

# Pentecostalism and Human Rights in Contemporary Zimbabwe



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Edited by

Francis Machingura,  
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and Ezra Chitando

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This book is dedicated to the Chancellor of the Zimbabwe Ezekiel Guti University, who is also the Archbishop of the Zimbabwe Assemblies of God Africa/Forward in Faith, Professor Ezekiel Handinawangu Guti. His vision (talents or matarenda) has given birth to the planting of churches in different parts of the world and it is of great importance that this same vision has addressed the social, economic, political, religious and cultural concerns of indigenous Zimbabweans through community services in the form of a hospital, schools, orphanages and, of late, a university, thereby empowering present and future generations.



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## FOREWORD

It gives me great pleasure to have been accorded the privilege of writing the preface to this book, the contents of which emerged from the 2014 conference, Pentecostalism in Contemporary Africa, held at the Zimbabwe Ezekiel Guti University (ZEGU). This book comes at an opportune time — the University is regarded in other circles as a “new academic kid on the block,” though we do not regard ourselves that way, as the University sits on the wealthy tradition of the church, the Zimbabwe Assemblies of God Africa (ZAOGA FIF). The book marks our celebration of the vision of the Archbishop and Chancellor of ZEGU, Professor Ezekiel Handinawangu Guti, of empowering those at the bottom of the societal heap. As the ZEGU community, we are delighted with this product, and as Professor Guti always says: “education lies at the heart of economic development of any country and the emancipation of every citizen.” The book has a number of chapters that critically interrogate Pentecostal beliefs and practices while at the same time acknowledging the good work by the Pentecostal movement in empowering weak and voiceless groups such as those with disabilities, women, children, people living with HIV, and the elderly. Through the support that culminated in this publication, ZEGU has contributed to the Zimbabwe Agenda for Socio-Economic Transformation (ZIMASET) cluster on Social Services and Poverty Eradication, as contributors discussing the empowerment of vulnerable groups. All the authors see an empowered and inclusive society as one which can easily transform itself in all areas of life: technological, social, economic, religious, political, and cultural. This book positions ZEGU as a serious contender in areas of research and intellectual discourse. The chapters are written in accessible language that can be understood by the general public, thereby empowering them in controversial religious issues. It contributes to the visibility of ZEGU in the academic research agenda, teaching, and community service.

Sunungurai Chingarande (PhD)



## INTRODUCTION

### “CATCH THE FIRE”: PENTECOSTALISM IN ZIMBABWE

FRANCIS MACHINGURA,  
LOVEMORE TOGARASEI AND EZRA CHITANDO

#### **The Birth of Pentecostalism**

This book focuses on Pentecostalism and human rights in Zimbabwe. It is important to begin by clarifying the central concept of Pentecostalism. The term “Pentecost” is a Greek word, prominently used in the Old Testament to imply the “Feast of Weeks”, a Jewish festival which occurred on the 50<sup>th</sup> day, seven weeks after Passover. The term “Pentecost” changed its meaning in the New Testament to mean the day when, according to the evangelist, Luke, the Holy Spirit descended on people and they began to speak in tongues (xenolalia, Acts 2<sup>1ff</sup>). Most Pentecostal churches claim to derive their authority from Acts 2. However, it is important to note that there is no unanimity amongst scholars when it comes to the definition, origin, development and features of Pentecostalism. Bergunder (2005) argues that a broad understanding of Pentecostalism neither refers to a common dogmatic basis nor institutional framework. For example, international umbrella organisations such as the Pentecostal World Conference only cover tiny fragments of the Pentecostal movement. As a result, a number of approaches have been used to explain the origins of Pentecostalism. There are two major approaches or schools of thought that have been put forward to explain the birth and origin of Pentecostalism: the providential or divine experiential approach (Acts 2 and the Azusa Street Revival) and the historical analysis approach (events of Pentecostalism in different parts of the world).

