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Exiles and Exotic Intruders: Christians in Britain

In this paper I want to explore where the Christians are going in this country. To say that they are going is already a statement of some kind because there are those who think that Christianity is going nowhere in this country except downhill. The *schadenfreude* of decline easily suits a Church that is determined to rethink Christianity only within its liturgical boundaries. But what does this old religion look like from the scholars' point of view, in the perspective of world Christianity, and, finally, from the grass roots level in Britain? In this paper I am arguing that Christians in Britain may be heading for two distinctive kinds of Christianity – namely, on the one hand, an immigrant community, and an exilic community on the other. I have organized my thoughts in three sections. *Firstly*, I will discuss the matter of church decline in Britain. S*econdly*, I will address the issue of immigration from the Christian South – and this is where the phrase of *exotic intruders* has its place. And *thirdly*, I am asking what happens to the indigenous pockets of British Christianity, caught between intruding Christianity and a mainline culture that has long gone somewhere else. This is the moment we will have to speak about *exiles*.

1. Church Decline

There is no way to deny that the Church in Western Europe has been marginalized.[i] But I find the language of *death* that has been used in places, and often triumphantly, more than a little dubious. I am asking myself whether the smugness with which Britain's (and sometimes: Europe's) churches are declared for dead might conceal an implicit desire to take over their inheritance. People die; institutions lose their function. Therefore, it is not the Church with a capital C that dies. It is rather that churches, as inherited social forms of Christian organization, are increasingly losing their usefulness. But this is very

different from, say, the end of Christianity. The problem is partly one of perspective. Much of our social understanding has been shaped by a particular theory: for a century or so the "master narrative" of the secularization theory was dominant in sociology, history, and the political and religious sciences. This theory says roughly the following: due to modernization there is a long-term and *inevitable* historical decline in the social significance of religion. This is the big picture, though certain short-term processes, such as periodic religious revivals, may interrupt the general trend, whereas others, such as technology, urbanization and industrialization, may also accelerate it. Of course, as must be expected, this theory exists also on street level, as a complete disregard for all things religious, or in a brutalized version according to which religious ideas are harmful bacteria of the mind. It must be said that the secularization theory has also been applied in places not generally but unilaterally, for example with regard only to Western Christianity but not one's own religious tradition. The mechanism is well–known: my enemy's enemy is my friend. But let us return to scholarship:

In a time of the "return of religion" to the public square, both at home and away, the secularization theory is in more difficulties than usual and there are indeed attempts to modify or even deconstruct the secularization hypothesis altogether. There are also alternative approaches such as the *rational choice theory* or the application of the model of supply and demand to the so-called *religious market*. I cannot go into these areas here, but I will return later to the market model.

What then is the big picture the scholars have painted for us so far?[ii] Two points are to be made. Firstly, it is important to remember that Christianity is not a territorial religion and that church decline is not a new experience. Let me explain this: Christianity is a serial religion – this means it moves in a series of phases through time and space. It interacts with local cultures and their histories without privileging any of these cultures – not even Jewish culture, from where it came, and not Greek or Mediterranean culture into which it entered first. To put this into a biblical framework: circumcision is not a Christian requirement. This means that the new variants of Christianity around the globe do not need to be "circumcised" by the character Christianity had acquired in a previous territory. New variants of

Christianity will formulate their own understanding of the Bible and the tradition of the Church. A church in a new territory, therefore, always means a new church and a new theology. Sometimes, this is hard to accept – in particular for Christians in the West who were used to the idea that their version of Christianity was the only legitimate one. Theologically, however, we have to be clear here – there are no cultural privileges in Christianity. Christianity is not a territorial religion, rather the whole world and all of humanity is its horizon.

