FENDING FOR ONESELF BY CONNECTING WITH OTHERS: FRANCOPHONE AFRICAN

PENTECOSTAL-CHARISMATIC CHRISTIANS

IN WASHINGTON, DC

By

Rose Wishall Ediger

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Chair:

Dolores Koenig, Ph.D.

Geoffrey Burkhart, Ph.D.

Sabiyha Prince, Ph.D.

Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences

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ABSTRACT

Most of the research done on new immigrant religion has concentrated on religious structures, the systematized relationships between people and between groups within which religious practices are embedded. While this work is important, it has tended not to foreground religious meaning, the ideas that people hold about the world that include concerns about non-empirical forces and that make their experiences logical and understandable. In this dissertation, I address this limitation by taking a holistic approach to studying immigrant religious participation. I address both structure and meaning, domains that can be conceptually separated but in practice are integrated. This dissertation looks at religious structure and meaning through a qualitative study of a Catholic congregation made up of French-speaking Africans and Haitians in Washington, DC conducted from 2003-2007. My primary methods were participant-observation and interviews.

Congregation participants created a community with significance for them. People adjusted to some of the expectations of their new context while also bringing to bear

continuities such as a familiar mode of interpersonal interaction, ideas about Catholicism, and French language. These immigrants organized religiously by negotiating space for themselves within the Catholic Church, and they created and used social capital in various ways. Through their organizing, they created voice in the Church hierarchy and increased participants' access to practical resources. By looking at religious meaning, I also discovered that participants brought in Pentecostal-Charismatic Catholic specialists from around the world to guide them in understanding their experiences and to heal them spiritually. By emphasizing African causes and the maintenance of participants' connections to the people of Africa—through family ties, practical support of organizations, and prayer—the congregation valorized people who were devalued in the broader social setting. I argue that through their participation in Pentecostal-Charismatic Catholicism, immigrants took up and acted on their desire to change their limited positioning in the wider opportunity structure.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

AIC	African Initiated Church
CCR	Catholic Charismatic Renewal
DOS	US Department of State
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
ECZ	Church of Christ in Zaire
EJCSK	Church of Jesus Christ on the Earth by the Prophet Simon Kimbangu
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IRCA	Immigration Reform and Control Act

CHAPTER 1

AFRICAN IMMIGRANTS AND PENTECOSTAL-CHARISMATIC CHRISTIANITY

Immigrants coming to the US bring religious practices with them, and they encounter a new social setting in which they take up new practices. Many researchers have begun to look at immigrant religious practices. Most of the research has concentrated on religious structures, the systematized relationships between people and between groups within which religious practices are embedded. This research has found that organizing religiously is advantageous for immigrants due to the enhanced practical resources that become available to them and due to its function of reproducing aspects of immigrants' culture for themselves and their children. This work has tended not to foreground religious meaning, the ideas that people hold about the world that include concerns about non-empirical forces and that make their experiences logical and understandable. In this dissertation, I address this limitation by taking a holistic approach to studying immigrant religious participation. I address both structure and meaning, domains that can be conceptually separated but in practice are integrated. To consider meaning is to ask why people do what they do and what they think about it, central questions of anthropology.

This dissertation looks at religious structure and meaning through a qualitative study of a Catholic congregation made up of French-speaking Africans and Haitians in

Washington, DC conducted from 2003-2007. According to Yang and Ebaugh, a congregation is a community that gathers voluntarily, and, "in contrast to denominational hierarchies, congregationalism focuses on the local community as a congregation, which includes the increased voluntary participation of members in religious functions, a lay-centered community, and multiple functions of the religious community" (2001:273). While the Washington, DC francophone community gathered voluntarily and was heavily centered and dependant on lay participation and its functions, it was also embedded in a denominational hierarchy. Foley, McCarthy, and Chaves described congregations as "groups of believers (from a handful to several thousand) who meet together on a regular basis at a fixed place or places for worship and other activities" (2001: 219), a definition that is more open to the community's placement in a hierarchical denomination. After carefully considering terminology, I have chosen to adapt the term congregation for the group in this study, but note that congregation participants referred to their group as a "community."

I carried out participant-observation and interviews with people involved in three francophone Christian congregations as well as with friends and family of these participants and others outside the congregations. For practical reasons and because of the disintegration of one congregation, I conducted most research with one congregation. This congregation, in the inner suburbs of Washington, DC, joined together at its own French-language mass every Sunday in a Catholic church that had long been home to established Americans and groups of newcomers. The congregation had grown quickly. It began in 2000, and in 2005 it counted over 500 member families. This congregation followed Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity, a form of Christianity in which

participants have confidence that all believers may have ecstatic experiences bestowed on them by the Holy Spirit (Robbins 2004:117-122). I discuss further details about this congregation in Chapter Six.

In looking at religious meaning and structure for this group of immigrants, this study takes into account the ways in which religious participation shifts over time in various contexts. To better understand change, it is necessary to look at history. One important case study is the old kingdom of Kongo, located along the west coast of Central Africa. Kongo was part of a region from which many immigrants in this study originated. This kingdom took up Catholicism very early after European contact, and its acceptance has been relatively well documented. Therefore, I use this as a case study of Christian conversion before colonialism proper. Looking at this history also draws this study to the literature on the Christianization of Africa. This body of literature has tended to focus on the ways in which Christianization, which accompanied colonial rule, was a mechanism of imperialism (Comaroff and Comaroff 1989; Mudimbe 1988). This study takes a more holistic perspective to account for why different groups of Christians took up Christianity in various contexts and what Christianity meant to them. This dissertation picks up historically the question of missionary activity in the Belgian Congo, a European territory that included, but was not limited to, parts of the Kongo kingdom.

Because this group of immigrants practiced Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity, unresolved issues in the literature on Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity in Africa drive the specific questions asked by this study about immigrant religious participation. First, this literature has suggested that Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity represents an important new form of religious organizing that enhances participants' access to

resources (Cruz e Silva 2002; Maxwell 1998), but it has not explained how these groups form bonds of trust and friendship that would enable them to have this improved access. The nature of these groups remains unclear. This study looks at how Pentecostal-Charismatic Christians form bonds of trust and obligation and what practical resources might be opened up for participants as a result.

Second, the literature has emphasized the global character of Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity. It has suggested that this character is important for the international movement of ideas and that this global character can facilitate people's access to materially-useful resources and opportunities (Englund 2003; Meyer 2004; van Dijk 2002). How the international religious institutions that are not Pentecostal-Charismatic connect with a global Pentecostal-Charismatic Christian identity is not clear. This study investigates the significance of immigrants' Catholic and Pentecostal-Charismatic Christian identities in terms of meaning and structure.

Third, the literature has noted that Pentecostal-Charismatic Christians have an egalitarian ideal in meaning and religious practice (Asamoah-Gyadu 2005; Englund 2003). However, studies have not assessed this egalitarian element in relation to the religious hierarchies of the churches in which people practice this religion. This dissertation addresses this issue as a concern of both meaning and structure. It looks at how the ideal of egalitarianism works out on the ground between groups of lay participants and religious specialists.

Finally, the literature on Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity in Africa has overwhelmingly noted how this religious form helps people express and act on the continuities and changes in their lives by enabling participants to work at breaking

extended family ties and to focus on individual accumulation (Marshall 2009; Meyer 1998). This literature has not adequately addressed the ways in which participants resolve their concentration on individualism with their focus on the religious group, and it has not addressed how Pentecostal-Charismatic Christians practicing in larger non-Pentecostal-Charismatic religions, which have historically tended to create syntheses of old and new or ignore subjects such as witchcraft and demons, conceptualize and symbolically deal with evil. This study looks at how this group of Catholic immigrants who practiced Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity reconciled the apparently contradictory emphases on individualism and community-level identity and groups. It also examines how Pentecostal-Charismatic Christians practicing within the Catholic Church conceptualized and symbolically dealt with evil. To investigate these questions, the scope of which covers structure and meaning, enhances our understanding of immigrant religious participation.

African Christians have been an important part of the growth in Christianity. Christians in Africa numbered about 10 million in 1910, 117 million in 1970, and 335 million by 2000 (Isichei 2004:171; Kalu 2007:24). In 2000, about 126 million Africans considered themselves Pentecostal-Charismatic Christians (Meyer 2004:451). While Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity may account for much of the growth in Christianity in Africa, mainstream churches like Catholic and Protestant denominations have also grown (Hofmeyr 2007:317). Between 1978 and 2004, the number of Catholics in Africa tripled, growing from 55 million to 149 million (Eternal World Television Network 2006).

Additionally, in the last few decades, the numbers of immigrants in the US have increased, and these immigrants have come from different places than in the past. More accommodating US laws since 1965 and the increasingly restrictive policies of former colonial powers joining the EU have played a part in increased immigration to the US. At least three US policy changes have proven significant (Konadu-Agyemang and Takyi 2006:3-5). The US Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 eliminated existing country quotas that had heavily favored immigration from Northern Europe (CQ Press 2011). The law continued to favor spouses, minor children, and parents of citizens and residents, and it allowed immigration of people with specialized work skills and those seeking asylum. When the law was enacted, more than one-third of immigrants to the US were Europeans and seven percent were Asians (CQ Press 1993).

The 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) legalized immigrants who entered the US before 1982. At least 39,000 Africans were regularized under IRCA (Konadu-Agyemang and Takyi 2006:4). By 1990, Latin Americans and Asians accounted for 85 percent of all immigration (CQ Press 1993). Then, the creation of diversity visas (the visa lottery) in 1990 increased African chances for immigration (CQ Press 1993; Konadu-Agyemang and Takyi 2006:4). Since this time, 42 percent of the 55,000 diversity Green Cards issued each year have consistently gone to Africans. For instance, in 1998, 21,000 people from 48 African countries were granted Green Cards this way (Konadu-Agyemang and Takyi 2006:5). Paired with these important legal changes, Congress has gradually increased the number of immigrants allowed. On the other hand, since September 11, 2001, the immigration process has slowed considerably.

While Africans are a minority compared to Asian and Caribbean immigrants, their numbers are noteworthy. For instance, while only 46,326 Africans immigrated to the United States from 1861 to 1961, 201,442 Africans immigrated to the US from 1982 to 1992 (Agyemang and Takyi 2006:4). More than 184,000 African immigrants were admitted between 1995 and 1998, about six percent of all the immigrants admitted during that time (Agyemang and Takyi 2006:4). Since 1990, about 43,000 African immigrants per year have come to the US (Takyi and Boate 2006:50).

Africans are in some ways disadvantaged on a global level. Their nations have limited international influence and are often used in the international strategizing of other countries. However, within African nations, some groups have power, wealth, and high status. Africans with means can navigate the immigration system and afford to fly to the US. However, once in the US, these newcomers often find that they have less useful knowledge and connections, and they live in a society that devalues them. African immigrants in the US are "triple minorities:" they are foreigners, they speak another language (or have a foreign accent if fluent in English), and they are black (Stepick 1998:4). Being placed into these devalued social categories limits their choices.

In the following section I situate this study's questions in a review of three bodies of literature. I show that the literature on new immigrant religion in the US has maintained an overwhelmingly structural focus to the disadvantage of meaning. While this literature has pointed to important benefits that immigrants gain from religious organizing, it has tended to overlook how religion helps immigrants explain their experiences. Second, I situate the study within the literature on Christianity in Africa. This literature has tended to focus on Christianity as an ideological location of control

and has been concerned with studying Christian forms that are “authentically” African, two approaches that limit the understanding of religious meanings that African Christians bring to their practices. Finally, as the type of Christianity practiced by this group of immigrants is Pentecostal-Charismatic, I review this literature to generate specific questions for this study.

The Importance of Religion for Immigrants

Reviewing the literature on the religious practices of new immigrants to the US brings to light a weakness that this study intends to address. The literature on new immigrant religions has tended to concentrate overwhelmingly on structural elements to the detriment of understanding meaning. The literature has not addressed how their religious engagement helps immigrants come to terms with why bad things happen to good people, and the literature has not developed our understanding of how immigrants express and act on their feelings of suffering and pain through religion. This inattention is important to remedy because people also take care of spiritual needs through religious participation, and religion helps them explain their experiences. This study takes religious meaning as seriously as religious structure to enhance our understanding of immigrant religion. In this section I note some of the important contributions of the literature on new immigrant religion while illustrating its mostly structural approach.

Churches, especially ethnic parishes, have historically played an important part in acclimating newcomers to US society and in teaching religious and cultural values (Bukowczyk 1985; Christiano 1991). This is partly because religious affiliation has been a legitimate and meaningful social identifier in US society (R. Williams 1996:94). While

Americans have tended to expect immigrants to change their language, nationality, and way of life, becoming American has not meant that a person must abandon his or her old religion for an American one (Warner 1998:16). Some have suggested that religion has continued to be an important way for immigrants to identify themselves. In spite of this knowledge, there has been a general lack of scholarly attention given to the religious presence of new immigrant groups to the US—which in 1998 comprised about fifteen percent of the US population (Warner 1998:6-11)—except for Muslims, for whom this has been the overarching identity characteristic. In addition, and more important for the theoretical questions addressed by this study, the research that has been done on new immigrants and their religions has focused on religious structures.

As Shandy (2002:219) noted, most studies of religion and immigration have tended to focus on socio-political aspects to the disadvantage of spiritual dimensions. This work has illuminated some of the effects of organizing around religious identity for immigrants. For instance, some studies of immigration to the US have illustrated how religion can be an important and salient way for immigrants to transmit culture to their children and to retain an aspect of their identity (their religious identity) while gaining acceptance from a community (e.g., Ebaugh and Chafetz 2000; Warner 1998:15-16). The ethnic religious community can give individuals and families a sense of continuity and emotional support (Menjivar 1997:1, 9-10; Warner 1998:16-17). In their edited collection, Ebaugh and Chafetz recognized a major theme across immigrant religious congregations in Houston; religion was integral to the reproduction and maintenance of shared “traditions, customs, and languages” (2000:385). In addition, studies have shown how immigrant religious communities can reinforce behavioral expectations and cultural

values (Bankston and Zhou 1995:523-534; Menjivar 1997:9-10). In studying the religious participation of Vietnamese adolescents in New Orleans, Bankston and Zhou (1995:523-534) found that participation in the ethnic community, which happened to be focused at the church, acted as a means for parents to reinforce adolescents' ethnic identity and solidify traditional beliefs.

Because of the importance of cultural reproduction for immigrant religious communities, it might seem that grouping this way does not facilitate adaptation to the new society. However, the ethnic community can also provide newcomers with information and social networks that can be instrumental in their incorporation into US society. Much research on immigrants has shown that they frequently create communities and social networks to provide social and economic safety nets and enhance access to resources (e.g., Portes and Rumbaut 1990:86-87). This emphasis on the positive economic effect of participation in an ethnic community is reflected in the scholarship on immigrant religions. For example, scholars of immigrant religious communities have often portrayed them as emotional and material support networks for immigrants, allowing them to overcome difficulties and contributing to upward social mobility (e.g., Bankston and Zhou 1995:523-534; Foley, McCarthy, and Chaves 2001:217; McAlister 1998; Warner and Wittner 1998).

Studies attending to the socio-political aspects of immigrant religious organization—highlighting the importance of community ties for cultural continuity and economic and social support—are important, especially as they illustrate how people work to achieve economic and social success in the migration process and in the new country, which is often difficult to do. Immigrants arrive with particular knowledge and

abilities (cultural capital) and personal networks (social capital). They must also negotiate a new system of knowledge, expectations, and social differentiation. In adapting to the US, immigrants draw on both what they bring with them and the possibilities that they encounter in the new society (R. Williams 1996:92).

Immigrants may arrive with different cultural expectations, a small amount of economic capital, and difficulty speaking the new language (e.g., Kiang and Kaplan 1994; Koltyk 1998; Lessinger 1995). Immigrants may also experience the hostility of native citizens who perceive the immigrants' race, ethnicity, or legal status as inferior (e.g., Lessinger 1995; Matsuoka and Sorenson 2001). Immigrants often accept the most menial jobs available and frequently have a difficult time finding work (Conquergood 1992; Matsuoka and Sorenson 2001; McSpadden 1999). In fact, immigrants are one of the best examples of the importance of contextual factors in individual economic action (Portes and Sensenbrenner 1993:1322). Moreover, when the new labor market devalues the skills learned at home and when language ability is weak—when immigrants do not have cultural capital valued in the US—their economic paths depend a great deal on the social structures in which they are incorporated, especially community structures (Portes and Sensenbrenner 1993:1322). It is important for immigrants who lack cultural or economic capital to develop new social capital.

Given the ability of immigrants to self-identify with a religious congregation, some scholars have drawn attention to religious identification as a way in which immigrants actively develop an identity in relation to others in the surrounding social milieu. Developing religious groups comprises one way to organize socially that will provide a steady social location from which immigrants may more successfully negotiate

who they are in relation to others (R. Williams 1996:274). A group is defined in relation to other groups, and membership within a group is the conscious acceptance of a given mode of self-presentation (Dubois 1993:12). Whereas the freedom of individuals is restricted by the way others within society treat them, with people "becoming" who others see them to be, groups have more power to negotiate. Immigrants form groups to control, as much as possible, their dealings with the larger society (R. Williams 1996:94). This identification may enable a group to be Catholic, Baptist, or another religious denomination on their own terms (Warner 1998:20).

On the other hand, immigrants may also change their religion in adapting to a new social setting. For instance, William Stevens (2003) looked at how their new social context impacted the way that Ghanaian Pentecostal-Charismatic Christians in Chicago practiced their religion. Because of their emphasis on evangelizing, and to broaden their religion's appeal to non-Ghanaians, Ghanaians shifted their aggressive, street-style evangelization to an inclusive congregational approach that included conducting their services in English.

While the literature has tended to stress the socio-cultural and economic functions of immigrant congregations, religious belief systems are important and are not left behind upon moving (Shandy 2002:219). For instance, religious meanings may provide continuity for immigrants across moves and they may provide answers to new questions brought about by the experience of migration (Warner 1998:16-17; R. Williams 1996:6). Religion can also help to situate identity and create boundaries and possibilities for being that are legitimized by supernatural sanctions (R. Williams 1996:92-93). This possibility

of religion to help immigrants locate their place or identity can provide a counterweight to the pressures of adapting to the new context (R. Williams 1996:93).

This section has considered the scholarly treatment of new immigrant religion. Those researching this topic have tended to focus on religious structures. Studies have shown that immigrant religious communities can be a way to transmit culture to children and retain aspects of identity. Immigrant congregations can provide a sense of continuity, and they can offer emotional and practical support. As a new form of social capital, immigrant congregations can provide information and social networks and so can be an important means to increase access to resources. On the other hand, these studies have not typically treated religious meaning, including spiritual healing, as seriously as structure. However, for immigrants, these elements are tied up together. In giving equal attention to meaning and structure of immigrant religious practice, this dissertation aims to improve the anthropological understanding of immigrant religion. The next section situates this research in the literature on Christianity in Africa.

Catholicism in Africa

Many scholars have considered Christianity to be the religion of colonizers. This line of thinking leads to the question of how a person can be both African and Christian. However, African Christians do not tend to see their Christian beliefs and practices as foreign. In this section, I look at the scholarly treatment of the Christianization of Africa. One of the shortcomings of this literature has been its focus on the use of Christianity as a tool of European imperialism. Another, related problem has been the construction of

Christianity and mission churches as more European and indigenous religion and African-originated churches as more African.

Many analyses of Christianity have been concerned with missionization during or just before the period of formal colonization, a period of direct administration by colonial governments that began in the late 1800s, in most areas. Academics concerned with missionization during the colonization of Africa have tended to focus on how Western culture or Christianity was received by Africans. Some have accentuated the extent to which missionization during this period was a tool of imperialism. For example, Comaroff and Comaroff (1989) argued that colonization was not only a matter of material domination of the colonizers over indigenous people but also and perhaps more importantly a matter of coercion of consciousness—and so the meanings and practices of everyday life.

Comaroff and Comaroff (1989) showed how the missionaries approached their lifework with the outlook of bourgeois, Western European, nonconformist Christians. The missionaries assumed that their way of viewing the world was the best way. As a result, the missionaries conflated Christianity with their European worldview. They colonized Tswana consciousness by vying for control over the semantic domains of water (ritually and practically important), production (where the plow’s success was undermined by uneven transition to capitalism and a large poor class), and language (a new "orthodox" Setswana that ignored the performativity of Tswana speech) (Comaroff and Comaroff 1989:289). Although encountering various forms of resistance, not all of which were staged in European semantics, the colonizers' form of consciousness eventually took precedence due to their imposing, wealthy, and powerful presence.

Comaroff and Comaroff (1989) argued that this framework was gradually assumed by indigenous people to tap into what looked to be the greater source of power of the Europeans; they entered the conversation and began using the forms of European discourse.

Similarly, Mudimbe (1988) argued that colonization organized and transformed African areas into European domains through its control of physical space, restructuring of indigenous minds, and incorporation of local histories into the perspective of the West. Importantly, missionaries took part (willingly or not) in the colonial process of extending European control over wide areas of the world (Mudimbe 1988:45). Papal declarations gave Europeans the right to appropriate foreign lands and enslave "barbarians," or enemies of Christ. Mudimbe (1994) contended that in converting and saving indigenous people, the Catholic Church reorganized space and time according to its own memory; in choosing traditions to use and to discard, it created its own relevance and inverted African cultural orders. Mudimbe (1988:1-23) also made the case that the epistemological and historical interconnection of different Western entities, including missionaries, travelers, colonizers, and anthropologists, constructed an "Africa" as everything that they considered to be opposite to themselves. This other was savage, barbaric, and in early stages of evolution. Furthermore, they superimposed Western constructions and ideas of history on Africa.

In this perspective, like that of Comaroff and Comaroff (1989), the faith transmission of missionaries was tied up with wider cultural propaganda, patriotism, and business concerns (Mudimbe 1988:45). In carrying out their part of colonization, missionaries took three major approaches to imposing their culture on indigenous people.

They derided indigenous religions and gods, they swayed evolving Africans by demonstrating their superiority, and they set the rules for behavior for converts to ensure conformity (Mudimbe 1988:52-53). Like Comaroff and Comaroff, Mudimbe demonstrated the cultural and physical imperialism of colonizing powers, including missionaries. This is an important approach to a situation in which Europeans clearly did tend to act on their notions of superiority over other peoples in ways that were destructive for so many.

This study looks at colonization from a different angle, to elucidate the complexity of the ways in which different groups of Africans took up Christianity in different places and times. This dissertation aims to consider this complexity by looking at religious structure and meaning as they change over time in a region—the old kingdom of Kongo of west Central Africa—that has a long history of interaction between Africans and Europeans and a long history of missionization. This study is concerned with why people of the kingdom adopted Christianity in a time when they were politically independent. Understanding this deep history is also important for a more precise account of the changes that occurred during the missionization that accompanied colonialism in the Kongo.

Under colonial rule, some Africans also began their own churches. Some unhappy members of mission churches started their own. Other, often more informally organized churches formed around indigenous leaders. These African Initiated Churches (AICs) attracted much attention in social science research prior to 1975 (Meyer 2004:450-451). Scholars generally understood AICs to be syncretic and mission churches to be reflections of their European counterparts, even without studying grassroots participation

in the mission churches (Meyer 1999:218-219). Anthropologists studied AICs with the understanding that they represented the ruptures created by Africans' transition from tradition to modernity (Meyer 1999:218).

This frame is problematic when modernization is understood as the political-economic interlinking of various peoples, across societies, and perhaps more specifically the growth of societal-level economies in a complex, international capitalist system. First, Africans participated in wider political-economic systems before formal colonization. Second, it is not clear how adopting Christianity signifies being "modern" as opposed to "traditional" and how this enhances theoretical understanding. These implicit assumptions undermine the experiences of people who have changed and adapted to changing contexts over time, as have Europeans, and so does not go far enough in developing an understanding of African participation in Christianity. This dissertation is concerned with illustrating how Africans—maintaining focus on the people of (now) Congo—have taken up Christianity in changing contexts and thus is concerned with how the elements of structure and meaning that have been involved with this adoption have changed over time.

Finally, other work has framed African Christianity in terms of the coexistence of multiple cultural or social systems. In his work on Congo, W. MacGaffey (1983) reasoned that a dualistic social system existed that was part Western/colonial and other part Congolese/customary. Those who attended mission churches operated mostly in the Western sphere while others attending independent churches operated in the customary sphere. Kirby (1994) made a similar case for modern African Christians of northern Ghana, who compartmentalized Christian expression with Western problems and

indigenous responses with indigenous problems (Kirby 1994:63). One way to envision the co-existence of multiple ideologies is to imagine that religion, like human experience, is layered; “the processes of identity formation and problem solving appear to be sufficiently separate to have multiple religious systems being used at the same time by the same person” (van Beek and Blakely 1994:4). This is a useful frame for understanding the ways in which people draw on different sets of ideas in different contexts. However, these systems are not mutually exclusive but interact with each other and change (Maxwell 2006:387-388).

One overall conclusion that can be drawn from this body of literature is that Africans converted to Christianity as a reaction to their domination by colonizers. Some experienced more pressure to convert than others. Many considered it to be a way to succeed in the political-economic realm of the colonizers. However, while it is important to reveal the mechanics of ideologies that coexist and struggle against each other, it is equally important to recognize that these systems are fluid, interactive, and changing. Viewing religious strands as African or Western, or traditional African changing to modern African, essentializes much of this fluidity and complexity. Left unanswered are questions about the different experiences of varied groups of Africans. Further, in understanding Christianity as an entity, the literature has overlooked nuances in the changing character of various Christian forms over time in various contexts.

In looking at why people of the Congo territory took up particular Christian forms, I move beyond an analysis of essentialized, competing worldviews to ask how and why people take up ideas and objects in a particular context and what meanings they

attach to them. People understand and explain their world through creating and changing spaces and connecting new and old structures and meanings (De Boeck 1996:100).

New Forms of Christianity

Looking at how African immigrants practice Christianity today links this study to work on contemporary forms of Christianity in Africa. I draw on the literature on Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity in Africa in forming research questions about the structure and meaning of immigrant religious participation. This study takes up questions about forms of community, global identity, egalitarianism, and negotiation of continuity and changes.

First, because of the recent rapid growth and divergence in practice of Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity, it is important to situate it within a broader, worldwide field. The spread of this form of Christianity is part of the proliferation of new Christian forms worldwide, all of which have grown rapidly in number since the 1970s. Whether a study distinguishes them from each other or conflates them as a common type, their development might be linked to the disordered character of globalized culture, a field of differentiated values, tastes, and styles available to everyone (Freston 2001:314-315). New churches tend to fragment and proliferate in the form of small informal churches (tents, chapels), but they also include new, large-scale forms like the Korean mega- or para-churches of Paul Yonggi Cho and Sun Myung Moon (Brouwer, Gifford, and Rose 1996:105-130), which have seen success worldwide.

To read the literature on new Christian forms in Africa is to reveal divergence in naming them. African Christians themselves have tended to use the labels of mission

churches, AICs, and Pentecostal churches; however, self-identification has shifted over time (Meyer 2004:452). Africanist scholars have also debated how best to name them. I relate this debate to a general concern in the literature with understanding how African various churches are, a concern that echoes the past understanding of AICs as more African than mission churches. Moreover, the distinction between categories is not clear cut; churches have all been in "ongoing exchange, conflict, and dialogue with each other" (Meyer 2004:450).

For this dissertation, I acknowledge that there is great variability among churches in Africa. I employ the notion of Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity that Africanist scholars like Meyer (2004) and Maxwell (2005) have tended to use implicitly. This conceptualization includes contemporary people named in the literature as Born-Again, Pentecostal, Charismatic and Pentecostal-Charismatic. This understanding of Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity recognizes that it is a global religious form that varies in its local manifestations but in general makes gifts of the Holy Spirit available to all participants.

Pentecostal-Charismatic Christians emphasize the gifts of the Holy Spirit, including the principle of speaking in tongues—the act of speaking the Holy Spirit's message in a language unintelligible to most humans—and hold up the experience of the Apostles during the original Pentecost as exemplary of Christian life (Maxwell 2005:5; Robbins 2004:120). Anyone moved by the Spirit can speak but speaking in tongues is not necessarily required. The core ideas that spread worldwide are the following: 1) "Jesus offers salvation;" 2) "Jesus heals;" 3) "Jesus baptizes with the Holy Spirit;" and 4) "Jesus is coming again" (Robbins 2004:121). People can take up Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity within nondenominational fellowships, independent churches, in prayer

groups, and within national and international churches, including Protestant and Catholic Churches (Meyer 2004:452). In some larger churches that do not as a whole take up these ideas, people create and participate in subgroups in which they experience Holy Spirit baptism, speak in tongues, or accept other gifts of the Holy Spirit (Csordas 1980:17; Robbins 2004:121). Using this conceptualization of Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity allows this study to draw attention to continuities across different churches in contemporary Africa, which is useful in looking at the structure and meaning of the immigrant congregation that is the focus of this study.

Many scholars have located the growing importance in Africa of Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity as beginning in the 1970s. Some have considered Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity since this time to be something different, in meaning and structure, from earlier churches (e.g., Hastings 2000:41; Marshall 2009:11). However, connections have remained. Ranger (2008:6), for instance, argued that mission churches and AICs helped make up a long interconnected history that led to Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity (Ranger 2008:6). Similarly, Meyer (2004:452) argued that African Christianity has always been diverse and that the popularity of Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity did not represent a new phenomenon. In her view, Pentecostal-Charismatic Christians are similar to AICs because they emphasize the gifts of the Holy Spirit above Biblical doctrine (Meyer 2004:452). In the course of argument, this study aims to enhance our understanding of the continuities and changes in Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity as practiced by this group of immigrant Catholics.

Global Identity and New Forms of Community

Some have suggested that Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity in Africa offers specific structures and content that promise to help people better fit themselves into the modern world. In this view, the modern world is one that privileges individual economic action in a context in which most people are not able to fulfill their desires or increase their economic well-being. The disconnect between people's aspirations and possibilities is a result of the confluence of globalization (which makes available more possibilities outside their original context) and neoliberal policies, and it involves specific national and local political-economic and social conditions. The academic concern with modernity echoes earlier anthropological writing. In the mid 20th century, Mintz (1974) hypothesized that poor Puerto Ricans converted to Pentecostal (revival) churches because these churches offered a new way of comprehending changes such as the decreasing salience of noneconomic forms of security and the instigation of wage labor that resulted from US occupation. To succeed, a person needed to defer gratification, work hard and save money, and cut some non-economic ties. Mintz (1974) put forward the idea that for poor Puerto Ricans, participation in Pentecostal churches was a means to change their expectations, making it possible to adopt or to justify their adoption of these new behaviors.

The following sections look at the content and practical effects of Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity in Africa. They are organized around four themes: global identity and forms of religion, new forms of community, egalitarianism, and continuities versus change. Highlighting these themes brings to light tensions that I use to set up the research questions. While Pentecostal-Charismatic Christians have a global identity, it is

not clear how this is different from the global identity of international churches such as the Catholic Church. Next, Pentecostal-Charismatic Christians appear to create new forms of community, but it is not clear how community develops. Also, Pentecostal-Charismatic Christians espouse an egalitarian ideal in opposition to social categories of difference, but they also take up a different, spiritual hierarchy. Finally, while Pentecostal-Charismatic Christians seem to emphasize individuality, they also create new church groups for the social and economic support of individuals.

Global Identity and Forms of Religion

Much of the literature has presented Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity as a global identity that connects Christians across space while also functioning in specific local contexts. Scholars have argued that Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity is appealing because this identity, which materializes in the global circulation of tape and video sermons, music, and literature, and which people draw on as "brothers and sisters in Christ," is more encompassing than ethnic groups or nations (Meyer 2004:461).

Some have argued that reaching beyond Africa has practical effects. For example, Englund (2003) described the transnational links that churches seeking to associate with other true or serious Pentecostal-Charismatic believers formed with other churches. These international affiliations could result in funding from abroad. In another example, Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity could facilitate migration. For Ghanaian Pentecostal-Charismatic Christians, the church served as a communication link between different locales in the Ghanaian diaspora and as such facilitated migration (van Dijk 2002:177-178).

On the other hand, the Catholic Church has an international reach separate from this new movement. The literature has not looked at the significance of the international structure of churches like the Catholic Church for Pentecostal-Charismatic Christians. The ways in which the international structure of a church is interconnected with Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity are not clear.

New Forms of Community

Some have explained the growth of Pentecostal-Charismatic groups, which instigate processes of reciprocity and grouping and around which new social networks can work as safety nets, as a reaction to global processes of exclusion (Cruz e Silva 2002). In this light, Pentecostals reject the neoliberal project that treats groups as many individual subjects (Maxwell 2005:29). However, community structures, or the ways in which Pentecostal-Charismatic churches comprise new forms of community, and the effects of these forms have received little attention in the literature.

Maxwell (1998) did describe some of the instrumental effects for individuals who participated in Pentecostal-Charismatic groups. In Zimbabwe, the church became family for participants (Maxwell 1998:354). In participating in Pentecostal-Charismatic churches, people found themselves in a system of informal networks that operated within and among multiple assemblies and fellowship groups (Maxwell 1998:354). Pentecostal-Charismatic groups helped finance funeral-related expenses and weddings, and they supported the sick, orphans, widows, and the homeless (Maxwell 1998:354-355). Richer participants tended to employ those who were poorer, and participants seeking work let the group know their situation (Maxwell 1998:355).

However, this research implies that other congregations that are not Pentecostal-Charismatic do not offer these same networks. This is significant for immigrants because as discussed above, immigrants tend to be highly dependent on creating new social capital. Therefore, it becomes pertinent to ask how immigrants create social capital through organizing as Pentecostal-Charismatics.

What is more, while the literature has attended to the appeal of Pentecostal-Charismatic Churches (primarily in the domains of content and style), it has not explicitly asked how Pentecostal-Charismatic groups are cohesive. For example, while Laurent (1994:161) noted that a group of Pentecostals in Burkina Faso made up a tightly knit group, he did not analyze the mechanics of this unity. So people may be first drawn to a church because of the appearance or promise of member success. Alternatively, they may go to a church because it expresses a tension that exists in their lives. However, the literature has not analyzed how participants relate to each other or how their church group "becomes" family. The way that a group creates trust among its members is important as this is related to the level of social capital available to participants.

Egalitarianism

Many scholars discussing Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity in Africa have pointed out that this Christian form has egalitarian ideals and practices. Believers are "children of God" in a space where social categories of difference do not matter. All Pentecostal-Charismatic Christians are equal, regardless of income, race, geographic origin, or gender (MacRobert 1988:90). This identity also connects them with other

Christians, regardless of denominational affiliation (Englund 2003:84). The egalitarian ideal is also seen in practice, where everyone has access to the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

On the other hand, participation in Pentecostal-Charismatic churches seems to create a new, albeit spiritual, hierarchy. For instance, Malawian Pentecostal Christians who associated with others who were highly religious or gifted in the faith (men or women of God) experienced spiritual growth (Englund 2003:96). Men and women of God worked as channels between participants and the Holy Spirit. Similarly, Pentecostal-Charismatics in Ghana understood their pastors as powerful spiritual mediums in the realm of prayer, medicine, and objects (Asamoah-Gyadu 2005). In both cases, Pentecostal-Charismatics assumed and reified a this-world spiritual hierarchy.

While Pentecostal-Charismatics are disinclined to bureaucratic hierarchy (Englund 2003:96), some still are involved with one through participating in a church. How this ideal is worked out on the ground in the context of a hierarchy is unclear. Catholics are part of and operate within the confines of a large bureaucracy. It can be surmised that Catholics assume this large bureaucracy is also a spiritual hierarchy. In this view, those Catholic specialists located at various points on the earthly Catholic hierarchy have correlated levels of spiritual authority. What this means for an egalitarian Pentecostal-Charismatic ideal is not clear. The literature has not discussed how Pentecostal-Charismatics who comprise subgroups within larger churches understand an egalitarian ideal or how they reconcile this with the hierarchy.

At the same time, the promise of equality does not appear to be unique to Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity. For instance, Sanneh (2001:113) suggested that Christianity provided justification in the late 18th century drive to abolish the slave trade

(Ranger 2008:10). Ranger argued that some mission Christianity always had an emancipatory angle, even if this existed underground, that taught brotherly love, equality before God, and "belief in the redemptive power of the Holy Spirit" (2008:10). The scholarship has not addressed how the Pentecostal-Charismatic ideal of equality is different from that of past Christian forms.

Continuity versus Change

Researchers have argued that Pentecostal-Charismatic churches help participants deal with continuities and changes in their lives. The church is a space in which a participant expresses the contradictions of daily life, where a person seeks to be a modern individual while at the same time feeling the real pressures of family. In emphasizing their religion's global nature, Pentecostal-Charismatics are also emphasizing the need to "break away" from local norms (Meyer 1998:317). In breaking from these expectations, Pentecostal-Charismatics appeal to a "modern" present (illustrated in the break from the past and/or an emphasis on the future) that correlates with God. Good Christians oppose a "traditional" past (local norms and family) that correlates with the "Devil" (Meyer 1998:318).

Scholars have argued that Pentecostal-Charismatic experiences of healing posit the past—demons and the effects of witchcraft, embodied as physical pain and possession—as something that can be overcome (Marshall 2009; Meyer 1998). Participants believe that breaking with the past is necessary to move toward the future or to catch up with modernity. Pentecostal-Charismatics break ties with evil spirits (and family) through their deliverance ritual, where the Holy Spirit possesses the person being

delivered; the moment of possession is a time of war between the Holy Spirit and the evil spirits already dwelling in a person (Marshall 2009:12; Meyer 1998:338-339). Besides welcoming possession by the Holy Spirit, Pentecostal-Charismatics can be healed when they pray incessantly, immerse themselves in scripture, witness God through life style, and participate in Christian fellowship (Maxwell 2005:20-22; Meyer 1998:323).

However, sinful attitudes caused by family curses or haunting spirits can be difficult to vanquish; their effects can materialize in bad fortune in health and wealth (Meyer 1998:323). For instance, Pentecostal-Charismatic churches in Zimbabwe taught that poor people were poor because ancestral spirits, who were social-economic disappointments while alive, were passed down in the blood of generations (Maxwell 1998:358). Ancestors were violent and drunk; they practiced polygamy, ancestor worship, and witchcraft; they led wasteful and poverty-stricken lives rather than lives of accumulation (Maxwell 1998:358). Also, contemporary witchcraft performed by extended family members—whether or not the family members admit to it—can affect the victim. Breaking with the past thus offers individuals a way out of social debt (Marshall 2009:12).

In breaking with the past, Pentecostal-Charismatic Christians are breaking from the extended family, at least ideally. Scholars have argued that this complete break with the past offers a way for participants to engage in modern, individualistic behavior. In rejecting the past, the elderly, and traditional ritual, members leave their family and look to the future (van Dijk 2000:146-148). For instance, in Zimbabwe, release from extended familial obligations arguably increased individuals' chances of accumulation (Maxwell 1998:354).

In another example, the Pentecostal-Charismatic church was a way for the Ghanaian migrant to (mostly) sever ties with extended family and focus instead on "modern personhood," making it possible for an individual to seek material success in Europe without worrying about traditional family obligations (van Dijk 2002:191). However, once abroad, the immigrant had difficulty finding a good job and found she or he had to deal with regular violence and disrespect (van Dijk 2002:180). This apparent failure was explained "in terms of weaknesses in personal, spiritual and protective power" (van Dijk 2002:180).

Besides showing how Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity can be a way for people to distance themselves from family, the literature has highlighted the ways that participation reforms individual character. The Pentecostal-Charismatic character—a positive attitude, a sense of personal self-worth and reliance—helps participants function on the level of the individual (on the psychic, social, and economic levels) that is necessary in a changing neoliberal economy (Laurent 1994; Maxwell 2005:28-29). Individuals are responsible for change. The process of rebirth leads to increased self-esteem and ascetic individuals (Maxwell 2005). Leaders call on participants to repent and to lead moral and disciplined lives (Maxwell 2005:18-20). Speakers tend to rebuke members for arriving late and for forgetting their Bibles, and they encourage members to give more and to sing and pray with more enthusiasm. Additionally, the Christian must work and maintain self-control to keep his or her body clean, in order that the Holy Spirit, not evil forces, will dwell there (Maxwell 2005:27).

The outcome of this break with the past is, however, uncertain. For Ghanaian Pentecostal-Charismatics, a complete break with the past was not realized; instead,

religious rituals reflected the ambiguity of their lives (Meyer 1998:340). Poor family members visited and put pressure on the better-off. People who were doing better than their relatives felt uneasy due to family-centered values that their individualist orientation ignored and due to fear of being bewitched by a jealous family member (Meyer 1998:337).

In addition, the idea that Pentecostal-Charismatic Christians are able to act in a more individualistic manner contradicts the arguments discussed above that Pentecostal-Charismatic global and community forms are important manifestations of new social capital. It is not clear how Pentecostal-Charismatic churches that teach individualism, as seen, for instance, in breaking with the past and extended family, resolve these ideas with the simultaneous emphasis on the importance of community-level identity and groups.

Moreover, while the literature has characterized Pentecostal-Charismatic churches as anti-witchcraft, anti-spirits, and anti-"past," the literature has not looked at how Pentecostal-Charismatics in an international church whose identity is not primarily Pentecostal-Charismatic deal with these issues. Pentecostal-Charismatic Churches have tended to take seriously the influence of witches and demons and to denounce recourse to them, whereas other historic Western denominations have tended to deny their existence (Asamoah-Gyadu 2005:110). Scholars have described Pentecostal-Charismatic churches as different from Catholic ones, for instance, in their treatment of indigenous beliefs. Rather than the synthesis that Catholic and Protestant historic mission churches work toward, Pentecostal-Charismatic Churches stress their global identity and the need to break from the past (Meyer 1998:317). However, the literature has not discussed how Pentecostal-Charismatics who practice this within larger non-Pentecostal-Charismatic

religions conceptualize evil and how they express and act on the ambiguity that they experience in their daily lives.

If the Catholic Church does not recognize local spirits and beliefs, perhaps participants ignore them or deal with them elsewhere. Perhaps the stronger group structure and identity of Catholicism will better enable people to break with their pasts. Understanding how participants in a global religious institution with historical roots are also Pentecostal-Charismatic will enhance our understanding of how immigrants draw on this Christian form in dealing with continuities and changes.

Pentecostal-Charismatic Catholicism

The literature has tended to overlook how people practice Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity within larger religious institutions that as a whole do not take up this form, which leads to important questions. What is the significance of the larger Church structure for those practicing Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity within it? How do Pentecostal-Charismatic subgroups understand egalitarian ideals in the context of church hierarchy? How do Pentecostal-Charismatic Christians in an international church that is not primarily Pentecostal-Charismatic understand evil and suffering, and how do they deal with continuities and change in their lives? Finally, how do Pentecostal-Charismatic Christian groups create bonds of trust and obligation? This section describes how contemporary Catholics understand Pentecostal-Charismatic Catholicism.

Catholics experiencing gifts of the Holy Spirit began to be accepted in the Catholic Church around 1967 (Csordas 1997:4; Ford 1976:viii). Charismatic Catholics may speak in tongues, interpret tongues, prophesy, heal, and give inspirational

interpretation of the Bible (Ford 1976:viii). Catholics have tended to see Pentecostal-Charismatic Catholicism as a legitimate Catholic phenomenon (Csordas 1997:271), but it is important to note that the Catholic Church has over time selectively imitated popular Protestant elements to defuse its detractors (Cannell 2006:25). Of relevance here is the period in which the Church recognized Pentecostal-Charismaticism as legitimate; at this time, the Catholic Church was concerned that Protestant missionaries were gaining too many adherents in Catholic strongholds, and it moved to de-emphasize its hierarchical and conservative style. In the first half of the 1970s, the Church institutionalized Pentecostal-Charismatic Catholicism, and the movement took the name the Catholic Charismatic Renewal (CCR) (Csordas 1997:5). CCR's organizational structure coordinates activities like regular national and international gatherings and publishes books, magazines, and tapes of instruction and devotion (Csordas 1997:6).

While Charismatic Catholics are not a homogenous group, they tend to recognize themselves as part of the larger Pentecostal-Charismatic world, and they periodically adopt non-Catholic practices (Csordas 1997:8, 46). However, Charismatic Catholics express the "more forceful phenomena" of Pentecostalism in a quieter manner (Csordas 1997). In 2000, in response to the increasing popularity of healing services, the Catholic Church published directives for how they should be carried out that included the following norms: "Anything resembling hysteria, artificiality, theatricality or sensationalism, above all on the part of those who are in charge of [healing services], must not take place. The ministry of exorcism must be exercised in strict dependence on the Diocesan Bishop, and in keeping with the norm of can. 1172, the Letter of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith of September 29, 1985, (31) and the *Rituale*

Romanum (32)" (Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith 2000). This illustrates how the Catholic Church maintained authority and directed Pentecostal-Charismatic practice within it.

Pentecostal-Charismatic Catholicism can also be seen as an internal challenge to the institution of the Catholic Church. For instance, in looking at the movement as followed in Guadalajara, Torre (2002) argued that participants challenged the Church's bureaucratic and vertical hierarchies through their communitarian ties, and they replaced their lack of social and institutional mobility with spiritual mobility. However, he argued that the Church maintained its hegemonic power through balancing continuing contradictions. The Church recognized lay identities by appealing to the founding Christian communities, and in doing so, reinvented its past. Tolerating diversity like this allowed the Church to adapt to external happenings and maintain balance between extreme authoritarianism and extreme malleability. Torre's analysis provides insights into how the Catholic Church maintains its hegemony and remains successful over time, but Torre did not ask what these processes meant to people participating in the religious movement. He did not take into account how participants may draw on the movement and the Church's structure at the same time and how their participation may better enable them to explain and act on difficult life experiences and suffering.

Furthermore, in the past half century, the Catholic Church has emphasized the importance of indigenization of the gospel. Because this does not appear to be the same thing as creating and demonizing a past, it is possible that Pentecostal-Charismatic Catholics deal with continuities and changes in other ways. What is more, while Protestant groups tend to ignore or vilify spirits who are not God or the Holy Spirit, the

Catholic Church espouses belief in the mediating powers of its ordained priests and spirits of people who have died. What are the implications for a practice of Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity?

Research Questions

This study looks at immigrant religion by investigating religious structure and meaning for a group of African Christians of the Catholic denomination who practice Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity. The study's main aim is to better understand immigrant religion through using a holistic approach that includes both meaning and structure. This is significant for the discipline of anthropology because of the overwhelmingly structural focus of the literature on new immigration to the US. This study also contributes to our understanding of the Christianization of Africa and Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity in Africa. This study considers the character of relationships in which immigrant religious participation is embedded and it examines the ideas people hold about the non-empirical order of the world that make their experiences understandable. The study will address the following subsidiary questions:

1. How did this group of immigrant Catholics form bonds of trust and obligation and what practical resources were opened up for participants as a result?

2. What was the significance of the international structure of the Catholic Church and a global Pentecostal-Charismatic Christian identity for this group of immigrant Catholics?

3. How did this group of immigrant Catholics approach an egalitarian ideal and how did they resolve this with religious hierarchy?

4. How did this group of immigrant Catholics resolve individualism with an emphasis on community-level identity and groups?

5. How did this group of immigrant Catholics conceptualize and symbolically deal with evil?

6. What were continuities and changes in the religious practices of this group of immigrant Catholics?

Outline of Chapters

In Chapter Two I outline the approach to understanding religious structure and meaning taken in this dissertation. Religious structure encompasses three domains: the relationship between the political field and religious field, religious hierarchy, and forms of community. Religious meaning comprises two ideas: how people explain the misfortune that happens to good people and how people understand, express, and act upon their pain and suffering.

Chapter Three describes the ethnographic site of Washington, DC and my research methods. I show that Washington, DC was an important site of new immigration, and specifically, of African migration. In addition, this metropolitan area was a place where minorities face discrimination. I also discuss how I conducted participant-observation and interviews, and I discuss issues of positionality.

Chapters Four and Five illustrate the history of change in religious structures and meanings. In these chapters, I focus on the kingdom of Kongo, before colonialism, and then the colonial territory of Congo. I show how Christianity was taken up by particular people in particular times and spaces for reasons that combined the political, economic,

and spiritual. I address who adopted new religions and what this meant to them in specific social contexts. Chapter Four looks at the long period of direct contact between BaKongo and Europeans. The next chapter looks at Christianization during the colonial period and ends by considering religion for Congolese in the post-independence period.

In Chapter Six, I draw on my fieldwork to include francophone Africans, assessing why and how francophone Africans migrated, and how they did once in the US. I show that while they had to deal with typical newcomer adjustments, they faced further difficulties as a result of being black Africans. Their cultural capital was not very useful in this new context. Partly in reaction to the harsh city climate, francophone Africans turned to their own institutions. This chapter introduces Mary Our Mother, a pan-African French-speaking congregation in a Catholic Church in the metropolitan area.

Chapter Seven looks at religious structure for the immigrant congregation Mary Our Mother. This chapter shows how immigrant religious participation results from and acts on the new social setting. Immigrants who participated in the congregation developed bonding and bridging social capital that enhanced immigrants' access to practical resources like information and practical support.

In Chapter Eight, I look at religious meaning for the immigrant congregation. I describe ideas about good and evil and spiritual healing that immigrants negotiated with the congregation priest. These ideas provided a means for immigrants to explain their difficult experiences and to express and symbolically heal them. I show that through working to fill themselves with good, immigrants worked toward their full potential.

In Chapter Nine, I describe the knowledge gained through taking a holistic approach to the study of immigrant religion. I also assess the study's contribution to the

literature on the Christianization of Africa. In the course of this discussion, I address the specific research questions posed in this introduction. This chapter closes by assessing continuities and changes seen in religious practices.

CHAPTER 2

THEORIZING RELIGIOUS STRUCTURE AND MEANING

In this chapter I discuss the analytic understandings used in this study of immigrant religion. This includes theories of structure on the levels of society, religious institutions, and community, and theories of meaning in the domains of evil and healing. I also discuss religion as a way in which people express continuities and changes, an analytic domain that encompasses meaning and structure. This dissertation uses these theories to understand immigrant religion and address the questions posed in Chapter One.

Religion

This understanding of religion incorporates both outsider and insider views. To begin from the perspective of a cultural outsider, I see religion as "human interaction with a culturally postulated nonfalsifiable reality" (van Beek and Blakely 1994:2). Understood in this way, religion refers to people's activities that engage phenomena that they believe to be real but the existence of which can be neither proven nor disproven. By extension, religion includes people's beliefs that inform these activities. From the point of view of an insider, religion is an expansion of the domain of social relationships beyond human society, where a person may be dependent in relation to "non-human alters" (Bowie 2006:21). People carry out activities according to their understanding of how this

expanded social domain is ordered. In sum, then, religion refers to people's shared behaviors and beliefs that are related to non-empirical phenomena that they believe to be real. As such, religion necessarily involves people's shared ideas of what this expanded reality consists of, how it is organized, and what its significance is. Religion also incorporates the ways in which people behave in regard to this reality; these behaviors are necessarily dependent on beliefs and these behaviors take place within particular structures.

Much that is religious is not directly observable. However, for cultural insiders, this domain is reality. While most people do not assert that they directly witness nonhuman alters, for instance, God or an ancestor, at work, beliefs related to this realm are shared and real (van Beek and Blakely 1994:1). People behave in ways that relate to their understanding of the (expanded) social world in which they live. Because religious ideas help make up people's realities, they have concrete effects by influencing people's actions (Geschiere 1997:20-22).

This understanding of religion points to the necessity of studying both the meanings for insiders of their total social realm—religious meaning—and the structures in and through which they relate to this realm. In the following two sections I conceptually expand this idea of religion by considering structure and meaning, separate analytic categories that in practice are integrated.

Structure

A major concern of anthropologists and sociologists has been how to conceptualize the relationship between social structure, which shapes how people view

the world and their possibilities for action, and the ways that individuals interact to construct social reality. Some group the various theories that attempt to understand this paradoxical relationship as practice theory, wherein human actions are examined in relation to the social structures that shape them (Ahearn 2001:117). Here I will rely on the theoretical model of Pierre Bourdieu (1977), whose work has been at the forefront of practice theory.

To understand a social phenomenon, it is necessary to consider the social makeup of individuals, the particular social world within which they act, and the specific conditions under which they encounter and impose on each other. Through his model, a "theory of the mode of generation of practices," Bourdieu (1977:72) argued that the structures making up a particular environment, such as the environment of a particular social class, produce sets of lasting, transposable dispositions in people. In other words, the material conditions of a given social milieu result in a particular way of seeing the world due to a person's internalization and embodiment of this world; people's dispositions arise within particular social settings. Moreover, these dispositions direct people's action.

This is not a mechanical process. As people live in a particular social milieu over time, they internalize and come to embody the expectations, norms, and behaviors—including the constraints and possibilities—associated with that space. In this way, social structure influences the way people understand and act in the world, making it likely that people will reproduce structure. However, people's dispositions formed within particular social spaces filter their experiences in other spaces as well. If people's expectations do not fit with a particular social setting, as happens, for instance, when people act within a

social setting that is different from what they had previously experienced, practice can change structure. What is more, due to their social position, some people, groups, and institutions have more power than others to drive change. Investigating how group boundaries are defined and by whom, and how and why religion is differentiated, become important tasks (Wolf 1999:66-67, 289-290). This dissertation will examine structure on three levels: society, religion, and community.

The Relationship between Religious and Political Fields

On the level of society and the global scene in which societies occur, I note, following Wolf (1997:18-19), that societies are not distinct cultural wholes but are open systems that connect in shared history. In looking at religious structure at this level, this study considers the relationship of the religious field and the political field, relying on Bourdieu's (1971) analysis of the relative autonomy of religion. First, however, it is important to background an understanding of this relationship with a look at how social class is linked to the political field.

In the course of argument, this dissertation considers religion in societies following two different modes of production, historically specific sets of social relations through which societies extract energy from nature by transforming it through technology, skill, organization, and/or knowledge (Wolf 1997:75). Therefore, I begin by describing these modes of production as important conditions integrated with politics and religion.

The first mode of production that concerns this dissertation is the tributary mode of production. In this mode, producers control the means of production, which is

comprised of their labor, the conditions for its realization, and their own subsistence (Wolf 1997:79-81). The elite obtain tribute from producers through political and military means. In this mode, centralized elite will be more powerful when controlling a strategic part of the production process and a means of coercion (Wolf 1997:80). Conversely, local powers will be stronger where strategic parts of the production process are in local hands that can intercept tribute moving to the center, a situation that tends to lead to conflict among segments of the society (Wolf 1997:81).

The second mode of production of concern for this study is capitalism (Wolf 1997:77-79). This mode entails that producers are cut off from the means of production. Those people who have capital may acquire the means of production and deny these means to producers, except according to terms that they set. People who do not have the capital to buy the means of production must, then, sell their labor power to the owners of the means of production, capitalists. Capitalists realize their goal of profit through the production of a surplus, the amount of product beyond the cost of paying producers. Capitalists can generate a surplus by paying producers low wages and by increasing laborer productivity through organization or technology. It follows that a surplus leads to increased productivity that fuels the accumulation of further capital and further technological advancement. Capitalism as a mode of production then depends on the purchase of labor power and control over the means of production and entails the continuous expansion of surpluses through intensifying productivity (Wolf 1997:79).

It is also evident that this mode of production depends on the division of people into classes that control the means of production and classes that make up the labor force (Wolf 1997:79). Class formation varies in different places in different times, depending

on circumstances, including the particular makeup of the state and the tributary modes with which capitalism interacts as it expands. This knowledge is important for understanding the particular social structures in which dispositions are formed.

Wolf contended that both modes rely on an ideology that frames social divisions as natural (and logical) and the state, a mechanism of coercion that maintains internal class divisions and protects the structure from external assault. This means politics in a tributary state are rooted in the ways the elite take surplus from producers (Wolf 1997:99-100). In contrast, in a capitalist mode, laborers must work for wages, as they are divorced from the means of production. The state played a role in the origination of this mode of production and in its maintenance, for instance, by supporting systems of work and labor discipline needed by the mode and by representing the interests of its capitalist classes abroad (Wolf 1997:100).

Bourdieu did not discuss modes of production, but he argued that a religious field develops—as seen in the increasing moralization and systematization of religious practices and beliefs—alongside the growth of cities (Bourdieu 1971:300-301), which exist in tributary and capitalist societies. Bourdieu looked at how the religious field in complex societies can be more or less homologous with political structures. He posited that the relationship of religious and political structures tends to find an equilibrium somewhere on a continuum of possibilities, the two extremes of which are the control of power (government) by religious specialists like priests and the control (or subordination) of the religious field (practices and symbols) by the political elite. Where a case fits on the continuum depends on the particular historical context (Bourdieu 1971:330). In imposing particular dispositions that accord with political structures and in effect

naturalizing them, putting the world in order, for instance, through religious ceremony, and in using its religious authority to combat heretical movements directed by prophets, discussed further below, religious institutions contribute to the maintenance of political order (Bourdieu 1971:328-329). On the other hand, religious institutions can be rivals of political institutions.

In tributary societies, then, religious and political fields tend to overlap, due to the divine political hierarchy. In capitalist societies, the relationship between religious and political institutions is more complex. However, religious institutions are still tied up in the production of systems of ideas and they to a greater or lesser degree remain active in the political field. For a politically stable capitalist state, it follows that ideas that uphold the ambiguity of social divisions as part of the natural order have been reproduced across a variety of idea systems, including those taken up in various religious institutions. On the other hand, religious institutions have the potential to create alternative ways of understanding the universe, for instance, by challenging the meaning of what is good and evil.

Religious Power and Hierarchy

Asad (1983) criticized Geertz's definition of religion as a system of meaning, which I describe below, as divorced from social processes and especially power. While Asad's intent was to demonstrate the problem of defining religion, I use his critiques in conjunction with the work of Bourdieu (1971) and Turner (1968) to understand power within the religious field. In this section, I focus on power and hierarchy within religious institutions, the structures through which people socially recognized as able to produce

and reproduce a body of organized religious knowledge negotiate orthodoxy (Bourdieu 1971:304). The form of an institution varies according to the particular historical context in which it develops.

The process whereby some people come to monopolize the religious field excludes others (Bourdieu 1971:304). Within the religious field, various entities, including groups and individuals, may struggle for control. Additionally, in complex societies, the religious field can include multiple religious institutions. Those within religious institutions have power to create laws and sanctions and to advise the disciplinary activities (for instance, obedience and prayer) of individuals (Asad 1983:242-243). The religious institution, as a structure of power directed to religious ends, creates the circumstances for experiencing religious truth (Asad 1983:242-243). It has institutionalized certain knowledge and practices and a variety of disciplinary activities "within which selves are formed, and the possibilities of" reaching the truth are outlined (Asad 1983:249). While the religious institution denounces certain discourses and practices, it praises and draws others into its authorized knowledge (Asad 1983:242-243).

However, while religious authorities guide lay people's thoughts and perceptions, they do this in a dialectical relationship with the religious interests of different groups of lay people (Bourdieu 1971:318-319). It is also important to note that the authorized meaning of religious practices and representations is not necessarily the same as the understandings of practitioners (Asad 1983:244). As well, churches tend to perpetuate themselves, and in doing this, they tend to ban new avenues of salvation like independent religious communities and individual search for salvation (Bourdieu 1971:319). This

means that a church will physically or symbolically incorporate or eliminate prophets and their movements (Bourdieu 1971:322).

Within religious hierarchies are religious specialists. Following Turner (1968) and Bourdieu (1971:319-328), religious specialists are people with culturally defined status relevant to particular religions. As a representative of an established religion, the priest claims authority and is interested in maintaining the current system of beliefs and practices. Religious authorities work to maintain their legitimacy in step with the lay people that they mobilize within the class structure. In contrast, a prophet communicates new doctrines, ethics, or values out of a sense that she or he has a calling and thus produces religious discontinuity. The prophet flourishes during times of social change or trouble, when the meaning of values is in flux and significant numbers of people feel alienated from the established social order. The prophet either provides a new way of viewing the world and new religious forms or articulates changing systems of ideas, including the meaning of morality. Often prophets find their place in societies invaded by the culture or military of larger-scale societies or when class animosities intensify. Prophets and their followers operate outside the body of authorized religious specialists. By their very existence and ambition to satisfy their religious needs themselves, they put into question the church's monopoly.

The more complex a society's organization, the more complex and specialized is its religious organization (Turner 1968:440-442). Among medium-scale, politically-centralized societies, for example, tributary societies, a religious dichotomy tends to exist (Turner 1968:442-443). In these societies, the king or chief tends to have religious functions, for instance, organizing rituals to promote fertility or to safeguard the harvest

(Turner 1968:443). The functions of other religious specialists in these societies also tend to be tied up with the office of king. For instance, among the Bemba of Zambia, the religious specialists made up a council that served as a check on the king's power (Turner 1968:443).

In more complex societies, religion tends to be a separate domain in which people may participate more or less (Turner 1968:442). As a result of bureaucratization, formal religious groups tend to include a large number of specialized roles and ranks filled by specialists (Turner 1968:442). There are many statuses, ranks, and functions within the Catholic Church, for example (Turner 1968:442). Also, because complex religious institutions may have theological sub-fields, the struggle for monopoly over religious meanings and practices occurs not only between church and prophet and between religious specialists and laity, but it is also negotiated across religious specialists (Bourdieu 1971:322-323). In other words, not only is the system of symbols taken up by a church a result of negotiations between specialists and lay groups and prophets, but it is also the result of internal tensions of bureaucracy (Bourdieu 1971:325).