Some scholars, such as Bergunder (2005), use the providential approach to argue that Pentecostalism was “a spontaneously and providentially

generated, world-wide end-time religious revival movement that was fundamentally discontinuous with 1,900 years of Christian history” (Bergunder, 2005). The providential approach takes Pentecostalism away from history and regards it as a divine world movement through which God sought to start afresh with the direction of Christianity after the departure of Jesus. As a result, the majority of Pentecostal and non-Pentecostal historians, theologians and biblical scholars regard Topeka and Azusa Street as the outcome of the provident God who provided American (and to some extent British) religious history with some contribution to a distinct Pentecostal Christianity. The different forms of Pentecostal Christian expression in various local contexts are taken as deriving from Acts 2 and the Azusa Street Revival experience.

Using historical analysis, Donald Dayton dismisses the claims of the providential approach and argues that Pentecostalism can be traced back to 19<sup>th</sup> century Wesleyan, Reformed and Higher Life Holiness circles or evangelicalism in the United States (Bergunder, 2005), citing a link between the continuity of Pentecostalism and 19<sup>th</sup> century popular American evangelicalism. According to historical analysis theory, classical Pentecostalism originated in the evangelical revival and several missionary movements of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, such as the Holiness Pentecostals (who believe in the second work or grace or sanctification and final stage of spirit baptism), the “Finished Work” Pentecostals (who see conversion as leading to sanctification and then spirit baptism), the Oneness Pentecostals (who reject the doctrine of the Trinity) and the Apostolic Pentecostals (who emphasise the authority of apostles and prophets). Further, the historical analysis approach regards Pentecostalism as not limited to one single event that took place in Europe or America. In fact, it sees several reported pockets of Pentecostal events as testifying to the origins of Pentecostalism. The older “Church Charismatics” or “Protestant Charismatics” are usually included under classical Pentecostalism. This is the case with older independent churches (movements begun by indigenous people outside Western countries), which are regarded as having links with classical Pentecostalism in terms of their practices of healing, prayer and an emphasis on spiritual gifts. The historical analysis theory includes events from other contexts and sees them as important sources that must be considered in the origins of Pentecostalism. Other similar Pentecostal movements occurred at the same time or much earlier, such as the Mukti (“salvation”) revival in India (1905-07), under the famous Brahmin Christian woman called Pandita Ramabai. The revival is believed to have taken 18 months, gained 1,100 new converts, and included instances of women speaking in different tongues. These people

had no knowledge of the Azusa Street Revival (Anderson, 2013). The current Pentecostal historiography is therefore trying to show that there are growing numbers of sources for and stories about Pentecostal events that are emerging around the world, but which have so far been overlooked by historians. Historical analysis seeks to prove that Pentecostal Christianity was never one phenomenon but a complex social movement with many different strains. This makes it very difficult to have a “godfather or mother” of the Pentecostal movement. Therefore, through the historical analysis approach, the revival movements in Mukti, Los Angeles, Valparasio and other parts of the world are taken as a series of events that gave birth to global Pentecostalism (Miller and Yamamori, 2007; Anderson, 2015). Robeck (2013) adds that while the Azusa Street Mission may have played some role in the birth and spread of Pentecostalism it has mythically received far too much credit for what it actually accomplished. All the above Pentecostal groups emphasise the subsequent experience of spirit baptism and the experience and practice of spiritual gifts, accompanied by speaking in tongues (Anderson, 2013). However, the superlative contribution of the Azusa Street Revival to the expansion of the Pentecostal movement cannot be ignored and this explains why most Pentecostal churches attempt to trace their lineage to it.

Both the providential and historical analysis approaches make it very difficult to ascribe the origins of Pentecostalism to one specific event, though the Azusa Street Revival features a lot in the narratives that deal with the origins of Pentecostalism. What is clear is that global Pentecostalism began as a restorationist or revitalisation movement, or a radical evangelical movement, with people who expected a worldwide Holy Spirit revival before the imminent return of Christ Jesus. The fundamental conviction of Pentecostals was to evangelise all corners of the world as part of the mission call (Matthew 28, Luke 24 and Mk 16). According to Karkkainen (2009), most early Pentecostals tended to appropriate the missionary empowerment and charismatic enrichment of the Church to the Spirit. Using the divine provident approach explanation, scholars have used a number of sources to point to the fact that Charles Fox Parham and William Seymour were instrumental in the theological formula of Pentecostalism used at the Azusa Street Revival (Bergunder, 2005), emphasising:

- Speaking in tongues as the initial evidence of Holy Spirit baptism,
- Spirit-filled believers as the “sealed” brides of Christ, and
- Xenoglossic tongues as the tool for dramatic end-time evangelistic revival.