Historically, however, the characteristic of Christianity is its alternation of phases of advance and recession. Sometimes both at the same time but in different regions. For example, when one of the oldest sections of Christianity receded in North Africa and Palestine and vacated the place to Islam, the western, northern and eastern European cultures developed their specific variants of Christianity and finally became part of the new heart-lands of the religion. At the same time, the Bhagdad–based Church of the East, which unlike the Church in the West did not associate itself with state power and was soon living in the midst of Islam, embarked on its non-imperialistic or dialogical expansion into China, together with the Muslim merchants, and the Buddhist missionaries from India, namely along the Silk Road. Christianity is a religion that advances and recedes – like breathing in and out. It is therefore able to vacate even the place of its origin. Jerusalem, at least in terms of statistics, cannot be called a Christian city. Palestine, the symbolic home of the narratives of the New Testament, is now almost devoid of Christians. Their share in the population, despite the most intense missionary enterprise the last two hundred years have seen, is around 1.5% and falling – this is a percentage way below that of the huge subcontinent of India. It is not so difficult then for us to put the current recession of Christianity in parts of Europe, the old heart–lands of Christianity, in a wider perspective. In the last two hundred years as well, Christianity has seen a growth outside of Europe, particularly in Africa and Asia, that is unprecedented in Christian history. Today, the statistical average Christian is not to be found in Rome, London or Washington, rather in Lagos, Mexico City, or in Manila. He or she would be a non-Westerner and a person of colour, perhaps a young mother, possibly unemployed, rather poor by British standards and of the Catholic persuasion with strong charismatic and Pentecostal leanings. I will come back to this scenario later. The point is that world Christianity is

currently changing beyond recognition, namely into a religion of the South, and that growth and decline are, and always have been, part of the Christian story.

The second point scholars make is that there has been church decline in the West for quite some time. It was not unknown in the 19th century either as the history of the bible societies and home mission organizations clearly demonstrate. But most scholars today would agree that since the mid-twentieth century, the 1960s in particular, this decline has accelerated and acquired a new dimension. In Britain, Church membership peaked in the 1930s around the 30% mark, was rather stable until the 1960s and, then, rapidly fell to 12%. This general downward trend continues (affecting all mainline denominations, though some "new" and other churches show 'growth'). It seems that, within a generally shrinking church life, there is a kind of migration from mainline to New and Pentecostal churches. General church attendance has fallen since to something like 7%, and some researchers predict the wipe-out of Christianity in Britain by the middle of the century. I suppose, we all have learned to regard statistics, and particularly the predictions based on them, with the necessary degree of skepsis. However, scholars have found a bit more than just statistics, namely powerful cultural, social and religious processes that may affect Christianity's and other religions' future in the UK.

Surveys seem to indicate that people leave the Church not necessarily because of a loss of interest in faith but primarily because of a loss of interest in the Church. This seems to support the "believing without belonging" hypothesis of Grace Davie (1994). Interestingly, arch-secularists such as Steve Bruce, also accuse the churches as having lost the supernatural and spiritual. How could this happen? Some scholars think that the churches have actually lost nothing, but that the society around them is on the move. It is the religious life that is *mutating* whereas the churches remain what they always have been. Could it be then that the churches as institutions are hit not by a crisis of faith, but by a *cultural trend*? Some say that the churches were caught unawares by the new trend of overcoming the traditional division between the "secular" and the "religious". Others say that there is a move towards a more personal pursuit of the meaning of life. This line of thought is further developed by Paul Heelas and Linda

Woodhead (2002 and 2005): they think that the mutation of religious life in Britain consists primarily of a switch from *submission to a transcendent God* to a form of *spiritual experience where the divine is immanent and transforming*. The first kind of experience is to be found in the Church, the second outside, namely in the area of alternative spirituality. They predict (2005) that in the next fifty years this mutated type of religiosity ("holistic spirituality") will be as strong or perhaps will have replaced the traditional "congregational domain". We will see later that these two forms of experience are also to be found inside the Church.

My position is that one cannot and must not escape from the questions our culture is asking. It is better to admit that Christianity in its traditional shape does not have the answers to some of the questions than to offer orthodox answers to questions nobody is asking. So, what are the questions? I will be looking at immigrant Christianity first and then at the older main-line Christianity.

2. Exotic Intruders

In his recent book on the *Coming of Global Christianity,*[iii] the American historian of religion Philip Jenkins drove the following powerful message home

– that world Christianity was concentrating in the global South,

– that southern Christianity had religiously little in common with that of the global North,

– that the future of global Christianity would be more conservative and traditional, perhaps even "fundamentalist", when compared to that type of Christianity that had grown in the West and took its cue from liberal theology and Vatican II,

– that the Christian South was also in a process of political radicalization,

– that for the foreseeable future, the Christian imagination of the South would have serious and direct political consequences: in practice, some form of crusading theocracy engaged in a series of violent conflicts with Islam, but carried out with modern weapons,

Let us take a closer look at what Jenkins has to say. His first step is to distinguish between a "northern" and a "southern" form of Christian experience. As the specifically *southern* experience he characterizes the acceptance of the whole package of orthodox Christian belief and the expectation of God's direct intervention in a life that is troubled by alienation and demonic forces. On the other side is his characterization of the *northern* Christian experience as a process of pick and mix, with the modern liberal mythology acting as the decisive element and therefore inevitably leading to the abandonment of Christian belief. Jenkins, in other words, tells us without much fuss who, in his view, is responsible for the decline of the Church in the West.