In the Catholic Church today, priests are in charge of parishes, which draw people from within the surrounding area, but which can also draw people based on identity, for example, ethnic identity. Parishes are organized into dioceses (headed by bishops) and dioceses are organized into archdioceses (headed by archbishops). While the pope has absolute authority, he and the bishops are in charge of directing the Church (McBrien 2005:7886). Within this structure, groups exist at the various levels of hierarchy. For instance, Social Development and World Peace is a policy group of US bishops that targets US policy in its focus on global poverty (Endres 2010). The aid organization

Catholic Relief Services has an international scope while Catholic Charities focuses on the US. Other Catholic groups and organizations include women's and men's religious orders, lay organizations, and schools.

While the Catholic Church is a hierarchically organized, complex structure within which specialists vie for control over defining orthodoxy, within and across this structure flow various ideologies that may or may not accord with Church doctrine. Conceptualizing the Catholic Church as a transversal organization (Torre 2002:305-306) is a useful way to understand how this happens. The Catholic Church as a transversalized institution includes struggles about how to be Catholic that cut across the institution's vertical hierarchy, for instance, through transnational networks and groups. It comprises group aspirations and strategies that do not necessarily come from the center but can come from outside it, from its top, and from its bottom. These different models for being Catholic shape ideas and action beyond the local space.

In sum, within the religious field and within particular religious institutions, the negotiation of power and hierarchy are of interest. Within the religious field, various entities, including groups and individuals, may struggle for control. In complex societies, the religious field can include multiple religious institutions. Priests within religious institutions tend to be concerned with reproducing the institutions that they represent. This involves negotiating meanings with groups of lay people. While the Catholic Church is a hierarchical institution, its transversal character facilitates the negotiation of authorized meanings across various groups. In addition, prophets are individuals who express popular discontent and anxiety in times of social stress. Because prophets and

their groups of followers are dangerous to religious authorities, religious entities try to either incorporate or exclude them.

One element noted in this discussion of the negotiation of religious meanings and practices is that this occurs between religious authorities and various groups of lay people. It is also significant that the ways in which groups of lay individuals form around religious identity varies depending on context. The next section will discuss forms of religious community.

Forms of Social Relations and Community

A general assertion of cultural anthropology is that change in one domain of culture, such as economics, affects the others, like politics and religion. Similarly, when these larger structures change, so too do forms of social relations and community. It is important to note that religious structures can be means to ends that are not explicitly religious, whether or not those ends are consciously sought or happen as a secondary product of participation.

From a structural perspective, it is useful to look at people's social relationships in terms of social capital. Capital in a broad sense consists of the resources that enable a person to benefit from participation in a given social milieu (Bourdieu 1986). Social capital, which I elaborate further below, refers to resources gained by being a member of a group. Economic capital comprises material assets. Cultural capital refers to dispositions that provide material and symbolic profits; cultural capital can be embodied, objectified, and it can be established as an accepted part of society. Symbolic capital is

the effect of any of the other forms of capital when people do not recognize it as such (Bourdieu 1986).

Bourdieu (1986:248-249) defined social capital as the total of the "actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition—or, in other words, to membership in a group." Put succinctly, by virtue of their participation in a group, people gain resources. People's relationships come about through material or symbolic exchanges (including exchanges of words) transformed into symbols of recognition and may coalesce under a common name (Bourdieu 1986:249-250). The amount of an individual's social capital depends on the number of relationships she or he can mobilize and on the volume of economic, cultural, or symbolic capital each of those in his or her network has. It is also important to note that social capital can be an unconscious effect of group participation (Bourdieu 1986:249).

A church is an institution that develops social networks, in effect building social capital. To refer again to Bourdieu (1986:249-250), particular social networks, or groups, must be continually reproduced; they result from peoples' investment of time and energy in the conscious or unconscious goal of creating or reproducing social relations that have practical value. This process includes transforming contingent relationships, for instance, those based on work or kinship, into indispensable and voluntary ones, leading participants to feel gratitude, respect, and friendship toward their obligations to each other (Bourdieu 1986:249-250).

It follows that the stronger the ties of acquaintance, the more available resources will be to participants. Thus, explaining how mutual trust, friendship, and feelings of

obligation are formed becomes important. Social ties within communities create a subtype of social capital—bonding social capital—internal to the community (Saegert, Thompson, and Warren 2001:8-11). Bonding social capital can result in shared resources and efforts, which can be important to people's survival. On the other hand, community ties can have negative effects, which include exclusivity and excessive demands on group participants (Portes 1998:15). Social ties across communities and institutions create a second subtype of social capital, bridging social capital, that is, resources that accrue to individuals within the community through the group's linkages with other groups (Foley, McCarthy, and Chaves 2001:217-218). For instance, in linking people to government aid through its social service programs, the Catholic Church creates bridging social capital (Mooney 2005).

Important resources opened up through the bonding and bridging social capital of religious institutions include 1) information flows, which includes information about community problems, available resources for individuals and communities, and the state of the world; 2) free spaces for use in social and political organizing; 3) socialization, community service, and political participation, which include the religious education of the young, volunteer opportunities and political information, places where the voiceless may gain a voice and opportunity to lead, opportunities to develop civic skills—making decisions, planning meetings, making presentations—and authority and legitimacy of church leaders on moral and social issues (Foley, McCarthy, and Chaves 2001:218, 225-229).

An understanding of religious structures entails that this study takes into account how people form relationships based on trust and respect. This study looks at the

development of bonding and bridging social capital and the resources opened up as a result and how these change in different contexts. The following section elaborates the approach to religious meaning.

Meaning

To understand the meaning of religion, this dissertation relies on the theory of Geertz (1993). Geertz defined religion as a cultural system, describing it as, "(1) a system of symbols which acts to (2) establish powerful, pervasive, and long-lasting moods and motivations in men by (3) formulating conceptions of a general order of existence and (4) clothing these conceptions with such an aura of factuality that (5) the moods and motivations seem uniquely realistic" (1993:90). Religion as a cultural system involves three ideas (Geertz 2005). First, meaning is socially and publicly constructed. Second, meaning is embodied; it is formed and conveyed in perceptible signs and symbolic devices such as events and rites of passage. Third, in religious practice (myth, behavior, daily pious acts), the way people order the world and the tone in which they live their lives complete and strengthen each other (Geertz 2005:7).

People elaborate and negotiate meaning through practice, and they embody it. Also, it is possible to inquire into people's understandings of particular religious practices. To study meaning, then, it is necessary to consider what people say about meaning and the forms of religious practice. It is in public religious ceremonies that religious perceptions are shaped (Geertz 1993:112-114). For participants, public religious ceremonies—rituals, performances—generate a disposition while also marking out a representation of their religiously expanded social world; in doing this, these activities

make models of what people believe and "models *for* the believing of it" (Geertz 1993:114, emphasis in original).

Religion makes the world logical and understandable by creating order (Geertz 1993:98-100). Matters of religion are important when (other) cultural resources begin to fail, for instance, when people feel faced with the inexplicable, the unbearable, or the unjustifiable (Geertz 2005:6-7). Religion deals with three domains of experiential challenges (Geertz 1993:100). These are the limits of people's moral insight, the limits of their powers of endurance, and the limits of their analytic ability (Geertz 1993:100-108). The limits of moral insight refer to the problems of good and evil or the gap between what people deserve and what they get. The limits of people's powers of endurance refer to the suffering that people learn to endure. Finally, the limits of analytic ability refer to the metaphysical, that which is beyond accepted knowledge. The first two categories are useful in this study's analysis, so I expand on them below.

Good and Evil

Geertz (1993:105-106) posited that people share ideas of what is good, or moral, and what is wrong, or immoral. However, what happens to people is not always explicable through these ideas of right and wrong. People become concerned when the way things are do not fit the way people think things ought to be, and this concern permeates religions (Geertz 1993:105-108). The problem of or about evil, then, refers to the ways in which people's symbolic resources manage this mismatch between expectations and experiences (Geertz 1993:105-106). Geertz (1993:107) drew on the story of the Dinka people to illustrate.

The Dinka origin story, which described how “Divinity” withdrew from men and women, represented how the Dinka experienced and understood their world. According to the Dinka, the Divinity withdrew from them because of a slight offense a Dinka committed. This disproportionate consequence to a Dinka action symbolized the unforeseeable events that happened to Dinka. People were active and acquisitive, but they also experienced suffering and ineffectiveness. Their shrewdness often proved inaccurate. People found that outcomes were often different from what they had anticipated or what they would have considered to have been a fair result.

Thus the problem of and about evil refers to the ways in which religion accounts for the gap between what people should get and what they actually do get. It accounts for the “enigmatic unaccountability of gross iniquity” that would otherwise raise the possibility that the world has no moral coherence (Geertz 1993:108). The following section discusses the way in which religion explains people’s pain and suffering. When suffering is harsh enough people tend to see it as morally undeserved, which links these two domains (Geertz 1993:105).

Healing

Most religions acknowledge the suffering inherent in living (Geertz 1993:103). In this vein, religion works to make it possible for people to understand and continue living in the face of “physical pain, personal loss, worldly defeat, or the helpless contemplation of others’ agony” (Geertz 1993:104). Not only do religious symbols give order to people’s expanded social world (the world that includes supernatural entities), but they

also express and explain what people feel, and this understanding is what makes it possible for people to keep going.

In example Geertz described Navaho curing rights, called sings. Through sings, Navaho patients, curers, and family ritually healed the patient through purifying the patient and identifying the patient with the divine (Geertz 1993:104-105). The practice of the sing created a meaningful context in which to understand people's suffering; it created a mode of expressing and understanding suffering and a way to act upon it (Geertz 1993:105). The sing enabled people to endure their physical pain by giving them concepts through which to understand their misery and connect this misery to the wider world (Geertz 1993:105).

It is evident that this understanding of suffering and healing is concerned with the whole human being. While biomedicine tends to focus on removing disease from patient bodies, and while this is an important component of healing, this dissertation conceptually separates biomedical practices from those spiritual ones designed to heal. This study understands that people suffering from a physical ailment may visit a physician but they may also visit a spiritual healer. People may understand their suffering as resulting from primarily physical causes, like germs, or they may understand their suffering as resulting from spiritual causes, like curses.

This was the case among the Dinka studied by Godfrey Lienhardt (2003). The Dinka participated in religious healing ceremonies to physically heal individuals, rather than waiting for amelioration in the patient's condition (Lienhardt 2003:291). However, because the Dinka did not anticipate healing ceremonies to mechanically achieve a particular outcome, they concurrently sought biomedical treatment (Lienhardt 2003:291).

For the Dinka (as for many people), medicine, ritual, and prayer were complementary methods.

Lienhardt noted that even when religious practice failed to make the ill person better, there were actual effects. Importantly, the community took part in the healing ceremony not only for the person who was ill but also for the group (Lienhardt 2003:291-292). The activity was a social activity. Furthermore, because people understood the community action as more effective than anything that an individual could accomplish on his or her own, the ill person gained advantage from being a member of the community that drew together partly around and for him or her (Lienhardt 2003:292). Through their participation in community religious practices, then, people underscore and strengthen mutual respect, an important part of group life (Lienhardt 2003:294-295).

Overall, then, this study recognizes that people can explain and exert some control over their suffering by acting within the religious realm. In this way, this study expands Geertz's emphasis on the ways in which religion tends to acknowledge suffering and make it livable toward a broader concern that includes how people seek to remedy it. In searching for healing, people may understand suffering as having multiple causes, including physical, spiritual, and social causes. Depending on how people understand the cause(s) of pain, they may visit a physician, religious specialist, and others in seeking to ameliorate their suffering.

Moreover, the view of health taken here is a holistic one. It is possible to analytically separate the physical from the spiritual and emotional, but it is also important to acknowledge the links between spiritual, emotional, and physical health. For instance, physical symptoms are common among people who are depressed and anxious

(Kleinman 1988:41). Environmental elements such as diet, high psychosocial stress, and limited access to medical care may adversely affect people's health, as seen, for instance, in blood pressure (James 1994:164). People who are economically poor tend to have decreased access to health care and increased exposure to health risks (Sapolsky 2005). In addition, the psychosocial stress of feeling poor, especially feeling chronically poor, increases people's rates of morbidity and mortality (Sapolsky 2005). This study does not intend to address the empirical efficacy of spiritual healing, but it is important to note that people's feelings, for instance, feeling cared for and protected, may also enhance their physical health.

Continuity and Change

This section relates to both structure and meaning. Through religion, people can express and confront the contradictory concepts and practices they encounter in changing contexts. Through ritual, people act out the changes and continuities they experience in the material conditions of life and in the meanings that they use to make sense of these conditions. In this way, changes in structure and changes in meaning are integrated. One is not a reflection of the other, but instead they exist in a relationship that is particular to the historical context.

Religion presents an account of the world that explains the ambiguities and contradictions in people's experiences (Geertz 1993:108). Religion does not deny that living can be painful or that unjust things happen to just people. Instead, through religion, people can account for and act on the elusiveness of the moral order and the feeling of pain. People can see ambiguities and contradictions as rational and natural consequences

of the moral order (Geertz 1993:108). Therefore, while the religious field has relative autonomy, it also tends to create and legitimate the symbolic order that gives meaning to the material conditions of life of particular classes of people and that makes people's hopes fit within the actual possibilities of their structural locations (Bourdieu 1971:310-315). The message that people find most appealing is that which gives them a symbolic system that helps them make sense of their location in the social structure.

This study takes the perspective that religion contributes to the maintenance of social structure when it instills schemes of thoughts and perceptions that create the illusion of the naturalness, or cosmological roots, of social structure (Bourdieu 1971:300). Religion fulfills this function by constructing and expressing people's experiences—in effect, defining reality by making experience thinkable—and by consecrating a particular system of dispositions (Bourdieu 1971:310). In this way, religion legitimates and reinforces the arbitrariness and the material and symbolic forces of class relations (Bourdieu 1971:310). It follows that religious meanings and dispositions change over time to adapt to the social conditions of groups (Bourdieu 1971:314-315).

When social structure is in flux, people will feel in crisis, as their logical, "natural" world has been turned upside down. Prophet movements are thus opposite of social order; they are dynamic, free, and violent; they represent disorder (Bourdieu 1971:333). This explains why they dominate during periods of crisis. The symbolic re-ordering of the cosmology and natural world led by a prophet will give language to political change, thus creating political revolution (Bourdieu 1971:334) or giving meaning to political changes. If successful, a prophet's movement will be bureaucratized,

systematized, and its scheme becomes the (changed) “natural” order of the cosmos (Bourdieu 1971:320-321, 333-334).

Finally, because this study includes some historical analysis, in particular on missionization in Central Africa from the 1500s to the 1900s, it is important to note that the understanding of belief has changed over time (Bowie 2006:224-225). In Old English, belief meant holding dear, and in Middle English it referred to pledging loyalty. It was a “promise to live one’s life in the service of God,” not a claim to believe something that could not be proven, as it is understood today (Bowie 2006:224). It was the end of the 1600s when belief (in Europe) first referred to a choice between different understandings or propositions (Bowie 2006:224). When there is a single worldview, there is no choice to be made and there is no need to convince others of the superiority of one’s viewpoint. In some societies, whether or not a person believes in God, for example, is not the question. Rather, the question is how best to behave to achieve positive ends (Bowie 2006:228). However, with the coexistence of different worldviews, saying that a person believes in God is declaring that God exists (Bowie 2006:224).

The contemporary understanding of belief comes from a “competing marketplace of ideas that constitutes modernity . . . a jumble of assorted ideas, some compatible, others contradictory” (Bowie 2006:228). On the other hand, it is also important to not draw too rigid a line between different worldviews, as they may in practice be indistinguishable from each other, and they may both come into play in the same context (Bowie 2006:226-227). On the other hand, what are apparently contradictory perspectives may not come into play in the same context. Instead, modernity can be understood as comprising a greater array of different choices that are available to people.

Conclusion

This study defines religion as shared behaviors and beliefs about non-empirical phenomena that effectively expand the social world in which people live because people believe them to be real. This involves people's ideas of what this expanded reality consists of, how it is organized, and what its significance is. Religion also incorporates the ways in which people behave in regard to this reality; these behaviors are necessarily dependent on beliefs and these behaviors take place within particular structures.

In this dissertation, I conceptually separate religious structure from religious meaning to analyze immigrant religious participation. By looking at structure and meaning, this work qualifies current explanations of immigrant religion, which are overwhelmingly focused on immigrant religious structure. By focusing on religious structures, the literature has tended to overlook the ways in which people understand their experiences in the world, including undeserved loss and feelings of pain and suffering, through religion. Religious structure and religious meaning are both important to understand religious participation.

On the level of society, this study focuses on the relationship between the religious and political fields. It is possible for the relationship to fall anywhere on a continuum between total control of the religious by politicians and dominance of the political field by religious specialists. Understanding the ways in which modes of production are related to the political field is important background to understanding the relationship between the political and religious because the political order represents the interests of tribute takers: classes of elite in tributary and capitalist societies.

Furthermore, religious institutions have relative autonomy. This means that while the system of meanings and practices inculcated by the religious institution tends to support the political and social structure, this is not always the case. Religious specialists negotiate religious meanings with groups of lay people, with prophets, and across themselves. The Catholic Church, a highly specialized, hierarchical institution, maintains its hegemony by selectively incorporating potentially dissident movements from groups within it and without. Because religious meanings tend to help groups of people make sense of their experiences, religion tends to support social structure. However, in this same way, religion can serve as a voice for groups of lay people that does not accord with the social order. In times of significant social change, prophets express the anxiety that people feel; religious institutions must then incorporate prophet movements or exclude them. When accompanied by political change, prophet movements are more likely to become institutions.

The ways in which people organize religiously also change with changing contexts. This work uses the concept of social capital to understand this structural aspect of religious participation. When people come to recognize each other as friends and form a group based on trust and mutual recognition, they create social capital. Within the group, bonding social capital refers to those resources available to people by virtue of their common group identity. Bridging social capital refers to the resources that become available to people in a group through the linkages that the group has with other groups. The social capital created through participation in church groups may open up important resources for people that include free spaces, information, and civic building skills.

This dissertation understands that people take part in religious practices to make sense of their experiences that would otherwise be confusing, arbitrary, and make no sense. People experience inequity and loss even when they act morally. Religion constructs this problem as one of and about evil.

Additionally, people explain, express, and act on the suffering and pain that they feel—for instance in illness and mourning—through religion. Health is a multifaceted concept that incorporates ideas of the physical, spiritual, and social. These aspects of health may be separated conceptually but they are integrated. For instance, material insecurity and social stress cause disease and illness. This study understands people to act on their pain in complementary ways, depending on what they understand to be the cause of the pain and the cultural context. While people seek out treatment by biomedical specialists, they may also seek out spiritual healing. Spiritual healing enables people to feel like they have some control over their pain. Moreover, spiritual healing may have actual effects, for instance, through asserting the social concern of group members for each other.

Cutting across the domains of structure and meanings is the notion that religion is a way for people to express their feelings and act in changing environments. Religious practices allow contradictory and ambiguous ideas and experiences to be expressed and understood. In analyzing religious structures and meanings in various historical periods and as seen among immigrants today, this study analyzes the ways in which religion helps people to make sense of their changing contexts. Embodied expectations and ways of being in the world are formed within particular social contexts. When these contexts change, systems of religious meanings must change to make the new context

understandable. Conversely, religious meanings may operate to undermine a particular social and political order, in which case they are subsumed into the existing religious institution, excluded, or in which case they accompany political change.

In the next chapter, I describe the field site of Washington, DC, one of the new immigrant gateway cities. The chapter includes discussion of the new immigration and the local social structure in which discrimination was significant for this group of immigrants. The chapter also describes my research methodology and positionality.

CHAPTER 3

WASHINGTON, DC, A NEW IMMIGRANT HUB

During the fieldwork period, Washington, DC was one of the top ten receiving metropolises of immigrants in the US (Singer 2003:1). The region had experienced such phenomenal growth in immigration in the last three decades that it had become the "seventh-largest immigrant gateway in the United States" (Singer 2003:1). Africans comprised 11 percent of the region's immigrants, making this the "largest proportional flow of Africans of any major metropolitan area in the United States" (Singer 2001:7-8, 11). What is more, most of the churches serving Africans were hierarchical (Lutherans, Episcopalians, and Catholic), within which immigrants formed smaller communities (Foley and Hoge 2003:11-12), like Mary Our Mother.

In this chapter, I discuss the field site Washington, DC and my research methods. I use the name Washington, DC (and Washington) to refer to the metropolitan region that includes Washington, DC proper and its Maryland and Virginia suburbs. I use the name District to refer to the city proper of Washington, DC, when it is necessary to discuss it apart from its suburbs. Prince George's County and Montgomery County make up the inner Maryland suburbs. Prince George's County borders the District to the east, and Montgomery County borders the District to the north. These counties were important sites of residence and work for the immigrants in this study.

First, I situate African immigrants within the wider recent and large-scale influx of immigrants to Washington. Then, I look at the social-economic, race based structure of the metropolitan area. In this section, I touch on the historical development of racial segregation and discrimination in Washington, processes that constrain the choices of black people in particular ways. Finally, I explain my fieldwork methods, issues of positionality, and data analysis.

New Immigrants in Washington, DC

The numbers of immigrants and, more generally, of foreign-born, in Washington, DC began increasing in the late 1940s and 1950s with the founding in Washington of new political and financial institutions such as The World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the Organization of American States; the fast growth in number of diplomats and their staff; and an increase in the number of foreign students studying at local universities (R. Manning 1998:337; Singer 2003:2-3). In addition, in 1965 Congress amended immigration law to open up the possibility of US immigration to people from all parts of the world, instead of primarily those from Europe. This resulted in further growth of the number of foreign-born people in Washington, by increasing the numbers of university students and refugees from Africa and Asia. In current times, family members and friends also moved to Washington through the social contacts they had there (Singer 2003:2).

Immigration to Washington, DC was quick, recent, and large-scale. In 1970, Washington counted 127,579 foreign-born residents, and in 2000, it had 832,016 foreign-born residents—a number that has surely grown since then (Singer 2003:3). Furthermore,

the increase in immigration was one of exponential increase over time; almost half of the foreign-born arrived in the 1990s (Singer 2003:1). Paralleling these trends, the number of Africans in Washington more than doubled between 1980 and 1989 and more than doubled again in the next decade. About 55,000 Africans moved to Washington, DC between 1990 and March 2000 (US Census Bureau 2003).

Washington, DC was distinct from other metropolitan areas with large immigrant populations in that immigrants there had an especially wide variety of national origins and suburban settlement patterns (Singer 2003:1-3). Because most international immigration to Washington was recent, there were few well established immigrant communities, a fact that likely contributed to the dispersion of immigrants across the metropolitan area. Almost all foreign-born in Washington (90 percent) lived in the District and inner suburbs, with most living dispersed throughout those areas but with some concentrations in areas that included the Maryland cities Silver Spring, Wheaton, Rockville, and Langley Park (Singer 2003:3-4, 9), all places that my research took me. For immigrants in Washington, residence choice seemed based on family ties, social networks, housing market, access to public transportation, school choices, and other local services (Singer 2001:13). As a whole, the foreign-born in Washington, DC were doing better economically than their counterparts in other “gateway cities” (Singer 2003:12-13).

One area where many new immigrants lived and shopped was Maryland’s International Corridor. The International Corridor encompassed parts of Langley Park and neighboring areas and happened to be the “setting for the largest concentration of foreign-born residents and immigrant-run businesses in the State of Maryland” (Action Langley Park 2003). The wide array of shops, for example, restaurants featuring Indian

food, Nigerian and Korean clothing stores, and international groceries reflected this diversity.

Individual shops often had an international clientele. In a Jamaican shop, for example, a man in a booth sold music and movies from Nigeria. In the rear of the store was the fresh meat that lent its scent to the rest of the shop. The remainder of the store was filled with African and Caribbean foodstuffs. Behind the checkout counter on the wall were displayed an array of phone cards. Also on the same strip of shops were a local discount store, a fabric store run by a Korean woman who showed me some popular Nigerian fabric, and a mainstream, Safeway grocery store.

Local groceries typically attracted a very diverse and international clientele—a clientele that lived in the neighborhood or that came to the neighborhood for other reasons and then frequented its stores. For instance, one Sunday evening I stopped at one of these groceries with a Cameroonian woman. She picked up some green bananas and two packages of turkey necks. Nearing the checkout, in the front of the store, I pointed out a large wall-hanging of the Virgin of Mary of Guadeloupe, standing in front of the Mexican flag, to the woman, saying that you would not see this in a mainstream American grocery store. She was pleased to see it and commented with enthusiasm on the Christian nature of this country. She checked out her supplies for dinner for about ten dollars. Outside, the lot was full and cars were double and triple parked in front of the store.

Over ten percent of the 881,300 Africans in the US lived in Washington, DC (Singer 2001; US Census Bureau 2000). This was the second largest population of Africans in the US; the largest number lived in New York (Singer 2001). In Washington,

Africans comprised over 16 percent of the foreign born with permanent legal status (Singer 2001:7-8, 11). This suggests that Africans in Washington were more likely than people in other immigrant groups in the metro area to have had permanent legal status.

There has been a burgeoning awareness of new immigrants in Washington among social scientists (Bump 2003; Burton and Gammage 2003; Foley and Hoge 2003; Landolt Marticorena 2000; Singer 2001 and 2003). D'Alisera (1998) looked at Africans in Washington, DC. She examined how Sierra Leonean Muslims located meanings from multiple cultural spheres (those of their romanticized Islamic homeland and the US) within a single social space. Others have written about Ethiopians, the largest African group in the region, which also has a longer-standing presence than those of other Africans. For instance, Chacko (2003) wrote about the ways in which an Ethiopian community was maintained through ethnic businesses and electronic media. Research on recent African immigration to the US is just beginning (Abusharaf 2002; Falge 2003; Holtzman 2000; Konadu-Agyemang, Takyi, and Arthur 2006; Woldemikael 1997).

There has been a focus in this research on francophone West Africans in New York City (e.g., Ebin 1990; Ebin and Lake 1992; Perry 1997; Stoller 1999 and 2002). A general focus has been the jobs of immigrants (especially international and informal trading) and their ethnic and Muslim identities. Coombe and Stoller (1994), for example, analyzed the ways in which objects sold by West African traders to black Americans in Harlem evoked various meanings for different groups of people. While much of the research on African immigrants to the US primarily has looked at Muslim immigrants who are in the country illegally and take part in the informal economy, Yeboah (2007) analyzed how Ghanaian entrepreneurs in the Midwest set up their businesses and kept a

mostly ethnic clientele. Noting the importance of Islamic identity, Shepard (2005) discussed how their Muslim religion set Somali youth apart from their peers in an American high school. In contrast, my research focuses on immigrants who were legal and unauthorized and who were connected to formal American Christian religious institutions in the nation's capital.

Opportunity Structure

The historical process of racism in the US has continued significance for the social stratification of contemporary society and forms a barrier to newly arrived Africans. This section looks at the social setting into which immigrants move. I sketch a brief history of racial segregation and discrimination before discussing some of the impacts that being a minority continue to have on people's experiences. While I focus here on racism and the ways in which this force has shaped people's lives, I do not intend to imply that experiencing blackness or being an immigrant is the same for all people. Nor do I intend to simplify the diversity of black Americans or immigrants, groups that are differentiated by geography, class, ethnicity, education, culture, and gender. Instead, what is important for this study is the idea that racism was one significant element of the larger social context in which African immigrants became incorporated.

Historically, black Americans in Washington, DC performed most manual and craft occupations and had the fastest increase in proportion of freedmen in comparison to other slave states (R. Manning 1998:331). On the other hand, as the city grew, so did its low paid black American population, which was moving in from neighboring rural areas and states. This pattern was different from that seen in other Northern cities, where

immigrants from abroad reduced the employment opportunities of black Americans (R. Manning 1998:331-335). At the turn of the twentieth century, black Americans in Washington, DC included a prosperous middle-class that was defined by its self-employment and skilled employment (R. Manning 1998:333).

Around 1900, restrictive housing covenants mostly confined housing choices of black Americans in Washington to a 'black belt' around the city center (north of the Potomac River and along the west bank of the Anacostia) and some rural outposts. As the city focused development along streetcar and trolley lines to the north and west, which included the development of communities restricted to whites, life conditions for the poor, which was mostly black American, became worse (B. Williams 2001:415-417). Following World War II, soldiers returned home to racism that included racially-inspired beatings by the police, Jim Crow segregation that relegated black people to low quality hospitals, and a job ceiling that limited career advancement (B. Williams 2001:419).

From the 1940s to 1960s, the Washington government cooperated with corporations in forcibly uprooting and concentrating black residents through state powers of condemnation, eminent domain, restrictive covenants, denial of construction permits and financing for black American housing developments outside the black zone, and permitting suburbs to reject funds for public housing (R. Manning 1998:334-335; Squires, Friedman, and Saidat 2002:157; B. Williams 2001:420-422). Those black Americans who were middle to upper class tended to live in neighborhoods around Howard University, but by the late 1960s, many were living along upper Sixteenth Street Northwest (E. Robinson 2010:12).

However, since civil rights laws made it illegal to discriminate in employment, housing, and education and with the establishment of affirmative action programs, the black American middle class has grown considerably (E. Robinson 2010:6). Whereas about 40 percent of black Americans lived in poverty in the late 1960s, about 20 percent were poor four decades later (E. Robinson 2010:6-7). During this fieldwork, the majority of black America was middle class and a minority was wealthy. It is also noteworthy that, whereas racism was historically significant and contributed to the formation of a black underclass that has continued to decline, those of younger generations had a different memory and behaved in more mixed ways; for instance, interracial marriages increased eightfold over the past 40 years (E. Robinson 2010:9).

Evidence in area housing practices showed that racial minorities continued to face discrimination in Washington, DC. The Department of Housing and Urban Development and the Urban Institute in 1989 found that in nearly half of their interactions with real estate agents, black and Hispanic people came across unlawful discrimination (Squires, Friedman, and Saidat 2002:157). In 1997, the Fair Housing Council of Greater Washington found that black people were discriminated against when trying to buy and rent homes and when applying for mortgage loans. Discrimination occurred in the forms of "racial steering, misrepresentation about the availability of homes, differences in rental rates for the same units and the number of units that were shown, disparities in mortgage interest rates, differential applications of particular standards," and more (Squires, Friedman, and Saidat 2002:160).

Racial discrimination in housing practices and in person-to-person interactions can be subtle. Other examples of subtle racial discrimination might include

discriminatory treatment at a restaurant and quickly completed job interviews after initial introduction. The results over time can be seen in concentrations of immigrant and racial minorities in neighborhoods (shown below) and in jobs. Research consistently demonstrates that people with darker skin tones are discriminated against in employment in the US, for instance, in getting through interviews and in advancement (Benson 2006; E. Robinson 2010:209-210). As well, blatant racism has continued. For instance, in 1999 in New York, an unarmed black immigrant from Guinea was shot because police thought he was going to pull out a gun (E. Robinson 2010:189).

Significantly, race and immigrant status seemed to play a determining role in where Africans lived in the metropolis. They were more concentrated in areas where black Americans were the majority, especially in parts of Prince Georges County and Montgomery County and the District (Singer 2001:11). Notably, many more black people lived in the District (making up 21 percent of the population) and in Maryland (19 percent of the population) than in Virginia (eight percent of the population, more similar to the seven percent nationwide figure) (Migration Information Source 2004). In particular, it appeared that Central and West Africans[1] were more numerous in Montgomery and Prince George's Counties (in Fairland, Silver Spring, Takoma Park, and White Oak) (Singer 2003). These were also locations where immigrants were more highly concentrated (Singer 2001:11). These areas were also relatively affordable.

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1. I use the phrase Central Africa in place of the US Census Bureau term Middle Africa, which includes Angola, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, Democratic Republic of Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, and Sao Tome and Principe. Western Africa includes Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Saint Helena, Senegal, Sierra Leone, and Togo. Other African regions are Eastern Africa, Northern Africa, and Southern Africa (Grieco 2004).

It should be remembered that the effects of racial discrimination were not felt evenly across the metropolitan area. The region had a rich history of black American intelligentsia, politics, and mobility. Howard University had a long history of drawing black Americans and internationals. In other Washington spaces, Africans and other foreigners were the norm. For instance, international NGOs and the World Bank regularly attracted foreign professionals.

Ethnography

My methods for dissertation research were participant-observation and interviews, supplemented by church documents and area news. I conducted exploratory research in 2003; fieldwork lasted from June 2004 to July 2007. I continued attending Mary Our Mother Sunday services through the summer of 2008.

While I focused on Mary Our Mother and its participants, I also took part in two other francophone African congregations, albeit less intensely. One congregation was Catholic. This group emphasized a Congolese identity but also included other francophone Africans. This congregation had about 200 participants and had disbanded by the summer of 2004. Later, I heard vague reports that conflict within the group—one ethnic group trying to monopolize it—and trouble with its priest had led to its breakup. I also worked some with a Protestant congregation. The protestant group was evangelical and had about 300 participants. Like Mary Our Mother, this group emphasized its French-language and pan-African identity, and it was growing. However, in contrast to Mary Our Mother, this congregation included English-speaking participants, and its services involved much translation from French to English and from English to French. I

also attended services at two other Protestant churches—both anglophone. One was international African. The other was AME with a significant number of African participants, including the pastor. Besides religious gatherings, I also met francophone Africans at NGO fundraisers, funerals, baby showers, restaurants, through research participants, and in the course of everyday life.

In participant-observation and interviews, I sought to uncover information relative to the domains of immigration, networks, and religion while also being open to learning about what was important to research participants. I focused on the activities of daily life and the kinship networks of immigrants. I also looked for information on the flow of information and goods, why and how people immigrated, how they felt about their immigration, and how life was for them in the US.

I conducted fieldwork with the knowledge and consent of research participants. I told them about my research project and intended uses of information. I also guaranteed anonymity. Some research participants told me sensitive information, especially about their past, for example, their involvement in politics. I have used pseudonyms in this dissertation for people and groups, and I have made minor changes to descriptions to maintain people's anonymity.

I used both English and French throughout my fieldwork. I generally initiated conversations in French. Many participants spoke to me in English from the first minute they saw me. Others spoke to me in French. I conducted the formal interviews in English, French, and a combination of the two. Unless noted otherwise, all direct quotes from informants or from congregation paraphernalia in this dissertation are my translations from French. Also, when I omit words or phrases from a person's direct quotes, I note

this with ellipses. The remainder of this section considers my participant-observation and interview methods.

Participant-Observation

In doing participant-observation, I immersed myself in the activities of the community with a goal of understanding their "basic beliefs, fears, hopes, and expectations" (Fetterman 1998:35). I intended to get close to the study population while simultaneously keeping notes for objectivity. In seeking to become a part of a congregation, I attended church services, prayer group meetings, and dinners. Throughout the fieldwork period, as I spoke with community members and listened to their conversations, I looked for other times and places where people might get together. These gatherings included church-related and other activities. For instance, I attended birthday parties and baby showers, and I also spent time with different people in their habitual environments. When not at a group gathering or interview, I was mostly in the company of women. I visited with them in their homes, and I drove them to the gym and to stores. I visited with one woman at her work.

Being a participant-observer meant that I joined in church services, church barbeques, and prayer group meetings. I stood when everyone stood and I sang and recited prayers with them. These occasions included informal periods. Before something would start, or setting up for an event, I was in the company of others, and I used these times to chat about families and to ask questions. For instance, I asked for names of others in the room and for explanations of activities. I asked people to tell me about their immigration experience and their experience as Christians. And I frequently listened or

joined in conversations that were not directed by me. In my notes, I counted at least 108 adults with whom I had substantive conversations. I maintained relationships with 43 of them. In addition, I tried to help out research participants, as they helped me with my research. I volunteered to do things like cook, give rides, and recruit health clinic doctors.

In my research, I attended church services and activities regularly with the Mary Our Mother congregation for over three years. Over this period of time, I became more involved with community events, and my friendships with various participants grew. Over time, I became recognized by many participants as a part of the congregation. For instance, at one prayer group meeting, a woman congregation participant introduced me to others. She did so at the end of the meeting, after a man noted I was a newcomer and asked to welcome me. The woman said, “Oh, I forgot.” Looking at me, she turned around in her chair. She said, “I forgot because Rose is African.” She went on to note that I was a regular participant in congregation activities, and if they needed something to be done, they could count on me to do it.

I increased my data reliability by utilizing key informants (people who provided me consistent and accurate information), by deriving data from group discussions, and by triangulating my data. I triangulated data by comparing research participants’ responses for inconsistencies and to data gathered from alternative sources such as meeting minutes.

I kept both written and recorded notes. On some occasions, I found that taking notes hindered research. For instance, I would pull out my note pad or voice recorder only to have conversations stall. More than once, women informants began acting tired and seemed to fall asleep. They were very reluctant to answer my questions, especially

those about their social networks and family. However, I was able to uncover some of this information through my informal conversations with people and while listening to their conversations with each other. So in cases such as these, I paid careful attention to the details around me. When it was unobtrusive, I pulled out my notepad. I frequently recorded notes on a voice recorder during my drive home. I transcribed my notes from notepad or voice recorder, and added to them from memory, as soon as returning to my computer. If I did not transcribe at the computer directly after taking notes, I did not add to them from memory.

I found participant-observation to be the most useful method because it was indirect. In this technique, I did not focus on asking individuals pressing questions and recording their answers, something many found to be uncomfortable, especially in regard to questions about family members.

Interviews

Throughout my fieldwork, I requested interviews from different congregation participants and from others. I sought out interviews in order to delve deeper into experiences of religion and immigration and the life histories of individual research participants.

Although I was able to get some interviews, this was not an easy task. Sometimes my request was not entirely understood, and when I pulled out my voice recorder, the interviewee declined to participate. Other times, at my initial request, someone might agree to an interview in the distant future, but then, in spite of repeated attempts on my part to find a time to sit down together, that future was never reached.

I was more successful getting interviews and getting closer to people after I realized a series of steps for building rapport. First, I called the other person every week or two to say hello and ask about family. This, combined with seeing people at church, increased how trustworthy people perceived me to be. In turn, I might be invited—or could more easily invite myself—to a gathering, to a person's home, or, a person might become more amenable to being interviewed.

However, I continued to encounter reticence among some research participants in spite of these rapport-building measures. This had less to do with rapport and more to do with informant's discomfort with formal research tools. For instance, one day after church services, I found one young woman whom I had interviewed twice to ask a few more questions. She turned me down, explaining that she no longer wanted to be recorded, as it made her ill at ease. She felt uncomfortable revealing her personal experiences and her thoughts. She went on to say that it was as if the recorder was drawing out her energy. She said, I like you a lot, but I do not want to talk about things that have happened to me with you. She wanted to instead tell me general things, like how life in the city was different from village life and how parents and children interacted. Therefore, while I often found it challenging to record people's precise words, I was able to learn about their experiences through casual conversation.

In total I interviewed 25 people. I interviewed eight of these more than once. Nineteen of the 25 were Mary Our Mother participants. These interviews included two of the three priests that have headed Mary Our Mother, people on the pastoral committee of the congregation, and other active and not-so-active congregation participants. Ten interviewees were women from Cameroon and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)

and included young women, middle aged women, and older women. Six were young and middle-aged men from the DRC and the Republic of the Congo. Seven were young, middle-aged, and older men and women from francophone West Africa.

I recorded these interviews on a voice recorder and took minimal notes. I found the interviewee more comfortable when I could focus on him or her. I asked open-ended questions about the interviewee's experiences according to my research interests, following a temporal framework. When I wanted additional information about a response, I probed by repeating what the interviewee said or asking for clarification. Handwritten notes included observations about the setting of the interview, the appearance and comfort level of the participant, interruptions to the interview, and unfamiliar names or words.

Positionality

As many ethnographers do, I attempted to overcome my outsider status by joining in the community for a prolonged period of time. As described above, I regularly attended Sunday services, and I telephoned and visited people. In doing this, I formed meaningful relationships with those I interviewed and with whom I regularly interacted. The relationships went beyond those of informant-visiting student. There was a depth that came from my long-standing presence, my interest in what was going on with the community and with individuals, and the growth of friendships. In some ways, these elements overcame clear-cut inequality based on perceived social identities.

My relationships and identity within the congregation enabled people to trust me more than they would trust an outsider. This familiarity helped me to gain more detailed

knowledge about what people thought, who they were, and what they did. Additionally, because this approach allowed for depth, complexity, and new ideas, my data is richer than data derived simply through formal interviews or questionnaires.

I also realize that the insights I gained about the way research participants saw the world were partial and situated. My ideas and background were different from those of my research participants—who might have had some things in common but who were also different from each other—and research participants saw me in particular ways. Characteristics that were probably important for people situating me in the field included my socio-economic class, age, marital status, parenthood status, language capability, student status, gender, and religious affiliation.

Many congregation participants held a high socio-economic status before moving to the US; for instance, many held important positions in government and business. Others continued as diplomats, lawyers, and professionals in Washington, DC. The congregation also included people who were mid-level socio-economic class before moving to the US. Once living in the US, people of both upper and mid class levels realized some loss of status or wealth.

In comparison, I was raised in a middle class family in the rural Midwest, and my household in Washington, DC continued to be low to mid level class. In some ways, the class level of my household was similar to that of many immigrants. As a graduate student, my income was from part-time work, but my partner worked full time. Working hard was held in common; no matter people's status at home, they worked hard in the US. In addition, they tended to understand an education would lead to increased income. On the other hand, getting a Ph.D. was beyond what seemed doable for many immigrants.

Some went to school for short periods to earn certificates for fields like nursing. Others went for their master's degree. However, the immediate need for money, both for one's own household and for family members back home, seemed to be the pressing need for most immigrants. Additionally, people tended to perceive me as having increased access to employment opportunities and some asked me to help them find jobs. Unfortunately I did not know people looking for child care or house cleaning or nurses. This perception probably made me more attractive as a friend for some.

In Mary Our Mother, my perceived age and motherhood status placed me in a "young mother" category. I was older than youth but also too young to be a woman leader. Most women leaders were in their 40s, 50s, and 60s, although one single mother in her early 20s was a leader of the youth group. Two women my age led congregation committees until they went away for school or had babies. My conception of motherhood also took some people off guard, as I frequently attended events and interviews without my children, who were home with their father. Many men and women asked after my children when I was in the field without them, especially in the evenings or at night. When I responded that their father had them at home, most immigrants reacted in the negative, saying that I should not stay out too late, which would trouble my partner, or that my place was looking after the children.

Marriage was also important in Mary Our Mother. A married couple or family generally carried the money collected at mass in a ritual procession to the front of the church. The priest would often stop at the front of the church those couples who were newly married or celebrating a wedding anniversary and announce their milestone to the

congregation. The first time my spouse came to church with me, in 2006, we were barraged with people who were eager to “finally” meet him.

In addition, my student status and language ability further complicated my place. While research participants were familiar with going to school, as many did, my pursuit of an advanced degree while mothering young children was more unfamiliar. And, while I held successful conversations and interviews in French, these were not without moments of difficulty. I had more difficulty understanding when people conversed together in groups. In interviews or one-on-one conversations, I could more easily request clarification of vocabulary with which I was unfamiliar.

Finally, because I was raised in a church-going Catholic family, I was familiar with mainstream American Catholic practices and beliefs. However, outside of my fieldwork I did not participate in a religion. This rarely came up, perhaps because I participated in services and so appeared to be a practicing Christian. On a few occasions, I was asked whether my children were baptized, to which I replied honestly that they were not.[2]

Analysis

I continually transcribed notes and interviews throughout the time I conducted fieldwork. The process of fieldwork, analysis, and writing up involved continuous feedback among these three areas and within each area. After transcribing notes and interviews, I loaded them into a database designed for analysis of qualitative research, ATLAS.ti. The database helped organize the data, and it increased my analytical

2. It is a Catholic norm to baptize infants or young children.

objectivity. Less frequently, I loaded other documents such as emails and newspaper articles into ATLAS.ti.

In ATLAS.ti, I read each line and passage of text asking what they were about and what they referenced. I worked to identify, name, categorize, and describe segments of text with concise descriptors—codes. I coded deductively and inductively, using concepts and themes of interest that I had previously identified while also recognizing new ideas that came out of the fieldwork. Coding like this is time-consuming but more specific and effective than a word search (Fetterman 1998:97). Having coded segments of data enables the researcher to create a list of examples that are more similar than those generated by a simple word search.

I worked at being consistent in coding, applying the same codes to similar passages. I erred on the side of making many codes. Often I wrote comments about how codes were linked. In ATLAS.ti, text passages can be labeled with multiple codes, and I coded passages that overlapped. Due to this function, I was not confined to coding sentences or paragraphs as exclusive segments. After coding my documents, I looked carefully at each code—especially those used only once—and combined codes when appropriate. I also ensured that the codes stood on their own, making sense. When they did not, I looked again at the passage in order to match it with a more appropriate code.

Because the coding process took place over a long period of time, codes added later in the process reflected my growing understanding. The coding process could thus have been made stronger by a second review of the participant-observation notes and interview transcripts. It would also be stronger with one or more additional researchers

doing this review, because this would increase the reliability of my analysis. This was not done due to practical constraints.

In analysis, I followed the grounded theory method, the discovery of "patterns of behavior or thought in a series of texts" by identifying concepts and categories that appeared in the text and linking them into theories (Bernard 2002:462, 464). Using the database tools, I was able see which codes co-occurred, in what frequency, and where they co-occurred. Throughout the process of working in ATLAS.ti, I also created memos to record moments when I realized connections. These memos then became a useful place to check when writing. I used these memos as well as additional notes that I took while closely reading the texts to record thematic relationships.

In making connections, I grouped similar codes together, and I paid attention to the links between and significance accorded to codes by research participants. The importance that study participants gave to religious meaning stood out during my analysis, a finding that underscores the importance of treating it seriously in a study on immigrant religious participation.

Conclusion

Washington, DC had a history of racial segregation and discrimination. International immigration to Washington was relatively recent and large scale. Significantly, most of these immigrants were minorities. These immigrants, including Africans, faced discrimination in terms of residence and jobs.

This dissertation is based on long-term ethnographic fieldwork with francophone African immigrants in Washington, DC. My primary methods were participant-

observation and interviews, and I focused on participants in Mary Our Mother, a francophone African Catholic congregation. The fact that Africans participated in the Catholic Church, an institution that was heavily involved in the colonization of Africa and has its center in Europe, raises questions about what their participation meant to them and how this participation related to the past.

In the next chapter, I take up the history of Christianity in Africa, focusing on early Christianity in the Kongo kingdom. Found along the west Central African coast, the people of Kongo developed relationships with Portuguese traders and with missionaries. While many analyses of Christianity among Africans begin at a later point in time, this early period of contact provides a useful context, since Africans were not coercively colonized during that time. Instead, some Africans took up the religion voluntarily. I look at who among the people of Kongo adopted Christianity and why they adopted it.

CHAPTER 4

RELIGION IN THE KONGO KINGDOM

This chapter looks at continuities and changes in religious structures and meanings in an independent African nation, the old kingdom of Kongo of west Central Africa. This nation was one of the few in Africa that took up Christianity before European colonization began in the late 1800s. This makes Kongo an interesting case because the nation was sovereign when it voluntarily became Christian. Additionally, many of this study's research participants came from the larger region of which Kongo was a part. The kingdom of Kongo, then, is a good starting point for a historical assessment of religious continuity and change for the study group of immigrant Catholics.

Beginning with this deep history sets this study apart from much of the work done on how Africans became Christians. As discussed in Chapter One, this body of literature leads to the expectation that Africans converted to Christianity in reaction to being politically dominated. While some experienced more pressure to convert than others, many understood conversion to be a route to success in the colonizers' social system. However, this point of view does not enable an understanding of how and why religious systems interact and adjust. Moreover, framing religion in terms of competing or coexisting systems of practices and ideas results in a misplaced and essentializing concern with labeling one system as more "African" than the other.

In contrast, this chapter aims to look at religious change and continuity in particular times and places. It works from the theoretical assumption, described in Chapter Two, that people use religion to make sense of, negotiate, and act on the wider cultural system of which they are a part. Religious institutions are integrated with political institutions, and tensions of hierarchy and power shape them. Through religious participation, individuals create relationships, the shape and function of which vary over time. An effect of the relationships created through religion is social capital, which can open up valuable resources for participants. Moreover, people look to religion to give meaning to their experiences. Religion explains why people have a bad harvest or why they get sick in spite of being good, and religion is a means for understanding and acting upon pain and suffering.

It is important to begin this chapter by noting that the meaning of belief and the concerns of conversion that accompanied missionization have changed over time. Thornton (1984) argued that many scholars writing about the history of Christianity in Kongo have done so with an understanding of that religion developed within 20th century colonial culture. Since modern Christianity has taken an exclusivist approach to missionization in Africa, requiring people to change their beliefs, modern scholars have seen early Christianization solely as a syncretic religion where “genuine” conversion did not occur (Thornton 1984:151-152, 154). While the Church did take an exclusivist approach to missionization in other areas of the world during this time period, the inclusive approach in Kongo was important and coincides with earlier meanings of the term belief, when to believe meant to adore. Before the end of the 1600s, belief meant holding dear or pledging loyalty, not a claim to believe in particular non-empirical

phenomena (Bowie 2006:224-228). When there is one worldview, there is no choice to be made and there is no need to convince others. Instead, the question is how best to behave to achieve positive ends. It is likely that BaKongo and many early missionaries saw the world from this point of view, in which there was no choice to be made between sets of beliefs.

Because people create transitional spaces and interrelated strategies to understand their world (De Boeck 1996:100), this chapter looks at how and why religious ideas and practices are taken up at particular times, and it will investigate their meanings (Maxwell 2000:478). The chapter begins with a description of religious structure and meaning in the kingdom of Kongo prior to contact with Europeans. The kingdom was organized around a political-religious hierarchy, and the chief had to work to gain ascendancy. People believed that witchcraft caused evil and magic protected against it. The second section is divided into two periods. During the time of early European-Kongo contact, the elite of Kongo adopted Christianity at least in part to further their political and economic interests. During this period, missionaries worked to take over the religious field. People adapted Christian practices and symbols in understanding their changing context, which included the growth of the slave trade. The final period covered in the chapter examines religion after about 1700, when the internal dynamics of the kingdom changed due to trade with Europeans and incipient European nationalism, setting up the context for colonialism.

Parts of northern Africa were integrated into the early Greco-Roman center of Christianity. For instance, Africans scholars such as Augustine helped to formulate early Christian doctrine and ethics (Isichei 2004:17-29; Kalu 2007:24). By the third century,

North Africa (present-day Tunisia and northern Algeria) was one of three regions in the world where Christians were a majority (Isichei 2004:23). Moreover, parts of Ethiopia and some Egyptians have been consistently Christian to the present day (Isichei 2004:26).

South of the Sahara, however, people were first introduced to Christianity through their direct contact with Europeans, which began in the late 1400s. Early European explorers were mostly traders, but Catholic missionaries accompanied them. Missionaries were overwhelmingly Catholic because this early contact began at about the time of the Reformation, during which Protestant churches were still developing in Europe. In this chapter, I look at who took up Christianity, and what this meant to those who converted. I also assess how this new religion related to established structures and meanings.

Kongo[3]

The kingdom of Kongo was one of a number of groups of western Central Africa. The Kongo, Lunda, Luba, and Kuba states, or kingdoms, were large-scale societies with shifting borders that came into being between 1200 and 1500 in the savanna south of the Congo River Basin. These states were tributary systems. The producers controlled the means of production and their own subsistence, and the centralized elite obtained tribute through political and military means (Wolf 1997:79-81). It appears that these kingdoms developed after Central Sudanese speakers from East Africa, who moved to the savannas south of the Congo River Basin late in the first millennium BC, introduced cultivated

3. For this section, I relied on Lemarchand (1993), Balandier (1963), and W. MacGaffey (1977; 1983; 1997). Lemarchand provided a general background of the Kongo kingdom. Balandier gave some description of Kongo political and religious life, but W. MacGaffey's descriptions of these systems were more complete. W. MacGaffey's historical knowledge came from a combination of historical documents and his ethnographic work.

cereals and herding to the Bantu-speaking populations there. Being better adapted to savanna conditions than the oil palm and yams that were farmed by the Bantu speakers, these foods spread and enabled population growth and increased settlement. Figure One shows the major savanna states of the 16th century.

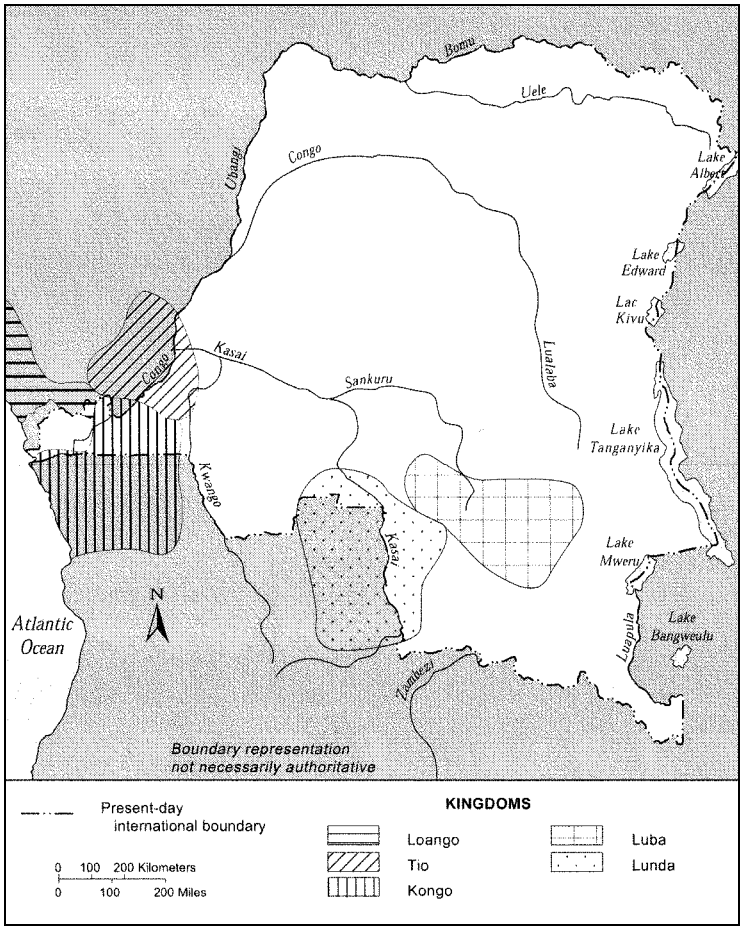

Figure 1. Major Savanna States South of the Congo River in the 16th Century. Source: Lemarchand (1993).

The savanna states were centralized political systems, and each had a single ruler whom people tended to see as divine. These states expanded using methods that included military raids, military occupation, and peaceful interaction. These states tended to have

oral literature that traced state origin to a mythical figure, and they tended to incorporate smaller neighboring groups both politically and culturally. As is characteristic of tributary systems, the symbolic power of the monarchy and the force of the military legitimated their centralized political structures. However, while these societies were organized around hierarchical lines, the extent of the king's monopoly of power varied. Ensuring the loyalty of the monarch's subordinates—appointed chiefs or local clan heads—was an important problem faced by African monarchs of these southern savanna states.

In contrast to the states of the savanna, the rainforest zone—which covers roughly the northern half of what is today the DRC and includes much of the Congo River Basin—included smaller-scale societies. These groups were widely dispersed over the interior north and south of the Congo River's great bend and are important to note because later, under European occupation, they would be drawn into the colonial territory of Congo. Most peoples not living along the coast lived in villages under chiefs or ascendant lineages and did not have much contact with Europeans until formal colonization. These groups tended to lack centralized political structures. Those between the Kongo and Ubangi, such as the Ngbandi, Ngbaka, Banda, and Ngombe, operated under more hierarchical lineage-based systems than those located farther south. The Zande and Mangbetu, who lived in the distant northeast, had state systems.

The kingdom of Kongo was part of a larger region where people spoke western Bantu languages. All these societies, including groups in Cameroon and eastern DRC, were local variants of a common cultural system. Kongo social structures, practices, and beliefs followed a pattern like that followed throughout much of the region at the time.

Structure

This section describes the structure of the kingdom of Kongo before contact with Europeans in 1483. I describe the significant overlap of political and religious fields in this tributary society; political authorities monopolized religious authority. Within the religious hierarchy, however, through the functions of prophets and priests, there was the possibility for some religious check over political power. Finally, while there is not much information on the religious participation of lay people, it appears that they took part in local religious groups organized around supernatural beings and forces.

Combined Political-Religious Authority

Kongo may have encompassed more than 300,000 square kilometers. In the late 1300s, for unknown reasons, a group from the small chiefdom of Bungu moved south of the Congo River and conquered what is presently northern Angola, setting up Mbanza Kongo Dia Ntotila (Great City of the King) as the capital of the Kongo kingdom. They allied themselves through marriage to the main lineages of the region and then conquered surrounding groups by force except for the Mbata kingdom, whose leader voluntarily recognized of the king of Kongo. By the mid-1400s, Kongo encompassed northern Angola and the north bank of the Congo River. By the late 1400s, however, the kingdom had shrunk; except for a small tract of land, its northern border was the Congo River, and it had (at least) two to three million subjects. These tributary states of the savanna tended to grow but also shrink because political alliances could shift, and the chief depended not only on inheritance but also wealth and political support to attain and preserve his position. In the case of the savanna tributary systems, local powers probably maintained

control over strategic parts of the production process, leading to conflict among various groups.

In Kongo society, the religious and political fields overlapped to a high degree. Like other central African societies, Kongo was organized around public cults. The title of king was the highest in a hierarchical system of political-religious titles. The king was the representative of *Nzambi* (God) and shared the responsibility for ensuring public well-being with *simbi* (local, water, or nature spirits) priests. The Kongo kingdom consisted of six provinces, each governed by a subchief who also retained a religious title and authority. In lesser Kongo domains, titleholders were paired with priests, making up a double hierarchy that was simultaneously political and religious. This means that those low on the political hierarchy worked alongside full-time religious specialists. Those who had more political authority, however, were also religious authorities. In this way, the equilibrium found by political and religious structures in the complex society of the Kongo tended to be at or near the extreme of control of the religious field by the political field. In addition, having religious authorities representing the king on the local level was undoubtedly in the interest of the centralized elite.

Four Religious Roles

The hierarchy of religious authority then was one in which the king was paramount. Under the king were provincial rulers, and underneath these provincial rulers were local priests. In this way, local priests, who answered to the political elite, perhaps also functioned as royal oversight at the local level.

The Kongo people understood power and its uses to be organized around four religious specialists: chief (*mfumu*), prophet (*ngunza*), magician (*nganga*), and witch (*ndoki*).[4] People in all four roles possessed knowledge about the land of the dead, the other world, where they were able to see and move. A Kongo prophet was not a prophet in the anthropological sense, a specialist who expresses changing ideas and explains changing contexts and who operates outside authorized religious institutions, described in Chapter Two. BaKongo recognized the role of Kongo prophet as legitimate.

The four roles can be understood in terms of their relative position to an afflicted individual, whose problem was caused by the chief or the witch and whose problem could be healed by the prophet or the magician. For Kongo people, the prophet and the chief represented hierarchical, authoritative order. However, while the prophet could heal, the chief could kill. Also, in contrast to the concern for the group held by Kongo prophets and chiefs, Kongo magicians and witches acted in their own interest. Like the prophet, the magician could heal, and like the chief, the witch could kill. People understood the magician to be benevolent but profit oriented and individualistic, something evidenced through his or her use of charms. The fact that the magician used objects in his or her religious practices pointed to the magician's individual—not group—orientation. The use of charms was individualistic, close to witchcraft, antisocial, and possibly subversive.

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4. Because the form of this set of four roles seems to apply to Kongo at least from its early Christian years, I have included them in describing Kongo society before European contact. In addition, this role set belongs to the same broad type as those of the Mongo, Luba, Shona, and most Bantu-speaking peoples.

Any particular person could take on one or another of the roles at different times, or as assigned by various people. For instance, a person could call herself or himself a magician but someone else might call this same person a witch. What labels a person used to describe herself or himself and others depended on a person's actual and desired position in the political hierarchy. In terms of religious hierarchy, then, these four roles provided a frame through which to interpret the actions of a group's political allies and enemies (for instance, by calling allies magicians, chiefs, or prophets and enemies witches). Moreover, this role set opened up possibilities for individuals to assume a role, for instance, that of prophet, and challenge the actions of others within the hierarchy. In this way, people might contest religious and political practices and meanings, and the Kongo prophet was a religious check over the king.

Simbi Cults

Finally, it appears that the people comprising the class of producers participated in religious activities organized around *bisimbi*, local, water, or nature spirits who inhabited bodies of water, dry gullies, and some other places. With *bisimbi* as focal points, the groups' practices took place around features of the local environment like caves, pools, or large rocks. Individual priests, who were a particular kind of *nganga*, or magician, led the groups. The people of each major political domain followed the cult of its tutelary *simbi*. Because I do not have further details about how these groups functioned or how they were organized, it is not possible to understand what resources may have been made available to participants in them. However, it does look to be the case that those with political aspirations, and the incumbent political elite, took part in

particular *simbi* cults that set them apart from commoners. In this way, *simbi* cult participation appears to have been a religious practice that supported the structure of the political system and in at least some cases justified the position of the political elite.

Meaning

Religious meaning makes the world understandable by creating order. In this section I suggest that Kongo people understood those in the roles of magician and king to be regular actors ensuring the day-to-day well-being of people. These specialists could lead the ritual acts necessary to appease the supernatural spirits, which would translate to healthy crops and people. Moreover, these ritual actions would have been necessary to protect people from evil. Witches and evil spirits caused bad things to happen to otherwise good people, and magicians would have been called upon by individuals to ritually counteract the effects of evil that manifest in people's sorrow and pain.

