



The Panorama of Pentecostal Philosophy of Life: Its Relevance and Challenges in Contemporary Zimbabwe

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ABSTRACT

In religious perspective, economic, moral and political prosperity has been forged, and attributed to the influence of the spirit of God. The study notes that, the Pentecostal theodicy has become the axis mundi of mankind's endeavours for survival. The paper therefore, explores, and evaluates the ethics of Pentecostal Christianity as depicted in the dogmatic creeds enshrined in the china chemadzimai, kitchen parties, man of integrity fellowship and couples' fellowship as practised. It also employs the descriptive survey to tap the original and the heart found emotionalism in the beliefs and their contributions in the devotee's life. In addition, the research reflects on the applicability and sustainability of the main drills in the three main Pentecostal churches in Zimbabwe, namely Apostolic Faith Mission (AFM), United Fellowship International Church (UFI) and Zimbabwe Assemblies of God Forward in Faith (ZAOGA FIF). In the last segment, the study bemoans the nature of immorality associated with some Pentecostal adherents, henceforth, its flaws as a philosophy of life. As part of its conclusion, the paper avers some recommendations which are suggested to mitigate the socio-religious strife facing humanity today.

INTRODUCTION

Worldwide, religion and society are two phenomena that are inclusively related with the former influencing the latter. Specifically, this paper focuses on the impact of Pentecostal Christianity as a philosophy of life *vis a vis* its perceived relevance in light of existential challenges in contemporary Zimbabwe. The contextual setting of the study is the prevalence of new brands of Pentecostalism, as it struggles to mitigate

economic and religious adversities without partnering well with the best philosophy of life. The study examines the impact of Pentecostalism in the Zimbabwean context from a philosophical viewpoint. Indeed, Pentecostalism and society cannot thrive to survive without being complimentary to each other. Just like any other social movement, Pentecostalism has a philosophy of life necessary for society and mankind's harmonious co-existence under an encompassing blanket of togetherness and pluralism.

It is worth noting that the generality of Pentecostalism across the country has led to the forced universal application of the spiritual wheeled religious movement's moral conduct even in non-Pentecostal societies. Thus, there seems to be a symbiotic bilateral relationship among the entirety of people in Zimbabwe and the Pentecostal creeds alongside the ethical teachings. However, it is vital to note that Pentecostalism came into a long standing society with its own native philosophy of life – *ubuntu/hunhu*. Against this background, the study argues that the Pentecostal gifts of the spirit's applicability are problematic due to cultural unacceptability and non-validation since Pentecostalism is flawed with ethical limitations.

This article therefore investigates the essence of Pentecostalism through a cursory survey of the spiritual gifts with much expatiation put on the notion of love. The research then takes upon itself to define and explore the Pentecostal creeds for a full picture of the phenomenon under scrutiny. It furthers its quest by analysing the teachings enshrined in *china chemadzimai*, kitchen parties, men of integrity fellowship and couples' fellowship of the three main Pentecostal churches in Zimbabwe; the AFM, UFI and ZAOGA FIF. The thrust of the study rests on finding the Pentecostal philosophy of life's merits and demerits. To realise this, the project invokes the wits and sustainability of reflective exposition. The paper will finally proffer some recommendations aimed at mitigating the moral repugnancy sprouting from the Pentecostal philosophy of life.

Methodology

The study is an inter-disciplinary project blending the philosophical and religious studies phenomenon. In view of this, the research is therefore a product of desk interrogation of already publicised literature and the phenomenological approach. The former is a reflective process which critically examines both the Occidental and African publications which pertain to the religious and ethical debates. The term phenomenology comes from the Greek word *phainomai* which means 'that which manifests itself' (Chitando, 1998). Hence, etymological meaning tells it all that the data discussed herein manifested itself and in response, the researcher then observed. Phenomologically, *epoche* is a Greek derivative verb from *epoche*. Sharpe, (1975) defines *epoche* as "a stoppage/suspension of judgement, the exclusion from one's mind of every possible presupposition". In this regard, the researcher therefore excludes any trace of presupposition in pursuit of a non-biased analytical evaluation. Embedded in this phenomological approach employed here is the notion of participant observation without compromising the niche of *epoche*.

Data was also collected through informal interviews with members of the Pentecostal churches and those they interact with in other strategic space and contexts besides the intriguing church services, such as *pamariro* (funerals) and political rallies and wedding scenarios. It is important to hasten to point

out that the practice of participant observation has the risk of one being converted into the religion under investigation. In response, the researcher has constantly guarded against being converted, basically for a successful quest for this scientific rigour of comprehending the Pentecostal phenomena.