Of course we can disagree with this kind of simplistic differentiation. For example, a sociological or cultural definition of *northern* and *southern* could be seen as more adequate and helpful than the geographical fixation. But we need to listen to what Jenkins actually wants to say. His book is a condemnation of Western culture as moribund and a broadside directed against "Northern liberals" and their "dilettantish kind of cafeteria religion" (197). He criticizes the tolerance of homosexuality in the Church or the admission of women to the priesthood and juxtaposes all this with the exotic and perhaps frightening but genuine Christian article in the South.

There are of course numerous Christian groups in the North that are rigorously evangelical and whose faith we must regard as orthodox. Orthodoxy, however, is not necessarily equivalent to the obedience to Christ. The orthodoxy of their beliefs, for example, did not prevent many Christians and academic theologians to support Hitler and his political religion of Nazism.[iv] In other words, geography and orthodoxy do not seem to be sufficient criteria for a qualitative distinction between Christians in the North and South. But Jenkins is right that non-liberal Christianity is increasingly outgrowing the liberal tradition. For Jenkins, the theological liberalism of the North is now already irrelevant. At this point, demographics play a decisive role:

He assumes that in Britain for example, traditional Christianity of the Anglo-Saxon type will die out within the next few decades – mainly for demographic reasons. Today, half of London's churchgoers are Black already, mostly belonging to Pentecostal or African

Independent Churches (97 ff.). And Jenkins did not fail to observe that one of these very successful and self–confident Black churches have already asked the Anglican Church in Britain to "die gracefully" and hand over its buildings to the new Christians. Jenkins predicts that by the end of this century, Whites will form a minority within Britain and that its religious future is "Brown and Black". The kind of Christianity then to be found would be only of the *southern* type. It would be precisely this mixture of orthodox, fundamentalist, slightly superstitious, exorcist and politically radical beliefs that he described in his book. This is a consequence of the predicted mass immigrations triggered by poverty, environmental catastrophes, and the strong population growth in the South and, on the other hand, the rapidly aging populations of the North. Non-western immigrants would re–introduce Christianity into an overwhelmingly ethnic population the majority of which would be partly secular, partly Muslim. Christianity would become the strange faith of exotic intruders. Standing at the vantage–point of the year 2050 and looking back, as it were, Jenkins can see that the liberal-Christian dinosaur will go extinct. So why not send it to the scrap heap of history right now?

Before answering this question we need to look at his *nightmare* scenario[v] according to which a dominant, but also fundamentalist and even "reactionary" and "fanatic" Southern Christianity[vi] will somehow gang up and merge into an "axis" of global *Christendom*. This prediction implies that passionate religious identification takes precedence over any allegiance to the secular political order, such as that of a nation-state. We have heard this before, of course, from Samuel Huntington and a number of other scholars.[vii] The focus of loyalty, it is said, is not the individual state, but the overarching unity of an imagined sacred empire. However, few of the examples quoted by Jenkins could be classified as a politicization of the sacred. He has thrown rather heterogeneous political phenomena into a single conceptual basket: politicians manipulating religious bodies, self-styled messiahs meting out apocalyptic violence, Church leaders challenging the political authorities in the area of human rights, or churches offering a kind of parallel administration in states where the infrastructure has collapsed. Such examples, valuable as they are individually, are not or, to be more cautious, not yet supportive of his thesis of a global southern trend towards a "political ideology" of Christendom or the emergence of a violent "theocratic Christian

state".[viii] These are, so far, nightmares, projections perhaps. But why are they used in his book?

The answer is that Jenkins has more than a religious interest in world Christianity. He addresses his ideas explicitly to "our political leaders and diplomats."[ix] In other words, this influential study is not simply the academic exercise of a disinterested historian, it is meant to have an impact on the discourse on policy and strategy of, in the first place, the leading world power. He is one of those applying a market model to religion and is asking how Christianity can "dominate the religious economy" (212). He criticizes the churches of the West for paying too little attention to the possibility that Christianity's battle for supremacy in the world market of religion might be won or lost in the mega-cities of the South. He predicts that a religion that "builds there today is very likely to be profiting richly in a decade or two". But why should this be of any interest to political leaders?