Powerful Supernatural Beings

The first concern of this study in relation to meaning is that of good and evil. As described in Chapter Two, religion gives people a way in which to talk about the difference between what people deserve and what really happens to them, creating coherence in a world that might otherwise appear to contain inexplicable inequities (Geertz 1993:105-108). While details about what Kongo people considered to be "good" or moral behaviors are unavailable, it is possible to understand the ritual practices through which they engaged good and evil.

In Kongo cosmology, all of the forces that dwelled in the invisible/other world, who mediated between *Nzambi* and living beings, belonged to the larger domain of the

dead. People of Kongo believed that the spirits in the land of the dead had considerable power over what occurred in the land of the living and so needed to be pleased. The land of the dead was not a direct contrast to "being" or "life," but it meant something like living invisibly. For instance, BaKongo said that "one dies only to sight," and those who were able to communicate with this other world had "opened" or "four" eyes, or "night vision" (MacGaffey 1983:140). Ancestors, thus, were active in the land of the living. Some *bisimbi*, the tutelary spirits of particular places, were at one time living persons, and others existed since the beginning, the creation/zero point. Each of the cults dedicated to a *simbi* had a priest in charge of divination for the chiefdom, propitiation of the *simbi* for good weather and crops, and chief-installation. Individuals practiced rituals led by their *simbi* priest. Chiefs and elders, in contrast, recognized different spirits, *bakulu*, in their religious practices. They believed these spirits lived underground and were closer to the beginning by being closer to the original ancestors, and they believed *bakulu* remained active in the world of the living.

Based on this information, it seems Kongo people understood poor harvests and other negative worldly events as having been caused by *bisimbi* and other entities in the land of the dead. For BaKongo, crop disease and other bad events—otherwise inexplicable inequities—could be explained as the result of inappropriately performed rituals. For instance, perhaps an individual Kongo or priest did not perform a spirit-desired ritual or did not perform a ritual in the spirit-desired way. It was also the case that malevolent entities existed in the other world, and these entities were the concern of witches, which I discuss below.

Magicians and Witches

The role of religion in explaining negative events is closely tied to its role in explaining what people feel. In helping them understand, religion makes it possible for people to bear their physical pain, worldly defeat, and consideration of others' misery (Geertz 1993:104). It can also give people a way to act on their suffering, to try to control and correct it.

One way to understand suffering among BaKongo is to look at it from the point of view of a suffering individual, someone bearing painful loss or illness. From this point of view, it was the activities of a witch that caused people harm. Witches were individuals who engaged in self-centered behaviors with the goal of profiting in some way from their manipulation of spirits and *minkisi*, powerful objects that incorporated the dead. Witches also acted through *minkuyu*, anonymous, malevolent ghosts who were witches when alive. Because witches designed to do things to result in their profit, it can be understood that witches were the prime culprits in cases of individual hurts. While a chief also had the potential to harm, and people feared the chief because of this, the role of the chief was to ensure the well-being of the group. The chief could kill witches or criminals to protect the community. It seems that people identified by chiefs as witches could be killed or enslaved. Also, to address their pain or distress, people could have sought the capacities of a magician, a healer.

In sum, Kongo society before contact with Europeans was a dynamic civilization with shifting borders. It was a tributary society that, similar to other groups in the region, was comprised of a double political-religious hierarchy. Those with the most political power also claimed religious authority, and this, together with military force, political

supporters, wealth, and kin linkages of the king, worked to maintain the society and the position of the elite within it. The chief was the divine and political ruler. Provincial rulers were also religious authorities. Priests may have acted as religious checks on politics at the local level, which would seem to have aided in maintaining the political allegiance of peripheral local groups. It seems that the set of four political-religious roles also created possibilities for action for political and religious challengers. While the chief had religious abilities, the priest, witch, and prophet also had religious capabilities. Given the complementary and opposite functions of these roles, each person filling one of them would, in theory at least, limit the abuse of another's power.

BaKongo understood the actions of supernatural forces like *bisimbi* and *bakulu* to be the cause of negative events like crop failure. Through *bisimbi* priests, people worked to please their tutelary *bisimbi*. Similarly, chiefs worked to please *bakulu*. These spirits had powerful capabilities in the land of the living and could be drawn on to explain why bad things happened to otherwise good people. People participated in *simbi* cults, although it is not clear exactly how these groups were organized. Moreover, witches acted to enrich themselves at the expense of others by manipulating the forces of the other world. The actions of witches, then, caused pain and suffering. Kings could ensure the public's well-being by punishing witches. Also, to counter the effects of witchcraft, people would have sought the help of magicians, who, while also focused on profit, acted to heal. This was the social field that Portuguese entered in the 1480s.

Trade with Europeans: 1483 – Early 1700s

Before describing relations between Europeans and BaKongo, it is helpful to contextualize European sub-Saharan maritime travels. Portugal was the nation that first interacted with Kongo, but it was not alone in being interested in southward travel, a pursuit that Europeans justified in religious terms. While the Crusades, organized by the Church in the 11th-14th centuries, had been ultimately unsuccessful in (re-)gaining Middle East or North African Muslim territory for European Christians, they had developed among Europeans a notion that they were responsible for keeping Muslims from spreading Islam not only in Europe but also in Africa (Crawford 1997; Kpobi 2007:124). Because many Christians lived in North Africa, Europeans tended to deem true Africa, a land of devil-controlled wild people that was guarded by Satan, to begin at the Sahara (Kpobi 2007:124-125). Additionally, early European explorers hoped to not only hold the Muslims at bay but also to find an ancient Christian kingdom ruled by Prester John somewhere in Africa (Kpobi 2007:124).

On the other hand, religious conversion was not the primary motive behind European travel to sub-Saharan Africa. Instead, religion served to justify the travels through which Europeans pursued the source of valued resources. Moreover, beginning in 1517, when Martin Luther split from the Catholic Church and stirred the Reformation, Catholic interests were separate from those of Protestant Christian churches, the early ones being Lutheran, Anglican, and Calvinist Churches (Bireley 2009). Each European nation in sub-Saharan Africa tended to bring with it its own Christian tradition (Isichei 2004:135; Winant 2001:39-41).

Portugal in Sub-Saharan Africa

The reason behind Portuguese exploration of sub-Saharan Africa was the desire to find the source of Muslim Arabs' trade goods. These trade goods, including gold, enslaved people, cloth, and ivory, arrived in North Africa, the Near East, and Europe after having travelled a complex route that included the trans-African savanna belt and tropical forest (Wolf 1997:38-39). The Portuguese hoped to bypass the Arab middlemen and get to the source of these goods themselves. It was not long after their southern expeditions that Portuguese traders and missionaries found the slave trade to be lucrative, and by the mid-1500s they were sending Africans to the plantations of Brazil (Didier Gondola 2002:32).

Although Portugal was a small nation, it was the dominant European nation in sub-Saharan Africa during this period (Isichei 2004:138; Kalu 2007:30). Some Portuguese settled in communities at various points along the coast. For instance, some Portuguese immigrants married local women on the West African coast (Mark 1999). In the 1500s, these mixed communities called themselves Portuguese, and they were distinguished by their status as traders, their language, their architectural style, and their Catholic religion, which, as practiced, combined elements of Judaism, Christianity, and local religion (Mark 1999:174-179).

While the missionaries that accompanied Portuguese ships tried to convert Africans, their work was largely unsuccessful. Some attribute this lack of success to a shortage of clergy (Gundani 2007:152; Isichei 2004:135). Consequently, the rare occasions that Africans took up Christianity can be attributed to the actions of local lay people, particularly royals and aristocrats (Isichei 2004:135-138). For example, the heir

to the throne of Warri, a small state in the western Niger Delta, converted to Catholicism in the 1570s, after which the religion was followed by the royals and to a lesser extent by the populace of the capital (Isichei 2004:136). Christianity was also adopted in 1623 on the Swahili coast by the sultan of the Muslim state of Mombasa, who switched back to Islam in 1631 and led a revolt in which many African and Portuguese Christians were killed (Isichei 2004:135). The other nation which adopted Christianity and in which Christianity persisted was Kongo.

Religious Structure in Kongo

During this period, the social structure of Kongo society changed in relation to its changing context. This section illustrates how the kingdom of Kongo adapted to the expanding coastal trade. Over time, political units that saw success in trade began to grow and the political power of the centralized elite weakened. During this process, however, the political field maintained control of the religious field. In addition, this section looks at the ways in which missionaries worked to supplant native Kongo religious specialists within the religious hierarchy. This work, paired with their relationships with political rulers, led to the institutionalization of Christianity in Kongo. Finally, this section shows that through their participation in Catholic associations, lay people of Kongo gained access to new forms of social capital.

Kongo Political Control over Religion

Situated along the coast, the Kongo came into contact with Portuguese sailors in 1483, when they began facilitating trade between Portuguese and groups in the interior (Lemarchand 1993; W. MacGaffey 1997:46-47). Missionaries aboard the ships

accompanied the Portuguese to the Kongo court in the capital, a short trip inland by river. It seems likely that Kongo politicians would have invited the Portuguese to the capital. Then in 1485 Portuguese took Kongo nobles to Portugal (Lemarchand 1993). In 1490, João II of Portugal initiated an expedition to Kongo to create a settlement there that included priests, monks, armed soldiers, peasants, artisans, and some women (Balandier 1968:42-43; Vansina 1990:200). The group arrived at Mpinda, a port town in the Kongo province of Soyo, where all caravans going to the capital were formed, to a tremendous welcome. The priests then baptized King Nzinga a Nkuwu and his nobles in the capital (Thornton 1984:148). The king's reasons for requesting baptism are not known, although they were likely linked to both political interest and religious meaning. However, he expelled the missionaries in 1495 (Balandier 1968:254); it is not clear why.

Nzinga a Nkuwu's son, Mbemba Nzinga (Afonso), who ruled from 1506 to 1545, returned to Catholicism. This return may have been related to the contest over his dead father's throne. Afonso's son—who became the only black bishop in western Central Africa before 1970 (Isichei 2004:136)—wrote that after the death of Nzinga a Nkuwu, Afonso's Christian camp and a pagan camp fought over succession (Thornton 1984:148-149). This account was supported by another that noted that a campaign conducted by Afonso's rival, the traditionalists, accused the Christians of practicing witchcraft to take the kingdom. The traditionalists claimed that because of Christian witchcraft, the rivers dried up and the rain stopped falling, causing the crops to die and loss to the king's income (Balandier 1968:250). In this competition, two Kongo political parties fought for control of the kingdom. One camp allied with the Portuguese Christians while the other

camp labeled the first group witches. This illustrates how point of view determined whether a person was a magician or a witch.

Understood in light of Kongo beliefs, this fight and later ones like it, where opponents of Christians and Portuguese accused them of witchcraft, may have occurred between competing *simbi* cults. Afonso must have counted the foreign Christians among his political supporters. Whereas Afonso and his supporters would have undoubtedly understood their position as religiously and politically legitimate, his detractors labeled them as witches. As described above, the four-role set of Kongo allowed individuals and groups to negotiate who held political and religious authority. At this time, there was a contest over politics, which in this system was necessarily related to religion. Some wanting political control were adopting Christianity while others were rejecting it.

After Afonso won the throne, Christianity was institutionalized within Kongo society (Thornton 1984:149-150).[5] Kongo kings seem to have respected the Church, writing the pope to ask for marital dispensations and to appeal for other-worldly aid against locust invasions. Kongo kings also requested missionaries, trying to establish a diplomatic connection through them to improve their position vis-à-vis the Portuguese and, later, the Dutch (Gray 1990:40-41; Thornton 1984). It is also apparent that the Church recognized Kongo as a Christian nation (Thornton 1984). The Church sent missionaries to Kongo to minister sacraments and to improve sinful behaviors, not to convert pagans to the faith (Thornton 1984:151, 156). After about 1600, lay Christian leaders selected by state authorities spread Christianity beyond the capital by converting

5. Thornton (1984) argued that any documentation to the contrary was politically biased. Much of the history of this time period has been pieced together using correspondence of missionaries and Portuguese clergy, who typically sided with Portuguese, not Kongo, interests.

local rulers and teaching Christian hymns and prayers to rural people (Isichei 2004:137; Thornton 1984:164-165).

In the capital, Christian missions played different roles under various kings, and in different parts of the kingdom there was still greater variation (Gray 1990:36). However, the foundation of the Church in Kongo since its early days was its local educational system, which trained nobility for the priesthood (in the 1500s) and government service (Thornton 1984:164-165). Christianity became deeply ingrained among the Kongo elite, who assumed Christian names upon baptism, adopted Portuguese titles of nobility, and were literate in Portuguese (Balandier 1968:246; Isichei 2004:137; Thornton 1984:164-165). During this early period, Kongo's status as a Christian state, its literacy, and its independent political status put it on somewhat equal footing with European nations. In fact, perhaps Kongo elite took up Christianity with this goal in mind. In Europe during the same period, literacy was also confined to the upper classes. On the other hand, political-religious links in Kongo were different than in Europe. In Kongo, the king was considered to be the representative of the high God, and provincial rulers also had religious authority.

In the early years of Kongo-Portuguese trade, resident Portuguese purchased dependents from BaKongo in the local currency to sell as slaves. As this trade increased, it began to include foreigners taken through military raids and local kidnapping. Kongo began to regulate the local market, including appointing a royal supervisor and setting the price for a dependent (Vansina 1990:200). About two to three thousand enslaved people were exported each year during this decade. By 1525, the system included caravans and relays at the capital and at Malebo Pool, a widening in the Congo River where today the

capital cities of Kinshasa (DRC) and Brazzaville (Republic of Congo) are located (Vansina 1990:201). By the late 1560s, about seven thousand enslaved people each year were sold to the Portuguese in Kongo (Vansina 1990:201).

In 1571 Portugal began a colony in Luanda that bypassed its earlier trade routes to become the new hub of the slave trade (Gray 1990; Isichei 2004:137; Vansina 1990:201). In the 1590s Dutch traders arrived, setting up their base north of Kongo in Loango, and by 1640 they were the leading traders with Kongo, dealing primarily with Soyo on the coast (Bob 1999:xxi; Gray 1990:37-38; Vansina 1990:202). Trade with the Dutch also spurred on the organization and further inward development of caravans in the region (Vansina 1990:202). Traders began organizing under leaders who formed alliances with trading parties in settlements along the routes of the interior (Vansina 1990:202). Independent political groups thus grew along the route of interior caravans and with the development of coastal shipping (Broadhead 1979:638). Professional traders brought people and ivory to Malebo Pool from upstream by canoe, and these upstream routes continually pushed farther inland, from where traders took slaves (Vansina 1990:202-203). The trading routes expanded during times of increased European demand but did not retract during slow periods (Vansina 1990:202-203).

So while the Kongo state was centralized before contact with Portuguese, its internal dynamics changed as trade with Europeans increased. Other groups along the coast of Africa also changed with increasing trade. For instance, the Duala along the coast of present-day Cameroon achieved a degree of hierarchical organization, first, to trade fish for agricultural products, and then to mediate trade between Europeans on the

coast and groups in the interior (Austen 1983). Duala big men could rise in importance, and small towns could shift allegiance from one segment to another.

Africans' desire for European commodities was constant (Vansina 1990:203). African political leaders worked to acquire European items in the competition to attract political followers and, later, to stay ahead of the producing classes once European textiles and other items became more common (Vansina 1990:203). During the 1600s, due in part to Soyo's increasing fortune and Dutch firearms, the Soyo ruler revolted against the Kongo king several times (Gray 1990:37-38).

In 1665, invading Portuguese forces from Luanda killed the Kongo king and many nobles at the battle of Ambuila (Gray 1990:38). Following this event, the Soyo, the only internal rival to the dominant royal establishment at Mbanza Kongo, took political control of Kongo (Broadhead 1979:615; Gray 1990:38-39). In 1670, the Soyo defeated the Portuguese at Kitombo (Gray 1990:38-39). Still, in spite of their dominance, their rule was weak. Soyo control over Kongo, like that of the political elite before, continually faced opposition from rival political groups. Now, however, the internal and regional political shifts resulting from European trade and military interference intensified these tendencies. Beginning in these latter decades of the 1600s and continuing into the 1800s, the slave trade expanded (Vansina 1990:204).

The Capuchins were important in Soyo, where they were able to maintain a continuous presence and where they had no local rivals, unlike elsewhere in Kongo (Gray 1990:40-41). Like missionaries in the 1500s, their presence underscored Kongo autonomy. They connected Soyo to Rome, and they aided in negotiations between Soyo and the Portuguese. For instance, after Portugal's defeat by Soyo in 1670, at the request

of Soyo's ruler, the pope obtained recognition from the king of Portugal that Soyo's ruler was an independent prince (Gray 1990:41). In Soyo, the presence of the Capuchins was beneficial to the rulers not only due to their diplomatic benefit but also due to their ability ritually to legitimize Soyo rulers in the eyes of their populace (Gray 1990:42-46). By the late 1600s, most significant public rituals were organized around the Christian calendar. Nobility also introduced Afonso I of Kongo as a Christian founding hero and maintained their interest in Catholic practices, priests, and artifacts (Broadhead 1979:625). Over time, membership in confraternities, Catholic associations described further below, became a prerequisite for high office (Gray 1990:42-45). However, although Soyo took the Kongo kingdom in 1665, its ascendancy was not without opposition. There was continued political struggle until the people of Kongo began to view Pedro IV, who occupied the capital from 1709-1715, as legitimate (Broadhead 1979:615).

During this first period of contact with Europeans, although there were changes within the Kongo political and religious fields, the relationship between them remained close, with politicians relying on and directing religion. The Kongo king and elite were considered divine. After Christian Afonso took control of the kingdom in the early 1500s, Christianity was institutionalized. Acquiring a Catholic education was increasingly important for the religious legitimization of the elite, and Catholic rituals also assumed importance in this regard. In this way, Catholic symbols and practices supported the maintenance of political order. Additionally, Kongo elite used the religious institution of the Catholic Church to try to affect some political goals, for instance, to emphasize sovereignty in the face of Portuguese desire for control. On the other hand, it is not clear how political changes affected the religious authority of provincial rulers—who may

have lost some political authority as trade units developed—other than those of Soyo, nor how religion was or was not involved in terms of the increasingly powerful traders.

Institutionalization of Catholicism in Kongo

Originally, missionaries considered Kongo magicians (*nganga*) and their followers to be simply sinful magical and medicinal practitioners (Thornton 1984:157). Over the course of the 1500s and early 1600s, however, missionaries came to categorize these magicians as diabolic witches, a belief that stemmed from contemporary European ideas that all magicians and healers worked through or with the Devil (Thornton 1984:158). This can be understood as part of the process through which the activities of authorized religious specialists bring about the exclusion of other practices and beliefs, as described in Chapter Two (Asad 1983:242-249; Bourdieu 1971:319-323). Catholic priests worked to monopolize the religious field. They authorized certain knowledge and practices. They denounced some discourses and practices and drew others into their narrative of truth. In this process of claiming religious authority, based on their European experiences, missionaries worked to suppress all Kongo religious specialists other than ordained clergy. In contrast, people of Kongo tended to understand *ndoki*, not *nganga*, to be witches. From Kongo perspective, *nganga* (magicians) healed whereas *ndoki* harmed people. Thus, missionaries suppressed both social and antisocial Kongo religious practitioners.

To a degree, missionaries did gain some control over the religious field. For instance, the lay Christians sent by political authorities to convert people throughout Kongo laid the groundwork for the delivery of sacraments on a massive scale by

missionaries: “Carried by the hospice servants (*nleke*) and accompanied by a noble interpreter, the priest would travel from village to village, baptizing hundreds of people each day, while the real mission work remained firmly in the hands of the church staff” (Thornton 1984:165). One of the sacraments, baptism, involved the distribution of salt, a valuable good in the interior (Broadhead 1979:633). Missionaries were responsible for conducting rituals not only for royals but also for commoners.

In spite of Portugal’s continual efforts to exert influence over Kongo through the Catholic Church, its power of appointment in the Church did not translate to influence in the kingdom (Thornton 1984:159-164). For one, the social structure of Kongo was different from that of Portugal. In Portugal, the Church had considerable wealth and power as a result of its land ownership. However, this power was directed to a large degree by the Portuguese state, which controlled the bishops and through them the staffing of lesser clergy. In Kongo, the state controlled how land revenue was divided, and no one could establish permanent rights to land. The king gave temporary leadership for collecting land revenue to nobility. He typically funded foreigners through a grant, a relatively stable piece of state income (Thornton 1984:161). Clergy in Kongo supplemented this income by charging a fee for carrying out the sacraments. For the Capuchins, however, the king granted some lands for farming in rural areas, as the secular clergy in the major rural capitals forbade them from living there (Thornton 1984:161). This shows that there was competition for religious authority between Capuchins and secular clergy. By the end of the 1600s, Capuchins in Soyo were making some income from the lands that they controlled.

However, while missionaries in Kongo were given income by the king, and while some missionaries controlled land, they were still at the king's mercy (Thornton 1984:162). If they had a falling out with the king, the king cut off their income. He also expelled priests who displeased him. All clergy in Kongo were paid by the king and were in his service. So while Portugal controlled the appointment of the bishop who presided over Kongo (after the death of Afonso's son), the Portuguese were unsuccessful in translating that control into influence in the kingdom (Thornton 1984:162).

In sum, during this period, those in the Catholic hierarchy, which in Kongo consisted of missionaries, worked to claim the Kongo religious field. They did this through their connections with Kongo political elite and by working to make it a necessity to be ordained to be an authorized religious specialist. Missionaries labeled all others witches, including those whom local BaKongo understood to be healers. However, other Kongo religious specialists continued to practice. Also, although Portugal controlled key priests in the Catholic hierarchy within its borders and abroad, it was unable to similarly control the religious field in Kongo. Instead, the Kongo king maintained control of the religious field within his kingdom.

Confraternities in Kongo

In adapting Christianity, some freed and enslaved black Christians in Kongo, like their counterparts in Angola, Brazil, Spain, and Portugal, began to organize themselves in Catholic confraternities, a type of Catholic group for non-clergy (Gray 1990:13-15). Catholic confraternities and Catholic religious orders saw much growth around the time of the Reformation, as the Catholic Church changed in response to its changing context

(Bireley 2009). In Europe these groups tended to respond to growing populations and poverty through social works. For instance, some required their members to care for sick, orphans, and people in prison (Bireley 2009:226-227). It is also evident that these groups arose within a changing social context in Kongo. As trade with Europeans along the coast increased and internal political factions shifted in their makeup and degree of dominance, it seems that individual BaKongo, depending on their structural locations, would have been caught up in various ways within a changing opportunity structure. For instance, those who procured resources from the interior to trade toward the exterior gained increased economic capital and political authority. In a similar vein, Catholic associations opened up another possibility for social and economic action for individuals, beyond the elite.

Confraternity members in Kongo were obligated to pray daily and participate in the sacraments of confession and communion monthly (Gray 1990:13). Confraternities that could afford their own chapels focused their activities around them, and other confraternities focused on an altar shared with the parish church or the chapel of a more prosperous confraternity (Gray 1990:13). The actions required of confraternity participants meant that some people invested time and energy. In doing this, members would have (ideally) developed feelings of trust, friendship, and obligation toward each other.

One result of these durable networks of relationships was increased availability of resources. For instance, at the local and regional level, these groups acted as mutual aid associations for their members (Gray 1990:13). Members gained benefits that included, depending on availability of funds, aid when sick or in prison. Participants were also

guaranteed a burial attended by fellow members (Gray 1990:13). Those serving on their governing councils also gained social prestige (Gray 1990:13), and, in effect, a chance to develop civic skills such as leadership. This grouping also mirrored the changing character of global political-economic connections in the way it was embedded within the Catholic Church. Using this organization, some confraternity members organized to protest slavery at the level of the pope and got some response in the form of debate and changed policy in Rome (Gray 1990:14-54). The institutionalization of Catholicism in Kongo brought new possibilities for organizing for individuals. While it is not clear how wide a swath of Kongo society took part in confraternity life, it does appear that some Kongo benefitted from them economically and socially.

Meaning in Kongo

As noted above, missionaries of this period concerned themselves with institutionalizing Christianity in Kongo, which included claiming religious authority and excluding Kongo *nganga* (magicians) and *ndoki* (witches). However, they were not completely successful in this task. Their incorporation in Kongo occurred as it made sense with Kongo religious structure and views. For instance, BaKongo first understood Europeans to be visitors from the land of the dead, the land of their ancestors who were white and lived in villages under rivers and lakes (Balandier 1968:253-254; W. MacGaffey 1977:186-187; W. MacGaffey 1983:26). As noted, spirits of the land of the dead were powerful forces in the land of the living, and people participated in cults organized around their worship. Following this understanding, BaKongo believed missionaries to be both priests of the *bisimbi* (local spirits) and incarnations of them. The

Kongo king interpreted the missionaries' appearance to be a multiplication of lesser gods that were controlled by his subordinates (W. MacGaffey 1983:26). While BaKongo incorporated missionaries within their political-religious structure and system of beliefs since their first appearance, the content, or meaning, of religion underwent some shift after European contact, and some BaKongo organized behind an attempt at an alternative understanding of the world.

Supernatural Power and Redefining Evil

People of Kongo continued to understand unpredictable negative events, such as lack of rain, as the result of actions of supernatural beings. These beings could be manipulated by people in the land of the living. It seems that the meanings attributed by Kongo to good and evil (and healing) were not problematic from the point of view of the Catholic Church, and they were probably similar to the views of the missionaries themselves.

Because unconquered Kongo adopted Christianity voluntarily, the Church followed an inclusive approach to missionization that was similar to the way in which it had approached European countries in the sixth century (Thornton 1984). Accordingly, the Church understood all elements of Kongo culture that did not directly conflict with basic Catholic doctrine to be acceptable (Thornton 1984:152-153). Early Christianization meant renaming existing institutions and concepts (Thornton 1984:159). For instance, important Christian terms were translated into terms from Kongo cosmology: God became *Nzambi Mpungu* (the inaccessible, supreme Creator, represented by the king) (Balandier 1968:244-246). Holy was *nkisi* (objects containing supernatural force, in touch

with the world of the dead). People understood Christian artifacts like crosses to be powerful and part of the *nkisi* domain (Balandier 1968:248-249; Broadhead 1979:627). Missionaries also distributed thousands of individual charms for luck, which were religious medals and which they called *nkisi*.

One issue of concern for missionaries was polygyny. Missionaries solved this "problem" by marrying Kongo nobility to their head wives and defining subsequent wives as concubines—still sinful but more acceptable (Thornton 1984:158). However, for the Kongo people, Christian marriage (into the 1700s) was a form of husband/wife initiation into a particular kind of *simbi* cult entered into by the wealthy (W. MacGaffey 1977:187).

Beyond their political connections and efforts at suppressing Kongo religious specialists, European missionaries displaced many Kongo *simbi* priests due to the apparent origin of the Europeans in the water (W. MacGaffey 1983:26). Because the water was the gateway separating this and the other worlds, BaKongo understood Europeans to come from the land of the dead. Missionaries replaced local specialists in initiation ceremonies (baptism), public rituals asking earth spirits to end drought, and the king's coronation. They filled the role of Kongo magician, in the view of BaKongo. Moreover, the expectations that missionaries held about their role may not have been much different from those of Kongo people (Gray 1990:6).

The Capuchins, who achieved the greatest connection with black Africans (as seen in relationship and scale) of any missionaries before the 1800s, understood ritual and religion to be an integral part of daily life, not a separate component of it (Gray 1990:6-7). For black and white Christians, working against evil encompassed the same range of

concerns, including harvest, rain, healing, and security (Gray 1990:7). This correlation makes sense when it is understood that belief meant to hold dear or pledge loyalty. Rather than the contemporary understanding of religions as competing systems of ideas, in this time period, people probably understood religion as a pledge of loyalty to God and the supernatural beings.

On the other hand, because of the considerable amount of time spent by Soyo rulers in missionary instruction in the second half of the 1600s, these people may have felt some conviction of belief (Gray 1990:36-56). These rulers were the most likely to have internalized some Catholic or European expectations and understandings. It is possible that some were devoted; it is possible that their everyday actions and understandings were more infused with specific Christian ideas than were those of others. In the same way, it can be surmised that members of lay confraternities and others who were active in learning about the Church also internalized new ways of being, to varying degrees.

There is evidence that one ideal of Christianity, equality in the eyes of God, was understood and used by various Kongo in political ways. In one case, during the period of political struggle that was dominated by the Soyo, a Kongo woman named Vita Kimpa (baptized Beatriz) came to prominence among the Kongo population (Isichei 2004:138). Beatriz was born in the shadow of the mountain of Kibangu, meaning fortress, especially significant because it is the origin of five rivers, sacred boundaries between this world and the land of the dead (Thornton 1998:12). In 1704, at the age of twenty, Beatriz witnessed a vision of Saint Anthony while ill with a high fever (Isichei 2004:137; Thornton 1998:10). During her sickness, the saint told her that he was trying to help

restore the Kongo kingdom, and then he "entered into her head and merged with her" (Thornton 1998:10). Beatriz was possessed by Saint Anthony (Thornton 1998:11). She believed that Jesus was born in Kongo, and she called on the king to go back to his deserted capital (Isichei 2004:137-138).

Beatriz fit the anthropological understanding of prophet described in Chapter Two, as she communicated religious doctrine out of a sense that she had a calling and produced some religious discontinuity. Beatriz came to popularity during a period of social change, including the slave trade, when, presumably, many people felt alienated from the current social order. She was an innovator, and she articulated a new social order. While being questioned by a missionary, Beatriz said there were BaKongo and no color in heaven (Isichei 2004:138). In other words, Beatriz was contesting the mainstream meaning of good and evil. In talking about the other world, she claimed that instead of being filled with white beings, these beings were in fact colorless. This would have meant that white people in this world were not any more supernatural than black people. As a result, the gross inequity between white people and black people, and the significant numbers of enslaved black people, could be understood as unjust, as evil. The religious and political authorities violently repressed the movement, and the Portuguese burned her at the stake as a witch in 1706 (Isichei 2004:138; Thornton 1998:1).

Just as Beatriz attempted to redefine good and evil by redefining slavery as unjust and as linked to the inequity in Portuguese-Kongo relations, members of confraternities drew on Christian values of equality in speaking out against unjust treatment, including slavery (Gray 1990:14-54). In 1658, soon after its founding, members of the Confraternity of Our Lady of the Rosary in Luanda sent a request to Rome for protection

from harm at the hands of whites, as, they maintained, “in the service of God we must all be equal” (Gray 1990:14). Due to the efforts of various black confraternities (on the level of the international Church institution) and Capuchins, the Catholic Church took a stand against perpetual slavery and cruel treatment of enslaved people, a position impossible to enforce, given the interconnections between the Church and colonial rulers.

In Soyo these directives led to conflict and tension between missionaries and local Christian rulers (Gray 1990:28-34). For instance, based on their interpretation of the Church directive, Capuchin missionaries condemned the selling of baptized slaves to non-Catholics such as the English. In response, Kongo King Antonio III wrote a letter to Rome, going above the Capuchins to seek acceptance of his trading practices (Gray 1990:54). Confraternity members picked up this Christian ideal of equality and used it to advocate for a better opportunity structure and better treatment for those in the low social classes. They argued to both Portuguese and Kongo elite for the just treatment of all people. This group of people acted against what they viewed as inequitable life chances. They, like Beatriz, sought to redefine slavery as evil, and they used political means to address it. This case also demonstrates an attempt by religious to control the political field.

Healing by Magician-Priests and Kongo Prophets

At least well into the 1600s, Kongo people viewed the missionaries primarily as healers; most of the people brought to them were ill (W. MacGaffey 1977:187). Catholic priests in Kongo, calling themselves *nganga*, performed all of the roles expected of *nganga* (Thornton 1984:156-157). As before European contact, people sought out

magicians for healing; magicians healed while witches caused harm. Priests conducted rituals to please spirits and to heal people from spiritual attack, and witches practiced rituals for ends that would profit themselves at others' expense.

In addition, from the perspective of Kongo political-religious structure with its four roles of prophet, chief, magician, and witch, which centered on the intersection of public and private interest and the power of life and power of death, Beatriz can be understood to be a *ngunza*, a Kongo prophet (W. MacGaffey 1977:183-190). Beatriz was focused on healing and she worked for the benefit of the group. Additionally, there is an implicit association between Kongo prophets (and Kongo prophetic movements) and *simbi* (and *simbi* cults), which gave her place of birth added significance for Kongo. Kongo considered Beatriz to be a healer and source of fertility, and she destroyed *nkisi*, including crucifixes. For instance, Beatriz's associate Mafuta cured a woman of snakebite solely by making the sign of the cross and invoking the name of the Trinity, not by using any powerful objects (W. MacGaffey 1977:183). It should be remembered that *nkisi* were objects that incorporated supernatural powers. They could be used by magicians, who would use them to heal people, and by witches, who would use them to harm people. The use of *nkisi* underscored for Kongo the individual pursuits of both magicians and witches, whereas a Kongo prophet like Beatriz healed for the common good, without *nkisi*. Those who followed Beatriz were reacting to the rise of a complex system of religious objects and rituals that they associated with the collapse of the Kongo kingdom. The movement sought the end to civil war and a reunited kingdom (W. MacGaffey 1977:183; Thornton 1998:1).

BaKongo during this period sought out religious specialists to understand and express their suffering. As before, they relied on the spiritual powers of magicians (objects and practices) and Kongo prophets (practices) in acting on and attempting to ameliorate their feelings of pain.

Continuity and Change

It seems likely that BaKongo who took up Christianity in this early period did so for political and religious reasons. The king and nobles who were baptized in 1491 may have been reacting to the seeming proliferation of competing *simbi*. Afonso seemed to have understood that adopting Christianity was a means to engage the political-religious outsiders, who were powerful religious figures but also appealing trading partners. The opposing camp rejected these connections. The elite of Kongo then adopted the specialized training, foreign titles, and language of Portuguese Catholicism. The Kongo political elite attempted to draw on the kingdom's identity as a Christian nation to its benefit on the international scene. Within Kongo, Portugal tried to lean on its influence in the Catholic Church to gain control but failed. The religious field remained under the control of the Kongo king, a continuity from the prior period. Christianity became important for the proper performance of rituals, but political authorities maintained control over missionaries.

Within the religious field, missionaries in Kongo worked to supplant native magicians and witches, whom they labeled as evil, but their understanding was different than BaKongo understanding. BaKongo understood the missionaries to be magicians, not evil, and native magicians continued to practice. Missionaries translated Christian

concepts into Kongo terms (and concepts), and while missionaries tended to replace native specialists in many public rituals, their role was otherwise like that of the native magician, or healer. Thus there was some change in religious practice in terms of the religious field. The special importance of missions within the religious field was new, in comparison to Kongo before contact with Europeans. However, the understandings of healing that BaKongo brought to religious participation and the reasons for which they sought out religious specialists represented a continuity.

Some BaKongo joined confraternities, a type of organization embedded within the international Catholic institution. This represented a new form of social relations for BaKongo. The social capital created by these confraternities increased participants' access to resources. These groups also drew on the Church's teaching of equality to advocate against slavery on the international level through the institution of the Church.

Political groups grew in size and influence along interior caravan routes and the coast, due to trade with Europeans. These political shifts included the increasing power of Soyo, which rose to prominence after Portugal attacked Kongo. Missions found strong footing in Soyo and bolstered the perceived legitimacy of the province in international and national arenas. The Christian identity of the elite became more entrenched during this time. However, the king retained ultimate authority over religion. It is possible that some elite internalized a more European or Catholic disposition due to the large amount of time they spent studying with the Capuchins. On the other hand, most BaKongo seem to have understood Christianity in their terms. Native priests remained active in trying to keep control of the religious field, something more successful in provinces other than Soyo.

Moreover, it seems that the ideas of the Capuchins about the place of religion in everyday life were quite similar to the ideas of BaKongo. So while there was possibly some change in the way some people (elite) understood the world, there was mostly continuity in this regard. What is more, some BaKongo, following the lead of the prophet Beatriz, attempted to reformulate the meaning of evil by defining those of the other world as colorless, thus working to put BaKongo on equal spiritual (and material) footing with Europeans and to make the world more equitable. The movement represented people's attempt to make sense of their changing context. This movement sought to define the political field that was Christian, with its accompanying objects and rituals, as witchcraft, as antisocial, and it sought to reorder the world. People used religion to understand and express the contradictions and changes in their experiences. They understood the inequity they experienced relative to Europeans and their pain and suffering in religious terms. Religious practice offered them a way to act on these understandings to try to control them in a manner that was simultaneously religious and political.

States Expand and Decline: Early 1700s – About 1885

This section covers a period during which European nations engaged in heightened competition on the international front. The industrialization of these nations led to their increasing desires for natural resources. Due to the increasing political and economic fortunes of those who benefitted from European trade and as Europeans shifted demand from enslaved people to natural resources, the centralized structure of Kongo weakened. Kongo elite continued to follow Christianity, but there were few missionaries.

Shifting International and European Fields

By the late 1700s, Portugal, Britain, France, Spain, Holland, and Denmark prospered from buying and selling to their slave colonies (Winant 2001:46-47). For example, British shipping was largely comprised of shipping sugar to Europe, enslaved people from Africa to the Americas, and manufactured items from England to the slave colonies. The labor of enslaved populations was thus the backbone of early industrial era Europe (Winant 2001:47). Slave labor, at its height about 1660-1830, "created much of the wealth and made possible the circuits of capitalist exchange that transformed and integrated the world economy" (Winant 2001:48, 56). Some Europeans and some Africans were involved in the capture, consolidation, and transfer of African people (Winant 2001:42-43). Europeans gave Africans trading advantages for supplying enslaved persons from the interior. By the mid-1800s, European states competing for power shifted their interests from commercial matters in Africa to gaining political control of territories. Before, only Portugal, France, and Great Britain held territories in tropical Africa, and these were mainly on the west coast (Magdoff, Nowell, and Webster 2011). During this period, the number of European powers working to control colonies grew to include Germany, Belgium, Italy, and Spain (Magdoff, Nowell, and Webster 2011). Throughout the 1800s, European technology continued to improve, increasing the gap between Europeans and Central Africa (Vansina 1990:210). European military capabilities and navigation also developed (Vansina 1990:210).

In the midst of this economic boom and growing territorial imperialism, work and religion in Europe were changing. Developing first in England, industrialization moved the center of production from the home to the factory and resulted in the growth of a

wage class (Thompson 1963; Wolf 1997:275-276). As work life changed, religious life also changed. Protestant churches moved in either intellectual and rational directions or rigid ones that “expelled all backsliders and heretics” (Thompson 1963:34-35). New denominations also developed; Methodism supported the eventual pacification of workers through emphasizing hard work and obedience but also functioned in some contexts to enable a new self-confidence and manner of organizing (Thompson 1963:42-43). European nations also experienced internal revolutions, struggles usually rooted in the competition of different elite classes for political control. For instance, the French Revolution of 1789-1799 toppled the monarchy and produced a new empire. Belgium also experienced a revolution and strengthening of national identity (P. Manning 1998:8-10).

Alongside European expansion and the competition of the late 1700s and early 1800s arose a widespread renewed interest in missionization. Protestant interest in missions can be linked to the beginnings of evangelicalism (Stanley 2001:2-4). Njoku (2007:193) argued that the end of the Trans-Atlantic slave trade also gave motivation to evangelists, some who missionized as a reconciliatory engagement and a means to share the liberating features of Christianity and others who saw it as a civilizing enterprise. Missionizing abroad was also a way in which Protestant Christian churches, formed along national, cultural, and linguistic lines, sought to strengthen their structures and increase their membership (Njoku 2007:194). New evangelical and interdenominational missionary organizations came into being (Isichei 2004:145). Also during this time period, the Catholic Church renewed its missionary efforts, aiming to reclaim its superiority in Christianity (Njoku 2007:194-195).

Weakening Kongo

As the slave trade increased from about 1660 into the 1800s, the area from which slaves were taken expanded (Vansina 1990:207). People became slaves when they were prisoners of war or to pay debts like court fines (Vansina 1990:207). Nearer the coast, the legal system was used to enslave people. For instance, small offenses such as breaking an imported object could result in a person's enslavement, and capital punishment was transmuted to a sentence of slavery. During this period there was also an increase in kidnapping and raids as means to obtain slaves (Vansina 1990:207).

Kongo elite had benefited from their role in mediating the slave trade, and they suffered during its decline, when emphasis shifted to exports such as ivory, groundnuts, and palm oil. This emphasis increased the role played by producers and shifted the role of coastal trade brokers to one of dependents on European trading posts, located along the coast (Vansina 1990:207-210). Also, due to industrialization, European imports became cheap and numerous (Vansina 1990:207). In addition, while slavery was officially repressed during the 1800s, European traders continued to export significant numbers of enslaved people from the region up to about 1900 (Vansina 1990:209). Within Central Africa, slavery was not illegal, so European posts also tended to use slaves for labor, for instance, by buying them or by renting groups of them from local elite (Vansina 1990:210). Often, enslaved people worked in export sectors, for instance, in agriculture and mining; at the same time, some areas witnessed famine, as subsistence agriculture declined (people were forced to work elsewhere) (Didier Gondola 2002:46). These changes in export processes would have led both to the growth of the nouveaux riches and nobles fleeing to less affluent rural polities (Broadhead 1979).

As the slave trade increasingly stayed local, with slave holders working enslaved people in Central Africa, local political structures in general became more malleable and weak (P. Manning 1998:11-12). In the northern and southern savannas, Muslim states and slave raiders captured people to trade to Egypt, Cuba, and Brazil and to use locally. Groups coming from the east and south took control of large parts of the southern savanna (P. Manning 1998:12). The only areas of Central Africa that remained isolated from the slave trade and political changes were the highlands around the Great Lakes region (present-day DRC provinces of the Kivus and countries of Rwanda and Burundi) (P. Manning 1998:12).

Kongo Religious Structure

Under Pedro IV in the early 1700s, the Kongo kingdom developed politically into its modern pre-colonial form, the form it would maintain for the next 175 years (Broadhead 1979:615-619). It was a fragile kingdom whose head did not possess great power. Although the king's political power declined, he maintained his claim as foremost religious authority, which in turn became his primary claim to authority. Additionally, it appears that with the weakening of the centralized kingdom came an increase in political voice for commoners and for some religious entities.

Declining political center and increasing religious autonomy

As in earlier periods, Kongo's international relations involved both politics and religion. During this period, Kongo's relationship with Portugal was strained because they shared borders and competed in trade, and this tense relationship was reflected in political and religious actions (Broadhead 1979:634). For instance, Portuguese traders

were considered undesirable partners, and most Kongo kings and elite preferred non-Portuguese clergy such as the Italian Capuchins. In 1785, Soyo threw out Portuguese priests and traders. Moreover, BaKongo encouraged their own to study to become priests to decrease their dependency on foreigners (Broadhead 1979:635).

Within Kongo society, political authority also held religious authority, yet it seems that there was a growing voice of religious authorities in politics. First, Kongo political structure continued to be a political-religious one, but it began to weaken. The kingdom started this period consisting of small, related polities, and it was also the focus of overarching institutions, services, and ideologies. For people of Kongo, the king, royal insignia, royal graves, royal titleholders, royal ancestor cult, and Mbanza Kongo were the kingdom (Broadhead 1979:619). In addition, the autonomous constituencies were not necessarily fixed territorial units, but they replicated the kingdom's model of ritual-political center and dependent units on an increasingly smaller and interlocking scale, down to the level of town (Broadhead 1979:619-620). Each constituency was ruled by a great lord. *Banzas* were large towns, often with more than 200 houses, presided over by a royal titleholder. Smaller *libatas* were ruled by non-titled royal descendants or by men of property. The relationships among the pieces of this royal kingdom "formed the girders" of the overarching Kongo political system (Broadhead 1979:619).

Over time and increasing in rate in the late 1700s, the constituencies of the kingdom became more numerous. By the late 1800s, towns were basically the essential units of the kingdom, with no hierarchy between them and the king (Broadhead 1979:620-639). This proliferation seems to have been linked to the internal fissures in the Kongo kingdom brought about through the dynamics of the slave trade (Lemarchand

1993). Owning slaves increased one's prestige and wealth, which in turn increased the possibility of a slave owner challenging the king's authority (Lemarchand 1993). This dynamic, leading to unrest and civil war, also occurred in other societies in the savanna (Lemarchand 1993). In addition, changes in the structure of exports along the coast further weakened the kingdom.

As in past periods, the power of Kongo political title-holders was considered to be fundamentally sacred (Broadhead 1979:623; W. MacGaffey 1977). In the 1700s and 1800s, the king of Kongo was a religious mediator whose power was situated in the royal Christian cult, which continued to function as a royal *simbi* cult, enabling the king and aristocracy to control who held senior titles (Broadhead 1979:620). Even in the late 1800s, when his political powers were minimal, the king's spiritual power was considered potent by his followers (Broadhead 1979:626-627). The king himself, at least by the 1800s, was seen as *nkisi* upon installation (Broadhead 1979:627, 632). Importantly, however, this spiritual element conferred power on the king in the eyes of the populace only in areas where the king had a political following (Broadhead 1979:632).

It also seems that policy decisions were made in a more democratic fashion than in previous periods. For instance, the Capuchins' settlements became independent political units staffed by *nleke* who served the catechist, teacher, and, when present, foreign priest (Thornton 1984:165). Various councils and committees—such as the market committee, *simbi* (local spirit) cults, initiation associations, and even credit associations—also played an important part in the development and enforcement of public policy (Broadhead 1979:621-622, 630-631). Notably, these groups included

religious ones and thus represent a point at which religious entities could have exercised some control over the political field. The chief's court was the center of each Kongo polity; the council elected him and could censor him. At the king's court were commoners and royal titleholders. The most important council member was the priest of the earth cult, which further demonstrates a more complicated interplay of religious and political power. Religious authority had some control over the political field, adding to the same potential held by religious groups at the court. Additionally, missionaries tended to hold high positions in the king's inner council. Missionaries had a vote in the council, and they were essential for the investiture of the new king. Also, while the chief had power independent from the council, his sacred status meant that he was subject to ritual taboos that could be invoked by council members to influence him (Broadhead 1979:630).

Being an official incurred real power; for instance, members of the Order of Christ—an order of the elite—and their Christian wives used the cross of the Order to set up tax-collecting posts in the countryside (Broadhead 1979:631-632). These members would have been political elite with religious authority. Religious and political authority remained interwoven, and Christian symbols were those understood to be the authorized religious symbols of the time.

The elite of this period developed the use of Catholicism for their benefit, for instance, by restricting Christian marriage and literacy in Portuguese to themselves (Broadhead 1979:633). But while the elite worked hard to maintain their Christian center, they did not remain intact into the mid-1800s, due to the political-economic forces at work, described above (Broadhead 1979:633-634). Related to the decline of the kingdom

and its elite, the distinction between elite and producers was fading by the early 1800s. For instance, the king paid the three hundred slaves who worked for him, and the wife of a chief worked in the fields alongside her family's slaves (Broadhead 1979:646).

As a whole, the political and ritual force of the Kongo kingdom further weakened in the latter half of the 1800s, due to the growing coastal economies and due to Portuguese military and political interference (Broadhead 1979:647-648). In his effort to win the Kongo court, Kongo Pedro V sought the ritual and military support of the Portuguese Catholics and army, who helped him gain and defend the throne (Broadhead 1979:648). His rule signaled an end to Kongo autonomy, as the Portuguese finally claimed control there, but the growing political and economic importance of the coastal areas was really the cause of the demise of the kingdom (Broadhead 1979: 648).

During this time, other European political groups also became interested in the region. In 1879, Leopold II, the second to fill the ceremonial role of Belgian king, created the International African Association to realize his interest in building an empire (P. Manning 1998:17). Through this association, he empowered explorer Henry Stanley to appoint "chiefs" to act as porters for a new Belgium trade route that went from Matadi to Kinshasa, and he set up a government outpost (the city Kisangani today) in the interior (Knappert 2011; W. MacGaffey 1983:28). In 1879 British missionaries became the first Protestants to enter the Congo River Basin (Reardon 1968:83-84). In 1881 Portugal sent three Catholic missionaries to the Kongo king and ordered a Portuguese gunboat to check on them every month, in order to claim dominion over the region (Reardon 1968:84). French traders and The Holy Ghost Fathers, whose allegiance to France could be seen in

the pledge “For God! For France!” of one of their chief missionaries, were enthusiastic about moving inland (Reardon 1968:84-85).

In the context of this political-religious competition, and because Britain was uninterested in the region, British missionaries allied with Leopold II. For his part, Leopold supported all Christian missionaries, regardless of denomination, for he wanted to garner the support of the European public for his empire (Reardon 1968:84-85). Leopold talked up his interest in the Congo River Basin as a humanitarian one, stating that he wanted to limit the effects of the slave trade and alcohol. After the Berlin Conference of 1884-1885, described in the following chapter, King Leopold controlled the region.

In sum, political and religious linkages remained very close during this period. The Kongo king continued to be the foremost religious authority in his political realm. The king and other political titleholders held religious authority. The religious symbolism (like that of the Order of Christ) that they enjoyed gave them power over commoners. However, religious groups and priests had some ability to regulate political decisions through their participation in the court, and some missions were politically independent. In this way, it appears that as the kingdom and the power of political authorities diminished, some religious entities saw gains in power. In addition, until the late 1800s, Kongo political authorities continually chose to work politically, economically, and religiously with non-Portuguese. In this manner, they requested non-Portuguese missionaries—required for the proper conduct of some religious rituals—from the Catholic Church.

Religious hierarchy

By the second half of the 1700s up until the late 1800s, there was hardly any missionary presence in Kongo (Broadhead 1979:625). This was a problem when a king took office but could only be officially installed by a missionary (Broadhead 1979:647). However, at least into the late 1700s, chapels were maintained and operated by Portuguese-speaking Kongo (Thornton 1984:165-166). Christianity was institutionalized before this period, and, as described above, Christianity remained important for the political elite on the international and national levels. The elite continued to look for non-Portuguese allies through the Church. Also, the goal of early Catholic missionaries to monopolize the religious field in Kongo had seen at least some success, because in this period, it can be seen that BaKongo elite and commoners relied on the missionaries to perform important rituals. When the missionaries were not present, the rituals did not occur.

Christian identity and *simbi* cults

Commoners had increased opportunities to gain in wealth and power through the new trading dynamics that undermined the efficacy of the Kongo kingdom. However, it is not clear how the changing context affected forms of religious community for commoners. The elite drew on their common identity and its associated symbolic power to bolster their access to resources, including taxes and political power. However, while commoners continued to follow Christianity as a *simbi* cult, it is not clear whether their participation in confraternities shifted during this time, and whether, or how, *simbi* cult organization may have changed during this time.

Religious Meaning

There is a general lack of information about religious meaning during this period, other than what is connected directly to political functions, as described above.

Christian and *bisimbi* cults

In the 1700s, BaKongo understood Catholic priests to be rainmakers (Broadhead 1979:633). This correlated with the prior period, in which Catholic priests tended to displace indigenous practitioners in protecting people from evil and in working to bring about positive ends in the world of the living. It also appears that BaKongo understood Christian baptism to be initiation into a particular *simbi* cult, which was desirable for its protective functions. BaKongo sung hymns and asked visiting missionaries to baptize them (Thornton 1984:165). In 1781, Rafael de Castello da Vide wrote detailed notes of a Christmastime baptism, conducted while, as he wrote, his "eyes were bathed in tears" at the devotion of a crowd of people who stayed up all night singing "various praises of the Lord" (Thornton 1984:165). In 1873, an observer wrote that BaKongo had a statue of the first BaKongo convert; people considered the statue to be a rain *nkisi* (W. MacGaffey 1983:26). In 1857, BaKongo used life-size wooden statues of Capuchins on feast days and during drought (W. MacGaffey 1983:26). BaKongo understood Christian *bisimbi* as supernatural entities with power in the world of the living.

In addition, commoners tended to protest any attempts at instruction by missionaries (Broadhead 1979:633). They continued to seek religious protection from Kongo magicians, who, in some contexts, saw increased demand. During the 1800s, various economic associations developed; for instance, *temo* associations represented a way for the less wealthy to raise credit for trading endeavors (Broadhead 1979:641). With

the increase in trading, Kongo magicians (*ngangas*) saw increased demand for their protective *nkisi* to help to bring about good fortune and to ritually protect against evil (Broadhead 1979:641). Because it appears that their understanding of good and evil corresponded in this period to the period before, it can be seen that BaKongo performed religious rites to please supernatural entities and acquired powerful objects to bring about good fortune in their lives. The inverse would also be true; that is, people would understand that bad things happen to good people because of the actions of displeased supernatural entities or the manipulation of the supernatural by witches.

Healing priest-magicians

Because the meanings people attributed to evil and the ways they ritually protected themselves from evil were similar to earlier periods, it appears that the meaning of health also continued along the same lines as in earlier periods. BaKongo explained, expressed, and acted on their feelings of suffering and pain—located in events like illness or death—through religious practice. BaKongo continued to understand missionaries to be healers (*nganga*). Kongo religious specialists also continued to function. Whether or not *nganga* practice was done in a more European manner, and whether or not *nganga* considered themselves to be Christians, is not clear and may, in fact, be unimportant when considering that belief at this time likely referred to a person loyally serving God, not a person choosing a distinct set of beliefs over another.

Continuity and change

Over the course of the 1700s-1800s, the kingdom of Kongo weakened. The intermediate levels of the political-religious hierarchy slowly dissolved due to the rise of

political groups along the coast and trade routes. While this happened, the king saw his religious and political power decline, and other religious groups and authorities saw increased political voice. While the political field in prior periods mainly controlled the religious field, it began to lose some of this control during this time. On the other hand, the declining political elite relied more heavily on Christianity to symbolically legitimize their position.

Missionaries, who had come to monopolize some of the religious field during the prior period and had become important for religious rituals, were often absent. It also appears that commoners found increased opportunities to organize economically. Some of these groups sought out *ngangas* to increase the chances of their good fortune. The little known about religious meanings of this period points to continuities. BaKongo continued to participate in *simbi* cults, including Christian baptism, and BaKongo continued to seek out *nkisi*, powerful objects. BaKongo understood statues of an early BaKongo Christian and of missionaries to possess supernatural force, and they invoked these forces during rituals designed to bring rain and to please supernaturals. The continuation of these practices points to a continuation of beliefs. On the other hand, there must have been some change in terms of how people understood their changing world. In fact, as becomes apparent in the next chapter, it is likely that BaKongo interpreted the material wealth of traders and Europeans as a consequence of witchcraft.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I gave historical context for the BaKongo, located along the west coast of Central Africa. Focusing on religious beliefs and practices in a changing social

field, where the people of Kongo were enmeshed in direct European trade, helped illustrate how Christian beliefs and practices were unevenly adopted over time and place, and how they were taken up in a way that helped people make sense of their world.

The analysis of this period is significant for this study. First, in assessing meanings and structure in Kongo religion, it sets the stage for understanding following periods. Awareness of how religious structures changed over time, alongside political structures, and how BaKongo relied on some continuities in belief to express ideas and act within their changing contexts, is important. It allows for a more accurate assessment of changes and continuities in religious meaning and structure during the missionization that happened during colonial rule.

This chapter illustrates how religious "conversion" means different things in different places and times. In Kongo during this period, missionaries were not very interested in remaking people's understandings of the world, and BaKongo did not perceive the missionaries' system of ideas as something radically different from their own. Most missionary contact during this period occurred before belief began to signify something other than loyalty or a pledge to God for most Europeans. Moreover, the meaning of belief for Europeans would have changed gradually and certainly unevenly. Understanding religion to be an everyday part of life, not something to be contested, furthers the theoretical understanding of Kongo religion. In this time period, Kongo religious structures and beliefs changed as the larger cultural systems in which they were integrated changed and because these changes made sense in explaining people's experiences, not because people chose one religion over another.

Finally, this case is important because Kongo took up Christianity but maintained its sovereignty. This distinguishes it from the cases discussed in the literature, which have tended to involve missionization during colonial rule, the period of focus of the next chapter. Beginning before colonization, as this chapter did, develops our understanding of religious continuity and change, when the religious field was not comprised of separate religious institutions and when the wider political context was different. It shows that the political use of religion was not unique to colonialism. Europeans and Kongo elite both used religion for political ends. The king of Kongo took up Christianity voluntarily and used a Christian identity in politically advantageous ways, both on the international and national stages.

Beyond this, the chapter provides an important alternative perspective in accounting for how the political and religious interests of groups of people interact, react to each other, and change, in different ways in different times. This is an important counterpoint to theory that has understood missionization (religion) as a project undertaken alongside colonization (political). For example, as discussed in Chapter One, Comaroff and Comaroff (1989) and Mudimbe (1988) described how missionaries as colonizing powers dominated both the spaces and the minds of Africans. From this perspective, Africans became Christians to tap into the European political-economic system; in doing this, their perspectives and expectations transformed into European ones (Comaroff and Comaroff 1989). Similarly, others have understood there to be coexisting religious-cultural systems, between which Africans switch (W. MacGaffey 1983). This is useful for understanding the ways in which people assume different modes of behavior in

different contexts. On the other hand, it essentializes the experiences of Africans by being backed into describing one track as (more) African and the other as (more) European.

This chapter looked at the continuities and changes over time in the structure and meaning of religion in a sovereign African nation engaged in global trade before European colonization. I showed how people used religion to explain, negotiate, and act on changing political-economic orders. The prophet Beatriz expressed the anxiety of commoners who were caught up in a context of increasing European trade goods, increasing numbers of people being moved out through the slave trade, and the presence of white foreigners, including missionaries. BaKongo tended to interpret white people as spirits or representatives of the land of the dead, an understanding that conferred on them supernatural abilities in the land of the living and explained their material wealth. In contrast, Beatriz attempted to redefine social relations by redefining what was evil. She claimed that spirits were colorless—a pronouncement that would have had the effect of leveling the European-BaKongo religious-political field—and she healed people. She did not rely on powerful objects for healing, which, for BaKongo, meant that she was healing for the greater good, not for personal profit. This in turn gave her increased legitimacy in the BaKongo four-role political-religious system. However, at this time, missionaries were closely allied with the Kongo elite and they were concerned with monopolizing the religious field. In the eyes of the elite and the missionaries, Beatriz was a threat, and they killed her and suppressed the movement.

By the latter half of the 1800s, the eve of colonization, Christianity had become an aspect of the broader Kongo religious system. The religion served to connect the Kongo king to foreign powers and to symbolically legitimize Kongo elite. I showed that when

presented with the opportunity to organize economically, politically, or religiously, BaKongo commoners have done so. They continued to seek religious protection for their daily activities from traditional specialists. For BaKongo, Christianity at this point in time also referred to a particular *simbi* cult, and people participated in these cults to satisfy supernatural forces, thus working to ensure that good things would happen to good people. BaKongo also understood these magician-priests—including Kongo magicians and missionaries—to ritually protect them from harm and, by extension, to heal them by counteracting the actions of witches. The next chapter picks up here to examine changes that occurred in this region with colonization.

CHAPTER 5

COLONIAL RULE, “CONVERSION,” AND INDEPENDENCE

This chapter begins on the eve of colonial rule. As discussed in Chapter One and the last chapter, the literature on the Christianization of Africa has tended to focus on missionary dominance during this period. Missionaries tended to share a notion of superiority with European politicians and capitalists, and the military and economic force of Europeans became linked in many ways to Christian missions and Christianity. However, it is important not to rely on this perspective alone to understand the changing dynamics of religion in the colony. To look at Christianization as a struggle between two groups of people with different systems of ideas does not allow an understanding of the complexity in which people understand their world. The perspective taken in this chapter allows room for the ways in which Christianity changes as it is taken up by different people in different contexts.

In this chapter, I examine religion during this period from the perspective detailed in Chapter Two and used in the preceding chapter. Religion includes structure and meaning. Structure comprises the way the political field is related to religious institutions and the way religious specialists maintain and organize power within the religious institution or field. Religious structure also includes the ways in which people organize religiously. In participating religiously, people form communities, and some of the effects of this may be useful in practical ways. Moreover, an understanding of religion is

completed by paying equal attention to meaning. Through religion, people explain why bad things happen to them. This domain, the concern of and about evil, is concerned with the origins and meaning of evil. Also, through religion, people explain, express, and act on their feelings of pain. Therefore, the final domain of meaning focuses on spiritual healing. In contextualizing and looking at these varied domains, this chapter helps us understand the ways in which peoples' ideas and expectations react to and are formed within particular social structures that change over time. This improves our understanding of how people took up Christianity under colonial rule.

The preceding analysis of Kongo religion is important for this chapter. Understanding the religious structures and meanings that BaKongo brought to this period enables this chapter to look at continuities and changes under colonial rule. This chapter is divided into two sections. The first covers the period during which BaKongo were part of the colonial territory of Belgians, from about 1880 to 1960. The second covers religion in the independent nation. I precede my discussions with general overviews of political-economic and mission activities in Africa, broad pictures intended to be a starting point for understanding what happened in the Congo River Basin.

Colonizing Africa: 1885 – About 1960

In 1885, the European nations competing for control of Africa signed the Berlin Act, which defined the territories of each. While most of Africa, including wide tracts of the coastline and most of the interior, was politically independent in 1880, by 1900, most of the continent had been divided into distinct territories administered by European

nations (Magdoff, Nowell, and Webster 2011). The ways in which these colonial rulers administered their territories varied.

