

Towards a Practical Hope-Giving Theology: An Assessment of the Revitalizing Model of *Arche de l'Alliance Goma* in the Context of the Eastern Congo Crisis

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Abstract

The Congolese of Eastern Congo have experienced many years of war and continue to live in poverty in a renowned, naturally rich country. In this part of the country, wealth is concentrated in the hands of an upper class constituted of government officials, military commanders, militia leaders (also known as warlords), and some businessmen and merchant women who work in connivance with the politicians. The lower classes, formed by most of the population in urban centres and rural villages, struggle to survive. Many Christians have joined Pentecostal churches, including *Arche de l'Alliance Goma*, because their message promises change amidst a desperate situation. This article proposes a theological reflection on hope amid suffering based on the question: How does a hope-giving theology, advocated by *Arche de l'Alliance Goma*, help Christians face the Eastern Congo crisis? Also, with the comparative method, the case study method is chosen to gather and report the findings based on research conducted 2019 through interviews and document analysis. The research finds that a practical hope-giving theology encompasses worship celebration, theological reflection, and social action engagement. Thus, hope is restored when Christians meet to listen to sermons during church services. A Pentecostal theology reinforces the aftermath of these gatherings focused on God's intervention in the human situation and a call to action to change uncomfortable conditions engendered by the long-persisted Eastern Congo crisis. Therefore, this study examines a revitalizing model that has served Christians in some churches to find ways of surviving amid suffering from the Eastern Congo sociopolitical and economic crisis.

Keywords: Eastern Congo; Hope; Pentecostalism; Revitalization, Theology.



Introduction

Generally, Eastern Congo embraced Christianity as a preferred religion that improves individual status before God and communal life. The message of hope described and transmitted through the Christian faith is good news in people's lives today and in the afterlife. In this respect, hope means believing in the possibilities of change. Emmanuel Katongole and Hartgrove take Christian hope as the power of resurrection or bringing back to life what is completely desperate and dead through a new identity in Christ (Katongole and Wilson-Hartgrove 2009). Eastern Congo is a stronghold of Christianity in its multifaceted expressions (Kalombo Kapuku 2015). Unfortunately, there is a paradox: at the same time, in this religious society, evil manifests under the horrors of war and poverty advances as well. This is just one of the expressions of what had been termed the Eastern Congo Crisis (Stearns 2012; Lemarchand 2015; Eale 2015; Trefon and Kabuyaya 2018; Yotama and Yotama 2021), though mostly its sociopolitical dimension had been brandished through the media. This crisis has affected many people and brought the loss of around 10 million lives. Yet, there is still hope for Eastern Congo. Why and how is that possible?

This article contributes to the discussion of how people living in Eastern Congo have survived nightmares imposed on them by an endless spiral of war during the past three decades. Some researchers have concluded that "the complexity of conflicts in Eastern Congo features the collusion of multinationals together with the neighboring states (including Rwanda, Uganda, Burundi, and Angola) and a multitude of rebel factions and militaries in the illicit extraction of natural resources that has become integral to local war and sexual violence" (Leatherman 2011, 117). The wars in the Congo have had less to do with inter-African tensions but more with the global appetite for Congo's resources (Iyara 2015).

This study is based on Christians' endeavours and proactivity in this region, as displayed by the churches' programmes. A close look at societal life in the area portrays an imbalanced standard of living between the so-called upper class and the lower class. On the one hand, wealth is concentrated in the hands of an upper class of government officials, military commanders, militia leaders called warlords, and some businessmen and merchant women who work in connivance with the politicians (Trefon and Kabuyaya 2018; British Embassy in Kinshasa 2023). On the other hand, the lower classes, formed by most of the



population in urban centres and rural villages, struggle a lot to survive. Christian churches remained their last fortress for reliance and guidance to change their conditions.

