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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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In the same vein, may I also thank my seven wonderful children for their prayers, patience, and support:

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[3] Kelvin Phiri

[4] Chikondi Ruth Phiri

[5] Abigail Waza 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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Prior to this research work the researcher, having been a minister in the Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa (Zambia) since 1988, not only witnessed tensions, conflicts and schisms in mainline churches, but also saw many people leave mainline churches to join or to form African Pentecostal churches. This prompted the researcher to take a further look into the subject of African Pentecostal spirituality, focusing on two African Pentecostal churches, namely the Bible Gospel Church in Africa and Grace Outreach Missions International, both based in Zambia. This research project was based on the missiological study of African Pentecostal churches in the Department of Science of Religion and Missiology at the University of Pretoria; and the investigation was conducted through the methodology approved by the department and as outlined in this research.

## **1.2. SUBJECT OF RESEARCH.**

African Pentecostal spirituality is the subject of this research. The aspect of African Pentecostal spirituality in Zambia's Christian and traditional religious contexts was investigated. The study focuses on the role of the Holy Spirit in African Pentecostal churches in order to understand their missiology, and seeks to unearth the strengths of these churches.

The concept of 'spirituality' in this context refers to the lived religious experiences of believers. Aylward Shorter, in his book, *African Christian Spirituality*, defines the concept "spirituality" as a dynamic and ongoing concept. He argues that:

"The very word derives from *Spiritus*, the life-giving force which stems from God, *quickens the baptized Christian* and *transforms the relationships* he/she has with his/her fellow human beings. There is nothing cerebral or esoteric about spirituality, *it is the core of the Christian experience, the encounter with God in real life and action.* Spirituality is the same thing as continuous or experimental prayer – prayer as a living communion with God who is experienced as being personally present in the relationships with humanity" (Shorter A, 1978:4) (Italics mine).

Shorter asserts that theology should be spiritual, encouraging active commitment, and not merely speculative. It should be noted nevertheless that no single pattern of spirituality could exhaust the fullness of God's self-communication as claimed by the broader ecumenical sense of the Christian tradition. Don Saliers (Dupre and Saliers 1989:540) acknowledges that a wide range of Christian spirituality emerges in tension with one another, making it impossible to have a culturally homogeneous central tradition of spiritual literature as being normative for all Christians.

This thesis discusses also the life-giving, life-restoring and life-saving work of the Holy Spirit in African Pentecostal churches, and critically examines why they are referred to as centres of hope where people come and experience the power of God through exorcism, healing and deliverance. The subject of research did not only focus on Christian spirituality among African Pentecostals, but on African traditional spirituality as well. This, therefore, calls for a broader perspective of spirituality, which is cognisant of the dynamic nature of African Pentecostal Churches' spirituality.

A variety of perspectives on spirituality have been listed by Lawrence Richards (1987:11-61), ranging from the denial of every normal human desire by austere ascetics, monastic commitment, meditation and worship, which is true to some Catholic traditions, to the views of some Protestant traditionalists. For researchers like John Westerhoff and John Eusden (1982:2) spirituality has to do with being an integrated person in the fullest sense. They assert that "at the centre of all human life is the quest for the integration of the material and the non-material, the body and the soul, the secular and the sacred."

And for Benedict J. Groeschel (1983:4), spiritual life is "the sum total of responses which one makes to what is perceived as the inner call of God. However, the spiritual life is not locked up inside a person. It is a growing, coherent set of responses integrated into the complex behaviour patterns of human life. When the individual has decided to respond to the call of God experienced within, and strives to make this call the centre of activity and choice, he or she may be called a spiritual person."

The definition of Benedict Groeschel qualifies the African Pentecostal churches, in this research, as spiritual as they meet the needs of people through the ministry of healing and deliverance from evil spirits. Having experienced the call of God, African Pentecostals have responded by sharing their spiritual experiences with others, reaching out to other people through the power of the Holy Spirit. African Pentecostal Churches are therefore, I believe, “a place to feel at home”<sup>2</sup>, not only in worship but in the whole profession and expression of Christian faith.

Iris Cully (1984:15) advocates the spirituality which hinges on human relationships. She understands spirituality as the ability to live among and serve other human beings. Cully argues that “the spiritual life, particularly through the forms of prayer, cannot be lived in a possessive sense of closeness to God. The intercessory nature of prayer is a mark of authentic spirituality.” Harvey Cox (1995:259) agrees with Iris Cully asserting that the great strength of what he calls the “Pentecostal impulse” lies in “its power to combine its aptitude for the language, the music, the cultural artifacts, the religious tropes...of the setting in which it lives”.

This was largely the communal sense in which Bible Gospel Church in Africa and Grace Outreach Missions International’s spirituality was critically evaluated. According to Shorter (1978:8) the Communal aspect of a sound spirituality is “a commitment to the world of the spirit, to man and his integral development, to culture as a living tradition and to human community.”

Hence, the subject of African spirituality also concerns itself with African beliefs. Therefore, the study of African Pentecostal spirituality incorporated both the African traditional and Christian perspective, especially taking into account that much of the Christian language in Africa borrowed ideas and images from African cultures and religions.

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<sup>2</sup> The phrase is used by F.B V... to feel at home (Oxford, 1966).



### 1.3. PROBLEM STATEMENT

The contention of this research was to consider what in African Pentecostal spirituality is liberative and attractive. Why the ministry of healing, and deliverance from evil spirits as the manifestation of the work of the Holy Spirit is attracting many people, including members of the mainline churches, to African Pentecostal Churches. And the manner in which this spirituality has impacted upon the Reformed Churches in Zambia, creating constraints and schisms, generated the problem statement of this research.

The problem was investigated and described as a study of what it was that was so attractive and liberative in African Pentecostal churches; and which was not found in the mainline churches. Questions concerning healing, protection and images of Africa's power from the pre-missionary to the post-missionary contexts arose. Traditional African religion and patterns of spiritual life, together with the continuity in images and experiences of the divine in both the pre-missionary African community and the Christian community, formed part of the problem which this thesis wrestled with. Similarities and differences between traditional spirituality and Christian spirituality were considered.

The problem stemmed from the fact that the influence and the impact of Pentecostalism on the mainline churches, particularly the Reformed Church in Zambia, lay in a change that occurred, not only in the way faith was expressed, but also in the shift in theological emphasis as well. The "pentecostalisation" of the Reformed Church in Zambia, as a process of renewal or revival, soon encountered resistance and opposition which finally ended in an impasse resulting in schisms and the formation of the African Pentecostal churches. The nature of this African Pentecostal Christianity, born out of African initiative and experience and offering an alternative spirituality to the unliberative Reformed spirituality, was another important part of the problem statement. These African Pentecostal churches have become centres of hope and attraction in spite of being found within an environment dominated by the mainline churches. The impact they have had on these mainline churches, particularly



the Reformed Churches, has resulted in schisms which also formed part of this research. Harvey Cox (1995:71) suggests that the rapid spread of Pentecostalism is a result of its heady and spontaneous spirituality, “like the spread of a salubrious contagion”. This has appealed to people emotionally and the African Pentecostal message of healing and deliverance has not only attracted many, but has liberated many people from sickness and evil spirits as well. Walter Hollenweger (1999:36-9) recognizes the revolutionary implications of Black Pentecostal spirituality for its contextual theology. He sees the characteristics of the “black roots” to be an oral liturgy, a narrative theology and witness, maximum participation in a reconciliatory community, the inclusion of visions and dreams in worship, and an understanding of the relationship between the body and the mind revealed in healing by prayer and liturgical dance. This is what I consider to be the essence of African Pentecostal spirituality. Besides, African communities are, to a large extent, health-oriented societies, and in indigenous religions rituals for healing, prosperity and protection are prominent. Healing and protection from evil are among the most prominent features of the African Pentecostal message and are probably the most important part of the liturgy in their evangelism and recruitment. Healing is probably no longer a prominent feature in mainline churches, but in Africa the problems of disease and evil affect the whole community and are not simply a private domain relegated to individual pastoral care. Therefore, African Pentecostal churches are responding to needs left entirely unaddressed by mainline Christianity. For this reason, many thousands are leaving the mainline churches to join or form African Pentecostal churches. This drift is not sinister; it is quite natural. Its rationale is detected in the reasons this research has investigated. In Harvey Cox’s (1995:99-110) perspective, the flowering of primal spirituality is a sign of hope, because western liberal Christianity has run into the sand. Most Africans manifest a primal mentality, and this research shows that churches meeting these primal needs are understandably flourishing. A primal discourse therefore leads naturally to a theology of deliverance from sickness and demons. This primal imagination appeals strongly to Africans. Harvey Cox



(1995:247) has observed that in Africa, Pentecostals provide “a setting in which the African conviction that spirituality and healing belong together is dramatically enacted.”

This research work, therefore, was concerned with the role of the Holy Spirit, emphasizing healing, exorcism and deliverance from evil spirits; and the way in which the African Pentecostal churches assimilated some of the indigenous religious practices into the fabric of Christian worship - so much so that they are often accused of “syncretism”. To the contrary, traditional beliefs have been transformed in these churches so that Christianity is presented as an attractive and alternative spirituality. The result is a thoroughly “Africanized” version of Christianity.

#### **1.4. AIM OF THE RESEARCH.**

The research aims to establish the African Pentecostal churches’ initiatives in Church development and mission by focusing on their spirituality, moving from the old to the new forms of spirituality.

The research has

- established the characteristics and liberative aspects of traditional African spirituality;
- established the characteristics and liberative aspects of African Pentecostal spirituality;
- established the atmosphere of worshipping and preaching during the worship service;
- established reasons why the ministry of healing, prosperity and deliverance is emphasized in African Pentecostal churches;
- established whether African Pentecostal churches tend to be syncretistic;
- established the mission of healing and deliverance in these churches, and how Pentecostalism has reshaped healing in Africa;



- Established how African Pentecostal churches are addressing the basic deficiency (a pneumatological hiatus) in contemporary mission theology.

### **1.5. THE NATURE OF THE RESEARCH AND HYPOTHESIS.**

This research project was guided by a clear hypothesis. The study drew a comparison between the role of the Holy Spirit and healing in African Pentecostal churches and the role of “spirits” and healing in African traditional religion. In this regard, the study is comparative in nature. Starting from the religious world-view of the Chewa-speaking people of the Eastern ethnic group in Zambia and their sacred rituals, the study then moves on to Christian African spirituality as it manifests among selected African Pentecostal churches.

The research critically attempts to correct a theological misconception that spirituality in these churches is simply an expression of traditional religion or evidence of syncretism.

Therefore, my hypothesis in this research is to show how these African Pentecostal churches are contributing to the contemporary mission theology. As renewal churches, not only are they emphasizing Christian experience and the demonstration of God’s power; but these churches are also addressing the deficiency in contemporary mission theology - the basic theological deficiency being, the “silence on the role of the Holy Spirit” in the Christian mission. This study is concerned with the way in which this basic theological deficiency has impacted the Christian mission and continues to influence it by means of the heritage of Protestant scholasticism. The hypothesis focuses on the experiential spirituality of the African Pentecostal churches which addresses this basic theological deficiency in Christian missions. This research has attempted to show that the “pneumatological hiatus” (Pomerville, 1982: v) which exists in Protestant theology of mission and which significantly affects missions; does not exist in African Pentecostal churches.

*Hence, the hypothesis for the research is that the African Pentecostal churches are providing a relevant theological orientation and perspective to contemporary Christian*



*mission which Protestant mainline Churches should not ignore. It has become increasingly imperative that any serious study attempting to develop a relevant African theology of mission should address the whole issue of spirituality which has a holistic approach to Christianity and more adequately caters to the African worldview, without ignoring the role of the Holy Spirit in the process. It is evident that, in Africa at least, the growth and attractiveness of African Pentecostalism lies in the experiential and expressive nature of the movement, and its ability to meet the needs of people through the ministry of healing, prosperity and deliverance through the power of the Holy Spirit.*

The research guided by this hypothesis, proposes a new paradigm shift to doing mission from an African Pentecostal perspective. At the heart of this shift is the *Missio Dei* idea; meaning that the God who sends the church, also accompanies the church in its mission. In his book, *Canon and Mission: Christian Mission and Modern Culture*, Dan H. Beeby (1999) calls for the essence and recovery of Scripture as a starting point for mission. He reminds us of how the Bible, read as a whole, calls for mission. And he shows how mission moves from creation to new creation: a movement of renewal, restoration and redemption through a sent nation of Israel, a sent Son of God and a sent Church. The metaphor “Immanuel” (in Chichewa, “Immanuel” - Mulungu Alinafe - means God with us) will play a vital role in understanding the manifestations in African Pentecostal Churches of the presence of God the Holy Spirit with his people.

The popularity of African Pentecostal churches is a result of their “breaking the silence” on the Holy Spirit in African missions and mission theology. Therefore, if a ray of hope lies in the work of the Holy Spirit and the ministry of healing for the African people, then the African Pentecostal churches have restored a valid and empowering hermeneutical key, which the mainline churches should not ignore.

## **1.6. MOTIVATION AND PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT.**

The motivation for this research lies in the growth and the impact of Pentecostalism on the Reformed churches in Zambia. The Pentecostal explosion did not only impact the mainline churches, but also ‘Pentecostalised’ these mainline churches, in particular the Reformed Church, despite a century of activities after their establishment. A thorough investigation shows that the formation of African Pentecostal churches was as a result of the impact of Pentecostalism on the Reformed Church in Zambia causing renewals, tensions and schisms. This prompted the researcher to undertake an in-depth critical look into the “spirituality” of two African Pentecostal churches, namely the Bible Gospel Church in Africa, and Grace Outreach Missions International. Of particular interest is the way the African Pentecostal churches have taken the initiative in bringing the message of healing to people in contemporary Zambia. Hence, the research also indicated that the churches in question should not remain schismatic sects, break-away churches and of marginal importance to Christian development in Southern Africa. Their position is neither at the periphery nor should they be regarded as mere rebels. But through the Holy Spirit, like eagles, they have ascended social and religious heights. They have become churches where people feel at home; centers of healing, prosperity and deliverance from fear and evil spirits, closing the gap between the secular and the sacred. Thus African Pentecostal spirituality has lifted the burden of silence and suffering from many Africans struggling with the question of the Church’s mission in Africa today.

The study was approached from a missiological perspective. David Bosch (1991:493) quoted Ivan Illich who defined missiology as “the growth of the church into new peoples, the birth of the Church beyond its social boundaries; beyond the linguistic barriers within which she feels at home; beyond the poetic images in which she taught her children...Missiology therefore is the study of the Church as surprise.” Bosch says that mission “is mediating the presence of God the Spirit...it concerns the world also beyond the

boundaries of the church. Mission means serving, healing, and reconciling a divided, wounded humanity.” He furthermore argues that “just as the church ceases to be church if it is not missionary, theology ceases to be theology if it loses its missionary character.” (1991:494).

The research into the spirituality of the African Pentecostal Church was an attempt to give answers to missiological questions concerning the problem of continuity and discontinuity, the intercultural communication of the Christian gospel and the encounter between Christianity and African traditional religion. The research proposes a shift in terms of the interpretation of the abiding presence of God the Holy Spirit in the church and its mission. From a scientific and dichotomic point of view 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 heavily influenced by secular science. The new approach advocates the need to understand the images of God the Holy Spirit from an African perspective. In this regard, the comparison between an African cosmology and a Biblical worldview 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 God the Holy Spirit in the African Pentecostal churches and their mission.

It is of importance to this research that the African Pentecostal churches take the African cosmology and the Christian response to that African cosmology such as is found in African Pentecostal churches, seriously. Because the study concerns the Christian church, and its mission, the research method was mainly theological and intercultural. Therefore, the African Pentecostal churches were missiologically evaluated. An attempt was made to critically analyze their interaction with different cultures and the ways in which they have been meeting the needs of the people through the message of healing and deliverance from sickness and evil spirits; which has resulted in the birth and the growth of many new African Pentecostal churches.

## **1.7. RESEARCH PROCEDURES AND METHODOLOGY.**

The methodology of the research rests upon two pillars: *quantitative* as well as *qualitative* research. In terms of the first, an extensive literature review was made. In terms of the latter, a series of interviews were undertaken. Methodologically the research endeavoured to obtain or have access to relevant material and information on the subject, to systemize and evaluate the material and present it as a missiological study of the African Pentecostal churches in Zambia.

To determine the current identity of two of the African Pentecostal churches, namely the Bible Gospel Church in Africa, and Grace Outreach Missions International, the investigation was carried out in the form of an identity analysis (Hendricks J. 1992:164-179) in two phases. The first was mainly descriptive and the second more explanatory.

To ensure a disciplined and systematic procedure in data collection (the gathering of empirical information) the method of Ammerman, N (et.al. 1998) was employed.

### **Phase I.**

In order to gain access to the expected relevant material the following methods of research were employed:

- **Written documents and literature.**

The intention of this research was to do a thorough review of unpublished written material and literature. Written sources on the subject which had already been identified were carefully studied. Some of these include primary sources: synod reports, periodicals and monographs. Unpublished materials included the minutes of the Synod of the Reformed Church in Zambia. Secondary sources were consulted also. Books written on the subject were identified. The research made extensive use of the library sources available at Pretoria University library and other libraries. Indispensable for a study of this nature was the use of archival document analysis (in Zambia) to select the most valuable material for the research.

- **Interviews.**

A careful sampling of groups to be interviewed was undertaken. Mouton (1996:132) says: “The aim of sampling in social research is to produce representative selections of population elements.” Both leaders and members of the Grace Outreach Missions International and the Bible Gospel Church in Africa were interviewed. These interviews were expected to yield some as yet unpublished information. The questionnaires discussed during the interviews are published in Appendix C. The names of the interviewees are listed in the Bibliography. The interviews were intended to bring out the information needed to understand the conflicts and schisms in the mainline churches over Pentecostal practices. Semi-structured and structured interviews were conducted. Open-ended questions were asked when it was deemed that some information was not forthcoming. However, all oral information which was gathered was corroborated by using written sources.

## **Phase II.**

This phase examined the impact of the African Pentecostal churches in Zambia by means of active participation in order to identify these churches and study their impact on the mainline churches in Zambia, particularly the Reformed Church in Zambia which this thesis focuses on as an example of “Pentecostalisation”. Participation in the activities of these African Pentecostal churches was helpful and fruitful. Peter Reason [1994:10], asserts that “we can only truly do research *with* persons if we engage with them as persons, as co-subjects and thus as co-researchers.”

- **Participant observation.**

The researcher has been a practicing Presbyterian Minister in the Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa since 1988. The fact that the researcher has maintained close relations to those in African Pentecostal churches who left the mainline churches to form their ministries/churches, gave the researcher an advantage. He was able to participate in the life of the African Pentecostal churches and make observations. Fluency in the Chichewa, Tumbuka and Bemba languages gave the researcher a great advantage over outsiders. The

researcher was aware of the weaknesses of a method where insiders are bound by their perspective and therefore could be blind to other perceptions and realities. This, however, was taken into account by checking gathered information against other sources such as books.

- **Writing the thesis.**

Having attended to these research stages, and others that are critical in social research management and processes, the researcher embarked on writing the thesis. In the process of research documentation, all necessary elements of required knowledge, abilities and skills for writing a dissertation were attended to. This has resulted in meeting crucial criteria for the research in order to make a contribution to the existing body of knowledge.

## **1.8. DELIMITATION.**

The subject of spirituality in African Pentecostal churches is very broad and cannot be exhaustively covered in a study of this kind. This study therefore focuses on the following dimensions:

- The study concerns the work of the Holy Spirit in the inner life and mission of the African Pentecostal churches.
- Pentecostalism has impacted and caused tensions and schisms in many churches in Zambia; but this study focuses mainly on the Reformed Church in Zambia.
- The Chewa people of the Eastern Province of Zambia have diverse beliefs and religious practices. In a study of this kind it is impossible to deal extensively with the Chewa as a people, and with all their religious and cultural practices. The study has therefore been undertaken only from the perspective of the members of the Bible Gospel Church in Africa and Grace Outreach Missions International of Zambia, and with particular focus on their understanding of the role the Holy Spirit in healing and deliverance.

## 1.9. VALUE OF THE RESEARCH.

It is expected that this research will make available valuable missiological information on African Pentecostalism and how this is impacting on the mainline churches by creating tensions, renewals and schisms. It is also expected that this information will not only be valuable to African Pentecostal churches, but also to the wider community which is seeking to understand the African Pentecostal spirituality. It is also hoped that this information will help build a bridge between the African Pentecostal churches and the wider community of churches in Zambia. Above all, it is hoped that the findings in this thesis will not only stir up dialogue between mainline and African Pentecostal churches, but will also prompt other researchers to do further research.

The value of this research lies in its effort to discover how the churches in question are responding to the call of God; and how they are as free as any branch of the Christian church serving God in their mission work as they allow the Holy Spirit to meet the needs of people through healing, prosperity and deliverance from sickness and evil spirits.

## 1.10. DEFINITION OF TERMS

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- *Spirituality*: The term “spirituality” can be understood as “life according to the Spirit” or “life in the Spirit.” In this thesis, “spirituality” is understood as the supernatural manifestations of the abiding presence (Immanuel, in Chichewa, is Mulungu Alinafe) of the Holy Spirit in the life and mission of the African Pentecostal Churches.
- *Zambia*: Geographically, Zambia is a landlocked, forested Southern African country covering 752,614 square kilometres. Zambia is the only country in the world which is surrounded by eight neighbouring countries. Its population is approximately 12 million. Lusaka is its capital city with an approximate population figure of 2

million. Politically, Zambia was, after its independence from Great Britain in 1964, a one-party state under President Kenneth Kaunda's leadership until 1991, when it became a multi-party state. Economically, copper mining and refining has long been a major source of foreign exchange. The collapse of world copper prices has caused Zambia to revisit and invest in the long neglected sector of agriculture. As for religion, for twenty-seven years Zambia was under Kenneth Kaunda's "humanist African socialism" policy (Van der Walt, 1994:228). But in 1991 President Fredrick Chiluba as a 'born again' Christian declared Zambia a Christian country with full religious freedom for all faiths. This was written into the constitution in 1996.

- *African Pentecostalism*: The term refers to the way in which the African Pentecostal churches developed their own African expression of Pentecostalism. This is because Pentecostalism has the ability to "incarnate" the gospel in different cultural forms (Sepúlveda, 1999:133).
- *Reformed Church of Zambia*: This church is one of the churches known as 'mainline' churches in Zambia. It was founded by Dutch missionaries from South African who came to Northern Rhodesia (now Zambia) in July 1899. It has a strong Reformed tradition and enjoys a countrywide membership of approximately 500,000 members.
- *Bible Gospel Church in Africa*: The Church broke away from the Reformed Church in Zambia as a result of the impact of African Pentecostalism. The schism took place in March 2001. When it was launched, BIGOC had nine pastors, but now it has 70; with a membership of approximately 12,000 members (Kanyenda, 2008:31)
- *Cell*: Sometimes called a kinship circle; a small group of approximately 8-12 believers meeting once or twice every week; an important part of the church's infrastructure which has the primary functions of accountability and intimacy, and the secondary functions of Bible study, prayer, and healing.