Catholic and Protestant missionaries came to Africa in their biggest numbers between 1880 and 1920 (Isichei 2004:153). Representatives of different denominations tended to be antagonistic to each other in the mission field, as they were at home. Each church thought itself to offer the truth while considering the others to be false; their race to dominate particular territories was similar to that between colonizers (Isichei 2004:147; Kalu 2007:33; Kirby 1994:60; Njoku 2007:195). However, the various missions did converge in their mutual dislike of Islam and the belief that indigenous religions were false and even devilish (Njoku 2007:195-196). While the main objective of missionaries was not colonial conquest, and the agenda of Protestants especially often conflicted with that of local officials, missions frequently identified with parties from their home countries (Isichei 2004:153). Missionaries did involve themselves in political matters, and they often felt that colonial rule was preferable for humanitarian, religious, or security reasons to that of traditional kings or white settlers (Isichei 2004:153).

As a group, European missionaries to Africa came from a variety of cultural backgrounds, including various socio-economic classes, educational levels, and national origins, and the missions and their particular social locations and theologies led to different patterns of Christianization (Maxwell 2006:385). However, most Europeans did feel culturally superior in relation to Africans, something that was likely linked to, or perhaps strengthened by, the material advances made possible by the Industrial Revolution. They tended implicitly to understand Christianity to be bound to cultural institutions such as architecture and clothing styles (Isichei 2004:146-148; Kirby

1994:61; Njoku 2007:196-197). In general, European missions, explorers, and academics considered black people and especially black Africans to be inferior human beings. One result of this racism could be seen in the Afro-Portuguese communities on the West African coast, described in the previous chapter. These groups had earlier abandoned the use of Catholicism as a distinguishing identity factor, but in the 18th and 19th centuries, when Europeans assigned black people low status, the African Portuguese increasingly emphasized their Catholic identity, some saying that to be Christian was to be white (Mark 1999:188-189).

After the Berlin Conference of 1884-1885 that culminated in the Berlin Act, and alongside Europeans' insistence on colonial occupation of Africa, missions tended to aim to replace indigenous religious institutions with European ones (Kalu 2007:33). The different Christian denominations often created schools in which to train a Christian, Westernized elite (Kirby 1994:59). Christian Africans trained in mission schools often received senior military, education, and administrative positions (Kirby 1994:60). The foreign priests and their infrastructure were dependent on both financial and personnel support from abroad (Kirby 1994:59).

The European missionary movement pinnacled in about 1910 (Isichei 2004:172). With World War I, the Great Depression, and World War II, interest in and funding for missionary work declined. This occurred due to increased acceptance among Europeans of beliefs "different" from their own and declining religious devotion and church attendance in Europe and North America. However, while European Christianity declined, African Christianity grew. This chapter groups African Christians in this time period into three loose sets: those who practiced in Protestant mission churches, those

who practiced in Catholic churches, and those who formed their own churches. In practice, however, Christian participation did not necessarily fit into these neat categories.

Many converted Africans participated in Catholic and Protestant mission churches, which were run and managed by whites. Some whites in church hierarchies excluded African participants from full church membership. While these restrictions appeared to be racially motivated, church leaders were inclined to justify it by claiming that Africans were sinning. For instance, Catholic leaders could ban African participants from communion for practicing polygamy (Isichei 2004:172-175). While prohibiting communion may be a general Catholic sanction against sinners, it has not been applied for every sin equally across time. In addition, the Catholic Church included some Africans in its clergy, but it closely controlled its individual churches (Kirby 1994:60). Teacher-catechists waited indefinitely for ordination, and Catholic seminarians were often rejected for the slightest inadequacy. In Gabon, 200 seminarians were unsuccessful before the first priest was ordained in 1919 (Isichei 2004:175).

Some Africans, frustrated with the restrictions on their participation in mission churches, formed their own churches. For example, urban, educated Africans began Ethiopianism, its name referring to the long-standing, independent Christian tradition in Ethiopia as well as the promise of the Psalmist, “Ethiopia shall stretch out her hands to God” (Isichei 2004:166-167). Other churches began around new religious leaders. For instance, in the 1930s, the Balokole (Saved Ones) Movement spread from Rwanda into Congo, Uganda, Kenya, and the Sudan (Kalu 2007:36). Finally, other churches expanded after missionaries departed to fight in the war or due to being jailed (Isichei 2004:172,

174). For instance, in 1922, after German missionaries on the Gold Coast had been interned, the Ewe church became the independent Evangelical Presbyterian Church (Isichei 2004:174).

Congo

Understanding the broader context is useful in making a close examination of what happened to the people of Kongo during the period of European colonization, which is the focus of this section. As noted, in 1885, the conference in Berlin assigned political control of nearly the entire Congo River Basin to Leopold II, calling it the Congo Free State (McKenna 2011). At the same time, the conference maintained that all states would be allowed entry into the territory and allowed to trade and ship there. I refer to the territory, which changed names several times in subsequent years—under Belgian rule, upon independence, under Mobutu, and again in the 1990s—as Congo. Congo's boundaries have shifted only somewhat over time since the Berlin Conference.

The colonial division of land meant that BaKongo were now split between Angola, French Congo, and Cabinda. During this period and up until the present, people across these borders continued to identify as BaKongo.[6] Figure Two is a map of the Central African colonial territories in 1919.

6. For the remainder of this chapter, I refer to the people of Congo as Congolese. People in Congo moved around during this period of time, and the extent to which various populations of people intermixed is not clear. On the other hand, I draw much of this information from W. MacGaffey (1983), whose fieldwork focused on BaKongo.

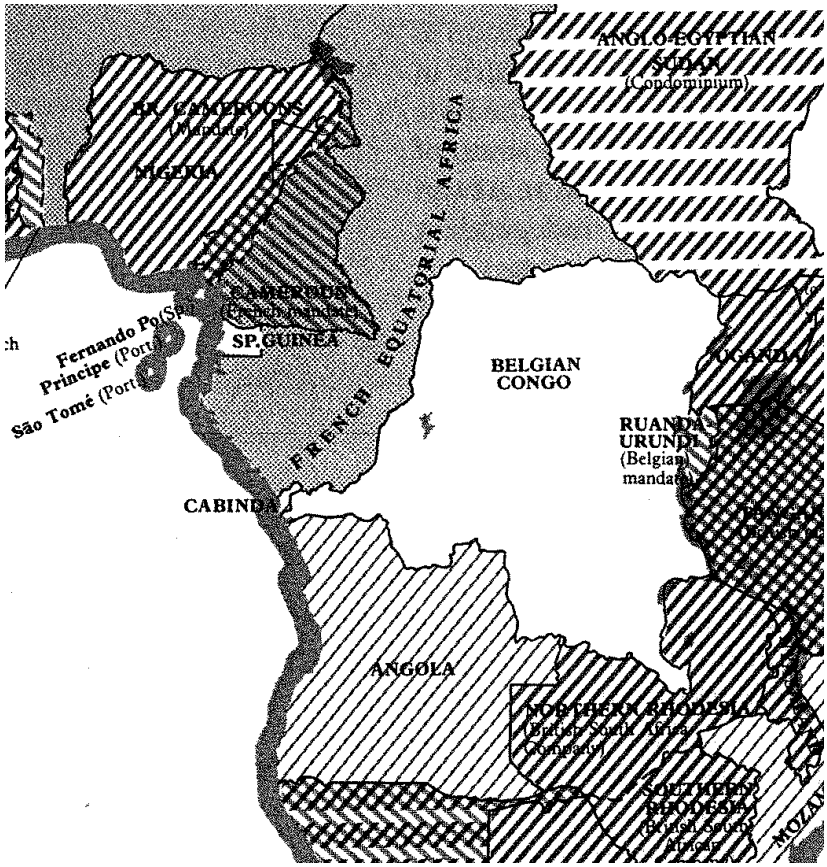

Figure 2. Colonial Africa, 1919. Excerpted from Kwamena-Poh, Tosh, Waller, and Tidy (1982:57)

Congo Religious Structure

Colonization had a horrendous effect on the people living in Congo. The colonizers suppressed traditional political and social institutions and focused on extracting raw materials for their profit. By 1910, due to the violent foreign regime, the population of the territory had been cut in half (Didier Gondola 2002:70; Weisbord 2003:36). This section considers the changing religious structure of this painful time period.

Colonial rule and missions

Following the Berlin Conference, the Congo territory was Leopold's personal territory. This arrangement of "personal plantation," 75 times larger than Belgium, was different from other European colonies (Weisbord 2003:36). Leopold was the sole ruler of the territory. However, it took time for his forces to reach parts of the interior. By the time they arrived in the Luba and Lunda kingdoms of the north and west in 1891, the kingdoms had lost power to ivory and trade merchants from East Africa and Ovimbundu traders from Angola (Didier Gondola 2002:39). The varied political groups in the Northeast were independent until the early 1900s (Didier Gondola 2002:43-44).

Although the Berlin Conference put San Salvador—the site of the first British Protestant mission—within Portuguese territory, most British mission stations were located in Congo (Reardon 1968:85). After acquiring the territory, Leopold heavily favored Belgian missions, who happened to be Catholic due to the lack of Protestants in Belgium, and he aided their settlement via land concessions and steamer transportation (Reardon 1968:86-87). Through the end of the century, Belgian Catholic missions gradually grew in number in the Congo State. Leopold, desiring to make Christianity in his territory "Belgian," pressured the pope into agreeing to send Belgian missions as soon as they were available (Reardon 1968:86). Belgian priests were recruited to work in the east with the White Fathers, a Catholic order of missionaries founded in Algeria and focused on working in Africa. The Flemish Scheut Fathers gradually replaced the Holy Ghost Fathers, who had been active in the west and identified with French interests.

However, because of the agreements made at the Berlin Conference, Leopold had to grant everyone access to Congo, including those whose political and religious ties

differed from his. A double stream of missionaries thus worked in the early Congo territory: Catholic Belgians and Protestant English, Americans, and Scandinavians (Reardon 1968:86). Scandinavian and American Protestant missions included Presbyterians, Baptists, Disciples of Christ, American Episcopal Methodist Church, and other smaller American and English denominations and nondenominational missionary societies (Reardon 1968:92).

In response to rising demands for rubber in Europe, Leopold instigated forced labor laws in Congo. These laws were maintained by a military that officials at first recruited from mainly outside of the colony but by the 1900s increasingly from Upper Congo, often in the form of raids on villages and sending children to military training camps (Didier Gondola 2002:66-68). If villagers refused to gather rubber, the military would often take women as hostages and rape them repeatedly until the men brought the rubber to them. Soldiers also wiped out whole villages that refused to collect rubber, severing their victims' right hands for the white commissioner. In fact, soldiers "acquired the habit of going on killing sprees to harvest hands in place of rubber. This happened so much that human hands took on a value of their own, becoming a sort of currency" (Didier Gondola 2002:68). The Baptist missionary Henry Richards, writing in 1903, noted that "the people were afraid of the State soldiers, and to get away from oppression were scattered abroad in the woods, valleys and swamps, and many died" (W. MacGaffey 1983:30).[7]

7. This brings to mind the plight of many Congolese today in war torn areas, especially in the east of the country.

During this time of political upheaval and physical turmoil, the Kongo chiefship disappeared (W. MacGaffey 1983:28). Local *simbi* cults, the Kongo political-religious groups organized around spirits, also vanished. The reasons for their disappearance included direct missionary suppression and political domination (W. MacGaffey 1983:28).

Missions during this period were not uniform. At the turn of the century, some missionaries and other observers of the genocide formed an international movement, the Congo Reform Campaign. The Protestant missions that joined the campaign were in direct conflict with the state, while Catholics remained publicly silent, given their dependence on the state (Reardon 1968:87). Leopold invited English Catholics to work in Congo, and Catholic leaders in the US and Europe tended to explain accounts of atrocities in Congo as the stories of Protestants who vied for foothold there (Reardon 1968:87; Weisbord 2003). However, Catholic influence was not strong in Britain and the US, and by 1908 the campaign had gathered enough international pressure to force Leopold to give ownership of Congo to Belgium (Didier Gondola 2002:68-70; O'Ballance 2000:1-2; Reardon 1968:87). The autonomous section of the religious field affected political change through its global connections.

Before this time, large areas were devastated. About 10 million Congolese died during Leopold's reign (Edgerton 2002:xiii). Conservative estimates suggest that Leopold amassed one billion dollars in today's terms in revenue during this time, most of which went to his private fortune (Didier Gondola 2002:71). At least eight companies also profited from the "rubber terror." One of these, the Anglo-Belgian India Rubber and

Exploration Company, made a profit of more than 700 percent on its investment; as a result, the value of its stock rose sharply (Didier Gondola 2002:71-72).

Upon assuming control of the territory, Belgium hoped that Congo's mineral riches would enrich the poor European nation (Didier Gondola 2002:74, 77-78). Didier Gondola (2002:81-99) described the Belgian colony as a "colonial trinity," where the state, missions, and big companies cooperated with each other in the country's administration. Missionaries were charged with the spiritual development of Congolese (Lemarchand 1993). Top government officials served as company directors, and the colony was run in an authoritarian manner (W. MacGaffey 1983:100). Extractive companies were given mandates to build schools, hospitals, roads, and to police the local people. The Belgian administration filled middle and upper administrative positions with Belgians and forced Congolese to work by imposing a heavy head tax and through forced recruitment (Didier Gondola 2002:81-99; O'Ballance 2000:2-3). Although forced labor had been made illegal, this method of recruitment was similar to it (Lemarchand 1993). By 1920, it seems that most BaKongo had become used to working for wages, and most had been "converted" (W. MacGaffey 1983:32).

The Belgian administration also fostered a Congolese elite through social programs, which included sending select Congolese to attend school at missions and appointing cooperative "chiefs" as local political rulers (Didier Gondola 2002:78-79; O'Ballance 2000:3). The position of chief was designed to link the Belgian administration with the Congolese people, but neither chiefs nor other Congolese were allowed involvement in the territory's politics. Also, while Belgium gave chiefs the

ability to rule by their own traditions (unless these traditions were deemed disruptive), the chiefdoms did not reflect indigenous political or ethnic organization (Lemarchand 1993).

In Congo, the colonial government continued working at controlling the religious field. Protestant missions continued to work at a political disadvantage to their Catholic counterparts under Belgian rule, not because of their denominational affiliation, but because they were not Belgian nationals (Reardon 1968:88). Soon after Belgium took control of the colony, it worked to increase the presence of Belgian Protestants. The hope was that they would take the place of foreign Protestants. However, this goal was not met since Belgian Protestants were small in number (Reardon 1968:88).

After World War II, the attitude of the Belgian administration changed, alongside a broader shift in European perspective. This shift meant a change in the links between the political authorities and the religious field. For one, the government decided to subsidize foreign Protestant educational work in Congo, if these missionaries would spend one year in Belgium before going to the colony (Reardon 1968:91-94). Additionally, Belgium's Liberal Socialist coalition government, in power from 1954-1958, meant an end to the period during which colonial government and Catholic missions saw their interests as the same (Reardon 1968:92).

In sum, Leopold and then the Belgian state took and maintained political control of Congo by force. Both political parties were interested in extracting natural resources from the territory for their profit. Leopold gave economic and political favor to Belgian Catholic missions in the territory, and in turn, these missions were publically silent about the mass deaths that occurred among indigenous peoples at the hands of the foreign sovereign. During Leopold's reign, the political field in Congo controlled the Catholic

portion of the religious field and did what it could to encourage the monopolization of the religious field by Catholics. On the other hand, Protestant entities in the religious field used their international voice to gain political leverage against the king, reflecting the lack of complete control of the religious by the political and the importance of international context in local happenings. Moreover, both the political and religious realms consisted of Europeans. Kongo political-religious groups appear to have disappeared, at least on the state level. The relationship between the political and religious fields that developed under Leopold essentially continued for the majority of the rule of the colony by the Belgian government. Until the decade and a half before independence, the Belgian administration continued to favor Catholic (Belgian) missions, and it worked to use the missions to control the population, which included educating a small elite.

Catholics dominate religion

Catholics dominated the religious field of Congo during the colonial period, but Protestants organized together. This section looks more closely at the organization of Christian denominations within the religious field and at what happened to indigenous religious specialists during this time. Throughout this period, in step with their effort to control the religious field, government officials and Catholic missions suppressed the expression of indigenous religion.

Both Catholic and British Baptist missionaries were consistently present in Congo since the 1880s (Broadhead 1979:625; W. MacGaffey 1983:28). American and British missionaries were the most numerous Protestants in Congo during this time (Rich n.d.).

Up until the end of World War II, Protestants and Catholics in Congo were at odds with each other. This in part stemmed from their prejudices (each group thought its own religion was the correct one) and it was exacerbated by the preferential treatment given to Catholics by Belgians (Reardon 1968:89-92).

The Protestant missions came to form a unified front. By 1900, Protestant missions believed that they needed to unify their diverse viewpoints and practices (Reardon 1968:88). In 1902 they held a conference in which they outlined a common approach to relations with the government and to the Congolese Protestants who moved from one region of Congo to another. From this time, Protestants held a conference every two years, until, in 1911, they created an official committee, proposed at the World Missionary Conference held at Edinburgh in 1910. The committee did not have authority but did symbolize Protestant belief in their unity, in spite of their variations in organization and practice (Reardon 1968:88-89). This unity must have been as much a practical matter as anything else. In 1924 this committee became the Congo Protestant Council, and in 1938 it became the Church of Christ in Congo (Reardon 1968:89). In the latter form, the churches shared membership.

While Protestants grew closer and shared their limited piece of the religious field, the distance between Protestants and Catholics did not lessen. Animosities between these two groups were exacerbated by the religious training of the missionaries in Europe, through which they learned that the others were heathens (Reardon 1968:91-92). This animosity transferred to African clergy and lay participants (Reardon 1968:93). In the 1920s, Protestants made official detailed complaints of abuses of Protestants by

Catholics. At the same time, the Catholic presence in Congo increased, especially in the medical field (Reardon 1968:89).

After World War II, Europeans, coming to terms with the atrocities committed against Jewish people and other minorities during the war, began to be more tolerant of religious diversity. The increasing warmth between Catholics and Protestants in Europe was felt in Congo with the arrival of new missionaries (Reardon 1968:91-94). In Congo, Protestant and Catholic missions were ready to share the religious field instead of compete for its monopoly.

Within Catholic and Protestant churches, which missionaries and overseas organizations controlled, Congolese were limited to low status roles (W. MacGaffey 1983:89). Protestants preserved a strict separation between the roles of black and white personnel (W. MacGaffey 1983:89). In 1895, a married missionary's salary in Congo was $750, 50 times more than the best-paid Congolese pastor (W. MacGaffey 1983:90). Even Congolese clergy who had been educated abroad, for instance, in America, were expected to return to live in basic conditions like other Congolese, much poorer than the way in which they lived abroad (W. MacGaffey 1983:89-90). Some Congolese, frustrated with their lack of success, opted instead to seek success in more traditional ways. Some chose to show their success by taking more than one wife; these Congolese were excommunicated by the missions (W. MacGaffey 1983:104).

During the colonial period, Catholic missions converted most of the population, and they worked to suppress indigenous religion. As noted, missions suppressed local *simbi* cults, which organized and carried out rituals on the regional and village level. These cults also disappeared because their political function disappeared within the

colonial context. The government and missions wanted Congolese to be Christian within mission churches. However, some Congolese tried to form their own.

Catholic missionaries and political authorities tended to view grassroots Christian movements as threatening. For instance, the Kimbanguist movement began in Nkamba, a village southwest of the present-day capital Kinshasa in April 1921, when the native Simon Kimbangu began to heal fellow Congolese. The movement, described in more detail in the section on health, below, was quickly popular among Congolese (W. MacGaffey 1983:37-40). The government interpreted the Kimbanguist movement as revolutionary, and they were concerned with work stoppages and the potential for the spread of disease (people were moving the sick and dead to Nkamba) (W. MacGaffey 1983:39-41). According to *Congo News Letter* in 1922, the movement, with its anti-white or anti-missionary tones, seemed to unify an otherwise "disassociated population" (W. MacGaffey 1983:39). Notably, the informants who told the government the movement was politically revolutionary were government appointees—chiefs and headmen (W. MacGaffey 1983:39). In response, the government put the Mbanza Manteke region under military occupation in August 1921 and arrested its leaders. Kimbangu died while in prison in Elisabethville in 1951.

In another example, a *simbi* priest in the 1920s attempted to convert a very old and widespread cult, whose priests practiced divination, healing, and rainmaking, into a sect called the BaSantu ("Saints") with state authorization (W. MacGaffey 1977:190-191). Attempting to frame his group in a way that would be accepted by authorized religious specialists (Christian missionaries), the priest, Ma Nsinda, explained to the

missionary who afterwards destroyed the sect that he was not a magician but a priest, which he thought would legitimize his cult (W. MacGaffey 1977:191).

On the other hand, while colonial authorities suppressed public Congolese religious practices, there is evidence that some practices and beliefs were maintained within the sphere of the household (W. MacGaffey 1983:90-91). While public organizing disappeared, beliefs and practices held in private spaces did not. Because women dominated this domain during this time (Congo women practiced subsistence agriculture and sold small surpluses) they were responsible for the perpetuation of these practices and beliefs (W. MacGaffey 1983:90). Traditional myth and ritual continued to order family life, and it was at this level of the family that religious meanings and practices continued.

In sum, the period of colonization was one of widespread change in the religious field. European Catholics, mostly Belgians, worked to monopolize the religious field, an effort that was encouraged by the colonial government. For most of this period, Catholics and Protestants were antagonistic toward each other, and Protestants organized together for practical reasons, to more effectively deal with the state and migrating Protestants. As well, Catholic missionaries worked hand-in-hand with the political authorities to suppress the religious practices of indigenous people. In doing this, they worked to claim authority over religious practices and meanings. This changing field and the missionaries' actions make further sense when understood as a separate domain (the religious domain) of a complex society in which people may participate more or less. Authorized religious specialists were less concerned about the level of participation of individuals and more concerned with claiming religious authority.

Mission education

Some people of Congo attended mission schools and became part of a new elite. In the 1890s, large numbers of Congolese sought to learn to read because they regarded this to be necessary for participation in the new Christian cult of missionaries (W. MacGaffey 1983:102). From the perspective of Catholic and Protestant missionaries, Congolese were ignorant, dirty, and idle, and missionaries upheld education as the primary path toward spiritual enlightenment (W. MacGaffey 1983:113). For the missionaries, education included dressing and behaving like Europeans: wearing European clothing, sitting at tables, and reading and writing (W. MacGaffey 1983:113). Once literate, many Congolese became disillusioned by the limited possibilities for advancement within the church and by the continued poor working conditions (W. MacGaffey 1983:102-103).

By creating social ties to foreign Christians and learning to operate in their world, Congolese did the right things to increase their social capital. Yet, as a whole, Congolese were disappointed when their actions did not lead to enhanced resources. In the eyes of the missions, on the other hand, the relationship between blacks and whites was not equal and therefore the trust and friendship on which social capital depends were not present. Additionally, because the political domains associated with the *bisimbi* cults were destroyed during European colonization (W. MacGaffey 1977:185), and due to suppression, few if any kept operating.

From about 1900, the government used taxation and other pressures to restrict most Congolese men to work in government or domestic service (W. MacGaffey 1983:87-88). In addition, different laws were created for white Belgians and black

Congolese that kept Congolese from becoming entrepreneurs in the capitalist economy. Congo was unusual in Africa in that primary education was widely available. Congolese attended whichever mission school was available, and as adults, they participated in the churches of the missions that had educated them (W. MacGaffey 1983:87). However, this education did not necessarily translate into a job. Instead, Congolese needed a secondary education to secure the low positions in management and technical trades that were available.

Those Congolese who obtained a secondary education tended to come by that opportunity through their political affiliations with Belgians. Being a “chief” or a chief’s relative, therefore, resulted in social capital that translated into steady jobs, education, good food, and medical care (W. MacGaffey 1983:104-106). Once receiving a mission education, these Congolese took better paying and higher status jobs in the church, schools, government, and in corporations as bank clerks, medical assistants, clergy, and teachers (W. MacGaffey 1983:87, 100). Only a minority of Congolese gained a small and limited foothold in this developing elite class. Following World War II, the people in this group of mission educated and clerically employed recognized themselves as comprising a social class and understood the organization of society according to the point of view they had learned in school (W. MacGaffey 1983:108). It was from this group of Congolese that a new governing class developed after independence.

By 1945, those who were not educated tended to work for wages. These people earned enough to support a single person, and prices were rising (W. MacGaffey 1983:108). It was from their ranks that dissident religious groups like the Kimbanguist movement tended to develop. These groups attracted the attention of the political and

religious authorities, who squelched them. These religious communities can also be understood as adaptive responses to changing conditions. Individuals acted within the changing context in ways that made sense to them and that made sense in the new context. Some even tried to get officials to recognize their groups as churches. However, the net import of the social capital of participation in these groups is uncertain. While the groups were repressed and hence did not succeed in gaining a voice in the political or religious fields, group members must have felt some trust and friendship among themselves. Due to their situation of poverty, these ties might have proven useful in people's everyday lives. For instance, as in confraternities in previous times, group members might have shared scarce resources.

In sum, this period saw much change in Congo. What was in the beginning a region that included similar groups linked through trading routes became a territory ruled by foreign powers. A considerable portion of the population died, and traditional political-religious institutions mostly disappeared. Amid the violence and change, indigenous people understood missions to be political-religious cults. Congolese joined churches hoping to integrate themselves into successful groups and, in doing so, better their lives. However, most Congolese found that learning to read and dressing and acting like missionaries was not enough. Some found secure employment, but many others did not and were instead forced to work as poorly paid wage laborers. Because wage laborers tended to be men, women were in charge of farming for the household and maintaining some religious beliefs. While Congolese had attempted to develop social capital in getting a mission education, the racist views of Europeans limited its creation and, thus, resources were not opened up for most Congolese. In contrast, those who formed political

alliances with the Belgian government gained social capital and were able to translate that into further education and better jobs, in essence forming an upper class of Congolese.

Meaning in Congo

During this period, missionaries understood their system of beliefs to be something very different from the Congolese system of beliefs. This was a contrast to early missions in Kongo such as the Capuchins, who had shared with BaKongo an understanding of the positive, worldly ends of religious rituals and a perspective that religion was a part of everyday life. During the colonial period, missionary activities were based in a more modern understanding of the meaning of belief as a choice that one makes in the relative truth of a particular system of meanings.

As noted, Catholic missionaries considered Protestant missionaries to be heretics while Protestants considered Catholics to be heretics. In addition, the missionaries were interested in converting Congolese to their understandings. This complicates the goals of this study because the extent to which Congolese accepted particular meanings is unknown. However, this study is working from the assumption that the structures that make up the environment of a social class produce lasting, transposable dispositions in people; people's embodied ways of seeing the world result from their experiences and in this way react and adjust to changing social contexts. Therefore, dispositions increasingly vary with social differentiation. With this in mind, the following sections concentrate on the religious meanings held by Congolese.

Both Catholic and Protestant missionaries coming to Congo during this time viewed old Christianity as practiced by Congolese with amusement and scorn (Thornton 1984:166). They understood the requests for baptism, the crosses, and the old religious objects as evidence of a lack of Christianity. Protestants like the Baptist Mission explained it as the Catholic inclination to dilute Christianity in order to gain quick converts. Catholics, on the other hand, understood the lapse to be due to the long shortage of ordained priests (Thornton 1984:166). Catholic missionaries in Congo expected Christians of Congo to change whatever beliefs and practices necessary to be like Christians of Europe (Thornton 1984:152-153). Additionally, as noted, those Congolese who were educated in the missions and filled the small elite class were more likely to understand the world from the point of view they learned in school and lived in their more secure employment sector. On the other hand were those Congolese who felt stymied and who lived poorly.

Witchcraft, trading, and evil

BaKongo came into this period with the understanding that negative outcomes happen to good people because of the workings of supernatural forces in the land of the living. BaKongo participated to some degree in *simbi* cults, local cults centered on a feature of the natural environment, through which they sought to bring about their good fortune in terms such as favorable weather. People also sought religious aid to make them successful in the growing trade economy. Individuals (witches) who sought to manipulate supernatural beings for their profit, an activity that necessarily brought harm on others, were engaged in evil. Magicians worked to bring about rain and develop *nkisi* fetishes

(W. MacGaffey 1983:125). It should be remembered that water comprised the boundary between this world and the land of the dead, and the dead were white. For these reasons, BaKongo understood white people to be representatives of or spirits from the land of the dead. It was from this understanding that the newly colonized understood Christian missions in the 1880s.

Just after Leopold took power, there were massive numbers of people of the territory who desired to "convert" to Christianity. These people understood their conversion in terms of their traditional political-religious system. As mentioned, the people of the territory came to the mission stations and followed mission instruction believing that they were being initiated into a new Christian cult. Proper initiation and education would certainly result in the proper treatment of spirits and thus in positive outcomes in daily life. Congolese who sought out mission educations understood them to be initiation into the white people's cults, which obviously required people to more thoroughly change their appearance and personality than any traditional cults (W. MacGaffey 1983:113). Through their participation, Congolese believed they would derive strength or power (W. MacGaffey 1983:102). I illustrate this with an example famous among missionaries. In 1886, the Baptist missionary Henry Richards, who was posted in Mbanza Manteke, a village up the river from Matadi, described a rapid and mass conversion that was similar to those reported in other mission stations along the trade route (W. MacGaffey 1983: 28-30). This contrasted with the first seven years of his mission, when he had acquired only a few followers. Clearly, people were interpreting the enormous violence and destruction let loose after the 1885 creation of the Congo Free State in terms of religion (W. MacGaffey 1983:30). They sought out the English-

speaking missionary in part for protection from the French-speaking government to which Catholic missions came to be linked.

This mass conversion, known as the Pentecost of the Congo, and others like it, were about more than politics. As had BaKongo before, people of this period believed white people to be spirits from the land of the dead. As such, whites had supernatural capabilities in the land of the living, for instance, in healing and in controlling the weather (W. MacGaffey 1983:30-31). Specifically, the people of Manteke believed that Richards was a spirit from the dead who had committed a crime in his country and was in Manteke to collect heads to send home to become white, a practice he did at night. People expected a certain number of deaths among their relatives as the fee for initiation into this new cult (W. MacGaffey 1983:31).

People took up Christianity under Richards in their terms. While Richards defined evil as paganism and serving the Devil, Congolese defined it as self-centered and self-serving activity with the land of the dead (W. MacGaffey 1983:31). In taking up Christianity, people declared that they would end self-serving behaviors that might contribute to others' suffering (W. MacGaffey 1983:30-31). In this way, individuals renounced activities for individual benefit—evil activities or witchcraft. People affirmed the value of social equality, as an undue amount of individual profit was a sign of witchcraft.

Congolese educated by the missionaries absorbed at least some of what the missionaries taught them, although what they took in was perhaps the teaching that coincided most closely with their own understandings. For instance, at the turn of the century, while those Congolese who studied the Bible did so in response to their

changing opportunity structure (they hoped to improve their work and living conditions), they also based their hopes on the egalitarianism that was preached by missions (W. MacGaffey 1983:102-103). In actuality, though, they were not equals to white people, and Christian participation did not lead to perceptible benefits for everyone. The letters that these Congolese wrote to mission journals expressed their dissatisfaction with their working environment and their restricted opportunities for advancement (W. MacGaffey 1983:103). Kimbangu was one man disillusioned with the ineffectiveness of his literacy to create better life chances (W. MacGaffey 1983:103). Many Congolese were similarly disenchanted. In another example, one group trained at an American mission barricaded themselves and sang continuously of their desire for no government, taxes, or chiefs, and they sang that Christ would come to save them (W. MacGaffey 1983:102-103). Congolese religious "dissidents" behaved in ways that were not condoned by missions (W. MacGaffey 1983:104).

Local *simbi* cults disappeared, but other ritual practices continued. For instance, Congolese initiates of the twin *simbi* cult sang for newborn twins. In doing this, they propagated some knowledge of *simbi* spirits (W. MacGaffey 1983:91). Congolese carried out funerals in much the same manner as they had before colonialism, with some changes to accommodate European ideas about hygiene, and through these rituals, kept alive ideas about the place of the dead (W. MacGaffey 1983:91).

Additionally, elders assumed some of the functions of chiefs; for instance, they took charge of propitiating their deceased lineage ancestors (W. MacGaffey 1983:144). Congolese believed that these ancestors acted similarly to the way they had acted when alive (W. MacGaffey 1983:145). The ancestors had an idea of what they deserved, and

they were ready to punish the disrespectful. The living of a lineage also believed that if they acted correctly, the ancestors would punish their enemies. This understanding was illustrated in the explanation given by early Kimbanguists to account for Kimbangu's lack of success in finding employment in the capital in 1918, before beginning his healing work. It appears that Kimbangu traveled to Leopoldville in 1918 in search of work, but his failure to find any was attributed to not getting approval from the elders (W. MacGaffey 1983:103). Because the elders did not approve and were upset by his departure, the lineage ancestors became upset and caused Kimbangu's failure. Through religious practices like these, Congolese maintained some beliefs about the land of the dead and the origins of evil.

Over the course of the 1900s, beliefs in a spiritual hierarchy that mirrored the Kongo political hierarchy disappeared (W. MacGaffey 1983:129). While Kongo chiefs no longer existed as such, the idea of the chief as one who holds supernatural power (like magicians and witches) and uses the power on behalf of the community continued (W. MacGaffey 1983:141). The ideas of the functions of a chief, magician, and witch were similar to before. To declare another person to be a witch depended on a person's point of view; a magician and a witch used the same powers and therefore the magician remained an ambiguous character. A magician healed and defended—including through destructive means—against witchcraft (W. MacGaffey 1983:141). As before, anyone making evident wealth could be accused of witchcraft because Congolese believed in a limited good (W. MacGaffey 1983:141).

Congolese continued to believe that evil originated in witchcraft, but now they also understood witchcraft in terms of slavery. This understanding did not acknowledge

much difference between the slave trade and the trade in raw materials (W. MacGaffey 1983:134-136). They believed that Congolese witches collaborated with traders by selling the souls of their family and friends for profit. For example, Congolese explained the colonizers' interest in rubber and ivory as witches' need for containers to transport souls. Witchcraft entailed putting people in magical containers (W. MacGaffey 1983:134). In the 1900s, many Congolese came to believe that missionaries were the primary traders with whom Congolese witches worked (W. MacGaffey 1983:135). Congolese tended to believe that witches sold people's souls to the missionaries, and these missionaries sent them to the land of the dead. It also appears that Congolese considered Protestant missionaries to be less active than Catholics, since Catholics were linked to the government. This demonstrated a continued connection in the minds of Congolese between political and religious powers. Protestant missionaries, most of whom were English-speaking, were linked to America, the land of Congolese ancestors who might one day return to Africa to help their poor living descendants (W. MacGaffey 1983:135).

The meaning of evil expanded during the colonial period to account for the activities of missionaries and the massive numbers of Congolese deaths. Witchcraft activities included trading people and goods, because these activities brought harm to others. Many people in the colonial territory took up Christianity believing that to become initiated—or to convert—would give them strength and make them successful. These ideas were backed up in the sermons of missionaries who preached equality. While Congolese did what they were supposed to do to be good, however, the lived experience of most was poverty and low status.

Congolese beliefs that missionaries were from the land of the dead explained the large numbers of deaths among their people (who were apparently being trafficked by the missionaries) and the riches and power held by whites (the outcome of practicing witchcraft). With the decline of Kongo political-religious cults, the role of chief was taken up by lineage elders, who ritually worked to please the ancestors so that the ancestors would improve their daily lives. The following section looks at how Congolese sought spiritual protection and healing during this time, when Congolese public religious practices were prohibited.

Congo prophets

Congolese religion explained physical pain, personal loss, and worldly defeat as the results of witchcraft. Similarly, religion explained the often intense feelings—pain and suffering—that resulted from this evil. People understood that witchcraft resulted in people's suffering, for instance, the pain of ill health and the sorrow of mourning. Congolese still looked to magicians for healing. However, the ways in which people acted on this belief under colonial rule had to change because community healing rituals were suppressed (W. MacGaffey 1983:125). The accepted form for group religious expression under colonialism was the church, and church participation and the symbols of Christianity became the ways through which people expressed and acted upon their suffering.

For instance, the people of Manteke saw the missionary Richards as a rainmaker but also as a healer. People burned their *nkisi*, or supernaturally powerful objects, because they believed that Richards was there to abolish evil (witchcraft) (W. MacGaffey

1983:30-31). Therefore, they would cease to try to protect themselves individually. These objects were no longer needed for protection when the world was void of evil. People interpreted Richards to be a healer who worked without powerful objects, and he worked for the greater good, not self-interest. Physical pain caused by military force and the sorrow felt upon family members' deaths were powerful emotions, caused by evil, but people could heal themselves through religious participation.

Other mass conversions were kicked off by indigenous leaders like Kimbangu. In 1918 an influenza epidemic killed many Congolese (W. MacGaffey 1983:33), causing widespread suffering (important background for understanding Kimbangu's popularity). Following a dream in which God directed him to do His work, Kimbangu drove out witches, and he "raised the dead, caused the paralyzed to stand upright, gave sight to the blind, cleansed lepers, and healed all the sick in the name of the Lord Jesus" (W. MacGaffey 1983:33). In healing, Kimbangu identified witches, who caused evil and unbearable suffering. He cured illnesses and other forms of suffering. People visited Kimbangu to hear someone put their confusion and disillusionment into words and, in essence, give their feelings order. Kimbangu, thus, fit the anthropological notion of a prophet. Additionally, through visiting him for healing, people acted to cure their pain.

Kimbanguism's references to localities and their spirits resonated with, rather than reproduced, past beliefs (W. MacGaffey 1983:33). Also, under colonial control, Kimbangu and others who can be understood as prophets in the Congo (Kongo) sense, as not-for-profit healers working for the common good, gradually took over the magician's public function (W. MacGaffey 1983:144).

As a Congo prophet, Kimbangu healed in the public interest because he had been charged with doing it. He represented "a hierarchical dispensation of healing power mediated through him personally;" he healed by his action alone, not by using powerful objects (W. MacGaffey 1977:179). A Congo prophet worked for free, but prophets got around this restriction by asking their clients to pay for their materials at prices above what they paid (W. MacGaffey 1983:145). Clients volunteered to bring them food and other items as well. In contrast to Congo prophets, the typical magician would heal but demand money, and a magician's healing involved the administration of healing power that resided in powerful objects (W. MacGaffey 1977:179). Both prophets and magicians could see themselves as Christians (W. MacGaffey 1977:179-180).

Following Kimbangu, people abandoned their *nkisi* and sought Christian teaching on a massive scale (W. MacGaffey 1977:188-190; 1983:34-38). Kimbanguists viewed the ensuing movement as the true work of God. This contrasted with the corruption (witchcraft) of the missionaries. At the same time, many missionaries understood the movement to be deceptive, not dissimilar from "the old-time witch-doctor" (W. MacGaffey 1983:34-35). Adept Congolese Christians were also skeptical. Protestant missions tended to have positive opinions of the movement, likely because they also benefited from Kimbanguism. The Protestant mission Mbanza Manteke missionary field saw 1160 baptisms as a result of Kimbanguism. While Kimbangu was selective about whom he declared to be possessed with God's spirit—for instance, he said that many who claimed similar Congo prophet status were possessed by a demon spirit—"within a few weeks, there were prophets in villages all over Kongo" (W. MacGaffey 1983:37-38).

After the government suppressed Kimbanguism, the movement shifted in form under various leaders (W. MacGaffey 1983:41). Congolese understood the Salvation Army's arrival in 1934 as the return of Kimbangu and sought out its European officers for healing and witch finding.

Continuity and change

The period of colonization was a dramatic one for Congolese. People saw large numbers of deaths at the same time as white Belgians pushed their frontier and developed a territory. At the beginning of this period, the Kongo kingdom was already declining and had lost power to the Portuguese. However, the Portuguese lost power to Leopold during the Berlin Conference. Under Leopold and then the Belgian government, both politics and religion came under the control of white foreigners.

With Leopold came Catholic and Protestant missionaries. Congolese understood the teachings of these missionaries in their own terms. Congolese sought to become Christian because this identity was that of the powerful whites and so represented a route for Congolese to develop strength and success in a new context. While Catholics worked closely with the government, Protestants, many from the US and Britain, joined the international outcry over Leopold's violence. Because Congolese tended to recognize the links between Catholics and the Belgian government, they were less critical of the Protestant missions. Congolese tended to believe that Catholics engaged in witchcraft practices more often than Protestants. For Congolese, political and religious powers were integrated, a continuity from earlier times.

The majority of Congolese Christians, who had tried to save themselves from the new political-religious rulers by joining new, powerful cults, found that their opportunities did not improve due to their Christian status. Instead, they recorded their disillusion about the Christian promise of equality. This lack of equality underscored beliefs in witchcraft, a force that disrupts social equality. The government forced most Congolese to work in wage labor, and it outlawed Congolese group religious practices. On the other hand, a minority of Congolese, many of whom were government appointees, were able to draw on their new social capital for secondary education and better jobs. These Congolese tended to be satisfied with mission Christianity.

Over the course of colonization, Congolese left out of opportunities understood inequity and their resulting suffering as the result of witchcraft. Congolese (depending on their perspective) could interpret the success of whites and some blacks as the outcome of the collusion of people with witches, selling the souls of relatives and friends to traders or missionaries. On the other hand, the line between magic and witchcraft was a fine and ambiguous one; while having too much wealth was a sign of evil, people tended to, at the same time, desire wealth.

Interpreting excessive success as a result of witchcraft was useful for people in a restricted structural context because it gave them a way to act on their suffering, through healing rituals. Healing rituals led by Congo prophets used the symbols of Christianity. On the other hand, these healing rituals were not authorized by those monopolizing the political and the (public) religious field, the Belgians and Catholics, and these rituals expressed a widespread understanding that Belgians and some others practiced evil.

Instead of incorporating the prophet movement into the authorized religious systems, religious authorities and political authorities repressed it.

According to the perspective of Comaroff and Comaroff (1989) and Mudimbe (1988; 1994), as discussed in Chapter One, Christianity was primarily a tool of the colonizers. Christianity aided the colonizers in controlling not only African lands but also their minds. The data in this study have shown many Congolese decided to convert to Christianity on their own terms. They understood their Christian participation to be religious initiation into a *simbi* cult of the powerful and wealthy whites. While these Congolese studied the Bible and dressed and acted like Europeans, they maintained their own understandings of evil and healing. Moreover, when participation in Christian missions did not translate to worldly benefits for them, many chose alternate paths. Those who followed Congo prophets exemplified how those who were colonized creatively drew upon and refashioned Christian symbols and practices in expressing and acting upon their suffering. The data of this period point to the differing understandings brought to conversion by European colonizers and Congolese "converts." Whereas Congolese understood that they were being initiated into a political-religious cult to gain strength and success, Europeans understood conversion to be a choice to believe in a particular system of meanings instead of another. For the Congolese, participation was supposed to lead to positive ends seen in the land of the living. For the Europeans, however, to be Christian meant to act like a European in dress and conduct. In Congo, the tensions across social classes in the changing political order were negotiated and understood in terms of religion.

Congolese produced the raw materials used by European capitalists to increase their profits. As noted, during England's industrialization, there was a tension within both new and old Protestant churches that had to do with the differences between intellectualism and ascetism. English working classes and groups of religious specialists negotiated what it meant to be a good Christian. The new wage classes accepted their jobs and understood their experiences as those of good, hard working and obedient Christians. These ideas supported their pacification in the new social order. In contrast, the new wage classes in Congo came into being through physical force, and the meanings of Christian participation were different for different classes. The mission message that seemed to have translated best to Congolese experiences was that of equality, which they understood to mean social equality. The emphasis of European missions on changing dress and behavior and studying the Bible did not pacify Congolese workers. Instead, Congolese understood mission activities in terms of evil and suffering, or witchcraft.

In sum, Catholic missions during this period were linked to colonial governments in the administration of the colony of Congo. In the Congo Free State, Catholic missions ignored state-instigated violence while Protestants joined an international campaign against it. For Congolese, Protestant missions offered an alternative to the cruel francophone colonial project, and people joined these churches en masse. These churches offered a way to try to understand the violent colonial changes. People understood them to offer help and healing. However, in spite of these understandings, mission education did not lead to enhanced resources for most Congolese. In this context, Kimbangu faced economic disappointment in the capital and then became a healer. Many Congolese took up Christianity under Kimbangu, other Congo prophets, and Protestant missionaries at

this time. For these Congolese, these leaders offered healing, and Congo prophets explained evil and helped people direct their feelings of suffering. Feeling threatened, the government jailed Kimbangu and outlawed the movement. The worldwide post-World War II climate foreshadowed independence.

Independent African States: About 1960 – Present

Before examining the changes that took place after Congo's independence from Belgium, it is useful to look at what happened in the broader African arena. As mentioned earlier in the chapter, European missionization generally declined after 1910, but African Christians grew in number. Also, most religious leaders in state-recognized institutions during colonial rule were white, but this gradually changed. In 1939, Ugandan Joseph Kiwanuka became the first black African Catholic bishop since Don Henriques was consecrated in 1518 (Isichei 2004:183-184). He remained the only black African bishop until the 1951 appointment of Nigerian Anglican bishops. From the 1950s, Roman Catholics trained black priests, and missions worked on connecting with elite nationalists whom they had educated and whom they hoped would help them gain terrain with coming independence (Kalu 2007:36). In 1960 there were 1661 African Catholic priests on the continent, and in 1975 there were 3650 (Kirby 1994:66).

On the other hand, the low numbers of clergy have led to continued reliance on lay people. While 95 percent of Catholic bishops in Africa were Africans by 1990 (Isichei 2004:184), there remained a shortage of priests—both African and foreign (Kirby 1994:66). Christianity in Africa has tended to be propagated by lay people who minister to each other, evangelize others, and pray together (Kirby 1994:66).

In recent times, the focus of mainstream missions shifted from conversion to provision of social services (Isichei 2004:186). Christian missions were involved with schools, hospitals, digging wells, housing projects, and farming. As Gifford described it, contemporary missions understood salvation to be "liberation not just from sin and hell, but from fear, from want, from hunger, from ignorance, from anything that diminishes the image of God in a human being" (1991:9).

Independent Congo

During the 1950s, different Congolese groups put increased pressure on Belgium for independence. In 1956, the Kongo association Abako distributed a manifesto demanding immediate independence (Lemarchand 1993). This group grew in size and political voice over the next several years. In January 1959, Belgium authorities dispersed a large Abako gathering in the capital, killing about fifty people and wounding over 100. Soon thereafter the Belgian government announced imminent independence for the country (Lemarchand 1993).

Different Congolese groups grew important in the ensuing competition for political control. Patrice Lumumba headed the Congolese National Movement and, after winning the most votes in May 1960 elections, became the country's first prime minister (Lemarchand 1993). Joseph Kasavubu, the leader of Abako, became president. Meanwhile, in the south, Moïse Tshombe headed the Confederation of Katanga Associations. With the support of Belgians in the region, in July 1960, he declared the rich province of Katanga independent of Congo. A similar movement happened in Kasai, which claimed independence in August 1960 (Lemarchand 1993).

Congo's police force, which the Belgian commander had refused to fill with Africans, mutinied. Lumumba dismissed the commander and filled the ranks with Congolese, but unrest persisted (Lemarchand 1993). Belgium sent its military to protect Belgians in Congo, an action that violated its treaty with the new country and that Congo took as an effort to regain control. The UN sent troops to aid Congo's defense against Belgium. Lumumba also tried to use these forces to bring Katanga and Kasai back into the country. After the UN objected to this use of its forces, Lumumba took Soviet aid instead. This led to a confrontation between President Kasavubu and Lumumba that ended with the takeover of the government by Mobutu, the army's chief of staff. Lumumba was assassinated in January 1961. A new prime minister was elected in August 1961, but politics remained tumultuous. In 1964, Tshombe became prime minister. In 1965, Tshombe and President Kasavubu struggled for political control, and in 1965, Mobutu took power by military coup (Lemarchand 1993).

The mid and late 1960s were a period of violence throughout the country and stagnating economic conditions (Didier Gondola 2002:128). Ndaywel è Nzien (1998:419-420) argued that independence marked the beginning of Congo's "thirty year war," as the country was in a permanent state of violence marked by episodic peace. Mobutu's rise to power in 1965 and thirty authoritarian years in office were supported by the US and some European and African nations who justified their support by citing fear of anarchy and civil war (Didier Gondola 2002:131, 134).

Under Mobutu, most people lived in rural areas where their primary allegiance was to the family and local group over country. In addition, the state's control was weak in many areas. By the 1970s, the governing class sent their children abroad for school;

owned plantations, mansions, and businesses; and invested abroad (W. MacGaffey 1983:100-101).

Mobutu tended to favor people from his own region; he gave the region's educated elites political placements and created policies enabling them to acquire businesses (Winsome 1993:70-71). During his tenure, Mobutu's government stifled popular opposition partly through force that included arbitrary killings, looting, and rape (Kushner and Knox 1999:376; Winsome 1993:71). He used the Belgian colonial administrative system to enrich himself and his friends at the expense of the formal economy, health care, infrastructure, and social services. Under his rule, the country's economy worsened (J. MacGaffey and Bazenguissa-Ganga 2000:29-31). Congo's per capita income went from $380 in 1960 to $154 in 1994 (Luiz 1997). In 2006, 80 percent of Congolese made less than a dollar per day; almost one third of Congolese ate only one time per day (Stearns and Wrong 2006). In 2003, life expectancy in Congo was 50 years, and the median age was 16 years old (CIA 2003).

Religious Structure in Congo

This section describes how Mobutu's government controlled religious institutions. However, as the economy worsened, the availability of social services decreased, and the condition of infrastructure worsened, Mobutu changed his policies to allow churches to fill the gap left by the state. Near the end of Mobutu's rule, churches within independent Congo voiced greater criticism of his regime, which illustrates their gains over the weakening political field. Also during this period, churches diversified as more people looked to them for meaning and help. Church hierarchies continued to shift, incorporating

more Congolese over time. Notably, however, white Europeans and Americans continued to monopolize the upper rungs of international churches.

Shifting links between the state and churches

Just before independence, different religious groups gained political ground. Kimbanguism experienced a mid-1950s resurgence that was linked to growing anti-colonial activity and was officially recognized in 1959 (W. MacGaffey 1983:41). After this time, leaders who were still alive returned from exile, and Kimbangu's three sons tried to unite Kimbanguists into one church, an effort that failed (W. MacGaffey 1983:42). During this decade, as well, Muslims in Congo formed a nationalist party, the Mouvement National Congolais (Knappert 2011). This group was an important supporter of the first prime minister (Knappert 2011).

The first decade of independent Congo saw a wide variety of political parties and secessionist regimes along with a large number of very different churches (W. MacGaffey 1983: 42-43). Then, once in power, Mobutu mounted a campaign of national unity called "authenticity" or "Mobutism," where he made French the official language, recognized only four other languages, and made political parties and ethnic affiliations illegal (Winsome 1993:70). The name of the country became Zaire. The goal of the authenticity program was Africanization, or more specifically, Zaireanization. In this program, Mobutu attempted to suppress practices of Western/European origin and instead favored what he viewed as indigenous practices and local control. What was foreign and what was indigenous were not always obvious, as evident in the declaration of French as

national language and the government's support of some churches, including some that had been Protestant mission churches.

As a whole, Mobutu's policies targeted mission Christianity as a Western phenomenon during this time, and so the government and churches were confrontational toward each other (Bob 1999:81). In 1971 Mobutu consolidated most of the churches into an approved six (W. MacGaffey 1983:43). Mobutu was especially confrontational with the Catholic Church. In 1972 he declared that all newborns would be named after their ancestors instead of given Christian names, a declaration that the Catholic leader Cardinal Malula protested (Edgerton 2002:213). Malula told Catholic bishops to ignore this command, and as a result Mobutu temporarily exiled him and took over his home. Mobutu suspended the journal *Afrique Chrétienne* and banned Christian broadcasts, and he substituted his name for that of God in some hymns and ordered that his photograph replace those of the pope (Bob 1999:81; Edgerton 2002:213).

After executing some of his opponents in 1966, Mobutu claimed to be chief (W. MacGaffey 1977:180). In 1972, Mobutu recognized the role of *nganga* (magician) as authentic (Zairean), reversing colonial-era policies that were based on the European understanding of it as witchcraft and that had suppressed *ngangas*. Mobutu also nationalized schools, including mission schools, and foreign-owned businesses through Zaireanization. He replaced religious instruction in Catholic schools with Mobutuism (Edgerton 2002:213). In turn, Catholic bishops wrote letters condemning the corruption of Mobutu's government. As a result of the nationalization of schools, teachers went unpaid and the educational system declined (Edgerton 2002:213-214). In contrast,

Protestant churches in Congo tended to support Mobutu, and, therefore, they had greater autonomy than did the Catholic Church (Edgerton 2002:214).

However, Mobutu turned many of his policies around in the country's ensuing economic mess. Beginning in the mid-1970s, Mobutu began to ease up on anti-church policies; in 1976, he rescinded the decision to take over all church schools (Bob 1999:81). In the late 1970s, while government services declined, church agencies began to take on more responsibility in the distribution of international food aid and in education. The political field under Mobutu attempted but failed to assume control of the religious, and other, fields. In fact, as the national economy worsened, the religious sphere gradually increased in significance.

The early 1990s were a time of heightened economic and political crisis. Mobutu's critics, including those from the religious field, became especially vocal during this time. For example, various Christian leaders were active in pushing for democratic reforms (Bob 1999:81). In 1993, Catholic bishops accused Mobutu of using state terrorism, ethnic cleansing, and economic destruction to maintain his control of the state. While criticizing the government, the Church also provided social services to urban migrants and those left behind by weakening familial and government social support (Bob 1999:82). Religious players increasingly affected the political field as political power declined.

Mobutu left power in 1997, and then four years of war began—mostly east of the capital—in which all factions "routinely attacked civilians, killing, raping, and maiming thousands. Hundreds of thousands of civilians died of hunger, diseases, or exposure as a result of the war" (Human Rights Watch 2002a:1). Many women and young girls were

brutally raped. Many young boys were made soldiers. The war ended with Laurent Kabila—whose militia was supported by Uganda and Rwanda—claiming the seat of President (Jackson 2003:80; Reed 1998:19-20). Following the 2001 assassination of Kabila, his son Joseph Kabila was named head of state. Congo held elections in 2006, but the state was weak and violence continued. Shifting, splintering, and combining allegiances of ethnically and nationally-oriented, armed factions continued fighting (Jackson 2003:21; Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict 2003:5). All African nations that shared boundaries with Congo and powerful intercontinental players such as the US have been involved, largely due to their interests in the country's raw materials (Human Rights Watch 2002b:5; Ngolet 2000:72-74; Williame 1998:28).

In sum, after gaining independence from Belgium, various factions fought to gain control of the new country. Once Mobutu held power, he worked to divorce the Catholic segment of the religious field from the political field. His decision to pursue authenticity and his manner of rule had disastrous consequences for the country's economy and infrastructure, and as a result the Catholic portion of the religious field ended up with more autonomy by the latter portion of the period. The Protestant part of the religious field tended to have more autonomy than the Catholic; Mobutu tended to leave Protestants alone while treating Catholics harshly. In this way, the relationships of Protestants and Catholics with the state were opposite what they had been during the colonial period. Additionally, as the state weakened, churches increasingly provided social services to Congolese. Church leaders spoke out against Mobutu's corruption and violence.

Indigenization of religious hierarchies

Throughout most of the colonial period, Protestant and Catholic missionaries and Protestant and Catholic Congolese tended to dislike each other. As noted above, these attitudes began to change after World War II. It seems that the Catholic Church's second Vatican Council, which among other things called for Christian unity, sped up the growing friendship between Catholics and Protestants in Congo (Reardon 1968:93). This change could be seen, for instance, in 1964 when a Protestant pastor gave the sermon at a gathering for Catholic priests in Leopoldville (Reardon 1968:93).

Most leadership of Catholic and Protestant churches was turned over to Congolese when Congo gained independence. For Catholics this meant that bishops (as well as priests) tended to be Congolese. However, the Church still depended on foreign missionaries to help staff its churches and schools, and it depended on financial assistance from various church organizations abroad. For instance, a congregation priest of Mary Our Mother went to school at the mission of and later became a member of a Belgian religious order in Congo. While describing his youth and his seminary education to me, he talked about the importance of the interest of foreign missionaries in Congo after independence. This priest came of age after independence, and so this was the place and time that he knew. According to the priest, Catholic churches in Congo depended on aid from abroad; these churches had money wired to them as needed, since it was not secure to have money in the bank. In this case, an international Catholic Church group acted as an alternative institution for financial management where corrupt state institutions were undependable. Overall, then, the Catholic Church hierarchy within Congo was indigenized; Congolese held the various positions of leadership. However, the

Church within Congo remained dependent on the financial assistance of other Catholics. What is more, within the international structure of the Church, Africans' advancement in terms of leadership was more limited. This means that Africans on a whole had less authority within the Church than other groups; those who maintained more authority than others tended to be Europeans.

Lay people felt the impacts of the hierarchy of power within the Catholic Church. For instance, some local groups were subsumed into authorized international movements. In 1973, women in Lubumbashi founded prayer groups and called on indigenous Catholic clergymen as healers (Csordas 1997:35). Later in the same decade, the groups came under the influence of the CCR, represented by Jesuit missionary priests and others known internationally for their healing, including Archbishop Milingo from Zambia (Csordas 1997:35). At the same time, the group's relationships with various people through the international structure of the Church are noteworthy, as they represent globalization of community.

Upon independence, Protestant missionaries from the US also handed leadership of their churches over to Congolese (Rich n.d.). Afterwards, American Protestants were ready to form coalitions with the Congolese who had assumed leadership. For their part, African leaders looked for practical support. Through new partnerships between US and Congolese Protestant leaders, some US evangelicals visited Congo in the 1960s and 1970s to preach; in Congo, they conducted tours organized by African church leaders (Rich n.d.). These church crusades, like Protestant organizing in Congo and perhaps in the US at the time, tended to be ecumenical (Rich n.d.). For instance, the Congolese preacher Jean-Perce Makunzu arranged for a visiting crusader to visit a series of

Methodist missions in addition to preaching in stadiums in large cities in Congo. It is significant that African organizers worked to set the agenda for these crusades and ensure that they would appeal to Congolese, for example, by insisting on Congolese choirs in lieu of American ones (Rich n.d.). Internationally, then, Congolese Protestant leaders actively sought partnerships and at the same time asserted their voices within these relationships.

While Catholics challenged Mobutu's policies in the 1970s, Protestants were mostly quiet (Rich n.d.). This seems to have been in part because Protestants at the time were working hard to be unified and to overcome residual missionary divisions, as noted a leader of the Eglise du Christ au Zaire (ECZ), a merged group of Protestant churches formed in 1970 out of the Congo Protestant Council (Rich n.d.). Just after the formation of this group, Jean Bokeleale, one of its founders, voiced whole-hearted support for Mobutu, even declaring him a secular messiah. Disapproving American missionaries viewed this as an example of how Africans used churches for nationalist and socialist causes (Rich n.d.). However, there were also dissident voices among Congolese Protestants. For instance, John Shungu, the leader of the Congolese Methodists at the time, pulled his church out of the ECZ, but the following Methodist leader rejoined it. Additionally, Congolese preachers were not always enamored with the Americans. For instance, one Methodist pastor was upset at the low level of funds and the character of the missionaries coming to his church from abroad (Rich n.d.). This pastor found many American Methodist missionaries to be suspect due to their drinking, smoking, and their liberal political views (Rich n.d.). Reflecting the diversity of Congolese Protestants, ties

between the ECZ and American missionaries varied according to the style and goals of different African and US leaders (Rich n.d.).

In addition, during this time, the Church of Jesus Christ on the Earth by the Prophet Simon Kimbangu (EJCSK), the church founded by Kimbangu in the 1920s, underwent bureaucratization. Recognized by the state and favored under authenticity policies, leadership of EJCSK and other prophet churches became increasingly educated (W. MacGaffey 1983:251). The church developed into a form similar to mission churches, which included paying salaries, building structures, and owning vehicles, and its reach was international (W. MacGaffey 1983:119). It also began running health clinics in which physical ailments were treated under the purview of the state (W. MacGaffey 1983:118). Concurrently, spirit healing declined (W. MacGaffey 1983:118). Some participants seeking spirit healing looked for it elsewhere, for instance, in other churches that were more similar in form to the early Kimbanguism of the 1920s. These churches proliferated.

Over the past two or three decades, the rate of church participation by Congolese in the capital city of Kinshasa increased (De Boeck 2004). It is reasonable to think that people throughout Congo increasingly turned to religion because the stresses people experienced in Kinshasa were similar to those felt elsewhere. It appears that the most widely practiced variant of Christianity in Kinshasa in recent years was Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity, and although Pentecostal-Charismatic churches tended to maintain that to be Christian was not to be Catholic, Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity was also practiced in the Catholic Church (Pype 2006:299-301). Also, Pentecostal-

Charismatic Christianity increasingly dominated the public sphere (De Boeck 2004:167; Pype 2006:299).

The fact that people participated in this global religious form within already-present religious institutions with identities that were not Pentecostal-Charismatic demonstrates the effects of the negotiation of religious meanings and practices that occurs between groups of lay people and religious specialists. Lay people incorporated this global form into their religions in a manner that priests authorized. In turn, religious institutions maintained their legitimacy. On the other hand, there were also people who took up Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity in nondenominational groups and prayer groups that they formed outside of church—where, therefore, they were not under the authorizing supervision of a specialist. Others joined new churches that formed around new Pentecostal-Charismatic Christian leaders. These Pentecostal-Charismatic churches and groups could be varied in their doctrine and practices, but they tended to make gifts of the Holy Spirit available to all participants.