Spiritual Gifts

The essence of baptism with the Holy Spirit is the manifestation of the spiritual gifts. The spiritual gifts are the back-borne of the Christian community's survival as in all its multi-dimensional nature. That is, the plethora of the heavenly given gifts function as a superb mainstay of the Pentecostal movement continuity in warding off the satanic efforts bombarding the Christian life. These gifts include prophecy, speaking in tongues, miracle healing, wisdom and knowledge, and distinction of spirits thereby making a clarion call for the repletion of the degenerated morality among the Pentecostals in Zimbabwe.

Prophecy is one of the fundamental gifts of the Holy Spirit among Pentecostals world over. It is through this notion of prophecy that devout followers of Pentecostal movements ascertain God's presence. The delivery of prophetic oracles strengthens the church. According to classical Judaism, a prophet is the one who speaks on behalf of God for the benefit of the entire society. Hence, in Pentecostalism prophecy is the utterance of the divinely given message to God's children through the live experience of the Holy Spirit. In this understanding, the prophetic utterance may foretell future events such that if possible some preventive measures can be put in place if it is danger sensing. The oracles delivered in these spiritual churches target individuals, the congregational multitudes and the nation at large. These oracles may be positive or negative and such messages might be social, economic or political. However, it should be noted that the prophet in all circles is never considered a fetish, but a male servant or maid servant of God imbued by His spirit. In regard to the above point, the Pentecostal prophets use phrases such as 'Thus says the Lord' or 'the Lord has given me this to say'. These statements bring and confirm the authority of their God, consequently everyone takes heed of the prophecy of the day.

It is in the same spirit that Pentecostals value the notion of speaking in tongues and their interpretation as an underlying ontological essence God's presence. This phenomenon marked its importance from the day of Pentecost when the disciples spoke in the unlearned languages or angelic languages but in a common understanding. Against this backdrop, the Pentecostals in Zimbabwe tend to over-emphasise the tongues as the most evident trait of God's existence among them. Duffield and Van Cleave (2008) concede that tongues are an initial evidence of the baptism of the Holy Spirit and in an individual prayer it serves a different purpose than tongues as a spiritual gift. Embedded in this viewpoint, the individual believer is transformed from the previous creature into a new being altogether with the charisma to praise and worship God in a unique and more

fervent mode. The concept of *glossolalia* is a daily portion of one's devotional utterances lest they are deemed not true worshipers by fellow church members. Accordingly, the Pentecostal claim that, 'the speaking in tongues deepens the prayer life and the spiritual development of the personality'. Likewise, Paul wrote to the Romans that,

"But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience. Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness, for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with sighs too deep in words" (Romans 8: 25-26).

The foregoing demonstrates that the Pentecostals are of the inclination that the Holy Spirit intercedes for the believers through tongues as it directs the individual's devotional utterance to God. Of great relevance to the thrust of this paper from the above biblical quotation is the claim by the author that the spirit gives a hand, especially in those areas of weakness, to the Pentecostals. Logically, it follows that behavioural conduct of the Pentecostal devotees is protracted and predetermined by the Spirit of God. The paper further avers that, by biblical principle, all the Christian Pentecostals are of 'good human behaviour' on the basis of the strength vested in them by the Holy Spirit. It can be posited that Pentecostals are virtuous since *unhu* (good ethical conduct) is engrave in the hearts. To this end, Mutigwe (2013) describes a person with *unhu* as someone with "kindness, gentleness, humility, respect and love for others". However, it is contentious to sustain the above claim the moral malaise in the Pentecostal churches today in Zimbabwe; an issue to be critically unpacked at some later stage in this study.

For most Pentecostals miraculous healing is very significant in spelling out their godliness; a thing equated to the power of creation that God demonstrated in the beginning and during the life and ministry of Jesus. Most of the believers are of the belief that since they received Christ as a personal saviour, they got the power to be called the children of God. By implication, they presume to possess the same power equal to the father's. But, there is need to analyse this contention because there seems to be semantic or linguistic ambiguity or commitment of haste generalisation fallacy. Nevertheless, in this paper, I beg to differ with the generality of the bible readers who interpret the statement above as implying that believers are literally children of God. Deductively, 'given the power to be called...' in John chapter 1 verse 12 is a phrase that implies an adoptive sense of a child status. In this case Jesus only remains the genuine son of God. By contrast therefore, the Pentecostals cannot assume the same spiritual excellence as demonstrated by Jesus. The inferred limitedness herein, put the miraculous healings by Pentecostals into oblivion. Drawn from such obscurity, some of the healings are attributed to the satanic worships awash these days. Ironically, today's believers view spiritual gifts as something that is earned and merited, hence they appropriate them as a

criterion to gauge one's religious worthiness. Sprouting from this contention are the questions; does it imply that there is anything inspired by the devil that is ethically right? If not, then what is the Pentecostals' take on moral issues arising from their miraculous healings?