- *Indigenous churches*: Churches that are self-propagating, self-theologizing, self-governing, self-supporting; churches that are producing, growing and living naturally in their own region and environment; in-culture expressions of Christianity.
- *Spirit possession*: this term gives expression to the belief that a person who displays certain behaviour has been taken possession of by an invisible being or power. And this constitutes an important means of communication with the spirit world, a world of invisible beings which can influence people either for good or for evil (Maureen Wilkinson, 1991: 231).
- *Mainline churches*: The term ‘mainline’ has come to indicate churches in the mainstream of traditional Christianity in Zambia, yet without the same commitment to basic beliefs on salvation and Scripture as evangelicals or Pentecostals would hold.
- *Signs and wonders*: This term refers to the manifestations of healing as God’s demonstration of his power and directly intervening in human situations to save.
- *Priesthood of all believers*: The biblical teaching that every Christian has a ministry to perform; every Christian has a spiritual gift or gifts given by God to be used for the health and growth of the body of Christ; the mobilization of the laity.
- *Spiritual gifts*: Supernatural attributes given to a person by the Holy Spirit when he/she enters the body of Christ, for use/ministry within the body for the edification of the people of God and the growth of the Kingdom to the glory of Jesus Christ.
- *Territorial spirits*: Based on Eph. 6: 12, empirical impedance from numerous parts of the world, the hypothesis that Satan delegates high-ranking members of the hierarchy of evil spirits to control nations, regions, cities, tribes, people groups, neighbourhoods, and other significant social networks of human beings throughout the world.



- *Pentecostalisation*: The term “pentecostalisation” was used by Johnson Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu (2005:30) and refers to “a process of renewal or revival” of the mainline churches in order to “accommodate Pentecostal practices” as a result of the impact of Pentecostalism on them (see in this thesis, p. 22 and p. 131).
- *Renewal*: The process by which the church, either Christians individually or the community as a whole, responds in a new way to the leading of the Holy Spirit in their lives. A quickening or enlivening in personal or communal commitment to Christ in the churches. And at the heart of this renewal process lies an intensive experience of Christ.
- *African cosmology*: This is a spirit world which is very real and important, because it determines and balances the physical world. This spirit world includes, among others: things with magical powers, ancestors, various divinities, as well as the Supreme Being, who cannot be approached or served directly, but only through the ancestors with the help of the ng’anga.
- *African Pentecostal Churches*: This term refers to churches which express and form a distinctively African Christianity emphasizing the “role of the Holy Spirit with ecstatic phenomena like prophecy, speaking in tongues and healing.” Historically, they trace their roots to mainline churches; but now their theology and liturgy are Pentecostal.
- *Syncretism*: The attempt to synthesize elements of different religious systems into a single body of belief and practice. Some African indigenous churches have sought to synthesize elements of Christianity with pre-Christian traditional beliefs. The result of translating the Christian message into native forms without preserving the meaning; the mixture of old meanings with new, in such a way that the essential nature of each is lost.
- *Identity*: the term “identity” refers to faith and values, the worldview, symbols, style and story which shape the unique identity of a church (Hendricks, 1992:164).



- *Worldview*: A worldview is an integrated, interpretive set of confessional perspectives on reality which underlies shapes, motivates and gives direction and meaning to human life (Van der Walt, 1994:38). A worldview is therefore a term which simply refers to “the way a person or group of persons view the world around them. It expresses the viewpoint of what they think and believe the material and immaterial world in and around them look like. It includes the unexamined suppositions people hold, most of which are passed on from one generation to another” (Sunday Aigbe, 1991:166).

### **1.11. OUTLINE OF THE THESIS.**

The findings in this thesis are presented in **six chapters**.

**In Chapter One**, the relevance of the research, the research problem and hypothesis, as well as methodology is discussed, together with information on the terms and definitions that are widely used in the thesis. An overview of the thesis concludes the introductory chapter.

**Chapter Two** deals with the concept of “spirituality”, which is used in this thesis, and the fact that it is theologically interpreted in different ways. The meaning is determined by the context in which the term is used (and by the researcher). In this chapter Christian spirituality is examined and a brief historical overview of spirituality is given. A definition of Pentecostal spirituality is sought as we study its nature focusing on sanctified Christian life. The Pentecostal understanding of Christian spirituality in areas where the Zambian Christians express themselves is distinctively highlighted. The influence on African Pentecostal churches by western missionary churches shares an Evangelical (Puritan) spirituality with a Methodist background. The remaining part of the chapter deals with Christian African spirituality.

**Chapter Three** examines some of the African traditional religious aspects of the Chewa cosmology. The chapter discusses the African traditional understanding of spirit-



possession, witchcraft and magic; and sickness as experienced in traditional African culture. In this chapter, traditional healers, and methods and practices of healing are discussed as well. The remaining part of the chapter examines and discusses the attitude and response of Christianity to the African worldview, and shows how African cultural values played a pivotal role in shaping the Christian faith. And the concluding part of the chapter is a reminder to seriously develop an African holistic theology.

**Chapter Four** discusses the spirituality of African Pentecostal churches, and a brief background to the formation of churches is provided. This chapter focuses on the birth of the church and examines the manifestations of the Spirit in the life and mission of the church. The patterns of and the reasons for the growth of these churches, as well as views on preaching and liturgical practices are discussed. In this chapter, case studies of healing and deliverance are cited. Much of the chapter is devoted to the emphasis these churches lay on pneumatology, the doctrine and the manifestations of the Spirit. The remaining part of the chapter deals with conflicting views on healing and deliverance and their role in the mission of the church today.

Guided by the research process, **Chapter Five** focuses on the impact of African Pentecostalism on the mainline churches in Zambia, focusing on the Reformed Church in Zambia. A brief background to African Pentecostalism is explored. And the term “African Pentecostalism” is defined. The causes of tensions, pentecostalisation and schisms in these mainline churches are examined and the response of the Reformed Church in Zambia to this impact is assessed. In this chapter, historical developments leading to secession and the formation of African Pentecostal churches namely the Bible Gospel Church in Africa, and Grace Outreach Missions International are established. The remaining part of the chapter looks at entering into dialogue with African Pentecostalism in Zambia on missiological issues of spirit possession as an African reality, the biblical work of the Holy Spirit, healing, exorcism, prophesy and pneumatology. A comprehensive analysis of GOMI and BIGOCA,

including the question of syncretism, is provided, followed by a missiological evaluation of African Pentecostal churches. The question, “What is mission?” concludes this chapter. Then this is followed by **Chapter Six**. This chapter concludes the thesis by showing how the hypothesis has been proved correct; and research goals have been reached. A summary of the chapters and some recommendations are included in this section.



## **CHAPTER 2: SPIRITUALITY THROUGH THE AGES.**

### **2.1. Introduction.**

A new interest in spirituality can be registered in the Church – in Roman Catholic, Protestant as well as in Pentecostal/Charismatic Churches worldwide. New books have appeared on the scene, one of which is from the South African (Roman Catholic) author called Albert Nolan, who has written a book entitled: *Jesus Today: A Spirituality of Radical Freedom* (2007), which has become one of the most important books on the local scene. In this chapter clarification concerning the term ‘spirituality’ and Christian spirituality is offered, together with a brief historical overview of spirituality through the ages. Pentecostal spirituality and sanctification are defined, and Pentecostal practice is dealt with. Such an exercise helps to illustrate the context in which the spirituality of African Pentecostal churches was formed, and how this spirituality has been affecting other churches.

#### **2.1.1. The term “spirituality”**

Gordon S Wakefield (1983:361) elaborates on the term “spirituality” introducing it as “a word which has come much into vogue to describe those attitudes, beliefs, and practices which animate people’s lives and help them to reach out towards super-sensible realities”. The word “spirituality” originated in the French Catholic world. The term has been used since the early 1890s in religious practices to express the beliefs and values of a particular religious group. This term is roughly similar to earlier technical words like **religio**, **pietas**, **eusebia**, **leiturgia** and **euthisianmus** (Spittler, 1988:140).



In addition to the traditional varieties of Christian spirituality, all religions have their spiritualities. One may speak of Mormon, Islamic, or Buddhist spirituality (Spittler, 1988:140). Thus, spirituality needn't always be essentially good or Christian. Wakefield (1983: v) illustrates the content of spirituality in terms of prayer saying, "Prayer in Christian theology and experience is more than pleading or petition; it is our whole relation to God. Spirituality concerns the way in which prayer influences conduct, our behaviour and manner of life, our attitude to other people. It is often best studied in biographies, but clearly it shapes dogmas, inspires movements and builds institutions. Therefore, spirituality characterizes a person's life or a group's nature in terms of their relation towards God".

### **2.1.2. Christian spirituality.**

Christian spirituality is derived from and inspired by the revelation of God in Christ Jesus. Newlands (1980:159) says that "Christian concepts of God involve salvation through Christ as core element". This Christian spirituality is, therefore, rooted in a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. The centre of Christian spirituality is the incarnated Word of God (John 1:1). Peterson (1995:28; cf John 10:36; 17:19) explains that in the Gospel of John, "Jesus uses the language of sanctification with reference to his own role as the saviour and sanctifier of others."

From a historical perspective, Christian spirituality is in itself a synthesis and has undergone many developments. Wakefield (1983:363) points out that "in the first millennium, it was profoundly influenced by Neo-Platonist philosophy and later monasticism." Two Christian types of spirituality have distinguished themselves since the 16<sup>th</sup> century. One is Roman Catholic and the other is Protestant. However, a third has emerged tracing its origins to the eighteenth century. The third one is called "Pentecostalism." Catholics, Protestants and Pentecostals differ with each other, and have developed distinctive kinds of spiritualities. Though their differences should not be exaggerated, a distinction can clearly be made according to their respective emphases; the Catholic Church emphasizes our own effort

towards God, the Protestants emphasize our justification by faith in Christ, and the Pentecostals emphasize the Holy Spirit.

In a general sense, the way of understanding Christian spirituality, is in terms of sanctification, a godly life and its power to transform “the entire person”, not just the human mind. This means that Christian spirituality is not simply for the interior life or the inward person, being as much for the body as for the soul, and equally directed to the implementation of both the commandments of Christ to love God and our neighbour.

David Bosch (1979:3) says that spirituality which concerns and embraces “the whole life” can never be something that can be isolated from the rest of our existence. And, according to the New Testament, in the Epistles of Paul, Paul’s new life is not another life, but the life which God has renewed, transformed and transfigured by the Holy Spirit. On this holistic view of spirituality incorporating the whole person, McGrath (1995:125) said that “in its fundamental sense, spirituality is concerned with the shaping, empowering and maturing of the ‘spiritual person’ (1Cor 2:14-15) that is, the person who is alive to and responsive to God in the world, as opposed to the person who merely exists within and responds to the world.” Therefore, Christian spirituality is the whole expression of faith of a sanctified individual and or a group of individuals.

## **2.2. Brief historical overview.**

The reformer’s motto was *Ecclesia reformata semper reformanda*. The reformed church must continue to be reformed. This strongly suggests to us a principle: that to be truly reformed is not to get stuck in the sixteenth or any other century. History has shown that in each age, God has called and raised a remnant to be faithful and influential in the context in which that remnant lives; in order to bring change for the better. The purpose of this brief historical overview is to focus on the selected faithful remnants who brought changes in their contexts and institutions, as a result of their spirituality.

### 2.2.1. Protestant spirituality.

Historically, Protestant spirituality is a protest against Roman Catholic spirituality. The origins of Protestantism, according to C P Williams (1988:539) “lie in the teaching and actions of both the magisterial reformers, chiefly Luther, Zwingli and Calvin, and the leaders of the Radical Reformation.” And Lochmann (1975: 220) recommends that one should distinguish between a First and a Second Reformation, and that Hus should be included in the first movement. He points to three distinguishing characteristics of the First Reformation:

“In the first place, it was a return to the beginning of the Church, viz, the first apostolic church, which believers sought to reinstate. In the second place, the stress is not so much on the dogma of the early Christian church, but on the practice of faith (orthopraxy rather than orthodoxy). They emphasized the example set by Christ and his words. Deeds played an important role. Stated more simply, the difference between the First and Second Reformation lies in the fact that the First accords primacy to the evangelical commands of Christ (such as, for example, to the Sermon on the Mount), while the Second stresses more particularly the Pauline message of justification through faith. In Hus the intense need to live simply, according to the commandments of Christ, predominated. The third characteristic ties in with the second, viz. the social responsibility of the believer was brought to the fore. Once again in simpler terms (because this is not applicable to the sixteenth-century Calvinist reformation): The reformation must not be limited to the doctrine and the church only (as was the case with some of the sixteenth-century reformers), but should include all the spheres of life even outside the church.”

According to Luther, Protestant spirituality blossoms in the double liberty of Christians. “On the one hand, they are free to do the most humble work that God expects of them in concrete situations where they find themselves and which touch the needs of the neighbour. They no longer run after particularly religious works. On the other hand they are free from the obsession of perfection” (Lienhard, 1988:295). Since the 16<sup>th</sup> century, Protestant spirituality

has been more biblically orientated with the emphasis on the gracious God. Wakefield (1983: 363) describes the difference in terms of the way the believer considers himself/herself related to God. The Catholic saint has come to unite himself/herself with God, consummating purgation and illumination. For the Protestant, spiritual growth begins with God's justifying mercy initiating a relationship with him. And because the Protestant spirituality insisted (still do today) on the centrality of grace as God's freely given gift, any spiritual practice that could suggest that grace could be earned is utterly condemned.

This Protestant spirituality can be distinguished by the particular comprehension and practice of sanctification. In order to appreciate Protestant spirituality, one must understand sanctification in terms of people being simultaneously justified and sinful. The unconditional grace of God is taken seriously. For example, Luther realized that as sinners we are direly in need of the guidance of the gracious God. In the Lutheran tradition sanctification is, as Forde puts it, "the art of getting used to justification" (Forde, 1988:13).

To the Lutherans, spirituality is the process of transition. And, this transition will never be completed this side of the grave. That is, since we are always confronted by sin and in need of grace, we find ourselves always starting afresh, as Luther puts it, "to progress is always to begin again" (1961:370). The Lutheran tradition holds sanctification to be a dialectical relationship or invasion of the old by the new. According to this assumption, it is clear that justification overshadows sanctification. Peterson puts it this way, "To separate sanctification from redemption and conversion is inaccurate and unhelpful" (1995:68). This leads Forde to say the following:

"If what we have been saying is true, however, our salvation, our sanctification, consists in turning about and going the other way, getting back down to earth. The trouble we have is that it is a long way back to us. To get there, we must learn to trust God, to be grasped by the totality of his grace, to become a creature, to become human" (1988:30).

In his book, *Reformed Spirituality*, Howard L. Rice comments that in contrast to the attitude of many contemporary Christians who create a sharp distinction between life before

conversion and the new life in Christ that is free of doubts and troubles, Howard says that “the Reformed tradition insists that even the converted continue to suffer...over against the attitude of some of liberal Protestantism that Christian growth in faith means steady improvement.” (1991:179).

### **2.2.2. Pietist spirituality.**

Pietism has been one of the least understood movements in the history of Christianity. D.W. Brown reminds us that “Spener is commonly regarded as the father of pietism.” He says that “Spener was reacting against the polemical orthodoxy that was sterile amid the immorality and terrible social conditions following the Thirty Years’ War from 1618 to 1648.” And “hoping for better times ... Spener set forth his “pious wishes” for the reformation of the church” (1988:516).

Pietism, like Moravianism and Methodism, was “a movement within the large established church communions” (Snyder, 1989:32). Ernest Stoeffler discusses several of the distinctive marks of Continental Pietism in *The Rise of Evangelical Pietism* (1965:13-23). Ernest Stoeffler says that this movement emphasized “the new birth; intensity of personal religious experience; focusing on personal piety, holiness, and discipline; an emphasis on Scripture; primitivism and an ‘oppositive element’ regarding the established church; and religious idealism.” Howard A. Snyder in discussing “the renewal movements” in the history of the church, says that “the formation of intimate renewal communities within the church...raises fundamental questions of ecclesiology. It is...seen as implying a negative judgement on the ‘spirituality’ and...the ‘legitimacy’ of the larger church community and structure” (1989:33). But Brown says that “Contrary to the meritorious works of medieval Catholicism, pietism stressed the gift of sanctifying grace.” He argues that the Pietists “desired reformation of and not separation from the church” (1988:516-517).

Historically, the emphasis on *ecclesiolae in ecclesia* and the Pietist spirit of mission, provide us with some further insights into the understanding of this movement's spirituality.

#### **2.2.2.1. Ecclesiolae in Ecclesia.**

The establishment of *ecclesiolae in ecclesia* ('small or little churches' within the church) was due to the influence of Philip Jacob Spener (1635-1705), who was educated at the University of Strasburg. A separation from the church is to be carefully avoided, he maintained, but within the church dynamic cells ('little churches') need to be developed. According to Howard (1989:35) the church (ecclesia), composed of large numbers of people, all of them professing faith in Christ but who in fact demonstrate varying degrees of commitment, needs as a normative structure, a form of "a church within the church" or a "little church" (ecclesiola), as a place for more intimate fellowship and for spiritual growth. By this term, Spener meant little associations of living members within a local parish, to act as a leaven among the membership. Awakened and regenerated persons are to institute a special fellowship among themselves and to uphold certain regular rules in view of personal piety and family religion. At the same time, however, they are to remain in the full communion of the church (Stoeffler, 1965:236). Spener, according to Stoeffler (1965:237) stated that they "were to be instrumentalities through which the church was to be brought again to reflect the image of the early Christian Community."

This approach was further developed in the life and ministry of Augustus Herman Francke (cf. Hamilton, 1900:6). Howard (1989:38) concludes by saying that "whether such *ecclesiolae* can in fact function without creating factions or schism, and whether it is ever legitimate to allow for what may amount to two levels of discipleship in the church, are the two major questions raised by the ecclesiola approach."

### 2.2.2.2. Missionary Spirit.

The Pietists who flourished during the eighteenth century were missionary-minded and their work was connected to missionary endeavours. In this century, according to Karl Barth (1976:98) the attention of Christians was focused on the practical life that was to be changed, on the Christian works that came from faith. The Pietists however were more concerned with *inner* works and the *rationalists* more with outward works. Evangelical pietism under the leadership of Count Zinzendorf found further vigorous expression in the renewal of the church of the *Unitas Fratrum*, the Moravians. By 1727, Zinzendorf had become their spiritual leader, with a vision that the Moravians might become the *collegia pietas* within the Lutheran Church, a committed, “zealous group of soldiers for Christ” (Stoeffler, 1973:137) ready to carry the Gospel anywhere in the world. Feeling a call to Christianize distant lands, the Moravians sent missionaries to the Danish and British West Indies in 1732, to Greenland in 1733; and two years later to Georgia. By 1760 the Moravians had sent out 226 foreign missionaries (cf. Howard, 1989:168). According to Latourette (1970: 17-48) the “Moravians never sought to bring all other Christians into their church. After the Pietist pattern, they wished to be a leavening and transforming influence in other communities.” Manschreck (1981:268, 269) wrote that, “No other Protestant group practised missions more wholeheartedly than the Moravians during the eighteenth century.”

Evangelical piety found expression in Christ-mysticism, hymns, and liturgy and in lives that were geared to Christ’s Sermon on the Mount. And Lewis, according to Howard A. Snyder (1989:169-170), notes that “the Moravians sang from a larger collection of hymns and from more diverse sources than any body of Christians of the day, and as they sang their way around the world they broke down many walls of partition.” This “Moravian music had a strong influence on John Wesley, who translated a number of Moravian hymns” (cf. Howard, 1989:170). A typical Evangelical oriented Pietism and spirituality resulted and, it



was claimed, developed into Puritanism in England (cf. Stoeffler, 1965:118). The Puritans pursued simplicity, fidelity to God's Word, striving to emulate the example of the primitive church. The sacredness of God's ordinances, the need for seriousness and sincerity of worship (cf. Davis, 1976:296); and the development of healthy marriages and committed Christian families, as well as a strong social concern, became the characteristics of Puritan spirituality. Stoeffler wrote that "the beginning of the social outreach of the church is in no small part the result of the Pietistic impact, especially as that impact made itself felt in the evangelical movement in Britain" (1965:4). It is of significance that the movement against slavery was driven by William Wilberforce and a number of fellow Evangelicals.

### **2.2.3. Wesleyan spirituality.**

John Wesley's earnest spiritual quest began at an early stage. Wesley, according to Howard (1989:192) said, "I began to aim at and pray for inward holiness. My one aim in life is to secure personal holiness for without being holy myself I cannot promote real holiness in others." In trying to be a Christian, Wesley finally, according to Howard A. Snyder "broke the faith barrier" on Wednesday, May 24, 1738. "This was his famous heart-warming experience during a meeting in Aldersgate Street, an experience which Wesley himself saw as the critical turning point in his spiritual quest." Wesley says the following about his "heart-warming experience" in his *Journal*: "I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone, for my salvation; and an assurance was given me, that He had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death" (Wesley Journal, 1:476, 1909).

For Wesley, holiness was a process of becoming in reality what we already are in Christ, through the new birth. Holiness is the dialectic moment in which Christ's pure love becomes an inner reality for the believer. This is a continuous happening through the indwelling of the Spirit (Wood, 1988:96). John Wesley (1898:39) "believed that sanctification begins at the moment of the new birth, and entire sanctification is the experience of being made

perfect in love.” The Wesleyans remind us that this experience of being made “perfect in love” is not humanly possible to achieve except through faith as a gift of God’s grace.

To appreciate Wesleyan theology and spirituality, one must understand sanctification in terms of being both instantaneous and progressive. The unconditional grace of God is taken seriously. Sanctification, according to John Wesley, was “the infinite and dynamic love of God at work in a finite believer” (Albin, 1988:720). Wesley realised that as believers we are direly in need of the sanctifying grace of the work of the Holy Spirit. In the Wesleyan tradition, “sanctification is received just as is justification” (Sceats, 1988:506). To Wesleyans, spirituality is the process of transition. And, the transition will never be completed this side of the grave. Wesley has greatly contributed to the understanding of the way of growth of sanctified Christians. To grow spiritually the believer must feed on the Word of God (1 Peter 2:2). In the process of sanctification the believer must come to maturity. And the Christian who is grasped by the totality of grace always discovers the miracle anew. One is, always learning new and experiencing new truths (John 8:32). The Wesleyan tradition holds sanctification to be a dialectical relationship, the dying of the old person and the raising to become a new person in Christ, forgiven, accepted, loved, and in the process of growing in Christ’s likeness (2 Corinthians 5:17). For John Wesley the essence of original sin is “carnal pride” The essence of Christian perfection is pure love for God. Wesley says that “it is pointless to debate whether freedom from ‘original sin’ means that it is ‘suspended or extinguished.’” Rather, according to him, “it is enough that we feel nothing but love” (Wesley, 1991:510-511). According to Ferguson (1988:720), this “love for all nations” caused Wesley to declare: “The world is my parish.” In other words, sin is not literally a “thing” but is an “attitude of pride” that alienates us from God and others (Wood, 1988:114-115). Therefore, Wesley’s spirituality, according to McGrath (1993:629), was a synthesis of the Protestant ethic of grace and the Catholic ethic of holiness. Wesley’s continuing influence is seen through the ongoing life of the societies he organized and their

offshoots. It is very important to note the social consequences of the quest for Christian perfection among those who embrace Wesley's doctrine in its totality. Burk wrote in *The Works of John Wesley*, that "The commitment to the Kingdom motivates us to strive for social reform or, perhaps, more appropriately, social recreation" (x:150).