In sum, after independence, Congolese who had previously been left out of church hierarchies filled them. This was the case in the Catholic Church, where their influence within the Church was limited to Congo. In addition, Congolese lay groups were incorporated into the charismatic movement authorized by Church leadership in Rome. Also, Catholic parishes and lay orders relied on their transnational links for practical assistance. Protestant churches comprised a similar case. Protestant church leaders were Congolese during this period, and these leaders, too, looked for aid from abroad. Most Protestant churches in Congo, in the 1970s at least, had joined a national umbrella organization. As well, Protestant leaders actively pursued partnerships with American

preachers for aid. The case of the Kimbanguist church was somewhat different. While the colonial government had suppressed this church, the Mobutu government recognized it as an authentic Congolese church. As the church became an institution, it became more similar in form to mission churches, with paid clergy and staff, buildings, and clinics. Some disaffected participants left the church, and new Congolese-founded churches developed. In the last few decades, Congolese increasingly attended church, and Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity became the leading Christian form. This form could be found in independent churches, nondenominational and informal groups, and churches that claimed a larger identity besides Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity.

Global community and local needs

During this time, people's choices for religious participation were wider than during the colonial period. There is a lack of scholarship about forms of community of lay Catholics during the implementation of Mobutu's authenticity policies and afterwards. However, there seem to have been, at least in the last few decades, a diverse range of options for Catholic group membership. These options would seem to have varied depending on city or rural location and depending on particular parishes. For instance, some Catholics joined groups with international reach, and some formed groups in their parishes. Among my study participants were many who were active in various groups in their home parishes before moving to the US. In Chapter Seven I discuss how a few used their membership in Catholic associations and in the Catholic Church to facilitate migration out of their countries. In cases such as these, the social capital gained from group participation led to enhanced resources that included financing, tangible aid,

and visa acquisition. This was also related to globalization; as people and ideas move internationally more quickly, people increasingly form international ties. For some, this has translated to increased opportunity to migrate internationally.

In addition, after the school system fell apart, Catholic social capital was useful for some people wanting to educate their children. The priest of Mary Our Mother told me that as a new priest in Congo he was responsible for four parishes. He traveled from one to the other over the course of the weekend, by bicycle, to say Sunday services. He also raised money to maintain a Catholic school, which included paying the teachers; this money primarily came from those who attended his churches and from school fees paid by parents. Also, church participants tended to volunteer their labor for church construction and other projects. By virtue of their mutual recognition and the trust that resulted from their church participation, which worked to mobilize participants' funds, time, and skills for the common purpose of a school, people had increased access to education for their children. Similarly, other churches used participants' labor for church projects. The EJCSK used its members' unpaid labor to build schools and church buildings (W. MacGaffey 1983:113-114).

Also during this period, like most Congolese, Protestants were suffering economically; at least part of the reason they looked for global partners was their need for financial support (Rich n.d.). On the other hand, American preachers who visited Congo did so to evangelize Congolese; their first concern was to preach, not to assist on the secular front. Beyond evangelization, American Protestant crusaders tended to be concerned with fighting communism, which they linked to the rebels who had sought aid from the Soviet Union and who had killed Christians in Congo (Rich n.d.). However, the

connections that African Christian leaders and lay individuals (who wrote letters to evangelizers after they returned to the US) fostered with American evangelical missionaries, and the ways in which they drew on similar messages (for instance, metaphors of fighting with the devil and equality under God), can be understood to demonstrate a Congolese search for a global community in which to be included and from which to benefit.

Significantly, the majority of Congolese crusade participants (those of various denominations participating in the crusades) did not see increased access to resources through these global connections. US missions had difficulty funding their trips and did not have much to offer Congolese. The American Ford Philpot, for instance, aided only a handful of people—Congolese church leaders and their children who had taken an active part in his crusades in Congo. In this way, for leaders only, the creation of international partnerships with American Protestant leaders led to useful social capital. Some Congolese—including some church leaders—criticized Philpot for not doing enough financially to aid their physical and educational needs. From their perspective, Philpot had endless amounts of money (Rich n.d.). It is useful to see the assertive style of Congolese Protestant leaders as a global strategy to look for financing and education for themselves and their church members. African churches, which needed money, trucks, and scholarships, understood the crusades as a first step in the creation of a set of strong relationships (Rich n.d.). Many lay individuals attending the American crusades in Congo were also interested in these things. However, the goals of American and Congolese partners were not the same. As a result, only a few Protestant leaders were able to access resources; these resources came about as a result of the social capital they formed in their

personal relationships with American preachers, not as a result of inter-church linkages between the US and Congo.

In the 1960s and 1970s, Congolese Protestants fostered global partnerships to increase their access to resources, a goal which overall was not met. Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity is more ecumenical in form, and as an identity, it links Congolese to people worldwide. Global links are formed not only across individuals and groups, but they also exist through shared ideas. For instance, Pentecostal-Charismatic Christians in Congo are consumers of international media such as video films produced in Nigeria and Ghana (De Boeck 2004:167; Pype 2006:299). There is a lack of scholarship on how Congolese individuals and church groups work their global connections to enhance their access to resources. Similarly, there is a lack of coverage on the organization of these groups at the local level and how these forms are different from or similar to other Christian communities.

In sum, during the past half century, religions in Congo diversified. While Mobutu attempted to control the religious field, people ended up having increased options for organizing. Some continued to practice Catholicism and organized in international Catholic associations and in local prayer groups. Grouping as Catholic enhanced the access of some to education and financing. Others practiced in various Protestant denominations and worked to partner with American evangelicals to increase their own social capital. However, only those Protestants who formed personal ties with evangelicals seemed to benefit from this form of organization. In addition, the availability of air travel would have been important for American Protestants and European Catholics traveling to Congo. Wire transfers enabled Congolese Catholic parishes to have a secure

source of income. Finally, it appears that religious ideas are increasingly shared across space, which is also important to understand the shifting meanings attached to religious practice.

Religious Meaning in Congo

This section looks at meaning for Congolese in the past half century. There is evidence that some beliefs in this period diverged more than before, which makes sense in the context of religious diversification and increasing social differentiation. For instance, the children of elite grew up under very different circumstances than others.

An example illustrates differences in religious participation and possibly understandings. Bofossa Charles-Daniel, a man who worked for Mobutu and was politically successful, gave a public testimony on his life and Pentecostal-Charismatic Christian conversion (Ndaywel è Nziem 1993:33-39). Bofossa Charles-Daniel was a Catholic by birth. He attended Catholic schools, and he participated in Catholic sacraments such as daily mass and communion, but, he said, his participation was "mechanical" (Ndaywel è Nziem 1993:33). At the same time as following Catholicism, he consulted witches and manipulated spirits for his betterment. Later, while sick, he listened to a Pentecostal-Charismatic friend and converted to a Pentecostal-Charismatic church, something that required him to denounce his participation with (evil) spirits. This example illustrates that churches dealt with beliefs in different ways, and people had more choices in terms of religious beliefs and practices in this period.

The extent of divergence in religious practices and what it meant in terms of religious meaning, however, are not clear. Also, while this study assumes diversity in the

religious understandings held by individuals about evil and healing, it also proposes that some elements tended to be held in common across a wide group of Congolese. In this section, I piece together what appear to have been some common tendencies in how Congolese explained evil and suffering.

Witches, demons, and the devil

As mentioned, over the course of the 1900s, the Kongo political-religious hierarchy disappeared above the level of the village. However, people of Congo maintained some continuities of thought regarding the origin of evil. Magicians and witches could see in the land of the dead and manipulate supernatural forces to affect the living. Magicians still worked to protect individuals while witches sought self-profit, a design that always harmed others. Whereas colonial powers suppressed the practices of magicians, magicians became a part of 'authenticity' under Mobutu. They were legitimate in the eyes of the political field. For instance, in 1973, a *nganga* interviewed by the press had no qualms about describing *ngangas* as *sorciers-guérisseurs* (healing sorcerers) and witches as *sorciers maléfiques*, and he said "in principle, a good healer does not kill. He should think of healing" (W. MacGaffey 1977:180). Similar to earlier conceptions, the magician and witch were people with knowledge of the land of the dead and who, therefore, had the knowledge to supernaturally heal or kill others. Whether a person saw another as a magician or a witch depended on perspective.

In this period, the idea of what was encompassed by the land of the dead—supernatural entities with power to affect living people—shifted. Similar to the past, beliefs in the powerful forces of the land of the dead explained the deaths and

disappearances of Congolese and why Congolese lacked good living conditions in comparison to the standard of living of Europeans. Congolese understood their plight as the result of witchcraft, through which people sold the souls of friends and neighbors for profit (W. MacGaffey 1983:133). Witches dealt in this economy in secret, at night, but its effects, as seen in death or the ownership of those sold by a new owner, were evident in the daytime. Similar to times past, when slave traders would leave food on the road to trap people traveling by, witches were said to leave money in the road (W. MacGaffey 1983:134).

On the other hand, the distinctions Congolese made between the beings of the land of the dead seem to have shifted. At the turn of the century, missionaries were understood as spirits from the land of the dead, and people sought to participate in their cults. In the 1960s and 1970s, Congolese conceptually distinguished between white people depending on their evil or ancestral origins. Both educated and uneducated Congolese distinguished between whites who were white by origin and whites who had been black Congolese while alive (W. MacGaffey 1983:131-133). There was ambiguity in the understanding of the land of the dead, which, because it meant the opposite of the land of the living, tended to encompass both Europe and America. Congolese believed that people sold to witches were sent to America.

When Europeans were expected to leave the port, Congolese expected a rise in the number of deaths, those whose souls had been sold to the Europeans by a witch and those who sold their own souls to Europeans in the hope of becoming white and wealthy abroad, in the land of the dead (W. MacGaffey 1983:138). People believed that Congolese sailors who worked out of the port of Matadi were especially knowledgeable

about Europe and America; their jobs gave them special opportunities for engaging in witchcraft themselves (W. MacGaffey 1983:137-138). These beliefs were not relegated to those with particular levels of education. Those with four to six years of secondary education who were senior employees in a cement factory also acted on these beliefs, for instance, refusing to eat with their white supervisors due to fear of being captured. Most Congolese considered their white supervisors to have been black at one time, but to have contracted to become white in order to become wealthy (W. MacGaffey 1983:138).

These beliefs remained widespread. In the early 1990s, Mobutu's opposition claimed that he strengthened himself and his regime via "witchcraft and occult techniques learned around the world" and by selling children's souls (W. MacGaffey 2000a:74). Also, while Mobutu was being treated for cancer in Switzerland, a vaccination campaign in Congo was unsuccessful because people thought their children's blood was being taken for his treatment (W. MacGaffey 2000b:225). The case fits with conceptions of witchcraft held by Africans elsewhere. Popular discourse explains the long-term survival of Gnassingbe Eyadema of Togo, like that of Mobutu of Congo, in terms of his associations with malevolent witches and spirits (Asamoah-Gyadu 2005:108-109). Similarly, the media debates whether actions, such as the bloodshed caused by Idi Amin of Uganda, are ritual quests for spiritual protection.

The Congolese politician Bofossa Charles-Daniel, described in the introduction to this section, attributed his success in politics to luck, to personal relationships, and to his use of powerful objects and magic. He consulted magicians in Congo, Bamako, and Dakar, among others. He talked with the spirits. He noted that through these associations, he had been looking for success through Satan's aid. Evidently his participation in

Catholicism did not conflict with or impact these practices. Conversely, the Pentecostal-Charismatic church to which he converted took seriously the influence of witches and demons and strongly denounced recourse to them.

As in earlier times, people prayed to their ancestors to positively affect their lives, although this was occurring less often than in the past. For example, Kimbanguists understood that a disapproving ancestor caused Kimbangu's 1918 failure to find work in the capital, but their understanding later shifted. Now they understood it as the result of not heeding God's call to become a healer (W. MacGaffey 1983:33-36). The supernatural force that was God was upset and caused Kimbangu's failure in the land of the living.

Congolese prayed to their ancestors (in America) for skills, jobs, and money. A prophet church in the 1960s recommended prayer to participants' relatives who were sold in the ivory and rubber trades to the Americans; about these ancestors, the church pamphlet noted, "The Lord will send them back to this country to teach skills and give knowledge superior to that of the whites" (W. MacGaffey 1983:134). Similar sentiments were expressed in the newspaper (W. MacGaffey 1983:134). Additionally, only a few *bisimbi* were still recognized during this time, and these were universally recognized (W. MacGaffey 1977:185).

Alongside the belief in wealth through witchcraft and correlated fear of harm by witchcraft, there was also increased use of Christian terms to describe evil spirits. For instance, among those Africans participating in the evangelical revivals described above, it appears that Congolese were merging ideas about the devil and heaven with those about the land of the dead. For instance, in 1978, one evangelical Congolese leader, Jean-Perce Makunzu, noted that Congolese were afraid of evil spirits, and he stated that the

American missionaries needed to talk about how Congolese should be “fencing out Satan’s power” in their evangelical crusades (Rich n.d.). In other words, people understood the evil spirits directed by witches to be ruled also by a predominant evil supernatural being, Satan. Makunzu also noted that while Christ gave people eternal life, Congolese understood that they also needed indigenous supernatural power to protect themselves; this power was something that they could obtain from magicians (Rich n.d.). Here, Makunzu brought Christian symbols and traditional understandings of evil into the same context. Evil forces continued to damage people’s lives, and people needed to seek protection from them. In addition, there was some acceptance of eternal salvation through Christ. Understandings of the land of the dead and of the origins of evil were shifting.

Makunzu also noted that Congolese sinned by lying, stealing, and practicing adultery and prostitution (Rich n.d.). It can be assumed that sinning would have displeased the ancestors (possibly) or the supreme deity (likely). This can be turned around to understand what it meant to be good. To be good, a person was honest and a person acquired items by buying or trading for them or by being gifted them; good people were honest and law-abiding. The idea that a person should have sex only with a spouse is an interesting continuity with early missionization.

EJCSK advised that people needed grace, faith, and good actions to achieve salvation (W. MacGaffey 1983:248-249). The church put on a play in 1980 that drew on and reflected the ideas of its participants (W. MacGaffey 1983:251). It showed that participants believed that on the Day of Judgment the good would be saved and sinners would be given to the Devil and the Devil’s accomplices. The costume of the Devil looked like that of the indigenous magician, a person whom many Congolese were

tempted to consult. The devil costumes were also those of rebels whose violent occupation in 1964 did bring hell to those living there. This complex interplay of meanings point to a shifting idea of what the other world meant (differentiated by heaven and hell), how to attain the good other world (heaven), and evil (indigenous magicians). Good Christians in this understanding would have faith and grace, and good Christians would not seek to manipulate supernatural forces for personal ends. This is also important because it illustrated the changing idea of evil. In some churches, any individually-oriented supernatural dealings were evil, not solely those done to increase a person's wealth.

In this period, Christianity's claim that all people are equal reappeared. After the American evangelical Ford Philpot toured Congo in 1978, many Congolese wrote to him, asking for financial assistance for their churches or for sponsorship to attend an American seminary (Rich n.d.). Philpot did not preserve most of the letters, but one that he kept was written by someone who claimed to have been converted due to Philpot's preaching. In particular, this writer was enamored with a story about a doctor who was unable to tell people's race by looking at their blood (Rich n.d.). This case highlights how the promise that all people are equal regardless of the color of their skin was an attraction of Christianity. It seems likely that this story was significant for many Congolese, as Philpot chose to tell it to a large crowd. However, as noted above, once again, this promise of equality did not meet with change in people's day-to-day lives.

In sum, the understanding of good and evil that most Congolese seemed to hold was that good people prayed to their ancestors for material aid and evil was the cause of material inequality and physical harm. By selling souls, which were then sent to America,

witches enriched themselves. In addition, belief in magicians was re-legitimized in the view of the government, and people visited them. However, the figure of magician was ambivalent and in some contexts associated with evil. As before, whether a person was labeled witch or magician depended on the relative position of the person doing the labeling. People also continued to pray to their ancestors, including those sold through trading. People prayed for skills that would enhance their physical well-being. On the other hand, ancestors became less important than God in the effects that they had in the land of the living.

For many Congolese, to be good meant to be honest and to acquire objects only through payment or gift. To a degree, these behaviors are law-abiding behaviors, which would seem to support the social order. Additionally, by incorporating grace and faith into the meaning of what it meant to be a good Christian, it seems that Congolese were doing one or a combination of two things. Either they were developing an understanding of multiple systems of beliefs from which people could choose and in which different people could participate to varying degrees, or they were understanding faith in terms of high level of devotion and ritual attention given to God.

Finally, in some circles, at least, the composition of the land of the dead shifted. The primary spirits inhabiting this world were ancestors, God, demons, and the devil. The intermediary hierarchy of spirits that had accompanied the political Kongo hierarchy had mostly disappeared. It also looks like the land of the dead was differentiating into heaven and hell, and the evil spirits had a supreme leader, the devil. As in previous periods, the Christian promise of equality drew Congolese to church participation. However, for most, the promise remained only a hope.

Holy Spirit healing

In independent Congo, Congolese continued to draw on religion to creatively understand, express, and act on their suffering. During this period, Congo prophets (not prophets in the anthropological sense) healed in the interest of the common good. The Congo prophet healed because he had been given a divine command to do so, and he was supposed to gain no personal profit from his religious work (W. MacGaffey 1983:147). The Congo prophet allegedly worked through the power of the Holy Spirit, and his subordination to this spirit was expressed through demonstration of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Congolese in this time understood an important Christian spirit as powerful in possession and for healing, and Congo prophets channeled this spirit to heal.

In this period, Congolese continued carrying out religious practices to make daily life better. They did this by focusing on aspects of life such as the weather, harvest, hunting, disease, and childbearing (W. MacGaffey 1983:147). For instance, in religious practice, people understood diseases as supernatural entities that could be made to be accommodating if correctly treated (W. MacGaffey 1983:147). People understood negative material conditions to be the materialization or the embodiment of an angry or evil spirits or forces and according to this understanding, they could act on them.

Congolese Christians followed various means of healing. One Congolese man who attended a Philpot crusade was struck by learning that George Forman resolved to box the devil (Rich n.d.). Here he learned of the possibility of directly confronting and fighting the supreme evil force. As this evil force caused most pain and suffering in the world, a fighting metaphor provided people a way in which to directly act against this suffering. People could fight the pain caused by evil by directly fighting evil. The

Catholic prayer groups in Lubumbashi, described above, were also concerned with healing. Healers in these groups took seriously the problems created by witches, the need for powerful objects for spiritual protection, and affliction caused by supernatural forces (Csordas 1997:35-36). Another church, which at that time called itself the Mission Prophetique Congolaise and which was similar to the Kimbanguist movement, described its intention as prayer, confession, and healing. For this church, healing took place through prayer or medicine, as directed by the Holy Spirit (W. MacGaffey 1983:114, 118). The Congolese politician who converted to Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity while ill found healing in his renunciation of witchcraft (Ndaywel è Nziem 1993:37).

Concurrently, the number of witchcraft accusations rose, especially in recent decades and in particular those leveled against orphaned children (De Boeck 2004). According to De Boeck (2004:162), Pentecostal-Charismatic churches demonized the figure of the witch, a figure increasingly central to Congolese imagination, in their ongoing concern with the struggle of good and evil, demons and Satan. Pentecostal-Charismatic churches were active in searching out child witches and ritually exorcising the evil spirits from the child. The ritual included surrounding the child with a group of women who spoke in tongues—one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit—and could last days (De Boeck 2004). It can be understood that through these acts of healing, participants expressed the pain that they felt due to the lack of having enough food for all in the household and the sorrow that they felt when loved ones died. The high rate of death and poverty in Kinshasa appeared to be changing the composition of many households; since orphaned children tended to be those in the household with the weakest kin ties, they were the first accused of witchcraft and thus, also, the first to be thrown in the street. In

churches that held ritual healing of these witches, then, these services were an expression of feeling and an effort on the part of the community to counteract the pain caused by poverty (witchcraft).

In sum, Christian healing became an integral part of religious practice for Congolese. Healing in a church usually invoked the Holy Spirit. Christian healing was concerned with acting on the pain and suffering that people witnessed in their everyday lives in domains like disease, childbearing, and material deprivation. In addressing their pain, people ritually gathered to exorcise witches, to obtain objects with supernatural force, to heal their afflictions, and to pray to the Holy Spirit, God, and to ancestors for protection.

Continuity and change

Since independence, most Congolese suffered material hardship that resulted from corrupt politics and ongoing violence. Infrastructure declined, many were not paid, and many Congolese did what they could to make money and live (J. MacGaffey and Bazenguissa-Ganga 2000:53-54). Congolese worked largely within a shadow or informal economy (Nzeza Bilakila 2004; Trefon 2004a:10). At the same time, the religious field diversified. Catholic churches remained active in the country; some of them organized to educate local children. Some Catholics then benefited from their membership in the global institution, in terms of access to European funding and global identity, and some benefited from local social capital, as seen, for instance, in support for schools.

In general, churches worked to provide social services to Congolese. Additionally, people sought social capital (and healing) by organizing churches. For

instance, Protestant churches proliferated. Those in the 1960s and 1970s that were largely complicit with Mobutu's regime also worked to establish partnerships with American evangelists, many of whom visited Congo and participated in Congolese crusades. However, Protestant churches generally did not see much financial benefit from these partnerships. Instead, those Congolese with personal ties to missionaries saw some increased access to travel to the US, education in the US, and funding. Moreover, as an "authentic" church, EJCSK became a recognized institution, and its leaders were educated. The church assumed the form of mission churches, with buildings like clinics. This church, too, benefited from social capital in terms of labor of its participants. This suggests that there was more social capital and more available resources for those who participated in formal institutions.

Thus there was much structural change, including change in the religious field and within religious institutions, change in the relationships that different religious entities had with the political field, and also change in social relationships formed through religion. There were considerable shifts in meanings, as well. Although the magician as a religious specialist returned to legitimate practice by government decree, some interpreted the figure's ambiguity—being very similar to a witch—as too dangerous and therefore saw him or her as someone to avoid. In addition, the magician tended not to perform group healing rituals, as he or she had done in earlier times. Congo prophets, or priests, led group healing activities in various churches. Significantly, it looks like social capital was greater for those within a religious institution. It also appears that as a church became a recognized institution, it lost some of its spiritual practices, such as healing rituals. At least this was the case for EJCSK.

The meaning of evil stretched to include the supreme evil being of the devil, and, correspondingly, the land of the dead was differentiating into heaven and hell. It is possible that Congolese understood America to be heaven, or close to it, since they believed that their ancestors were there. They prayed to these ancestors, hoping they would use supernatural abilities to improve Congolese lives. Congolese tended to understand that those people—mostly Europeans but also some Congolese—who were wealthier and who had better jobs were witches, having obtained their positions through engaging in evil activity, something that concurrently caused harm and inflicted pain upon others. As poverty worsened, it followed that witchcraft accusations increased.

In this way, people understood their physical insecurity in terms of religion. What is more, they acted on this understanding through religion. More and more Congolese participated in churches, many of which conducted healing ceremonies. These group activities seemed to be an important activity of the increasingly prominent Pentecostal-Charismatic churches. In these churches, people acted on the widespread understanding that witchcraft was increasingly practiced. People tended to label young orphans as witches, a phenomenon linked to the changing composition of many households, which were extended households and in which the number of orphans was on the rise. These children were often thrown in the streets, and they were also the focus of the healing activities of many Pentecostal-Charismatic churches. Through the Holy Spirit, Christians healed. The Holy Spirit could possess people as could demons.

In healing ceremonies, many Pentecostal-Charismatic Christians exorcised witches through prayer. In doing this, they acted on the understanding that pain and suffering were caused by witches, by demons. However, whether or not these group

rituals affected people's access to resources like food and water, for instance, through creating useful social capital, is not clear.

Those who trafficked in human souls, causing death and harm to others, were engaged in evil activity. This represented continuity from earlier times, but it was modified to fit into Christian spaces. For instance, witch children could be exorcised; some force was causing them to do evil. This understanding was new. Other Christian rites of healing were designed to heal people who suffered as a result of disease or barrenness, for example. People also continued to desire objects with protective supernatural force. These practices represent continuities, but they were carried out in different spaces (churches) and invoking a new spirit, the Holy Spirit.

What is clear is that people continued to express their ideas through religion and act on their understanding of evil and pain, phenomena linked to the inequity and pain they experienced.

Conclusion

The aim of this chapter was not only to provide historical context for immigrant religious participation, but also to engage the scholarship on Christianization during the period of colonial rule in Africa. As discussed in Chapter One and also at points in this and the prior chapters, the literature on the Christianization of Africa has tended to come at this issue from a particular perspective. This literature has looked at Christianity as an imperial tool used by white Europeans in the conquest of African territory, society, and understandings. In this view, missionization was a contest between Europeans and Africans over various semantic domains (Comaroff and Comaroff 1989). Colonized

people sometimes fought but missionaries tended to win. To be materially successful like missionaries and other Christian Europeans, colonized peoples assumed the perceptions and entered the discourse of missionaries. In contrast, in this chapter, I approached the Christianization of Africa from an angle designed to help account for ambiguity, complexity, continuities in belief, and differential experiences of Africans who converted.

The literature has shown that conversion involved more than religion; it also involved ways of understanding time and space (Mudimbe 1988). Missionaries were among a larger body of Europeans that constructed Africans as barbarians who needed to be Christianized and civilized, which went hand-in-hand. Similarly, some scholars have understood later African participation in Christianity as illustrative of how Africans moved between European and African spaces (Kirby 1994; W. MacGaffey 1983; van Beek and Blakely 1994:4). It follows that churches begun by Africans, like Kimbanguism, were more "African" than were other churches like mission churches. But this leads to the problematic and unhelpful question of the meaning of "African." Additionally, this concern does not further our understanding of why and how people practiced Christianity or the continuities and changes involved.

Envisioning Christianity primarily as a tool of conquest and understanding an innate difference to exist between African and mission churches would lead to incomplete conclusions about this period of Congo history. For instance, I showed that at the turn of the 20th century, Congolese converted in large numbers to Christianity. They understood Christianity as a political-religious cult, and many chose to convert at Protestant missions. There is no way to understand this choice that was simultaneously

political and religious if a study were to take the view that Christian missionization was all-powerful. If it were the case that Congolese wanted to enjoy the success of the Europeans through joining their churches, then it would have made more sense for them to have chosen to join Belgian Catholic ones. Congolese should have seen these churches as the route to political power; after all, they did understand them to be linked to those who held political power at the time.

This study helps to build a more complete theoretical understanding of Christianization and how Christians have taken up the religion in different ways in different times. For instance, in the old kingdom of Kongo, Christian missionaries did not see their mission as a colonizing one, as did later missionaries. In addition, BaKongo adopted Christianity while they were politically independent; Europeans did not force Christianity on BaKongo. Instead, BaKongo took up Christianity voluntarily, and the political field within the kingdom maintained control over its practice up until the late 1800s.

I also showed how BaKongo and Congolese associated different meanings with their Christian practices in different times and places. In the Kongo kingdom, Christians pledged their loyalty to God through initiation into the Christian cult (baptism). Missionaries assumed the role of Kongo magicians, and Christian symbols and ceremonies became important means of symbolic legitimization of the elite. However, commoners also learned prayers and songs. Statues of missionaries and the founding Christian were incorporated into *simbi* rituals due to their powerful supernatural force. People took up Christian ideas in understanding their changing contexts. When the kingdom was in decline and independent political units were growing along trade routes

and the coast, Beatriz led a popular movement that promised to alleviate people's pain, to heal them. Beatriz was Christian; she was possessed by a Christian saint and she used Christian symbols. She also sought to use the Christian ideal of equality to redefine social order. Beatriz did not capitulate to the construction of space and time of missionaries; instead, she actively used elements of Christianity in conjunction with older elements to create meaning and act on the world.

Looking at the ways in which people use religious meaning and structure, and the continuities and changes in each, was also useful for understanding missionization during the period of colonial rule. In this time, Congolese were forced to work and half the population died. Living and working conditions were horrific for the majority of the population, and yet many studied as missionaries asked them to do to improve their opportunities. A minority of Christians was able to improve its well-being through mission education and political connections. Most, however, did not. Many Congolese took up Christian symbols and practices to organize and heal. Doing this, they also acted on continuities in meaning. For instance, early Kimbanguists sought healing from the witchcraft practiced by the wealthy—those in political power. In this way, their participation protested the social order.

The problem of belief, or conversion, continued to apply in the colonial period, as well. While missionaries understood people to have a choice among competing systems of beliefs, it was not clear whether Congolese shared this perspective. If they did not share this understanding, Congolese would have expected no struggle or conflict between systems of beliefs. Also, Congolese integrated or merged mission teachings into and with

Congolese understandings. However, it could be that the small group of elite had different understandings, especially those coming of age during this period.

Congolese continued to explain hard times through religion, and they continued to express and act religiously on their feelings of suffering. The meaning of evil expanded to include the demons who possess witches and who answer to the devil. The expansion resulted from how people explained their hardships and the pain that they experienced, caused during the slave trade, colonial rule, and then the violence of the independent years. Evil (harm or misfortune) originated from demons, witches, the devil, an unhappy God, and sometimes ancestors. Closely linked to the domain of evil was that of healing, which tended now to be accomplished through the help of the Holy Spirit. When harm caused enough pain, people sought spiritual healing. Congolese Christians continued to adapt religion in changing contexts.

In Congo, the meaning of evil and the meaning of healing changed over time, but they also maintained a degree of continuity. Christians in Congo practiced this religion in ways that helped them make sense of their world. As discussed in Chapter Two, there is some evidence that as an activity integrated within a community and as an event that affects the mind, spiritual healing rites may have positive physical affects. This is important to keep in mind for the case of Congo, and, what is more, spiritual healing practices tended to be holistic in intent. Additionally, healing rites performed among a group of people can be understood to reaffirm a group's identity and people's mutual respect, which created social capital.

Many Congolese moved within the country and others left it as a result of its instability, poverty, and violence. Many migrated to Europe and North America; popular

destinations were France, Belgium, and Canada, French-speaking countries. Those in the US joined a growing group of new immigrants from around the world and found that they had to negotiate a new social context. The next chapter considers the experiences of my research participants, francophone African immigrants in Washington, DC. Some joined a cross-cultural congregation that included Congolese. This congregation also drew on Pentecostal-Charismatic practices and so will be an interesting case through which to better understand not only immigrant religion but also this Christian form.

CHAPTER 6

NEW CONNECTIONS IN A NEW CONTEXT

The previous two chapters depicted how the political-economic and religious experiences of people of Congo changed, especially focusing on how religious structures and meanings changed. Looking at changes and continuities in meanings and structures highlighted the important role that religious meaning had in explaining people's experiences. People explained and tried to spiritually control the harm and pain in their lives. In addition, spiritual meaning and practice were elements of an integrated worldview.

Some Congolese moved away from their country of origin. Outside sub-Saharan Africa, some Congolese lived in Belgium and France. In recent years, Congolese became a part of the growing African migration stream to the US. The focus of this chapter is the experiences of these immigrants within the new social structure.

In this chapter, I show how francophone Africans in Washington, DC confronted a largely hostile context and in turn developed a welcoming counterpoint in a French-language African congregation within the Catholic Church. Francophone Africans living in Washington, DC found themselves adjusting to a new society alongside immigrants from around the world. However, US society also situated them as black Africans, a construction that limited opportunities in residence and work. Francophone Africans shared common difficulties regarding where to live, how to find a job, and how to get by

in daily life. Some Africans looked toward their own institutions to help them cope. In Washington, these institutions included ethnic associations and NGOs. This chapter introduces a religious group, Mary Our Mother, a pan-African, French-language Catholic congregation to which many immigrants turned. People attended services of this congregation since it began in 2000. Some congregation participants attended mostly on Sundays and for special events, and others were involved on a more frequent basis. This chapter begins by discussing why francophone Africans moved to the US and how they got there. I broaden the sending context to include francophone Africans, not just those from Congo. Next, I look at how immigrants adjusted to living in the US, and I introduce the congregation Mary Our Mother.

Francophone Africans in the Nation's Capital

Francophone Africans in Washington, DC were from diverse ethnic and regional origins, often being fluent in different combinations of languages. While most of my research participants were of middle to upper class background at home, signified by their ability to come to the US (to afford travel expenses and to navigate visa acquisition) and by their high educational levels, many started from scratch once in the US. Many focused on bettering their English skills, going back to school to acquire a US degree, navigating the immigration process, and finding a job. I estimate about seventy percent of congregation participants worked low to modestly paid jobs and roughly fifteen percent had professional jobs. This section looks at why francophone Africans moved to Washington, DC and how they did once there.

Security in Living: Reasons to Migrate

Due to political and economic restraints at home, many francophone Africans faced limited opportunity for wage employment or security. For instance, in Congo, the state tended not to pay teachers and health care workers; they depended on compensation (monetary or otherwise) from students and patients. In Cameroon, to speak out against the government could get a person jailed or disappeared. For those who could acquire a visa and gather the funds to buy a transatlantic plane ticket, getting by could mean traveling to the US.

Emilie's father fought for secession from Congo. After his death, which she believed was in part due to repeated torture by state agents, her mother worked. When I met her, Emily had chosen to stay in the US, away from lawlessness and food scarcities. Emilie had a relatively high social position at home, signified when she noted that others could be jealous of her:

> There's a war. There's no peace—and insecurity.... Because people are becoming bad; they are becoming jealous. ... If they're jealous of you.... they can come in the middle of the night to your house, they can tie you up, they can steal your things, they can rape you, all kinds of things.... Bad because, you know. No, war is not good.... a lot of bandits, a lot of guns.... [Here in the US] at least your family can have food and there is security. Security is very very important ... Nobody is going to come into your house and steal and rape you and hurt you because of jealousy [stated in English].

Economic and physical insecurity affected almost everyone in Congo. While those who were poorer were more disadvantaged, those who were educated also could not guarantee food or basic medical care for their family. Catherine recently moved to the US from Congo. When young, she became ill, but she was lucky that her parents had doctor friends to treat her. She explained that emergency rooms at home were not like

those in the US. There were always sick and hurt people in the emergency rooms at home, but it did not matter. There were simply not enough resources to attend to them. She also noted that she had been hungry, as had all Congolese. At the time, astonished, I replied, but your parents had professional jobs. She looked at me with a puzzled look on her face, saying they did, but they were not always paid. Nobody was paid regularly in Congo. Almost everyone experienced hunger.

While these examples originate in Congo, which I discussed in some detail in Chapter Five, other francophone Africans experienced political and economic constraints of various kinds. For example, people fled oppressive regimes in the Ivory Coast, Togo, and Cameroon. In Cameroon, the longstanding president employed heavy-handed tactics toward those he perceived as a threat to his rule. A woman recently moved to the US with her children to join her husband, who fled Cameroon after he outspokenly challenged corrupt government practices. Agnes told me that the government often claimed to have completed projects (for instance, paving a road) when it had not. Additionally, the government took loans from other countries for these imaginary projects, eating the money ("*mange l'argent*"). (As she said this, she motioned as if putting something in her mouth that then moved to her belly.)

Agnes said that in Cameroon, when you started asking questions or wanting things to change, the government started to follow and question you. Those who challenged could disappear. She said that many students who challenged the government have disappeared. Their mothers inquired about them, but the government denied having done anything. After her husband started challenging things, the government started tracing him. Immediately his family paid for a ticket for him to leave the country. She

said that after he left, police came to her door several times asking where he was and what he was doing, and she always told them that she did not know, that she did not get involved in politics. Other Cameroonians also came as political protestors moving away from violence; some living in the US planned future political action.

On the other hand, francophone immigrants also came for economic security. For instance, Joseph described his life at home in Cameroon to me. Although he described his income as very comfortable, he was not satisfied with his position. He often felt compromised by the practices of those around him. Maintaining his position required a certain degree of complacency under corrupt economic-political practices. While he did not agree with what was going on, he felt helpless to change it.

Francophone Africans who moved to the US looking to increase their security in meeting basic needs, safety, and work, tended to have an idealized picture of American society that did not reflect life on the ground. Impressions about American life developed through watching television and getting ideas from books, photos, and other people. Popular thought held that in America, everyone had a high standard of living. For instance, Joseph, mentioned above, came to the US after winning the visa lottery. He told me that he was incredulous at how difficult it was for him to find a good job when he first arrived. He began working two minimum wage jobs, trying to pay his bills in the US while also sending some money home to support his family. He told me that if he had realized the difficulty of life in the US, he would have thought twice before moving.

Once in the US, it would be embarrassing to return home. Also, there were employment possibilities in a dependable economy. Immigrants found that in the US, they could count on getting paid after working. Immigrants counted on schools running

and accepting their children without charge. In this country, immigrants learned that they were safe and that people could call the police in times of trouble. In this country, there were food and health care (even if this came at the ER). They tended to stay, although some did move, for instance, to Canada.

Francine, a mature *maman* of the congregation, described life in the US as the better of two less-than-perfect options. She moved to the US with her husband decades ago. The couple's American-born children were, at the time of our conversation, adults. Both she and her husband worked, and they lived in an affluent area. After mass one cold winter Sunday, she noted that when she went to school in Kinshasa, schoolchildren like her expected to grow up and work there. She said that life in the city was good at that time—they were "normal people" with a "normal life"—not like it was now. Francine explained normal life as being able to live decently, or at least having the minimum. In her words: ". . . a good school . . . good hospitals, good roads . . . . Everything just correct, and, you know. To give the child, or the children, a better place to be, a better place to go, and a better place to work [stated in English]." Francine told me that she did not feel completely at home in the US, but here there were opportunities that lacked in her home country.

In comparison, at home, there may have been violence, corruption, and an unreliable economy. Good schools may have been private and expensive. Immigrants looked for dependability and security. Thus, moving to the US became a method to make life more reliable: safer, steadier, more stable.

Visas, Asylum, and Kin: How to Migrate

For many, then, the US represented a chance to provide a secure life for themselves and their families. Moving was one way to fend for themselves. But getting here in the first place often involved getting a visa to visit as a tourist, to work, or to go to school. For people that were a part of Mary Our Mother, work at embassies, the World Bank, the IMF, and university study were also important conduits for new immigrants to the metropolitan area. African immigrants already resident in Washington, DC formed another important immigration channel, in the well-documented strategy of chain migration—moving to join other family and friends—which was enabled by US policies of family reunification. US residents could also write letters in support of family and friends' requests for tourist visas. When newcomers had connections with someone already in Washington, the established resident acted as a host to kin (or friends of kin) while the new immigrant adjusted, got his or her papers in order, found a job, saved some money, and found a place to live, a process that for French-speaking African immigrants in Washington, DC, took anywhere from several months to three years.

Other francophone Africans moved here after winning a visa by lottery through the diversity immigrant visa program. This program, run by the US Department of State (DOS), distributed 50,000 visas each year (US Citizenship and Immigration Services 2011). The DOS selected individuals at random from a pool of applicants from countries with low US immigration rates (US Citizenship and Immigration Services 2011). Immigrants I met who won a diversity visa thought it would be better to try life in the US. For example, one man had a decent job at home, but decided to try his luck in the US

after winning the visa lottery. He was taken aback by the difficulties he faced once here and was obliged to work as a stocker in a local company.

Many of the immigrants I met who came from throughout francophone Africa applied for asylum, a legal status based on an individual's proven fear of persecution in his or her country of origin. One woman explained to me that she enjoyed her position, but in Africa, from one day to the next, a person could lose everything, as she did after a regime change. She applied for asylum after coming to the US. She left because she was scared for her life:

> I was a great lady, with drivers . . . with domestic help. . . . Each day, there were receptions. . . . We wore gold jewelry, things, nice clothes. . . . I had no problems, I had much. . . . We had a good life. We experienced some of the very best moments of our lives. . . . Life has changed a great deal. But it isn't a problem. God watches over us in life. . . . Today, the children sleep well. They are happy. They go to school. That is the essential. . . . There are people who used to work for me. . . . Now I also work for people like that. I never did that before in my life. But for my children, I will do it. . . . I always tell my children that life, life isn't easy. . . . In Africa, you can be very rich and from one day to the next, you find yourself like that, with nothing. The schoolwork that you did, your savings, all gone. . . . If you aren't brave, you die. You die. You truly must have courage. . . . All our things were thrown out. . . . [A man of the opposing political faction] was going to kill us. He was going to kill us. And me, I couldn't bear it. It was hard.

In sum, among my research participants, many people moved to the US for a combination of economic and political reasons. Some came as temporary visitors and others came through the visa lottery or family efforts. They stayed for economic opportunity, which for many was entangled with desire for physical security and transparency in political and economic relationships. On the other hand, living in a new society and speaking a new language was difficult. The next section looks at the stresses of daily life as an immigrant, which were augmented by the general structural location of black French-speaking Africans as national, linguistic, and racial outsiders. Stresses and

social location are important to understand because they made the development of alternative communities like Mary Our Mother more attractive.

Se Débrouiller: Adjusting to Life in the US

Francophone Africans in Washington, DC confronted new challenges. In general, the first one to three years in the US were the most difficult. During this time, immigrants discovered how to find a place to live, how to get around and find a job, and how to fit in and get by in daily American life.

Residence

Newly arrived Africans found it more difficult than expected to get lodging for themselves and their families. Often, their stay in the US began when friends or relatives picked them up from the airport. They stayed with friends or relatives until they found their own residences. Sometimes this process took a month or two; sometimes it took a year. After winning the visa lottery, one man arrived in Washington one year earlier with his wife and young child. I asked him if things were easier for them, as they had been there for one year. He replied, “a little.” They had come thinking that they would simply pay for a place to live. Instead, he told me that they had been staying with friends since they arrived—only recently acquiring their own apartment nearby the church—because they had no credit or employment history in the US. Moreover, potential apartment managers looked for a current address and employer for applicants. He and his wife were working “small” jobs—minimum wage jobs—while before immigrating they were professionals. At that point they had an apartment and jobs that were near the bus stop, so they could get back and forth between home and work.

Additionally, for immigrants with children, a main concern was the quality and safety of schools and neighborhoods. Parents did not want their children picking up bad language or disrespectful behavior from their peers, behaviors that they tended to believe children learned in schools in Washington, DC. In contrast, they generally found the schools in Montgomery County or other counties less problematic. A primary concern was to find housing in quiet neighborhoods, where there was ample parking and where there was minimal foot traffic. These desires for schools and neighborhoods were balanced against the heavier importance of affordability, a serious problem in Washington, DC, and also against the nearness of bus transportation, an affordable way to get around. The fact that most immigrants in Washington, DC were geographically dispersed also contributed to a new sense of isolation, as people had to travel (usually through a few bus connections) to see others they knew or others who spoke their language.

Work

Many francophone Africans in Washington, DC were surprised to discover the long hours that they had to work to pay their basic bills. What was more, finding a job could be difficult. Although African immigrants tended to be better educated than people born in the US (Konadu-Agyemang and Takyi 2006:9), francophone Africans perceived difficulty in finding jobs due to their accents and foreigner status. Most francophone immigrants took (British) English in school but had not experienced British or American English on the street. This limited their interpersonal interactions, as they had trouble communicating in English. Combined with frequent derogatory reactions of native-

English speakers, this contributed to a lack of self-confidence. Many people talked about how hard it was to find a job and to be accepted by their neighbors who were American; they believed that native-born Americans perceived difficulties with legal paperwork when dealing with immigrants and viewed people with accents or who were learning English to be dumb because they sounded dumb.

Adding to job difficulties, foreign experience was generally not recognized by US employers, and immigrants believed that the education they received abroad was devalued. Certification required for certain jobs like those in health care and education was difficult to transfer. Language difficulty also made direct entry into a high level job difficult. Most immigrants worked whatever job they could get. Especially in the beginning, francophone Africans worked as pizza store employees or delivery drivers, security personnel (men), nannies (women), braiders in salons (women), hourly employees at grocery and department stores (often women), and as taxi or limo drivers (men). Once immigrants found a job, they usually immediately began sending some amount of money home—partly because family needed it and partly because at home, everyone thought that being in the US meant you were making money. Many immigrants purchased inexpensive phone cards to be able to call family back home without getting caught in long conversations that resulted in large phone bills.

After holding a base-level job or jobs for a period of time, immigrants often worked to move up the job hierarchy by receiving some vocational training or by building on their US job experience. Moving up was also likely facilitated by their cultural capital (in schooling and professional employment) that they brought with them. Typical higher-level jobs include CNA (Certified Nursing Assistant) or GNA (Geriatric

Nursing Assistant) (often women but also men), loan officer (e.g., at a mortgage company) (men and women), bank teller (women), supervisor at a restaurant (e.g., pizza place) or store (e.g., department store) (women and men), and sales jobs (e.g., working out of home selling cell phones or long distance service) (men and women). After increasing their experience or US education level, immigrants could move up to work in higher bank roles, to manage store(s), to work for a mortgage company, to teach primary or secondary school, or to work in other professional jobs.

One middle-aged woman advised a younger, newly arrived woman, who was a college graduate, to get a job as a cashier. The older woman advised that holding this job for about a year would demonstrate her responsibility in handling money, and from there she could expect to be hired for a bank teller position. Over the course of several years, Joseph progressed into jobs with supervisory duties and higher pay. He foresaw the day when he would make a “comfortable” income, but, at the present time, he and his wife decided to keep their children in Cameroon while they worked in the US.

Finally, for those with young children, paying for child care was a significant expense. Many women told me that at home, having children was easy. There was always someone at home (family or servants) or someone next door who would watch the children while they worked or went shopping. In the US, however, child care was expensive, and most neighbors had only limited relationships with each other. Paying for child care was either avoided by having the mother, grandmother, or other woman relative stay at home with the children (and sometimes applying for a visa for a woman family member to come to the US to look after the children), or it could be done informally among immigrants and could be paid below-market rates or in-kind. For this

reason, it was good to live in areas of heavy recent immigrant population, such as parts of Silver Spring/Langley Park and increasingly the I-270 corridor (the suburbs along I-270, which links Maryland's inner suburbs like Bethesda and Maryland, to its outer suburbs, such as Frederick and Maryland). Some immigrants had decided that leaving the kids at home was the better option. For instance, Joseph's children were cared for by the children's grandparents in Cameroon. He explained to me that in Cameroon, they would be raised without the high cost of American childcare, and they would receive a good education. This was a common strategy.

For those who immigrated to work in a professional job at the World Bank or their country's embassy, adjustment and learning the ropes were somewhat facilitated by their employers. For example, the employer might have helped take care of legal paperwork, and foreign co-workers might have provided information. Accents and foreign status were the norm in these jobs. Moreover, these jobs tended to pay more than minimum wage, making some of the above issues associated with low income less of a worry.

Daily Life

To get by in daily American life, immigrants generally had to improve their English language skills. The American accent and quick speed took some practice and time to learn to understand as well as to speak. This learning was easier for younger immigrants. Five-year-old children learned English quickly, while their grandparents, who already had some school experience with the language, may have never become completely comfortable in English, even after working and being tutored.

The immigration status of immigrants also had a significant effect on daily life. If there was hope for legal residency, the immigration system had to be navigated for legal status and work permits. Legal status was desired by most immigrants, even though it was not always possible. For instance, the female relatives who came to look after young children, as well as others, tended to come on temporary visas and were more hidden. Navigating immigration included filling out paperwork and generally working with (and paying high fees to) a lawyer. One woman spent two years moving through asylum procedures. She paid almost $5,000 for a lawyer's representation.

Many applied for asylum and so had to meet with immigration officers and occasionally go to court. Others applied for a Green Card using their employer as sponsor, which then meant the immigrant was at the mercy of the employer's demands during the long application process. To lose the sponsor would mean to lose the opportunity to obtain a Green Card. I knew of at least one situation in which employers took advantage of the waiting immigrant. The employer scheduled the immigrant to work long, odd hours. The immigrant did not like the job but was worried about being fired and losing out on the Green Card. One woman told me that the employer owned the petition for the Green Card. If you were fired, the employer could find someone to take your place. In some cases, you could still go ahead with the petition. She also believed there was a law that a company must advertise for two weeks, and if an American wanted the job, the American would get the job and the petition would be cancelled.

One Nigerian woman congregation participant—the only anglophone participant that I met in Mary Our Mother—told me about her Green Card situation. She got a degree in epidemiology in the US and worked for a company that sponsored her Green

Card. Because the company was having some financial problems, it was considering firing some employees. Her main concern was that she needed to be employed there continually since the business was her Green Card sponsor. She was near the beginning of the process of getting the card. In an unrelated situation, a woman in the US to work as a child care provider was not given any information about immigration procedures from her American employer. She had been in the US for two years. Fellow congregation members told her that she needed to get her employer to cooperate with filing paperwork for her to have the best chance at obtaining legal status.

Newly-arrived francophone Africans also wanted to learn the best places to shop in terms of price and desired goods, for example, at discount or thrift stores, at low-cost groceries, and at international markets; how to get around by bus (and metro); the intricacies of interaction with Americans (e.g., coworkers and phone calls); the expectations associated with children (how to register for school, what's expected of parents); and how to find health care (e.g., applying for Medicaid or visiting clinics). Coming from a tropical geographical area also made the weather a big factor in adjustment. A common cause given for sickness was the cold or changing weather.

A significant form of stress felt by francophone African immigrants was related to the immigration process. This could be seen to encompass life experiences before moving to Washington, DC, the actual move itself, and life experiences in Washington, DC. At home, many people worried about economic security and/or the physical safety of themselves and their families. Some people I met were involved in politics at home and were followed by police or taken to jail and tortured. Others went through intermediate moves before coming to Washington, DC and spent time homeless or searching for work.

As well, the move itself may have been harrowing (for instance, being smuggled out of the country), or, at the least, an anxious experience.

Not only did stress from immigration result in physical symptoms, but so too did ongoing concerns about income, housing, children, and food. Additionally, most immigrants felt pressure for remittances from family back home. Family tended to view the US as a place of infinite wealth to be shared. This translated to an expectation that those in the US would send money to family still at home. Some immigrants understood that jealous family members would practice witchcraft against them if they did not send something. For this reason, one woman noted that it was important not to look like you were doing too well, or, she said, it was a good idea to send gifts (or money) home. In contrast, another woman interpreted feeling ill not as a result of the witchcraft practiced by a jealous family member but as a result of a discordant relationship. She felt that a person may feel ill if familial relations were strained, as could happen, for instance, when one person was jealous of another.

People's needs varied, but those who took lowly to modestly paid jobs often had problems in the realms of health care, child care, and immigration. Those with professional jobs had similar issues, but they were making more money and could better afford child care, health care, and immigration advice (some may have also been offered these things through work). For professionals, life in the US was also made less stressful through decent pay and benefits.

Meeting the pressing social needs of immigrants were the US government, which provided information and welfare benefits on a temporary basis to asylees and low income residents, and some employers, especially those employing professional

immigrants. But those low on the pay scale often did not have health insurance and they could not pay for health care. Also, the high amount of income spent on rent decreased what was available to cover medical visits and childcare. Therefore, especially as the numbers of immigrants continued to increase, there was a continuous and growing need for information and help with immigration procedures, health care, and information about and support in work and daily life in the US. Some participants in Mary Our Mother recognized these needs and worked to address them through congregation subgroups and also by helping individual friends. The following chapter discusses in more detail how Mary Our Mother organized and created useful social capital.

Discrimination

In general, francophone Africans in the US perceived discriminatory treatment to be the result of their accent or foreignness. For instance, a middle-aged woman told me that she had trouble getting a job because of her accent. It was rare for a potential employer to respond to her application with a phone call (her name appeared foreign), but when that did happen, she felt that her accent instantly disqualified her. Why would they want to hire a foreigner when they could hire one of their own, an American? I often asked immigrants about racism; most did not interpret their experiences in this way. For instance, one man told me that not everyone treats him well, but he “can’t call that racism.”

In response to my question about his experiences with racism, one college student from the Republic of the Congo described the US as a place where racism was not a significant problem. He compared the United States with France, a country with which

francophone Africans often had more experience: **"**I don't really like France a lot. I mean I go there, I like the place, but the people can be really rude sometimes. . . . They show that [they] don't want you [there]. That is very very clear. And it's very very hard for somebody in France to make it in France. It's easier here; you have a lot of opportunities here. Even though you have some racism going on, but still it's, you can still make it here. In Congo, in France, no" [stated in English].

His experience with racism in the US was a standout moment for him:

> It was last year, I was working on Connecticut Avenue and that guy was in a black car. . . . He yelled at me, 'get out of the street, you black, you nigger. . . .' I was just shocked. That was the first time I was exposed to that. . . . I was absolutely shocked. I'd heard about it before, but being exposed to it is, I mean it's shocking. So I didn't real-, I didn't say anything because I was shocked. I can't believe you just said that to me, and in bright daylight. I mean everybody is just around [stated in English].

A woman from the Congo recounted how life was better in the US for her children than in Europe. For instance, "Especially for my children, there is more opportunity if they study well. There isn't really a problem with racism here, like elsewhere, in Europe. Here . . . it is different if everyone works, everyone goes to school. . . . There are many things that pushed me to come to the US."

In interpreting discrimination, newer immigrants tended to understand it as native discrimination against foreigners that would decrease as they improved their English skills. Immigrants who had lived in the US for a longer time or whose English ability was high tended to understand that many Americans, white and black, had stereotyped ideas about Africa. This is part of the reason the following illustrations come from Nigerians, who grew up speaking English, not French like most of my informants. However, these examples have broader application in that they depict American stereotypes about Africa.

One of my most vivid encounters related to American perceptions and racist behavior toward Africans occurred with a Nigerian woman, Molly. Molly's oldest child—now 20—was a baby when she and her husband moved to the US; they won the visa lottery, and they decided to try life in the US. But, Molly told me, life was not better in the US than Nigeria. In the US, people spoke badly about Africans. She said that people higher up—mostly well educated people like professors—interacted fine with her. As she said this, she lifted her hands above her head and signaled a flat plane above her head. Others on "her level" or even "lower than her" level thought they were better than her. For instance, upon hearing her accent a person might say to her, "Why are you here; go back to Africa." Or at work, coworkers talked to Africans as if they were "slaves," telling them what to do. Molly told me that Americans did not realize that people in Africa had houses with walls. They were dressed from neck to feet; they lived large. She told me that life in the city was "civilized."

Later, I related the gist of this conversation to Abby, also from anglophone West Africa. Whereas Molly lived in a working class city neighborhood, Abby lived in an affluent outer suburb. However, their experiences were similar. Abby recalled how a child called her son a monkey, and she noted that Americans thought Africans lived in trees. Abby also mentioned that there was an American woman nearby who wanted Abby's family out of the neighborhood. Abby concluded, "Americans just don't know." She noted that when she travelled home to visit, she lived in luxury. She went on to describe this with gusto and relish. There they had nice things, they lived in mansions, and they had drivers and nice cars, marble swimming pools. The last time she visited home, she did not have to drive for a week. She said that when filmmakers shoot video in

Africa, they do not take the video of those houses, only of the poor areas. But those areas were the equivalent of an American city's ghetto.

This derogatory mainstream attitude toward Africans was intertwined with ideas of blackness. For instance, in describing how Americans treat Africans, Abby noted that a friend of her daughter made fun of her daughter's hair, calling it fake. Abby told me that her son was the only black child in his grade from kindergarten until the end of the fourth grade, and she said this was hard on him. At that time, the school was one percent black. She said that it made him timid.

At an annual gala of Mary Our Mother, people danced following dinner. It was warm in the room, which you could see in the gleam of sweat on many faces. I was enjoying the dance from my seat at the table when one of the congregation leaders saw me. He did not sit down, but said hello in passing, with a half smile, and he commented to me that "we are not always like this." To me, his comment signaled that here at the dance, these immigrants might come across too close to the stereotype. He did not want the predominant understanding of who they were and what they were about to be this stereotype.

To some Americans, Africans were "savage" or "primitive," ideas that resonated with a colonial ideology. Some African immigrants concentrated on American social fields that were more accepting, like the university and some professional and internationally oriented jobs. African immigrants tended to continue working to succeed in the labor market, but they also looked for their own institutions that helped them cope with their experiences and provided alternative routes through which they could express and act on their desires. The congregation Mary Our Mother was a pan-African, French-

speaking community that was created through the Catholic Church. It was a refuge of sorts where francophone Africans explained hardships and expressed and acted on their pain.

Mary Our Mother

About 20 years ago, Emilie came to the US through her work. Emilie had spent almost a decade working in anglophone West Africa before moving to the US. In the US, Emilie made friends at work and at social gatherings through work. She later received her bachelor's degree from a local university. (She had attained a vocational diploma before coming to the US.) As she told me, spirituality was very important to her and this was evident in the large amount of time that she devoted to her religious community, Mary Our Mother. Involvement with this community consumed the leisure (non-work) time—the little that there often was—of many of its members. Some lived nearby; others traveled an hour or more to arrive at church.

The congregation Mary Our Mother was made up of people from francophone West and Central Africa and Haiti who lived in the Washington, DC metropolitan area, mostly in the District and Maryland. Nearly all participants spoke French and had completed high school or college. They held diverse jobs in the US—some were diplomats, others taxi drivers, and some were students—and included people who arrived in this country twenty years ago as well as people who were newly arrived. The congregation included men and women of all ages. The countries most heavily represented in the congregation were Cameroon, Ivory Coast, Togo, and Congo, but there were also members from Benin, Haiti, Gabon, Rwanda, the Republic of the Congo, and

the Central African Republic. Haitians had a somewhat different history and US location than those of Africans. This created occasional problems for Haitians in the congregation, as Haitian needs and identities were superseded by reference to Africa. However, Haitians continued to take active roles in the congregation.

As described, a congregation is a group of lay people who gather together voluntarily on a regular basis at a fixed location for worship and other activities. Congregations within the Catholic Church occur at the level of the parish, which is the smallest unit of the institution and is centered around a church with regular services and clergy and that can include multiple congregations. The parish that was home to Mary Our Mother was founded in 1951, and it had a history of serving as home-base for new immigrant groups. According to Bernadette, a European-American who was involved in church operation and had been a parish participant since 1961, the parish had hosted several immigrant populations that mirrored the changing face of the surrounding neighborhood. Bernadette noted that the church had welcomed Cubans and Vietnamese in the past, but as immigrant groups became established, they moved out of the neighborhood. Bernadette related that the next major immigrant group to move into the neighborhood consisted of Hispanics. The French-language service was in addition to the regular parish weekend schedule that also included Spanish language masses, a multi-cultural mass, and a gospel mass. A Haitian mass was said once per month.

At Mary Our Mother masses, the priest often asked who was new to the services, and after mass someone from the welcoming committee greeted the newcomers and asked them to fill out a parish registration card, on which people noted the names and ages of household members, address, and ethnicity. However, not all participants

registered; also, those who did register may not have attended. The racial/ethnic categories tracked by church statistics were white, black, Hispanic, and Asian. Since the church did not track people's origin countries, the church statistician entered those who noted home country or continent, for instance, Cameroon or Africa, as black.

The 2005 parish census counted a total of 6282 members, including children. The parish estimate of the racial/ethnic composition of these members follows: 25 percent white, 33 percent black, 34 percent Hispanic, one percent Asian, and seven percent other. Within the category black, francophone Africans equaled the numbers of black Americans. In 2005, the parish grew three percent. In 2006 there were a total of 2290 registered households: 138 were Asian, mostly from Bangladesh, India, and the Philippines; 743 were black; 794 were Hispanic; 488 were white, a number that was decreasing; and 15 families were other or mixed.

The congregation Mary Our Mother was founded by a Canadian priest who had worked in Africa and who saw francophone Africans in Washington, DC turning to Protestant churches. According to the congregation website, at that time, "a lot of African Catholic francophones attended evangelical churches because of linguistic or cultural barriers in existing Catholic churches." The priest told me that these Africans "sometimes kind of lose themselves within the African Americans, which is not quite their heritage either." He claimed that Africans looked for familiar language and style and religious education for their children.

This priest and a handful of immigrants began Mary Our Mother in December 2000. The founding priest searched out a few people from Congo to decrease the tension felt between Ivoirians and Cameroonians when they were the only two groups involved.

These early participants focused on leaving ethnic mentalities at home to “work as one Africa.” In contrast to these early days, said one active participant, the congregation in 2006 boasted much diversity.

In the beginning, the group consisted of about 20 people, plus children, that met in a chapel of this church. Because a parish draws Catholics in its vicinity, some francophones already attended mass there before hearing about Mary Our Mother. When Mary Our Mother was forming, announcements about it were published in the weekly bulletin, which was distributed at each Sunday mass. Bulletins included the time of each Sunday mass and its type (or language), for instance, multicultural mass, gospel mass, and Spanish mass. They also included information about parish events, announcements, and prayers. News of a regular Catholic mass in French also spread by word of mouth. Soon the growing congregation outgrew the chapel. By the middle of 2004, the congregation claimed 450 families. By 2006, the congregation had begun exploring how to create a francophone African parish.

Mary Our Mother was a large congregation of people from a variety of backgrounds and social contexts. In turn, these backgrounds were reflected in uneven, dynamic ways in prayer groups, in congregation retreats, and in special services that were attended by varying numbers of congregation participants. Frequently, I heard people say that they looked forward to Sundays, that this was *their* day, the only day of the week when they could pray, socialize, and not work, although it was not always possible to have a work-free Sunday in the US. Some spent the whole day at church. For instance, choir practice and religious education began several hours before mass. Figuring in time for Sunday bus rides and connections, at least one woman left the house over three hours

before choir practice. Adoration in the chapel commenced at thirty minutes before the afternoon mass. Following mass were occasionally meetings, congregation events, or an extra choir practice to rehearse for the next, upcoming event.