Many Christians have joined Pentecostal churches, including *Arche de l'Alliance Goma* – whose uniqueness is presented in the second section of this article –because of hearing a message full of promises of change in their desperate situation. The message of hope has been a revitalizing factor that helps many people courageously face the Eastern Congo crisis. People move from one church denomination to another for various reasons, depending on what they are told to believe and develop as their Christian character. In the context of war, tribalism, poverty, corruption, and violence, a hope-giving message contributes to establishing a religious brand (Katongole 2011, 7). Revitalization is the needed religious brand in the context of much suffering like Eastern Congo. However, not every Pentecostal church is a revitalizing model for other churches, especially the historic missionary churches in Goma. *Arche de l'Alliance Goma* has championed such a revitalizing paradigm.

This article proposes a theological reflection on hope amid suffering based on the question: How does a hope-giving theology, advocated by *Arche de l'Alliance Goma*, help Christians face the Eastern Congo crisis? This study aims to present a revitalizing model that has served Christians in some churches to find ways of surviving amid suffering. Thus, the article is based on three major bedrocks. First, an analysis of three waves of Christianity sweeping Africa and their relation to the Eastern Congo Crisis. Second, a demonstration of why *Arche de l'Alliance Goma* is a revitalizing model for other Christian churches in Goma. Third, an elaboration of practical hope-giving theology that expresses what had inspired Christians in facing the Eastern Congo Crisis and what should underline Christians' actions in finding ways out of that crisis.

Christianity in Africa and the Challenge of the Eastern Congo Crisis

Christianity in Africa and African Christianity may not mean the same thing.¹ The latter is more about appropriation and expression of Christianity, while the former refers to a strange

¹ For a short debate, read (Bediako 1995, 3–16) John Mbiti rightly observed that by the beginning of the 21st century, Christianity in Africa had taken shape and established roots in all areas of African reality. It has come to stay. Therefore, we welcome Christianity afresh in Africa, where it has arrived to continue the ancient and vibrant Christianity of Egypt, Ethiopia, and Eritrea...Nevertheless, [the Anthology of African Christianity]



religion on the African continent. Three waves of Christianity in Africa express the African encounter with missionary Christianity as lived through historic mainline churches, reactionary form of Christianity by African Independent Churches, and revival form of Christianity advanced by Pentecostal churches. All three have transformed African people into African Christians capable of solving many problems, including sociopolitical crises.

Though the current literature on African Christianity is overwhelmed by the huge impact of Pentecostalism and African Initiated Churches (Asamoah-Gyadu 2013; Öhlmann et al. 2020), it should not overshadow the great work of missionaries and mission agencies in the Christianization of Africa. Churches with labels like Anglican, Baptist, Lutheran, Mennonite, Methodist, Presbyterian, and Reformed, among others, have mission agencies behind their establishment across Africa. Following Jesse Mugambi's view on the African church, we can categorize the mission churches as composed of the Roman Catholic Church, mainstream Protestant denominations, and classic Pentecostal churches. These are churches that missionaries preferred to refer to as "Established" churches in contrast to the challenging African Independent Churches (Mugambi 1996, 204). Nonetheless, modern African Christianity is primarily a product of African agency and initiatives. The most vigorous growth occurred *after* the heyday of Western missionary enterprise and *after* colonialism. The emergence of African Christianity as a popular religious movement owes much to continuity with African primal religions, notably in the widespread use of vernacular names for the Christian God, the preoccupation with spiritual power, and the centrality of healing (Hanciles 2008, 129). While Emma Wild-Wood advances that "Christianity in Africa depended upon the way in which Christian belief and practice were perceived to meet local spiritual, social, and political needs" (Wild-Wood 2008, 2), Lamin Sanneh thinks of "the indigenous discovery of Christianity rather than the Christian discovery of indigenous societies" (Sanneh 2003, 10).

The legacy of missionary churches to African Christianity is many-fold. It ranges from social transformation to theological formation, evangelism, education, spiritual nourishment, and structural organization, with positive and negative effects. The following ten aspects can summarize this legacy: establishment of clergy in collaboration with laity; organizational structures and leadership; education from primary to tertiary level; social

cannot exhaust the full substance of Christianity in Africa, which is becoming African Christianity without losing its ecumenical and global outreach. See, (Phiri et al. 2016, xix).



development works; political engagement; philanthropic, charitable, and emergency relief; theological productions and reflections; mission outreach in remote rural areas; critical apprehension of African culture and religion; and Bible translation in vernacular languages. Dyron Daughrity rightly concludes that "for better or for worse, Africa would not be half Christian today without that massive era of European [and American] missions" (Daughrity 2014, 351).