The Methodist revival was, however, only part of the eighteenth century revival, which was largely Calvinist in theology, over against Wesley's Arminianism, and infused with warmth and the power of the Holy Spirit (Ferguson, 1988:426).

#### **2.2.4. Azusa Street spirituality.**

The enthusiasm and warmth of the movement was carried through the 19th century and into the 20<sup>th</sup> century, as history shows us. In America a new and dynamic spirituality was on the surge.

Eddie Hyatt (2006:1) wrote that "on April 9, 1906, the fire of God fell on a small group of hungry believers at a home on Bonnie Brae Street in downtown Los Angeles, California."

Within a week the meetings moved to an old, dilapidated building located at 312 Azusa Street. The Azusa Street Revival was birthed, according to Hyatt (2006:2) "in a milieu of prayer and the belief that God would restore to the church the power of New Testament Christianity just before the return of Christ to the earth." He argues that "the nineteenth century had witnessed the erosion of many people's faith through the emergence of Darwinian evolution and higher biblical criticism." "Many Christians," he says, "believed that only a restoration of the Pentecostal power of the New Testament would stem the tide of Scepticism and unbelief." Perhaps nowhere, asserts Eddie Hyatt "was the desire for revival more intense than in Los Angeles, California. Dissatisfied with traditional forms of Christianity and alarmed by the scepticism that seemed to permeate so many of the churches, scores of individuals and small groups were giving themselves to intense times of prayer" (2006:2).

According to Cox (1995:48), "William Joseph Seymour, a black preacher born in 1870 of parents who were former slaves in Centreville, Louisiana, had an inclination to the 'holiness' teachings about the indwelling Christ." Having an intense hunger for the life and power of the Holy Spirit (Eddie Hyatt, 2006:4), Seymour gave himself to almost constant prayer. Seymour, according to Eddie Hyatt, later said:

"Before I met Parham, such a hunger to have more of God was in my heart that I prayed for five hours a day for two and half years. I got to Los Angeles, and there the hunger was not less but more. I prayed, 'God, what can I do?' The Spirit said, 'Pray more.' 'But Lord, I am praying five hours a day now.' I increased my hours of prayer to seven, and prayed on for a year and a half more. I prayed to God to give what Parham preached, the real Holy Ghost and fire with tongues with love and power of God like the apostles had." (2006:4).

On April 9, 1906, Edward Lee, a black janitor, told Seymour about the vision he had experienced, saying that "the apostles had come to him and told him how to reclaim the gift of tongues." Both men prayed, and that night ... "the power fell." Several participants began praising God in unknown tongues, and among these was William Joseph Seymour himself (cf. Cox, 1995:56). It is generally considered that the famous revival of Azusa Street in 1906 is the cradle of modern Pentecostalism. According to Martin (1990:29) "as Aldersgate Street, London was to Methodism, so Azusa Street, Los Angeles was to Pentecostalism." Speaking of the origins of Pentecostalism Hollenweger (1972:xvii) says, "The origins of the Pentecostal Movement go back to a revival amongst the Negroes of North America at the beginning of the present century." Concerning the Azusa Street revival he adds that:

"The Pentecostal experience of Los Angeles was neither the leading astray of the church by demons (as the German Evangelical Movement claimed), nor the eschatological pouring out of the Holy Spirit (as the Pentecostal Movement itself claims) but an outburst of enthusiastic religion of a kind well-known and frequent in the history of Negro churches in America which derived its specifically Pentecostal features from Parham's theory that speaking with tongues is a necessary concomitant of the baptism of the Spirit" (1972:23-24).



Hollenweger (1972:24) links the American “negro enthusiasm” with a weak and unfortunate position: “I do not wish to assert here that the Holy Spirit was not at work in the Los Angeles revival”. Hollenweger’s denial of the eschatological outpouring of the Spirit in Pentecostal style is critical. While the centrality of Black “holiness” believers in the early Pentecostalism is indisputable, nevertheless Hollenweger incorrectly uses this information concerning the Azusa Street revival. He did this in order to discredit Pentecostalism as a Negro “enthusiast” expression of Christianity rather than a renewal of New Testament Christianity. And Hollenweger denies that speaking in tongues is the initial evidence of the Pentecostal experience. Because of this bias, Hollenweger attributed the religious phenomena of Azusa Street to Black enthusiast religion. But Bartleman’s view of the twentieth century Pentecostal, the Azusa Street revival, was in a clear eschatological framework:

“The ‘gifts’ of the Spirit are being given, the church’s panoply restored. Surely we are in the days of restoration, the ‘last days,’...demons are being cast out, the sick healed, many blessedly saved, restored, and baptized with the Holy Ghost and power....Jesus is being lifted up, the ‘blood’ magnified, and the Holy Spirit honored once more” (1980:64).

Bartleman’s emphasis is on the restoration of the ministry of the Holy Spirit in the eschatological “last days”, a return to the New Testament times, which he sees as normative (1980:74,90). However, Hollenweger argued that Seymour “in spite of constant humiliation ... developed a spirituality that in 1906 led to a revival in Azusa Street, Los Angeles, which most Pentecostal historians believe to be the cradle of Pentecostalism. The roots of Joseph Seymour’s Spirituality lay in his past.” He further says that Seymour “affirmed his black heritage by introducing spirituals and music into his liturgy at a time when this music was considered to be inferior and unfit for Christian worship. At the same time he steadfastly lived out his understanding of Pentecost. For him Pentecost meant more than speaking in tongues. It meant to show love instead of hatred, to overcome the hatred of a whole nation

by demonstrating that Pentecostal was something very different from the success-oriented North American way of life.” He furthermore says that “...as they could not understand the revolutionary nature of this Pentecostal spirituality, they took refuge in ridicule and scoffed: ‘What good can come from a self-appointed Negro prophet?’” The mainline churches also, he asserts, criticized the emerging Pentecostal movement. They despised the Pentecostals because of their lowly black origins (Hollenweger, 1999:40-44).

According to Hollenweger (1997:23) Seymour’s Pentecostalism is “the oral missionary movement, with spiritual power to overcome racism and chauvinism”. God used Seymour and Azusa Street as a catalyst to help spread the fire of Pentecostal Revival all around the world. And Harvey Cox (1995:83) says that the movement that has emerged out of that old, dilapidated building at 312 Azusa Street “is reshaping religion in the twenty-first century.”

At Azusa Street, according to Cox (1995:101) “a kind of primal spirituality that had been all but suffocated by centuries of western Christian moralism and rationality re-emerged with explosive power...This resurfacing of archetypal modes of worship, elements that lie closer to the surface in some cultures but are buried more deeply in others, helps explain why the movement raced across the planet with such electrifying speed. Its potent combination of biblical imagery and ecstatic worship unlocked existing, but often repressed religious patterns, enabling Pentecostalism to root itself in almost any culture.”

With this description, Cox demonstrates the pervading influence of the Azusa Street revival, both upon early Pentecostalism and upon later forms of the movement, especially in the Third World, where the majority of Pentecostal adherents now live.

#### **2.2.5. Evangelical spirituality.**

While Azusa Street revivalism was moving in one direction, an alternative spirituality, Evangelical spirituality – was moving in another. The roots of this movement go back to the times of John Wesley and his colleagues on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean.

Historically, in order to appreciate the Evangelical spirituality, one must understand the defining figures in the history of American evangelicalism in the eighteenth century. In many ways, the defining figures were revivalists George Whitefield, John Wesley and Jonathan Edwards. According to Stout, in America as well as in England,

“revival itself took on a new meaning as a staged, translocal event, held outdoors on weekdays in open competition with more secular entertainments and diversions. In the past, revivals were local, mysterious events that occurred once or twice in any generation and that remained within local communities. With the New Birth as his product and the promise of a transatlantic market, Whitefield introduced a religion to a dawning consumer age” (Stout, 1991: 98-99).

Whitefield’s stand was on the new birth of the believer. In his journal, he says that “...some other strong opponents of the doctrine of the new birth...believe only in an outward Christ, we further believe that he must be inwardly formed in our hearts also. But the natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are spiritually concerned.” And again, “The old doctrine of justification by faith alone, I found much revived, and many letters had been sent concerning it to me, all of which I providentially missed, for now I come unprejudiced, and can easily see who is right. And who dare assert that we are not justified in the sight of God merely by an act of faith in Jesus Christ, without any regard to works of past, present or to come?” (Backhouse, 1933:107, 102).

Whitefield delivered the Gospel that moved men and women from death to life. He helped people to see the righteousness of Christ in the Gospel and to live up to the faith. He himself experienced a total transition in perspective at the time that he was influenced by the works of the Pietists. Whitefield wrote about his experience as follows:

“ God soon showed me: for in reading a few lines further that true religion was union of the soul with God, and Christ formed within us, a ray of divine light was instantaneously darted in upon my soul, and from that moment, but not till then, did I know that I must be a new creature” (Backhouse, 1933:18).

Since Whitefield and Wesley began to have open-air preaching in 1739, the period from 1740 to 1830 has been called and seen as “the dominance of Evangelicalism.” Davis (1961:3, 4) says that “the impact on worship of the Evangelical revival under...Whitefield and the Anglican evangelicals, shows that rationalism and moralism yielded to the imperative demands of sentiment, or what Jonathan Edwards called ‘the religious affections’.”

Davis (1961:146) wrote that “Wesley’s and Whitefield’s greatest achievement was to take the Gospel to the people in the fields...” And Wesley’s great gifts lie, according to Davis, in the practical relevance and clarity of his ethical sermons (1961:156). Davis (1961:155) argues that “although Whitefield and Wesley concentrated on practical divinity, rather than on ‘speculative divinity’, they showed a considerable divergence in the selection of other themes.” Davis adds, “This is true not only of their theological statements...for Wesley was an Arminian who preached universal grace, while Whitefield was a Calvinist who believed in predestination and was not averse to anti-Arminian polemical reference in his sermon.”

George Whitefield’s sermonic power defined much of what American evangelicalism became. Evangelicalism was a tradition in which its greatest speculative theologian, Jonathan Edwards, is best known for a sermon entitled “Sinners in the hands of an angry God” (Noll, 1994:155). According to Ferguson (1988:221) Jonathan Edwards “was the greatest evangelical mind in America in large measure because his thought was driven by the profoundest truths of evangelical Protestantism.” Edwards believed that a renewal in holiness was basic to conversion.

This is the viewpoint of the reformers and Puritans. Murray (1987:261) writes that “for the Christian, holiness is the beauty of God whom he has been brought to know and, having now a principle of holiness in his own nature, he delights in God and seeks to be like him.” This viewpoint - surveying the evangelical history since Edwards wrote his *Religious Affections* - has commonly been exchanged for that of the Wesleyans. Arminian beliefs inevitably depreciate the radical nature and the full significance of the rebirth, and, where

such beliefs are accepted, the experimental divinity of Edwards will always receive the criticism that Wesley gave. Edward defined “affections” as vigorous and sensible exercises of the inclination and will of the soul - things like hatred, desire, joy, delight, grief, hope, fear, gratitude, compassion and zeal (Piper, 1990:78). It is true, as Noll (1994:61) remarked that “the brilliant Jonathan Edwards was the most discriminating defender of the revival.” Our time calls for the establishment of an evangelical spirituality that is relevant to our times. Noll in *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind*, insists that:

“At this stage in our experience, evangelicalism does not have a lot to offer in intellectual terms as such. We have frittered away a century or more, and we have much catching up to do. We need a lot of help, which may come from other Christian traditions...where continuous intellectual activity has been undertaken as a spiritual discipline” (1994: 250).

McGrath has provided a few relevant insights into what Evangelical spirituality amounts to. He says that:

- Basically the church must be reformed to reflect its realization in accordance to Scripture and its origins. The simple gospel, the euangelion, must become real and appeal to non-Christians. It must flourish with fresh Christian love in the church and presented anew to the world. The problem is that the commitment, and enthusiasm in the Christian community as God given to sinful men, so often theologically misled and lacking a sanctified and wholesome understanding of the Christian life. This is one reason why so many Evangelicals in our day become Pentecostals.
- One distinct feature of the evangelicalism is its transdenominationalism or nondenominationalism. Spiritually denominationalism cannot be satisfying. “Evangelicals are most emphatically not committed to any, including any specifically separatist, doctrine of the church or understanding of the fine details of church order. Evangelicalism is as consistent with a convinced denomination as it is

with a convinced separatist view of the church, and it is not restricted to any specific Scripturally based ecclesiology” (McGrath, 1995: 79, 80).

The basic problem of Evangelical spirituality is that it has not stayed alive to its confessional approach; and according to McGrath (1995: 130) “It has neglected to give weight to the human weakness and needs that make spirituality so attractive for many people.”

#### **2.2.6. Pentecostal spirituality.**

Historically, Pentecostal spirituality as a protest against Reformed spirituality can, and must be dated before the Pentecostalism of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The Pentecostal movement emerged out of the intense Wesleyan-holiness and Reformed evangelical revivals of the late nineteenth century, as well as from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century Azusa Street experience. The way in which Pentecostal spirituality depends upon, and is informed by, these movements is explained in the next paragraphs.

From the context of American restoration revivalism emerged a distinct Pentecostal spirituality: “It was the black spirituality of former slaves in the United States encountering the specific Catholic spirituality of the movement’s Grandfather, John Wesley” (Land, 1993: 35). The Moravian Movement of Count Nicolaus von Zinzendorf, which had sprung from German Pietism, had a profound effect upon John Wesley, the founder of the Methodist Church (Land, 1993: 49). Wesley’s contact with Moravians in Georgia (USA) and in England led him to his Aldersgate conversion experience. To him being spiritual meant to encounter and experience Christ, as he wrote, “I felt my heart strangely warmed”. Pietism gave emphasis to the importance of feeling in Christian experience and encouraged holiness, discipline and a personal relationship with God.

In 1727, the Moravian Community at Herrnhut received an outpouring of the Spirit that resulted in a round-the-clock prayer meeting that lasted continuously for a hundred years, and Wesley himself visited this community. Wesley's doctrine of a second blessing, a crisis experience subsequent to conversion which he called sanctification or "perfect love", was a central emphasis of the early Methodism and had a great influence on Pentecostalism. The more deeply Wesley got involved with the Moravians, the more he felt that two distinctly different visions of the church were at stake, despite profound similarities at the level of spiritual experience and *koinonia*. From the Moravians Wesley learned the "inwardness of faith", but he insisted on balancing this with that stream of Anglo-Catholic Piety that stressed "holy living" (Snyder 1989: 208). Wesley instituted societies for religious fellowship quite apart from ordered public worship as an attempt to recover the spirit and form of early Christianity (Baker Frank, 1970: 43-44). And, in the course of introducing his innovations, Wesley was accused of "leaving the church of England by two doors at the same time" namely: Roman Catholicism and Puritan Separatism (Baker 1970:43).

The Pentecostal spirituality, according to Wesley, blossoms in a triple liberty of Christians. Firstly, Christians are free to do the most humble works that God expects of them in concrete situations where they find themselves and which touch the needs of the neighbour. They, secondly, devote all to God, giving Him their soul, body and spirit. And, thirdly, they continue to promote the life of Christian holiness as both an inward and an outward reality (Baker, 1989:192,208).

#### **2.2.6.1. The main characteristics of Pentecostal spirituality.**

From the point of view of Pentecostal spirituality, the most important complement brought by Wesley to Pentecostalism was his doctrine of sanctification. Wesley's doctrine of a *second blessing*, a crisis experience subsequent to conversion, which he called sanctification or "perfect love", was a central emphasis of early Methodism and had a profound influence

on Pentecostalism (Burgess, 1988:280). In accordance with the Bible, Pentecostal theology and piety have always emphasized sanctification. God begins and continues with us simply by declaring us to be righteous because of Jesus Christ. (2 Corinthians 5:21).

For Pentecostal Christians, sanctification means a spirituality that has its centre of gravity in a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. John Calvin was right when he said, “First we must understand that as long as Christ remains outside of us, and we are separated from Him, all that He has suffered and done for the salvation of the human race remains useless and of no value to us” (*Institutes* 3.1:1). Snyder (1989:200) agrees with John Calvin when he says that: ‘Wesley’s heart-warming experience during a meeting in Aldersgate Street was an experience which Wesley himself saw as the critical turning point in his spiritual quest.’

Sanctification, therefore, in Christ has to do with a profound reorientation of values and behaviour beginning with the heart. God’s word and God’s spirit bring about change and transformation in us and then through us God’s holiness is revealed to the world.

According to the Pentecostal tradition Christians believe that Christ must engage their whole being. For Pentecostals, “the one who died with Christ is not merely justified, but has also been set free from the reign or dominion of sin” (Roman 6:7). All that Christ has accomplished for their human nature is a reality through union with Him, true for them. He died to sin once; He lives dedicated to God (Romans 6:10). He was subjected to the dominion of sin in death, but death could not master him. He rose and broke the power of both sin and death. Now he lives forever a life unto God’s glory. The same must be true of his followers; they were with Him on the Cross, in the tomb and on the resurrection day (cf Romans 6: 4-11).

In their faith and practice, the basic framework of their new life in Christ is that they have become like Paul, “I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.” (cf Galatians 2: 20). Pentecostal Christians think of themselves in terms of being dead to sin and alive to God, united with Jesus Christ our Lord.

Union with Christ in Pentecostal spirituality is understood in terms of two features of sanctification, (i) that “Jesus Christ is our sanctification or holiness (1 Corinthians 1:30); and (ii) through union with Christ sanctification is accomplished in us” (Ferguson, 1988:48). This union with Christ is the purpose and one of the foci of the ministry of the Holy Spirit (cf Romans 8:15).

Therefore what is so significant in the Pentecostal lifestyle is the transformation which faith brings to Christians’ self-understanding. They do so by “giving themselves to God through both their beliefs and emotional attitudes, which ultimately influences their actions and values” (Cecil, 1992:103). Against this background, Paul urges radical consecration and sanctification (Romans 12:1, 2). In the Pentecostal tradition, sanctification amounts to the consistent and practical realization of what is meant by belonging to Christ as a new creation (2 Corinthians 5:17). This Pentecostal apprehension is associated with a cosmic context and contrast: in Adam by nature, in Christ by grace; in the old humanity by sin, in the new humanity by regeneration. Once we lived under the reign of sin, now we have died to its rule and are living by the grace of God in Christ. The work of Christ and his grace are experienced in contrast with Adam and his fall as stated in Paul’s letter to the Romans (8:1ff; cf Romans 5:12ff). Pentecostal theology has stressed the cosmic context in which Scripture expounds sanctification.

Since Pentecostal spirituality stresses the need for “a consecrated life”, Pentecostal Christians are to demonstrate the reality of sanctification by continuing to live in union with Jesus Christ as the Saviour and Lord. For the holy status of believers is the basis of their appeal for holy living. John Wesley wrote to his father in 1734, that “My one aim in life is to secure personal holiness, for without being holy myself I cannot promote real holiness in others” (Vulliamy, 1932: 60). To Pentecostal Christians sanctification is definitive as a basis and motivation for holy living.

Pentecostal spirituality is composed of a number of characteristics, convictions and assumptions. This fact is proof that spirituality is intrinsic in the Pentecostal theology. Its



typical features are revealed in various forms and in contextualised traditions. In the Zambian Christian spirituality we can find the following Pentecostal features:

#### **2.2.6.1.1. The Bible and Pentecostal spirituality.**

The Pentecostal tradition regards the Bible, contextually understood, as its basic source and inspiration, rule of faith and practice. It supplies the corrective and interpretive authority for all Christian experience. Burgess (1998:607) says, “For Pentecostals, the issue of biblical authority is non-negotiable and is the beginning point for missions’ theology and strategy.” The Pentecostal movement signifies the restoration of the Bible as the divine Word of God. The Word of God was restored to the central position in the divine services, in the everyday lives of the people and is understood at face value. Thus the supernatural experiential worldview of Scripture is our worldview; that is, an understanding of God who is above and beyond creation yet in and among his people and testified to by signs and wonders. The role of the Holy Spirit is continually referred to by Pentecostals as an important element in hermeneutics. A fundamental principle is that “Scripture given by the Holy Spirit must be mediated interpretively by the Holy Spirit” (Arrington, 1994:109). Because Pentecostal persons seek to think and live according to Biblical revelation, God is in command by his Spirit. The Holy Spirit enables the interpreter to bridge the historical and cultural gulf between the ancient authors of the Scriptures and the present interpreter (Arrington, 1994: 105). This strong emphasis upon the Holy Spirit comes from the Scriptures which emphasize the role of the Holy Spirit as revealing God and God’s will to his people (1 Corinthians 2: 9-10a). In the Scriptures Pentecostal Christians find the righteousness of God in Christ that is to be appropriated freely by faith in Him (Christ) as their sanctification. Only by Union with Him and his Spirit and abiding in his word, they are convinced, they are now new creations according to his purposes (2 Corinthians 5: 17). Pentecostal Christians consider themselves to have died with Christ and come alive with him (Romans 6:4). This doctrine of the new birth in Christ is the essence of the Gospel in Pentecostal theology.



Sanctification means therefore to seek the teaching of Scripture continually in every walk of life. The Pentecostal churches and Christians believe that we are in need of a continuous dependence upon the Holy Spirit who, according to Howard M. Ervin, “gives existential awareness of the miraculous in the Biblical world-view. These events as recorded are no longer ‘mythological’, but ‘objectively real’. Contemporary experiences of divine healing, prophecy, miracles, tongues, and exorcism are empirical evidence of the impingement of a sphere of non-material reality upon our time-space existence with which one can and does have immediate contact. Awareness of and interaction with the presence of this spiritual continuum is axiomatic in a Pentecostal epistemology that affects decisively its hermeneutic.” (Ervin, 1981: 24).

#### **2.2.6.1.2. Sanctification and Pentecostal spirituality.**

Vigorous debates have taken place about the nature of Christian holiness and how it is acquired or attained. Pentecostal traditions have highlighted the importance of sanctification. Sanctification has one concern or aim, to relate God anew to his creation and creatures who have fallen in sin. God accomplished this by Himself as creator, redeemer and lord. It required a process of deeds and means called sanctification. Humanity and the world had to be sanctified by God, who is holy.

Humanity and the world are made holy by being redeemed and sanctified by the triune God. Old Testament saints (Israel) and New Testament Saints (Christians) are commanded, “Be holy as I am holy” (Lev. 11:41; 1Peter 1:15 and 2:4-10). The Bible speaks often about our holy God and about holiness, but today the term arouses pictures of a dour, joyless, irrelevant, unattractive, “holier-than-thou” religion.