In describing the congregation in the following chapters, I find it useful to group congregation participants into two groups based on level of involvement in the congregation. The first category is Sunday participants, people who attended most Sunday masses but who did not typically join in other congregation activities, except occasionally or except for some Sunday activities. A second group was the involved group and consisted of people who attended most Sunday services and participated regularly in one or more congregation activities during the week. Those people who were very involved on Sundays can also be considered involved. Approximately 80 people volunteered on Mary Our Mother committees, and three prayer groups included about 90-100 regular participants. There was a high degree of overlap between committees and prayer groups. Also, the categories of participation are not distinct, and some people in each group were more active than others within the same group. In addition, people could move from being inactive to being active and vice versa, guided by their interest or life events.

Congregation participants noticed that there were different levels of participation among themselves. For instance, at one committee meeting, an involved participant pointed out that many congregation participants had graduation events to attend at the same time that this group planned to hold a reception—after Sunday mass. Another then complained that Mary Our Mother was just a Sunday community, but people should want to come during the week as well. This turned into a brief discussion about the general

lack of involvement by Mary Our Mother participants. A woman at the meeting noted that there were two types of people at Mary Our Mother. One type *needed* what they offered. This person was not involved except when beneficial to him or her. The other type of person *loved* being involved. This type of person was involved whether or not she or he found it useful on a personal level. One man quickly shifted the discussion to a productive, business-like resolve and suggested that each person present be responsible for bringing two to five others to the reception.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I described how francophone Africans moved to the US in search of increased security. Some were from the tumultuous context of Congo. Others came looking for the ability to be politically outspoken or to work without worrying about the consequences of being complicit in corruption in the workplace. Many francophone Africans came to the US after winning the visa lottery. Many also came through family reunification and on temporary visas. A common strategy for those who came on temporary visas was to apply for asylum. Others were sponsored by their employers.

I also described how living and working as a French-speaking African in Washington could be difficult. Those who did not migrate in a professional job at the IMF or an embassy, for example, or those who migrated in that way but then stayed at the end of employment, worked to build their US employment histories and/or schooling. In Washington, immigrants learned and worked in a new context on a daily basis—frequently going back to school or working jobs that they never would have considered working at home. They sensed that Americans tended to look down on them because of

their accents, and those who had been in the US longer learned the significance of being African, something interrelated with blackness. Their combined statuses of immigrants, non-native English speakers, and black Africans located francophone African immigrants as outsiders in many Washington, DC contexts.

In the process of getting by in Washington, francophone Africans shared a common experience. For some, a welcome counterpoint to daily life was the congregation Mary Our Mother, a recently formed and quickly growing congregation of francophone Africans. Thus, this congregation's development was in part a response to being African in Washington. People identified with each other in part due to their common structural location. The congregation was housed within a parish that was accustomed to welcoming newcomers. Some Mary Our Mother participants attended mostly on Sundays, while a minority was more heavily involved.

The next two chapters look at religious participation of immigrants in this congregation in a holistic way. The chapters focus on understanding religious structure and meaning in an approach that enhances the literature, which concentrates on structural elements of immigrant religion. To more effectively assess the value of this approach, I divide the next two chapters into the domains of structure and meaning. However, in lived experience, these domains are integrated. The final section of the domain meaning, continuity and change, discusses how they are integrated.

CHAPTER 7

NEGOTIATING STRUCTURES

In Washington, DC, Congolese found themselves among a diverse group of Africans who contended with their new situatedness as foreign and as black Africans, categorizations that made life in the new society more difficult. Many francophone immigrants were unable to draw on their education and professional experiences, aspects of their cultural capital. This was tied up with their difficulties speaking and understanding English. As a counterpoint to the harsh Washington, DC climate, some francophone Africans focused on building social capital in the form of building community through the congregation.

Through their participation in congregation social programming and organization, people increased bonding and bridging social capital. This chapter inquires into how Mary Our Mother participants solidified and reinforced, or reproduced, social ties. I understand participants' focus on group identity to be a response to the constraints of larger structures and an assertion of continuities, and these transform their relationships (Bourdieu 1986). Through their participation and focus on particular identities, people bonded multiple ethnic groups within the congregation, and they bridged the congregation to other groups. By virtue of this "group work" people had enhanced access to resources and opportunities such as civic skills, decision-making opportunities, free spaces, information, greater voice, and practical and emotional supports.

The information from Mary Our Mother suggests that increasing systematization of sub-congregation groups like prayer groups leads to increased surveillance by religious specialists. This results in a negotiation of religious practices and meanings between the group and the priest that gives some voice to participants but more authority to the priest. This understanding is useful for addressing the contradiction that exists in the literature: Pentecostal-Charismatic Christians are egalitarian and yet they practice within religious institutions, which are necessarily hierarchical. In the course of the discussion, this chapter also addresses two related issues raised in the literature review on Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity in Africa. First, what is the significance of the social capital created by the global identity of Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity, and, second, how do Pentecostal-Charismatic Christians create social capital on the local level?

This chapter is structured around the three domains outlined in Chapter Two and used to understand continuity and change in religion for BaKongo and Congolese in Chapters Four and Five. Religious institutions exist in relationship with political institutions; therefore it is important to begin with this context. Next, meaning is negotiated within religious institutions. Religious specialists and lay groups work out meanings that help participants understand their experiences, and religious specialists have an interest in maintaining the authority of the religious institution. The final section looks in depth at how trust and friendship were developed among the group and the useful resources that accrued to participants through social capital as a result.

The Relationship between US Religious and Political Fields

This section describes some of the linkages between political and religious institutions in the US. The belief that religion and politics were separate and that individuals had the right to choose their religions was important to the American imagination. In practice, however, there were overlaps between the religious and political fields. To understand these overlaps, I refer to Bourdieu's (1986) conceptualization of the political-religious relationship, outlined in Chapter Two, whereby the two extremes of a continuum of religious-political overlap are, on the one side, religion dominating politics, and, on the other, government controlling religion. I discuss first the influence of political entities on the religious field, and then I look at how religious agents and institutions worked to influence the political field. On a whole, the religious field in the US had a great deal of autonomy.

First, it is apparent that US political institutions tended to treat some groups preferentially. Preferred groups tended to be Christian, and they tended to have many followers and a history longer than a few decades. In recent years, these recognized Christians included Catholics and various Protestant churches, groups which were not necessarily accepted by the mainstream when they were new. For instance, Mormons did not comprise a "respectable" religion in the 1940s (Barkun 1993:597). In contrast, political authorities tended to distrust Muslim groups and new Christian groups, such as the Branch Davidians. For instance, since September 11, 2001, the government increased its scrutiny of Muslim social networks and finances. Also, government agents tended to

view new Christian groups as cults, a term with a pejorative sense that underlined government unease with them.

For instance, government authorities tended to interpret new religious groups such as the Branch Davidians not as legitimate religions but as groups that were out of order (Barkun 1993:596-597). When authorities labeled the Branch Davidians a cult, they were effectively calling this Christian group "too exotic, marginal or dangerous," closer to psychopathology than religion (Barkun 1993:597). In its dealings with the Branch Davidians, the government treated the group as delusional hostage-takers or hijackers (Barkun 1993:596).[8] The government agencies' beliefs that Branch Davidians possessed illegal firearms were probably true, but their beliefs that children were being abused later turned out to be wrong (B. Robinson 2008). The government treated this religious movement with excessive force in a confrontation that most likely could have ended peacefully, and this was largely the result of the refusal of the agencies to see the group as a religious one.

While this case was arguably an extreme one, it does highlight the political heavy-handedness that could be taken toward new religious groups. On the other hand, the religious field was quite autonomous from the political one. Some movements for political change originated in religious groups; for instance, much of the leadership of the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s came out of black Baptist churches (Encyclopedia Britannica 2011a). Martin Luther King, Jr., son and grandson of Baptist preachers, was a new Baptist preacher when he organized the Southern Christian Leadership Conference

8. After trying to search their Texas compound for illegal arms in February 1993, 76 ATF agents ended up in a firefight with Branch Davidians, an event followed by a two month FBI-led standoff and a violent outcome in which about 75 Branch Davidians died (B. Robinson 2008).

and spoke out and acted against racial segregation throughout the US. One of the influences on King was the gospel that called for increased focus on social inequalities. Significantly, while the Baptist church was an important foundation for the civil rights movement, the police frequently put King and followers in jail, and while change occurred, including the passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, social change was not as far reaching as what they had envisioned it should be (Encyclopedia Britannica 2011b).

Besides new Christian groups, established churches, and Islam, there were other religions (some with worldwide reach), and the relationship between these various groups and the US political field was complex. People were mostly free in their religious choices, especially when their practices were unthreatening to the political order. The political field maintained an active interest in the goings on of religious entities and could be quick to interfere if groups followed what it considered to be antisocial or illegal behaviors. Also, for the government, targeting new groups was less contentious than going after people working from within established religious institutions. This was significant for individuals in this society, as it suggests there were benefits for individuals to following established religions.

Political entities had varying religious ties; for instance, some politicians campaigned on a platform through which they identified with particular Christian ideals. These ties could be more or less personal on the part of the politician and more or less dependent on the politician's major funders and other supporters. Other government agents, including police officers, social service case agents, and judges, were also influenced by personal religious beliefs and by the policies and predominant religious climate in which they worked.

The Catholic organizational hierarchy mirrored that of the national government and thus could facilitate transfer of government resources to immigrants, as shown in the work of Mooney (2005) on Haitian immigrants in the US. Mooney (2005) showed how religious hierarchies enabled the transfer of resources from the government to immigrants. This represents an additional link between the religious and political fields, and it highlights the ways in which political-religious relationships were complex, not neatly showing a disproportionate influence of one over the other. At Mary Our Mother, I saw how involved participants used this government-church parallelism to create a local health clinic. Some participants worked with Catholic Charities and the Montgomery County Council Health and Human Services Committee (HHSC) for funding and support.

Churches could work to influence the political field through lobbies and through their authority over their members. Around election time in the US, I heard Catholic priests in the Midwest and the East urging congregations of mostly native white Americans to vote for pro-life political representatives. However, I did not see this issue taken up at Mary Our Mother. During my fieldwork, the parish hosted political information events to which it invited local government officials, other Catholic specialists from the diocese, local nonprofit groups, and church participants. These events were intended to serve as an opportunity for church participants to voice their concerns and ask questions to political leaders, and for political leaders to hear the concerns of the church officials and participants.

For instance, in November 2005 I attended a meeting entitled Advocacy Training for Immigrants. There were about 55 people present, including representatives from a

secular immigrant NGO and Catholic Relief Services, some church participants, others whom I did not recognize, a lay individual employed in the Catholic bureaucracy, a Catholic priest, and three politicians, seated in front of the crowd: Maryland Delegate Anne Healey, Prince Georges County Council Member Will Campos (an immigrant himself), and US Congressman Chris Van Hollen (from Maryland). The intent behind this meeting was to learn to organize to benefit immigrants. Addressing the Catholics in the room, the Catholic bureaucratic representative said that they needed to persuade other Catholics of the "inherent value and good of migration and immigration." He noted that the goal of a new Catholic program was to encourage native Americans to see immigrants as sisters and brothers in Christ. As he said, "we start with the presence of Jesus Christ in every individual regardless of where they come from."

The Catholic priest at this event described Church teachings on social justice and immigrants, and then people in attendance asked practical questions about immigrant advocacy to the politicians, which were answered by each of the politicians in turn. This was an event organized by the Catholic Church at which politicians and NGO representatives gathered with Catholics, to work on an issue that was a priority of the Catholic Church; the degree of concern held by the politicians for the issue of immigration was not clear. In this context, religious participants learned how to engage effectively the political field, but also, politicians listened to the religiously-oriented concerns of Catholics.

Political representatives also attended various church events, contributing further to the negotiation of influence between the political and religious fields. At one of the annual gatherings of the regional African Catholic Association, of which Mary Our

Mother was an active part, Montgomery County Council Member Steven Silverman spoke. He noted that he had worked closely with the various entities of the Archdiocese, including the Director of Social Concerns, the Cardinal, and Catholic Charities, and he drew attention to his concern for ensuring that those who were “less fortunate” had access to social services and programs. He also recognized a friend of his, a Cameroonian, whose knowledge had proven to be an asset to Silverman’s work on the council. For Silverman, attending this church event of African Catholics, most of whom were first-generation immigrants, appears to have been a way to develop and strengthen the ties of his political office with a constituent group and a way to increase his recognition among potential voters. For African Catholics, who publicized events like these to local political leaders, Silverman’s presence was undoubtedly assurance that their group had some voice in the region and practical support.

The Archdiocese of Washington had an Office for Justice and Service that arranged meetings between parish groups and politicians. This office also maintained an email list to which it sent frequent emails, about two or three per month, requesting action on the part of those reading them. Typically this action entailed calling one’s political representative on a particular bill that was being debated. For instance, in one email, Larry Couch, the legislative policy coordinator for this office, wrote that the House would be voting on a budget reconciliation bill. He cited the name of the bill, the date the vote was scheduled to take place, and he described the concerns of the US bishops: the bill included “provisions that many believe could be harmful to many low-income children, families, elderly and people with disabilities who are least able to provide for themselves.” Among the specific groups to be affected were recently arrived, legal

immigrants, who stood to lose some government economic support. This was another avenue in which the Catholic Church, through a specialized office, put forward an effort to direct the political actions of its lay participants and in doing so, attempted to affect the political field.

In addition, various subgroups within the Church organized with other faith-based organizations, secular nonprofits, and others to lobby the government. For instance, during March and April, 2003, various groups throughout the country were angry about a proposed bill that would have made being in this country without legal documentation and aiding people without appropriate documentation a felony. One flyer that I received by email claimed that this bill would affect "11 million undocumented workers as well as those who help them. This includes church employees or volunteers who assist people with food, shelter, health care, or other necessities. Immigration reform is now before the U. S. Senate. We must defeat H.R. 4437, the 'Border Protection, Anti-Terrorism, and Illegal Immigration Control Act of 2005.' We must act now!"

I attended two rallies in downtown Washington, DC during this period. The first drew a total of about 20,000 participants, and observers said the second rally was ten times the size of the first. In the month between the two rallies, coalitions of civic groups, churches, and labor groups had grown by communicating through e-mail, phone calls, word of mouth, and media (Archibold 2006). While I did not see Mary Our Mother participants at these rallies, other parish participants, including Euro-Americans and Latinos attended, taking church vans together to a metro stop. I was struck by the religious tone of the rallies, which incorporated prayer and the words of local religious leaders, including the archbishop of Washington, DC. This was clearly a way in which

religious groups organized together and with others around an issue and worked to influence policy.

While US political and religious fields operated relatively autonomously from each other, entities of one tried to influence those of the other. It is noteworthy that new religious groups such as the Branch Davidians appeared threatening to the government. These new movements tended to develop outside the purview of established religions, religions which tended to support the existing social structure but which, in dynamic response to their lay members, also lobbied the political field for change in regard to particular issues. Individuals who chose to participate in recognized religions, except for Islam, with which I did not deal here, were relatively free from the scrutiny of the government, whereas the actions of those who chose to follow new religious groups were more likely to be monitored.

Negotiating Voice in the Catholic Hierarchy

As noted in Chapter Two, the religious field in complex societies is a domain in which people may participate more or less (Turner 1968:442). Specialists within a religious institution have power to create laws and sanction the practices of lay participants (Bourdieu 1971:304). In the case of the Catholic Church, these specialists are priests and bishops arranged in an internal hierarchy. Those higher on the hierarchy tend to have more power in marking out and authorizing knowledge and practices, making certain phenomena thinkable and sacred, and in doing so guide the formation and maintenance of dispositions (Asad 1983:242-249; Bourdieu 1971:324-325; Turner 1968:440-442). Priests not only negotiate meaning across their hierarchy but also in a

dialectical relationship with the interests of groups of lay participants (Bourdieu 1971:324-325). This complicated process of negotiating authorized practices and meanings can be understood by seeing the Church as a transversal organization, in which ideas and struggles originating in its different components (top, bottom, center) or from outside of it about how to be Catholic cut across its hierarchy (Torre 2002:305-306).

In this section, the interest is the ways in which hierarchy within the formal organization of the Catholic Church negotiated acceptable practices and meanings with a constituent group of lay individuals, those of Mary Our Mother. I describe the organization of Mary Our Mother's subgroups and the relationship that the congregation priest had with the congregation. I also describe how Mary Our Mother participants, and the congregation as an entity, came into contact with other congregations of the parish and in doing so negotiated voice.

The congregation Mary Our Mother had some autonomy in organizing its subgroups and their activities. The priest had the final say in this, but he tended to reserve his authority for interpreting Church doctrine. The dialectical process whereby the meaning of symbols was negotiated between lay people and religious specialists was evident. It occurred in the authorized space of the Catholic Church and the practices that it authorized, for instance, mass, healing services, and prayer services. The Church negotiated the symbolic system with lay groups; they negotiated strategies for how to be Catholic.

Mary Our Mother counted eight supporting groups. First, those of the hospitality committee welcomed people at the door of the church before and during mass, and they passed out church literature and bulletins. At special events, people in this committee

greeted attendees at the door, and they tended to be involved in caring for people during the event. For instance, during healing services, they covered those who fell down from the Holy Spirit with a blanket. This committee was not large, probably with about a dozen regular members, but it was quite active in congregation life.

Second, the liturgical committee was in charge of assigning people to read petitions and Bible passages during mass. This committee also took care of setting up and cleaning up religious items before and after mass and prayer services. There were two choirs, one adult and one youth. The adult choir led songs for nearly every Sunday mass. This choir included two choir directors, a man and a woman; a pianist and drum player, who were both men; and about twenty singers, about three-fourths of whom were women. As a whole, congregation participants were fond of the music of the choir, which sung enthusiastically; people used their voices and their bodies. The youth choir sung occasionally during mass and special events, and they tended to relieve the regular choir during the summer months. There were also Sunday education programs for youth and for adults. Educators were congregation volunteers, and they taught Catholic belief and prepared participants to receive sacraments.

The seventh group in this list of congregation subgroups was a committee that was concerned not primarily with the spiritual and organizational needs of the congregation but with social concerns such as health care, immigration, and child care. This group put on occasional immigration information sessions, and it was important for the creation of the health clinic. In addition, this group wished to make affordable child care available to congregation participants and worked on possible strategies. In other

words, this social concerns committee actively worked to make resources available to congregation participants through the social capital of the congregation and the Church.

People who were active in these seven groups joined voluntarily and were not elected. On the other hand, Mary Our Mother participants elected members of the pastoral committee, which made decisions about events and priorities for the congregation and represented the congregation to the parish council, from a group of interested people. In July 2006 in the school auditorium following Sunday mass, about 50-60 people voted for the pastoral committee.

Congregation life was completed with three prayer groups that met weekly. I describe these groups further below in the discussion of negotiation of meaning. First, it is important to look at the relationship of the congregation organizing committees and the congregation priest.

The subgroups of the congregation mostly came about and were maintained through the interests and actions of lay people. While there was some influence of the congregation priest in setting up some of the core organizational groups, especially the adult choir, children's education, and the liturgical, hospitality, and pastoral committees, the influence of the priest in the activities of these groups remained limited. While the presence of the priest was necessary for mass, it was not obligatory at the prayer meetings or other subgroup meetings. According to one priest, one of his primary responsibilities as the head of Mary Our Mother was to organize the congregation in such a way that everyone was able to participate in community life. In doing this, he met with the leader of each subgroup and prayer group at least once per month to learn about group happenings, for instance, how it was working, whether they were having difficulties, and

how he could help them. He also organized pastoral committee meetings. He made a regular tour of the various groups when they met, and, he said, “I help them. If there is something that isn’t right, I say, ‘no no like this, not like that’ . . . . So I am here full-time for [Mary Our Mother] community.” Importantly, he was talking about correcting matters of belief. He did not direct but was supportive of the activities of the various committees.

The people who served on committees decided what they would do. The president of the pastoral committee was the congregation’s representative to the parish’s pastoral committee. He brought the concerns of the congregation to the parish, along with the congregation priest. Moreover, the groups on which the congregation was less dependent for its core organization, including the social concerns committee and the prayer groups, were entirely dependent on lay participants in their initiation and maintenance. This is important because it was at this very basic level of congregation that the priest and participants negotiated religious meanings and that participants figured out their priorities, both social and religious. For instance, Mary Our Mother participants were careful about what political alliances they made as a congregation, and they made these decisions themselves. A prominent local NGO extended an invitation to the congregation to create an alliance; the NGO wanted to expand beyond its primarily Spanish-language reach. One involved participant on the social concerns committee argued that Mary Our Mother would be in an advantageous political position by maintaining its autonomy; the committee decided not to ally with the NGO at that time.

In the summer of 2004, a woman who arrived from Togo two months before told me that at home there were *many* church groups in which one could choose to take part, but here, there were only two. She was referring to two prayer groups. By 2007, there

were three groups—Rising to the Faith, The Renewal, and the Legion of Mary—focused on prayer and learning about Catholicism. These groups met at the parish on a weekly basis. Rising to the Faith and The Renewal were congregation prayer groups while the Legion of Mary was a chapter of an international organization. These prayer groups were important in the process of negotiating meaning, discussed below. The three prayer groups met during the week in the congregation's chapel and meeting rooms. As in the committees, the leaders of prayer groups volunteered. Mass was said in the congregation's chapel two to three evenings per week before prayer group meetings.

The Renewal, begun during the initial formation of the congregation, followed Pentecostal-Charismatic Catholic guidelines, issued by CCR. This group numbered about 30 or 35 participants in a typical evening and included some Rising to the Faith participants. About 50 people attended for important occasions, such as prayer group with a visiting priest. In the summer of 2003 the priest behind the initial development of Mary Our Mother told me that this group "planted" the congregation in prayer and that it was a "very successful" charismatic prayer group. The group was central in the organization of Pentecostal-Charismatic events and congregation prayer retreats. In contrast, Rising to the Faith developed toward the end of this research, and, while open to all, actually consisted of a small group. About a half dozen attended in one evening. This group followed a worship style similar to the Renewal but was more informal and perhaps more egalitarian, an idea picked up further below. A third group, the Legion of Mary, requested Mary's help in prayer and evangelization work. This group was the parish chapter of the international Catholic lay organization Legion of Mary. It was in a formative stage and

was tutored by a Legion of Mary member from a large Haitian congregation in Washington, DC.

To examine the negotiation of meanings and practices, I turn to sermons and prayer groups. One important difference between prayer group meetings (including the mass in conjunction with them) and the typical Sunday mass was the style of the sermons. Non-Sunday sermons tended to take place in the chapel, a room in the parish's school. The atmosphere for these sermons was relaxed and informal. While the Sunday sermon could include questions asked by the priest to the congregation, these questions were few in number and were superseded by the priests' monologue. On Sundays, the priest's sermon was an interpretation of the readings, based closely in the Bible, and it typically took a rather intellectual perspective. However, sermons that occurred in the context of the prayer groups, visiting Pentecostal-Charismatics, and general prayer retreats, especially when these sermons happened outside the church building, had a dialogic character.

I first recognized this common approach one night that I attended a Thursday prayer meeting. The Thursday mass sermon was similar to one given on another occasion by a visiting Pentecostal-Charismatic priest. In both instances, people gave louder (than Sunday) vocal responses, for example, to signal agreement, and the priest asked questions of the congregation that participants then answered out loud. This dialogic space provided people the opportunity to ask questions of priests. They recognized the spiritual authority of these religious specialists, but they also claimed some voice for themselves in negotiating the direction of the course of the discussion.

The more open character of these dialogic sermons meant that involved participants had more opportunities than Sunday participants to discuss meaning with religious experts. Recognizing the authority of leaders, especially priests, they had time to ask questions. Any message or explanation delivered by the priest was balanced by his interaction with the congregation. This interaction could include a discussion of a topic, especially a theme from the Bible reading of the day, or it could consist of the priest directing participants to specific passages of the Bible throughout the sermon that they then looked up in their Bibles. Participants often questioned the priest about the meaning of Bible passages or about Catholic belief.

A similar dialogic character could be seen in prayer groups. During one prayer group meeting that I attended, the group of about 10 adults took time to discuss a Bible passage that participants were to have read beforehand. After three people took turns reading the verse, the group discussed it. Group members encouraged each person to contribute to the discussion about the Bible passage. Overall, the atmosphere was open and informal. The priest came in during the discussion; while there, he sat on the edge of the circle, and he did not take the lead on anything. He added his thoughts after everyone had given their opinions. This Bible study took place after a sequence of informal and simultaneous, individual prayers and group singing. Like dialogic sermons, prayer groups offered space where lay participants could be active in interpreting meanings. In dialogic space, participants interacted with each other and with the priest to understand meanings. It was a setting where lay people actively negotiated the religious practices and meanings that were appropriate and authorized. Lay people managed much of this back-and-forth in terms of the topic chosen for discussion and in terms of sharing their interpretations. The

priest gave the final, authorized interpretation of the passage or topic, and he tended to do so in a way that made sense to the experiences of the particular group.

Some small groups offered a structure that was less formal and more open to participant direction than others. For instance, the structure of the prayer group Rising to the Faith was more informal than that of the others. Participants did not sit classroom style—in rows facing the leader at the front—as those at Renewal meetings did and as people did when Pentecostal-Charismatic specialists visited. For prayer and singing, Rising to the Faith participants formed a semi-circle facing the corner where they believed Christ to be present in the Eucharist, and then, to study, they faced each other. A result of their less hierarchical mode was a perceived increased freedom in which people could act. There were fewer rules to follow, and participants chose the length of time spent praying and singing and the content of study. Group activities in this setting were singing and studying; there were no rote prayers like at the Renewal and mass. Instead, prayers were the words people spoke informally and spontaneously, out loud, directly to God.

This more egalitarian mode of worship could also be seen in informal prayer groups that occurred outside of church and that included Mary Our Mother participants as well as people outside the congregation. Because these groups were not under the guidance of the congregation or its priest, people had more freedom in worship style. For instance, one young woman from Ivory Coast, an involved participant in Mary Our Mother, noted to me that there were always rules to follow at mass, and informal meetings allowed something different, something charismatic. While prayer groups held at the church tended to follow rules, people also joined together in their homes in a more

relaxed style. Some understood the freedom to pray as one pleases, not according to Catholic directives or under the gaze of the Church and its specialists, to be more charismatic than what could be done at church.

These observations about various styles of religious practice relate directly to questions about this Christian form posed in the Introduction. The literature has stressed its egalitarian form as important for participants, who are equal in the eyes of God, in spite of social differences like income, race, or geographic origin (e.g., MacRobert 1988:90). This egalitarian stress was seen in Mary Our Mother, both during Sunday services and more explicitly Pentecostal-Charismatic times. The literature has noted that all participants have access to the gifts of the Holy Spirit, something that seems to support the egalitarian emphasis. However, the literature has not explained how these egalitarian ideas and spiritual practices work out on the ground in contexts where religious specialists have authority over religion. To say that religious practice is egalitarian and to say that there is simultaneously a religious specialist seems contradictory. When a religious group is under the guidance of a religious authority, it negotiates meanings and practices with that authority (Bourdieu 1971:319-325). In addition, religious institutions systematize particular practices and knowledge as legitimate means for experiencing truth while excluding others (Asad 1983:242-249; Bourdieu 1971:322).

The case of Mary Our Mother indicates that as a religious group becomes more systematized, it comes increasingly under the purview of religious authorities. The Renewal and visiting Pentecostal-Charismatic specialists at Mary Our Mother operated within the directives of the Catholic Church for the proper conduct of Catholicism. These

directives ensured that group practices were, for instance, not too loud. The Renewal relied on media put out by CCR and a prescribed format for prayer group services. In contrast, Rising to the Faith was smaller, newer, and less formal. Their practices looked very similar to some followed in meetings of the Renewal—for instance, individual prayers were out loud and spontaneous—but contrasted to Renewal practices that followed a more rigid schedule, included rote prayers, and followed designated prayer group leaders. Also, groups that met in people's homes necessarily offered individuals more room to practice as they desired.

This description enhances our understanding of the working out of tension between egalitarian ideals and practices and religious hierarchy. Groups that are informal and small tend to be able to maintain more egalitarianism in how participants understand meanings. Larger groups and those incorporated within a religious institution, on the other hand, must operate within the set of practices and meanings that the institution has authorized. At the same time, at this level, lay groups are also able to negotiate meaning and practice with the religious specialist. In Mary Our Mother, this negotiation occurred in dialogic, group spaces.

It is also important to look at the effects of religious participation in terms of the larger religious hierarchy. As noted in the chapter's first section, participating in established religious institutions in the US offered individuals a means of group religious participation relatively free from political scrutiny. Religious institutions worked in various ways—for instance, through direct lobbying and influencing their participants—to influence the political field. I now turn to look at the negotiation of power within the religious institution on the parish and regional level.

Mary Our Mother's priests were important for influencing the congregation's connections to other parts of the Catholic Church. The various priests who have led the congregation have lived in West or Central Africa. The founding priest appeared to have more authority within the Church hierarchy. He was active in the creation and early development of Mary Our Mother, and he actively supported the work initiated by its subgroups. For instance, he worked alongside the social concerns committee in developing the health clinic. I believe that the priests who followed the founder as primary priests of this congregation have not had the same authority within the Church. Perhaps this was because they were African (the founder was Canadian), because English was their second language, or because they were younger. They were active supporters of the congregation on the level of the parish and region but their support was more understated and less aggressive than that of the founder. For instance, they did not actively organize groups or lobby for congregation needs.

It may be that as the congregation became established in the parish, it had less need for a vocal advocate within the Church. Size and visibility gave Mary Our Mother more influence, something that other parish congregations tended to perceive as threatening. This phenomenon was not limited to the experiences of Mary Our Mother. For instance, when the Spanish-language population first began to grow in the surrounding neighborhood and in the parish, about 20 years ago according one parishioner, a "certain number of the older white folks left the parish." More recently, the fast growth of Mary Our Mother created additional tension. As another knowledgeable involved participant put it,

> One of the problems is that there is, and I hate to say it, but the truth is that many Americans feel, you know, we've opened our doors, and we've bent over backwards for the Hispanic community, and what are you doing now? Here is another language group. Here is another group. Does that mean that we have to redo all of this again? So we have to be very very careful [in pursuing recognition for Mary Our Mother]. But at the same time, we can't also say [Mary Our Mother] will remain quiet in a little corner, when in fact the numbers are increasing and increasing. And the need for the recognition of this African community needs to be fully recognized.
>
> Now that the French Africans have come, it's become much more than a prayer group; it's become an outreach group. And that, that's caused instability in the parish, because they liked them as long as they were that prayerful little group in the corner. But now they've started to ask for services and wanting to be more of an integral part in the parish council and all of that.

This person recognized that the growth of Mary Our Mother worried the parish's established Americans. The latter perceived the new, dynamic congregation—an evangelizing group with a growing voice within the parish—as threatening. This illustrates how, while Sunday participants did not actively negotiate with other congregations and parish priests, they did in effect vote with their feet. Individuals organized together and negotiated power as a group within an institution. This was important for immigrants who found themselves marginalized as individuals within the larger society. By attending congregation services and events, their combined numbers had influence that was drawn upon by its involved members and priests.

Developing Social Ties and Accessing Resources through Mary Our Mother

Religious communities shift form in changing contexts. As immigrants negotiated their place within a different social structure, one of the ways that they formed friendships and community ties was through religion. As noted in the Introduction, this has been an important form of immigrant organizing in US society, a society that has not

required them to change their religions. This section looks at the development of the congregation Mary Our Mother in terms of how participants created and drew on social capital for enhanced access to resources. First, using the concepts bonding and bridging social capital, I examine how participants created and strengthened mutual ties, which led to social capital. Then I look at the resources that social capital made available for congregation participants. These resources were differentially available, depending on the character of a person's participation in the group. Finally, I focus on how congregation participants drew on various types of social capital to create a free health clinic for francophone immigrants.

Creating Congregation Solidarity

As discussed in Chapter Two, social groups or forms of community must be continually reproduced (Bourdieu 1986:249-250). This happens when people invest time and energy in the group, resulting in feelings of respect, friendship, and obligation toward each other. This process results in the transformation of contingent relationships into indispensable and voluntary ones. When people invested time and energy in the congregation Mary Our Mother, they developed feelings of respect and obligation toward each other, and they transformed their relationships, rooted in their structural locations, into important and intentional associations. However, elements important for the group's identity are not explicable only in light of their structural location. In developing this community, immigrants drew on elements that represented important continuities for them, including Catholicism, a common form of socializing, their own idea of Africa, and a common language. In other words, congregation identity was more than foreign, black,

and non-English speaking, and it was more than an American idea of African, the categories within which these immigrants "fit." The elements around which the congregation bonded pushed back on the structure.

This section on creating congregational solidarity focuses on how participants formed strong ties, which resulted in social capital (Bourdieu 1986:248-250). How were feelings of friendship and obligation that resulted in bonding social capital (Saegert, Thompson, and Warren 2001:8-11) formed in the congregation? I rely here on what participants told me was important to them. I understand these various elements to work together in creating bonding social capital for Mary Our Mother.

Causer: Comfort in Culture

An important element present at Mary Our Mother church services that people perceived to be missing at American ones was largely encompassed in the verb *causer*. *Causer* means to talk familiarly with someone (Rey 1998). At Mary Our Mother, people who talked familiarly did so in a manner that was unhurried and that could include varying lengths of comfortable silences. While talking familiarly, people could exchange greetings and ask about each other and each others' families (often asking about specific members by name) after church. If the people chatting were from different places, they might ask about those places. The way that people chatted tended to be the opposite of rushing out once services finished, which was what people did at American Catholic services. On the other hand, the majority of congregants tended to leave within fifteen to thirty minutes after the end of the service.

Francine, introduced in Chapter Six, attended the church services of another francophone congregation for fifteen years. This congregation was primarily French and Belgian with some African members. She switched congregations after learning of Mary Our Mother through a friend, and she noted the difference between the two congregations:

> The thing is like a cultural thing. You know when the mass finishes here, for instance, we take time just, sometimes to laugh, to stop and to say hi, to ask how people are doing. But [at the other French parish], it was like, when the mass is over, it's like, there is no more meeting. Everyone just quietly goes back home. And I didn't like it, because I am from Africa. And in Africa, I think, I will not say we are easy people, that's not true. [Francine fumbles for the right word.] . . . But um, it's just taking time. And as a Christian, that's my own belief. I don't know about any other person. I think what the priests preach … for me it's like, I just put it in practice. If I see a human being, I will just greet, say hi, how are you. And you know, and it makes people feel good. It makes myself feel good too. And I didn't have that when I was going to the French parish. Despite the fact that the commonality there was the French language in which I grew since now. I speak French at home. . . . But I didn't see the connection. . . . [At the French parish] it's mostly people from France, and a few people from Africa. Because I was one of them, yes. A few of them but not as here. Just mostly people from France, from Belgium, yeah, mostly [stated in English and French].

Another Congolese woman told me about first learning about the congregation Mary Our Mother: "I first prayed at . . . the ten o'clock mass, ten thirty. And one day I picked up the bulletin, I looked, and oh, a francophone community was offered. So I went. It still took place over in the little chapel. There weren't a lot of people. . . . I was happy to meet Africans. . . . It was nice. [She laughed.]

After church on Sundays, I did what many congregants did. For instance, one typical Sunday, after services, I stayed in the church, greeting people that I knew and others that I did not know. I said hello to Sandie and her mother, Emilie, another woman, Emilie's husband, Monique, and the woman who sat next to a friend of mine last week.

After the service, she told me that she saw my friend earlier; maybe she was sitting over by the choir. Later I saw her talking to the man who does the video recordings and DJs at events. I also exchanged greetings with a man who always went out of his way to greet my daughter and sometimes bought her a homemade snack from a woman participant after church. Another man with whom I exchanged greetings was from Togo. He was middle-aged and wearing a suit. He asked if I was French.

A different Sunday, I greeted and spoke briefly with Pattie, Florence, Emilie, Margaret, and Guy. I also saw Hélène talking to the wife of Arnaud, whom I also greeted. I talk to Hélène, a Haitian woman, for a minute. Her spouse and children—who were not Haitian—had attended the multicultural mass that morning. Hélène told me that she did not come to the francophone mass every Sunday, but she came when she needed the feeling of it.

People also followed this same relaxed feeling in occasions outside of church, for instance, in telephone calls. In the US, many immigrants were faced with the new challenges of living far apart and the central importance of work. I often heard that at home, it was easier to be social. Everyone walked. When you saw your neighbor, you stopped and asked how they were doing, and chatted for a couple of minutes. In the US, neighbors stuck to themselves. There might be Africans in the neighborhood, but they were not familiar with each other because they were like everyone else, sticking to themselves. Moreover, they lived dispersed throughout the metro area. Immigrants who knew each other could visit with each other much like they would at home. At home, a person might have stopped by a friend or neighbor’s house without first calling, and could generally expect to find someone home. In the US, homes were frequently empty.

In addition, transportation to visit someone took time and money and would be futile if no one was home. In the US, people who knew each other called each other for a brief hello or to find out information. These calls did not necessitate formalities. Instead, people got right to the point in a conversation that could be brief but established a connection.

People attended Mary Our Mother Sunday services, then, in search of a familiar manner of interpersonal interaction. People in the congregation tended to hold this expectation in common, and acting on it together supported the development of strong social ties and thus bonding social capital. The next section looks at how common symbols of Catholicism and ways for practicing Catholicism strengthened people's feelings of trust and reciprocity toward each other.

Catholicism

Important elements that participants identified with Catholicism augmented the bonding social capital of the congregation. While many participants told me that a person's particular Christian religion was insignificant, as everyone was a child of God, I also noted numerous times when Catholicism was significant. Some participants attended mass on holy days, special days requiring Church attendance. For instance, one night I was talking with an older Cameroonian woman when she recalled that the prior Wednesday was Ash Wednesday, and she made the sign of the cross on her forehead. She told me that she went to mass the evening of Ash Wednesday, and, looking pleased, she noted that there were many people at that multicultural mass. After mass, around ten Sunday participants attended to their spirituality by praying at statues of the Virgin Mary

and Catholic saints found around the periphery of the church. Mary and various saints were also invoked during mass. Familiar Catholic rituals and statues of saints marked Catholicism as distinct from other Christian groups and thus became important bonding mechanisms.

In addition, the Sunday masses and church rituals of Catholics worldwide followed detailed guidelines established by Rome. This means that mass would be recognizable at any Catholic church, although it would be said in local languages. However, this universalism was inadequate on its own; as mentioned, participants tended to find American services unsatisfactory. Participants appreciated the energy, movement, and warmth of Mary Our Mother services, which they said contrasted from typical American services. At Mary Our Mother, moments of spontaneity happened during the Handshake of Peace and periods of song after Communion where the majority in attendance knew the words to the songs and often stood and danced in place. Once the crowd was taken up with the songs, the congregation might sing two or three or four more before the service finished with a prayer and announcements. Movement, warmth, and song can thus be understood to be elements of continuity that contributed to the congregation's feelings of trust and friendship.

The impact and importance of these elements for participants can be illustrated with an example. Bernadette, an older Cameroonian woman who came to the US to care for her grandchildren while their parents worked, moved to Atlanta with her son, daughter-in-law, and grandchildren after having lived for several years in Maryland. In Atlanta, this woman was unable to find a congregation like that of Mary Our Mother. She noted that there were some Cameroonians in Atlanta, but they lived some distance from

her house. While on a visit to family in Washington, DC to mourn the deaths of two family members in Cameroon, Bernadette requested an audio tape of the choir from its director. She told me that what she really missed was the music. She felt warm and full of emotion during the singing. It can be understood that in creating strong emotions in participants, the warm and energetic services and singing at Mary Our Mother reinforced their importance as elements of continuity.

In sum, a combination of Catholic practices and symbols were important to Mary Our Mother participants. The particular manner in which people carried out the practices seems to have been particularly important. Based on my observations and interactions, for most participants, warmth, energy, and singing were important elements in the practices of Catholicism. This specific mode of Catholicism bonded people together. Not only were these elements practiced, they evoked emotions in participants. Through shared emotion, ties were strengthened.

African and French

People told me that a common language united the congregation, and I observed an emphasis on a common African identity. Noticeably, these commonalities were formed apart from ideas of France or Belgium. While francophones are connected transnationally, and while Mary Our Mother welcomed non-Africans to their services, ideas of Africa and the African Diaspora were valorized there. It was overwhelmingly for the children of Africa and various African causes that people prayed and for which people gave money and time. As a committee leader told me, they were Africans and Haitians that gathered under the “common umbrella of French.” While participants

emphasized these elements as a means of connection, these elements can also be understood as intertwined with immigrants' common structural location.

Priests and lay leaders encouraged Mary Our Mother participants to do things that, in effect, increased the level of mutual respect and trust and thus bonding social capital of the congregation and of their transnationally stretched families and communities. For instance, they urged participants to attend community activities in order to contribute to the life of the congregation. They led prayers for contemporary African causes. Congregation priests and visiting African priests encouraged people to stay connected and to be responsible to their homelands and to their families that were still at home. For instance, at the end of one mass, the priest who read the gospel spoke to the congregation about not just coming to Mary Our Mother but giving back to Mary Our Mother. He said that it was important to ask what you could do for the community spiritually and socially.

On the other hand, the francophone African space was a place where people could portray themselves as successful. People tended to wear dressy African and Western attire. They wore their best, and they appeared to be doing well. One Cameroonian woman, jaded about this practice, commented to me that some participants only came to mass to try and upstage others. In as much as this practice was a competition, it may have taken away from bonding. However, at the same time, people reified a shared aesthetic and recognition of their shared humanity, which may have counteracted any negative effect it had on bonding social capital.

Leadership

Involved participants comprised an international subset of Mary Our Mother, and they formed friendships across national and ethnic lines. These friendships were an additional mechanism that bound the diverse groups of the congregation. They planned and attended the majority of congregation events. Highly involved people were important for bonding social capital in at least two ways.

First, they tended to be more explicitly concerned with bonding social capital through their focus on the smooth functioning of the congregation, its development as a community, and the ways it could serve the needs of congregation members. For instance, some were concerned about what direction the congregation would take. One involved congregant told me that participants of Mary Our Mother were from all the countries of Africa. “So it’s difficult for us to adopt only one country’s policy. We leave it open. If everybody agrees on it, then we go for it. If something is very different, is strange to people, we let it go.”

Planning, like congregation life, was not always harmonious. For instance, a parish-level event illustrates how tensions could arise among involved participants. This event, designed by the parish pastoral committee to create empathy across congregations, was attended by people from the various congregations. Those from Mary Our Mother were overwhelmingly highly involved participants. The woman who had volunteered to oversee the food table arrived late. By this time, the people in attendance had already eaten the food at the potluck. Before the woman arrived, another woman leader made a face to me. Disappointed and frustrated, she noted that the woman in charge was not there to address the lack of food.

Highly involved participants tended to interact in events outside church. Some friendships that they formed at church were effective outside it, which in turn intensified their common feelings of trust and respect. Because they represented the various ethnic and national and socioeconomic groups of the congregation, this was also beneficial for the congregation. It increased the level of social capital. For instance, one summer, I attended the birthday party of a highly involved woman participant. Five others who were also highly involved participants, including the families of two of them, were in attendance. They sat together and talked and laughed. They had diverse geographic backgrounds and current socio-economic means.

Community-Building Events

Mary Our Mother hosted occasional events designed to build community and to attend to various needs of its participants. These events were generally conceived and organized by involved participants. However, Sunday participants attended them. Mary Our Mother events included an annual festival, an annual gala, and barbeques celebrating the anniversary of the health clinic. The congregation festival in 2005 was a typical Church festival that included a cooking contest, a raffle, and a skit put on by the youth group. Events such as this increased bonding capital, and they were often a means of accessing resources, as well.

One July, the community held a going-away party following mass to honor a departing Jesuit Brother. The auditorium was filled with people sitting in folding chairs, all watching the front, where young adults of the community performed a skit. A boy who wished to become a priest was confronting his parents with the news, and the

incredulity of his parents caused laughter in the audience. Following the skit, people formed a long line to the buffet of food set up on folding tables along one of the back walls. The usual women were charged with supervising the buffet and dishing up plates. As I stood in line with a Cameroonian woman in her 30s, we could barely hear each other over the music. Then she remarked, with a smile on her face, "I am comfortable" ("*je suis à l'aise*").

In this particular space, these immigrants tended to feel comfortable. More than a collection of internationally-recognizable Catholic rituals, their space included familiar music, familiar interpersonal interaction, a familiar language, and sometimes home cooking. After church service, people greeted each other and frequently formed small groups of shared dialects, although cross-national and ethnic friendships were the norm. The congregation Mary Our Mother was a space where people could act comfortably, where they were accepted, and also where they could portray themselves as doing well. The result of being perceived and treated as a valuable person was improved emotional well-being and arguably increased self-confidence that was adaptive in daily life. In building new community in Washington, DC, people created new social capital. The following section looks at the development of ties of trust and obligation between this congregation and other groups, connections that developed the congregation's bridging social capital.

Bridging the Congregation to Other Groups

As described in Chapter Two, the development of connections across congregations is a way of creating bridging social capital, resources created through links

to other groups (Foley, McCarthy, and Chaves 2001:217-218). In this section, I look at the formation of bridging social capital between Mary Our Mother and groups at the parish level, the regional and national levels, and internationally. To begin, I show that the parish made occasional attempts to connect its divergent ethnic congregations, but the bridging that occurred happened mostly across involved participants of the various congregations.

The parish put on various events throughout the year designed to bring the different congregations together. For instance, a popular spring event was the parish carnival in the church parking lot. Carnival rides ran and food booths were open all weekend, including during the various masses. I observed that this carnival attracted people from all congregations; however, it seemed that participants who did not already know each other tended not to interact in a significant way. This also held true for other parish level meetings. I attended an information session about immigration that the social concerns committee of Mary Our Mother and a parish-level social concerns group organized. This occurred one Sunday in late 2005 after the French mass, and it was led by an immigration lawyer from Catholic Charities. There were 16 adults present, including three who were not African or Haitian. The format was question-and-answer. Those in attendance asked the lawyer questions, and he answered them. However, there was no interaction among the people in attendance.

In spite of parish-level efforts to bridge congregations, it was my observation that Sunday participants did not tend to have significant associations with participants in other congregations. However, involved leaders tended to represent the congregation at parish

bridging events and, in doing so, developed bridging ties. Involved Mary Our Mother participants helped to organize events, and they attended them.

For instance, American members of the parish organized an annual Mardi Gras celebration. In 2007, the 15-20 Mary Our Mother members at the event were involved members—about half of these were highly involved participants—plus their children. The overall turnout for the event was low, at about 80 people. After eating, a white American woman took the microphone and invited everyone to karaoke—a tradition, she said, at the Mardi Gras event. This woman started it off with a country song. The songs on the list passed from table to table were mostly in English; a few were in Spanish. Many in the room took turns on stage, including some white and black American women, some Spanish-speakers, and two teenagers from Mary Our Mother.

After karaoke, two young women from Mary Our Mother performed a traditional dance. Then nearly everyone in the room joined a dance line. After a performance by children of Mary Our Mother, the international group of Mary Our Mother participants at my table laughed at how one girl did a cartwheel during the song. They discussed how in Africa people did not like that kind of behavior, but here, people wanted children to grow up famous, like Michael Jackson. The girl's mother reported that her daughter's teachers encouraged her to look for an acting school for her daughter. Others at the table agreed that it was something that she could do in the US.

Parish connections formed during activities such as this created a sense of community and empathy across the parish congregations. While only a relatively small number of parishioners attended parish-level events, these people represented multiple congregations. Plus, highly involved Mary Our Mother participants used this time to

exchange ideas and develop their friendships. They learned about new social practices and discussed American expectations like those of appropriate behaviors for children.

Other parish-level activities included frequent meetings of various groups. These latter groups included chapters of larger national groups, such as JustFaith Ministries, an American Catholic movement “to enable people of faith to develop a passion for justice and to express this passion in concrete acts of social ministry” (JustFaith Ministries 2007). JustFaith Ministries had an active group within this parish, and its members represented the different parish congregations.

Joan, the organizer of the parish’s chapter of JustFaith, was an involved parish participant, and through her involvement she knew other involved parish participants across congregations. Her friendship with a recent immigrant in Mary Our Mother along with other acquaintances in Mary Our Mother (met through her parish involvement) led her to draw these immigrants to a small meeting of parishioners from across congregations, where the immigrants told their stories of immigration to American parish participants. The immigrants described the circumstances behind why they moved, how they moved, and their experiences living in Washington, DC. The meeting took place after Mary Our Mother’s Sunday mass in an older chapel in the school.

The group of twelve, including Joan, the priest of Mary Our Mother, five Mary Our Mother participants, a white American man, two white American women, and a black American woman sat in a circle of folding chairs. A 55-year-old Central African woman described how she spent four years in the US before her children were able to join her. This woman said that Joan helped her to get through this time, when she was

alone, worried about her kids, and trying to get through the immigration process. Joan always encouraged her, and that made all the difference for her.

This example demonstrates how involved parishioners created bridging social capital. This group aimed to share the experiences of immigrants with Americans and in so doing develop empathy across congregations. Work undertaken by this group sometimes overlapped with that of the francophone congregation but was more often complementary—with wider outreach—while the francophone congregation was primarily concerned with francophone African and Haitian immigrants. Additionally, bridging events were beneficial for francophone Africans because they connected them to different, yet empathetic, people for support.

Connections across the participants of the various congregations could also be difficult, however. The role of secretaries and the different parish priests were related to tensions among the different congregations that made up the parish. For instance, the head parish priest spoke Spanish and tended to attend Spanish-language events more often than French-language ones. He also noted to me that the office personnel tended to play interference between him and parishioners. While not technically their job to screen callers and visitors for the priests, office administrators did so. It is significant, then, to note that these workers were white Americans and a Latina. I heard, secondhand, that some Mary Our Mother participants felt that they were treated rudely in the office. On the other hand, one involved participant told me that she volunteered her son to be a summer office helper. Additionally, while some tension existed across parish congregations, at their limited level of involvement, Sunday participants of Mary Our Mother mostly did not notice it.

The activities of some involved participants expanded networks not only at the parish level but also at broader levels of the Catholic institution. At the regional level, Mary Our Mother participants connected with black American Catholics, notably through the Organization of Black Catholics for the Archdiocese of Washington, established in 1974 and recently reaching out to Africans in Washington. In a French-language newsletter distributed in 2004, the organization claimed there were 120,000 Catholics "of African origin," or "black race," and 40 parishes with high numbers of black Catholics in the archdiocese. The organization included an advisory board for Catholic women and representatives from congregations throughout the archdiocese. In 2004, one involved Mary Our Mother participant served on the group's advisory board.

The congregation also connected African Catholics throughout the Washington region through the African Catholic Association of Washington, DC, a group organized by lay Africans for Africans. Since 2004, this group put on an annual African Prayer Day that consisted of mass, a multicultural African meal, booths set up by local African Catholic congregations or sponsoring groups, and an evening gala. The announcement for the 2008 African Prayer Day described it as a "day to celebrate our Catholic Heritage, pray for Africa, get to know one another, enjoy fine African food and get to know the social programs that help African Catholics." At the 2005 African Prayer Day were rows of folding tables set up with objects by various area African congregations, including Nigerian, Ethiopian, Eritrean, Kenyan, and the congregation Mary Our Mother.

Involved participants were also among those who organized African Catholics on a national level. Mary Our Mother participants helped organize a weekend conference for African Catholics from throughout the US at the Basilica, the patron church of the US

and a shrine to the Virgin Mary, located in Washington, DC. After its conference in the summer of 2006, I talked to one of the organizers, an involved participant, who said that it was “awesome.” According to her, more than 2,000 Africans attended from across the US, in addition to 140 priests and the Washington, DC archbishop.

Mary Our Mother, as a multicultural French-language African and Haitian congregation, was an anomaly in the US. Moreover, Washington, DC, as the capital of the US and home to the Basilica, a church that, according to its website (Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception 2007), was visited by hundreds of thousands of visitors each year, was a prime destination. The metropolitan area also housed the second largest population of Africans in the US. Accordingly, Mary Our Mother received a constant stream of visitors from the US and world. Some Africans traveling to the Basilica and to (or through) Washington, DC stopped to worship with the francophone community, forming new friendships, alliances, and exchanging ideas while there. Visitors included US residents as well as internationals traveling to the US, and visitors may or may not have been French speakers. Thus, the global community for Mary Our Mother was an African Catholic community.

For instance, in the summer of 2006, a Tanzanian bishop visited Washington. One involved parish participant organized an impromptu mass in Swahili held by him at the church. She sent out emails that her contacts then forwarded. At the mass, there were about 160 participants from across Washington, most of whom were apparently Tanzanian. One involved participant of Mary Our Mother, a Congolese who attended the Swahili mass, told me how surprised she was to see so many Tanzanians. Also that

summer, African nuns who were in Washington for an international conference came to mass with Mary Our Mother.

In December 2006, a Ugandan choir from Boston came to Washington to sing at the Basilica. While in the city, the choir attended mass with Mary Our Mother. Dressed in yellow and white, they took the place of Mary Our Mother's choir for the service. They sang in Luganda, and they distributed embossed programs from their stop at the Basilica. At the end of mass, during the announcements, the congregation priest encouraged Mary Our Mother participants to talk to and exchange phone numbers with the choir members. These instances were not isolated; most Sundays included visitors. These examples also illustrate that visitors were not necessarily French speakers. This necessarily complicates the identity of Mary Our Mother, suggesting that its identity as African was more useful and was more emphasized than its francophone identity in regard to international-level connections.

While visitors tended to be African Catholics, Mary Our Mother participants also organized visits of Pentecostal-Charismatic Catholics. During the summers 2005-2007, the congregation hosted a group of three to five members of the Beatitudes Pentecostal-Charismatic Catholic community based in France. This community was begun in 1973 and included religious and lay members, individuals and families. The community's website noted that their model was that of the first Christians as described in the book of Acts of the Apostles (The Beatitudes 2007a). The community was "one of the 'new communities' created in the Catholic Church after Vatican Council II and in the charismatic Renewal movement" (my translation from French, The Beatitudes 2007b). The community also had international reach. It included a nongovernmental organization

(*Alliance de la Charité*) that worked in developing nations, a hospital in Kabinda (Congo), orphanages in Congo and Gabon, a publishing house, a radio station, and *Soleil de Justice* (an association for African Christian politicians), among others (Zenit 2006). The Beatitudes were located in 11 countries in Europe, six in Africa, three in North America, four in Asia, two in the Middle East, one in South America, and two in Oceania (Zenit 2006). In developing its Pentecostal-Charismatic character, therefore, Mary Our Mother drew on its international francophone identity.

In addition, participants were connected with other Catholics of various ethnicities and nationalities through their voluntary membership in Catholic lay orders like the Legion of Mary and the Knights of Columbus. This had important ramifications for flow of ideas and people's international movement that went beyond the benefits of bridging social capital for Mary Our Mother participants. Individuals gained direct benefits from their participation in global Catholic groups. For example, a 35-year-old Togolese man described his immigration story at the JustFaith meeting described above. In Togo, he worked for the opposition youth movement, which protested elections. Afterwards, government forces beat and killed many of the protestors. He said that a corrupt bishop was working with the government. (Another African in the room said, apologetically to the Americans, that this did happen in Africa.) The government put him in jail. He got silent before saying that he was let out of jail. Some priests in the north disguised him and took him into a neighboring country, where they helped pay for his trip to the US. He arrived in the US a few months before telling this story. He came to the US under the auspices of attending a yearly gathering of the Order of St. John, of which he was a part.

Then he stayed in Washington, DC, living with the godparents of his marriage, the couple who had ritually promised to help guide him and his wife in their marriage.

In sum, the efforts of some Mary Our Mother participants and entities of the Catholic Church worked to create feelings of trust and mutual obligation across various levels of the institution. I described how some Mary Our Mother participants and its priests put forth an effort to connect with others through various parish, regional, and national events and associations. Moreover, visitors from around the world, who tended to be African Catholics, stopped for services with Mary Our Mother. The congregation developed its Pentecostal-Charismatic identity by connecting globally with Catholic francophones. Fostering friendships and connections across these institutional levels was important because it enhanced the congregation's social capital. The next section looks at what types of social capital became available as resources for Sunday participants.

Resources and Opportunities

> It's always a friend who tells you things.
>
> —Sophie, describing how she first learned about social services and finding work in the US.

While it was often through social networks that participants first heard of Mary Our Mother, the congregation opened more networks in which participants became embedded. The congregation began as a spiritual community but the relationships made there were also effective in daily life. I draw on the work of Foley, McCarthy, and Chaves (2001:218-229) in deeming the following resources important for religious participants. Resources opened up through the bonding and bridging capital of the congregation included information flows, practical and emotional support, free spaces,

and civic skills. These resources were more available to participants due to bonding and bridging social capital.

Resources were unevenly available to and were used differently by various participants. Sunday participants tended to rely more on non-religious social contacts. For instance, the congregation provided Agnes, introduced in the previous chapter, with a ready group of people with whom she became friends after arriving in the US. She invited fellow nationals from Mary Our Mother to her home, and they taught her where to shop for foodstuffs, clothing, and other items. Within her first year in the US, however, she diversified her social networks outside of Mary Our Mother. A Sunday participant, she came to rely more on non-church networks for information and support. For instance, one day she was cooking a meal in her home for a co-ethnic woman who was ill when another co-ethnic, a man, stopped by unannounced. Neither of these people attended Mary Our Mother. Agnes talked with the man about upcoming elections for an ethnic association of which they were both a part. Later, the man accompanied us in taking the food to the sick woman.

Agnes also connected with a French woman at her daughter's school. This woman directed Agnes to the health department for insurance for her children. She drove Agnes and her children to a playground to demonstrate how they could spend their free time outdoors, and she gave Agnes items for her home and Christmas gifts. While Agnes continued to attend Mary Our Mother Sunday services, she later found other people with whom she preferred to socialize, creating social capital in relationships unrelated to her church participation. The example of Agnes shows that immigrants made choices within their new social structure. While identities such as black and immigrant became

important in the ways that they limited people's opportunities and worked to shift dispositions, people were not without choice. Instead, people actively negotiated the changing structure.

Venues for forming networks external to the church included friends and family. Family was not limited to blood relatives but, depending on context, could include people from the same town or ethnic group. People also made friends through work, school, and their children's activities. Immigrants formed relationships with social service workers and neighbors. Networks were not circumscribed by language; immigrants also connected with people who did not speak their native language. Additionally, more women than men formed ties through children, as women tended to be primary caregivers. In sum, the social networks of Mary Our Mother participants included family, immigrants who spoke languages besides French and English and who came from other parts of the world, and Americans. Those who were Sunday participants tended to rely more on social contacts made in some of these ways, whereas involved participants tended to concentrate on developing ties at church.

Those who were involved participants tended to be relatively uninvolved with other groups such as ethnic groups. Instead, they spent their free time with their church community. As one Cameroonian woman put it, God came first, and then there was no time for anything else. One Saturday I caught up with her at church at a Congolese event. She had had a busy day, she told me, running from one thing to the next. That morning, she visited a Togolese couple, friends from her prayer group, at the hospital because the woman had just had a baby. She also worked, and she cooked greens for the dinner. She told me that co-ethnics maintained an association and gathered often in Washington. She

had attended its New Year's Eve celebration for the last two years but otherwise was not a member. She said she was first a member of the church community; “church is necessary.” Since she was involved with the church, she did not have time to participate in the frequent activities of the ethnic community. This involved participant illustrates a choice that some immigrants made to focus on developing friendships at church, which then took precedence over others.

Involved participants tended to concentrate on their congregation community and developing ties with others within that community instead of other communities like ethnic ones. This was important for bonding social capital, for these were people investing time and energy in the group. It was also important for these individuals, because as their congregation friendships became stronger, more resources became available to them through their religious community.

On the other hand, some involved participants were also committed to nonreligious groups. For instance, one prayer group leader was also part of a Beninese group of 30 people that he helped to create. This group met once per month to see each other, eat together, or go out together. Each time they met, people contributed to a common fund for individual emergencies, like medical problems, and for expensive events, like trips home or weddings. The following section is the first of four that describe some of the resources people could access as a result of their participation in and ensuing social capital of the congregation.

Information Flows

To varying degrees, through contacts made at church, individuals learned about life in the US, including how and where to access services such as health care, where to shop for familiar food and other necessities such as clothing and cookware, how to navigate the school and other government systems, and where to find desirable residential locations. I present some examples below, in addition to the case of Agnes. As participants in this spiritual community lived dispersed throughout the metropolitan area, a region that was diverse yet clustered in terms of class and race, they were well-placed to inform and learn from each other regarding the location of affordable stores, housing, and good schools. Information flowed across church networks.

For instance, one day after services, a Sunday participant handed out flyers, the program for an upcoming dinner of the African Youth Congress. The date and place were listed on the flyer, along with the organizer's phone number and the association's website address. The flyer announced that African ambassadors were scheduled to speak. When the man handed the flyer to me, he asked that I pass it on to students that I knew at American University.

Community festivals and other events were a means of making resources, including information, available. One community event that was typical included booths staffed by sponsors with information and items for sale arranged on them. Each sponsor gave a brief presentation. Sponsors included the congregation's youth group, a man with information on buying homes, and three clothing vendors. This event also generated funds for the congregation.