While mission-initiated Christianity in Africa has long been recognized as critical in the development of the academic literature and the international development policy discourse, in contrast, African Initiated Christianity lacks such recognition.² Philipp Öhlmann observes that "while at the beginning of the twentieth century, African Christianity was predominantly marked by the Historic Protestant, Roman Catholic Churches (and, in the North East of the continent, Orthodox), today about one-third of Africa's Christians can be estimated to be members of African Initiated Churches" (Öhlmann et al. 2020, 4). We can no longer talk about African Christianity by excluding African Initiated Churches (AICs). Philomena Mwaura provides the various categories of these movements: "more objective and sympathetic scholars have analyzed and categorized them according to their origins, historical period, geographical location and theology as Prophetic, Ethiopian, African or Nationalist; Spiritual, Zionist, Aladura or Prophet healing; Messianic and Charismatic or Neo-Pentecostal" (Mwaura 2004, 162).

The AICs portray the development of a Christianity rooted self-consciously in African culture, contributing to a richer worldwide interpretation of the gospel. They view themselves as "a prophetic voice to announce hope in the midst of despair, assurance of prosperity in the midst of poverty and the presence of God's kingdom" (Mwaura 2004, 173–174). They are currently among the fastest-growing religious communities in many African contexts where Pentecostalism is tremendously flourishing. Pentecostals in Eastern Congo – though not willing to be labelled AICs – claim to reach a synthesis of African and Bible cultural views of life. For this reason, they claim to have responses to any people's existential questions. They

² Here is a prophetic utterance by Andrew Walls that is yet to fully pass: "In the end, the history of African Christianity will be a single story, in which the missionary period is only an episode. The judgment of the churches of Africa will not be whether one can denominate them "older" [here mission-initiated] or "independent" [here African-initiated] – that distinction, I believe, will in time, and perhaps soon, become meaningless. Their judgment, like that of all the churches, will be by the Lord of the Church on the basis of his Word" (Walls 1996, 118).



build such a theology of problem-solving around the shortcomings of missionary-initiated Churches. Unsecured men and women flood their gates day and night.

African Christianity is not limited to the Mission churches and AICs. It is even currently more expressed through Pentecostalism. It is noted that "Pentecostalism, the most globalized form of pneumatic Christianity, belongs to the larger Protestant family, and it shares the traditional evangelical theological emphases on the authority of the Bible, the centrality of the cross, regeneration as the way to Christian salvation, and a call to holiness as the outflow of a new relationship with Christ," points Kwabena (Asamoah-Gyadu 2013, 2). To him, Pentecostalism developed in Africa because Historic mainline Protestantism took an intellectual and liberal attitude to the Scriptures and, in the process, neglected the experiential elements of Christianity. Though we have here an overgeneralized statement, we share his observation that Pentecostalism is the overall outlook of African Christianity in the twenty-first century. According to Asamoah-Gyadu (2013), there are three main reasons why pneumatic Christianity has become the religion of choice in contemporary non-Western Christianity, which includes Africa and the African diaspora: (1) its emphasis on personal transformation wrought by the Holy Spirit (2) its emphasis on the experience of the Holy Spirit with specific manifestations that make worship both a heartfelt and body-felt experience; and (3) the interventionist nature of charismatic theology, visible in healing, deliverance, and prayer for breakthroughs in life. This description of Pentecostal theologies brings Pentecostalism closer to African beliefs about the role of religion. Hence, by taking the African struggles seriously, Pentecostal Christianity has proved to be a more credible alternative to existing mission churches whose theology has proved too distant from people's aspirations (Asamoah-Gyadu 2005). Given that this study's spatial delimitation is the Eastern Congo, we shortly highlight the rise of Pentecostalism in this region.