The gift of wisdom and knowledge is of paramount importance in the pursuit of this study's prime goal; making the discourses relevant or irrelevant. Etymologically, wisdom is the body of knowledge and experience that develops within a specified society or period. Implied by Paul in his letter to the Corinthians is that godly wisdom and knowledge were supposed to take control over human behaviour within and without the church (1Corinthians 12: 8b). In that spirit, the gifts become the instruments to control some ethical issues thereby being in agreement with God's will because that which God wills is good (St Augustine cited by Geisler, 2010). Reflectively, the paper argues that wisdom and knowledge that come from the Holy Spirit are utilitarian in nature given the phrase used by Paul; "...for the common good". Hence, all spiritual gifts should not fight one another but rather work to complement each other in fabricating the moral consciousness augmenting togetherness rather than individualistic triumph in claiming championship in religious superiority.

Closely connected to the fore argument is the gift of love which happens to be the master corner stone of Jesus' teachings and Christian ethics. As alluded to in the preceding sections, love is a summation of all ethical standards by which all humanity should live. The phrase 'love one another' entails all the universal moral laws because to love is a categorical imperative which should be met for its own sake with no strings attached. Notably, most devotees of Pentecostalism are not living in congruence with the Pauline philosophy on love in 1Corinthians 13 verse 13. This is evidenced by their repugnant behaviour which grossly deviates from the expected human conduct as prescribed by the Holy Spirit. In the philosophical perspective, this vein of claim can be further substantiated by the following categorical syllogism;

The Trinitarian conception of God includes the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

God is Love. Love does not rejoice at the wrong, but rejoices in the right. Wrongness and rightness have meta-ethical insinuations. God is the Holy Ghost, and God is Love. The Holy Spirit and the believer are intertwined in Pentecostal ontological language. It therefore follows that, the one filled by the Spirit is ethically upright since love rejoices in the right.

Non-compliance to these ethical standards by the Pentecostal Christians has since proven to be a thorn in a society that desperately needs God's intervention to curb the political, social, economic and religious injustice prevalent today. For that, this study thrives to point a new dispensation to plumb line the situation in the Zimbabwean religious circles.

Pentecostal Creeds

A creed is a system of religious belief; a faith in something venerated to the levels of a deity. As expatiated already, the Pentecostal Christians put their faith in the divine providence of the Holy Spirit as the architecture of all their ways of worship through the direct experience of God. The church leadership under inspiration of the Holy Spirit postulates that, a good husband or wife comes from God. Also, it proffers that in Jesus Christ there is freedom. Poverty is disregarded as a sign of living under bondage of the devil. Moral values and norms underpinning the essence of marriage are attributed to the Spiritual providence. However, a close and acute search for the trajectories to the validity of these postulations leaves a lot to be desired. In the next section, the paper is exhaustive on the controversies raised so far. This task is to be fulfilled through the descriptions and critiques levelled against the *China chemadzimai* (Thursday ladies' Meeting), kitchen parties, couples' fellowship, men of integrity fellowship.

China chemadzimai

In almost every Pentecostal church in Zimbabwe, women and girls who are of age are privileged to meet every Thursday of the week to worship in a stylistic manner which is didactic. It is informative in the sense that, that the practice of *china chemadzimai* equips the female devotees with the ethical skills necessary to direct the day to day management of their homes. For the sake of time and space the study looks only at three churches (AFM, UFI and ZAOGA FIF). During these sessions, depending on the main doctrine of the church, the ladies discuss a number of issues which they value to enhance living standards of women and their respective families. Usually, the pastor's wife or the female pastor or a church elder of the same gender chairs and minutes the controversial matters for further scrutiny during the couples' meetings. Musoni (2013) avers that in order to address some gender disparities and instil some element of self dependence the founder of ZAOGA FIF Archbishop Ezekiel Guti introduced the system of *matarendu* in which women are encouraged to use their hands to earn a living instead of developing a donor syndrome. In ZAOGA FIF therefore women teach each other at such gatherings to make their own money through various activities to support the ministry and their own families. Biri in Chitando and Chirongoma (2013) says ZAOGA FIF is against people just folding their hands and encourages members to work and use their talents, commonly known as '*Matarendu*'. Failure to be successful in such profit making activities may imply that one is infatuated by a demon of poverty. When one succumbs to the pressure, which is usually exacted during the China sessions one may decide to partake in 'any sort of money making endeavour' in order to shun such labels. In some instances women make some weekly routines visiting each other in homes with special targets being the kitchen and the 'sacred' bedroom. During these sprees on Thursdays, they even inspect the array of one's kitchen, nature