The congregation immigration committee also organized occasional immigration information sessions. These were held irregularly, but when they occurred, committee members listened to the problems of congregation participants. They made themselves available by phone during the week. They relied on their knowledge of the immigration system and information about immigration that they had gathered from Catholic Charities, and they referred immigrants to experts. In this committee, people shared important knowledge.

Parish groups also facilitated information exchange, resulting from bridging social capital. For instance, the immigration lawyer from Catholic Charities who led a parish immigration meeting distributed a list of questions typically asked in an immigration interview, which included immigration status at entry and current immigration status. The lawyer noted that it was problematic for people to have lived in the US illegally for more than one year. He also answered questions from those in attendance. For instance, in answering a question, he said it was worth paying $100 per year for a post office box; this permanent address was important to receive government letters. He noted it was important for people to keep track of which forms they submitted. For instance, submitting form G-639 would enable a person to learn the information the government had on file for that person, which was important to know to get good immigration advice. Another form, the I-130, was a petition for alien relative including sibling, parent, and child. In another example, around the time of the pro-immigrant rallies of 2003 in Washington, DC, a local NGO stationed volunteers outside the church building after services to distribute information about immigration legislation to church participants.

On the other hand, the practical help that immigrants received from the Catholic Church was limited, at least in comparison to the help given to participants at other churches. A Haitian woman and mother of grade-school aged children, who had moved to the US in her early twenties, was a Sunday participant of Mary Our Mother and also regularly attended two other Haitian churches in Washington, DC, a rather unusual pattern of church attendance. She told me that many Haitians had formed small Protestant churches, mostly Baptist ones, around Haitian pastors. According to her, these pastors helped their congregants fill out paperwork and apply for jobs, unlike the Catholic Church, which tended to "leave you very much on your own to find your own group to help with those things." However, she felt Catholics tended to be more accepting of people's various religious affiliations, whereas her Baptist friends would not consider attending Catholic events. This highlights the broad social networks of Catholics. Even though direct practical information and support may have been limited, participants could develop and draw on social capital in a myriad of contexts. Doing so depended on a participant's level of participation and the groups in which he or she was active.

Practical and Emotional Support

The friendships formed on Sundays at church extended beyond it, and people could draw on these contacts for practical support; for instance, women could share household tasks such as child care and food preparation. I stopped by the apartment of Agnes, whom I had met at church, not long after she arrived in the US. She was cooking in preparation for a party. She remarked that not many people besides her sisters from church had come to help her ready for the party. At this time in her life in the US, her

church network comprised her greatest number of close social contacts. Not long after the party, I drove her to a nearby thrift store that she had visited with another friend. While there, Agnes asked me for my opinion about the price of things like cookware.

In another example, a male Sunday participant and an involved woman participant of the same ethnicity met each other at Mary Our Mother and became good friends. While I visited with them one day in her home, he told me about his most recent business venture selling cell phones, high speed Internet, voice over Internet, and Direct TV. A Cameroonian woman, who was not a member of Mary Our Mother, originally recruited him for this job. He had 17 clients, and he had three people on his team. One of these team members was this woman friend from church. He wanted to become a vice-president, which would significantly increase his income. This man also had several independent small businesses. He told me that he was going to sell his products to everyone at Mary Our Mother: “I will tell them, come see me.” This man drew a woman he had met at church into his business in a move that potentially could economically benefit both. Additionally, he understood his fellow congregation participants as simultaneously potential customers.

Mary Our Mother participants did have access to some parish support. This element appeared to be used infrequently by participants. However, once per month people of all congregations of the parish donated nonperishable food items to the common food pantry, which was available to participants as well as to neighborhood residents. Donated clothing was also available at the church. The parish priests counseled parishioners. After Sunday mass, the congregation priest typically saw at least half a dozen Mary Our Mother participants.

Participation in the congregation, especially in prayer groups, developed feelings of community in its members, which led to emotional and social support. Group members threw each other baby showers, collaborated on wedding receptions, and supported those grieving deceased family members. Involved participants created temporary and informal mutual aid associations for each other around specific needs, such as medical bills. One involved participant told me that those in his prayer group “help each other.” If someone was in need, the group prayed about it, and they asked if someone could help. For example, if one person needed a job, another might know of a job opening. During meetings of The Renewal, I observed that between two and six participants tended to announce employment needs or illness. However, most participants were in similar situations and did not have the capacity to make hires. From my observations, it also appeared to be uncommon for fellow participants to know of job openings.

Informal transactions among involved participants entailed food, money, and clothing. For instance, during a wake, a woman participant passed some cash to an older woman there. Earlier, she had given her a coat. The older woman frequently got rides to church or to return home. One evening she arrived for an event, having taken the bus. She told me that she would get a ride home from some good Christian brother or sister, as the event was scheduled to last later than buses ran that route. In other words, she depended on people’s mutual identity—social capital—for her ride. She told me that it was necessary to be there, to support her church sister. She also welcomed a good meal and socializing.

The prayer group exemplified the emotional support of group life, symbolized by potlucks where everyone shared food. These potlucks were common for Mary Our

Mother and represented an adaptation to living in the US. At home, women usually helped each other prepare food for major events, but people did not bring food to events to which they were invited. In the US, this practice continued for some events, especially those held in people's homes and events celebrating life transitions like wakes and weddings. However, the help that women gave each other extended into their separate kitchens; one woman could bring a dish that she prepared in her kitchen to another's occasion. On the other hand, events that were put on by the congregation or by a congregation group tended to be potluck. People were expected to bring a dish, although it was not a requirement. In an example, a prayer group organized a wake for the father of one of its women members. Many participants brought food to share, and, later, some people dished themselves leftovers to take home.

During this wake, a woman stood up to announce that it was her daughter's first birthday. She said she became pregnant when she was new to the group, which threw her a baby shower and gave her words and prayers of support. She also noted that everyone in this group had been with her throughout the baby's life. Later when we spoke this woman told me she was from the same region but different area as the deceased and could only make out the general gist of the song meanings. It was only herself and child and husband at home together, which was difficult. I later observed that this woman had come to the wake with a woman of a different nationality, who told me that she had been coming to the prayer group meetings for two weeks. This woman's story and friendships illustrate again the enhanced access to resources that came with involved participation. She had increased access to useful resources as seen in receiving items at the baby

shower and in shared rides, and she gained the emotional support of the group during a time in her life when she felt isolated.

One effect of the bridging done on the regional level, through the African Prayer Day, was fundraising. In 2009, the organization aimed to raise $25,000, from which it planned to give $5,000 to a Kenyan archbishop and a bishop from Eritrea (both had attended the 2008 African Prayer Day) “to help them in their pastoral mission.” The remainder of funds was to be used “to implement social and spiritual programs to accomplish ACA's objectives.” Funds raised through participants’ bridging efforts, therefore, proved useful in practical matters for various parties to the friendship, and these funds further tied them together.

Noting a case where resources became available as a result of bridging social capital brings this study to questions about Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity posed in the Introduction. The literature has suggested that this Christian form facilitates transnational connections, or bridging social capital, that enhance participants’ access to resources, making money and travel, for instance, more available. How this process works in conjunction with a religious identity that is linked to an established religious institution was not clear.

In the case of Mary Our Mother, the congregation made use of varying methods to bring in Pentecostal-Charismaticism. The Renewal relied on media published by the CCR. It sometimes played recorded music from CCR during prayer meetings, and its leaders read CCR literature that, for instance, discussed the meaning of Bible passages. The leaders then led discussions of Bible readings in light of their new understandings. The Renewal, thus, represented a way in which people practicing Pentecostal-

Charismatic Christianity in Church-authorized manners have a linked Pentecostal-Charismatic and Catholic identity. However, the global connection of Pentecostal-Charismatic Catholics did not appear to enhance access to practical information or other resources for participants. Additionally, the congregation brought in visitors who were authorized Catholic specialists and who practiced Pentecostal-Charismatic Catholicism. These visitors included spiritual healers with particular knowledge. Mary Our Mother participants funded visitors' trips, but these associations did not appear to result in increased practical resources for congregation participants. Instead, Catholic identity and membership within Catholic lay orders seemed to be more important, in practical terms, on the global level. It remains possible that through their activities in CCR, some individuals may have had greater opportunity to travel internationally, but at this point, having already moved to the US, this resource seems less useful in practical terms.

The congregation acted as a location where immigrants met others, learning information and forming social-economic supports that were separate from the formal institution of the church. As a participant expanded her or his social networks, she or he had increased access to a wider array of information. Participants also had use of church space for social occasions, typically marriages and wakes, which I describe below.

Free Spaces

Mary Our Mother participants made frequent use of church space for events such as weddings, receptions, and wakes. Weddings took place in the main church building and also in the chapel. Wakes often occurred in the auditorium of the parish grade school, a large open room with an attached kitchen that the congregation used for many events,

or in a smaller meeting room. The use of these parish spaces also drew in people from outside the congregation.

For instance, in 2007 a well-known bishop in Kinshasa died. In his honor, Mary Our Mother held a mass and reception and invited the “Congolese community” and others to attend. Most who attended were Congolese, not necessarily from Mary Our Mother. Others, especially involved congregation participants who were Cameroonians, also attended. The reception followed mass and featured several pre-dinner speakers, including the ambassador of Congo. The people in attendance were becoming impatient when one Congolese woman laughed and said to me that it was typical Congolese to talk too much. I noted to her that many of the people at the reception had not attended the mass just before. She rolled her eyes and said that was typical; Congolese liked to go to parties. Another Congolese spoke up then in defense of this practice, saying that Congolese music was well-known and liked throughout Africa.

The food was similar to what was served at a recent funeral. There were greens, manioc, chicken, fried plantains, beignets, fish, and waffles. Once people went back to refill their plates, a man began singing in the front. He sang in Lingala and also in Chiluba. Another woman told me she recognized and enjoyed Chiluba, her family's language. Before we left, a few people, including the young woman sitting with me, prepared plates to take home. This woman said this was how she saved a little. I gave her and another woman who lived in her building a ride home. The second woman, not a regular congregation participant, was a live-in nanny and did not know much French.

The availability of space at the church allowed participants and others to plan occasions for big groups of people. While these events tended to be organized for

religiously oriented purposes, they also provided opportunity to develop outside friendships, relax, and exchange information and practical items.

Civic Skills and Individual Character

Involved participants worked on committees and came to church during the week to fulfill their activist leanings and for spiritual enrichment. Some people primarily enjoyed being involved in group organization and leadership. For example, before having a baby, Celine, a young woman from West Africa, was an involved congregation participant; she was active on committees. She "found" God after the baby's birth. Before the baby's birth, she participated because she enjoyed holding leadership roles and socializing with others, and she participated out of a sense of obligation. Her involvement gave her an outlet to create change. For instance, she was active in scheduling committee meetings to address social needs of congregation members, and she frequently helped set up for events. She had many friends in the congregation and was well liked. As a mother, she found it more difficult to volunteer because she took care of the baby while her husband worked two jobs. In the beginning, she tried to continue doing committee work because, she said, it was the least she could do for all God had given her. The reasons behind her involvement in the congregation changed from social enrichment to God's work.

When people were involved in Mary Our Mother's committees and in prayer group leadership, they took advantage of an important opportunity to enhance cultural capital. For many immigrants, having a say in organization represented something that they experienced in their jobs, in politics, or at church before moving to the US, cultural

capital that they could develop at Mary Our Mother. This was an important opportunity that many felt was not available in the wider society, as noted in Chapter Six.

Participation in committees and prayer groups built self-confidence, responsibility, and discipline. For instance, individuals took on responsibilities through weekly meetings and preparation for Bible study. In organizing events and coordinating committee and prayer group meetings, involved participants developed management skills. People made decisions, planned events, coordinated visitors' schedules, and made presentations. For example, five months before the annual Pentecostal-Charismatic days—a week-long series of services led by an international Pentecostal-Charismatic Catholic group—congregation leaders began holding regular meetings and raising funds. Each committee and prayer group sent two people to the meetings, plus others were welcome to attend. Two volunteers coordinated the meetings and served as contacts. Men and women congregation members coordinated the schedule, reserved meeting space in the church and school buildings, paid for the visitors' plane tickets, and arranged for their overnight needs. Women organized shopping for foodstuffs and cooking for the visitors.

Some participants were also active in and created new associations of African Catholics at the regional and national levels. Each of these associations met annually. These meetings were an opportunity for African Catholics to connect, forging bonds of trust and obligation. These associations were important because they increased the visibility of Africans in the political field and in the Catholic institution. In working the bureaucracy, people learned how to create groups for recognition and influence, and they learned how to negotiate hierarchy.

Individual responsibility was also a recurrent theme in priests' messages about how to be a good Christian. Participants were responsible for praying and being humble. Priests continually reminded people to be on time to mass because God was important. As they said, there may be no time card to punch for church, but God knows. As well, members of the prayer groups believed that they had an additional, complementary role in event preparations. For instance, one night, prayer group participants formed a circle for the final prayer and intentions. The leader reminded everyone that the Beatitudes' visit was coming up. While, he noted, it was the responsibility of the pastoral committee to take care of the Beatitudes, this prayer group had a responsibility to pray for it. Here, again, people took on responsibility, and through this activity, they increased their feelings of self-worth.

As a place where people from different areas of town, different jobs, and different ethnicities came together familiarly, this church became a place where this multicultural community connected what might otherwise be divergent networks of people around common concerns to mobilize resources or otherwise support needy members, as in the case of the health clinic, discussed next, a good example of the operation and positive effects of social capital.

Health Clinic

Many immigrants did not have health insurance, many had low to moderate incomes, and many did not have legal immigration status. As a result, many people did not take care of their health problems, and people visited the emergency room. This final piece describes the development of a free French-language health clinic that Mary Our

Mother spearheaded, as it is a good example of how the congregation created social capital and access to resources. Opened in the summer of 2004, the clinic was the brainchild of the social concerns committee of Mary Our Mother.

In creating the clinic to meet the needs of its congregation, involved Mary Our Mother participants formed several partnerships; they created bridging social capital. The committee developed partnerships with local and county government offices and a county nonprofit, mobile health clinic. The partnerships with the government led to financial resources and to support navigating bureaucratic procedures. The partnership with the mobile health clinic led to the commitment of the clinic to make available its small bus—its clinic on wheels—once a week for the congregation clinic's use. Mary Our Mother's social concerns committee worked through the Church hierarchy for its authorizations, and it negotiated insurance issues. In forming partnerships with other groups and in negotiating hierarchies and procedures, participants built on their knowledge and organizational skills, an opportunity made available through social capital.

During this process, the committee also connected with another parish, French-speaking and Vietnamese. This partnership led to free space for use by the clinic. Because of insurance issues, the clinic did not operate at the parish of Mary Our Mother. Instead, it took place at the Vietnamese church. One afternoon per week, patients waited in the church auditorium to be seen in the mobile clinic stationed in the parking lot. Doctors who worked in the clinic were volunteers, primarily recruited through Mary Our Mother and the Vietnamese parish and the networks of their participants.

The mobile clinic was open one afternoon per week during its first two years of operation, and the number of patients exceeded its capacities. I talked to several people

who had tried using the clinic but had been unable to do so. For instance, one 65-year-old woman went to the Vietnamese church during clinic operating hours. However, when she arrived the waiting area was full. She decided to stay, and she waited for three hours without receiving care. The social concerns committee tried various tactics to handle patient appointments, besides first-come first-served. For a time, the clinic's phone number was listed in the congregation bulletin, and clinic volunteers took appointments by phone. Then they tried handing out numbers to people when people arrived at the clinic; once the clinic's limit was reached, they sent people away. Their latest strategy combined phone appointments and some walk-ins. One 75-year-old Cameroonian told me that she had been having difficulty hearing. She set an appointment at the clinic for four months out, their first time available.

Some people found the clinic helpful. I first met Camille, a woman in her 30s from Congo, in the waiting area of the clinic. She had moved to the US only a few months before with her partner and two-year-old daughter. She was stressed and isolated, she told me. Her daughter never listened to her and broke everything in the house; she seemed to be a main source of Camille's stress. Undoubtedly she also experienced stress from the process of immigration. She was visiting the clinic that afternoon for a general, chronic feeling of pain in her abdomen. Later, she did not tell me the doctor's diagnosis, but she did tell me she felt better after the clinic visit. However, she was continually stressed by her daughter and by navigating her new social context, and she continued to feel ill. Over the course of the following three years, she became an active participant in the Renewal, one of the Mary Our Mother prayer groups. I pick up her story in the

following chapter. She attended to her health in a holistic way that included visiting the clinic and spiritual healing.

Due to the high need, involved participants worked to continue expanding the health program. I illustrate the way that they drew on their different networks to support the clinic with an example. One summer evening, I attended a meeting about the clinic. The meeting began with a prayer led by Philippe, one of the health clinic's originators. The committee was meeting to strategize doctor recruitment for the clinic. With more doctors, the clinic's hours could be expanded. Philippe said that to increase the chances of getting volunteers, it was important for recruiters to demonstrate a high degree of professionalism and seriousness. When recruiting, people should spend time telling volunteers about the clinic, in addition to giving them the group's brochures.

Then, the meeting moved into discussion of where to recruit new doctors for the clinic. The three of us designated as being in charge of recruitment offered solutions, each automatically drawing on various social networks. Emilie said that she knew a dentist—a member of the congregation—and a general practitioner—not in the congregation—who were Congolese. I said that I would talk to my family's doctor. Philippe said that we could also recruit doctors from the parish who were retired, and I offered to take charge of this. Etienne and Philippe—both from Cameroon—decided to present our case to the local Cameroonian doctors' association. We ended the meeting discussing an upcoming blood pressure screening at church and our next meeting time, and then we closed with a prayer. This meeting illustrates how this international congregation, through a subgroup of involved participants, connected otherwise divergent networks of people. The recruiters drew on different networks—including Congolese and

Cameroonian networks—for a social cause, to provide health care to uninsured francophones in the area.

Conclusion

The literature on Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity has tended to overlook its structural aspects, especially in terms of how groups are organized at the local level. In Zimbabwe, Pentecostal-Charismatic Christians were embedded within an informal network of fellowships and churches (Maxwell 1998). Social capital enhanced participants' access to funding for events and created jobs and money for poor people within the group. However, Maxwell's analysis did not make clear how people created bonding and bridging social capital; therefore, it is not clear whether organizing as Pentecostal-Charismatic Christians was different than organizing in other religious forms. This also leads to questions about the contingent relationships from which these apparently voluntary groups developed—how participants created social capital.

In this chapter, I examined the development of the congregation Mary Our Mother, a Pentecostal-Charismatic group in the Catholic Church, in terms of bonding and bridging social capital. Through participating in this religious congregation, people affirmed and transformed a common status position in the new social order; this happened as dispositions that took shape in different structures did not fit within the new structures. The congregation coalesced around elements that represented important continuities for immigrants and had meaning in the larger social context. The broader structure assigned immigrants the statuses of immigrant, black, and non-English speaking. Immigrants at Mary Our Mother defined their community as African, Catholic,

and French-speaking. Immigrants drew on common expectations in interpersonal behavior, something that I described as familiar chatting. They also drew on Catholic symbols such as statues of saints and feast days, and they participated in services with energy and song that created emotion among them. These elements are important to understand, as they show people negotiating their changing social context in ways that made sense to them. This analysis also illustrates how ties of mutual respect and friendship were formed, leading to bonding social capital. These effects were furthered through community-building Mary Our Mother events like festivals and barbeques.

In addition, groups were embedded within various networks. Among Zimbabwean Pentecostal-Charismatics, the form of these networks was not clear. In contrast, I described how the congregation Mary Our Mother created ties with other groups within and external to the Catholic Church. Involved participants were especially instrumental to enriching these ties. Within the Church institution, participants created ties across congregations within the parish and region. The congregation also maintained international ties based on its African, Catholic, and Pentecostal-Charismatic identities. Partnerships with groups outside the Catholic Church included those formed with government offices and a local health clinic. Participants created voice for themselves by organizing through Catholic institutions, bridging groups at the regional and national level.

It is important to note that the resources available to participants varied according to the character of their participation. Some participants looked more to other identities in forming friendships. For instance, some immigrants formed groups around common ethnicities. Also, within the congregation were various subgroups and degrees of

participation. Resources that could be made more available through participation in the congregation included emotional and practical support, opportunities to develop civic skills, available space, and useful information. Developing and drawing on social capital were important in the creation of the francophone health clinic. This represented one way that the congregation worked to address the needs of its participants. It also organized immigration information sessions, and it hoped to offer help with child care in the future.

The congregation and its activities owed much to the efforts of involved participants. The efforts of involved participants increased its bonding and bridging social capital. Organizing within the congregation, and using the congregation as a base from which to organize with other local groups, comprised important opportunities for French-speaking African immigrants who saw their choices constrained in new ways in the US.

I also showed how Mary Our Mother participants negotiated priorities and meanings with the congregation priest. In doing so, I took up a problem in the literature on African Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity, identified in Chapter One, concerning how egalitarianism exists alongside religious hierarchy. The idea that people participating in churches are also egalitarian rests on a contradiction, and it was not clear how people work this out in practice. As the structure of subgroups in this congregation became more standardized, the practices and meanings that people followed within groups came increasingly under the gaze of religious authorities. Systematized groups like the Renewal included lay leaders with some specialized knowledge, gained through reading CCR materials, and these leaders and the otherwise equal participants listened to the priest correct their beliefs. They maintained some control over the course of the direction of the content of discussion, but the priest had the final word in meaning. In Mary Our

Mother, the negotiation occurred in dialogic spaces, where priests and groups of lay people discussed the meanings of Bible passages and Catholic beliefs. Therefore, while an egalitarian ideal existed, and while lay participants may have been more equal in a religious space wherein society they were not, the religious institution shaped and directed people's practices and beliefs.

Additionally, I addressed the problem regarding the effects of participating in Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity while also participating in an international religious institution like the Catholic Church. The literature has suggested that Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity provides a global identity, or bridging social capital, that can result in useful resources like funding. Pentecostal-Charismatic Catholics of Mary Our Mother who organized officially, through CCR, did not appear to enjoy increased funding as a result of this global identity. Instead, they spent money to fund visitors and obtain CCR media. On the other hand, participants' Catholic identity was useful. Some individuals used their Catholic connections to move to the US. I also showed how Catholic identity enabled the creation of bridging social capital that enhanced people's access to resources. In addition, I believe that the congregation's Pentecostal-Charismatic identity was important in other ways; instead of the creation of social capital that would have enhanced people's access to practical, or material, resources, this identity and the international connections it entailed enhanced people's access to spiritual healing. The next chapter looks at spiritual healing in detail.

As noted in the literature review in Chapter One, most of the work on immigrants in the US has focused on structural elements of immigrant religion. This work has especially focused on the level of the community. I used the concept of social capital as a

way to interrogate immigrant community formation. This analysis supports the research that finds immigrant religious groups to be a source of practical and emotional support for newcomers, and it supports the argument that immigrant religious participation is a strategy through which immigrants form new social capital in a new context. My work is important in how it draws specific links between immigrant religious participation and the local opportunity structure. As shown in Chapter Six, francophone Africans in Washington, DC tended to find their identity as black, immigrant, and nonnative English-speakers to limit their opportunity. Using Bourdieu's concept of social capital facilitates understanding of how these contingent relationships were transformed into bonds of community and friendship, and how people came to feel trust and obligation toward each other. However, an important goal of this dissertation is to discover the value of giving equal analytic weight to meaning and structure.

CHAPTER 8

HUMILITY, SIN, AND HEALING

In the previous chapter, I showed how immigrants organizing in Mary Our Mother, a congregation in a Catholic parish in the US, negotiated social structures. In this chapter, I shift focus and investigate religious meanings in immigrant religious participation. Giving equal concern to structure and meaning enhances our understanding of immigrant religious participation. People come to church with spiritual goals that are important to take into account for a holistic understanding.

In this chapter, I rely on the understanding of evil and religious healing discussed in Chapter Two. Religion deals with two domains of experiential challenges: the limits of people's moral insight and the limits of their powers of endurance (Geertz 1993:100-108). The gap between what people deserve and what they get is the problem of and about evil. People become concerned when the way things are do not fit their ideas of how things should be. Religion gives people a set of beliefs through which to understand what would otherwise appear as gross inequities (Geertz 1993:105-108), inequities that come to seem logical but are really based in the arbitrariness and the material and symbolic forces of class relations (Bourdieu 1971:310).

Religion also provides a means through which people express, explain, and act on their pain and suffering. Religion acknowledges the suffering inherent in living and it

offers people a context in which to act upon it (Geertz 1993:103-108). This understanding of health sees people as whole human beings. While it is possible to conceptually separate concerns of biomedical health from those of spiritual or emotional health, in practice these notions are integrated. Also, people can simultaneously seek various forms of healing as complementary ways of dealing with their pain. It is also important to recognize that people seeking spiritual healing do not assume that their religious activity will mechanically achieve a desired outcome (Lienhardt 2003). Instead, people may understand spiritual healing as a means of acting instead of waiting, and in this way, people may exercise some control over the spiritual realm (Lienhardt 2003).

This chapter begins by proposing some differences in how Mary Our Mother participants approached their spiritual practices. People took up the beliefs that they negotiated with priests to varying degrees. People accepted and participated in sets of beliefs that made sense for them. In this way, some participants of Mary Our Mother were more faith-filled, and some participated more in understanding and embracing the ideas put forward in the congregation. Next, the chapter looks at the meanings of good and evil put forward in Mary Our Mother, which is followed by an examination of procedures for spiritual healing. The chapter concludes with a discussion of concerns of both structure and meaning while engaging problems that the review of the literature raised in the Introduction.

Faith-filled

In the last chapter I described some of the ways immigrants negotiated social priorities and meaning in the Catholic hierarchy. I also outlined how people and priests

negotiated meaning during priests' non-Sunday sermons and in Bible study; this tended to be a dialogic process where the priest had the ultimate authority. What is more, based on my interactions with people, it was clear that some came to internalize religiously driven and guided dispositions more than others did. Some people were more steeped in religious language and perception, or explanations and concerns, than were others. The process of internalization is best described in this chapter, because it is religious meaning that people internalize differently. I also want to make a distinction between those who took up the meanings negotiated in the congregation and those who took up religious beliefs in spaces outside the congregation. In this chapter I describe meanings that arose in congregation spaces with the understanding that participants internalized these to different degrees. These meanings also existed in relation to other beliefs held by participants. I believe that those faith-filled participants who were also involved in the congregation tended to work to consciously embody the ideals deemed important in this space.

Those that I call faith-filled were congregation participants that avidly practiced and integrated their faith into their daily lives, for instance, by praying throughout the day and actively drawing on religion to explain daily events. Some faith-filled participants were involved in the congregation as volunteers, and some attended prayer group and other congregation activities regularly, but people who were not involved may also have been faith-filled. Congregation involvement was not a necessary condition. For instance, some Sunday participants were faith-filled. Faith-filled participants tended to pray and look for ways to learn about Catholicism out of enjoyment, not just duty. Involved people who were faith-filled developed their spirituality through their participation throughout

the week in prayer groups. They were interested in enriching their knowledge of the meaning of the Bible and Catholic beliefs through group discussion, prayer, and aid of the congregation priest, and they sought to apply this knowledge to their everyday life. Through study, members became closer to God and the Holy Spirit, and, I suggest, they came to internalize church-guided dispositions.

For instance, while those in prayer groups were interested in healing and the Holy Spirit, they were also interested in study. As noted earlier, these prayer groups happened under the guidance of priests, and priests encouraged this study and seriousness. One congregation priest described this to me. He said that the African church was “a lot of young people” who were “not afraid of being slain by the Spirit, talking in tongues.” But, he noted, instead of letting Holy Spirit reception become the focus of the prayer group, it had to be very “focused,” not a “free for all.” The Holy Spirit, in other words, was part of a larger process of listening to God and following Catholic teachings. He was proud of this group for being focused.

Those who were involved and faith-filled tended to seek out instruction on the meaning of charismatic experiences and protection from evil spirits. Archbishop Paul was a Pentecostal-Charismatic expert who visited from Cameroon at the request of the congregation. As a Catholic archbishop, he oversaw a group of several dioceses at home. The Archbishop told me that he traveled frequently at the request of Catholics who had heard him speak and who would like him to heal them. Mary Our Mother invited him to care for the sick. Besides the US, he had traveled to Canada, Europe, and throughout Africa.

Archbishop Paul spent a few weeks at the parish of Mary Our Mother, and his appearances, while popular, did not draw the large numbers of Mary Our Mother participants that the Pentecostal-Charismatic days drew. Instead, Archbishop Paul was integrated into the normal congregation routine. He led Sunday and weekday masses, he visited with congregation participants one-on-one, and he said a special mass in the church for the sick. His integration into the regular congregation schedule ensured that involved participants were able to draw on his knowledge and not simply on his healing power.

Additionally, it appeared that there was differential success in the internalization of the disposition negotiated in the space of the congregation. I suggest that people who were involved with committees often were faith-filled, or they became that way. In this way, spirituality and practicality were intertwined. For instance, Emilie was a faith-filled participant. She told me that before she died, she wanted to do as much for others as she could. In contrast, she said, some people stayed in their corner, focused on themselves. She also noted that "you need to take care of your spiritual life." Because if you "don't take care of your spiritual life, you're just like a dead person."

A central message of priests and people in the congregation was the importance of becoming closer to God through investing time and through prayer. Participants began to take seriously the task of praying and learning about Catholicism by increasing the intensity with which they prayed and learned. It seemed that when participants did this, they became increasingly faith-filled, and so they were, in effect, working to fulfilling the challenge to become closer to God. From a different angle, the congregation priests (and,

as they represent the larger Catholic Church, the Church) wanted people to become faith-filled—this was a goal and those who were faith-filled were thus exemplars.

Florent, a single man in his 30s, became faith-filled after he had earned a degree and realized material success in the US. After prayer group one weeknight, he described to me how this had happened. His mother, who was very active in her church at home and who took him to prayer groups back home, came to visit him in Washington. During her visit, he brought her to one of the prayer groups, his first time. Then, attending prayer groups seemed like a chore, something he should do but did not want to do. He watched the people, and he wondered what they were doing, this spontaneous chatting with God. However, over time, he started to enjoy going.

At Mary Our Mother, priests continually urged participants to open their hearts to God. Priests told participants that when they professed from their hearts that God was their Savior, they would be saved. It is useful to look at becoming faith-filled as a process begun when a person listened *seriously* to the gospel, thinking about and acting on what he or she heard.

Faith-filled participants were fervent, devoted, and enthusiastic. They referred to God in conversation; they prayed (devoting time) frequently to Him. Some faith-filled people preferred to spend their time at church or praying. For instance, Marie, a woman from Cameroon, told me that she enjoyed being at church. She felt secure and comfortable because God protected her there. She said she would occasionally leave home four hours before mass (Sunday and weekday mass) to go to religious education. Then, after church, she would stop at the Basilica. If she had time during the week, she visited the Basilica. Sometimes she turned down work if she knew there was something

going on at church. She chose to go to church before any other social event. She noted that before moving to the US, she only occasionally attended Sunday mass.

The pull that faith-filled people felt toward becoming closer to God could become so central that it was difficult to imagine life without Him. One man in his 30s, from West Africa, described to me the isolation he felt in his first months as a new arrival in Washington, an isolation common among new immigrants who were frequently alone (those they knew worked) and not fluent in English. Not being able to attend Sunday mass on top of this initial isolation pushed him to his limits. As he said, people at home thought that the US was "like heaven," where "life [was] easier." In reality, "it is very difficult over here." He was not accustomed to being alone. At home, he was busy, and he was with people. As he said, "all of the time, at church, at school, at home, I always had people following me everywhere . . . . All of a sudden, I get here, and my [housemate] doesn't even have time to take me to church on Sunday. I think, well, this is hell." He laughed. "If I can't even go to church, okay . . . . That's not worth it . . . . If you remove God from my life, there's nothing left for me. Besides, I can't even understand TV; I can't understand radio, nothing." This man understood his religious life to be important and necessary, and he believed that visiting God must be done at church. He had internalized the ideas that a person must pray to God and that it is necessary to pray to God to live a complete life.

Those who had most internalized this disposition tended to place more importance on sacraments and Catholic rules. For instance, the importance that faith-filled participants accorded to the mass was reflected in the desire to make it to Thursday prayer group on the first Thursday of the month when there was mass or to regularly

make it to Monday and Wednesday masses in addition to Wednesday and Thursday prayer group meetings and informal prayer groups. It could be seen in a common recognition that, as one man said (and the other six there agreed), mass "is truly heaven on earth" and living in the sacraments—in Jesus—was living in perfection. In fact, those who were faith-filled were more cognizant in general of the importance of Catholic sacraments and rules. This prayer group was reiterating Catholic teaching. They came to see Catholic practices according to religiously authorized beliefs and expectations.

Faith-filled participants considered it important to study Catholic teachings and the Bible. Participants considered the Bible to be God's Word, one way that people could experience God. Priests were primary instructors, but lay leaders also taught through catechism and prayer group discussion. Adults and children followed religious education on Sundays under the instruction of lay teachers. People understood religious education to be similar to prayer groups and mass. One woman chose to teach in lieu of singing in the choir, in spite of her love of singing, as both met at the same time, and she considered religious education more important.

Participants and priests tended not to discuss entities like demons and spirits, other than the Holy Spirit, during Sunday mass and irregular events like the Pentecostal-Charismatic healing days. This allowed participants like Sunday participants to keep some beliefs separate, for instance, in a different context. An involved young West African man, soon to be married, described to me the ways in which traditional and Catholic beliefs could be maintained differently by different people. He said that in his village, many people practiced the traditional ceremonies, and tourists came to see them performed. Some people participated while also attending Church. His Catholic

grandmother ensured that others' magic did not hurt him. However, his mother stopped participating in traditional religion and instead focused on Catholic teachings. He told me that Catholics probably should not participate in local religious practices; at the same time, he recognized the spirits as powerful, and he wished to learn more about them. To varying degrees, people maintained different beliefs in different contexts, and people chose to focus on some over others, as did this man's mother. This possibility of choice is a sharp contrast from the description of the Christianization of BaKongo. In recent times, people had a medley of ideas from which to choose. People drew on different meanings, including meanings that might seem contradictory and meanings from different belief systems, to explain and to act on their experiences. The ability to raise discussion questions in the context of studying Catholic belief is important because it was in this setting that serious, or faith-filled, participants could work out meanings and contradictions that before were kept separate.

Through spending time at church, especially at prayer group meetings, people tended to bring various beliefs into a Catholic context and work to reconcile them, under the guidance of community interpretation of the Bible and under the direction of the priest. For instance, non-Sunday sermons and instruction were occasions to discuss local beliefs. Very devoted members seemed more likely to work at reconciling Catholic beliefs with others that may have seemed contradictory. For instance, Celine was a young West African woman who had been an involved participant until she had a baby. After having the baby, she became less involved in the congregation, but she also became more faith-filled. Celine told me that the time after the baby was born was like hell. But she found Jesus during this time, and He was the reason she survived. Celine relied on her

reading of the Bible in understanding how religious practices of her mother, whom she believed was responsible for her hard pregnancy, fit with Catholicism.

Understanding, then, that participants were in various ways internalizing the disposition put forward and negotiated within the space of the Church is important to keep in mind during the remaining discussion surrounding what, exactly, meanings were. The models of and for what people believed existed in relation to the beliefs that people acquired through their participation in other contexts. I suggested that people who participated more frequently and/or more seriously tended to work to reconcile various beliefs with those taught by priests. However, while some became invested in fitting together different meanings, others remained content to keep them separate. The following two sections consider the meanings of good and evil and the meaning of healing within the context of the congregation and its practices.

Good and Evil

Religions deal with the problem of and about evil, the fact that what occurs to good people is not always foreseeable as a result of good actions (Geertz 1993:105-108). People may behave as good people should, but they do not necessarily achieve good results. Religion gives a cosmic order to this quandary, to this world that is out of people's control and that they frequently cannot predict, by incorporating a domain of evil. I look at the ways in which people talked about good and evil and the practices through which participants engaged these concepts. I show that participants focused on humility, and they devalued status and material goods. They turned their energy to evangelization. These elements, characteristics of good Christians, were situated opposite

notions of evil, a concept that remained vague and difficult to grasp for participants; it involved deceit and hate. In this way, we can understand that the meanings of humility and evangelization helped people to make sense of their structural position.

Humility

The congregation took up the idea of humility as important to leading a good, Christian life. This was a recurrent message put forward by priests. They wanted people to know that status and possessions were unimportant. For instance, a visiting bishop from Congo gave a sermon in which he said people must try to enter the kingdom of God by seeking the Truth and by following Jesus and the 10 Commandments. He preached that "possessions block people's intelligence," and that blocked intelligence kept people from following God, from seeking the Truth. He noted that "we must have intelligence in order to find the Truth." One Beatitudes priest, the most soft-spoken of the three leading the Pentecostal-Charismatic healing days in 2006, instructed those present that the Bible was important while academic diplomas were not. On another occasion, during a short sermon, the congregation priest noted that St. John the Baptist, the biggest prophet, was a model of humility.

Similarly, in describing a recently deceased archbishop of Congo in a special mass in his honor, the visiting Congolese priest described how this man was well-known throughout the country, and a poem that he had written had become a part of oral folklore. Moreover, he described this man as a model of humility. The priest said the bishop was very humble, and he cried openly in the church. Faith-filled participants

seemed to have internalized this message the most, and they repeated it in prayer group discussions and the themes they chose to emphasize in retreats.

For instance, during one instructional sermon during a prayer group mass, the priest and participants discussed a Bible passage and the importance of giving one's wealth and time to his or her church community. I paraphrase some of the dialogue:

> First Woman: So we are but an instrument.
>
> First Man: Yes.
>
> Priest: If you give all that you have with all of your heart, then you will be compensated. But if you have some money and think of giving it but then do not give it, well, in that case it is better not to give it. When missionaries came to Africa, they spent money, and now Africans think that they do not need to give money to the Church.
>
> Second Man: Renewed [Pentecostal-Charismatic] Christians who are at the center of the Catholic Church must realize this. My daughter and wife are evangelical Christians; we have a mixed family. My daughter automatically gives a tenth of her income to her church, and she gave her first paycheck to the church when she got her job.
>
> [There is general agreement expressed by the participants that people must contribute to the offering and participate in the community.]
>
> Third Man: We must also be careful not to become like the Pharisees.
>
> Priest: And do not be jealous when someone else does well.
>
> Second woman: We should budget for eternal life. [She points out the insufficiency of the many one and five-dollar bills in the collection of the day.]

This discussion illustrates the belief that people should give money freely to the church not because they have to but because they want to, and people should do this because their goal is eternal life. These attitudes toward giving were more likely when people had internalized the importance of humility. Even visiting priests reiterated this message. For instance, one Sunday visitor, introduced to the congregation as an exorcist

by the congregation priest, visited the congregation on more than one occasion. This priest's sermon followed a formula like that of other Sunday sermons, drawing on the readings to give a message, and he, as did other priests to varying degrees, incited frequent laughter from the congregation. One Sunday his sermon focused on being charitable. He said that people must make money in order to clothe themselves and to have food to eat, but then people should share their money with their brothers and sisters. People who had internalized this message independently repeated it to me. One woman, for instance, who had been in the US for a couple of decades—long by congregation standards—had seen economic success, along with her husband. However, she once told me this same message: a person must focus on clothing, shelter, and food, and then a person can focus on others.

In another example, in January 2006 the Renewal prayer group advertised nine Saturday day-long Bible study retreats to take place over the course of that calendar year. The theme of the retreats, as noted on the flyer, was "Community life following the example of Christ, servant to all. How to serve in a community." After reading aloud this theme three times, the woman telling me about the retreats explained the theme. She said that it referred to life together, and it referred to Christ, who washed his disciples' feet, among other ways that he acted as a servant. She told me to bring my Bible to the retreats. Those who organized the prayer retreats reiterated the message of the importance of humility and sought to learn how they could become more humble.

In general, due to their increased study and seriousness, involved participants of Mary Our Mother, in particular those who attended prayer group meetings or religious education, emphasized the need to be humble more so than Sunday participants.

Participants should be humble and remember that material, money, and status are unimportant as they do not follow you. In fact, these things, outside of feeding and housing a person's family, block intelligence and should be given in charity.

One woman involved participant talked about the importance of humility for priests and for all, especially those in her prayer group, during one prayer group Bible study. She noted that they were exposed, in public, and so they must be role models. She continued [I paraphrase]: We must be humble. In the US, you can study and have a small diploma, and it's easy to think you're great. A man I know worked for Mobutu for 23 years; he became crazy; and his wife came here. One of the most powerful women . . . , she came here and lives now in a small apartment. . . . All the money, all the stuff are nothing. She has humility; she left all that she had. . . . Now, she is "incognito."

This woman was talking about Mobutu of Congo, discussed in Chapter Five. Those working for his government worked within a corrupt system that observed intense favoritism. When the government disintegrated and the opposing political party took control, the new establishment kicked out Mobutu's people, sometimes jailing and killing them. This woman and others as well had come to realize the arbitrary nature of positions of high status. Today the woman who told the story was living in a new, lower status with different, fewer means in a different social context; she was finding ways to make sense of her experiences.

Additionally, in referring to a story of material success gone bad, this woman repeated a theme and a joke that reappeared frequently at Mary Our Mother, frequently targeting diplomas and professors, apparent knowledge and status but "in fact" nothing in the eyes of God. They discussed the need to be humble. They urged people not to say, "I

speak in tongues," or, "I have gifts of prophesy." Instead, they told each other that they were servants, and they were instruments of God. This message, underlining the importance of humility in daily life, was effective in shifting people's focus away from the increased difficulty in finding status and economic success in the US. It is worth noting that people had quite a high degree of discretion in what they considered necessary levels of possessions or income. It is useful to understand the ideal of humility as a way of defining good that legitimated a lower status than people had in the past, and it provided a focus for people that guided them to improving their lives in ways that were possible in current conditions.

It was also evident that participants bore the primary responsibility for enacting humility. Individuals were responsible for being disciplined and for praying. Individuals should make time to pray and study the Bible during the week. For instance, one spring Sunday afternoon, Father's sermon touched on this theme. He said during the week people chased money, for which he received laughter from the congregation. His larger point was that people needed to put God first. The priests talked about the importance of working at getting closer to God throughout the week. They often reminded the congregation that that they included prayers and Bible passages in the bulletin. One priest advised people to have the prayers read to them if they could not read. Priests also advised that in spite of being busy, people should make time to pray, for instance, by awakening at four in the morning instead of six. In other words, people should intentionally strive to get closer to God, who comes before money or status.

Additionally, people believed they would enjoy the rewards of being good in the afterlife. Not only did priests and people say this in sermons and discussion, but they also

understood exemplary, dead Christians to be especially holy. The Catholic Church recognized as saints some pious Catholics who performed miracles during their lifetimes. The Church considered these saints to be closer to God than other dead Catholics. For Mary Our Mother, saints also included exemplary African ancestors. One congregation priest told me that he preached that Africans' dead ancestors could be considered saints. In addition, I observed a perception in the congregation and among visiting African priests that not many Africans were official saints because of the need for proof, which required money, something that African Catholics did not have.

When this congregation priest said the mass, he invoked the ancestors to pray for congregation members, to assist them, to intervene for them with God. He told me that ancestors led good lives, attending to the needs of their brothers and sisters, and people could pray directly to them. Describing an ancestor, he said,

> Between God, who we cannot see, and us men alive on the earth, there are intermediaries. We call these intermediaries our ancestors. Not just anyone can become an ancestor traditionally. To become an ancestor, a person must have lived well on this earth, have done good deeds, and after he has died, others have good memories of him. So we say, for example, I would like to become like a particular grandparent. At his house, when we were hungry, he fed everyone. If we needed salt, we went to his house to see if he had some. So he lived very well.
>
> R : Someone who was, who shared his things?
>
> Priest: Exactly, someone who shared. . . . Who looked after others. So when someone like that dies, sometimes in traditional religion, people pray, people say, people invoke his name. We say, "Pray for us, so that God will give us what we need." So you see he became like an intermediary between God and men. The saints are people who lived well and who are intermediaries sometimes between us.
>
> R : Mm hm, that's true.
>
> Priest: So these people, sometimes they also are people who had a good life, who can also be considered like saints.

The idea that an ancestor was a supernatural being with the power to affect those in the land of the living echoed earlier beliefs in Congo quite clearly. Notably, this priest did not discuss any harm that might come about from praying to one's ancestor. In Chapter Five, I explained that Congolese believed in a limited good. With this understanding, ancestors' activities done on behalf of their descendants would be balanced by harm coming to others. However, I include the topic of ancestors in this section on the meaning of good because a limited good appeared to have been absent in Mary Our Mother. I heard neither priests nor prayer groups bring up an idea of limited good, and on the level of the beliefs negotiated among Mary Our Mother and priests, ancestors were saints, and these especially holy spirits had the power to help people in the land of the living. On the other hand, it was possible that some held the belief.

The belief in the existence of supernatural beings with powers in the land of the living and power to mediate between people and God remained important for francophone immigrants. This was illustrated in group discussions. For instance, one man noted that Lazarus was the focus of the Bible reading for that day. He recalled that when his own father died, he saw a dark shadow leave his body. Then he said, Africans say "the dead are not dead." If they were dead, why would we pray for them? The Cameroonian priest, visiting from abroad, noted that if people had a problem, they should call on their dead father and mother. Similarly, when Jesus called Lazarus, He called the living. Another man spoke up to say that he had been saved from injury by his dead mother, who woke him when he fell asleep in his car. This also points to continuity in the belief that the dead were not in some other world, but they were in a world that was parallel and opposite to the land of the living, as night was opposite to day.

In addition, good, humble Christians were thankful to God for whatever it was that they had. They realized that their control over the circumstances in the land of the living was limited. In describing to me why he felt it important to come to the prayer group, Florent said it was important to pray to God to thank Him for what you had, not to take things for granted, and to realize that God came first. I paraphrase him: You worry all the time about your job, about your career, and having material things, but God gives those things to you and God can take them away. If I stayed home, I would probably work on the computer, watch TV, or think about the things I need to do to get ahead in my job. I would worry. Instead of doing that, I come here and put God first. God comes first, because He controls everything. For instance, I could do all of the work that I am supposed to do and still get in an accident. You could try to pass an exam but your professors could decide for some little reason that they want to flunk you. People pray to God to put Him first. When I come here, I accept that, and I am more at peace.

Humble congregation participants understood that they should not brag about what they had, and, furthermore, that they should not be concerned with material possessions and status. Instead, they should act as servants, taking care of others and getting closer to the Truth, to God, and to rewards of the afterlife. In fact, they should make a conscious effort to do this. Participants learned that those who were most successful at these tasks became saints upon death, and these intermediaries had some power to act on behalf of those who were living. By focusing on the promise of blessings, people’s hopes became concerns of symbolic compensation, changing destiny into choice. In addition, good Christians considered all people to be equal to each other. This too, was a refrain of Mary Our Mother.

Equality

Coinciding closely with the ideal of humility was that of equality. A frequent refrain in sermons was the message that diplomas were unimportant; social status did not matter. The ideal of equality under God, and valuing human beings as equals, was a frequent refrain among Mary Our Mother participants. This represented an ideal of how things should be. People frequently told me that all were children of God, that all were brothers and sisters in Christ. Church participants addressed each other as Brother, Sister, Mother, and Father. For instance, one day after Sunday mass, I said hello to a man who sang in the choir. Every Sunday he greeted me, and he always explained my well-being with a "thanks to God." On this occasion, I apologized for having referred to him by the informal second person pronoun *tu* instead of the more formal *vous*. He responded by instructing me to use *tu* in the future. He said, *vous* is for talking to someone you do not know. But here in church, we are all brothers and sisters, and so we are not strangers. A young boy came up to him at this time and greeted him; the man insisted that the boy also greet me, "his mother."

Some people used the ideal of equality to explain the congregation's unity, arguing that tensions within the congregation were insignificant because they paled in comparison to participants' love for each other. Also included in the francophone African congregation were people who took part in outside interdenominational prayer groups. Participants in these groups (as many members of the congregation) told me that a person's denominational affiliation did not matter but his or her devotion to God did. As they said, we are all God's children.

Like the ideal of humility, this one, too, was an ideal. Of course this means that some individuals aimed for it and enacted it to varying degrees. I believe that those who were faith-filled tended to work harder for it and believe more in it. However, even faith-filled people stuck to particular subgroups within the congregation. For instance, one involved and faith-filled Central African grandmother told me one day that we are all children of God; we are all the same, really. God does not care about the color of your skin, she said; that is only surface. She told me that people should rise above categories of color and nationality. She was arguing that all people should connect to each other regardless of race, ethnicity, and nationality. But, even within the francophone congregation, she stuck with co-ethnics—people who spoke her dialect and who were from her same region.

The ideal of egalitarianism worked in tandem with that of humility. To be humble, a person did not feel superior to or live better than those around him or her. To be humble, a person shared food and material possessions with others. If everyone acted humbly, there would be social equality. To say that others were a person's sisters and brothers verbally affirmed the ideal of social equality, and it referred to a better, shared existence in the afterlife.

Evangelization: Focus on Others

Involved Mary Our Mother participants, especially those who were faith-filled and in prayer groups, perceived that they were exemplars for congregation participants, and they tried to enact the ideals of loving one another and equality as children of God. For instance, one leader, interpreting a Bible verse, claimed that they must not have a

second hidden, non-Christian life; as they evangelized people, others looked to them as models.

Prayer group members saw themselves as special, with a mission to bring God's message to others—evangelization—through what they said and what they did. Through evangelization, they brought God and the Holy Spirit to others. The primary goal of the Legion of Mary was evangelization; it wanted to bring converts to the Catholic Church (Legion of Mary 2010a). Participants understood that those who did not live according to the sacraments and the Church's teachings—non-Catholics and Catholics alike—needed to be converted. The group focused on praying to Mary and enacting the work of the church—serving and evangelizing others —with the help of Mary and the Holy Spirit (Legion of Mary 2010a). Every week each member was supposed to undertake an "apostolic work," an evangelizing work, that they reported back to the group at the meeting (Legion of Mary 2010b).

The idea that participants should focus on others through evangelization was underlined by Archbishop Paul in a sermon he gave to the Renewal prayer group. He wore the black shirt and pants of a priest, and he had a thin scarf wrapped around his neck. He was not showy in his sermon or in his overall style. He put out the main ideas without much embellishment or many stories. He did not have a loud voice or big gestures. He did not move around while he talked. The focus of his instruction on this night was Pentecostal-Charismatic Catholicism and its meaning [I paraphrase, except for what appears in direct quotes]:

> The . . . Charismatic Renewal is from long ago—the Pentecost. [He reads Acts of the Apostles 2:19, 28-39.] . . . The Charismatic Renewal is above all "a grace from the Pentecost." Sometimes [people] speak in tongues and prophecies. "When

> the fire burns someone," the person cannot not move. [There is laughter among congregation members.] “All of [the apostles] were burned by this fire that descended on them.” They had to act. “They took courage and went out” to proclaim “the good news” door to door. The Spirit manifested in the first Christians, the apostles; they took on a new manner of living, of prophesying. They proclaimed with new assurance. “The fire must burn at the center [literally, the breasts] of our Church.” Through the Holy Spirit, we get closer to God. God gives us breath. God does what he wants, when he wants. One can never find God in hiding, but you must go look for your brother to find God. “The word of God is God himself . . . . The good news . . . must become our sustenance.” The spirit is not given to us to rest in our house, but to become missionaries, to evangelize, to spread the good news. We aren't large in number, but if we understand our task, we can do more than the apostles. The church counts on us now, on the charismatic.

In this sermon, the archbishop legitimized Pentecostal-Charismaticism as a Catholic phenomenon, present since the Church’s origins. In doing this, he rooted its meanings in almost primordial time. For participants, the logic and importance of this Christian form was evident. Like other priests, Archbishop Paul noted that God could be seen in and approached through the Word (the Bible)—which must become people’s food—and through other people, whom they must seek out. The feelings instilled in people by the Holy Spirit were intense, likened to fire and burning, and these feelings pushed people to evangelize others with new confidence and direction. As Pentecostal-Charismatics, these Catholics were charged with evangelizing others and spreading God’s word, like the first Christians.

The emphasis on evangelization complemented those of humility and equality; to evangelize others was to take the next step. People practiced humility by intentionally directing their actions and thoughts in appropriate ways, namely, by focusing on God and heaven rather than on worldly pursuits. The second ideal, seeing everyone as equals, fit with that of humility. People should not think of themselves as better than others. Instead,

people should focus on serving others, on taking care of them and on bringing them the Word or the Truth. This focus on others through evangelization brings us full circle from a focus on individual worldly success. In a limited opportunity structure, finding success was difficult, but even those doing well had to deal with discrimination and the adjustments entailed with immigration, including loss of status. At church, however, social statuses were (ideally) unimportant; in fact, people realized that political position and wealth were beside the point. The real point was the promise of rewards in heaven, which people could pursue through humility and through helping others.

Evil

I described ideals according to which good Christians should live—those of humility and equality—in the view of the congregation Mary Our Mother. Following this set of beliefs led people to serve other people, including through evangelizing them. Alongside these emphases was a shared idea that people must continually work at being good. In spite of people's efforts not to sin, they will sin. Sin was behavior that was immoral, that broke Church rules, and it could happen in thought. Evil included sin and hate, and evil originated in people and in spirits.

An idea shared in the space of Mary Our Mother was that sin was evil, and it existed in everyone. This means that although people found God and tried to be good, they would sin. Even saints sinned many times each day when alive. In essence, participants learned that sin was an inherent part of being human. In being inherent sinners, people retained innate evil. To understand this in terms of good and evil is to understand that good people were culpable for bad things, even without conscious intent.

By being alive, people were a part of the origin of evil, the aspects of the world that were not explained by good people doing what they should do. However, participants believed that they could continually try not to sin.

This belief in innate evil represented something different than what I described for people in colonial and independent Congo, in Chapter Five. For Congolese, evil originated outside individuals, although individuals could choose whether to engage it and individuals could be harmed by it. Thus, individuals could be held responsible for the suffering of other people, but they were not responsible for their own pain. In contrast, for Mary Our Mother, evil originated in people, consciously and unconsciously. This allowed the blame for misfortune and social inequity to fall with individuals regardless of their actions.

For participants in the congregation, sin encompassed many behaviors and thoughts; one sin was pride. Like Satan, an angel of God who fell because of his arrogance, people who were not humble were sinning. Also, like Satan, some priests were not humble. For instance, during the course of Bible study of a meeting of Rising to the Faith, the leader noted that some priests thought very highly of themselves and did not live by the rules that they taught to others. A woman there replied that Satan was an angel of God who fell due to his pride, and, therefore, they must pray for the priests who were high on the hierarchy, as many fell because of their pride. These men were “not humble.” This woman’s observations also have significance for this study’s concern about equality. She did not hesitate to voice her opinion in critique of the religious hierarchy, implicitly stating a preference for more egalitarian practices and noting that evil remained inherent even among religious specialists. This critique is also noteworthy because people,

including this woman, tended to simultaneously look to religious specialists for guidance and explanation. There was a continual tension, then, between authority and egalitarianism.

It can be understood that the authority of religious specialists was somewhat ambiguous. People assumed that they came by their authority in a legitimate way; however, the possibility remained that they did not do so or that they would succumb to evil once in a high status. This resonated with Congo beliefs that I described in Chapter Five about the differences between the magician and the witch. Both figures had specialized knowledge about the supernatural realm. However, the magician worked for the good of people (to protect them and cure the effects of witchcraft) while the witch worked for self-serving ends. In the context of Mary Our Mother, the priest should work for the good of people; however, there were deceivers within these ranks. In pointing out that some priests had fallen due to sin (evil), this woman pointed out that the figure of the Catholic priest remains ambiguous because all people—even saints—sinned. The point at which people and other religious specialists held a priest responsible for his evil activities remained ambiguous, open to interpretation. For instance, depending on a priest's popularity or perceived holiness, people might say that his indiscretions were unintentional (or deliberate).

Beyond a concern with innate evil, people were concerned with evil spirits, which could be understood to create harm, misfortune, and gross inequities. Sunday sermons rarely covered concerns about evil spirits, but they were a topic of discussion in dialogic spaces. This points to the lay group's concern with evil spirits, and it illustrates how the lack of discussion about them in typical Catholic spaces left Sunday participants to figure

out their beliefs about them on their own. For example, after giving the sermon, Archbishop Paul answered questions from those in attendance. The questions asked of him illustrated the congregation members' interest in learning about experiences involving evil. People looked to religious specialists who served their congregation for assistance in understanding why bad things happened to good people in terms of powerful supernatural entities.

Participants learned that evil spirits could possess people, and evil spirits were deceptive. One man asked the archbishop whether the Holy Spirit compelled people to speak in tongues or whether individuals were being deceptive. This man noted that some people frequently spoke in tongues. Archbishop Paul replied that Satan always deceived. He said, when the Holy Spirit comes, he can speak a language we understand. But if the Spirit speaks in another language, he always finds someone that can understand, and the message is important. At the same time, the archbishop continued, in a group, there are always agents of the devil who say that God would not say what others have said. In other words, the archbishop acknowledged the ambiguity involved in spirit possession. For believers, the devil deceived and tricked, which explains how good people were susceptible to being influenced by the devil. This makes evident that identifying someone under evil influence was not a straightforward task. This belief in the ambiguity of evil versus good in the world and in people paralleled the case of identifying a witch and magician in Congo. Saying that a person was possessed by the devil or the Holy Spirit in this context, like calling someone a magician or witch in Congo, depended on a person's point of view and interests.

While people conversing with priests in these dialogic spaces seemed to work to reconcile various beliefs, those not seeking this religious instruction interpreted their experiences on their own. Earlier I described Celine as a woman who became faith-filled after the birth of her son. However, she also found it difficult to get to church and so began to rely more on her personal study and interpretation of the Bible to explain her experiences. This was illustrated in her explanation of her difficult pregnancy. While I sat with her in her living room one afternoon a few months after the baby's birth, she told me that her mother had sought the help of a magician to ensure that Celine's pregnancy would go well. However, because her pregnancy and birth were difficult, Celine interpreted her mother's activity as evil. She told me that her mother, while Catholic, practiced sorcery for good reasons but with bad effects. Her mother was deceived, and she practiced evil. It can be imagined that had the pregnancy gone well, Celine would have interpreted her mother's practice in a positive way. This shows how the use of supernatural forces for personal gain included ambiguity in intention and effect.

Beyond the idea that sin was inherent in people who were susceptible to the devil's deception and possession, people learned that hate contributed to the misfortune and inequity in the world. In this way, people could contribute to evil but they also could work to lessen evil. One Sunday sermon touched on hate and war. The priest told the congregation that if there was hate in their hearts, then there was no room for love. He noted that war and violence, the reasons that some people of the congregation were in the US, were caused by people with hate in their hearts. Warring people had evil inside them, which created harm. Additionally, the priest directed the people in the congregation to get rid of the hate in their hearts. Putting the onus on individuals, he said that they must not

return an act of hate with another act of hate, which would continue the cycle of violence. At the end of the homily, everyone applauded. His message that hate caused war and suffering (that hate was evil) and that people should have love in their hearts was well received. He was also directing people to forgive the perpetrators of violence, through replacing hate with love. On the other hand, while individuals could work to be good and fill their hearts with love (not hate), there remained a realization that not all individuals did this and the effects of hate, of evil, existed in the world.

An effect of this understanding was the placement of responsibility for evil on individuals. While some evil was inherent in people (and thus could not be helped), and while evil spirits intended to cause evil (against which people could guard but still be tricked), people also had a choice and a responsibility not to be evil. People should make the conscious decision to love, keeping hate out of their hearts. This emphasis on individual responsibility carried through the emphasis on humility and evangelization. These ideals for behavior and thought can be understood in terms of the way they directed people to act within their structural constraints. If a person was humble, served others, and did not hate, she or he was simultaneously a good worker who was happy with his or her place in the social order.

This frame also made it possible for people to understand gross inequities in society. Those people who had evil in their hearts created them. Emilie, from Congo, described some of what she saw on her last visit home, about five years before:

> Children, girls ten years old, twelve, prostituting themselves because of money. That hurts. I can remember that age, I was just stomping around, injuring myself, my parents pampering me, driving me to school, taking me back, you understand? And now you see the children . . . . My parents used to take care of me, do everything for me. Look at the children, because ah. It’s so sad. That hurts, you

> know. You see. Small children in the street like that. Begging. It's how they they eat. No like this, I don't believe it's the same country. It is the the devil. *C'etait*, you know war, war is the devil. You don't wish that to happen. You wish why, i-, you don't wish it, it's it's bad. It's bad. It's bad [stated in English].

This woman was saying that children should be able to rely on adults; living hungry in the street was not a choice that children would wish to make. Instead, the existence of evil in the world explained the plight of these children. Also, it explained war. The devil was war, and the devil was the origin of evil, the misfortune experienced by the children in the streets. This life was the opposite of the good life that this woman lived as a child, where she had food to eat, she was safe, and she was happy. This woman's explanation for child orphans was notably different than those I described in Chapter Five, where people in contemporary Congo tended to understand orphans as witches, as the cause of the destruction in their worlds. This may be due to the fact that she moved away 30 years ago, signifying that her perspective was quite different from what it was and from contemporary Congolese in the country. This may be because different people from the same place understood things differently. It is imaginable that the devil or evil spirits could possess children and force them to create evil. It is also the case that whether a person described another as a witch depended on the person's point of view, and in comparison to these children and others, this woman had much.