Since the establishment of Classical Pentecostal churches in this region like the Community of Pentecostal Churches in Central Africa (*Communauté des Eglises Pentecôtistes en Afrique Central*: CEPAC) in 1921 (Burgess and Maas 2002) and the Community of Free Churches of Pentecost in Africa (*Communauté des Eglises Libres de Pentecôte en Afrique*: CELPA) in 1922, Pentecostalism growth can be explained by the phenomenon of the rising of revival churches (*Eglises de réveil*) and charismatic groups called Deliverance ministries (*Ministères*) since the 1990s with the outbreak of wars. Many



Pentecostal churches have proliferated in Eastern Congo as products of dissidents, schisms, and splits from Classical Pentecostal or Historic churches due to power struggles over leadership or self-seeking interests.

Therefore, Mission Churches (wave one), African Initiated Churches (wave two), and Pentecostal Churches (wave three) dominate African Christianity's landscape. In a war context, these churches are doing something to guide Christians to find ways of survival and flourishing, but one Pentecostal church seems to lead the inspiring model in the case of Goma. To it, we turn in the section below.

Arche de l'Alliance Goma as a Revitalizing Model in Eastern Congo

The church's full name under study is *Centre Evangélique Francophone Arche de l'Alliance Goma*. This is an extension of the *Centre Evangélique Arche de l'Alliance Masina/ Kinshasa*. The latter is one of the congregations of *La Borne* network that is constituted of various parishes of the Assemblies of God in Congo, the 37th community of the Church of Christ in Congo (*Eglise du Christ au Congo-ECC*), founded in Kinshasa in 1965 by Jacques André Vernaud, a Swiss missionary of the AG-France in Brazzaville in partnership with Alphonse Futa, a former elder in a Baptist church in Kintambo/ Kinshasa. In 1970, the AG-Congo was affiliated with the AG-US (Burgess and Maas 2002). Later, the AG-Congo extended its work to other provinces of the DRC, including North Kivu (Kalombo Kapuku 2015).

Arche de l'Alliance Goma was launched in Goma on July 4, 1999, to respond to the missionary call of Jesus Christ to make disciples of all nations (Matt 28:19–20). The beginning of this work was inspired by pastors Patriarch Jacques André Vernaud of '*Mission La Borne*' and Father Israel Nsembe of '*Arche Masina*' (Arche de l'Alliance 2019), both mentors to Pastor Estone Kasereka Lukombola. The congregation aims to be (1) a praying church, (2) with dynamic and efficient house cells, (3) focused on individual evangelism as a lifestyle and (4) a provider of ministry training. The very first introductory sentence is, "We are a missionary church that wishes to respond to the call of Jesus Christ according to Matthew 28: 19–20 and Matthew 24:14." This church's vision statement reads: "Building a strong church for the mission, Acts 1:8." Its envisioned strength is about spiritual force: building a community of mature Christians; numerical force: growing in numbers, and socio-economical force: raising materially prosperous church members. In this perspective, *Arche de l'Alliance Goma* endeavours to preach for "the salvation of souls, their edification and



formation as disciples of Jesus Christ in order to provide the country and the world with a generation of honest men and women, faithful God-fearing and actively involved in the fulfillment of the missionary order of Jesus Christ in our generation" (Rev. E. Kasereka, personal communication, December 15, 2019, 1). It has an identifiable set-up organizational structure composed of departments like the pastorate team, elders' court, worship team (called *Union Musicale*), church administration, secretariat, logistics, finance, intercessory team, youth, children, women, hospitality (ushers), media, among others. As many Pentecostal churches do, this church is under the leadership of one "man of God" who oversees all the activities: "*le Pasteur Responsable*."