and conditions of the utensils found in that homestead. Still in the kitchen, they encourage one another to use recent recipes for family dishes especially to lure the husband to 'stay put'. Closely related to this is notion of respect to the husband as the head of the family. Also, children handling and protection feature as topical issues in these weekly congregations. In the bedroom they investigate the number of bedding sheets, types and number of blankets, sometimes even beds, one's under wear (pants) and husband's socks are objects of scrutiny. If found in a wanting state, that woman goes under fire and intense tutelage from fellow women. Most importantly, they discuss the issue of *bonde/kubekana/kusvirana* (conjugal rights/sexual intercourse) and its variant styles since it brings the couple together and idealness for procreation. On this subject, every woman participates actively. Every style is spelt out with its pros and cons. *Madzimai anhasi* (wise women) as they nickname themselves also encourage each other in *kukweva nzeve/matinji* (to pull or enlarge their labia majora) because these are deemed daddy's play toys before the 'main meal of the night'- *bonde*. Failure to do this, implies being a foolish woman and one risks to lose her husband to the 'ladies of the night'. Some women even go to the extent of boasting to peers that their husband is a sex machine since he does it by the book. Those with weak husbands or those with early ejaculation and poor erection husbands also confide in sisters in Christ as they plead for assistance to strengthen theirs so as to safe guard their matrimonial bonds from collapsing. Some complain of their partners being filthy, especially *vasingade kugezwa nhengo/pombi dzavo* (those who do not want to or to be thoroughly clean(ed) their penis). Thereafter, multifarious packages of both constructive and destructive advices are proffered. These include, *inter-alia*, the administration of *mushonga wemusana* (sex stimulation juju), fasting and praying, *kupodapoda/kushambidzika* (being smart with nice, shake/touch me fragrances) to arouse him and being innovative in terms of sex positions. It therefore becomes the individual's task to choose the correct measure for her own 'redemption'. All this is done in the name of the Holy Spirit to guard that which was given them by the Spirit.

Kitchen Parties

The epicentre of the practice of kitchen parties is almost similar to that of the *china chemadzimai*. The only difference is that in this case it is the young woman about to get married who is the sole target of the grooming. The teachings are therefore subdivided into small but important topics. These include personal hygiene in which the young woman is urged to be smart, that is, she always must bath first before involving herself with food preparation; removal of all the sweat from the previous night. Also, she should always have a clean shave in all private parts, including the armpits. Further, she is advised to use seductive perfumes and roll on during the night. In this regard, she is also urged to go by the type of dressing the husband favours as a technique to domesticate the

man. If he likes jeans and trousers so let it be with her. If his taste of smartness and decency is enshrined in medium and long skirts, then that will be the way to go. According to one informant (Faith Mutigwe Nee Chipfakacha, an AFM adherent), the to-be *muroora* is equipped with the tools and words to harness in the handling of relatives. Accordingly, she should be generous with food and other basic resources essential for a living.

The young woman is also furnished with some ideas on how to cook nice food for the husband and the entire family in a clean kitchen. Fore warned is fore armed, the marriage candidate is informed and told that she is the chief financial director in the home. Drawn from this dictum, she should make sure all the basic resources are available in the house. The budget should therefore be projected across the whole month, from the kitchen, through the bedroom to the toiletry and it should cater for eventualities. In the bedroom/'good room' therein, outside issues are not allowed to overlap in. The motto therein is, '*Ndiyo yandirova! Yandituka here! Ndiro randituka! Randitsamwisa here! Saka zvemuno ngazviitwe*' (*It is not the pipe that has beaten me, insulted me and made me angry*). She is also mandated to take care of the husband, i.e. to wash, cook, iron, and welcome him home in style, in fact, into the goodness of *bonde* (sex). Notably, *bonde* is not meant for the night only but any time is tea time. To this end, it is justifiable for the bedroom to be termed a 'good room'. As a matter of emphasis, the participants at the kitchen party can inspect one another to find out whether they are adhering to the set standards. This way, the ladies uncover one another to see the type and cleanliness of the pants worn. In order to strongly inculcate efficiency into the marriage candidate to have *bonde* using various positions, some ladies can go to the extent of demonstrating in nudity while others ululate and chant slogans of encouragement. Hence, kitchen parties are held away from homes where children and men are. This explains why secluded villages and parks are utilised as venues for such meticulous events. These occasions are also associated with vulgar music featuring songs like 'One more night' by Busy Signal and all the *ndombolo* vibes. The type of music fits the proceedings of the function.