The answer, in my view, is this: the continuation of the role of the US as a leading world power is dependent on more than oil and military force. As an empire that is shaped and continues to be shaped by Christianity (thanks to Mexican-Catholic immigration) it requires an uncompromising religious vision and must bring this to bear in the global religious conflicts of the future. The main conflict, according to Jenkins, will be between Christianity and Islam. This conflict may result in global wars that will originate in the Third World. The super power, because it can no longer rely on Europe's collapsing Christianity, must look for the big battalions of the Christian South. In order to do so it must be ideologically in agreement with southern Christianity, marginalize liberal forms of Christianity at home, and support southern Christianity in the urban centres of the Third World.[x]

There you have a nice job description for Christian mission. Mission agencies and mission bodies have in fact discussed the book with greatest interest, fortunately rather critically, as far as I can see. For Christianity here is hi-jacked for the secular-religious messianism of the self-appointed new people of god, the United States. To reject this invitation, Christian theology needs to consult its rich historical memory. If there were only one reason to continue with the critical power of theological liberalism this one would be a sufficient reason.

3. Exiles

Whatever Jenkins thinks of the *northern* form of Christian experience, in this section I would like to listen to what the people themselves on the ground level of Christian life in Britain have to say. We have already established that the churches have moved to the margins of mainstream culture. We can also assume that, on the ground, things tend to be fuzzy, contradictory, discontinuous and pragmatic. This is the place where the initiative lies for rethinking, rebranding and disbanding Christianity, but we can hardly expect clear-cut images, partly because the demarcation between church and culture is floating and perhaps multi-layered. Wherever Christianity is alive today its shape is precisely a negotiated mix of the Christian tradition and the religious or spiritual space people have carved out for themselves. It is this negotiation between the teaching of the Church and people's experiences and narratives that also defines the content of words such as God, Jesus or Spirit. I believe that Church and theology can learn from the people. People's stories, experiences and, even, misunderstandings, generate many of the common ideas of a good life, of justice and salvation. Is it not hard to understand that these ideas would also be fermenting the new wine in the Christian wineskin. The recycling of the Christian hope can take place within the churches themselves, but there needs to be sufficient spiritual space to do so. I will give four examples, all taken from recent missiological research.

First example: is a study of an ordinary *liberal* type inner city United Reformed Church in Birmingham.[xi] The result is the discovery of a quite surprising and strong presence of the supernatural and of "spiritual experience". And this is one of those places where according to the sociologist Steve Bruce the supernatural and spiritual is supposed to be so watered down and, if present at all then only in "almost homeopathic concentrations" and "undetectable to the untrained eye".[xii] We probably have to think again. Currently, around 76% of the British population acknowledge that they had some sort of spiritual experience, compared to 36% in the mid–70s. Spirituality is a major growth industry in the late 20th century while at the same time church attendance had continued to dwindle. One is tempted to think that the divine is more likely to be encountered outside of mainline Christianity than within it. There is probably a movement away from the institutional and ritual to the individual in encounters with God. However, the people involved in this research were all churchgoers

and committed to their religious institution, and therefore they are examples of significant spirituality *within* the Church. The church is and is not a spiritual place. It might not always provide the experience, but it gives a framework for its interpretation. In other words, the contradistinction between church and spirituality is questionable. The research showed that the real issue was how spirituality was located within the communal, liturgical and dogmatic expression of the church. And there indeed was the rub. It seems that the members of this congregation were very much spiritual, but their spirituality was not really acknowledged within the ecclesiological framework. This is a serious problem, because the research found also that spiritual experience was the meeting point of the doctrinal life of the church and the individual faith life of the believer. In fact, the people themselves did the theological processing of spiritual experience. If this is recognized by the institution – and, in this case, it certainly was not – people's theological expertise can become an essential element of renegotiating Christianity.

Second example: a study of the so-called *youth congregations* in England.[xiii] This research was conducted entirely within that part of the Church that can be described as evangelical and charismatic and that is now searching for ways of mission that are appropriate for the culture of a post-modern age. What is the specificity of these experimental forms of Christianity that now hope to resonate with popular youth culture? The point is that they all tried to include what the American missionary anthropologist Paul Hiebert called "the excluded middle",[xiv] namely, the world of ancestors, spirits, invisible powers; the mechanisms of coping with the stages of life, suffering, misfortune and death; and the search for protection, guidance and healing. This world of everyday needs is often excluded from mainline Christianity. These youth congregations reject the institutional church and organize themselves through cell-structures, almost along tribal lines, with a network of teams allowing everyone to participate in leadership. Worship is informal, with a strong emphasis on spiritual experience, and, whether in the form of a rock concert or something more meditative, it is highly charged. The membership structure is also informal; you belong when you are there. There are no prerequisites, though it is expected that, over time, members agree with the core beliefs and values. These core beliefs are surprisingly traditional, and Jenkins would be delighted to hear that. However, the

research shows also that the youth congregations failed to make any substantial missionary inroads into the unchurched population. What they did achieve was to keep the children of church attenders in the Church, which itself may have halted or slowed the decline.