Exorcism: Ritually Protecting against Evil

For Mary Our Mother participants and the priests who directed their spiritual development, exorcism was a wide concept that referred to casting evil out of people and objects and blessing objects and people to protect against evil spirits. In this section I discuss exorcism as ritual protection against evil. An interesting case was that of Flore, a

Congolese who told me that she did not believe in witchcraft. She explained that she did not believe a person's relatives could cause him or her to become ill except through the interpersonal effects of jealousy (not through supernatural phenomena). Flore said that when she was twelve, her mother successfully rid her house of evil. Flore had been having recurrent nightmares. One night, when she could not sleep, she woke her mother. Her mother was an avid Catholic, and she had holy (blessed) water, a rosary, crosses, and statues of the Virgin Mary—according to Flore, those things in which Catholics believed—in her room. Her mother prayed with Flore and then sprinkled the holy water throughout the house. After this, Flore reported, she always slept well, with no further nightmares.

It can be understood that, in a rite similar to what I describe below in which a priest's function as exorcist included blessing, or protecting, objects from evil spirits, Flore's mother rid the house of evil. Using Catholic objects endowed with supernatural power, she rid the house of the evil that affected Flore in her dreams. Not only did this illustrate continuity in belief about the power of religious objects, it also pointed to continuity in belief about the land of the dead. In the discussion of Congo thought in Chapter Five, I explained that Congolese understood the land of the dead to be a supernatural domain that existed in parallel opposite to the land of the living, for instance, as night was opposite to day. Understood according to this conception of the land of the dead, people were more susceptible to the influence of evil entities when sleeping, at night. In this case, the nightmare may be understood as the workings of evil forces attempting to influence Flore.

At a prayer group meeting, Archbishop Paul, a Catholic exorcist, related that he had been asked by a priest at Catholic University to *causer* with a girl (her nationality was not revealed) who had the signs of someone possessed by the devil. Before this apparent possession, she had had a group and a priest at her house to pray for her father, who ended up dying. After his death, when she appeared to be possessed by the devil, an exorcist prayed over her. Later, the archbishop said, he visited her. He really *causé* with her and found that she was disillusioned, not possessed. In this case, this specialist discerned the root of a woman's problems, which he decided was not possession. In telling this story, the archbishop underlined his spiritual authority to the congregation participants, and he also confirmed that possession by the devil was a real threat.

This archbishop visited with people one on one during his visit to counsel them and to protect them from being possessed. Camille, introduced in the last chapter as a patient of the health clinic, planned to see him. Camille told me that people saw the archbishop for a variety of reasons, for instance, to have him bless their houses or bless an object. She said some people visited him because he was an exorcist; people asked him to protect them. Looking for clarification, I asked whether people went to see him for protection against being possessed; she answered yes. In blessing these things, the archbishop was carrying out some of his exorcist functions. People sought protection from evil entities through getting him to endow the objects surrounding them with supernatural power.

Importantly, spiritual guidance was also part of the leaders' function. This happened in the group setting and one-on-one. The congregation priest was available to talk with people. Similarly, a visiting charismatic priest told me that when people came to

him, he figured out what was troubling them. Some people came to him to bless things. Some people came to him for spiritual guidance. Some people came to him because they were having trouble with their lives and they talked to him about it, looking for guidance.

The Archbishop not only instructed during prayer service and took care of people individually. He also joined in leading Sunday mass during his visit, and he led a service for the sick one Saturday evening. I arrived at this service for the sick expecting people to fall and be cured, like at Pentecostal-Charismatic healing days. Instead, the service was quiet, except for the songs, which were like those at mass and at prayer meetings—energetic and strong. The church was not full; there were about 150 people there. Members of the prayer group the Renewal had arrived early in the chapel to practice singing, and in the church they sat together in the center toward the front. There was much prolonged Catholic ritual this evening. Archbishop Paul led many prayers, some with responses from those in the congregation, others intoned solely by him. He stood in the front of the church, both behind and in front of the altar. The congregation's priest was there with him. During the service, the archbishop blessed water, oil, and religious objects that people had brought with them. This, I was told by Angeline, who had made sure I sat with her near front and center on this particular evening, protected these items from evil spirits. The four-hour long evening ended with the archbishop placing his fingers in blessed oil and anointing each person's forehead as they stopped in front of him, protecting people's bodies as he protected their objects.

Participants believed that evil spirits, which can invade people and objects, were kept at bay through the ritual, authoritative practices of a Catholic expert. Through these practices, the expert endowed things with supernatural power. Because they protected

houses, dreams, and human beings, blessed objects were helpful and desirable things to keep in daily life. This service for the sick also illustrated a spiritual understanding of health. As a result of their blessed status, protective oil, water, and objects could protect people from the intense suffering that resulted from misfortune.

Healing

As discussed in Chapter Two, religion provides a meaningful context from which to understand suffering and through which to express and act upon it (Geertz 1993:103-104). Also, the religious mode of healing complements other modes, as Lienhardt (2003:291-295) outlined for the Dinka. People can exert control, they can act on their suffering, and when they act as a group on behalf of a person or people who are ill, this exertion has a social effect: it underlines and reinforces mutual respect (Lienhardt 2003:291-295).

Mary Our Mother participants believed that health and healing encompassed more than an idea of body or mind or spirit on their own. Participants believed that the spiritual and physical were linked, as explained in the prior section and as evidenced through common requests of people to “pray for me” and their attribution of positive outcomes to God’s grace (“thanks be to God”). They sought biomedical advice and healing at the hospital and the clinic. They also looked to religion for whole-body healing, including finding a job and curing physical ailments, events that originated from sin or spirits and that caused pain. When a person lacked a job or when a person was ill and these events—caused by evil—created suffering so intense that it seemed unbearable, religion provided a means of expression and control.

For instance, the case of Celine illustrated how evil caused pain and how participants sought to treat it in a variety of ways. According to Celine, the ritual performed by her mother during her pregnancy took something from her, which explained the physical pain and emotional stress of her difficult pregnancy and later infection and re-hospitalization. During that period, Celine and her baby spent time in the house of a woman known as a healer, a participant of the congregation. This woman was not an authorized specialist of the Church but acted outside it, in complement to it. She used local medicine and care in healing Celine and her baby. Arguably, the passage of time and the practical and emotional support that Celine received from this woman enhanced the cure. Importantly, this woman took care of Celine's health in a holistic way. After this experience, Celine attended the Pentecostal-Charismatic prayer days, where she was touched by the Holy Spirit and healed further. In this example, Celine's intense physical pain caused her to rely on multiple modes of healing, including biomedical, social, and spiritual, in the legitimized institutions of the US (the hospital and the church) and in the home of a friend.

People who were faith-filled perceived that the spiritual healing process was more effective for them. This makes sense when understanding that when people had internalized expectations and beliefs surrounding evil, which caused harm, they would logically desire healing in this same, spiritual realm, and they would expect that healing to work. In addition, an assumption—sometimes implicit, other times not—in this congregation was that healing was a continual process. Therefore, the more frequently or intensely a person sought healing, the more significant the results. I illustrate this idea with an example.

Camille, introduced earlier in this study, felt much stress as a new immigrant in the US. She first sought help at the health clinic, where she told me (while waiting to be seen) that her abdomen felt painful. Later, she attended prayer group meetings with Archbishop Paul, where she listened to his instruction and where she sought his one-on-one attention and spiritual protection. Beyond this, Camille regularly attended meetings of the Renewal, and she went to most masses and events held at the church. She enrolled her daughter in religious education, and she began studying to become a baptized Catholic. Camille was also studying to be a religious teacher. She enjoyed these activities, and she felt that she was getting closer to God. Camille was becoming faith-filled in the space of the congregation and according to its shared understandings.

Camille told me that she enjoyed spending nights praising God with others in the chapel. She also made close friends in her prayer group. As a result, spiritual healing became more effective for her. One summer during the Pentecostal-Charismatic healing days, she fell down twice. I was near enough to her during one of these times to see that she was shaking and breathing quickly while on the ground. A couple of volunteers rushed over to her after she fell to watch over her and cover her with a blanket. Her young daughter came up to me on one of the occasions and told me her mother had died. This occasion happened during a service in the school auditorium, where everyone sat in rows of folding chairs. As some fell, those who were standing nearby hurriedly moved chairs out of the way. I asked her later what it felt like to receive the Holy Spirit. She told me that it felt hot in her heart as she motioned with an arm to her chest. I referred to the priest's description of the experience; he said that it burns. Camille said that it was very intense; it was very hot, and she said it was difficult to describe. This was the first time

she had experienced this. She linked it to her regular attendance at meetings of the prayer group the Renewal, where she had started becoming closer to God. Through serious participation in prayer groups, which emphasized prayer and religious instruction, becoming faith-filled was one way for involved participants to strengthen the ties they had with God and to make the healing process more effective.

Healing through Prayer

For participants, healing was a constant process, as was working not to sin and to develop one's faith. This was what a Congolese priest said to a group of mostly Congolese attending the funeral of a well known Congolese man in Washington, DC. This section describes three ways Mary Our Mother participants prayed for healing: asking for forgiveness, asking a supernatural being to act in the land of the living for a specific cause, and praising God. These three procedures relied on understanding the origin of evil, discussed above, and they worked better when done in a group setting.

When Mary Our Mother participants prayed for forgiveness for sin, they acknowledged the evil that was innate in them, and they expressed the pain that this caused them and others. Through prayer, they asked God to heal them, to take away evil. During a prayer group meeting, the congregation priest told a story of a nine-year-old boy who saw his father hit his mother. Thereafter, he was angry with his father. He developed a stomach ache that no hospital could treat because it was not a clinical problem. According to the priest, the boy needed to ask forgiveness—because people should not be angry at their parents. Once he asked forgiveness, he felt released from what was holding him down. Anger and hate were evil, and they caused pain. To heal this pain, a person

must ask forgiveness. This example also illustrated that asking forgiveness for sins could be a way to repair feelings of hurt between kin and friends, thus repairing social bonds. In this way, praying for forgiveness was a social as well as spiritual activity.

What is more, due to the innate character of evil, participants learned they must pray continually to receive forgiveness from God—to be healed. Individuals were responsible for continually and diligently asking for forgiveness. During the archbishop's mass for the sick, he emphasized the pervasive nature of sin. He told the congregants that saints sinned seven times per day, which meant that he and they must sin much more, and so they should ask pardon without cease. The context of this instruction was the ceremony designed to give objects and people protection from evil spirits. To gain this protection, people first had to ask for the healing of, or liberation from, their innate evil.

During the spontaneous, individual prayer period of Rising to the Faith meetings, people implored God in their own words. Included in these prayers were concerns for forgiveness. Individuals thanked God for having pity on them; they pleaded with God, their Father, to have mercy on them, His children, who had sinned. One woman's words were especially clear to my ear. She repeated, "we are sinners, *Papa*." "Save us poor sinners, *Papa*." In praying for forgiveness, people were not only seeking healing. They also enacted and reinforced the ideal of humility. These prayers were part of what people called praising God.

People attributed the origin of their strength and perseverance to praising God in the prayer groups. One Congolese man, a father and involved participant, spent much of his free time at church. One night I overheard him tell another woman that he had worked a twelve-hour day just before arriving. He attributed his strength to come from praising

God. Echoing this sentiment on another occasion, a middle-aged woman related that people must put God before everything. She taught religious education for two and a half hours before Sunday mass, “You know, God before everything. It is Him who gives the strength to praise Him.” The belief that strength resulted from praising also appeared in the sermon about the recently deceased archbishop of Kinshasa, who in life said that he gained his strength from praising God. The idea that religious worship resulted in increased personal strength illustrated the joined physical and spiritual good that participants perceived could come from religious participation. It also emphasized that individuals were responsible for developing their strength through prayer.

The understanding that strength and success resulted from worship echoed past understandings of religious participation. At the turn of the 20th century, BaKongo sought mission initiation to enhance their strength and success. They worshiped supernatural beings to influence them to act in their lives for their betterment. However, Mary Our Mother participants believed that prayer led to an enhanced person (physical-spiritual strength and endurance). I am not certain how people envisioned this to work or how they understood the nature of this force. For instance, this new strength might have protected a person from evil, or it might have given supernatural efficacy to people in the same sense as protective exorcism gives supernatural power to objects.

Intertwined with the healing brought about through praying for forgiveness and the strengthening aspect of praise was a belief that praying together meant something different than praying alone. Healing was social. While people could pray on their own, at home, people believed that there was more power in a group. For example, a Haitian woman in her 70s who was usually quiet but attended most Sunday Mary Our Mother

masses stood before the congregation to announce that her husband, in spite of his old age, survived surgery thanks to God's grace and prayers of the congregation. Not only could people heal pain through asking forgiveness, but they could also say prayers for specific causes. God, the Holy Spirit, and ancestors were supernatural forces that could help people in the land of the living. Good people could pray to them and ask for healing. The belief that prayer and healing were more effective in groups also held for charismatic healing. Not only did people pray in groups but they also sought the Holy Spirit this way.

One night before a meeting of the Renewal led by Archbishop Paul, the chapel filled up quickly. In total there were over 50 people present, including those sitting outside in the hall. Before the archbishop entered the room, a man went to the front of the room to coach the participants about what to say and do during the service. This was unusual for a prayer meeting, at least in my experience. He went through a call and response Catholic prayer, and then he started a song and everyone sang along. This song became another and then another and another, totaling about 10 or 12 songs. We stood the whole time.

While singing, people became energized; one man wearing a dark leather jacket slowly danced down the aisle, facing the people, often with his hands in the air, and sang, smiling. During one of the songs, half a dozen people—mostly prayer group leaders—danced in a circle around the altar. Even those in their seats danced, a little more than they usually do at church. All in all, the room was full and moving with dancing people, and the singing, two maracas, and two big drums were loud. The players of the musical instruments were intense, listening and playing in different rhythms. When others took their places, the man drummer was sweating profusely and the face of the woman

drummer also glistened with sweat. Both jumped right in to the singing. After the singing, the prayer group leader started the group prayers, and then there was time for individual prayers which were out loud and spontaneous. Prayer faded into more prolonged group singing, “Holy Spirit come, come fill our lives.” Prayer, including that done through singing, and instruction were essential steps in preparing for healing by the Holy Spirit.

Healing through the Holy Spirit

The Renewal and Rising to the Faith prayer groups held that gifts of the Holy Spirit were available to all participants. As a whole, this belief was followed in the congregation, although I never witnessed the gifts experienced during a Sunday mass. According to participants, though, gifts could be received silently. Participants in the prayer groups focused, in common but as individuals, on praying to God. They gained strength through their prayer. They prayed to God for forgiveness for the evil that they caused, consciously and unconsciously, that they knew caused pain to themselves and to others. Through acknowledging and expressing their sins, they attained spiritual healing. Participants in prayer groups also prayed to the Holy Spirit for healing. However, it was not every evening that someone fell or spoke aloud in tongues.

In contrast, falling was more common during the services of Pentecostal-Charismatic healing days, large gatherings that drew between 320-420 people at a service, that happened once every year over the course of a week. Involved participants invited internationally recognized Pentecostal-Charismatic Catholic visitors to the congregation to lead these services. For three years these visitors were the Beatitudes,

from France. The next year the congregation invited a group from West Africa. These visitors attracted a wide swath of the congregation, whose participants understood them to be spiritual experts who ministered to participant needs, like Archbishop Paul. From my observations, people could be possessed by the Holy Spirit on other occasions, but the experience was more widespread in this setting.

Pentecostal-Charismatic healing days followed a common pattern that I observed while attending multiple services each year. They began with song and prayer, like masses. Importantly, the leaders tended to spend over an hour teaching the participants lessons from the Bible. The schedule of these meetings, putting prayer, song, and instruction before healing, seemed designed to ensure that participants listened to the messages of the religious specialists. For a person looking to be healed, it would be wise to listen seriously to how to go about it. This then became an effective means for the religious institution to get people to listen to and work at internalizing authorized meanings and expectations.

Instruction at these events tended to be similar to Sunday sermons but extended in length and charismatic in focus. The priest giving the sermon stuck closely to the Bible, referring frequently to specific passages and encouraging attendees to bring their Bibles, and the teaching focused on how to change to be a better person and on how to receive the Holy Spirit. Priests told people to confess their sins, to be humble, and to clear their hearts of hate in order to have room there for love. To be healed (to receive love inside oneself), a person must first pray for forgiveness (confessing sins) and live the ideal of humility. Additionally, priests instructed people to embody in their lives the Word of God

that descended into their hearts. Put in another way, once a person had been healed, he or she should evangelize others.

Following instruction, the priests asked everyone to stand to receive the Holy Spirit. One night, the lead priest of the Beatitudes said that in letting in the Holy Spirit, participants would be returning to the apostles' first-hand experience of Jesus, where the apostles were burned. The leader said that this day they would let in God, and they would be healed and happy; this would be the same experience as that of the apostles, those who knew Jesus. He instructed people to open their hearts to the breath of the Holy Spirit, and he blew into the microphone.

As the other priests walked through the aisles, they occasionally made one-syllable sounds, quickly, "rah-tah-tah-tah." A piano played in the background. Almost everyone in attendance moved from the pews to crowd into the aisles, and they received the Holy Spirit. Often, I saw someone standing who started to shake, in the hands, in the arms. This usually led up to him or her falling down. Some people cried out when they fell; others were quiet. Some fell without first being visited by the priest; many more stood, praying, until one of the priests stopped in front of them to pray, lay on his hands, or blow. The priest said it was the fire of God; let it come through you. Most of this healing period was quiet. Toward the end many people yelled out, and then all the congregation joined in song.

In addition to guiding people's Holy Spirit reception, the priests asked for demonstrations of the Truth of God, referring to stories of healing. One night, the service was held in the auditorium, and about 20-30 people stood up when the priest requested such demonstration. One woman related that a year ago, at last year's Beatitudes services,

she needed a job but had no qualifications. A Beatitudes priest prayed for her, and less than a month later, she had an interview. After that she prayed to God and received the job. Another woman related that she had been sick in spite of taking medicine. Six months after receiving God, or the Holy Spirit, the doctor told her she was healthy. For the participants and the priest, stories like these illustrated the power of God to heal, reaffirming their faith.

This same night, about fifty percent—two hundred—of the people in attendance raised their hands to signal they were looking for employment. The priest also listed various medical problems, grouping them by type, like heart problems and hearing problems. A handful of people volunteered as needing help for each problem. For each group, the priest led healing, praying out loud with his hands in the air. He noted to one woman that next year, he probably would not need to pray for her, since she would be cured. It is noteworthy that individuals sought healing for the pain and suffering that they felt in their persons. The reasons they sought out the Holy Spirit were personal. People who needed work asked for prayers for work, and people who were ill asked for physical healing.

This study interprets spiritual healing as one way in which people express and do something about pain (Geertz 1993:103-105; Lienhardt 2003). Rather than waiting for disease to get better or to have a job, people take part in religious healing to produce change. They do not understand change as something that will happen with certainty or in a particular time frame. If possible, people seek biomedical treatment, and certainly they fill out job applications. However, people may not have much control over getting a good job or curing a disease. Inviting in the Holy Spirit provides a means to exert some control

over the religious domain. This process simultaneously increases the reach of the religious institution, as people listen to instructions when seeking healing. Similarly, praying in groups can be a healing activity, one that is more regularly available to participants than irregular healing events.

The religious healing practices of Mary Our Mother rested on a broad notion of healing. For participants, God and the Holy Spirit inside oneself restored overall well-being, including happiness and absence of disease or handicap. It can be understood that the burning that grabbed people's hearts had an effect in their lives because it provided a way to control the religious realm and because people practiced healing with the support of community. The hurting individual gained advantage from the caring of the community, and, through their common healing focus, people underlined and strengthened mutual respect. However, the group focused on hurting individuals for only a period of the larger service.

In understanding evil and searching for healing, participants learned that they, as individuals, were responsible for being humble and for clearing their hearts of hate. It was the individual who must continually seek forgiveness for his or her innate evil, and this opened up room inside for love—for God. It follows that when the individual did this well, the individual got closer to God, helping Him enter inside and finding that his or her pain decreased. The individual's chances of finding work, of healing disease, and of living harmoniously with others were enhanced. It is also evident that people relied on priests as mediators. Participants believed that those priests who practiced Pentecostal-Charismatic Catholicism had a special understanding of the process of becoming closer to God, and they had a connection with the Holy Spirit. Through their teaching and

practices, these priests facilitated people's getting closer to God, a process that resulted in healing.

For participants, the process of healing also depended on continual effort. People had innate evil and lived in a world of deception and hate. Therefore people who internalized the expectations that I outlined had to make a continual, conscious effort to work to live according to the ideals of humility, equality with others, and evangelization. Simultaneously, people believed that they needed continually to ask forgiveness for sinning, to make more room inside themselves for good. In this way they could let in the Holy Spirit and be healed, but it was not enough to let in the Holy Spirit on one occasion, just like it was insufficient to ask forgiveness one time. Instead, this process of removing evil and filling oneself with good took continual effort on the part of the individual, within a group setting, and had to be done over and over.

Continuity and Change

I described Mary Our Mother participants as a diverse group of people from French-speaking African nations who came together religiously in a new social context. The US political field recognized religious organizing to be a legitimate form of association, which was important for immigrants, who could organize through religion. I also suggested that individuals who organized in established religious institutions in the US tended to have more freedom from government scrutiny than people forming new religious groups. The Catholic Church provided space for this group of immigrants to form a new congregation with relative autonomy from the political field. Through their

congregation, embedded within the Catholic Church, these immigrants addressed some of their material and physical needs.

As a whole, these immigrants witnessed decreased status in the US. Many of the immigrants participating in Mary Our Mother came from relatively upper-middle or upper class backgrounds. Some held or were close relatives to people who held positions of political authority in their countries of origin. When the regime in control of the national political field changed, these people found that their statuses were suddenly gone. They discovered through experience the arbitrary nature of the class divisions of complex societies. Moreover, the uncertainty of politics tended to be tied up with economics, and these uncertainties led some people to move. For instance, Emilie grew up well-to-do, but due to the political repression of the government, her family struggled. She moved away to get an education and to work, living for a time with family and then moving to the US. Her desire for security was shared by many Mary Our Mother participants. She looked to have physical security—the safety of herself and her family members—and economic security. For these immigrants, then, concerns for security outweighed concerns of status. Also, some moved to the US because of a perception of its enhanced opportunities. A minority of participants in the congregation Mary Our Mother came to the US through good jobs, for instance, at embassies or the World Bank.

Washington, DC was one of the top receiving metropolises of new immigrants in the US. In part due to this large scale immigration, the region contained many areas where being foreign was more normal than not. As a whole, though, francophone Africans found it difficult to find affordable housing and jobs, something that many found surprising. In Washington, DC, francophone African immigrants tended to have in

common difficult experiences related to their race, foreign origin, and lack of facility with or accent speaking English. For instance, some found that employers did not want to hire foreigners; their name on applications and their accents over the phone made their status evident. In addition, they experienced a context where race, while not a determining factor for one's opportunities in an absolute way, was significant as a factor that shaped where many people lived and worked. Racism thus contributed to the shape of the structure of opportunities that immigrants in Washington, DC encountered. Participants in Mary Our Mother also identified shared concerns about lack of access to health care and child care. Many also had questions about immigration procedures and desired assistance navigating the US system.

In Chapter Seven, I suggested that the shape of Mary Our Mother depended on the social context wherein these immigrants were black, foreign, and non-English speakers. In forming a congregation together, these immigrants fit into the new structure while simultaneously pushing against it, something that happened as dispositions formed in other contexts shifted into a new one. Congregation participants amended the identity given to them by American society into one that was meaningful for them. In doing this, they turned contingent relationships into voluntary ones of mutual trust, friendship, and obligation, the basis of bonding social capital. Through the bonding and bridging social capital of the congregation, participants had access to resources such as practical information, free spaces for organizing, an opportunity to develop civic skills, and practical and emotional support. For instance, bridging social capital that resulted from Catholic connections provided useful resources, such as the opportunity to organize a

health clinic to serve French-speaking immigrants. The usefulness of the social capital for various individuals depended on the character of their participation in the congregation.

It is also the case that the social capital of the congregation was spiritually useful. Participants drew on bridging social capital in organizing visits of Pentecostal-Charismatic Catholic specialists. For participants, this bridging social capital enhanced their access to spiritual resources—instruction and healing. This observation relates directly to the problem in the literature about what resources are opened up for people through participation in Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity. In the last chapter, I concluded that participants' Catholic identity resulted in increased availability of practical resources, but it did not appear that their Pentecostal-Charismatic identity impacted the practical information or material support that they had. It now becomes apparent that through their global connections to Pentecostal-Charismatics, participants had increased access to spiritual resources.

The shape of this community as a global community thus contained two elements: Catholic and Pentecostal-Charismatic. On the global level, being a member of the Catholic Church enhanced some people's access to resources like financial support and the facilitation of migration. These material results of Catholic participation mirrored those that past Catholics experienced, including people of the old kingdom of Kongo and, more recently, Congolese during independence. In contrast, the creation of bonding social capital around a global Pentecostal-Charismatic identity resulted in an international flow of particular models of what people believe and what they should believe. In this way, the Catholic Church became a means across which material, people, and ideas increasingly moved within a context of globalization. On the other hand, as evidenced in the historical

chapters, this function of the global religion can be traced back at least to the old kingdom of Kongo. Globalization is a historical process, and the way people organize religiously within their global and national political-economic contexts is uneven, depending on local circumstances. It is useful to understand the international movement of Pentecostal-Charismatic Catholic ideas and specialists through the model of the transversal Catholic Church. The Church incorporated religious trends coming from outside it and within it and that, in this case, spread globally across it. In this way, the Catholic Church maintained its authority over religious meanings and practices while participants created a community with significance for them.

It is evident that by inviting Pentecostal-Charismatic specialists to their congregation, Mary Our Mother participants took an active part in negotiating religious meanings and practices. People negotiated meanings within congregation spaces with its regular priests and with visiting specialists. Specialists—authorized by the Church—guided the interpretation of meanings that helped people make sense of their experiences. Pentecostal-Charismatic Catholics learned that to be healed, they had to be humble and pray for forgiveness, thus creating space for good, in the form of the Holy Spirit, to enter them.

I discussed the meanings that congregation participants associated with good and evil in terms of how they helped people make sense of harm and gross misfortune. People learned that evil was found in every one of them and that evil spirits and the devil existed to trick and possess people. In this way, war could be explained as the result of evil, due to the hate people kept in their hearts. It is noteworthy that the focus of sermons in Sunday masses, Pentecostal-Charismatic healing days, and prayer group meetings was

how people should be good. People were interested in evil, as evidenced in the questions that people raised during dialogic sermons. However, while Catholic specialists affirmed the real threat of the devil and evil, they did not talk about witchcraft. Therefore, people brought beliefs about this realm to their practice of Catholicism. For instance, if people could pray to ancestors to help them in their lives, they could pray to demons to act in this world for their benefit. This allowed continuity in meaning. Celine interpreted her mother's dealings in magic to have been witchcraft (evil), which explained the harm that came to her and her pain. On the other hand, some people brought ideas and questions about spirits into congregation discussions, where the group, under the priest's guidance, fit beliefs from different contexts together.

Individuals usually lacked the ability to control their opportunity structure—although, as a group, they were working on it, as discussed in Chapter Seven—but they were able to control the religious domain. Some positive effects of religious healing may have been felt in the reinforcement of community bonds, which would enhance bonding social capital, and increased feelings of personal strength. It is also possible to understand people's religious healing practices as the expression of their desires to alter their limited opportunity structure. By associating illness and economic problems with evil, and by ritually working to cast evil out of their bodies to be replaced by good—health and jobs—people religiously expressed and acted on their desire to change the material conditions of their existence.

This observation relates to a main focus of the literature on Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity in Africa. As described in the Introduction, this literature has tended to focus on how participants use religion to express the contradiction between the

ideals of individual accumulation and family-centered values (Marshall 2009; Maxwell 2005; Meyer 1998). In this view, Pentecostal-Charismatic Christians construct the past as their ties to extended family, primarily by labeling witchcraft practiced by family members as evil. These participants may believe that their ancestors are demons, and they may believe that the bad blood of their ancestors continues to affect them. Through the healing activities of exemplary behavior, study, prayer, and Holy Spirit deliverance—during which the Holy Spirit possesses people and wages war against the already-present demons (ancestors)—people symbolically express a desire to break with the social responsibilities they have toward their families. By breaking with this past, they look to the future, and they express their desires to be modern individuals of accumulation and success.

In contrast, religious healing services of Mary Our Mother focused on individual culpability for evil. People prayed for forgiveness for their sins—including the jealousy or ill feelings they may have for someone—and this prepared them for receiving the Holy Spirit. For these participants, ancestors were not evil; in fact, they were supernatural beings with the power to make people's daily lives better. Individuals focused on ridding the evil from inside them, creating space inside themselves for good, which symbolically placed responsibility for their material constraints and the suffering that they felt on themselves. People did not blame their ancestors and ritually break family ties, but they blamed themselves for whatever they had done intentionally and unintentionally. The understanding that evil is innate also points to a symbolic recognition that the material conditions of life were not completely under their control.

Individuals were able to protect and heal themselves from evil, through ritual exorcism of objects, prayer, and Holy Spirit possession. Thus, through inviting good into themselves, they expressed their desire for better life opportunities. Economic trouble and illness originated when people did not let in enough good, or, conversely, when they held too much evil within themselves. Being completely full of good was impossible, but people put forward the continual effort to be filled with good.

Moreover, this Catholic congregation put forward an ideal of humility. To be humble meant to reject wealth, status, or material possessions, things that I showed were difficult for immigrants to obtain or that they lost. In rejecting them, they symbolically legitimated the established social order. This ideal set Mary Our Mother apart from the Pentecostal-Charismatic groups who were not subgroups of larger religious institutions, as described in the literature. These groups appeared to emphasize material success more than Mary Our Mother, which makes this congregation an interesting case. Humility and a sense that possessions and social status were unimportant gave sense to the material conditions of immigrants' lives, and these ideas pushed immigrants to fit their hopes within the possibilities available to them in their structural location. However, this ideal contradicted participants' desire to achieve something better, which they symbolically expressed in healing. The resultant contradiction reflected the ambiguity in congregation participants' lives. People aimed to achieve enhanced opportunities and better lives, and they believed that these came as a result of being good. However, being good came through humility, which meant that participants were also content to have the bare minimum (they would be rewarded in heaven).

Humility was connected to the ideal of equality, which brings this study to the problem of equality and hierarchy, raised in the literature on Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity in Africa and discussed in Chapter Seven. This literature has tended to underline the egalitarian emphasis of Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity as a means for participants to believe in their equality and spiritually act as equals, in spite of their social differences. However, the literature has not addressed how this emphasis works itself out in the context of religious hierarchy. In the last chapter, I noted that participants and priests negotiated meaning in dialogic congregation space. Participants had some ability to drive the topics being considered, and they felt free to voice their opinions and questions about the meanings of Bible passages and religious practices. However, the priest maintained ultimate spiritual authority.

This chapter further develops the understanding of how notions of equality are worked out in religious hierarchy. Congregation participants invited select religious authorities—Pentecostal-Charismatic ones—into their spaces. Participants were aware of the healing that took place in Pentecostal-Charismatic Catholicism and the procedures it set forth for being good Catholics; they drew on CCR literature and songs, for instance, in prayer groups. By inviting specialists, they promoted their understanding of this Christian form, and they enhanced their access to spiritual healing. In choosing the religious specialists with whom to negotiate authorized religious meanings, participants asserted themselves in the hierarchy.

I also described how the ideal of egalitarianism worked in concert with that of innate sin. As people, priests had innate evil, and this created for participants the possibility to critique the religious hierarchy. Additionally, recognizing that a good

Catholic was humble, not arrogant, enhanced this possibility. I described one woman who made this critique in general terms; she said that many priests high on the religious hierarchy become prideful—a sin—and fell. By underlining this happening, this woman employed the understanding that she and priests were alike in many ways. They were all vulnerable to the trickery of the devil, and they all had evil inside themselves. While this understanding might seem to have contradicted the understanding that priests had a special connection to God, the ambiguity of the meaning of good and evil provided a way for this to make sense. As for the BaKongo and the Congolese, whether a person intentionally or unconsciously (steered by evil spirits) practiced evil in the eyes of others depended on point of view. To recognize that all people, even priests, contained innate evil, symbolized by sin, and to note that they could fall like Satan, was to simultaneously note the ambiguity of good and evil, the fine line between a person being good or evil, that applied to all people.

Just as family relationships had continued significance for the Pentecostal-Charismatic Christians described in the literature, the harm and pain that Mary Our Mother participants experienced in their daily lives remained. The literature noted that family ties held individuals back from achieving economic success, from accumulating. This study points to a different interpretation. Due to the political-economic structure in which people were embedded, which was beyond individual control and which limited their opportunities, people with and without family responsibility were limited in being able to attain the material success that they desired. Additionally, this congregation emphasized the importance of maintaining extended family ties—for people separated by the Atlantic Ocean. Immigrants sent money and clothing to people back home, and

immigrants continued to worry about the effects of the jealousy of their family members. Perhaps this was an effect of the policy of the Catholic Church that discouraged talk of demons and the devil. Perhaps this discourse was not necessary, as it would mask the real problem, the contradictions inherent in living in the political order undergirding capitalism.

Moreover, Mary Our Mother's focus on being good included the need to evangelize people, which included proselytizing and serving others. Those who were faith-filled and paid attention to this message, who internalized the message or worked intentionally to fulfill it, focused on others. This ideal led participants to believe that they had an obligation to help others, an obligation that made sense alongside ideals of humility and equality. Whereas the problem of evil and the procedures for healing focused largely on the individual—in group settings and with the help of religious specialists—the idea that people should evangelize others emphasized others in the group. In de-valuing status and possessions and refocusing energy on evangelization, the congregation balanced individualism with a focus on connecting to various groups, including kin and the church. This focus on others could also be seen in congregation social organizing and committee work, through which participants worked to directly care for others' needs, for instance, through immigration information sessions. Because group connections were valuable in a capitalist society among disadvantaged populations, this focus on others had practical effects, increasing the emotional and economic security of people's lives.

To be good, people learned that they should be humble. In being humble, people learned to be satisfied with their loss of status, with their material conditions of living.

When living conditions were put in spiritual perspective, they were not important, but rewards in the afterlife were important. This ideal was complementary to that of egalitarianism. I discussed how participants found some ways to direct spiritual content as well as social activities. This ideal had an emancipatory angle, and yet paired with humility, it did not. Instead, participants were told to feel content as equals to their peers. Moreover, the ideal of evangelization became a new focus for participants. To find God and do His work—to draw others to the faith and to care for others—was a constructive activity in the world, and it was an activity within people's means.

Enacting these ideals, studying, and praying, led people to become closer to God. Praying was also a form of spiritual healing, and it was a religious practice that people could do regularly. Doing this in groups increased their strength, and praying for forgiveness was one way to continually work to clear evil from inside themselves in order that God might enter. Prostrating before a powerful supernatural entity also had the effect of reinforcing humility. In declaring their imperfection and in imploring a higher power, they reminded themselves that they were lowly, a belief that correlated with their low place in the social order. At the same time, people desired better lives, which was the simultaneous goal of prostrating oneself and getting closer to God. It should also be remembered that as a set of beliefs within the modern context of a wide range of beliefs available to people, participants in Mary Our Mother could take up the beliefs put forward there to the degree that they helped them understand their experiences. I pointed out some experiences that these immigrants had in common as a result of their structural locations, but they were diverse, in terms of origin, education, ethnicity, political views, and current economic means. It follows, then, that not all participants would work to

internalize the expectations and ideals that people and priests negotiated in Mary Our Mother.

Conclusion

This chapter aimed to complement the findings of Chapter Seven, which described religious structures. In this chapter, to provide a more holistic understanding of immigrant religious participation, I looked at the meanings that people associated with their religious participation. Not only did people organize together religiously because it was socially and politically expedient, but people participated religiously to feel complete. I described how religion helped people in this immigrant congregation that was Pentecostal-Charismatic Catholic explain misfortune, and I showed how it helped them to express and act on their pain.

For those in Mary Our Mother who seriously listened to the meanings that were negotiated in the congregation, the ideals that they learned enabled them to understand their lives and focus their energy on goals not related to worldly pursuits. In giving people an outlet for constructive work and attainable spiritual goals, these ideals simultaneously devalued social success and fit people's hopes within their structural constraints. In this chapter, I showed that immigrants who internalized or acted upon the ideals of the congregation focused on being good. To be good, people must be humble, treat others as their equals, and care for and proselytize others. Involved, faith-filled participants also learned that they were the fired up core of the Church. The focus of their energy became healing and evangelization through action and example. For people trying to achieve, or who may have been somebody bigger at home than they were in the US,

this offered a model to pursue that was more important than worldly success, including status.

In addition, to be good, an individual had to work to clear the evil out of herself or himself through praying for forgiveness. This was most effective in group settings, and it also made people feel stronger. Because it was based in the knowledge that sin was innate and everywhere, it also offered people peace from the stress of being unable to completely control whether or not they found or maintained employment, for example. Participants could offer up their troubles to God. People could also pray directly to God and ancestors to improve their lives.

Those who seriously studied the Bible and listened to sermons became faith-filled. Some faith-filled participants worked to reconcile ideas they brought with them with Catholic meanings, and, in doing this, they began to assess them for contradictions. In the course of learning and becoming closer to God, these participants also found more frequent, whole-self healing, in weekly prayer groups as well as irregular healing events. People could pray to the Holy Spirit to enter inside them, filling them with good, displacing their misfortune and pain. Through this activity, participants gained an instrumental way to respond and reassert control.

CHAPTER 9

UNDERSTANDING AND ACTING ON THE WORLD THROUGH PENTECOSTAL-CHARISMATIC CATHOLICISM

This dissertation set out to study immigrant religion from a holistic perspective that accounted for both structure and meaning. As the literature on immigrant religious practices has maintained an overwhelmingly structural focus, this study represents a step forward in better understanding this subject. People do not tend to conceive their religious participation solely in social or political terms. For participants, religious engagement is a means to act spiritually and to develop an understanding of the world that incorporates the non-empirical realm.

A study focused on the structural elements of religious participation for this group of immigrant Catholics may have come to some of the conclusions that I presented in Chapter Seven. That is, these immigrants organized religiously by negotiating space for themselves within the Catholic Church, and they created and used social capital in various ways. By investigating how this group worked within the institutional hierarchy and created some social programs for immigrants, a study like this might have concluded that immigrants creatively engaged the social structure of their new context to take care of the needs of fellow immigrants. However, the religious meaning that immigrants gave to their organizing would be unknown.

A study focusing on structure might have pointed out the differential engagement of immigrants in group life. Some were involved in the congregation and in making

connections to other groups. Some congregation participants went frequently to church, and they stayed busy with committee work and organizing community events. Through organizing, they created voice in the Church hierarchy, voice that translated to broader levels of the institution and the region. For instance, they gained the attention of local political representatives at events of the regional African Catholic Association of which Mary Our Mother was a part. Also, depending on the nature of people's involvement with the congregation, they had free spaces available to use and enhanced access to practical information and emotional and practical support.

This understanding would have left unanswered questions about the spiritual aspect of church participation that was significant for many people. For instance, I showed that Mary Our Mother connections with Pentecostal-Charismatic Catholics did not lead to enhanced access to practical resources. By giving religious meaning equal importance, I discovered that participants sponsored visits from Pentecostal-Charismatic Catholic specialists from around the world for spiritual reasons. People gained enhanced access to spiritual healing.

This finding applies to one of the problems posed in the review of the literature on Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity in Chapter One. The literature on this Christian form has suggested that Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity is a global form across which information—through media—travels, and it has pointed to the practical resources and opportunities, for instance, migration and financing, which can be made available to participants. Because this issue deals with both structure and meaning, a study focusing solely on structure would not have adequately addressed it. I argued that participants in this immigrant congregation made use of their Catholic identity to enhance the

availability of practical resources, and they used their Pentecostal-Charismatic identity to enhance the availability of spiritual resources.

By looking at the issue of global religious community and resource availability through a historical lens, it is also possible to draw links between these different functions and what happened in independent Congo. Catholics drew financing and priests from abroad, which enabled them to run schools, for instance, when the state did not. This Catholic identity then was useful social capital for participants in these areas. Similarly, some immigrants drew on social capital developed through their Catholic identity to move to the US. I also described how in the 1960s and 1970s in Congo, Protestants organized crusades to which they invited American preachers. The Americans were excited to preach to Congolese. However, Congolese Protestants were attempting to draw on a common Christian identity (which at this time was ecumenical) to develop international social capital that they could then use for practical resources, as Catholics did. However, their churches did not realize enhanced financial assistance from abroad.

The development of bridging social capital on the international level relates directly to the issue of global Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity today. While it is true that ideas, money, and people travel more quickly, the ways in which they move have continuity with the past. My analysis leads to the tentative suggestion that the identity Pentecostal-Charismatic Christian is not enough in itself to guarantee religious participants social capital that enhances their access to resources. Instead, it appears that individuals must actively create social capital by developing relationships between churches, which may still be ineffective, as shown in the case of Protestant churches in Congo. Therefore, the institutionalization of relationships between churches would be

more likely to create social capital that would enhance people's access to resources. This is a proposal that warrants more in-depth investigation.

Using the model outlined by Bourdieu (1977; 1986) to describe how people in the congregation developed mutual respect and trust, I showed how people organized together in response to their new social context and prior expectations. In this way, Mary Our Mother participants had in common some new, devalued statuses, and they created a community with significance for them. People adjusted to some of the expectations of their new context while also bringing to bear continuities such as a familiar mode of interpersonal interaction, ideas about Catholicism, and French language. Drawing on these continuities created bonding social capital for this group of people. By emphasizing African causes and the maintenance of participants' connections to the people of Africa—through family ties, practical support of organizations, and prayer—the congregation valorized people who were devalued in the broader social setting. This again draws attention to the importance of including religious meanings in the study. Understanding the spiritual importance of prayer was key to explaining the significance of praying for Africa and what people envisioned this type of prayer to accomplish. As I showed, people prayed to God and their ancestors to act in the land of the living in ways that took away pain and suffering. In addition, common participation in Pentecostal-Charismatic services enhanced community feelings of mutual trust and friendship, further enhancing bonding social capital.

My analysis of the development of bonding and bridging social capital of this immigrant congregation responds to open-ended issues about local community in the literature on Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity in Africa. In the Introduction, I noted

that this literature has tended to take for granted the creation of social capital among groups of participants. It has not asked how people develop feelings of trust and friendship that lead to bonding and bridging social capital. However, understanding how groups create bonding and bridging social capital is important to understand how this universal Christian form takes shape in various local settings. While the immigrant congregation that was the focus of this study was not representative of churches in Africa, the analysis of the congregation does point to the importance of understanding the social setting in which participants live to understand how these groups create feelings of trust and obligation. It is important to take into account how participants experience a similar social setting and what continuities of expectations they employ in order to understand how people transform structurally similar positions into relationships built on trust, the basis of social capital, through religion.

I discussed some of the ways in which including meaning in studying this subject enhances the ability to address important questions in the literature. Also, because anthropologists are interested in learning why and how people do what they do, a structural approach that neglects meaning does not address questions that are central in the perspective of anthropology. By looking at what people thought they did when they participated religiously, not only what I saw, I gave equal attention to structure and to meaning.

By looking at immigrant religion in a way that included both meaning and structure, I showed that immigrants participated in a religion because they sought to understand the world in which they lived and how they should act in that world. Religion put ambiguities, inequities, and feelings into terms that people could grasp and about

which they could do something. Through religion, people understood the world in terms of good, evil, and suffering, and they sought spiritual healing.

I argued that through their participation in Pentecostal-Charismatic Catholicism, immigrants took up and acted on their desire to change their limited positioning in the wider opportunity structure. They constructed the origin of illness and lack of work, which they sought to remove from inside themselves, as a lack of good. When they worked to clear their hearts of hate and open their hearts to receive God and the Holy Spirit, they were not necessarily casting out demons or the devil. Illness and economic trouble were the result of not having become good enough or not having realized full potential. Full potential could be realized by letting in the Holy Spirit, and this was something that had to be done on a continual basis because evil was innate in people. This process was more effective with religious study. While the relationship with God and the Holy Spirit were mostly individual affairs, often mediated by a priest, people balanced individualism with a focus on connecting to various groups, including kin and church. The congregation de-valued status, money, and possessions and refocused energy on evangelization, a constructive means to act in the world for people who experienced a loss of status.

Congregation participants fostered ties to others, which could be seen in congregation social programming and organization, and the development of these ties increased bonding and bridging social capital. They bonded people of multiple ethnic groups within the congregation, and they bridged the congregation to other groups in the Church and external to it. By virtue of this “group work” people had access to resources and opportunities not available to them in society, such as civic skills, decision-making

opportunities, free spaces, information, and greater voice. Group participation was also a route for practical and emotional supports. In terms of the wider context, I suggested that while individuals expressed dissatisfaction with the opportunity structure, they did not directly challenge it. Instead, values of humility made their social status acceptable and, in fact, not important. Ideas of humility and of how people become good reflected the contradictions between people's desire to improve their experiences and the reality that this possibility was largely out of their control. Additionally, the spiritual procedure for realizing full potential (good) put responsibility on individuals for improving their experiences themselves, while the concurrent focus on taking care of family, in a broad sense, was valuable in ensuring the maintenance of networks that could act as social safety nets.

In searching for a more complete understanding of religious continuity and change, this study took a historical perspective. Looking at religious structures and meanings over time has led to important observations. I discussed the relevance of the case of independent Congo in problematizing the significance of Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity as a global identity. The historical analysis also leads to improved understanding of another issue raised in the literature.

I took up the issue of egalitarianism raised in the literature review at two points in this study. Here, I want to summarize my observations and expand on them using information from the historical chapters. This issue includes concerns about structure and meaning, and it has historical relevance. The literature on Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity in Africa has tended to highlight its egalitarian appeal. Participants call each other Brother and Sister, and they are all children of God. In this understanding, in the

space of the congregation, social differences are unimportant. Additionally, all participants have access to receiving the gifts of the Holy Spirit. This study develops our understanding of how participants understand and experience the ideal of equality in the context of religious hierarchy. Some Pentecostal-Charismatic churches may not have a large hierarchy, but they do have religious specialists who are closer to God than everyday participants. The very developed and specialized hierarchy of the Catholic Church amplifies the contradiction between egalitarianism and religious hierarchy, making this a good case study.

Participants in Mary Our Mother followed an egalitarian ideal like that described in the literature. Lay participants engaged and negotiated meaning with those in the religious hierarchy. A couple of observations are important for understanding how the contradiction between egalitarianism and hierarchy worked out on the ground. First, the belief in innate sin held by those in the immigrant congregation had the possibility to act as a leveling mechanism. Participants could call out priests for acting arrogant, for instance. The extent to which this happened in practice, however, is unknown. Also, because the emphasis that this congregation placed on sin seems to distinguish this group from other Pentecostal-Charismatic Christians, it may not be significant for some groups.

Second, the belief in equality gave additional power to religious participants in directing the course of discussion about religious meanings. I discussed how involved participants took an active role in raising topics and Bible verses for discussion in dialogic spaces of the congregation. Participants were also active in bringing Pentecostal-Charismatic Catholic priests to the congregation, choosing the track of Catholicism that they want presented and discussed. On the other hand, participants recognized that priests

had special powers to mediate with God. This undoubtedly had to do with priests' study and time spent getting closer to God as well as their religious appointment. People sought out priests for instruction and healing, and they believed that priests had enhanced knowledge and improved access to the Holy Spirit, to good. Additionally, as representatives of the Church, priests were interested in maintaining its authority in the eyes of the people through developing meaning in a way that helped people understand their experiences. For example, the congregation priest put forward ancestors as saints, a recognition that represented the negotiation of universal Catholic and local meanings. However, while there was some check on the religious authority of the priest through the idea of equality, the priest tended to maintain spiritual superiority.

Through looking at history, it becomes evident that Christianity's egalitarian element can be found beyond the confines of Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity. Members of Kongo confraternities drew on this ideal in lobbying Rome for better treatment for slaves. Beatriz drew on it in seeking to redefine good and evil. Congolese mission Christians drew on it as a promise for equality that was not fulfilled. Importantly, these historical cases were situations in which people asserted their right to equality in the social order. In a similar way, entities in the religious field in the contemporary US drew on the idea of equality in efforts to improve social equality. For instance, some Catholic experts taught their constituents that they should welcome and care for immigrants, among other disadvantaged populations. Also, Catholics lobbied politicians for fair immigrant legislation. At the level of the congregation, Mary Our Mother participants saw people as equal in a spiritual sense. It can be understood that some participants also put forward an effort to treat people in their lives as equals. On the other hand, while

some participants did organize to attend to the material needs of immigrants in the region, this organizing did not depend or draw on an idea of equality.

Through analyzing the ideal of equality at the levels of society, institution, and community, then, this study suggests that on the level of society, entities from within the religious field can work to influence the political field by taking up and applying the ideal of equality to social order. Similarly, participants within religious institutions may draw on this ideal in looking to better their social positions in relation to others within the institution. On the level of religious community, equality is especially important in regard to spirituality and interpersonal relations.

The historical analysis began with the BaKongo, a group of people of western Central Africa. This group was part of a region from which many of my study participants came, and this nation had a long history of contact with missionaries. Thus it became a useful starting point for the dissertation to begin to assess religious meanings and structures, and the ways in which these changed with changing social conditions.

Looking at the history of Christianization in Africa compelled this study to consider this body of literature. It is noteworthy that most of this literature has begun with the colonization of Africa, which took off during the latter 1800s. This literature has tended to focus on how religion was a tool of political control. In this model, Christianity was a tool of domination, and missionaries were active in the colonization of Africans' minds and spaces. My research showed that the political use of religion was not unique to colonialism. In Chapter Four, I described Christianization of BaKongo during the early period of contact with Europeans. At this time, the kingdom of Kongo was politically independent. It was a complex tributary society, one of several in the area whose

boundaries shifted as internal political alliances shifted in size and power. The king was a divine ruler, the premier political and religious authority. Similarly, those who ruled the provinces of Kongo also had religious authority, under the king. At the local level, priests were the religious authorities, and they acted alongside local political rulers.

At the time of contact, the political field controlled the religious field. BaKongo interpreted Europeans according to their own understandings, which combined the political and the religious. They understood Europeans to represent the land of the dead, but BaKongo were interested in trade with them. Therefore, in taking up Christianity, BaKongo elite took up the religious identity of the Europeans—as they understood it, joining the Christian cult—thus assuming equal political (and religious) footing with Europeans on the international stage. As a Christian nation, BaKongo drew on their connection to Rome for political purposes. Over the course of this long period, Christianity became increasingly important as an identity for the elite. Christianity during this period was not a tool of imperialism, but BaKongo took up the religion in step with participating in a changing social context.

I also described how commoners took up Christianity, and how they used it to explain harm and suffering. BaKongo included missionaries and Christian symbols in their religious understandings, alongside witches and Kongo magicians. During this period, the slave trade grew, and interior political units in the region gained power. This time must have been stressful for many people. In this context, Beatriz was an innovator who articulated a new way of viewing the world. Drawing on the Christian ideal of equality, Beatriz said that people in the land of the dead were colorless—not white, the prevailing understanding. She claimed that missionaries and Kongo political groups

associated with missionaries practiced witchcraft, a claim that she backed up by pointing to their use of objects with supernatural force. In contrast, she healed without objects, casting herself as a healer for the greater good, without intention of gaining profit.

In this case, groups of lay people sought religious meanings that helped them make sense of their world. When their sense of confusion was high, a prophet—acting outside the authorized religious institution—led the rearrangement of ideals and values, combining various religious meanings and practices. This new way included continuities and changes. For instance, using the sign of the cross and relying on an ideal of equality represented changes introduced by missionaries, but the belief that people could manipulate supernatural beings (through witchcraft and magic) for their personal benefit represented continuity. However, the religious movement did not result in a change to the structure of the political order; Beatriz was killed and the movement suppressed.

Change and continuity could also be seen in the religious practices of the elite and commoners of Kongo during this time. The cult of Christianity was primarily a royal cult and it symbolically legitimated the elite. As the elite gradually lost its power, it increasingly relied on its Christian identity for symbolic legitimization, which showed some change in identity and international associations but continuity in political function of religion. Commoners understood missionaries to be a special type of magician, which illustrated a shift in types of religious specialists (incorporating these representatives from the land of the dead), and commoners understood mission crosses and medals to contain supernatural potency, which could be seen as continuity.

By discussing the case of the old kingdom of Kongo, I showed that Christianity was not only a tool of imperialism. In this case, a politically sovereign people chose to

adopt it, and the classes of producers and the elite took up new, Christian practices in ways that made sense for them. This highlights the necessity of a holistic perspective to complement those put forward in the literature on the Christianization of Africa. The perspective that sees Christianity as an imperial tool would have suggested that Christianity was European and that African indigenous religion was something quite different. In this literature, Africans who took up Christianity have been understood to have taken up European discourse and perspective. In contrast, I showed that Africans, like early European Christians, took up Christianity in ways that made their experiences understandable, a practice that included continuity and change.

In 1885, European colonial powers divided much of Africa among themselves. This division split the BaKongo into several colonial territories, including that of Congo. Under the rule of Leopold and then the Belgian state, the population of the territory of Congo was halved. People were subject to mandatory work in harsh conditions, and they were punished through violence at the hands of the military under Leopold. Belgium forced most Congolese to work through taxation. The ways in which Congolese took up Christianity during this period again demonstrated the ways in which religious meanings and practices shifted with changing social contexts, as people's dispositions adjusted to new social settings.

For instance, large numbers of Congolese became converts at missions. When there was a choice, they preferred the English-speaking missions, because they rightly associated the French-speaking missions with the colonial government. This is different from what one would expect had Congolese wished to take up the religion of the colonizers in order to succeed under their rule. Belgians had power, so Congolese should

have sought out Belgian Catholicism. Congolese in the missions studied the Bible and learned to dress and behave like Europeans in a process that they considered to be initiation into a powerful political-religious cult. In this way, they brought their religious understandings to new practices. Then, when material conditions did not improve for the majority of mission-educated Congolese, they looked elsewhere. Some of these Congolese used the Christian ideal of equality to protest their lack of material success. The minority of Congolese given relatively good positions in the colonial order tended to be content with mission Christianity, which is understandable because their religious participation led to and symbolically supported their material benefit. The perspective that Christianity was a means for Europeans to compel African acceptance of their ideas and values does not account for the conversion as Congolese understood it. It also does not account for why some Congolese and not others were happy going to church at the mission and why others were dissatisfied and looked for other means to make their living conditions better while still taking up Christian symbols and practices.

As people's social conditions changed under colonial rule and after independence, their religious practices and beliefs changed. Many Congolese desired religious healing but were unable to practice their old rituals, outlawed by colonialists. In this situation, people took up symbols of Christianity, trying to begin churches and also working to heal people, as they had learned Jesus and apostles did. At the same time, Congolese understood that Europeans were witches. In this way, Congolese created new practices by drawing on Christianity and old ideas about the order of the non-empirical world. This again points to the ways in which religion helped people in different social structural settings explain misfortune and express and act upon pain. People maintained old beliefs

and incorporated and merged new ideas in their religious practices to help explain the new context. In these cases, acting on spiritual pain was also linked to acting politically.

The historical perspective that this study took improved the understanding of how religion shifted in changing social contexts. This study looked holistically at these changes because both structure and meaning were important for understanding the development of immigrant religious idea systems and practices. This analytic design also enabled the study to address questions raised in the literature review about how immigrants who practice Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity within the Catholic Church explain, express, and act on the misfortune, pain, and ambiguity that they experienced in their daily lives. A historical perspective also makes it possible for this study to show that how these Pentecostal-Charismatic Christians participated in a universal religion was not dissimilar to the ways in which past Christians participated in Christianity. I now turn to look at some of the continuities and changes that were evident in religious participation over time, as described in this study.

Looking at the relationship between the political and religious fields over time showed how they overlap and merge in different ways in various places and times. Among BaKongo, the religious field was closely intertwined with the political and served to symbolically justify those with political positions in the kingdom. During early contact with Europeans, the relationship stayed much the same, but as the context changed—as BaKongo engaged in direct European trade—foreign religious specialists and the Christian cult became important to the religious field and the symbolic legitimization of the political order.

With formal colonization, rulers and missionaries suppressed Congolese religious rituals. In the colonial territory, Catholic missionaries worked closely with the state. Protestants organized internationally and in the territory to increase their voice with the state. After independence, Mobutu flipped the links between the political and religious fields. He worked to undermine the Catholic Church while supporting Protestants and Kimbanguism, a Christian movement started under colonial rule. This led to the increased autonomy of Protestant churches and the EJCSK and the decreased autonomy of the Catholic Church. However, as the state weakened, churches as a whole gained voice in the political field, and they took over some government functions.

In the contemporary US, immigrants joined churches with a high degree of autonomy. Established churches, especially, tended to be free from government scrutiny. Understanding that institutionalized religions in general tend to support the political order helps make sense of some of these changes in relationships between the religious and political fields. Religions become systematized within a political order. When the political order changes, religion also changes. Conversely, when religions change but there is no corresponding change in the political order, the religion as such does not become an institution.

The domain of religious hierarchy was another lens through which to assess changes and continuities in religious practices. Looking at religious hierarchy over time showed how groups of lay people drew on religious meanings like witchcraft, egalitarianism, and those surrounding healing in their struggles with religious specialists (whose interests were with the maintenance of the religious institution) over meaning. In the Kongo kingdom, religious hierarchy was joined to political hierarchy. There was

some room within this hierarchy for people to claim authority as Kongo prophets and for people to contest political authority through religious means, for instance, by accusing groups in power of witchcraft or non-egalitarian treatment.

Under colonial rule, Catholic and Protestant hierarchies were filled by Europeans. Congolese who studied could become catechists, but they were limited in moving above this role. Congolese were not satisfied and protested, drawing on the ideal of equality, but this did not create change within the institutions, something that paralleled their lack of voice in the political order. In the broader religious field, Kimbangu asserted a right to create his own church and spiritually heal Congolese, but religious and political authorities repressed the movement. After becoming an authorized religious institution, the EJCSK became more bureaucratic and conducted less spiritual healing, which caused some people to look to other churches. People looking for spiritual healing who were not satisfied with institutionalized churches like mission churches and the EJCSK looked to newer churches. In the US, the congregation Mary Our Mother negotiated meaning by drawing in particular specialists and directing topics of discussion. Mary Our Mother participants desired and found processes for spiritual healing.

On the level of community, I suggested that participation in institutionalized religions offered the possibility of more social capital for religious members. In this way, people might be drawn to participate in religious groups within institutions, to have increased access to resources. Catholics in Congo had international capital resulting from the international institution and used this to support churches. This set them apart from other churches, which did not draw in this kind of capital. Catholic Church membership grew, but so did participation across most churches in Congo. On the other hand, when a

religion did not offer spiritual expression for people, they looked elsewhere. As the EJCSK became an institution, its practice of spiritual healing declined and some members departed. People left the church in spite of evident social capital. Similarly, in Mary Our Mother, some participants found their practical resources enhanced. However, they also looked for spiritual understanding and expression, or healing. These observations support the focus of this study on both structure and meaning. While the practical resources opened up through the bridging and bonding social capital of church life are important for people, they participated religiously for spiritual explanation and expression.

Looking at changes and continuities in religious meanings was beneficial for understanding how religion changed to help people explain their experiences. In addressing the literature on the Christianization of Africa, I discussed how religious meanings changed with changing social contexts in the Kongo kingdom and in colonized Congo. In independent Congo, as the state declined, witchcraft accusations and church attendance increased. People looked for answers in the political and religious realms. It also seemed that during this period, more than those before, Congolese were increasingly able to choose from a variety of sets of beliefs. This increase related to globalization, and it also related to the discussion on the meaning of belief. During early Christianization, becoming a Christian entailed proclaiming loyalty to God; people did not question His existence. In late-day Congo, people had more options from which to choose.

In late-day Congo, many people continued to interpret their misfortune and pain in terms of witchcraft. While healing had been performed by a local magician, through supernatural beings, in old times, in recent churches it was done by a pastor through the

spirit of the Holy Spirit. Many sought spiritual healing through Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity, where the gifts of the Holy Spirit were available to all participants. Orphaned children seemed to draw the most attention at Pentecostal-Charismatic Christian healing ceremonies. They became a target for blame in households without enough food. Those accused of witchcraft could be healed in churches through exorcism. Important continuities included the understanding that some objects could be imbued with magical power. When older religious practices were unavailable or no longer helped people explain their current social setting, they took up different forms.

I discussed how immigrants in the congregation Mary Our Mother practiced their religion. It is notable that participants did not hear lessons from priests about witchcraft, and the congregation was not involved in identifying and healing those who practiced it. Due to the lack of Catholic discourse about witchcraft, there was room in people's minds to maintain beliefs about it. In this way, Catholic practice in the US allowed continuity in this belief. However, at the same time, those people who were involved and faith-filled took up new ideas, negotiated in dialogic spaces and heard in Sunday sermons. Congregation participants understood that demons existed and caused evil in the world, but they focused instead on themselves as individuals. Instead of focusing on healing people who harmed others through witchcraft, people healed themselves. This was an important change that expressed individual responsibility for change in the world. A focus on the individual puts the blame for some misfortune and pain on him or her. In this way, people were held accountable for their own living conditions, rather than blaming others. Focusing on the self through practicing humility, not sinning, asking forgiveness, and studying, encouraged immigrants to be hard workers in the world who did not expect

much. Mary Our Mother participants came to hope for what they could achieve given their material constraints, but they also learned to try hard to do better spiritually and in society. Religion expressed how people worked for success in the US while focusing on making and maintaining connections to others.

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