Man of integrity fellowship

Just like women, men constantly meet in special meetings such as *gochi-gochi ravanababa* (braai). However, in this case, only men are welcome to meetings of such calibre. The male pastor or a church elder is the facilitator of these gatherings and he jots down all the hot and unresolved issues so that they can be further discussed by both women and men during couples' fellowship meetings. The gist of these meetings is to discuss their concerns in marriage. The topical matters handled on such forums are the issues to do with *bonde*, monetary disputes, children's discipline and how members of the extended family are handled by their spouses. In this respect those men with problems as far as their conjugal interaction with their partners are concerned air them out for

assistance to be given. One can go as far as saying, *iiii varume kwangu ndafa nenzara, amai mwana vanobva kubasa vaneta zuva nezuvu* (gentleman, at my place am starving, my wife claims she is tired every time she comes from work). In response, others would suggest tricks and strategies to bring her back into the track. Some would even argue that the victim of 'starvation' should try to net work and try to hook up with a 'small house'(to have an extra marital affair) in a bid to meet the sexual needs. Those with poor erection and early ejaculation before satisfying the spouse also cry out for relevant help. In some cases the pastor would pray for them and give some dietary advice to enhance one's libido and erection. On the other hand some would egg on for the use of traditional *muti/vhuka-vhuka* (medicine). But in most cases, the one who uses the herbs would turn into a sex-beast who would be difficult to satisfy in bed. Consequently, such people would go beyond the matrimonial walls to in search of sexual gratification. Therefore, it is adultery in the church.

Ideally, a wife is expected to be an expert in budgetary issues. In fact, she becomes an effective treasurer of family finances. Paradoxically, men at these meetings complain that their wives misuse money without securing the basics for the family. If one decides to ask for explanations on the expenditures, it will be a suicidal move that may bring out detrimental results to the welfare of the entire family due to careless talks by women that follow thereafter. Accordingly, the council of fathers would deliberate on such matters for appropriate solutions. Failure to come up with suitable remedies, the meeting carries over the problems to the Couples' fellowship meetings to be discussed and critiqued latter in the text.

The study appropriates the act of inculcating good morals in the children by parents a source of gross misunderstanding sometimes. Some mothers are too protective of their children while a good number of fathers tend to be hard disciplinarian. The attitudinal difference normally gives rise to antagonism between the two parents. The fathers may eventually jilt the responsibility of moulding the young Pentecostals morally. This results in acute immoral dealings by the young. In this manner fathers meet the financial needs only in the upbringing of the children. The mother becomes both the mother and father in the office of being moral guardians. Such issues are also topical in these men's fellowship meetings. The situations sometimes cannot be given remedy and as a result the matter might be taken to other forums deemed to be better.

Another contested area of interest in men's fellowship discussions is the way relatives from the extended families are handled by female spouses in the marriage union. According to the philosophy of *ubuntu/hunhu* every individual is not for oneself but for the entire family, clan, community or nation and it cherishes the availability of each person for others. To this end van der Walt, cited by Konyana and Mutigwe (2011) concurs as he laments that

"...for the Bantu (African), man never appears in fact as an isolated

individual, as an independent entity. Every man, every individual, forms a link in the chain of vital forces, a living link, active and passive... the Bantu is quite unable to conceive an individual apart from his relations...".