The Azusa Street Revival easily spread because a number of individuals and organisations generally accepted it as the second Pentecost after the first Pentecost in Acts 2. The divine provident approach explanation for Azusa as the source of worldwide Pentecostalism has found favour with a number of scholars. Individuals and organisations generally accepted the Azusa Street Revival and declared themselves to be part of it (Bergunder, 2005). According to Bergunder (2005), different and divergent streams of people with different beliefs joined Pentecostal Christianity essentially because of networking that existed within evangelical and missionary circles through correspondence and magazines, evangelistic journeys, personal contacts, and missionary work that spread the gospel message. The Azusa Street Revival was followed by an international multi-dimensional expansion facilitated by religious networks that were already in place, along with the explosion in religious print in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Kastfelt, 2008). From Azusa, the Pentecostal movement spread to different parts of the world (Africa, Europe, Asia, Australia, and various islands) in a short space of time. It is reported that, after the Azusa Street Revival, Pentecostal Christianity reached 50 different nations within the first decade of its existence (Anderson, 2013). This was fundamentally based on “ends of the earth” missionary, polycentric, transnational Christian beliefs. The Pentecostal movement has essentially always had the atmosphere of a globalising, migratory meta-culture with power and influence, despite the fact that the movement lacked central organisation and coordination. This was compounded by the naïveté of some missionaries who believed they could speak the languages of the nations to which they had been called, or of some novice missionaries, who succumbed to tropical diseases or the conditions of poverty, and faced opposition in the host countries, due to their narrow cultural setting (Anderson, 2013). However, for the majority of these Pentecostal missionaries the good news was supposed to be preached to all creatures, as the world was coming to an end. As a result, Africa was not spared in the growth of the Pentecostal movement.

## **Pentecostalism and the African Space**

The Azusa Street Revival in 1906 resulted in classical Pentecostal missionaries operating in Africa (e.g. South Africa and Liberia); Africa got its share of Pentecostal missionaries. The notable early Pentecostal missionaries who came to South Africa were Henry and Anna Turney, Charles Chawner, Jacob Lehman, John G. Lake, Archibald Cooper, Thomas Hezmalhalch, George Bowie, and Hannar James. It is not

surprising that Pentecostalism and most of the African independent churches in southern Africa were greatly influenced by political, social, economic and religious developments in South Africa. Migrant mining workers who were converted to Pentecostalism took their faith to their motherlands. A number of Pentecostal churches were first registered as Assemblies of God in 1917, though they were later known for schisms (Anderson, 2013), something that has characterised modern Pentecostal Christianity. The same schisms have contributed to the growth of Pentecostal Christianity in Africa.

One of the greatest schismatic Pentecostal leaders is Nicholas Bhengu, whose “Back to God Crusades” brought many Africans into Pentecostalism. Anderson (2015) adds that although African pastors and evangelists were largely responsible for the growth of the Pentecostal movement in Africa, they were unceremoniously removed from the history books, with the exception of Nicholas Bhengu whose enormous contribution to the South African Assemblies of God became impossible to ignore. The ill-treatment, ethnocentrism, socio-cultural insensitivities and misunderstandings with racist white missionaries resulted in an upsurge of schismatic Pentecostal churches. There were other schisms that occurred within the Apostolic Faith Mission in South Africa, resulting in several denominations. The biggest notable one is the Zion Christian Church, which was led by Engenas Lekganyane who was once a fellow worker with John G. Lake, who worked with Paul Kruger (Anderson, 2015). Paul Kruger, who moved from South Africa to Zimbabwe and established the Apostolic Faith Mission there, is regarded as the father of Zimbabwean Pentecostalism. His Zimbabwean converts, such as Chiumbu, Masembe and the Gwanzura brothers, were instrumental in putting Pentecostalism on the radar in Zimbabwe (Machingura, 2011). The Apostolic Faith Mission is a surrogate mother to a number of Pentecostal churches in Zimbabwe. The Zimbabwe Assemblies of God Africa (ZAOGA), founded by Ezekiel Handinawangu Guti, has its roots in the Apostolic Faith Mission in Zimbabwe. Guti was a member of the Apostolic Faith Mission prayer band. According to the official biography, the reason for Ezekiel Guti’s schismatic decision was missionary intolerance (Maxwell, 1995). The other largest African independent church in Zimbabwe — the African Apostolic Church of Johane Marange — also has roots in the Apostolic Faith Mission in Zimbabwe (Anderson, 2015).