Holiness, however, is the essence of Christian spirituality. Martin Parsons in his book, *The Call to Holiness* (1974) argues that for the Christian living in a secular age, spirituality means that Christians are called to be like Christ, to be holy, to imitate Him (1 Corinthians

11:1; Thessalonians 1:6), and to increasingly conform to his likeness (Romans 8:29). James I Packer (1992:97) notes that spirituality and growth in holiness are relational. God is a person and we are people who relate. The goal is the same for all of us - to be like Christ - but each spiritual journey is likely to be unique, guided by the Holy Spirit, and often helped along by other human beings. The being, character and action of God determine holiness. Related to Him, Christians are called Saints.

Therefore, Sanctification is about belonging to God and expressing that distinctive and exclusive relationship with the Holy One by the way we live. Pentecostal spirituality can be distinguished by the particular comprehension and practice of sanctification.

#### **2.2.6.1.3. Doctrine and Practice go together in Pentecostal spirituality.**

In the Pentecostal tradition “what we believe” determines “how we live”. Pentecostals take seriously the Word of God in Romans which says, “For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, *‘The righteous shall live by faith.’* “ (Romans 1: 17) (Italics mine). Schaeffer is very clear in his reasoning, “As Christians we are not only to know the right worldview, the worldview that tells us the truth of what is, but consciously to act upon that worldview so as to influence society in all its parts and facts across the whole spectrum of life, as much as we can to the extent of our individual and collective ability.” (1983: 256). It is the result of the expositive interactive reading of the Scriptures. The idea that doctrine and life-style, theology and practice, are wedded together is accepted by the godly in their reading of Scripture.

This welding of “what we believe” and “how we live”, was illustrated by John Calvin in his Institute of the Christian Religion (1536). This first publication bore the significant subtitle: *Containing the whole sum of piety*. John Calvin’s purpose was to engage the reader in an experiential fashion. According to Simpson (1984: 190) one of the objectives in writing the

*Institute* was to teach men “true godliness”. In contrast to Reformed spirituality, it is the Pentecostal spirituality that has been engaging the reader in an experiential fashion.

In Pentecostal spirituality sanctification is emphasized as the ministry of the Holy Spirit (cf. Matt. 4:1,11). Rowland Croucher (1991: 1-2) wrote that “spiritual formation is the dynamic process whereby the Word of God is applied by the Spirit of God to the heart and mind of the child of God so that she or he becomes more like the Son of God.” Pentecostal Christians cannot conceive of true spirituality without the guidance of the Holy Spirit and the truth of the Word of God. Our lifestyle in Christ is bound to be in conflict with the lifestyle of this world. The presence of the Spirit produces conflicts.

The Spirit himself is the first fruit of glory. No one can be possessed by the Spirit without being caught up in the contrast between what the Bible calls ‘flesh and spirit’ (Romans 8:4-5). Another way of describing victory over the flesh, Ladd (1993:517) wrote, was “to walk in the Spirit”. “Walk in the Spirit, and do not gratify the desire of the flesh. (Gal. 5: 16; cf. Rom. 8: 4). Walking in the Spirit means to live each moment of life under the control of the Holy Spirit. Walking involves living a step at a time, moment by moment; and to walk in the Spirit means to take each step of my earthly walk under the direction and control and leadership of the Holy Spirit.”

#### **2.2.6.1.4. The Divine presence.**

The consciousness of divine presence in every ministry of Christian involvement has been much emphasized in both the life of the Chewa Christians and of the Zambian Pentecostal Bible schools. The concept of divine presence (‘Immanuel’ in Chichewa means ‘God with us’) concerns two phases of godliness, the holy fear of God and the unspeakable joy of God. Sensitive to the omnipresence of the divine Spirit, God’s people delight in walking daily with God from birth to death. They are awakened to a conscious awareness of the need for holiness. The most fundamental secret of Pentecostalism is that everything should be in the field of vision of God, that God reigns supreme in all spheres. that there is no tiny area of

which Christ cannot say that it is his. For that reason we have the honour and the privilege to serve God in all spheres, with joy and submission, being at the same time grateful like a child.

In explaining this Guy Chevreau (1994:44,45) wrote, “Throughout the history of the church, it has been the experience of God’s ‘felt’ presence that has called men and women to faith and mission...Theologically, what we are talking about is the omnipresent and eternal God localizing and actualizing his presence, in space and time.” The consciousness of living in the divine presence encourages discouraged Christians and assures them that they are anchored in the eternal council of the almighty God. McClung (1986: 48) says that “for Pentecostals, God is not an idea, but a presence and a power to save, cure and deliver.” According to Guy Chevreau (1994: 68), “the manifest presence of God is a radical life-changer. There is no record in the Scriptures of the Lord manifesting his presence and people staying the same as before.” He (1994:69) further says that “in the course of the Scriptures, the manifestation of the Lord’s power and presence goes hand in hand with the commission. In Mathew 28: 16-20, John 20: 21-22 and Acts 1:8, the commissioning of the disciples is the hallmark of the manifestation of God’s presence.”

In Jesus, there is a unique consciousness of God’s presence, so much so that Jesus mandates the conduct of his ministry on the grounds of direct communication with the Father. Repeatedly, He justifies his actions with words to this effect (John 5: 19; Matt. 11: 25-27; Jn. 8: 38; 12:49, 50). In Zambian spirituality the phases of holy fear caused by this consciousness have long been much emphasized. The godly are motivated to shun sins and lead a decent life by this fear of God. The Lord’s promise of his presence- “Immanuel” (Mulungu Alinafe, a Chichewa phrase meaning “God with us”) (Matthews 28: 20) is what encourages the Pentecost churches and their mission. The spirituality of Pentecostal Christians derives from their living in the presence of God and from their subjective attitude to a life which is for the glory of God.

### **2.2.6.1.5. The Glory of God.**

Bouyer (1969: 63) a Roman Catholic theologian wrote that “Calvin’s most important contribution to Protestant spirituality was his concept of God’s glory, or, to put it better, God’s glorification, as the final end of Christianity.” While it is true that John Wesley did not write a systematic theology nor a system of Christian Institutes like John Calvin, Turner (1977: 50) wrote that “the primary contribution Wesley made to Christian theology was ‘entire sanctification’”. In his exposition of Romans 4:5, Wesley wrote, “This is sanctification, which is, indeed, in some degree, the immediate fruit of justification, but, nevertheless, is a distinct gift of God, and of a totally different nature. The one implies, what God does for us through his Son; the other, what He works in us by his Spirit.” (1991: 52). In the Pentecostal perspective the final significance of man’s sanctification and the reason for its crucial importance lay in God’s glory. According to Wesley’s understanding God’s glory lay first and foremost in his action, his power acknowledged as the only one that counts, the only one that is good, the only one that is real: there lay first the objective of justifying faith. With the result that all man’s doing and all man’s being could be devoted to nothing but blessed obedience to the divine will alone.

All conduct of the sanctified Christians should therefore reflect the glory of God. Peck (1951: 72) argues that “God is glorified by holiness alone...only the heart entirely consecrated, from which sin is all excluded, which is wholly dissolved in love, can completely glorify God...He is glorified by the exhibition, before earth and heaven, of the power of his remedial goodness, the efficacy of the Saviour’s blood, and the renovating force of the Holy Spirit in the soul of man.” Kistemaker (1883: 358) agrees with Peck by saying that “in everything we do and say, no matter how insignificant, the world should be able to see that we are God’s people. Exalting God’s glory ought to be our chief purpose in this earthly life.” Therefore, it is very clear to the Zambian Pentecostal Christians that man/woman is saved to be dedicated to the only life that has significance; a life wholly



given over to the glorification of God, in action, prayer as well as word. In their lifestyle, Zambian Pentecostals are extremely wary of being honoured. To praise them is to offend them. Lochman (1979: 55) writes that "...the glory of God in the church may never be merely admired as a legacy, nor held onto as a possession, but must be witnessed to and verified. As it is made concrete in Jesus Christ, it demands the correspondingly concrete response of Christians. Its scope encompasses all areas of human life". This duty with interest, and devotion with fulfilment was classically formulated in the first answer of the Westminster shorter catechism: "Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy Him forever."

#### **2.2.6.1.6. Catholicity.**

The doctrine of the catholic character of the church is based on the Holy Scripture, on God's infallible revelations in the Old and New Testament. We believe in one holy, Catholic and apostolic church and on this our faith is based. God's Word is the supreme rule of true Catholicity. The Reformation movement was started with a view of reforming the Roman Catholic Church; and not to start a new church. Likewise, Pentecostalism as a movement started with a view of restoring the "New Testament Apostolic experiences" within the Protestant Movement (cf. Arrington, 1988: 381). As an evangelical seeking to live according to the New Testament, John Wesley preached a sermon entitled "On having a Catholic Spirit" (1991: 442-455). In this sermon, Wesley said "difference of opinion would not keep him from having fellowship with others who were like minded with himself". Today Wesley would doubtless be prominent in the ecumenical movement, urging unity if not union - but unity on the basis of Christ and not simply for union as an end in itself. In 1907, William Joseph Seymour, with reference to the Azusa Street Revival, wrote, according to Harvey Cox (1995: 297), in the mission's newspaper *The Apostolic Faith*, the following:

“Tongues are one of the signs that go with every baptized person, but it is not the real evidence of baptism in everyday life...The secret is: one accord, one place, one heart, one prayer, one soul, believing in this great power. Pentecost...brings us all into *one common family*.” (Italics mine).

Early Pentecostals, according to Kärkkäinen (1998:65) “saw unity as spiritual, invisible unity of doctrine; creeds were often regarded as divisive.” And Walter Hollenweger (1997), a dedicated ecumenist himself and the first to study Pentecostalism academically as a sympathetic outsider, also points out the ecumenical significance of early Pentecostalism. His monumental study of Pentecostal Scholarship, *Pentecostalism: Origins and Developments Worldwide*, has as its main theme the roots of Pentecostalism in almost every conceivable Christian tradition. Pentecostalism has Black oral roots, Catholic (and Methodist) roots, Evangelical roots, ecumenical roots and critical (liberal) roots. The origins of Pentecostalism themselves held great potential for ecumenical participation, he maintains. After showing the ecumenical and reconciliatory nature of William Joseph Seymour’s ministry at Azusa Street, Hollenweger (1997:20) gives further pioneering examples to show that Pentecostalism began as an ecumenical renewal movement without the express purpose of founding a church (cf. Hollenweger, 1999:187). And in various countries around the world Pentecostalism followed this pattern in its early development.

#### **2.2.6.2. The practice of Pentecostal spirituality.**

Other features of Pentecostal convictions and assumptions make for a characteristic way of life, a practice of the Christian faith.

##### **2.2.6.2.1. The personal commitment.**

###### **2.2.6.2.1.1. Mortification.**

Pentecostal piety and theology take the warning of Jesus seriously. Christians are **in** this world but not **of** this world (John 17: 14-16). A biblical balance is steered, recognizing the continuing presence of sin in this world and Scripture’s frequent exhortation of the believer

to deal with it severely. Mortification, in a biblical sense, is considered a divine blessing and training in spiritual things. God allows trials (tests) in order that the new life be strengthened, growing in grace from one degree of glory to another (cf. James 1: 2-4; 2 Corinthians 3:18). Mortification, in Pentecostal understanding, is the result of our union with Christ in his death to sin. Our death of the flesh, according to Ladd (1993: 517; cf. Rom. 8:13) “ is an event that must be appropriated by faith. This involves two aspects. Believers are to recognise that the flesh has been crucified with Christ, and therefore ‘consider [themselves] dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.’ (Rom. 6:11). I cannot consider myself dead with Christ unless I have actually died and been crucified with Christ; but because this has happened, it can be put into practice in daily experience. Because I have died with Christ, I am to put to death the deeds of the body.” And Louis Berkhof puts it well:

“By this union believers are changed into the image of Christ according to his human nature. What Christ effects in his people is in a sense a replica or reproduction of what took place with Him. Not only objectively, but also in a subjective sense they suffer, bear the cross, are crucified, die and are raised to newness of life with Christ. They share in a measure, the experience of their Lord.” (1978: 451).

John Stott (1986: 279) describes the significance of mortification vividly as follows: “An actual taking of hammer and nails to fasten our slippery fallen nature to the Cross and thus do it to death. The traditional word for this is ‘mortification’; it is the sustained determination by the power of the Holy Spirit to ‘put to death the misdeeds of the body’, so that through this death we live in fellowship with God.”

#### **2.2.6.2.1.2. Humanization.**

The goal of sanctification is true humanity, gained through Christ. Abraham Kuyper (1900: 461) once wrote that “what a redeemed soul needs is human holiness.” This is the heart of the Pentecostal doctrine of sanctification. Christian spirituality being the restoration of the

image of God in Christ, it amounts to a radical humanization. It means as a new creation (cf. 2 Corinthians 5:17), Christians, as Larry Richards (1987:53) reminds us, must start “living a human life in this world in union with God”. Ferguson (1988:66) says that “as a Christian I must see myself from two perspectives, and say two contrasting things about my life: in myself there dwells no good by my own creation or nature (Rom. 7:18); and in Christ I have been cleansed and justified so that in me glorification has begun.” I boast only in Christ. I can do good only in his grace (1 Cor. 6:11).

#### **2.2.6.2.1.3. Means of grace.**

Pentecostal spirituality is related to the means of grace. This spirituality is nurtured by four ways in which the grace of God and Christian duties are expressed: the ministry of the Word and Spirit, the providence of God, the fellowship of the saints, and the sacraments. The Word of God redeems and shapes, and instructs the mind by renewing the thinking processes; it informs the conscience and conforms us to God’s will. At the same time, the Word is applied or used by the Holy Spirit as a sword to have us “purified by obeying the truth” (1 Pet. 1:22). The Word enables us to abide in Christ and let Him take up residence in our lives (John 15:7). Rowland Croucher (1991: 1-2) says that “Spiritual formation is the dynamic process whereby the word is applied by the Spirit of God to the heart and mind of the child of God so that she or he becomes more like the Son of God.” Therefore, the declaration of the Word of God, preaching under the power of the Holy Spirit, characterized the early Pentecostal and Puritan pastors, for they were convinced that God inspired his Word to sanctify his people.

By the providence of God, even by severe trials and afflictions, sanctification is advanced. Affliction serves as a beacon for those who are going astray. For this reason Christians rejoice at all times (Philippians. 4:4). The fellowship of the church is another contextual means by which sanctification is fostered. In this sense it is also a means for the development of a sanctified way of thinking and living. Pentecostal theology considers the

church as a community where caring, praying and teaching take place through sub-communities called cell groups. Research shows (Roger Finke, 1994: 3-22) that large churches can maintain high levels of commitment and conformity if they are divided into small homogenous units, and Cho (1997: vi) affirms that for church growth, “the real secret is home cell groups”.

The sacraments play an important role in Pentecostal sanctification and theology. They remind us of the distinction between the church and the world. Sanctification is simply the effect of this communion. We become like those with whom we have communion with. In short, sanctification in Pentecostal theology, means becoming like Christ Jesus.

#### **2.2.6.2.1.4. Prayer.**

In Pentecostal theology sanctification is a divine experience in which holiness is ours by faith. God lets us grow in holiness by engaging our minds, wills, emotions and actions. Prayer is a direct communication to and with a divine presence through which one can keep one’s spiritual life and obtain spiritual power to do God’s work. And if prayer is coupled with fasting, it intensifies one’s spiritual life. In turn, the spirituality of individuals, especially of leaders, directly affects community ministry. This spiritual practice has been long recognized as vital to Christian life. According to Robert C. Bondi (1991: 12) “prayer is the fundamental reality of Christian lives. Prayer actualizes believers as they discover their focus in God”. And E.M Bounds (1995: 247) notes that “prayer has to be the basis of Christian character, their life and living. This is Christ’s law of prayer, forming it into the very being of the Christian. It should be the primary step and breath.” Bounds (1995: 26) contends that “Christ showed that trust is the basic foundation of prayer. The central issue of Christ’s ministry and work were his unreserved trust in his Father. When trust is complete, prayer is simply an outstretched hand ready to recur.” Bondi (1991:163) had a holistic view of prayer: the possibilities of prayer influence all things. Whatever deals with people’s highest well-being, and whatever has to do with God’s scheme and will concerning

human beings on earth, is a subject for prayer. Prayer opens doors for the access and success of the Gospel. Therefore, prayer plays the most important role in the Pentecostal spirituality pursuing the sanctified life. John Calvin once wrote on prayer as follows:

“Words fail to explain how necessary prayer is, and in how many ways the exercise of prayer is profitable. Surely, with good reason the heavenly Father affirms that the only stronghold of safety is in calling upon his name.” (1960: 851).

#### **2.2.6.2.1.5. Glossolalia.**

Pentecostals are known for their emphasis on the baptism of the Holy Spirit and the practice of speaking in tongues. Great emphasis is placed on the experiential side of the Christian life among Pentecostals. And for Pentecostals there are two important spiritual experiences: firstly, it is the New Birth; and secondly, it is the baptism of the Holy Spirit with speaking in tongues as evidence. According to Gordon L. Anderson (1990:58-59), this baptism of the Holy Spirit accompanied by speaking in tongues, “has roots in the Wesleyan teaching of the second blessing of sanctification, which they believed purifies the life from sin. Pentecostals adopted the idea...but they added that it imparts spiritual power for ministry along with the ability to speak in tongues.” He says that “Speaking in tongues was a prayer language that enabled one to communicate directly with God without the interference of the human intellect and the vehicle of a known language.” He adds that “the purpose of this communication is personal edification. The key verse for this position is 1 Corinthians 14:2.”

Richard A. Baer, Jr. (1976:152-153), in his article, *Quaker Silence, Catholic Liturgy, and Pentecostal Glossolalia - some functional similarities*, argues that the “strangeness of glossolalia to most people, not least of all ministers and seminary professors, has blinded them to a fundamental functional similarity between speaking in tongues and two other...accepted religious practices,...Quaker silent worship and the liturgical worship of the

Catholic...” He asserts that “in each of the three traditions...the desire is to free man in the depth of his spirit to respond to the immediate reality of the living God.”

“Speaking in tongues,” Richard Baer continues, “is not a form of religious hysteria or spirit possession. Nor is it, except occasionally and quite incidentally, uncontrolled expression of emotion.” He asserts that “the use of tongues...is similar to the fulfillment a person may find in spontaneous dancing...the use of the dance for the expression of religious ecstasy is a well-known and virtually universal phenomenon.”(1976:153).

In his book, *The Pentecostals (formerly, Pentecostalism)*, John Thomas Nichol (1966:10), says that “Pentecostals will not retreat from what they feel is a biblical basis for their position. In their expositions they assert that ‘tongues’ were an evidence of the Holy Spirit’s descent on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:4); ‘tongues’ were in evidence when the Holy Spirit was poured out on those who gathered in the house of Cornelius...(Acts 10:45); ‘tongues’ were in evidence when Paul laid hands upon the believers at Ephesus (Acts 19:1-7)...in his Corinthian letter he writes: ‘I thank God that I speak in tongues more than you all’ (1 Corinthian 14:18).” And Cox (1995:81-96) adds that Pentecostalism “has succeeded because it has spoken to the spiritual emptiness of our time by reaching beyond the levels of creed and ceremony into the core of human religiousness, into what might be called ‘primal spirituality’.” He asserts that the reason they continue to attract people is that “Pentecostals have rediscovered a powerful and primal form of religious expression.” Cox further asserts that “Pentecostals interpret tongue speaking as evidence of the wonderful nearness of the Spirit. We are unable to pray, but the Spirit ‘maketh intercession’. Our corrupt and inadequate language is transformed by God’s love into the tongues of angels.”

And Macchia (1992:68-70) agrees with Cox, by saying that “indeed Pentecostals have rightly understood glossolalia as the ‘sighs too deep for words’ in Romans 8:26. And if speaking in tongues participates in the pain of God, it also points to the new creation: Glossolalia is not only a yearning for the liberation and redemption to come, it is ‘evidence’

that such has already begun and is now active. This evidence of God's transforming and liberating activity is an essential element of divine theophany in Scripture."

Cox (1995:315) says that "Glossolalia is a mystical experiential protest against an existing religious language that has turned stagnant or been corrupted." He argues that glossolalia does not occur in a vacuum, but..."takes place among people who are themselves culturally displaced, and often politically or socially disinherited..." He continues saying that "it is a form of cultural subversion, a liberating energy that frees people to praise God in a language of the Spirit that is not controlled by dominant modes of religious discourse." Cox adds that "glossolalia helps to create a new religious subculture, one that in turn amplifies and affirms personal experience."

Therefore, the gift of glossolalia or speaking in tongues is one of the important doctrines which produces much spiritual satisfaction for Pentecostals, and non-Pentecostals should be cautious, as Paul himself recommends, about forbidding others to speak in tongues [1 Corinthians 14:39].

#### **2.2.6.2. Communal commitment.**

Contextualization of the Pentecostal spirituality in missiology is comprehensive and distinctive, since in the Pentecostal church, the members understand that they are entrusted with sanctified stewardship in every vocation or in every distinctive sphere of life. When they are born again they believe they are to live for the glory of God as new creations (2 Corinthians. 5:17). To the Pentecostal Christians every culture is a conditioned medium through which they should express themselves as the sanctified people of God. Kraft (1980:328) writes concerning this role of the church, "If churches are to be dynamically equivalent to those of the Bible they must be made up of members who have become a part of them in a dynamically equivalent way."

### 2.2.6.2.1. The strength of Pentecostal spirituality in contextualization.

In Africa, by adopting cultural thought forms and religious experiences with which ordinary people are already familiar, Pentecostalism has been able to attract many followers. The Pentecostal spirituality has found immediate resonance with African spirituality and concerns. Harvey Cox (1996:81) says that Pentecostalism is expanding because “it has spoken to the spiritual emptiness of our time by reaching beyond the levels of creed and ceremony into the core of human religiousness.” And one would add that it addresses the matter at a level that African spirituality readily comprehended: deliverance and healing of the entire person. Sunday Aigbe (1991:173-174) mentions some of the aspects of tribal religion which Pentecostal Mission responds to:

- **Tribal animism.** Pentecostals respond by proclaiming and demonstrating the presence and power of the Holy Spirit.
- **Tribal power encounter.** Pentecostals respond by the working of miracles, divine healing, and exorcisms.
- **Tribal ancestral spirits and the spirit world.** Pentecostals respond with the proclamation of the Kingdom of God and the eternal bliss of heaven.
- **Tribal community.** Pentecostals offer a form of Koinonia, the fellowship of believers, e.g. home cell groups.
- **Tribal rituals.** Pentecostals respond with vibrant and spontaneous spiritual worship, weddings, funeral rites, dedications, etc.
- **Tribal hierarchical structure.** Pentecostals respond with a unique dimension of church administrative structure where reaching a pastor is less difficult than trying to see a popular diviner or chief.
- **Tribal philosophical cyclical history.** Pentecostals respond with an offer of a pneumatological-eschatological paradigm. In this way Pentecostal spirituality



contextualises its message as a mission. However, according to Anderson (1999: 228) Pentecostal cultural adaptability has led some people to conclude that Pentecostalism, in one form or another, represents forms of syncretism (more on syncretism, cf. Schreiter, 1985: 144 ff).

