church of God and the Gilead Medical Unit of the Winners Chapel are also doing well in providing healthcare for people of their missional communities. The Gilead Medical Team of the Winners Chapel is a team of professional medical practitioners whose mission is fashioned according to Luke 10:33–34.¹

4.1.3. Development and diaconal ministry through communal sanitation education and practices

In the light of the fact that the church has a lot of followers, it should be the concern of every local church to be conscious of our stewardship of the

1. 1. "But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, brought him to an inn and took care of him."

environment. In the Old Testament, the Israelites were given laws related to sanitation and on how to be good stewards of the environment.

In Deuteronomy 23:12–13,² we read of God's specific direction on community hygiene and sanitation. Giving this instruction on sanitation implies that when Israelite abide by them, they would enjoy good health and protection against diseases.

According to Greaves, Yardley, & Van Hoek (2009:2), the church has five roles to play in ensuring sanitation and hygiene in their missional communities. They submit that the local churches are to serve as:

- Messengers – communicating messages about improved sanitation and hygiene;
- Demonstrators – offering individuals and communities the chance to experience a well-kept toilet or hand washing facility;
- Implementers – helping individuals and communities to attain improved sanitation and hygiene facilities, through technical and financial support;
- Advocates – speaking out to those in authority with and on behalf of communities to express their need and desire to have improved hygiene and sanitation;
- Guardians – helping communities and individuals maintain the gains achieved through improved hygiene and sanitation.

On Friday, 23rd November 2018, the Church of Pentecost in collaboration with Zoomlion, launched a sustainable environmental programme dubbed Environmental Care Campaign, at the Accra Technical Training College. The environmental care campaign was designed to tackle four areas such as Education, Clean-up Exercises, Community-based initiatives and other activities. It focuses on attitudinal change and unhealthy practices that contribute to environmental degeneration. Prior to the launch of the programme, the church organized a training workshop for over 100,000 of its Elders, Deacons, and Deaconesses on environmental care.

2 “Designate a place outside the camp where you can go to relieve yourself. As part of your equipment have something to dig with, and when you relieve yourself, dig a hole and cover up your excrement.”

This missional approach contributes to the call of the church to be good stewards of creation of the environment. It also forms part of the churches' social responsibility to support the government of Ghana to keep the environment clean and to ensure sanitation and good living practices.

5. Conclusion

The article discusses religion, culture and development from a pneuma-diaconal perspective. The article argues that religion and culture are some of the factors to consider when it comes to development. The focal point of the article is on how Pentecostalism has been used as a reference point in addressing religio-cultural and socio-economic needs of Africans.

The article started with the concept of gospel and culture and how both should move together by contextualising the gospel. Although the western missionaries were the early people to sow the seed of the gospel in many communities in Africa, they were however, unable to contextualize the gospel in the light of African culture. African Pentecostal Churches therefore took advantage of the gap reacted and contextualized the gospel. The study argues that African Pentecostal Churches did not only minister to the spiritual well-being of their patrons, but have also made some socio-economic developments in their missional context through their diaconal mission approaches.

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