Third example: is taken from a research into one of the deprived estates of Cardiff. It is based on a very long theological conversation in a small congregation there about life, Church, and God.[xv] The result is an urban theology that is emerging "from below" and one that contains a number of surprising details. It is a theology of exile in which the Church has been driven away from the centre, where the space outside the Church is theologically fertile, and where God has become strange and unfamiliar. None of the triumphant God-talk of the Christendom era, which still dominates our hymnody, liturgy and ecclesiology, can be used in this situation of exile. Instead, a rethinking is taking place and an exploration into the nature of God has been started. The dominant experience is that God has stepped out of the Church, and that, in order to discern his footsteps, believers and their theology need to follow. It is intriguing to discover that we are here dealing with an experience that takes a form that is inverse to that which Western missionaries overseas went through: the experience that God was already active before their arrival. This example from Cardiff wants to tell us that God is there, even when the Church has gone.

Fourth example: relates to the history of Christianity in the city of Wolverhampton.[xvi] Although the Anglicans of Wolverhampton have inherited a particular image of a “Christian society”, the contemporary context in which they live is very different from that in which this inherited model was developed. There is now a feeling of discontinuity, displacement, loss and vulnerability. The research found that the current experience of change was informed by the biblical stories of exile. We have heard this loaded term before. The Christians of Wolverhampton have woven these stories into their own narratives of survival and come up with four responses to exile. These can be classified as the Remnant, Restoration, Assimilation, and Renunciation (or, Pilgrimage).

1. A *remnant community* re-groups around a remembered identity; it is inward looking and past oriented and prioritizes group survival.

2. The *restoration community* wants to regain lost ground and considers alliances in order to recover influence and make their view of God predominate in society again.
3. The *community seeking assimilation*, however, would look outward and see God at work in the world outside. Its mission is to "translate" the Christian message and be intelligible and acceptable in a changed historical context.
4. The *renunciation* community, finally, is on a pilgrimage to God's future. That is they are, together with others, on a way where God takes the lead.

However, it is important to remember that all these responses are woven into the particular narratives of each community, and that the same community exhibits these traits. These are varieties of stories of the loss of the homeland and the immediacy or remoteness of God's Kingdom. They are constantly re-told and changed, very different from a systematic theological discourse. In other words, Wolverhampton's Christians offer a plurality of answers as to what God is doing. They are on the cutting edge of the transition from Christendom to pluralism and, as communities of exile, they develop adaptive strategies to their new environment and redefine their individual identity and purpose. Let me emphasize that it is not just people outside the church who are capable of creating meaning. As with the other examples, the church is not to be written off as being devoid of the spiritual imagination. Social marginality can actually be a position that is conducive for asking big questions.

Conclusion

I am suggesting that two concurrent processes will shape the formation of Christian identity in Britain. They represent two culturally distinct and very different kinds of Christianity, and the bridging of the gap between the two will very likely be a major task. The exotic intruder scenario is the first process and it relates to the phase of the global advance or growth of Christianity in the South. The exile scenario is the other process and it belongs to the phase of the recession or the decline of Christianity in parts of the North. There may be a crossing-over in both directions and from one side to the other. In particular, northern Christians may feel the pull to join the victorious super-ego of the Christian South. The inclusion of some

Episcopalian congregations in the United States in the Anglican Church of Nigeria or Dr. John Sentamu's recent appointment as Archbishop of York are illustrative of these powerful new dynamics. Both these processes, intrusion and exile, could have a positive spin-off, namely helping Christianity in Britain to relocate itself. This relocation would include a new distinction from mainline culture, a critical conversation with the old dream of a powerful Christendom, and, hopefully, an increasing weariness to be enlisted in projects of political dominance.