#### **2.2.6.2.2. The strength of Pentecostal spirituality in contrast to cultural factors.**

The strength of the Pentecostal message lies in its uncompromising adoption of a given culture and transformation of it into a Christian culture. Culture is dynamic and constantly goes through a process of change placed upon it by external forces and internal tensions. Charles Kraft (1980:353) wrote that “Calvin in developing a representative type of church government, Wilberforce in his effort to abolish slavery, the early Christians in deliberately transforming the meanings of countless Greco-Roman linguistic and cultural forms, and many others were aware that they were employing available social patterns for Christian ends.” And one would include the Pentecostals as employing cultural patterns for missionary ends.

Culture or society changes rapidly as time lapses. And, since the Pentecostal spirituality takes the way of the Bible, it is a restoration by the triune God. It is stronger than any other system of thought in restoring society in a positive sense. This is in a special sense clear in the mission and global expansion of Pentecostalism (cf Anderson, 1991: 218-222). The task of Christianity in a given culture is primarily to transform the conceptual system of that culture, providing the Christ-centered world-view (cf. Kraft, 1979:114). Therefore, Pentecostal spirituality is missiologically minded in its approach to culture.

#### **2.2.7. The need for a Pentecostal spirituality for missions.**

Man has always been in search of a spirituality which is relevant, i.e. final and all satisfying. This is true for all times, also today. This has come to be a search, so well illustrated by

several spiritualities. In due course several types of spiritualities developed, Puritan, Pietistic, Reformed, etc. These different types of spiritualities had different approaches according to the different denominations and movements. A spirituality typical of the Pentecostals has emerged in the present day. Spirituality is always related to a specific context and situation, for every age is always in need of a satisfying spirituality. According to Cox (1995: xvi) the Pentecostal spirituality is the most satisfying. He observes, and correctly so, that instead of the “death of God” some theologians announced some years ago, or the waning of religion that sociologists had predicted, something quite different has happened.

The emergence of Pentecostalism, its rapid growth and global presence have perplexed, and in some way, invalidated the predictions of social scientists and others. In its spirituality the Pentecostal movement seeks to affirm the centuries-old Christian belief that “God is alive” and is able to intervene directly and concretely in daily human experience. Perhaps the most crucial factor in the growth of Pentecostalism is its emphasis on experience. Pomerville (1985:78, 79) points out that western Christianity appears to neglect the experiential dimension of the Christian faith, the dynamic experience of the Spirit. He is persuaded that, as a renewal movement, emphasising a neglected dimension of the Holy Spirit, Pentecostalism exposes the inadequacies of post-reformation Protestant Scholasticism. Pomerville contends that “Pentecostalism functions as a ‘corrective’ in contemporary missions.”

In the interpretive analysis of Gerlach and Hine (1996:32), the commitment experience in any movement plays a key role in its development and growth. In Pentecostalism such a commitment experience or act “sets the believer apart in some way from the larger social context, cuts him off from past patterns of behaviour and sometimes from past associations, identifies him with other participants in the movement, and provides high motivation for changed behaviour.” The paramount commitment experience in Pentecostalism according to Gerlach and Hine, is “a personal conversion to Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour”. Yet, they

further state that the observable commitment act that most distinguishes Pentecostalism, is “glossolalia.”

Harvey Cox (1995:81) is of the opinion that Pentecostalism has succeeded in its rapid growth because “it has spoken to the spiritual emptiness of our time by reaching beyond the levels of creed and ceremony into the core of human religiosity to evoke what he calls ‘primal spirituality,’ which is related to what classical theology calls the ‘imago Dei’ in every human person.” Cox is convinced that, as a ‘restorationist’ movement, Pentecostalism has touched so many people because it has indeed restored and enabled countless people to recover, on a personal level, three dimensions of this elemental spirituality, namely:

- **Primal speech.** According to Cox (1995:82) primal speech pinpoints the spiritual import of what scholars of religion sometimes call “ecstatic utterances” or glossolalia, what the earliest Pentecostals called “speaking in tongues” and many now refer to as “praying in the Spirit.”
- **Primal piety.** This dimension of “primal spirituality” touches on the resurgence in Pentecostalism of trances, visions, dreams and other archetypal religious expressions. Traditional Christian theology, influenced by western ethnocentrism, has adopted an ethical approach in interpreting the phenomena in the Bible that are culturally and spiritually inexplicable to them. In the time of the worldwide missionary movement from the west, a spirituality devoid of primal piety (in Cox’s terms), was uncritically transplanted to the Spirit-sensitive communities of the Third World.
- **Primal hope.** In his description of primal spirituality, Cox (1995:82) adds a third dimension, namely that of primal hope. This pinpoints to Pentecostalism’s millennial outlook - its insistence that a radically new world age is about to dawn. This is the kind hope that transcends any particular context. It is a refusal to believe that what we see is all there is or could be.

Pentecostal spirituality is firmly based on Scripture and understands spiritual things revealed in Christ and taught by the Holy Spirit. According to Steven Land (1993:22-23) this spirituality has “the dimensions of height and depth” which he describes as:

“The dimension of praise, worship, adoration and prayer to God...[and] the abiding, decisive, directing motives and dispositions which characterize Pentecostals...this depth of conviction and passion...is a steadfast longing for the Lord and the salvation of the lost...a continuous, joyous exclamation of the in breaking presence and soon to be consummated kingdom of God.”

This “passion for the kingdom” is the way Land (1993:218-9) describes Pentecostal spirituality, which is centered in the Pentecostal experience of the lived reality by the eschatological, missionary community, expressed by prayer and integrated by “apocalyptic affection.”

Pentecostal spirituality therefore concerns the whole area of our life. It amounts to not only our seeking after God, but also our understanding of the miserably human plight of implementing what we ought to do to live up to our faith in the long journey of life. Hence, when Pentecostal spirituality comes across a situation contrary to Scripture and its concepts, renewal, change and restoration result.

However, this Pentecostal spirituality has been accused of being a spirituality that withdraws from “worldly” issues like politics and social justice, and of proclaiming a gospel that either spiritualizes or individualizes social problems. Pentecostals generally have been regarded as having “an apolitical stance often skewed in a conservative direction” (Martin, 1990:265) and have not been noted for their socio-political involvement. It is argued that political structures are often seen as evil, and Pentecostals are exhorted to have nothing to do with them. For the same reasons, early Pentecostals were pacifists. But the danger with some forms of Christianity, Pentecostalism included, is that a strong emphasis on personal piety could become a sop for a lack of social conscience. In his book, *The Liberating Spirit*, Villafane points out the following concern:

“While it is true Pentecostalism has been recognized as a powerful force in evangelism, world missions, church growth and spirituality, it is equally true that their services and prophetic voices against sinful social structures and on behalf of social justice have been missing” (1993: 202).

And according to Robert Mapes Anderson, in his book, *Vision of the Disinherited*, (1979:229) “Pentecostalism was an oblique expression of social protest” He points out that although the movement was “born of radical social discontent”, as it became institutionalized, it gradually withdrew from the social struggle. He further points out that a movement designed to protest against the social system that marginalized and oppressed its members, “functioned in a way that perpetuated that very system”. (1979:222).

Until recently, Pentecostals have not been involved in many overt socio-political activities in the world, with exceptions in several countries like Zambia, where in 1991 Pentecostals were instrumental in changing the government; and ushered in a government whose leader was a ‘born again’ President, Mr. Fredrick Chiluba. Paul Gifford (1998:196-197) mentions that in Zambia, “at the time of the October 1991 elections...Christians generally were perceived to be against UNIP and favouring MMD.” He adds that “In Zambia’s context, it was not difficult to see this as directly referring to Kaunda. The born-again churches particularly were thought to be on the side of Chiluba and the MMD.” And Gifford concludes on the role the Pentecostal or born-again churches have in Zambian politics by saying that “Since 1991...Christianity has been raised to an entirely different plane and given a formal rather than an informal constitutional status. This came about through Chiluba’s declaration of Zambia as a Christian nation.” (1998:244-245).

However, when the Pentecostal Churches do enter the political arena, although they certainly insist that corruption should end, they hardly have a consciousness for social agenda. In describing the situation in Brazil, where the Pentecostals have secured a sizeable representation in parliament, Freston (1994:537-570) laments that far from purifying a corrupt political culture, ‘Pentecostalism has assimilated the political culture at all levels.’

He argues that Brazil's Christian politicians are not so much corrupt as "time-serving", which he defines as "the art of keeping oneself close to power, regardless of ideology or principle, in order to receive benefits often for the church." This was roughly the political agenda of the Pentecostals in Zambia (during the time when Mr. Fredrick Chiluba was President of Zambia), where the benefits that the pastors were seeking from their Pentecostal President were that Zambia should be declared a Christian nation, and that they have unlimited access to State House through the creation of the religious desk at State House.

And Pentecostal theologian Cheryl Johns hopes that "Pentecostalism can both retain and recapture its revolutionary nature as a movement which can change the course of history." She asks questions as to whether the movement "can be a catalyst for personal and social transformation". She refers to Emilio Willems's suggestion that "in Pentecostalism in Latin America there is a legitimate social protest" and that "Pentecostalism with its emphasis on lay leadership and its democratization of worship services, exists as a classless society, subverting the traditional social order in the language of religious symbolism." (1993a: 9, 19, and 58).

What the church needs today is a spirituality that combines a deep and renewed personal and communal piety with a passionate concern for world mission. And Pentecostal spirituality has both. Howard L. Rice (1991:162) argues that "Piety without world concern gets reduced to sentimentalism and...Such religion becomes truly the opiate of the people..."

#### **2.2.8. Evangelical (Puritan) spirituality and its Pentecostal view of sanctification.**

Zambian Christianity in its roots shares the Puritan spirituality shaped by a Pentecostal understanding of the Christian faith. Historically, the Evangelicals adopted the Puritan spirituality. And according to Davis, Puritan ministers were giving an example of godliness and learning, which was at the heart of Puritanism (1970: 257). McGrath (1995:24) writes

that “although Puritanism is often represented as a somewhat cerebral and moral movement, concerned with good theology and morals, it must be pointed out that recent scholarship has drawn attention to the Puritan emphasis on ‘a religion of the heart’. A deep concern for spirituality is now recognized to have been an integral part of the movement.” Recent studies have focused on the importance of the heart in understanding and expressing religious affections. Don E. Saliers (1991:19) says that “the heart is a place of conscience and moral capacity... [and] the concept of the heart then, not only explains what we do, it governs who we are.” John Wesley, who was one of the Evangelical revivalist during the period from 1740-1830 which was seen as “the dominance of Evangelicalism” (Davis, 1961: 3, 4), and who was raised in a Puritan family with deep religious convictions, had his “heart strangely warmed” (Ferguson, 1988:719). This experience resulted in an eighteenth-century Wesley revival as a distinctive heart movement with a unique theology - a heart repentant, assured, and forgiven; a heart overflowing in joyous response; a heart of love, and a heart of perfect intention (Young, 1995:12). And according to Burgess (1998: 280), “Wesley’s doctrine of a second blessing, which he called ‘perfect love’, was central to early Methodism and had a great influence on Pentecostalism.” In the sermon, *Upon our Lord’s Sermon on the Mount*, iv, 1748, Wesley (1991:235) discusses the role of the heart in outward and inward religion. He says that “evidence of the changed heart, inward holiness, is in outward holiness, love of neighbour or social holiness.”

The Puritans therefore viewed the whole life as a gift from a God of grace. They did not separate social, ecclesiastical and theological concerns into artificially separated categories. They lived up to what they believed and confessed. This is the way the Puritans lived; a sanctified lifestyle. And according to Davis (1970:257) “Puritan Ministers were giving an example of the godliness and learning that was the heart of Puritanism”. Noll (1994:77) points out that:

“Jonathan Edwards, as a defender of the Great Awakening, always insisted that a living spirituality was the one indispensable thing. Yet Edwards also realised how vital it was

to struggle towards distinctly a Christian view of the world. To him there was no antithesis between heartfelt devotions and the most recondite labour of the mind.”

The Puritans had emerged as individuals with real insight into the spiritual challenges and dilemmas that confronted the Christians of the day. Their spirituality inspired Christian believers through the ages, emphasizing the reform of life based on the biblical concept of the believers being the new creation (2 Cor. 5:17) in union with Christ. “They were religiously enthusiastic, ascetic, legalistic, and morally earnest. The will rather than reason was of prime importance. They concentrated on the practice of piety. They insisted on a reformation, to give expression to purity of the faith and the church as a whole” (Stoeffler, 1965:29). And they used texts from Scripture to achieve their aims.

### **2.2.9. The grass-root spirituality of the Zambian Christians.**

In order to take a sample from the Zambian Christianity which could represent the general nature of their Christian way of life, we selected a group of Zambian Christians during a certain period of time to describe the Zambian Pentecostal Spirituality in this thesis. From 1971 the Zambian church began to be affected both by the economic decline due to plummeting copper prices, and by the emergence of Pentecostalism. The Christian church further suffered spiritual emptiness when in 1972 the country became a one-party state under the United National Independent Party (UNIP) with its political philosophy, humanism, until the country became democratic in 1990. Then came years of uncertainty, poverty, riots, and military coup attempts while the reshaping of the nation as well as the church occurred. In 1991, Zambia was declared a Christian nation under the leadership of the Movement Multiparty Democracy (MMD). This period of time spanning the two decades from 1971 to 1991 was chosen to observe the unique Zambian spirituality.

During this period of time, the people showed their distinctive Christian character against the backdrop of the country’s crises and spiritual crises in the church. When the country

was declared “a Christian nation” they were determined to renew the church. In contrast to the secularised Christian way of life at that time, these Christians were determined and ready to express themselves in a Pentecostal spirituality. These Christians emphasized the renewed or restored life based on the biblical concept of the believer being a new creature in union with Christ. Most of all, they believed that the country would be blessed by the pure life in Christ. And, because the spirituality of these people and the church in Zambia was admired, respected and honoured we may call the spirituality of the time and of those people, the **Zambian Christian Spirituality**. The Pentecostal churches are the leading figures of this spirituality. What they preach and how they preach have become the extensions of their vision of God.

#### **2.2.10. African Christian spirituality.**

Defining spirituality in an African and Christian African sense is a challenge. Scholars differ with each other in their definitions.

##### **2.2.10.1. The Challenge of definition.**

Pobee (1983:6 - 8) identifies at least four challenges when it comes to defining African Christian spirituality. Firstly, the basic problem is lack of collected sources. On a largely illiterate continent, multiple traditions circulate orally and universal access to them is well-nigh impossible. Secondly, what is written down is often twisted by the viewpoint and motives of foreigners, the missionary, the Mission Home Board. Thirdly, the fact is that the African churches are evangelized by North Atlantic Christians and are accordingly molded by strange traditions, norms and practices. They reflect their Western origins, organization, polity, worship, discipline and even their ethos. The Roman Catholic and Protestant spiritualities are still vividly imitated in African churches. Fourthly, the problem is further complicated because various Christian traditions are represented in Africa. And each one of

these institutionalized understandings of the Christian faith filtered its own type of spirituality in Africa.

Therefore, Christian spirituality in Africa according to Pobee (1983:8) represents a spectrum of traditions. Then there is the challenge of the complex and elusive concept of “Africanness.” To detect and describe unspoiled or genuine African spirituality is almost impossible. To start with, the large African continent is the home of a variety of people, including the Afrikaners and English, who for centuries have known no other homeland than Africa. Indeed, to a certain degree, Africans are trapped by a crisis of identity. However, in spite of the above-mentioned challenges, traits of a typical African spirituality are making themselves known.

#### **2.2.10.2. The Nature of African spirituality.**

According to Shorter (1978: 4 – 5) “the word ‘spirituality’ is Christian in its origin...There is nothing cerebral or esoteric about spirituality: it is the core of Christian experience, the encounter with God in real life and action. Spirituality is the same thing as continuous or experimental prayer, prayer as a living communion with God who is experienced as being personally present in the relationship of humanity. It is the mode of living, the essential disposition of the believer, and it imports a new dimension to the believer’s life. In other words, it is not only a new way of looking at human life, but a new way of living it.”

Shorter (1978:6-8) goes on to say that “African Spirituality is a form of Christian humanism, but it is essentially revolutionary. It is a four-fold revolt. Firstly, it is the revolt against materialism on the one hand and against a shallow religiosity on the other. Secondly, it is a revolt against a world that conspires to dehumanize, it is a revolt against unfair structures of certain churches. Thirdly, it is a revolt against cultural passivity, against being a mere consumer of western products. Finally, it is a revolt against purely internal religion, a religion that is inward looking and oblivious of the community. These four revolts can also be experienced positively as commitments: the commitment to a world of

the Spirit, to man and his integral development, to culture as a living tradition and to human community...”

Mbiti (1969:1) emphasizes the fact that “Africans are notoriously religious and each person has his/her own religious system with a set of beliefs and practices.” Mbiti (1969:2) further points out that “there is no formal distinction between the sacred and the secular, between religious and non-religious, between the spiritual and the material areas of life. Spirituality covers and functions in all areas of life.” This is what Mbiti says about African spirituality:

Wherever

“the African person is, there is his religion, therefore his spirituality. He carries it to the fields where he is sowing seeds or harvesting a new crop, he takes it with him to the beer party or to attend a funeral ceremony; and if he is educated, he takes religion with him to the examination room at school or in the university; if he is a politician, he takes it to the house of parliament.”

This spirituality, as part of being an African, accompanies the individual from long before his birth to long after his physical death. Much of the African spirituality, argues Mbiti, comes up in its true colours during a moment of crisis. According to Mbiti, African spirituality is marked by oneness or togetherness. “I am because we are and since we are therefore I am. Just as God made the first man, as his man (Godsman) so now man himself makes the individual who becomes the corporate or social man...When he suffers, he does not suffer alone, but with a corporate group; when he rejoices, he rejoices not alone, but with kinsmen, his neighbours and his relatives whether dead or living...Whatever happens to the individual happens to the whole group, and whatever happens to the whole group, happens to the individual” (1969:108-109). Therefore, African spirituality in the African sense is the spirituality which covers man and his surroundings in the community to which the person belongs.

### **2.2.10.3. Christianised African spirituality.**

Smith (1989:372) shows how the African retains his traditional spirituality even if influenced by another culture or religion. He describes the spirituality of the Afro-American tradition, saying that “Black spirituality in North America seems at once a type of western spirituality and yet strikingly non-western. In its Christian form it appears simultaneously conventional, an imitation of or a gloss on the major Protestant and Evangelical traditions- and also something alien, intransigently different. What accounts for both aspects is the commonality on the one hand and the distinctiveness on the other.”

The foundation of Afro-American spirituality, according to Smith, “is ritual transformation found in the black religious phenomena of spirit possession and magical shamanism or conjuration. This is followed by the aesthetic display of this transformative spirituality in Black music, speech and literary discourse. The spirituality of black freedom movements and political actions patterned on biblical models...” By the 1800s, Black spirituality already combined indigenous African and adopted Christian elements which were the outcome of the independent Black churches, e.g. the African Methodist Episcopal Church and the Baptist Church (1989:372-407).

Africa, however, is a continent in movement and turmoil and has been so probably for the last two millennia. Africans have managed to create and recreate expression of religion in any situation, reacting to multiple changes, dangers and possibilities.

Most significant and revealing is the spirituality of the African Pentecostal churches, especially in Zambia. The spirituality of African Pentecostals in the Eastern Province of Zambia depicts Christ as Ng’anga who plays a vital part in the healing of all various diseases. Schoffeleers (1994:73-80) has this to say:

“If the Ng’anga paradigm is valid, one must conclude that those who maintain that Africans have difficulties integrating Christ into their belief system may somehow be mistaken. On the other hand the same people may be right if they refer to Christ of the established churches. For it is imaginable that quite a few African Christians find it

difficult to identify with a westernized image of the saviour. The contradiction may be solved if it is recognized that we are dealing with both westernized and Africanized versions of the biblical Christ and if it is further recognised that the intellectuals are rebelling against the westernized version...”

In the catechesis and liturgy of African Pentecostal Churches, Christ is often referred to as the one true ng’anga because this is an image that the audience intuitively understands and at the same time is seen as rooted in Scripture. Portraying Christ as the saviour as well as the healer speaks to the African’s cultural traditions. This Christianisation of an African concept finds its support in hymns and praise songs. Jesus is the medicine man (Yesu Sing’anga Alleluya Mwambamwamba), says hymn number 83 in the Chichewa hymnary, the greatest medicine man is Jesus (Sing’anga Mkulu ndiye Yesu), the son of God (Mwana wa Mulungu).

Commenting on what Schoffeleers (1994:73-80) says about Ng’anga, it is true that hymns or songs are sung in Zambian Protestant churches as well as in African Pentecostal churches, depicting Jesus Christ as a doctor or sing’anga. This is done as a matter of faith which is confirmed by passages from the Scriptures which denote Jesus’ healing power to cure all sorts of illness, making the blind to see, the lepers clean, the deaf and dumb to speak and hear, the dead to come back to life, etc. But he must not be misunderstood to be a ng’anga who uses herbs. Ng’anga in Chichewa means a medicine man, who can heal diseases with herbs and at the same time concentrate on directing witchcraft activities. A ng’anga can perform both white and black magic for the good and for the worse.

Shorter in his book, *Jesus and the witchdoctor* (1985:10-13) describes the healing method of Jesus as equal to the healing methods of the medicine people of his time. The description of Jesus as a healer who resembled the witchdoctor in Palestine during the lifetime of Jesus is debatable. Biblically speaking, the healing powers of Jesus came from God the Holy Spirit. The use of saliva which doctors used does not make him equal to any of the witchdoctors. Jesus is God and he can perform healing beyond human understanding through the power of

the Holy Spirit. As already said earlier on, the healing ministry of Jesus is generally misunderstood. The Chewa people in the Eastern Province of Zambia regard him as being Ng'anga. Therefore there is a need to teach people the difference between Jesus and the ng'anga or witchdoctor; the difference between the power of the Holy Spirit and the power of evil spirits. The ng'anga paradigm has misled some to believe that they can compare Jesus to the ordinary ng'anga whom they know.

#### **2.2.10.4. The Zambian Evangelical-Pentecostal holiness.**

Descriptions of African (Pentecostal) Christian spirituality point to its Old and New Testament texture and orientation. Old and New Testament imagery and symbolism are appropriate and much appreciated by African Pentecostals. The “image” or “motif” of Jerusalem as a holy city is common in African songs, signifying the hope of ultimate salvation. The African Christian sacred dance and songs are features of the African Pentecostal churches, an attempt to express an all embracing joy in the Lord. The somberness accompanying the practices of the mainline Reformed churches is not to the liking of many Africans, and this has led to schisms searching for self-satisfaction. The new music in African Pentecostal churches has taken on indigenous melodies and set them into Christian words to express upliftment and joy.

In African Christian spirituality, the focus is on the **holy man**. He realises the Africans' desire to be part of, to belong. Thus, the minister or pastor or priest or head is accepted as “father”, “holy father”, the protector and the defender of the members of the group, both physically and spiritually.

