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**AFRICAN PENTECOSTAL SPIRITUALITY:
A STUDY OF THE EMERGING AFRICAN PENTECOSTAL
CHURCHES IN ZAMBIA.**

by

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*I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God,
that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God
which is your reasonable service.
And do not be conformed to this world
But be transformed by the renewing of your mind,
that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God”.*

Romans 12:1-2



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DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that the work contained in this thesis is my own original work and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it at any university for a degree.

.....

Signature

.....

Date



DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to

my parents

Akulemba (Chirwa) Phiri (deceased) and Beatrice Talikisi Phiri

and to my beloved wife

Fadress Phiri,

and to my children

Mercy Lusungu Phiri, Nancy Chawezi Phiri, Kelvin Phiri Jr., Ruth Chikondi Phiri, Abigail

Waza Phiri, Ndatha Khondwani Phiri, Dalitso Mazizwa (Miracle) Phiri.

and to my grandchild, Promise Temwa Natasha kgasago.



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[4] Chikondi Ruth Phiri

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ABSTRACT.

This study investigates the spirituality of the emerging African Pentecostal churches in the development of the church and the theology of mission in Zambia's Christian and traditional religious context. Of equal importance is the contribution of traditional African spirituality to Christianity in Africa. Attention is also drawn to the way in which African traditional religion and culture are treated by the African Pentecostal churches.

The effect of both culture and Christianity in shaping modes of relationship and in bringing to light a liberative spirituality which this study examines is an issue in focus in African Pentecostal churches. Hence, this study has consciously appealed both to traditional spiritually and Pentecostal spirituality for a liberative theology which is both African and Christian.

The study therefore proposes a change in terms of interpretation in our understanding of spirituality. The term "spirituality" in this study is defined as "the abiding presence of God the Holy Spirit" in the Church and its mission. From a predominantly scientific and dichotomous approach to spirituality, the study suggests that the paradigm shift should be in the direction of a supernatural approach as opposed to the Western worldview approach which is influenced heavily by secular science. The new approach advocates the need to understand the images of God the Holy Spirit from an African point of view. In this regard, the comparison between an African cosmology and a Biblical world-view (theologia Crucis) determines theodicy. Inter alia, the metaphor "Immanuel" (Mulungu Alinafe in Chichewa, meaning "God with us") plays a crucial role in a metaphorical approach to supernatural "manifestations" of the abiding presence of God the Holy Spirit in the midst of the people of African Pentecostal churches and their mission.



SUMMARY

This study investigates the spirituality of the emerging African Pentecostal Churches in Zambia's Christian and traditional religious context. In this study, spirituality is defined as "the abiding presence of God the Holy Spirit" (in Chichewa, the term is "Mulungu Alinafe"). The study seeks to explore the role and the work of God the Holy Spirit as He manifests in the life of the Christian person, and the inner life and mission of the African Pentecostal Churches. The study examines the impact of African Pentecostalism on the mainline churches in Zambia, in particular the Reformed Church in Zambia, causing tensions, conflicts, and schisms; and resulting in the formation of Grace Outreach Missions International [GOMI] and the Bible Gospel Church in Africa [BIGOCA] (*Chapter 1*).

In order to understand the concept of "spirituality" which this study uses, Christian spirituality and a brief historical overview of spirituality are explored. A definition of Pentecostal spirituality is also explored, focusing on a sanctified Christian life; and the Pentecostal understanding of Christian spirituality is distinctively highlighted. With reference to John Wesley, Afro-American Pentecostalism, which arose in 1906 after Joseph William Seymour's Azusa Street Revival, and was influenced by the Evangelical (Puritan) spirituality, is examined. The emphasis on the Word, the Spirit, prayer and the practice of godliness is typical of the African Pentecostal churches' way of life and theology (*Chapter 2*).

Of equal importance to this study is the understanding of the African traditional religious beliefs of the Chewa cosmology in the Zambian society. This study explores the Chewa understanding of spirit possession, witchcraft, magic and sickness. The study also examines the methods and practices of the ng'angas [healers] and healing from the African traditional view-point. The Christian attitude and response to this African worldview is also examined; and the need to develop an African holistic theology is considered (*Chapter 3*).

The depth of the spirituality of the African Pentecostal Churches is examined in this study with the intention of exploring the role of God the Holy Spirit in the formation of the



churches, and the manifestation of God the Holy Spirit in the life and mission of the church. The study explores patterns of and reasons for the growth of these churches which include liturgical practices. And for the purpose of understanding the question of healing and its place in the mission of the Church today, three case-studies of healing and deliverance - those of Mwatitha Mbewe (40), Grace Banda (35), and Mary Ndlovu (38) - are cited and examined (*Chapter 4*).

Highlighting the African Pentecostal Churches in this study reveals how African Pentecostalism has impacted on the mainline churches, in particular the Reformed Church in Zambia. Pentecostalism entered the mainline churches through renewal groups such as Bible studies, youth groups, prayer groups and other groups which resulted in the “Pentecostalisation” of the Reformed Church in Zambia. But, this renewal process brought with it tensions and conflicts which led to the formation of GOMI and BIGOCA. Recognizing the impact of African Pentecostalism, this study encourages mainline churches, especially the Reformed Church in Zambia, to enter into dialogue with African Pentecostalism in Zambia in order to find common theological ground for the sake of the mission of God. The question, “What is mission?” concludes this chapter (*Chapter 5*).

This study concludes after establishing that the African Pentecostal churches’ missiology is grounded in their spirituality. Recommendations to the churches and, to the universities and colleges for the purposes of dialogue and for further research are included. (*Chapter 6*).

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