What is going to happen in British Christianity may also be very important for the theological understanding across the continents and cultures. If Christians can learn from each other in Britain, they can anywhere. It is up to us to prove Jenkins' doomsday scenario of global spiritual incommunication and his dualism of faith here and thought there to be wrong. Britain's Christian experience is not irrelevant, it is rather a genuine location from where to ask fundamental questions such as what God is doing in Britain and the world.[xvii] This is what matters, not frantic efforts to regain a place for our religious community close to the centre of public life or mimicking Starbucks, Ikea or Classic FM. What God is doing in Britain is again an open question. So far, the attempts of the Church over the last century or so to rechristianize or reconvert Britain were all gloriously disappointing. So much of our self–important theology, liturgy and hymnody is credible behind church doors only – they belong to the little world of the sanctuary, where God is available in equal measure at all times as if God were packaged up and poured out like shampoo. This god is no longer strange, but also, it seems, no longer real. Is God more often in the church than the rest of us? I am uncertain about the answer. God has become a stranger. There is ignorance as to the future of British Christianity in the breathing-in and breathing-out process of this vast religion, which we thought we knew, but which has grown so unfamiliar to us. Is more church or more Christianity really the answer to the situation? Exile does not need to be understood as punishment, even if it hurts. In fact, we remain in the core story of the faith when we read the times with faithful uncertainty.

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[i] Hugh McLeod, *Secularisation in Western Europe, 1848-1914*, London: Macmillan, 2000; Callum Brown, *The Death of Christian Britain. Understanding Secularisation 1800-2000*, London: Routledge, 2001; Steve Bruce, *God is Dead: Secularization in*

the West, Oxford: Blackwell, 2002; Grace Davie, *Religion in Modern Europe: A Memory Mutates*, Oxford: OUP, 2002; Robin Gill, *The 'Empty' Church Revisited*, Ashgate, 2003. H. McLeod and W. Ustorf [eds.], *The Decline of Christendom in Western Europe, 1750-2000*, CUP, 2003

[ii] Brierley, P., *The Tide is Running Out*, London: Christian Research, 2000; Richter, P., and Francis, L.J., *Gone but not Forgotton: Church leaving and returning*, London: Darton, 1997; Riddell, M., *Threshold of the Future*, London: SPCK, 1998; Davie, G., *Religion in Britain Since 1945*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1994; Bruce, S., *Religion in Modern Britain*, Oxfortd: OUP, 1995; Lynch, G., *'Generation X'*, London: Darton, 2002; Woodhead, L., and P. Heelas, *Religions in the Modern World*, London: Routledge, 2002; Woodhead, L., and P. Heelas, The Spiritual Revolution: why religion is giving way to spirituality, Oxford: Blackwell, 2005

[iii] *The Next Christendom. The Coming of Global Christianity*, Oxford and New York: OUP, 2002.

[iv] Cp. my *Sailing on the Next Tide. Missions, Missiology, and the Third Reich*, Frankfurt: P. Lang, 2000.

[v] *Nightmare* is a term used by Jenkins himself.

[vi] Jenkins used these terms in *The Next Christendom*.

[vii] Cp. for example S. Rudolph, *Transnational Religion and Fading States*, Bolder, Colorado: Westview, 1997.

[viii] *Next Christendom*, 141-159.

[ix] *Next Christendom*, 13.

[x] Interestingly, Tony Blair – after the no-vote in France and the Netherlands on the European Constitution and addressing his imminent talks with George Bush – is said to have made the remark "Africa is worth fighting for. Europe, in its present form, is not." Quoted in *The Sunday Telegraph*, 5th of June, 2005, page 1.

[xi] John Burgess, *Perceptions of God in the Particular: a case study of the relationships between spiritual experiences and expressed faith among members of a Birmingham church*, Birmingham PhD thesis, 2005.

[xii] Bruce, Religion in modern Britain, 15.

[xiii] Cp. John Hall, *The Rise of the Youth Congregation and its Missiological Significance*, Birmingham PhD thesis, 2003.

[xiv] First published in *Missiology* 10.1 (January 1982); see also now P.G. Hiebert, R.D. Shaw, and T. Tiénou, *Understanding Folk Religion. A Christian response to popular beliefs and practices*, Baker Book House, 1999.

[xv] Peter Cruchley-Jones, *Singing the Lord's Song in a Strange Land?*, Frankfurt: P. Lang, 2001.

[xvi] Mark S. Hathorne, *Building God's City in Wolverhampton. A study of local churches in mission*, Birmingham PhD thesis, 2004.

[xvii] I am using here thoughts that play a role in the conclusion to Peter Cruchley-Jones (ed.), God at Ground Level (forthcoming).