Pentecostal Christianity has now become the largest Christian movement in southern Africa. Yet, at the outset of the colonial period (around 1900), there were just under 9 million Christians in Africa and, in the 1950s,

some 80% of the world's Christians lived in the northern hemisphere in Europe and North America (Anderson, 2013). For the first three-quarters of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the growth of the Pentecostal Church or Charismatic Church in Africa was slow, compared to the current Pentecostal movement and the mainline mission churches of the time (Lindhardt, 2015). By 2005, the majority of Christians lived in the southern hemisphere in Asia, Africa and Latin America; the African Christian population had increased to 393 million (Anderson, 2013). Scholars such as Lindhardt (2015), Kalu (2008), Kalu and Low (2008), Maxwell (2006), and Clarke (2014) are unanimous that Pentecostalism came at the right time, when most African nations were undergoing numerous challenges despite having gained independence. Freeman (2012: 44) argues that:

In the post-1980s era, a number of African countries suffered a drastic fall in their material standard of living and poverty increased across the continent. Per capita incomes dropped by 21 percent in real terms between 1981 and 1989. Prices of essentials skyrocketed, incomes dwindled, jobs disappeared, services were cut and many people struggled to make ends meet. It was at this time and in this context that the phenomenal growth of both Non-Governmental Organisations and Pentecostal Churches came about.

Lindhardt (2015) is of the same view that the first real growth in the Pentecostal movement took place in the 1980s, when most African countries experienced crises (social, political and economic collapse) of varying levels of severity. These crises wiped out some of the successes achieved by socialist governments because of rising oil prices, a fall in real incomes, the reduction of services, rising inflation, high interest rates on loans taken by governments to fund infrastructural projects, and the adoption of structural adjustment programmes (SAP) that had been instigated by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. Welfare programmes, public spending cuts and the reduction of government employees (increasing formal employment was the only source of income) contributed to the rise in poverty (Lindhardt, 2015). Pentecostal Christianity came onto a scene characterised by social, political, economic, religious and cultural strife. In response, it provided a means to meet the needs of people living under neo-liberal conditions marked by economic and social uncertainties (Deininger, 2014). People developed more confidence in the God that was preached by Pentecostal preachers than in political leaders who had brought misery, hunger, disease, unemployment, lack of accountability, the closure of industries, bad governance, misplaced priorities, patronage systems favouring the elite, the looting of national resources, and endemic corruption.

The theological discourse of Pentecostal churches focused a lot on “what God wants for Africa” (i.e. a continent blessed with health, wealth and abundance (Freeman, 2012)). This message touched people’s hearts and minds and assured them of personal security in Christ. However, Africa has been led by leaders who have made poor policy choices while at the same time being unprepared to accept responsibility or admit moral culpability. It is not surprising that the gospel of prosperity holds such great appeal for the masses of Africa.

The myriad of problems provided a good platform for the Pentecostal seed to germinate and grow in Africa. This rise and growth of Pentecostal churches also coincided with an increase in non-governmental organisations that filled the space left behind by failing governments, in terms of providing services and helping people to cope with poverty, disease, and the limited conditions in which they had to survive. Lindhardt (2015) observes that, in recent decades, Pentecostal/Charismatic Christianity has moved from what was initially a peripheral position to become a major force within African Christianity and the sub-Saharan African societies in general. Pentecostalism has permanently transformed the face of Christianity on the world platform and, of late, Africa has provided fertile ground for it to flourish, thereby making it predominantly a non-Western phenomenon. The failure by governments to address national problems also created an opportunity for Pentecostal churches to provide solutions for people who were moving from rural villages to cities to look for opportunities. For example, Pentecostal Christianity has, to some extent, stabilised families and marriages, provided prayers, fasts and hope for the sick who could not afford medical costs. It has also given hope to those venturing into business, boosting self-esteem and empowering lowly-paid congregants with business skills to start businesses.