Drawn from this dictum is the notion of extended family where all relatives either from the wife's or the husband's nurturing family is a dependent in one way or another. In most cases sisters and brothers-in-law are usual beneficiaries of this multilateral connection. Sometimes mothers-in-laws enjoy the same benefits though to a limited extent. Women by design are the financial directors or treasurers or both, they sometimes become partisans especially towards those from their own families; a practice which proves to be an eyesore for men hence complaints pertaining to the matter. Also, these complaints are a prominent feature of the agenda at men's meetings. This controversial matter is always coined by statements such as '*aah ndaguta sehamu yemukadzi*' (am full as if am a wife's relative), depicting the fact that usually, women are generous to their own people. Despite being filled by the Holy Spirit, women use their *gongolic/bechural* power (female genital/clitoris related power) to influence husbands to reject or evict their own relatives from their matrimonial homes. During such deliberations one could complain saying "*kwangu unotobviswa pamusoro uchiridza ngoma wonzi munini'na wako anobhowa ngaabve pano, zvino wogodii uchirida beche, unotobvuma* (my wife forces me off her whiling having sex saying 'Your young brother is a problem, let him go away. Usually I give in to her demand because I need her in bed'). This way women use sex-sanctions to make sure that men dance according to their tune. Against such a background, a variant of possible panaceas, though some of them are toxic to the marriage institution, are postulated in a bid to curb the problem or protect their own relatives from the siege.

Couples' Fellowship

Following the *china chemadzimai* and men of integrity deliberations, the pastor and his wife facilitate the clash of the two 'warring sides' to iron out and lubricate the outstanding/sticking points in their social life. This is achieved through the organisation of couples' fellowship meetings. "At these meetings, issues relating to sex and sexuality, family finance, relations with the in-laws, etc, are addressed" (Manyonganise, 2013). The pastor as the spiritual father facilitates such meetings but at the back of his mind he will be knowing that such and such a couple are affected by such an issue. Nevertheless, he does not directly tell the couples that this matter refers to Mr and Mrs so and so. In relation to the bedroom issues, some women directly describe how best they ought to be caressed to enable them to reach the orgasm. One can even spell out the most sensitive parts she favours most by their real scientific names. In turn, a man can openly teach fellow men how to do it the best way, all this under the banner of helping sisters and brothers in

Christ. Notably, some tips on *kutamba nematinji* or breast sucking by husbands among the multifarious techniques to please one another during the *bonde* sessions are given.

In regard to financial matters, the pastors encourage members to first pay tithes so that the wrath of God is not unleashed upon them for failing to meet the biblical law. If this condition is met, then God blesses the remaining portion of the monthly income. In addition the adherents of Pentecostalism are sternly urged to be transparent in their finance management. The notion of transparency seems to mean something only when the adherents are paying their tithes and not at the work place or in their small businesses. This can be substantiated by a church elder who was recently arrested in Zimbabwe after he swindled almost ninety-six United States Dollars from a service station where he worked as an accountant. To this effect, the story of Ananias and Sapphira is constantly brought in to drive the point home; that is, never to lie to the Holy Spirit. In response to the relatives handling, the house through the augmentation of the facilitating pastor, the Pentecostals advocate for non-burdening of the couples in looking after one another's children, and when it comes to the fathers, mothers, sisters, brothers-in-law, it is suggested that they stay at their own homes and be given only basic supplies. The extended family is even discouraged from using *varooru* (daughters-in-law) as 'beasts of burden' (Sibanda and Maposa, 2013). In fact, the mentors remain anonymous, though to some extent he may visit the particular families as a follow up to make sure that they were saved from that menace.

Relevance and Challenges

In the corridors of history, these teachings existed as part of indigenous knowledge systems embedded in the Zimbabwean culture. A paradox comes into play around these teachings when they are disseminated in religiously magnified spectrums but without congruence to the set moral standards in a society. Hence, such divergence invites some derogative labels upon the participants. These vary from religious prostitutes, satanic worshipper to money mongers. The poor are tagged the demonic and said to need redemption. The perception of poverty is a course of concern among the Pentecostals. As such, there is a tendency of using material wealth as a yardstick to measure the righteous and moral excellence of a people. This philosophy acts as a seedbed of jealousy, envy and stiff competition amongst the Pentecostals. Resultantly, they undertake some shoddy deals to wade off the unpleasant labels. For instance, after being humiliated in front of fellow wise women one may decide to partake in dangerous and unclean business activities to cover up.

To this effect, a female Pentecostal devotee from Madhuku village in the Chipinge District of Zimbabwe was recently arrested and jailed for several years in prison with hard labour after she was caught with ivory destined for South Africa. Upon investigation the unfortunate Christian Pentecostal revealed that she had been in this line of business for a long time as

functionary in working talents at church. In the vein of augmenting the claim that Pentecostals venture into unholy dealings, an AFM in Zimbabwe pastor, Rev Musiiwa is on record saying, *vamwe vakadzi munobhadharirwa sikuru fizi dzevana nemabhoyi furendi iwe uchizviti mupostori waJesu. Kwete Mweya Mutsvene haudaro* (some of you ladies get school fees for the children from sexual boy-friends). In view of this, one would wonder whether the Holy Spirit is at work in and around the women. It can be envisaged that, despite the claim that Pentecostals are Spirit filled, their behaviour is not at congruence with Christ's exemplary life.