The Congolese from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) are reputed for their music, both in secular and religious realms. "Tune" is a musical word that expresses the adjustment to the rhythm, way to go about a song, pace, tempo, beat, cadence, modulation, and pulsation. A tune refers to the impact, influence, effect, incidence, reach, inspiration, leverage, and leading model of a Pentecostal church to other Christian denominations in Goma that are getting Pentecostalized in their outlook. In other words, this paper singles out the "Pentecostalization" of non-Pentecostal churches in Goma. Kalu (2008), Asamoah-Gyadu (2013), and Anderson (2016) find being Pentecostalized as adopting Pentecostal characteristics that include but are not limited to Holy Spirit baptism, tongue speaking, divine healing, expressive worship, spiritual gifts, adapting to local cultures, and experiential spirituality. It is important to note that within Pentecostalism, there is a wide range of beliefs, practices, and expressions, so not all Pentecostal churches or individuals may embody all these characteristics in the same way. In the next section, based on observations and interviews done for this case study, these characteristics are summarized into three.

Arche de l'Alliance Goma is a distinctive church because of its only one location in the town, the social class of its attendants, its vision of ministry and mission, its urban-oriented church planting, and its department of media. Being one of the youngest churches in town but rapidly reaching the standards of Megachurches (Gitau 2018), *Arche de l'Alliance Goma* is the most influential among Pentecostal and charismatic churches. It has contributed much to the Pentecostalization of Baptists, Methodists, Lutherans, and other Historic mainline churches. For these reasons, it deserves a special case study that tells the story of its revitalizing model in providing hope within the context of the Eastern Congo crisis. What is



practical hope-giving theology? Does *Arche de l'Alliance Goma* advocate for a hope-giving theology?

From Despair to Hope: Towards a Practical Hope-giving Theology

The Congolese of Eastern Congo have experienced many years of war and desperation; they live in poverty in a renowned, naturally rich country. In this part of the country, wealth is concentrated in the hands of a few politically connected elites. Most of the poor population in urban centres and rural villages struggle to survive economically. This is one of the causes of war in the country, even if there are many other reasons for the interminable war spiral in the DRC. Apart from poverty and war, violence, conflicts, tribalism, corruption, unemployment, and disease – including the prevalent cases of Malaria, HIV/AIDS, Ebola, and Coronavirus – remain a significant feature of Eastern Congo's history and outlook. Because of a long period of suffering, hope has given place to despair in the lives of many Congolese. The enduring reality is that Congolese Christians are still eager to see Jesus intervening to sort out this situation one day. To turn their despair into hope, they need a practical hope-giving theology. Thus, to what extent does *Arche de l'Alliance Goma's* practical hope-giving theology constitute a revitalizing model for other denominations in Goma town?

Practical hope-giving theology is the summarized and contextualized version of the broad Pentecostal theology advocated in Eastern Congo by *Arche de l'Alliance Goma*. The scope of this study does not allow an elaboration on Pentecostal theology. The study limits its focus to three areas where the revitalizing force of *Arche de l'Alliance Goma* is perceptible: worship celebration, theological reflection, and social action engagement. However, these areas need to be tempered by the protestant principle of *ora et labora* (pray and work) for their relevancy in the context of the Eastern Congo crisis, where Christians struggle to find hope.

Worship Celebration

Worship in Pentecostal churches is often characterized by lively music, singing, clapping, and other forms of expression as believers seek to connect with God in a profoundly personal way. Pentecostalism in Africa has proved that Africans seek to worship God in an authentically African way. Congolese, with a strong tradition for love of music, appreciate a more moving worship service with corporate praying than an orderly, noiseless liturgy in their churches. Asamoah-Gyadu states, "The impressive congregations some pneumatic



Christian churches have built, the attractiveness to our upwardly mobile young people, the kinds of media ministries they have developed, and the religious menu they constantly roll out for the public tells me that unless the older churches raise their game, their future will not be that bright" (Asamoah-Gyadu 2013, 15).