No Christian researcher or observer of Christianity can overlook, deny or underestimate the significance and influence of Pentecostalism in the modern day African religious landscape. Statistically, it is very difficult to determine the number or percentage of Pentecostal followers in Africa. For Kalu (2008), statistical estimates for the year 2000 stood at 20% of the population in Zimbabwe, Tanzania and Malawi, 14% in Kenya, 11% in Nigeria, 10% in Ghana and Zambia, 8% in the Democratic Republic of Congo and South Africa, and 4% in Uganda. When these percentages are translated into absolute figures, the numbers are astronomical. Barrett (2001) estimates that Pentecostal Christianity has won over half a billion souls worldwide, representing 28% of global Christianity. The estimate for Africa is that 126 million people claim to be Pentecostal

Christians/Charismatics, which is almost 11% of the total population of the continent, while 9 million new members worldwide are believed to be converting to Pentecostalism (25,000 a day from the global South) (Barrett and Johnson, 2002).

In the case of Zimbabwe, the massive move to Pentecostal Christianity was largely a post-2000 phenomenon (despite the fact that the phenomenon has been in Zimbabwe for more than a century now), due to multiple crises being faced by Zimbabweans (Bornstein, 2008; Masenya, 2009; Poe, 2008). Pentecostals have also dominated both print and electronic media as collective communication outlets are used to store and deliver information or data. Asamoah-Gyadu (2005) argues that contemporary Pentecostals are clearly in the lead when it comes to online religious activities. In fact, radio, television, Facebook, Whatsapp, book covers, magazines and newspapers have become important tools of their evangelism; Pentecostals are known for their aggressive use of mass media and new media technologies (Kalu, 2008). Through internet resources, Pentecostal churches attempt to “sacralise” cyberspace as a medium for the work of the Spirit (Asamoah-Gyadu, 2005). It is an inherent tendency of Pentecostalism to align itself with modernity by adopting Western technology as evidence of the globalising effect that mass media has in Africa. In Zimbabwe, Pentecostal graffiti stickers, amulets, and posters announcing Christian crusades, seminars, workshops and revivals are stuck on many trees and walls. Church logos are commonly seen on vehicles and buildings, heralding the planned religious events and inviting people to attend.

Pentecostal Christianity in Zimbabwe — as is demonstrated in the following chapters — has influenced and modified the face of Christianity (Machingura, 2011). According to Kalu (2008), Western Christianity and culture encountering African religion and culture in the 19<sup>th</sup> century has led to a variety of responses to the gospel that have created different Christianities. The varieties can all be described as “Pentecostal” in colouring, character, beliefs, practices, ethos and theologies. Of late, there is a great deal of emphasis on empowerment and the resultant prosperity, dealing with material and spiritual concerns of witchcraft, demonic forces, the burning of charms, bad omens and fertility — hence localisation or contextual theology. For Togarasei (2015), contemporary Pentecostal Christianity has defined the pull factors that are now characterised by “secularisation” and which concern proximate (this worldly) issues rather than ultimate (post-mortem) issues. Pentecostal Christianity’s secularisation of the Christian faith has made it popular as it tries to mitigate a plethora



of “here and now” problems in order to transform people’s lives (Musoni, 2013). The Pentecostal faith gospel now focuses on a “this-worldly” blessing and deliverance theology built on traditional African conceptions (Gifford, 1998; Hock, 1995). The contemporary Pentecostal type of Christianity in Zimbabwe is a religion that is “packed with promises”, where God is not far removed from God’s creation, but interacts and prospers by it. As a result, Pentecostal Christianity has developed distinctive beliefs and practices, and thereby established an identity.