The study has also established that some bedroom visits contribute to the prevalence of adulterous acts by the Pentecostals. Some women would gossip around about fellow congregates' failures in bedroom management. They can even mock the husbands of those who would have been failures in terms of *kukweva nzeve, kugera muhapwa nepaAfrica Unity square, kuve kufamba neshinda dzega* (enlarged labia, no shaves around the private area, old and torn parts) and kitchen uncleanness saying *'Aah kwenyu paruware chaipo, ivo dready venyu variko here?, imi baba kusafa necholera ndiMwari anochengeta* (Aah your wife's genital area is not decorated by enlarged labia minora, but she has dread locks instead and she is not smart in the kitchen). In a way, this lady will be inviting the victim's husband into sexual intimacy as she will be pledging her availability for better service provision. In reception of such intriguing words the man in turn takes it upon himself to quench off the thirst on the classic, smart and ideal woman. As a result the Pentecostals are involved in adultery.

Paradoxically, woman would openly commend her husband's excellence in bed. In turn fellow female Pentecostals covet that man hence prostitution. In fact, there are a lot of adulterous affairs between married people and sometimes pastors involved in dating *madzimai evatendi vavo* (their church mates' wives). To this effect, Apostle Kapandura (2012) of ZAOGA FIF constantly rebukes fellow pastors saying, *"regai kuhura, regai kuhura nekuti chechi yaKristo ine mweya mutsvene haidaro"* (stop being promiscuous for we are Christ's church with the Holy Spirit). In response to such hectic decomposition of morality in the church, one is forced to ask some philosophical questions; Does the Holy Spirit exist? Where is the Holy Spirit? If it is there; what kind of the Holy Spirit is it?

The developments in the technological fraternity have also contributed immensely to the ethical decadence in the 'spiritual' led churches. This technological era has seen the digital cameras awash. Almost everyone is in possession of a complicated phone capable of recording both voice and video messages during the church services or any function. To this effect, most sermons by most prominent preachers are found in these gargets without the consent of the preacher. Among the recorded messages are both the morally correct and those that are morally repugnant. In some more gravy instances, women at these female gatherings can extend their underpinning evil make up to the point of recording some visual videos of seductive dances of

demonstrations by fellow attendees at *china chemadzimai* and kitchen parties. Some can take pictures of the bedroom setups during the bedroom visits. These recordings are publicly played thereby contravening the secrecy heed, right to privacy, and more importantly the principles of love. In one incident, a high profiled lady was recorded dancing naked at a kitchen party. There is also the recent sex video saga involving media personality Tinopona Katsande (The Herald, 2014). In a bid to typify the moral decadence by the Pentecostals, one can bring to the fore the story of a scandalous and founder of the R. M. G End Time Message Ministries, Reverend Martin Gumbura. He is a prolific rapist and a polygamous pastor who would act in and produce pornographic films (The Herald, 2014). All these acts fall into the category of pornography, an unethically condemned practise. Some go to the extent of harnessing such videos to seduce the spouses of those featuring in the recordings into bed. The study therefore envisages that such behaviour is unethical as they intend to demean fellow believers; an act which wilts the souls of the poor and weak.

The study bemoans the robust rate of immorality emanating from the 'value laden activities' within the ritualised kitchen parties. The quirk of fate discovered by the paper is that most advisers during the kitchen parties go by the statement 'do as I say and not as I do' because it is common knowledge that the Pentecostals shun out the members of the extended family. The teaching on how to handle relatives is in fact empty. They disassociate with the unbelieving relatives whom are labelled the demonic possessed.

The young woman entering the marriage institution as already depicted above is mandated to be the "the chief financial director in the home"; for that she sees to it that everything runs soundly in that particular family. Many are times when devastating misunderstandings kernel out from the financial management. From the onset, the wife therefore claims supremacy in issues to do with the budget, resulting in conflicts thereby shattering the essence of marriage which is enshrined in happiness. The husband may claim that the wife is misappropriating the money for the good her own relatives on the expense of the immediate family. The misunderstandings of this nature are most common in marriages where the wife is not employed. In turn the wife purports to be doing a great deal of work in the realm of housekeeping, child bearing, and to that end they fight against one another to the detriment of the marriage.