The Christian faith requires a complete separation between evil and the holy. A person is said to be a “man of God” if his moral standards are unquestionable, setting him apart from immorality. The prescribed way of life in the Old and New Testament has an orientation typical of the Evangelical-Pentecostals and the Puritans and a contextual consideration of its own. The Christian is without doubt different from other people and not given to

superstitions and unbiblical beliefs. A Christian is not allowed to practise witchcraft, sorcery and ancestral worship; nor to cater for worldly desires and pleasures, e.g. to gossip, to drink alcohol, etc.

The *Zambian Christians of the Bible Gospel Church in Africa* and *Grace Outreach Ministries International* are not even allowed to enter a bar where beer is sold. It is “unholy ground”. There is more to this ruling. An example must be set in a society which often abuses alcohol. This prescription is understood in terms of God’s command in the New Testament, “Be holy, because I am holy.” (1 Peter 1:16).

### **2.3. Conclusion.**

The term ‘spirituality’ in the context of this thesis, covers a wide range of meanings. On the whole, spirituality in this context is closely related to the Christian in comparison to the traditional religion of the Chewa people in Zambia. In this study, the spirituality of Pentecostalism implanted in Zambia, is examined. In particular, the primary concern is to point out the spirituality of African Pentecostal churches relative to the Pentecostal Evangelical tradition of the Afro-American Pentecostalism. With reference to John Wesley, Pentecostal Spirituality has been explored for it is the source of African Pentecostal spirituality inherited from Afro-American Pentecostalism which was influenced by the Evangelical (Puritan) and Pietist traditions. Their emphasis on the Word and prayer is typical of the African Pentecostal churches’ way of life and theology.

The question is in what way and sense the spirituality of African Pentecostal Churches has been influenced by African Chewa culture and religious beliefs. The problem is that one single definition does not suffice to describe the spirituality in the African setup. According to Mbiti (1969:1) there are over a thousand tribes south of the Sahara, each tribe, having its own religious functions. However, there is, says Mbiti “a common ground of Africanness, viz, the fact that their religion covers all aspects of the African’s way of life. Africans are notoriously religious.” Besides, the African was bound by virtue of his background, which

before the freedom was offered through the Gospel, observed rules, taboos and regulations of beliefs. But this has changed, thanks to the Gospel, brought by Pentecostal Missionaries, which called Africans “from the darkness into the wonderful light” (1 Peter 2:9). The Zambian Evangelical-Pentecostal concept of holiness is related to the Old as well as the New Testament concept of complete separation from unholy objects to avoid pollution. Purity of the Church and of the individual must reflect the purity of God: “Be holy, because I am holy” (1 Peter 1:16).

Therefore, the practice of holiness has been the key message of the Afro-American Pentecostal missionaries, and has become the basis of the African Pentecostal churches in Zambia.



# **CHAPTER 3: ASPECTS OF AFRICAN TRADITIONAL SPIRITUALITY: THE CHEWA PEOPLE OF ZAMBIA.**

## **3.1. Introduction.**

This chapter explores the role of the Chewa spirits of the Eastern Province in Zambia. More importantly, the spirit-possession phenomena in Chipata will be discussed. This sheds some light onto the role played by the ancestral spirits in the life of the Chewa people. The extent of the influence of Chewa spirits in the social, economic, and spiritual life in Chipata is looked into. This chapter, therefore, presents an analysis of Chewa spirituality or religious beliefs. Writing about Chewa theology in Malawi, James Amanze (2002:131) points out that Chewa theology overwhelmingly “emphasizes the survival of the human species here and now by attaining good health, a good supply of rain, fertility of the land, many children and the like.” African traditional spirituality as an African heritage must be taken seriously for a fuller understanding of African Christian spirituality, particularly of the African Pentecostal churches.

The traditional spiritual beliefs of the Chewa people of Zambia, for example, are human-centered and socially oriented. The same can be said of the African Pentecostal churches’ spirituality. Delores Williams wrote about black spiritual churches in America describing their overwhelming emphasis upon the life and efficacy of the spirit which emanates from the concept of God as spirit (1993:221). African Pentecostal Churches are not an exception. The need to explore the prevailing religious belief patterns of the African becomes mandatory in any serious study of African Pentecostal spirituality. Such a study reveals the socio-cultural and economic composition of the local people and their prevailing spiritual beliefs. These help a great deal in understanding the preferences of the new Christian communities of faith founded by the local people.



### **3.2. Some aspects of the Chewa cosmology.**

Bourdillon, writing on the cosmology and society of the Shona in Zimbabwe, depends on a definition which refers to the ways different peoples in different cultures understand the world of their experience (1991:220). It should be said right from the beginning that although there is an attempt in this section to deal with the Chewa Cosmology, the Chewa society today presents a heterogeneous religious situation. Hence, the need to handle this subject carefully.

#### **3.2.1. Ancestral spirits (Midzimu Yamakolo).**

It is a common fundamental belief among the Chewa that the existence of a person continues after death; he or she becomes a spiritual being and acquires characteristics of immortality and eternity. According to Scott (1892:415) “the ancestral spirits are the spirits of the departed who were once alive and are now dead. These are known as azimu (spirits). The Chewa believe that the spirits of their dead relatives survive physical death and remain alive. At death, the spirit leaves the body and flies away like wind or air and becomes god-like and goes to live in the spirit world.” And according to Murphree (1969:32) “the spirit...transforms into an ancestor, taking its place in the spiritual hierarchy of the ancestors.” The belief in spirits and a spirit world is as widespread in Zambia as elsewhere in Africa. John Mbiti (1969:75) makes a distinction between two broad categories of spirits, namely, those which were created by God as such, and those which were once human beings. By and large, most African ancestral spirits belong to the latter category.

Among the Chewa, according to James Amanze (2002:146) the ancestral spirits not only protect “their people from dangers such as disease, droughts, famine and witchcraft; but also they punish people when they break traditional moral norms.” When descendants perform appropriate ritual ceremonies and through them, the Azimu will perpetuate their contacts

with the living through dreams, visions or by means of spirit possession of which only the diviner can give an authoritative interpretation. As Bourdillon (1976:227) postulates, once settled back into the community, the ancestral spirit is regarded as a friendly guardian to the family that survives him. These spirit guardians, asserts Bourdillon, “have power over the lives of their descendants. They are also responsible for bringing the family group together on ritual occasions and ensure that harmony prevails at family level.” Traditionally, Africans hold that to experience good health, prosperity and success in life one needs to be subordinate to, and venerate the ancestral spirits. Thus sickness implies an imbalance between the metaphysical and the human world that is disturbing the expected normal flow of life (Mbiti, 1975:134).

The ancestors are without question the most prominent aspect of African religion, in fact, they are the heart of the African spirit world. In his book, *The living dead and the living God,* Klaus Nurnberger (2007: 37) says that “Effective authority must be existentially present. The authority of the most proximate ancestors is present. Everything of existential importance is present.” According to Klaus, ‘distance does not exist between the most proximate of the deceased and the living in terms of space and time, but only in terms of authority and power.’ For many people ancestors are a reality to be given due acknowledgement, providing for felt needs, the benevolent guardians and protectors of people. But the African Pentecostal churches confront and reject traditional beliefs about the “ancestors”, because they believe that these ancestors are not really ancestors, but demons which need to be exorcised.

### **3.2.2. Tribal spirits (Midzimu Yamitundu).**

In order to understand the tribal spirits, one has to know the role of royal (chiefs’) graves in the religious system of the Chewa. According to James Amanze (2002:166) “the chief...is, for all practical purposes, a ritual figure since his or her ancestral spirits are considered as the supernatural guardians of the land and the village group or territorial group depends, to a

large extent, on his good will.” James further notes that a chief never dies, but continues to rule his people in this world through his successor. The deceased chief, it is believed, becomes even more powerful in the spirit world than when he was on earth. Therefore, when the tribe is facing natural disaster, appeals are brought to this chief as one among many in a long chain or hierarchy of intermediaries whose position is to intercede before God on behalf of the tribe or people (2002:167). Hence, our theology should start taking into account the traditional beliefs and modify these beliefs. On this basis, the church should show the people that “Jesus , who is our chief high priest, is the only mediator before God.” (Hebrews 5:1-10).

### **3.2.3. God (Mulungu).**

Mulungu emerges as the Creator, the source of life, and the giver of rain and sun, the one who has been in existence before creation (Van Breugel, 2001:29). In his Doctoral Thesis entitled: “*Heart of Darkness*” (2005: 93), Arnold Maurits Meiring agrees with Van Breugel and asserts that “African religion teaches that God exists, and that this God created all things... is eternal, all knowing, and ubiquitous...beyond description.” The Chewa people deeply acknowledge the existence of one supreme God, Mulungu. He is understood, among the Chewa people, as the creator of the cosmos. James N. Amanze (2002:135-141) lists some of the Chewa names for God: Mulungu (sometimes also attributes of God as Mulungu); Chiuta (the supreme power); Namalenga (the creator of the universe) and Mphambe (the lightning). Although omnipotent, Mulungu is not worshipped directly as is done by Christians. The Chewa people turn to tribal spirits “as special agencies through which God, Mulungu, can be approached.” (James N. Amanze, 2002:146). It should be noted also that although the same name, Mulungu is used for the Christian God, it does not imply the same thing. The Chewa traditional Mulungu is not as universal and as approachable as the Christian Mulungu. Nevertheless, according to James N. Amanze (2002:130), this Chewa God, Mulungu “is not un in heaven. but here on earth among his



people, his presence being manifested in the day to day concerns of human life in the world of nature.”

#### **3.2.4. Spirits (Midzimu).**

Mbiti (1969:79) writes, “As for the origin of spirits, there is no clear information what African peoples say or think about it.” Most, if not all, including the Chewa people, believe the spirits always existed, and they are omnipresent, very much a part of the world. People project these spirits into their natural surroundings. These spirits could include nature spirits, spirits under the control of malicious sorcerers and witches, and spirits that come from outside a person’s particular ethnic lineage; sometimes seen as avenging spirits (Mbiti, 1969:80). David Barrett (1968: 119) in his his study of African societies notes that “the belief in ancestral spirits is predominant in almost all African societies mainly as an expression of family and clan continuity and solidarity. These ancestral spirits exercise control over the living and all life exists under their surveillance.” He observes that “the ancestral spirits are treated with awe, fear, reverence, respect and veneration.” Their influence penetrates almost every sphere of life. Therefore, many spirits are feared, and so people go to diviners or medicine-men (ng’anga) to seek protection from them. In this section we will consider few spirits.

##### **3.2.4.1. Evil spirits (Midzimu Yoipa).**

Among the Chewa people, the spirits of witches are supposed never to acquire the status of ancestral spirits since being an ancestral spirit is, in itself, a sign of moral superiority, and witches and sorcerers are believed to be evil persons by nature, hence they become evil spirits (Mizimu yoipa). Witches and sorcerers who die are said to be wandering around homeless and to change into dangerous animals like hyenas (James N. Amanze, 2002:144). Daneel (1971:161) states that hereditary witches have evil spirits in their blood which they cannot get rid of. Such witches cannot live without bewitching others.

### **3.2.4.2. Good spirits (Midzimu Yabwino).**

Among the Chewa people, good spirits are those which are directly concerned with the welfare of the living. They act as guardian angels, being active in the day to day activities of their people. Mbiti (1969:83) states that good spirits “are guardians of family affairs, traditions, ethics and activities.” It is commonly believed that the good spirits of good people live in the spirit world in which Chauta (Mulungu) is King. It is said that the spirits of good people return to the physical world or reincarnate in the form of harmless snakes (Njoka) (James N. Amanze, 2002:144). Geoffrey Parrinder (1967:22) states that the snake has had a fascination for people in every land. It is mysterious, fearful and immortal. It is regarded as immortal, because it sheds its skin, yet it continues to live. Parrinder further points out that a snake with its tail in its mouth, apparently swallowing itself yet with no beginning or end like a circle and sphere, is symbolic of eternity. This concept of eternity is the basis of Chewa spirituality.

### **3.2.4.3. Angry spirits (Midzimu Yokwiya).**

The other spirits among the Chewa people are angry spirits. Crawford (1967:88) describes angry spirits as spirits with a grudge and bent on vengeance. There are four types of angry spirits according to Gelfand (1962:162). These include the spirit of a murdered person; the spirit of a servant who has not been paid for his services or a person from whom something was taken or borrowed and not returned; the spirit of a husband or wife who died in an unhappy state of mind over a matter of deep concern; and finally, the spirit of a parent, especially a mother who was ill-treated by the children.

These spirits will seek amends and payments for the injustice from the guilty parties. The Chewa people believe that an angry spirit can cause very serious quarrels within a family, misfortune, and loss of property, wealth or life. (James N. Amanze, 2002:143; Mbiti,



1969:84). Bourdillon (1976:234) concludes by saying that “the fear of making a spirit angry can act as a sanction for ethical behaviour ensuring social harmony.”

#### **3.2.4.4. Alien spirits (Midzimu Yachilendo).**

Alien spirits form another class of spirits found among the Chewa people. They are the spirits of non-members of the lineage such as white people, or even animal spirits. These spirits can confer to their hosts particular skills for divination, hunting etc. They may, however, also be associated with activities such as witchcraft. While they may choose their host, they may also be given to a person by a previous owner or may be inherited from an ancestor (Crawford, 1967:86).

### **3.3. Chewa understanding of spirit possession.**

Spirit possession is a frequent phenomenon in African societies because it is seen as an affective means of communication between the visible world of human beings and the invisible world of spiritual beings. Kwesi Dickson and Paul Ellingworth (1969: 36), in their book entitled: *Biblical Revelation and African Beliefs*, say that “For the African, the world of spirits is a real world...It is the spiritual beings which actually control the world; indeed, the world is a spiritual arena in which the various categories of spiritual beings display their powers. Man, in particular, is entirely dependent upon these spiritual beings.” According to Maureen Wilkenson (1991:231), “spirit possession is a cultural term which gives expression to the belief that a person who displays certain behaviour has been taken possession of by an invisible being or power.”

In Zambia, spirit possession is understood literally by the Chewa people as “Kugwidwa” or “Kulowedwa ndi azimu”, meaning seized by the ancestral spirits who fall upon or enter them. Among the Chewa people of Zambia, as with many other African peoples, the desire of an ancestor spirit to possess someone is usually to convey significant messages to people, and this is signalled by a lengthy illness (Daneel 1971:100). Mbiti (1969:82) says that spirit

possession is not always to be feared, and there are times, he argues, when it is not only desirable, but people induce it by special dancing and drumming until the person concerned experiences spirit possession, during which he or she may even collapse. According to Daneel, the shaking and grunting noises during dancing and the beating of drums herald the onset of possession.

In spirit possession and illness, the assistance of the diviner or medicine man/woman is often necessary in order to find out which spirit of the living dead it is and what it may demand. And according to Mbiti (1975:120) “if a living dead makes demands which can be fulfilled, people normally meet them. But if the demands are impossible, other ways of keeping the living dead quiet are sought through the medicine man/woman or diviner.” Mbiti further says that “sometimes the spirits of those who died away from their homes, or ...were not properly buried, may demand ritual transfer to their home compound or reburial of their remains.” The family may then discuss their problems with the possessed medium; for they are actually talking with the ancestors (1971:119).

The onset of this trance is accompanied by trembling, rolling of eyes, falling down in fits, after which the medium begins to speak with the “voice” of the ancestors (G. ter Haar, 1992:130-131). After the trance is over, the person (medium) returns to normal. The people enquiring of the medium are thereafter to carry out the instructions of the ancestor as interpreted by the medium.

### **3.4. Witchcraft and magic among the Chewa.**

Traditionally, Africans believe in the mystical power of magic and witchcraft. According to Van Breugel (2001:211) “Belief in witchcraft is deeply rooted in the mentality of the Chewa people, and ... it continues to influence their behaviour.” M.G. Marwick (1965) made a study of sorcery (magic) and witchcraft with reference to the particular social setting of the Chewa matrilineal society. He pointed out how witchcraft is related to social conflicts inherent in that particular system. According to Mbiti (1969:198-199) “Magic is generally



considered 'good magic' or 'evil magic'." And he says that "the use of good magic is accepted and esteemed by society." It is chiefly the specialists, and particularly the medicine-men (ng'anga) who use this mystical power for the welfare of their community. Good magic is used in treating diseases, in counteracting misfortunes, and in warding off or diluting or destroying evil "power" or witchcraft. But evil magic, Mbiti argues, involves the belief in and practice of tapping and using the power to bring harm to human beings or their property.

'Witchcraft' is a term used to describe all sorts of evil employment of mystical power, generally in a secret fashion. Therefore, a witch, according to Van Breugel (2002:214) "is a person who kills people in order to eat human flesh." And, E.G. Parrinder in his book, *African Traditional Religion*, (1974:126) points out that the "idea of witches eating human flesh is fairly widespread in Africa, but ... it is clear that what is meant is some sort of spiritual eating."

Individuals who use magic are called "sorcerers". Sorcerers are people who cause harm to the community by using destructive "medicine" and other harmful substances (Maboea S.I., 2002:21). Van Breugel agrees with Maboea saying that sorcerers "have weapons with which they can kill at a distance" (2001:225). By their witchcraft and magic beliefs, the Chewa people attempt to explain suffering by referring to evil in man and projecting it on to a witch or sorcerer (Van Breugel, 2001:228). The witch is the personification of evil in man. The experience of evil caused by men leads to a belief in mysterious evil-doers as the explanation of much of the suffering and misfortune. This has made people to look for protection against and salvation from this power of evil (Mbiti, 1969:169).

### **3.5. Different dimensions of sickness as experienced in traditional African culture.**

In African traditional culture, death, suffering, misfortunes, diseases and accidents are mysteriously caused as far as African peoples are concerned. Among the Chewa people, sickness and death are rarely due to natural causes, but due to spirits or enemies.

### **3.5.1. Physical**

Physical sickness is one of the dimensions of sicknesses experienced in traditional African life. For example, paralysis, dumbness, blindness, etc., are physical sicknesses which, among the Chewa people, are seen as mysterious.

### **3.5.2. Social**

Social sicknesses such as barrenness, staying unmarried, etc, are experienced in traditional African life. Barrenness, for example, could cause strife, humiliation, and break marriage. And, according to Mbiti (1969:200) “sorcery is a social sickness because people hate sorcerers.”

### **3.5.3. Spiritual**

Spiritually, a curse is one of the dimensions of sicknesses experienced and considered among Africans as a spell that causes failures in life, e.g. being unemployed, unmarried, etc., (Mbiti, 1969:190). According to Mbiti (1969:155,197) a curse is greatly feared in many African Societies, and it is believed to bring death to the person concerned. Sometimes curses are evil words spoken or sent to a person from a distance. Mbiti further asserts that “most of the curses are within family circles. The operative principle is that only a person of a higher status can effectively curse one of a lower status, but not vice versa.” He believes that the “most feared curses are those pronounced by parents ... and the worst is the curse uttered at the death-bed, for once the pronouncer of the curse has died, it is practically impossible to revoke it.” (1969:211).

### **3.5.4. Magical**

This is a sickness which is believed to have been caused as a result of your enemies who practise sorcery or magic. Pauw (1975:12-27) defines magic as “a belief in mystical

impersonal forces which are compulsively manipulated.” The belief is found in most, if not all, African societies that there are invisible, mystical forces and powers in the universe which certain human beings have knowledge of, and the ability of how to tap, control and use these forces for evil. Magic, according to Mbiti (1975:165), “is believed to be these forces in the hands of certain individuals” who “may use magic for harmful ends.” Barrenness, or lack of a partner in marriage, for example, are some of the magical sicknesses which are sent from a distance by sorcery (Mbiti, 1969:197).

In Zambia, and many other parts of Africa, when something goes wrong in the welfare of the individual or his/her family, he/she immediately wonders who has caused this misfortune. In most cases he/she will suspect that someone is responsible for this evil magic, sorcery or witchcraft against him/her or his/her household, animals and fields. Chewa people in Zambia, like other people in other parts of Africa, believe that sorcery, witchcraft and evil magic cause misfortune and death. Therefore, when someone has died, people often try to find out who used sorcery, witchcraft or magic against the dead person. In the African context, someone is often blamed for the misfortune or death; and in some cases the suspect may be beaten to death, or asked to leave or be thrown out of the village. Relatives of the deceased may also take types of revenge which are less open.

### **3.6. Chewa traditional healers and healing methods.**

By the nature of their profession, Chewa traditional healers (ng’anga) are respected and consulted for their ability and effective methods of treating diseases. Lucinda Domoko Manda, has written a chapter on ‘Africa’s Healing Wisdom’, in a book entitled: *Persons in Community* (2008: 125-138) in which she ‘investigates the value of African traditional healthcare practices and systems by exploring how the traditional African worldview, its ethics and healthcare practices, serve women in search of social, spiritual and physical healing.’

### **3.6.1. Traditional healers (ng'angas).**

In this section, I will deal with who the ng'angas are, their calling, training, and their duties.

#### **3.6.1.1. The medicine men/women.**

The medicine men/women (sing'angas) are persons who use herbal medicines to cure diseases. They carry out the work of healing the sick and putting things right when they go wrong. The knowledge and skill which they have acquired through training has been passed down through the generations. And since in every homestead and every village people fall sick or meet with misfortunes, medicine men/women are considered to be extremely important. They are the ones who come to the rescue of the individual in matters of health and general welfare. According to Mbiti (1969:166) these medicine men/women, “are the greatest gift to African societies and the most helpful and useful.” James N. Amanze says that “Chewa traditional healers have prophetic powers which they use to determine the cause of a particular disease. And after having determined the cause of a disease under a believed spiritual inspiration from the ancestors, ng'angas decide what type of medicine the patient should take in order to effect healing.” (2002:29).

#### **3.6.1.2. Their calling and training.**

Mbiti (1969:166-7) says that “there is no fixed rule that governs the calling of someone to become a medicine-man/woman. This may come, asserts Mbiti, when one is young and unmarried, or in her/his middle or later life. And most, if not all, medicine-men/women believe that the ancestral spirits “called” them to this profession through dreams, visions or in waking.

Usually, the training of medicine-men/women comes after their “calling”. According to Mbiti, medicine-men/women, “must undergo formal or informal training” (1969:167).

Among the Chewa, like any other tribe in Africa, the training is long, expensive, and the process is a complex one. Their training involves learning a new language, communicating with spirits, learning certain prayers, singing professional songs, dancing and the necessary exercises for inducing spirit possession (Mbiti, 1975:157). When, the training is over, the candidates are, in some societies, formally and publicly initiated into the profession of medicine-men/women, so that everyone may recognize them and their qualifications (James N. Amanze, 2002:42; cf Mbiti, 1969:167).

### **3.6.1.3. Their duties in the community.**

The duties of the medicine-men/women, according to Mbiti (1969:168), “are many and varied, and overlap with those of other specialists.” Some of the duties the medicine-men/women carry out, are to provide to the families or individuals protective as well as healing medicines. Mbiti goes on to say that it is the duty of the medicine-men/women to purge witches, detect sorcery, and remove curses and control the spirits and the living-dead (ancestors). Medicine-men/women also have access to the forces of nature and other forms of knowledge unknown or little known by the public (1969:170).