### **Pentecostal General Beliefs and Practices and the Quest for Human Rights in Africa**

As we can see from the above discussion, it is not easy to clearly define what Pentecostalism is and is not, or what does or does not constitute Pentecostalism. In order to avoid many problems arising from trying to define what Pentecostalism (and its origin) is all about, scholars have looked at beliefs and practices generally associated with Pentecostal Christianity. Douglas Jacobsen has noted that, in a general sense, being Pentecostal means that one is committed to a Spirit-centred, miracle-affirming, praise-oriented version of Christian faith, though there is no meta-model of Pentecostalism (Anderson, 2013). For some, being centred or Spirit-filled implies pneumatic practices of speaking in tongues, prophecy, divine healing and exorcism that are central to Pentecostal’s self-definition. Those seeking to understand Pentecostalism must remain mindful of these features of the phenomenon (Maxwell, 2006). Generally, Pentecostals believe that there are three steps that must be followed or obeyed as evidence of one’s complete salvation:

- Justification by faith;
- Sanctification and holiness;
- Speaking in tongues as evidence of salvation.

Pentecostals take speaking in tongues as an important mark of a saved person. Smoking, drunkenness, adultery, hunger, sickness, poverty, unemployment, homelessness, indifference and hopelessness are taken as direct results of not being filled by the Spirit, and hence a sign of being alienated from the Lord (Carlin, 2011). Prayer, fasting and the exorcism of demons are features associated with Pentecostal Christianity (Machingura, 2011). Besides the pneumatic gifts and the ability to share the gospel, the Pentecostal theme of empowerment (or the prosperity gospel as already

highlighted) is linked to social, development, political, economic and cultural ills (Wilkinson, 2012).

Deliverance from all forms of oppression is one of the aspects associated with Pentecostal Christianity and is taken as an attempt by Pentecostals to restore the rights of individuals to remain in the surroundings in which they find themselves (Thomas, 1999). Pentecostals usually regard themselves as being in warfare against all forms of ills. Deliverance and the restoration of people's rights are marks associated with Pentecostal Christianity. The restoration of people's rights includes: the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness; equal treatment; ownership of property; and the right to practice religion (Orend, 2002; Friedman, 2012). Justice and fair treatment become the order of the day. Pentecostal Christianity, just like other Christian movements, ideally cultivates respect for human rights. For Martin (2002), the "largest global shift" in the religious market has taken place in recent years. As a result, Pentecostal Christianity has attracted debate from a variety of disciplines including theology, religious studies, history, sociology, political science, anthropology, eco-theology, nature rights, development studies, human rights, and heritage studies. Contemporary African Pentecostalism has redefined the Africans' quest for power, identity, self-image, and experience of the Christian God. The redefinition has also incorporated issues to do with human rights (e.g. the rights of women, children and people with disabilities (PWDs)), and it is worth noting the Pentecostal effort to empower formerly marginalised groups such as women. However, concerns have been raised that Pentecostal churches have not done as much as expected when it comes to the rights of women and PWDs, though it can be argued that it has empowered women in the face of their sad past experiences of traditional culture, colonialism, the vilification of women and the masculinisation of the good news.

In the colonial era, the majority of women in Africa were not gainfully employed because the system promoted men. For Chitando (2010), throughout history, women faced challenges under oppressive patriarchal systems. The net result of these barriers has been that women have often lost equal access to the resources necessary to improve their lives and those of their children (Izumi, 2006; Wusu, 2007). Women's contribution to political and economic decision-making became limited and in some cases, absent. The suppression of women resonated very well with African spirituality; Pentecostal churches changed the face of Christianity in Africa by enlarging the religious space for women, who have been given the space to claim the pneumatic and charismatic experience previously

suppressed by various forms of mainstream and African indigenous Christianity (Kalu, 2008). The empowerment of women is a critical area: Pentecostal Christianity has sought to lift the status of women by teaching them to be industrious through income-generating projects. In addition, a number of women are now leaders of assemblies as pastors. Arp-Frahm (2010) argues that the teachings of Pentecostal churches have taught women to stand in the face of the ideological, social, political and economic power that privileges men. Different groups (women, the elderly, youth, and orphans) have found hope in some of the Pentecostal churches. As a result, Pentecostalism in Africa has become a vehicle of cultural revolution when it empowers women through peer support, networking, encouragement and social justice teachings (Fleming, 2014). Pentecostal Christianity helps its followers to develop individuality and an autonomous identity, enabling them to face challenges without falling back on the extended family, family clan and tribe (Arp-Frahm, 2010).