There is one striking thing about the Pentecostals to be noted and understood for the sake of critiquing their way of operation as Christians. They are highly religious and their high level of morality should be maintained. During the functions they use gross vulgar and street language bearing no grain of religious and ethical aptitude. Pure ethics task people to behave and speak well even in isolation, be it in the toilet or in one's bedroom. Imagine hearing utterances of this calibre, *"...wogodiyi uchirida beche, unotobvuma"* (since I need her vagina, I have to comply with her demands) in a church gathering set-

up. The type of language used just incites some sort of loose morals hence they end up acting in an indecorous manner which soils the religiosity and the attributes of God. Register implies matching the situation and culture of a group, in that, I can infer that their language fits the bottle store or bar-kind of life hence the non existence of the Holy Spirit among them.

The believers' marriages are constantly marred by gender violence in which women are mostly victims. For example, words like '*aah ndaguta sehama yemukadzi*' (oh, am satisfied/full as if am an in-law/wife's relative) are derogative in nature and in most cases they trigger reactionary attitudes by the women, an unethical situation perpetuating gender based violence in Christian marriages. In regard to inculcating the best moral behaviour in children, in Pentecostalism just like in African Traditional Religions (ATR), women are utilised as instruments. As such, they are blamed in cases of unruly conduct by the children. Interestingly, the women themselves do not want men to temper with their children, and there seem to be social disparity between the children and their fathers. The Pentecostal doctrine perpetuates and nourishes some patriarchal tendencies directed to abuse the female congregates. The Kantian ethics condemns such abuses since it advocates for the treatment of humanity as an end in itself. In addition, it contravenes the categorical imperative maxim; act as if you were both a sovereign and subject in an ideal kingdom of ends. This implies that men consider themselves to be sovereigns only, and non-subject and not to be at the receiving end of the relationship. Thus, in this context women are exposed to gender injustice in terms of roles both at home and in the church.

The study has interrogated the pertinent issues discussed at the couples' fellowship under intense scrutiny only to discover that they greatly influence the prevalence of immoral acts by Pentecostals. A person of integrity and rationality wonders the moral implication of a man of the 'spirit' describing how to best to seduce a woman in the presence of both female and male believers during a church gathering, though it is named couple's fellowship. However it should be noted that the use of a different name in reference to that function makes no difference. It is the same people in attendance whether it is called a couples' fellowship or a church service. The fact that they are all one in Christ implies that there must be a social distance. As such, there are *vanyarikani* (they use strict register). In addition, the pastors will be aware of the couples affected by a particular issue and they may go to the extent of visiting them afterwards to make sure the problems were amicably solved. What happens if the wife is still starving sexually? Thus, the situation degenerates into the wife seducing the pastor into bed; an adulterous act by people of the 'spirit'. For instance, recently a pastor cum gospel musician by the name David Mabvuramiti in one of the renounced Pentecostal churches in Zimbabwe resigned from 'serving God' after he was found to be having sexual relations with several married women, some even pregnant with his children. One can wonder whether

the Pentecostals' Holy Spirit migrates the same way the god of Baalism does because being in the Spirit and the Spirit being in them, such devilish acts cannot be realised.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The paper was aimed at discovering the relevance of the Pentecostal view of the ethicalness of the pristine link between humanity and God in order to unravel the challenges posed by Pentecostalism as a philosophy of life. The study also explored the gifts of the Holy Spirit from a philosophical perspective since they assume the fundamental essence of Pentecostalism in relation to ethical propositions. Also, the paper established that love (agape) is the greatest gift of the Spirit because all other ethical values and norms hinge on it. In regard to the creeds and ethical fibre underlying Pentecostalism, the study found out that though it inculcates the syndrome of self-reliance and innovativeness, this particular religious movement is flawed. Hence, the article hereby proffers some recommendations perceived relevant in mitigating the social and religious decomposition in contemporary Zimbabwe:

- Pentecostalism is encouraged to embrace the elements of collectivism, empathy and pluralism as embedded in the philosophy *ubuntu/hunhu*.
- The consciousness about self reliance and innovativeness should be partnered with the notion of sustainable development in safe guarding the human resource in this era of HIV and AIDS pandemic.
- While Pentecostalism is wheeled on the Holy Spirit, the research recommends that its adherents should earnestly implore for a re-baptism in a bid to flash out the immoral acts and practices which are pervasive in contemporary Zimbabwe.

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