Daneel (1971:143-144) describes the medicine-men/women as “the well-known champions in matters affecting the basis of Africans. Specialists who prescribe remedies for diseases that affect the community.” According to Daneel, “their position is mostly acknowledged for their ability to normalise situations involving magical power in a community.” (1971:143-144).

### **3.6.2 Traditional healing methods.**

African culture and tradition define good health in terms of a healthy body and fulfilment of the rules and rituals expected of human beings. It is believed that “health depends on being in harmony with the spiritual powers.” (Maboea. 2002:11). In some cases, if not all, the

traditional healer (ng'anga) may instruct the patient to perform “sacrificial rituals to the ancestors” (Van Breugel, 2001:87-92).

### **3.6.2.1. Exorcism.**

One of the functions of a ng'anga is to determine the identity of and exorcise “evil spirits”. These “evil spirits” in the traditional understanding could include nature spirits, spirits under the control of malicious sorcerers, and spirits which come from outside a person's particular tribe or lineage. If a person is possessed by a spirit that is causing danger to the family and the community; then the spirit must be exorcised from the person. Exorcism, according to Mbiti, takes place when ritual ceremonies conducted by the ng'anga are arranged for the express purpose of “driving away the notorious spirits which ‘endanger’ a village or the life of the individual.” (Mbiti, 1969:82).

### **3.6.2.2. Divination.**

Divination, according to Mbiti, is the link between the physical and the spiritual worlds, making it a religious activity. And the diviner is the one who fulfils the role of intermediary between the human world and spiritual world for the community. He further says that “divination enables human beings to contact the ancestors.” (1969:160-178). The role of the diviner among the Chewa people is extremely important, according to Van Breugel, because the diviner is the official interpreter of the will of the ancestral spirits. (2001:244). Mönning (1955:80-81) has the following to say about methods used by diviners:

“Various methods of divination are used...The most common method is that which uses divination bones. This is, in fact, also the principal method since, even when other methods of divination are used, they will usually be preceded or concluded by consultation with the bones. Usually consulting the divination bones is considered sufficient.”

Diviners normally work as medicine men/women. According to Mbiti (1975:156), these diviners “deal with the question...why something has gone wrong. They tell who may have worked the evil magic, sorcery or witchcraft against the sick or the barren.” Mbiti adds that these diviners have the ability to “find out which spirit may be troubling a possessed person, what it wants and what should be done to stop the trouble.” Divination is still widely practised throughout Africa. It is intimately associated with the ancestors, since diviners are believed to be possessed by ancestors. These diviners serve many purposes in the African communities (Shorter, 1985:8).

There is a growing recognition among churches in Africa in general, and African theologians in particular, that the problems taken to diviners, whether they relate to witchcraft, evil spirits, barrenness, etc, should be recognised and responded to. In the African Pentecostal churches, divination is opposed as ancestral worship and being demonic.

### **3.6.2.3. Tattooing.**

Tattoos (nembo) are marks that remain permanently after cutting a person’s skin with a razor for the purpose of applying medicines for protection and healing. These ritual tattoos are done by the medicine-men/women, ng’angas, who perform this ritual on the person seeking either protection or healing. Tattoos are done on the face, neck, hand, knees, varying in sizes and shapes according to the demands made by the ancestral spirits through the ng’anga (Mbiti, 1969:175). According to Van Breugel, a person who is afraid of poisoning or being killed by lightning (thrown by the enemy) will ask the ng’anga for mankhwala (medicine) to protect him. This mtsiliko (protection) often takes the form of mankhwala which has to be rubbed into cuts in the skin (otemera) (2001:249-250).

#### **3.6.2.4. Appeasement.**

Among the Chewa people, the ritual to appease the ancestors is a strong belief. If it is found by the ng'anga (medicine-man/woman), that the illness or bad luck has been caused by ancestral spirits, the ng'anga will advise the sufferer that appeasement of the ancestors is the only solution to the unfortunate situation (James N. Amanze, 2002:117-118). Sundkler (1961:21) believes that “the power the ancestors have over the people compels the people to appease the ancestors for their prosperity.” And Africans have a strong belief that appeasement of the ancestors guarantees a good relationship with them, which ensures good health, success, and prosperity. Failure to appease the ancestors could result into misfortune upon the people, such as a poor harvest, illness, theft or unemployment (Mbiti, 1969:82; cf Maboea S.I., 2001:63).

#### **3.7. The attitude and response of Christianity to the African worldview.**

Christianity should acknowledge the importance of the ancestors and spirit-possession in many societies, both in rural and urban areas. In their relationship with the ancestors, people experience very real problems. Perplexing dreams, the withholding of protective powers, the unpredictability and possible spite of the ancestors, and the often devastating effects of spirit-possession - all these and many more problems plague everyday existence. These are issues that Christianity has often overlooked, particularly in its western forms.

In many African initiated churches, the ancestor cult is accommodated and allowance is made for the intervention and communication with ancestors. But, in African Pentecostal churches, the ancestor cult is confronted, and rejected as demonic, a custom from which people need deliverance. Western Christianity also rejected the African traditional rituals, but for a different reason: they saw these practices as ignorant superstitions to be totally eradicated (James N. Amanze, 2002:191). James N. Amanze argues that “missionaries were determined to plant a pure Christian faith which was free of pagan elements. There was no



room for the indigenization of Christianity. It was feared that such a move, would lead to syncretism...which is explicitly forbidden in the Bible” (2002:196). Christianity necessarily, properly, and ceaselessly adjusts to cultures. In the process of achieving these adjustments, erroneous decisions can be and have been made. Such errors in accommodation lead to a major missionary problem, which is syncretism.

Syncretism has been defined by Alan R. Tippett (1975:17) “as the union of two opposite forces, beliefs, systems or tenets so that the united form is a new thing, neither one nor the other.” Tippett mentions two kinds of mixtures that might be called syncretism. One mixture involves the distortion of Christian teaching by mixing it with non-Christian myth. And the second mixture involves the singing of Western, Calvinistic theology in an unfamiliar chant to a drumbeat previously used for a pagan dance. These two mixtures are different and the difference led Tippett to use the term, “Christopaganism” for the first mixture. McGavran (1974:45-49) points to deism as an example of the improper adjustment of Christianity to culture. The deist culture placed the laws of life and world in first place. Deism did not so much ban God as it relegated him to an absentee deity who had created the world and left it in control of natural law. The laws, not God, governed the world. Miracles were impossible. And prayer was meditation influencing only the one who prayed.

In attempting to adjust Christianity to deist culture, McGavran declares, the adjustments all but destroyed the biblical faith. He further points out that:

*“under the guise of adjusting Christianity to a rational culture, theologians and leaders of these segments of the church gave birth to a new syncretistic religion. They still called it Christianity. It used the old familiar words. It met in church houses and listened to robed choirs. It sang hymns and employed ministers trained in seminaries which devoted themselves to hastening the adjustment to deistic culture. It looked very like Christianity - but it radically disbelieved the Bible, had very little faith in the resurrection of our Lord and had little power. It converted few sinners. In America, it maintained itself by proselytizing out of the orthodox churches Christians whose faith had grown cold. It emphasized ethics -*

*partly because righteousness was the one component of the pure faith in which it still believed, and partly because, having lost the vertical dimension, it had to compensate by stressing the horizontal. Missiologists do not have to go abroad to observe the tragic futility of syncretism” (1974:45-49) (italics mine).*

In his book, *Constructing Local Theologies*, Schreiter (1985:151), says that Christianity has “a long history of absorbing elements from the cultures in which it has lived.” And so, African Pentecostalism may be judged “syncretistic” because these churches have absorbed African cultural elements. From the point of view of the African Pentecostal churches themselves, however, they exist precisely because the mainline churches founded by Western mission are “syncretistic”, having absorbed centuries of Western cultural and religious symbolism into their forms of Christianity which are often not very meaningful in an African context. Theology should, therefore, be contextualized in order for it to have meaning in the lives of local people. Kofi Appiah-Kubi (1983:viii) succinctly puts it as follows:

“That the Gospel has come to remain in Africa cannot be denied, but now our theological reflections must be addressed to the real contextual African situations. Our question must not be what Karl Barth, Karl Rahner, or any other Karl has to say, but rather what God would have us do in our living concrete condition.”

Western theologians have written a lot of theological books; but, it is imperative for us, Africans, to think about the relevance of these theological books to church life. Because theology is relevant when it not only answers the questions, but also brings solutions from the context in which it is done. There is nothing that makes the Word of God more relevant than a proper understanding of the language and culture of a people. Daneel (1990:227), however, has proposed that the correct Christian response should be to “confront those beliefs [in wizardry] with the message of the one scapegoat, Christ, and exorcise the invading spirits as part of the solution to the tradition-based problem, despite the risk of

misinterpretation.” This demonstrates a more relevant approach than that which dismisses the spirit-world as ignorant superstition, which never penetrates the real problems in popular African experience.

Therefore, a demonstration of God’s power through the Holy Spirit will convince African people that God is indeed more powerful than the ancestral spirits and the surrounding evil forces; and therefore, God is worthy of worship, honour and service. Without the Holy Spirit in this milieu, people will easily revert to the religion of the ancestors, which was more “powerful” than the sterile, rational Christianity which, according to Mbiti (1969:3), “is active once a week, either on Sunday or Friday, while the rest of the week is virtually empty.”

### **3.8. The need to develop a holistic African theology.**

The need to develop an African theology that takes into consideration the dynamics of cultural context and reflects the experiences of African Pentecostal churches in order to build the identity of African churches is critical.

For a long time now, African churches have been doing theology embodied in European culture. This is mainly because the gospel was intrinsically inherent in the culture of missionaries who brought Christianity to Africa. So much so that when African people received the gospel, they received it together with the European culture. In *Theology Cooked in an African Pot*, Klans Fiedler (1998:142) comments that when Christianity arrived in Africa:

“...it came with a western wrapping. Christianity went into the pot without being unwrapped. There was no period of observation first. But the pot...was not quite empty. Some of what was there was pushed out, some remained and was included in the stew...Africans want the meal, but not the indigestible wrapping which should not have been included. To some extent, the meat has not been cooked properly because it is still sealed in the wrapping”

The above comment reveals a great deal regarding the situation of theology in the African context. In other words, the theology which came from outside of Africa, and was in haste put into an African pot, did not pass into the hands of indigenous Africans for modification first, in order to suit the intentions of the pot. It came into the African pot, without realizing that the dynamics of the African pot are totally different to that of the Western pot. Furthermore, most African food is still cooked on the traditional three stones. This should not be mistaken to mean wastage of energy, but rather a transformational place for the hermeneutic inquiry and participation between the cook, the fire maker, and those enjoying the warmth of the fire. This is the reality that the western pot missed, and will continue to miss.

Theology in Africa should not accept the dichotomizing of spirit and body as two different realities. The African worldview is holistic; body and soul are indivisible. This indivisibility which forms the African worldview is also in accordance with the biblical worldview. And Newbigin's response to the dualism between the thinking mind and the world of things extended in space, as propagated by Descartes' *res cogitans and res extensa*, is helpful. Newbigin states that the early church had to overcome this dualism:

“It could do so because the starting point of its thinking was in *the Bible, where this dualism is absent*. It formulated its rejection of the dualism in the statement that the one God was the creator of both the visible and invisible realities. So long as this dualism remains part of popular thought, it is impossible for the gospel to be accepted as public truth; it can only be private opinion.” (1995: 37) (Italics mine).

It must be remembered that spirit and body form a unity of the diversity, and as such the spiritual and physical needs of a person are inseparable.

African theology, therefore, needs to take into consideration the African cultural context, its language, hymns (and songs as messages). The effort to develop and reformulate African Theology depends heavily upon African theologians and how they understand the African Religion which, according to Du Toit (1998:390) “...gives access to African lifestyles,

myths and narratives, practices and rites, and the broad oral tradition.” Africans should be themselves advocates of theology cooked in the African pot which aims to serve God through meeting the needs of the people, especially the underprivileged in both rural and urban centres. Doing theology in this way will make life meaningful to African people since their spirituality will get in touch with the realities of the people. Reverend Chuba, a Zambian minister with the United Church of Zambia, comes up with a helpful article as a conclusion in *Theology cooked in an African pot*, Klans Fieldler (1998:60) saying that:

“Africans need a theology that will redeem them from the give me, teach me, and lead me mentality, especially at this stage of an independent Africa. That theology which is not cooked or at least not boiling in an African pot has its abode in an African pit.”

There is need also to remember that Africans did not just observe and receive the foreignness of Christianity during the colonial era when missionaries were associated with imperialism. Africans initiated efforts at developing a theology which suited the African cultural context, language and spirituality. Klans Fieldler (1998:62) observes that “there is a general agreement among African theologians that African Independent Churches have taken a daring step of contextualizing or indigenizing the Church in Africa. Consequently, they have produced a relevant theology for Africa. They have also succeeded in producing a ritual-oriented church which appeals to the deep seated emotions of African peoples and thus satisfying their spirituality.”

Therefore, in doing and developing theology, the African Pentecostal churches have repudiated ancestral worship, divination and sacrifices as demonic; but have included a number of good cultural aspects, without necessarily compromising the gospel. Much of what is happening in these African Pentecostal churches may not be known because the African theologians are not doing much to publish theology. But the time has come for African theologians to do more in terms of documenting African theology in order to build up a profile of the African Pentecostal churches and their identity.

### **3.9. Conclusion.**

In conclusion, African traditional religion appears, from a Christian perspective, to be inadequate on several fronts: the Supreme Being seems often distant and unfathomable, the ancestors appear sometimes fickle and unpredictable, and the diviners (ng'angas) seem limited by the ever present fear of a power that might be greater than their own. In African life, the departed are not readily forgotten, though there may be taboos against mentioning their names in certain places. Through rituals, dreams, visions, possessions and names they are recalled and respected. This does not and cannot mean that they are worshipped according to African traditional religion. The departed are considered to be still alive, and people show by these African beliefs and practices that they recognize the presence of the living dead (ancestors). In this way, African religion appears realistic, since nobody wants to be forgotten by his/her family immediately after dying.

Therefore, the solutions offered by African traditional religion, at least from this Christian viewpoint, seem to be seldom completely satisfying, and may leave people feeling uncertain, threatened and fearful. African problems caused by a loss of power and life through the malicious working of sorcery, magic and witchcraft, and through capricious spirits who often demand more than people are able to provide, demand a truly African Christian solution.

## **CHAPTER 4: AFRICAN PENTECOSTALISM IN ZAMBIA.**

### **4.1. Introduction.**

Researchers of Christianity today are increasingly recognizing the role of a rapidly growing movement, here referred to as “new Pentecostal churches”, which has sprung up since the seventies, but is fast becoming a major expression of Christianity on the continent, especially in Africa’s cities and towns. Since the 1980’s these churches have emerged all over Africa, where they tend to have a younger and more educated leadership and membership, including young professionals (Walls&Shenk, 2000:132-135). Their services are usually emotional, enthusiastic and loud, especially as most make use of electronic musical instruments.

In this thesis, the “new Pentecostal churches” are referred to as “African Pentecostal churches”. My use of the term “African Pentecostal churches” is exclusively narrow in its definition, and totally different from “African Independent/Pentecostal” or “Zion/Apostolic” in the general sense of the word. But, when I use the term “African Pentecostal churches”, I exclusively refer to African Pentecostal churches in this thesis, which share a historical background with the mainline Protestant churches. These African Pentecostal Churches do not allow ancestral worship, they have a solid biblical foundation and are theologically sound and balanced.

These African Pentecostal churches are increasing in popularity with educated people who continue to give financial support and feel that their needs are met there (Gifford,1992:24). According to Gifford (1998:3340, these “newer churches”, which I have referred to as “African Pentecostal churches” in this study, are totally different, from “African Initiated churches”. He argues that “the newer churches, though they depend on primal conceptions

like deliverance, do not represent a return to the past, or a bridge to traditional culture, in the way the 'African Initiated churches' did. They are harshly negative concerning much of Africa's traditional culture, not just polygamy and (in Zambia) practices like the 'cleansing' of widows." He further argues that these newer churches "repudiate the veneration of ancestors...attacking 'spiritual' churches...rejecting all the ritual candles, blessed water, white cloths, drumming, sacrifices - that have been associated with the AICs. Miracles are performed without instrumentality. All their props are modern and sophisticated. Their language tends to be English...and their music is western."

Gifford, continues to say that the theology of these "newer churches" is essentially the Faith Gospel, and argues that "it is natural that the Faith Gospel should be so prevalent, because Africa's traditional religions were focused on material realities." (1998:334-5). According to Peel (1993:98), in the nineteenth century Crowther wrote of the Yoruba religious in search of "peace, health, children and money". And Daneel (1987:46), who agrees with Peel, writes in his book, *Quest for Belonging*, that "this preoccupation has been noted several times since". Westernized mainline Christianity does not cater for this, therefore it is perfectly natural that the African Pentecostal Christianity which does, fares so well in African contexts.

African Pentecostalism should be placed within its global context because Pentecostal mission has been extremely successful when we look at the statistics. Whatever reservations some might have with regard to the calculations and estimations of David Barrett and Todd Johnson (1988:25-26), there is no denying the fact that the Pentecostal movement is the fastest growing section of Christianity, one of the most remarkable occurrences in church history.

David Barrett and Todd Johnson estimate that there were 74 million 'Pentecostals /Charismatics' (6% of the world's Christian population) in 1970. But, by 1998, after 28 years, this figure reached 461 million or 25%. Barrett and Johnson further project that according to present trends "the figure is likely to rise to 740 million or 28% of the Christian

world total by 2025.” Pentecostalism today is fundamentally and dominantly a Third World phenomenon (Land, 1993:21). In recent years the greatest increases in the Pentecostal movement have been in Africa, especially in sub-Saharan Africa. This phenomenal growth has been so significant that Cox (1996:83) speaks of Pentecostalism as a manifestation of the “unanticipated reappearance of primal spirituality in our time”. African Pentecostalism, as defined in this thesis, is undoubtedly one of the most vigorous and fastest growing movements in Zambia, as it is in other parts of Africa. Although there are some difficulties with regard to statistics such as those given by Barrett and Johnson, they still remain indicative of a worldwide trend and Zambia is no exception to this.

Therefore, the emergence and growth of these African Pentecostal churches indicate that there are unresolved questions facing the church in Africa, such as the role of “success” and “prosperity” in God’s economy, enjoying God and his gift, including healing and material provision; and the holistic dimension of “salvation” which is meaningful in African context.

#### **4.2. A brief historical background to the formation.**

Historically, what motivated the formation of these African Pentecostal churches was the desire to reform the existing mainline [Protestant] churches and make them more relevant in order to meet the needs of daily African life. When this reform or renewal within failed or reached an impasse, the result was the formation of African Pentecostal churches. The fact is that these Pentecostal churches did not emerge in a historical or social vacuum. They were conditioned by a number of factors ranging from **spiritual, cultural, political, social and circumstantial factors**. The Pentecostals were first taken note of in the 1970s and, in the 1980s Pentecostalism had a dramatic impact on the lives of the people. The movement came like a flash, it was derided, but once it had established a firm foothold it captured its own oppressors and scorners. As a result, groups from the mainline churches broke off to form “African churches”. David Barrett (1968:161-162), a missiologist, argues that

“independency reflects a rebellion against a Christianity that had become ‘over-Europeanised’.”

Mbiti (1969:233) states that “a fundamental cause which perhaps is not easily evident, is that mission Christianity has not penetrated sufficiently deep into African religiosity.” In discussing the encounter between the New Testament eschatology and the African traditional concepts, John Mbiti (1971:151-155) mentions the necessity of the gospel message to penetrate into the African world view. He argues that “the African Inland Mission failed to penetrate into the African world view, and the failure involved both the fidelity to culture and fidelity to divine revelation.” He states that “the African Inland Mission’s teaching failed to discern between sorcery and shamanism, and also failed to articulate the total spirit world in New Testament terms.” Mbiti says the following concerning the Akamba world view:

“...the final result of the Christian message in a society such as the Akamba is to transpose the tribal spirit world into the Christian one. Akamba life is so deeply rooted in the spirit world that, until Christianity can penetrate that far, it will for a long time remain on the surface, incapable of providing a radical and all-embracing meaning to the total Weltanschauung of the people. This applies as well to many African societies, since evidence shows great similarities between their concepts of the spirit world and those of the Akamba” (1971:155).

Therefore, in dealing with the New Testament eschatology in connection with the African worldview, Mbiti does not stress the “already” dimension of eschatology in terms of present-power for the African who must cope with the spirit world. He affirms the “already” sense of the Kingdom’s coming, along with the “not yet”, but he does not apply this truth to the African context (1971:49). The New Testament account of the Kingdom’s breaking through in power in salvation history, defeating and destroying the powers of this world and manifesting that victory in terms of healing and exorcism is acknowledged by Mbiti (1971:140-141). But Mbiti makes no connections with the contemporary needs in the

African's encounter with the spirit world. This has remained and is presented only in terms of dogma, or a doctrine to be believed.

In his extensive research on African Pentecostal/Independency movements, Barrett investigates the causes of Pentecostal/Independency movements in Africa, emphasizing the sociological and ecclesiastical dimensions in the clash between the Western mission and the African traditional societies. His research concerning the root causes of these movements reflects the social level of his investigation:

“The root cause common to the entire movement of independency, therefore, may be seen in this one aspect of culture clash: a failure in sensitivity, the failure of missions at one small point to demonstrate consistently the fullness of the biblical concept of love as sensitive understanding towards others as equals, the failure to study or understand African society, religion and psychology in any depth, together with a dawning African perception from the vernacular scriptures of the catastrophic nature of this failure and of the urgent necessity to remedy it in order that Christianity might survive on African soil.” (Barrett, 1968:156).

These may account for the formation of “African Pentecostal churches” but, they should not be considered as underlying causes, as they presuppose the existence of other deeper factors.

#### **4.3. The birth of the ministry/church.**

African Pentecostal churches are initiated and instituted by Africans and not by western missionaries. After secession from mission churches, these churches are established for the purpose of meeting the “physical, emotional and spiritual needs of people in the third world, offering solutions to life's problems and ways to cope in a threatening and hostile world” (Anderson and Samuel,1993:32).These churches were born or founded in innovative mission initiatives unprecedented in the history of mission, motivated by a compelling need to preach and even more significantly, to experience a new message of the power of the Spirit.

Harvey Cox (1995:219) suggests two vitally important underlying factors, which he finds in Pentecostal churches, that “for any religion to grow in today’s world, it must possess two capabilities. First, it must be able to include and transform at least certain elements of pre-existing religion which still retain a strong grip on the cultural subconscious. Secondly, it must also equip people to live in rapidly changing societies.”