Most Pentecostal churches are known for promoting hard work and entrepreneurship (the ideals of womanhood) — projects to create opportunities for self-employment, nation-building and transformation (Biri and Togarasei, 2013). One Pentecostal church that has demonstrated its commitment to addressing indigenous people’s concerns is the Zimbabwe Assemblies of God Africa/Forward in Faith, which is led by Ezekiel Guti (ZAOGA/FIF). Maxwell (2006) argues that ZAOGA/FIF’s commitment to development is shown when it tries to bring sustainable development by encouraging its congregants and the community at large to be self-propagating, self-supporting and self-reliant. Through its religio-economic philosophy of talents (*matarendu*), ZAOGA/FIF is the first Zimbabwean indigenous Pentecostal church to build a university, and the church is a proud owner of a number of schools, hospitals, orphanages and training centres. It runs dress-making schools which are aimed at empowering people, fulfilling the government’s education curriculum vision that focuses on psycho-motor skills. Tuition is pegged at a nominal level when compared to other private institutions and they are even lower than the state universities which are funded by government. ZAOGA/FIF’s youngest university, The Zimbabwe Ezekiel Guti University (ZEGU), had its first ever academic conference in 2014. The ZEGU conference presented a platform for scholars, civil society, faith agencies and service providers to explore critical issues linked to Pentecostal Christianity, such as: Pentecostal doctrines/beliefs/practices and African Traditional Religion; Pentecostalism, human rights and dignity (women, children, disabled persons and the elderly); Pentecostalism, State relations and pan-Africanism (including land reform movements, conflict management and

reconciliation initiatives); and Pentecostalism, health and wellbeing (including the HIV and AIDS epidemic).

## **Book Chapters on Pentecostal Christianity and Its Manifestation**

The chapters here show that, Pentecostal Christianity has managed to give voice, identity and power to its adherents on a number of cosmological, political, economical, religious and social issues. Most contributors highlight the fact that Africa's Pentecostalism needs to be acknowledged in as far as it is the contextual laboratory of theological dynamism (Clarke, 2014). Although the hegemony of Western culture nurtured Christianity for a long time, the chapters acknowledge that African culture has and continues to make a distinct mark on Christianity in general and African Christianity in particular. Meyer (2004) notes that:

There has been a shift over the course of the 20<sup>th</sup> century from mainline missionary churches that brought European styles of Christianity and rejected traditional African religion, to African Indigenous Churches that creatively combined Christian and African religious elements in syncretic mixtures, to the new Pentecostal and Charismatic Churches which offer a form of Christianity that fits well with African sensibilities and acknowledges the validity of traditional African beliefs in witches, spirits, ancestors-while at the same time providing a way to break from them.

This shift cannot be overlooked as the growth of Pentecostalism in Africa has caught the attention of academics, politicians, activists, economists, health officials and theologians. Zimbabwean Pentecostalism is witness to the distinctive nature of its doctrines: forms of praxis and theology that address African concerns on spirituality, economics, politics, ethics, humanity, the environment and development. The following chapters are testimony to the unique nature of Pentecostal Christianity in Zimbabwe. In **Chapter 1, Lovemore Togarasei** assesses the place of Pentecostal biblical interpretation in the face of Zimbabwe's socio-political and economic affairs. Togarasei chooses to look at how biblical interpretation influences the role of Pentecostal churches in the socio-political and economic affairs of Zimbabwe, focusing mainly on their role in politics, which coincides with worsening political and economic conditions in the country, resulting in many abuses of human rights. On the same note, **Chapter 2, by Nhlanhla Landa and Sindiso Zhou**, looks at how an inclusive Pentecostal gospel can help peace-building endeavours in Zimbabwean communities. The chapter analyses how members of the

AFM in Zimbabwe positively describe Christian religious groupings (both Pentecostal and non-Pentecostal) with ideologies and doctrines similar to their own, while negatively describing groups with different ideologies and doctrines as “insignificant others”. The chapter shows the underlying power and ideological use of indoctrinating language in the “us-and-them” discourse in the AFM in Zimbabwe’s church. Landa and Zhou conclude that religion is not only about faith but also about power and the interactions between people.