Arche de l'Alliance Goma initiated a single Worship Team to lead the congregation in praise and worship songs. Its liturgy gained a broad audience among the surrounding churches. In contrast to the Mission churches with many choir groups, the one worship team was revolutionary in conducting liturgy and providing more time for congregation participation. Such a church service became a vanguard of instilling hope in traumatized people in Eastern Congo. Apart from praising time, preaching time is given a unique accent. Through worship celebration, hope is restored when Christians meet to listen to songs and sermons. Young students and middle-aged professionals started to fill this Pentecostal church, leaving their Historic mainline churches. The latter adjusted their liturgy and use of media to respond to the challenges of youth drifting to this emerging Pentecostal/charismatic congregation, and they adapted their hymns by regaining the African way of worship. Like my Baptist church, mainline churches moved from suspicion (Kalu 2008) to imitation towards *Arche de l'Alliance Goma* worship celebration style. Other denominations started "Praise and Worship Teams," which differed from choirs. It is no longer surprising to see what Pentecostals called experiences of the Spirit and manifestations of his power displayed during worship services.³ Curiously, these facts have helped stop the loss of membership in favour of emerging Pentecostal congregations (Asamoah-Gyadu 2005). Scholars recognize that Pentecostalism, expressed in Goma through *Arche de l'Alliance Goma*, captures the African religious worldview and biblical recommendations through worship expressions (Anderson and Hollenweger 1999; Kalu 2002; Anderson 2016).

Theological Reflection

Kalu (2008) finds four emphases in Pentecostal theology: emphasis on power encounter, empowerment, healing, and prosperity. These four emphases constitute theoretically a hope-giving message to suffering Congolese. Each emphasis responds to a challenge in the

³ This is related to miracles, signs and wonders, prophecy, healing, visions and revelations, emotional worship, dancing, jumping, trance, speaking in tongues, casting out demons, centrality of music and songs, drumming, handclapping, exorcism, congregational responses of "amen" and "hallelujah" to preaching, shouting, sharing testimonies, etc.



desperate situation of Eastern Congo. Kalu summarizes Pentecostal emphases by stating that "Pentecostal political practice runs in four interlocking grooves: (1) rebuilding the individual, thus bestowing the power to be truly human; (2) a predominantly covert form of social activism, attacking sociopolitical and moral structures; (3) an increasing assertion for the rule of saints and the politics of engagement; and (4) building the new Israel by empowering communities to participate in the foretaste of God's reign" (Kalu 2008, 213).

Therefore, regarding the issue of corruption, Pentecostal theology is a message of power encounters where God transforms people's lives and gives them authority over demons. Considering such a victorious living, Congolese may thus hope that transformed hearts will replace corrupted minds. Pentecostal preachers show how empowered leaders can work for the well-being of the entire nation amid the problems of war, violence, and conflicts. They urge Christians to influence politics for people to be prosperous. Political instability and the militarization of society combine to create vulnerability, insecurity, and hopelessness. Kalu argues that the first task of Christianity in such situations is to save people from hopelessness by creating new empowering tools of hope and new sources of security, not by repeating old excuses about the redemptive qualities of being Christ-like (Kalu 2008). When it comes to the issue of tribalism, Pentecostalism insists on healing, a holistic healing of body, soul and spirit that will be the witness to the presence of God's reign among God's people. Pentecostals imply that people born again would choose upright leaders who honour God's laws to restore righteousness (Kalu 2008). This is a hope-giving message to Eastern Congo communities struggling with coexistence because of tribal and ethnic animosities.

Concerning the challenge of poverty, Pentecostal theology promises material restoration through personal health, care, and well-being. Pentecostals believe prosperity might cure poverty (Gifford 2004; Nel 2023). In confronting poverty, some concerned Pentecostals brandished that religious values were necessary for creating a new mindset that encouraged discipline, hard work, and self-reliance. Unfortunately, many deviations in prosperity teachings lead astray. In Katongole's view, "the miracle of instant prosperity that many of [prosperity gospel] preachers promise as part of being born again seems none too far from the shameless corruption that characterizes the politics and economics of Africa. From this point of view, prosperity gospel peddlers merely represent the religious version of the "politics of eating" (Katongole 2011, 50). Nevertheless, preaching against poverty sounds like



a hope-giving message to the Congolese who need daily bread. Beyond bread, Congolese hunger for God's *shalom*, which included peace, security, equity, health, justice, righteous acts, harmony, well-being, wholeness, restoration, and responsible governance.

