This chapter aims to demonstrate why and how distinctions between “religion” and “culture” are of particular concern to Pentecostalism in Africa in the manner in which it relates to transnational migration and mission. Though Pentecostalism is often analyzed from the perspective of globalization, because of its rapid global spread and success, it is a mistake to assume that Pentecostalism responds to or interacts with local cultural contexts in globally uniform ways.

Various scholars have written about the apparent “fit” between Pentecostalism and globalization, and about the diverse ways in which this “fit” has manifested itself (see e.g., Droogers 2001, Meyer forth., Robbins 2004). The growing and dominant form of Christianity today is Pentecostal/charismatic Christianity.¹ The Pentecostal view of the world, as the site of a spiritual battle between demonic and heavenly forces, supports a Pentecostal global project to spread the Gospel among all nations. Most Pentecostal churches operate in global networks of exchange, whereby public media as well as the circulation of charismatic leaders, ideas, books and all sorts of other materials are crucial in targeting localities around the world—part of the faith’s project to transform nations, communities, and personal lives through the power of the Holy Spirit.

While this form of Christianity often serves as the exemplar of cultural globalization in modern times—*i.e.*, in the way that it appears to foster a homogenizing of the Pentecostal born-again identity around the world—the precise manner in which the faith relates to local cultural traditions and circumstances appears to result in a myriad of diverse engagements, ritual styles, and cross-cultural exchanges.

¹ Often also called neo-Pentecostalism or the third wave within Pentecostalism. In this piece we use the term Pentecostalism as shorthand, while being aware of the variety of Pentecostalisms (for Africa, cf. Asamoah-Gyadu 2005, Meyer 2004).
This view runs counter to the currently dominant perception of Pentecostalism, which emphasizes the way that its doctrine, organizational format, and services become easily adopted all over the world, seemingly irrespective of local cultural variation. From the perspective of the pursuit of a homogenizing Pentecostal identity, it hardly seems to make any difference where one attends a Pentecostal church. Services in Lagos, Johannesburg, Seoul, Amsterdam, Rio de Janeiro, or Chicago are often described in the existing literature as appearing strikingly similar to each other (Martin 2002, Poewe 1994). In considering this global homogeneity, most scholars have stressed Western cultural dominance (cf. Robbins 2004: 118), because the origins of Pentecostalism are generally traced to developments in Western Christianity at the beginning of the twentieth century (see Anderson 2004 for a historical development of Pentecostalism). The current rapid growth of Pentecostalism in the southern hemisphere (Barrett and Johnson 2008) is mainly treated as a global cultural flow originating in the West and from there expanding all over the globe, encroaching on various local settings. As such, Pentecostalism is often viewed as something more than a mere neutral “bridge” between the global and the local; instead, it is interpreted as tending to superimpose itself on local religious environments. Pentecostalism then becomes part of a local reaction and response to globalization or a “conversion to modernity” (for Christianity as a whole, cf. Van der Veer 1996).

Yet, in studying this homogenizing tendency of Pentecostalism and its project of creating a modern Christian identity, we cannot fail to see the diverse ways in which, moving from setting to setting, the faith negotiates and navigates local cultural traditions differently. In this regard, the faith’s South-South links offer an interesting and different perspective on the standard discussion of the linkage between globalization and Pentecostalism. As we will show in this chapter, by looking at Ghanaian Pentecostalism in Botswana (Rijk van Dijk) and Brazilian Pentecostalism in Mozambique (Linda van de Kamp), Pentecostalism is not necessarily part of a globalizing Western modernity. Its Southern forms contribute to and shape processes of globalization in specific ways. Analyzing the transnational features of South-South Pentecostalism makes clear that it is not only the global aspects of Pentecostalism that render the faith relevant for its followers, but the faith’s position toward the nation-state and national cultural projects as well. The specific ways in which southern Pentecostalism fosters identities that transcend national borders and cultural projects, like