**Musa Dube** regards the Bible as gendered. In **Chapter 3**, she looks at the biblical challenges of patriarchy in Pentecostal discourses and assesses how the prophetic-spirit framework encounters and functions within the framework of the inerrant but patriarchal written word. For Dube, the Spirit framework must be an oral canon that opens up spaces of gender empowerment. Yet Pentecostal scholars problematize the supposedly liberating Spirit and deny the materiality of human existence so as to inhabit the constraining parameters of patriarchal church structures. She calls for new Pentecostal theological categories that empower all people, especially women, such as healing and deliverance and prosperity gospel discourses, if gender justice is to be achieved.

In **Chapter 4**, **Collen Takaza** further interrogates the Pentecostal concept of sanctuary. He regards the concept as not being inclusive when it comes to women, despite the fact that the emergence of Pentecostal movements (PMs) has attracted women and girls who constitute the majority of members. Takaza argues that cultural and societal factors are still areas of concern when it comes to women’s challenges, as social roles are packaged by gender; he states that the reality is that culture is laden with prescriptive taboos and sanctions that scorn and disadvantage women. For Takaza, Pentecostal churches have tried to maintain the status quo by using the Bible to entrench the privileges of men.

In **Chapter 5**, **Annah Paraffin** touches on an interesting topic: Pentecostal healing and schizophrenia. For Paraffin, Pentecostal Christians sometimes cling to beliefs that limit them from fully utilising mental health services; she takes schizophrenia as one such mental health condition that has divided most Pentecostal churches in terms of how best to address it as Christians. On the one hand, there are those who regard schizophrenia as needing medical attention as well as prayers; on the other hand, some see it as a manifestation of the devil and his bag of tricks. The latter would rush to the “tried and tested” Pentecostal tool of exorcism.

Paraffin calls for a marriage of the two positions in order to holistically help individuals suffering from the condition.

**Meloud Sipeyiye** takes a different direction in **Chapter 6** by relating Pentecostal Christianity to other religions. He notes that vying with other religions for religious customers or clients has resulted in verbal and physical clashes in the religious community at large. This is most rife or evident in Pentecostal churches; Pentecostal Christianity claims pole position in this contest. Sipeyiye laments that Pentecostal Christianity in Zimbabwe does not uphold the spirit of inter-religious dialogue but creates a religious landscape characterised by tension and animosity. He is of the view that Pentecostal Christianity generally cannot be used in peace-building and development as it has fundamentalist tendencies against other religions. He advocates for an inclusive environment by arguing that the pluralist spirit of inter-religious dialogue is the best alternative in an oversubscribed spiritual market, where no single religious tradition can claim to offer answers to all human concerns.

**Tennyson Muyambo** supports Sipeyiye by discussing the patronisation of God and truth by Pentecostal churches, in **Chapter 7**. Muyambo also believes that Pentecostal Christians must realise that Christianity is not operating in a social vacuum. He takes a radical position by accusing Pentecostals of using dubious methods to win followers by disrespecting and being intolerant to other religions that have different beliefs and practices. For Muyambo, indigenous African religions and Pentecostalism have a lot in common despite the apparent antagonistic relationship between them. He feels the antagonism emanates mostly from intolerant and exclusivistic Pentecostals. Like Sipeyiye, he calls for a dialogue within Christianity, followed by a dialogue with other religions.

The theme of inter-religious dialogue is also raised in **Chapter 8** by **Canisius Mwandayi**, who suggests that it would definitely help Christians in general and Pentecostals in particular to not perceive African Traditional Religion (ATR) and its custodians (*n'angas*, "traditional healers") disdainfully, as devilish, or as actual agents of Lucifer. Mwandayi calls for tolerance between Pentecostals and ATR practitioners for the good of society. He opines that African Pentecostals are unrealistically un-African in their rejection of cultural views, beliefs and practices that are not in keeping with their worldview. For Mwandayi, religion is there to build social bridges and human relationships. Notwithstanding Pentecostalism's exclusivism, he acknowledges that Pentecostal Christianity has, to some extent, been successful in meeting the concerns of a number of Africans.