Social Action Engagement

The principle of *ora et labora* finds its full expression here. Pentecostalism stresses church growth, winning converts, healing, deliverance, signs and wonders, and other expressions of divine power reflect a worldview that explains the Pentecostal response to the created order (Kalu 2008). All these express the praying dimension of Pentecostal theology. To be balanced with the working dimension, partial fulfilment of the requirements of Pentecostal theology should provide a message that goes beyond the present instability of political, economic, and social affairs so that Congolese might be grounded in God's word even after their current war and poverty years.

In the context of Eastern Congo, "let us not forget that the frantic quest for miracles demobilizes men and women at work, engaging them in long and endless prayers for prosperity, deliverance, and visas for the West, marriage, and so on, and thus hinders the development of the Congolese society" (Kalombo Kapuku 2015, 35). *Arche de l'Alliance Goma* is among the Pentecostal groups actively engaged in social and humanitarian work, including efforts to alleviate poverty, provide education, and address social justice issues. For instance, its school complex is among the best in town and inspires others to build good infrastructures and to get quality education for children. Its ministry for the vulnerable, called the "Tabitha program," has carried out humanitarian actions impacting the community by visiting prisoners, refugees, the displaced and the sick.

To summarise this section, "The impact of the Pentecostal movement has influenced other Christian denominations. The continued vitality and prosperity of many Protestant and Catholic churches are due to the charismatic inheritance which originated in Pentecostalism. These manifestations *have revitalized church services* and masses, combining traditional forms of worship with spontaneous verbal and bodily participation (*italic added*)" (Waldo 2001, 23). How did revitalization for hope take place?



"Pentecostalization" vs. "Historicization" in Revitalization for Hope

While many scholars agree that Christianity has become an African religion because it is the largest religion on the continent, Pentecostalism is the current fastest-growing movement in African Christianity because the Roman Catholic, Anglican, Protestant, and Independent Churches are also moving considerably in a Pentecostal/charismatic direction to become relevant to the needs and hopes of socio-economic vulnerable Africans. "Today in Africa, as in other non-western contexts, the force of Pentecostalism has led to the Pentecostalization of Historic mission churches to the point where in many countries the expressions Pentecostal, charismatic and evangelical are becoming indistinguishable from each other" (Ma et al. 2014, 1). There is no history, theology, mission, or social activism of the Christian church of the twenty-first century without a complete inclusion of its Pentecostal component. Anderson states, "Pentecostalism has become one of the most prominent forms of Christianity. It permeates every historic denomination and independent church. It has contributed to the reshaping of the nature of Christianity itself and left an indelible mark on popular religion and culture" (Anderson 2016, 3).

This paper focused on the Pentecostal church's revitalizing model (*Arche de l'Alliance Goma*) on other denominations. The implications of the process of "Pentecostalization" of Historic churches and the "historicization" of Pentecostal churches are visible in Eastern Congo. This mutual influence is somewhere a result of Pentecostal emphases that present a five-fold revitalizing contribution and significance: Growth (numbers), prayer style (power encounter), Christian renewal (quality of spiritual life), church survival (increase of membership, both in Historic and Pentecostal churches) and church portrayal (African way of worship).

Conclusion

Congolese Christians believe in God's transcendence and immanence in dealing with the multifaceted Eastern Congo Crisis and their role as God's vessels. Setting out for such a mission requires a leading model and an inspiring theology. This article presented a case study of a Pentecostal church, *Arche de l'Alliance Goma*, as a revitalizing model to other denominations through a hope-giving theology.

From the analogy of tuning in musical settings, this Pentecostal church of recent history, compared to Mission-initiated churches in Goma, has set an example in worship



celebration, theological reflection, and social action engagement. These three areas allowed this church to significantly impact other denominations in Goma, both in terms of development and deployment of people's potential. The result of these components of practical hope-giving theology, coupled with the protestant principle of *ora et labora*, portrays revitalized Christian denominations capable of dealing with the complexity of the Eastern Congo Crisis.

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