#### **4.4. The urban African Pentecostal Church.**

The phenomenon of mass urbanization in Africa results in African Pentecostal churches providing places of spiritual security and personal communities for people unsettled by rapid social change. Shorter (1990:148) in his book, *The church in the African city*, contends that “the Christian task in Africa is the evangelization of a continent in the process of rapid urbanization...If the Gospel of Christ makes a lasting impact in Africa, it will be because it has helped the urban process to become less invidious and less unjust, more human and more enduringly creative. It will have given the African town a soul.”

##### **4.4.1. The membership.**

In most, if not all African Pentecostal churches, membership is through faith in Jesus Christ as saviour and Lord. According to Hunter Kent (1994:177), “the growth pattern of any church is measured by its members.” The emphasis in African Pentecostal churches is on “conversion growth” not “biological growth” nor “transfer growth”, as the main means of increasing membership through evangelism. Ruth has argued however that “to guarantee...salvation and continued membership in the community of the saved, the convert must ensure, through his thoughts and deeds, that [he] is a fitting vessel for the ‘infilling’ of the Holy Spirit, which will provide...strength and protection to ward off the multitude of evil forces which seek to possess him. Christ must be invited “in” (1998:285). After the

conversion experience, the convert undergoes baptism by immersion which entitles the convert to all the rights and privileges of a full member.

#### **4.4.2. Liturgy and worship.**

Throughout the world, Pentecostals are noted for their exuberant, enthusiastic, experience-oriented Christianity; and African Pentecostals in Zambia are no exception. In fact, the African roots of Pentecostalism suggest that in many respects, the characteristics by which Pentecostals are known are more acceptable in any African cultural setting than they are in any Western setting.

##### **4.4.2.1. Music and dancing.**

The worship of African Pentecostal churches is truly African in character, and their members find that they are not only Christians, but African Christians. Singing is authentically African, with local lyrics, music and instruments. Regarding the authenticity of African music, Donald Fraser, a Church of Scotland missionary in Africa, at one point was concerned with regard to foreign music:

“Why should African musical have its songs of praise given in a music which is entirely foreign? While all the village life is full of tuneful African music, why should not the gospel not only use idiomatic vernacular for its proclamation but also idiomatic African music?” (1926: 447).

Joyful singing is often accompanied by ecstatic dancing and clapping. African Pentecostal churches have led the way in developing “a culturally relevant liturgy” into Christian worship which has become “a strong growth factor” (C. Peter Wagner, 1986:99-100). The incorporation of dance into worship services is perhaps one of the most distinctive Africanizations in the African Pentecostal churches. Harvey Cox quoting Appiah Kubi (1995:248) states that “as for dancing in the church, which nearly all the other denominations discourage, they argue that the Psalms also endorse ‘dancing before the

Lord,' and that King David danced before the Ark of the Covenant.” According to Oosthuizen (1979:21), “the chief purpose of dancing is to express gratitude, praise and joy in the presence of God; it has a cathartic value and strengthens a person spiritually.” And Harvey Cox says that “their worship exhibits all the features of Pentecostal spirituality” (1995:246). Therefore meaningful songs, rhythmic accompaniment, dance and other forms of spiritual expression play a significant role in the rooting of the Christian faith in the African soil.

#### **4.4.2.2. Uniform and church decorum.**

African Pentecostals do not generally wear uniforms, although there are some who do. In most Pentecostal churches, for example, women are expected to wear head covering in church services; make-up and jewellery are often frowned upon, and men are to wear a jacket and a tie. But my own observation in Grace Outreach Ministries International and Bible Gospel Church in Africa, is that these rules have been considerably relaxed, and a great number of men come to services in clothes according to the event or weather, while the women are usually elegantly dressed in modern clothes, some with make-up and jewellery.

In African Pentecostal churches, churches are beautified with flowers and curtains of different colours. These curtains can be changed on a monthly basis. In most of these churches, the praise-team or the choir is allowed to put on a uniform. Ushers wear badges for the express purpose of being identified by visitors. During the services, some pastors wear gowns. If Holy Communion is observed then those who serve Holy Communion will be dressed in accordance with the event (usually in white and red).

#### **4.4.2.3. Services in African Pentecostal churches.**

There are noticeable similarities and differences between the liturgy of African Pentecostal churches and the mainline reformed churches, although similarities are marginal.

Pentecostal and mainline churches usually have only one service, which is on Sunday. Services in African Pentecostal churches usually last for three or more hours. According to my own observation, the Sunday service centres around three main items. Firstly, praise and worship, secondly, the word and, last but not the least, the altar call. In African Pentecostal services, there is considerable audience participation in the worship (C. Peter Wagner, 1986:104). A newcomer [visitor] will be struck by the way everyone participates through praise songs, choir and group items, testimonies and prayer. The prayer offered by the Pentecostal worshippers is usually spontaneous, simultaneous and uninhibited.

In these services, you will find a praise and worship music group who usually lead the congregation in worshipping and singing - until the pastor comes to the front either to exhort, pray, or to preach. C. Peter Wagner has observed that “one of the first things you notice when you go into a Pentecostal worship is that people seem to be enjoying themselves” (1986:99-100). In these services, people sing and dance to the rhythm of the music, swaying from side to side while ululating, clapping etc. Secondly, in these services, the preaching of the word by the pastor is very important and emphatic. Preaching is usually an exposition of a text, which often lasts for an hour, and the preacher is normally the pastor of the congregation or a guest pastor.

The sermon is usually carefully prepared before the service, and is followed or concluded with an ‘altar call’. The ‘alter call’ is the last, but not least item emphasized in African Pentecostal services. When the pastor finishes preaching, he or she calls or challenges people to come forward for prayers. People respond according to their needs, some come forward to receive Christ into their lives, and others come to receive healing [by laying on of hands]. After this prayer line, the offering is taken up by the ushers who pass around plates or baskets. The service usually ends with a prayer of blessing from the pastor.

#### **4.4.3. Preaching in African Pentecostal churches.**

Hermeneutics [preaching] in African Pentecostal churches has attracted not only people, but also much debate. This debate, according to Arrington (1994:104), is primarily based on

“the role of the Holy Spirit, who, is continually referred to by Pentecostals as an important factor in hermeneutics”. This Pentecostal hermeneutic is praxis oriented with experience and scripture being maintained in a dialectical relationship. And, the Holy Spirit maintains this ongoing relationship. Pentecostal preaching is quite distinct from the monologues which characterize most of the mainline reformed churches. According to C. Peter Wagner (1986:110), “the Pentecostal preacher enters into a kind of dialogue with the audience. The sermon is an experience for those who listen, as they respond with loud shouts of approval which surge up like waves breaking over the sea shore.” The Bible, which is the word of God, is understood, in Pentecostal preaching, at face value. This face-value interpreting of scripture without any concern for the historical distance allows Pentecostal preachers to emphasize the immediate meaning of Scripture. Joseph Byrd (1993:204-205), after researching the first decade of Pentecostal preaching makes the following four descriptive conclusions about the sermons:

- Preaching was spontaneous and not relegated to professional clergy,
- Preaching participated in the overall trajectory of worship services, it was not necessarily the climax of the service.
- The congregation participated in the sermon in terms of responding, but the sermon also allowed for participation of the congregation more fully in the altar call,
- The sermon reached for an immediate experience for the listeners and was not characterized by hermeneutics or time spent in exegeting a text in a historical or critical manner. But the preacher focused on the immediate meaning of a text and not upon what a text meant in its original context.

To illustrate how the hermeneutics is given wing by the homiletics, take Luke 13:10-17; for example, the periscope which shows how Jesus healed the crippled woman. An African Pentecostal preacher would first describe the sad fate of the woman until everyone would recognize a similar case in the home village or urban area. There might be an interlude with a plaintive song. Then, the entry of Jesus into the context would be portrayed in such vivid

colours that each person would feel the same presence. The past is given life in the present. The healing occurs as the whole congregation stands to sing that “in the word of God, there is power, in the name of Jesus, every knee shall bow”. Other victory choruses would follow before the main text, verse 16. Jesus calls the woman “the daughter of Abraham”, meaning the one in whose body the powerful promise of God was at work. Her social context had constructed her otherwise, as a cripple - ugly, dysfunctional and worthless. She had accepted the verdict for life. But, Jesus renames her and imbues her with an image of being different. She accepts the counter-verdict, “She stood up straight and began to praise God” (verse 13). Jesus roots himself in the enduring covenant of God, refuses manifest givens and voices a **different reality** that is borne on the counter text in Genesis.

African Pentecostal hermeneutics surfs the counter-verdict of God and uses these to conscientise the people of God in the midst of life’s debilitating contexts. And Pentecostal homiletics is choreographed as a ritual validation and commitment. The homiletics crafts language in a transformative manner so that the listener would begin to speak differently and soon through biographical testimonies, sharing and validating the truths being advocated. This process of turning the text into oral and experiential models is a discovery of what the Bible originally was. Pentecostal hermeneutics, therefore, provides an altered view of self-identity-change, bridge-burning and cognitive restructuring or restoration.

In these churches, the Bible is the central source of preaching, the final authority for all that is taught, practiced and preached. For this reason, the preachers give pre-eminence to the Bible, and use it to justify and reinforce their messages to the people. The Bible forms the basis and provides the conditions for holy living and victorious lives. One of the main attractions of the church for Pentecostals in my observations and according to responses to the questionnaire is that the Word of God is preached and topics on the Christian life taught. Some of the important teachings include discipleship, soul winning, prosperity, loving one another, how to live a holy life and, the second coming of Christ. One of the fundamental themes emphasized in this African Pentecostal preaching is what members often describe as

“salvation”. This involves a call to repentance and accepting Jesus Christ by faith as Lord and saviour. For this reason, the altar call is a very important conclusion to most sermons. In many growing African Pentecostal churches one may see a number of people on a prayer line after the sermon every Sunday.

However, a much more detailed analysis of the sermons preached in Pentecostal churches needs to be done if any profile of the churches, such as that described by Turner (1965:81), is to be attempted. My own observations of the views of members on the preaching in these churches, and the preaching that I observed, will need to be tested through more thorough empirical analysis, by which an in-depth perspective may be achieved. At this point, this observation on preaching must not be taken as representative of, but as indicative of some of the trends in African Pentecostal churches.

#### **4.4.4. The Manifestation of the Spirit in African Pentecostal churches.**

##### **4.4.4.1. Speaking in tongues [malilimi]**

Speaking in tongues [malilimi] is one of the important elements in African Pentecostal churches. This gift brings much spiritual satisfaction for a large number of people, and non-Pentecostals should be cautious, as Paul himself recommends, about forbidding others to speak in tongues (1Corinthians14:39). According to Harvey Cox (1995:82), primal speech pinpoints the spiritual import of what scholars of religion sometimes call “ecstatic utterance” or glossolalia, what the earliest Pentecostals called “speaking in tongues” and many now refer to as “praying in the spirit”. Cox goes on to state that “in an age of bombast, hype, and double speak, when ultra specialized terminologies and contrived rhetoric seem to have emptied and pulverized language, the first Pentecostals learned to speak - and their successors still speak with another voice, a language of the heart.” He furthermore makes the observation that “there can be little doubt that Pentecostals have rediscovered a powerful and primal form of religious expression. One of the reasons they continue to attract people is

that they emphasize the experience, not the interpretation, and that is what an ecstasy-deficient generation seems to be looking for.” (1995:88).

For Clark and Lederle (1983:43) to be a Pentecostal is to have experienced the power of God in Christ. This experience is essential to Pentecost, without it there cannot be a true identification of the church with *The Book of Acts*. Unlike critics of African Pentecostalism who reduce it to an experience-centered theology, Clark and Lederle(1983:44) describe it as a Christ-centered, experience-certified theology. And Paul Gifford makes the following observation on speaking-in-tongues:

“No one can call himself born-again without having gone through a process in which the ‘infilling’ of the Holy Spirit was experienced, manifest in trance-like states and speaking in tongues...In this process malilime is primarily seen as the absolute assurance that one has succeed in tapping into a superior power which purifies, protects one’s day to day existence, and heals any sort of more or less mystical affliction which may even include witchcraft” (1992: 67).

In many non-Pentecostal churches, speaking in tongues is forbidden on the grounds that it is not an appropriate gift for the church today. The Scofield Bible, says in its marginal notes on 1 Corinthians 14:1 that “tongues and sign gifts are to cease,” and many unfortunate, sincere evangelicals believe it. Many Protestant Christians in the reformed tradition have argued that the supernatural gifts of the Spirit were characteristic of the apostolic times, but not of today. Most exponents of the Reformed tradition teach that when the period of “apostolic history” was replaced by “church history”, the gift of the Holy Spirit ceased to operate. This line of thought is argued at length by Oscar Cullman in his book (1956), *The Early Church*. It is not my purpose here to argue, but to respond briefly. Firstly, the Bible nowhere explicitly states that the gifts have been withdrawn, or will cease with the passing of the last of the original apostles. On the contrary, 1 Corinthians 13:8-10 states that prophecies, tongues and knowledge will be needed until the “perfect comes” that is, until Christ returns. Secondly, Ephesians 4:11 teaches that “the gifts of apostles, prophets, evangelists and pastors and teachers are all required to prepare God’s people for the work of



ministry, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in faith.” Lastly, when the epistles mention the gifts, it is, according to Bridge and Phyper (1973:28), to instruct Christians in their proper use and “never how to phase them out.”

#### **4.4.4.2. Prophecy.**

According to Eddie Gibbs (1981:226), prophecy is a message given directly from God through individuals who have learned to listen to Him and are prepared to speak on his behalf. Gibbs goes on to say that “the message may come as a result of study or be spontaneous...a proclamation regarding the present or a prediction relating to the future. It may be addressed to the church for her up-building, encouragement and consolation, to an unbeliever to convict him of sin, or to society at large.”

#### **4.4.4.3. Falling down (slain in the Spirit).**

In most African Pentecostal churches to fall down under the power of God or to be slain in the Spirit is when people come under the manifestation of the presence of God’s spirit. The entire Bible is a declaration of God’s dynamic presence amongst his people, whether it be a celebration of his intervention in the past, a chronicling of recent experiences, or an anticipation of his ultimate and eternal manifestation at the end of history when “God, Himself, will be with his people” (Revelation 21:3). From the beginning to the end, the Scriptures are a literary record of God’s coming to humankind, at his initiative. It is this experiential reality of the presence of God that stands at the centre of biblical faith; the “theology of presence” is so much the unique feature of the Scriptures, that it is that which distinguishes Christian faith from both classical antiquity, and current world religions (Terrien Samuel, 1978: xxviii, 28). In the *Journals* that John Wesley kept, according to Nehemiah Cumnock (1909:122; see also Harvey Cox, 1995:68) numerous accounts are

recorded of the manifestations of the presence and power of the Holy Spirit. A sample is quoted as follows:

“At New Year’s 1739, George Whitefield, my brother Charles, three others and I, with about sixty of our brethren, were present at a love-feast in Fetter Lane. About three in the morning, as we were continuing in prayer, the power of God came upon us so mightily that many cried out in holy joy, *while others were knocked to the ground*. As soon as we were recovered a little from awe and amazement at the presence of God, we broke out in one voice, ‘We praise Thee, O God; we acknowledge Thee to be the Lord’.” (Italics mine).

According to Dun (1975:189,194,192) “the earliest Christian community was essentially charismatic and enthusiastic in nature, in every aspect of its common life and worship, its development and mission. The fact is that ecstatic and physical phenomena have been a regular concomitant of religious awakening and revival movements within the history of Christianity. Not for nothing were the Quakers and shakers so nicknamed.”

#### **4.5. Pattern and reason for the growth of the African Pentecostal Church:**

##### **4.5.1. Main growth factors**

###### **4.5.1.1. Conversion**

Conversion to Pentecostalism expresses a model for the construction of new identity. The notion of being “born again” encapsulates a particular attitude towards agency and social change, in which the individual is exhorted to make an absolute break with his personal as well as collective past. Upon “giving his life to Christ”, he or she re-enters the world as a “new creation” (2 Corinthians 5:17), as a sort of “blank slate” upon which the identity will gradually be written, following a model of spiritual growth from Christian “infanthood” into full “adulthood”.

Birgit Meyer (1996 :199-230) argues that “conversion to Pentecostalism entails a kind of conversion to modernity, insofar as the process of breaking with individual and collective

pasts enables converts to become “autonomous selves,” free individuals in possession of their subjectivity. She further notes that Pentecostalism in Ghana is self-consciously ‘global,’ connecting believers with a global community of born-again Christians, and offering a scope for identification which goes far beyond local culture.” Eddie Gibbs calls this act of turning by the individual “conversion.” He points out that “it represents a complete turnaround rather than a minor course correction; a turning away from sin to salvation and service in Christ. It is a turning from darkness to light, from the domain of Satan to the kingdom of God, from slavery to sin to freedom, service and worship of Christ as Lord.” (Gibbs,1981:145). According to Harvey Cox (1995:176), the success of Pentecostalism in converting massive numbers is clearly related to the opportunity it provides for the mediation of “urbanization or class conflict”.

#### **4.5.1.2. Deliverance**

In African Pentecostal spirituality, salvation embodies not only new birth, a sanctification of the affections and being filled with the Spirit, but also healing from sickness and deliverance from the demonic. In his book (1988), *Delivered from the Power of darkness*, Emmanuel Eni recounts his involvement with the occult evil spirit-world. This book has become popular in Zambia.

In the Zambian Christian context, the forces of evil include not just Satan and his cohorts of demons, but also witchcraft, sorcery, magic, evil eye, ancestral spirits and traditional deities who may make their presence felt in the lives of the people in order to oppress them. Therefore, the need for deliverance may be evident through what evil spirits are doing in a person’s life (Mark 5:1-20). Diagnosis may also occur through “word of knowledge”, prophecy or discernment granted by the Holy Spirit. In traditional spirit possession, the personalities of deities often provide clues to what determines the behaviour of the possessed person. Similarly a patient may in the process of deliverance writhe on the floor

and that would be suggestive of a 'serpentine spirit' at work. Manifestations of demonic oppression and signs of successful deliverance include tangible signs like screaming, yawning, coughing, belching, heavy sneezing, excretion of faeces, crying, sweating and vomiting.

Therefore, for salvation to be holistic, it must include deliverance not only from servitude to sin and demonic possession and oppression, but also from the fear and fascination with demons in which many Zambians seem to be trapped.

#### **4.5.1.3. Prosperity.**

The formal theology of the African Pentecostal Churches is essentially the message of faith and prosperity. Kenneth Copeland (1974:26) defines prosperity as "the ability to use the power of God to meet the needs of mankind." Prosperity is not seen as financial blessing alone, but as spiritual, mental and physical prosperity as well. The underlying teaching of the "message of prosperity" is that God rewards faithful Christians with good health, financial success and material wealth, "according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:19). On the provenance of prosperity teachings in African Pentecostal Churches, Gifford's view (1990:373-388) is that "the theology is incomprehensible apart from its American origins." But, Ojo (1996:106) expresses an alternative view, insisting that "the prosperity message is original to Africa's Pentecostal churches."

Theologically the message of prosperity reflects the belief that the "blessing of Abraham" has been willed by God to believers as beneficiaries of the new covenant mediated by Christ (Galatians Chapter 3). In this new covenant form, the "blessing of Abraham" is explained by the African Pentecostal churches, to encapsulate success in life's endeavors, health, progress and general well-being. These churches are not reinvigorating the Protestant ethic. On the contrary, Freston (1995:131-132) is surely correct when he writes that "Prosperity theology

represents an advanced stage of the decline of the Protestant ethic.” This message of prosperity is attracting many to African Pentecostal churches.

#### **4.5.1.4. Cell groups.**

This is another area where you see growth in African Pentecostal churches. In his book, *Balanced Church Growth*, Ebbie C. Smith (1984:159), says that “congregations composed of small groups of believers meeting in homes or other settings provide another promising pattern for urban ministry.” He continues that there is no reason a small group of believers cannot constitute a bonafide church. This New Testament pattern (Philemon 2; Romans 16), Ebbie explains, “promises help in reaching people in apartment complexes, condominiums, and manufactured homes.” He argues that “the small group approach need not, however, be restricted to the beginning stage of church development.” And Calvin Guy, who agrees with Ebbie Smith, contends that “the house church approach holds great potential for reaching the cities.” Concerning the house church, Guy says the following:

“The poverty of the urban masses, their inability to erect and support large structures, and the psychology of the urban poor that prevents them from identification with large numbers of people, point to the small group and the house church as the most feasible approach. In the small, caring communities where Christians listen to the Word, share the sacraments, uphold one another in prayer, and witness verbally and visibly to their neighbors, it may be that the faith will flow as in the first century to the great urban populations.” (1979: 127).

The cell groups are the empowering structures of these African Pentecostal churches. Through cell groups, new members find a home and begin to be integrated, nurtured, equipped and empowered. According to Ralph W. Neighbour, Jr (1990:94-95), “Community can occur most completely only in a small group. A cell group, numbering less than fifteen people, is all important. Essential elements of community include interpersonal commitments and a sense of belonging. Community takes place when there is a shared life, allowing common goals and commitments to develop between all of its members.” He adds that “as the extended family is the oikos of society, so the cell group is the extended family,



the basic building block, of the people of God.” In his book, *I believe in Church Growth*, Eddie Gibbs (1981:165-168) lists seven reasons for establishing cell groups in the church: (i) To provide a learning situation; (ii) To develop meaningful relationship; (iii) To identify gifts; (iv) To train new leaders; (v) To ensure greater pastoral care; (vi) To demonstrate concern for the neighbourhood; (vii) To establish a base for neighbourhood evangelism. Roger indicates in his research (1994:3-22) that large churches can maintain high levels of commitment and conformity if they are grouped into small homogenous units; and Cho Yonggi affirms that “for church growth, the real secret is home cell groups” (1997: vi).

#### **4.5.2. Recruitment methods:**

##### **4.5.2.1. Exorcism.**

Exorcism plays a major role in the mission activities of many African Pentecostal churches. It is considered to be important to pastoral ministry in this context, and is one of the methods for recruiting new members. A ministry of exorcism has a liberating value “which appears to confront the existential needs and fears of people in a ritually understandable and therefore psychologically and religiously satisfying manner” ( Daneel, 1990:220). Exorcism takes many different forms. In African Pentecostal churches, exorcism takes place in an atmosphere of prayer, of singing and dancing or clapping hands, with or without the use of symbolic objects. In a Christian context, manifestation of evil spirits usually occurs in an atmosphere of worship and prayer.

Different manifestations include shouting and screaming, restlessness, violent contortions of the body (often accompanied by extraordinary strength), jumping, falling to the ground, and running around. Pastors usually pray and exorcise demons until the people are set free. This exorcism is achieved during sustained prayer when the demons are rebuked and commanded to leave the victim in the Name of Jesus Christ. The church’s ministry of exorcism therefore

becomes, as Daneel (1990:220) has pointed out, “an effective means of communicating the good news of Christ’s lordship over all principalities and powers in the universe.”

#### **4.5.2.2. Witnessing.**

In most African Pentecostal churches, witnessing is spontaneous through the believer’s conduct of life. These churches believe that our daily contact with people seems to be a far mightier means of evangelization than most Christians realize. According to Paton (1975:93) “The local congregation in each place should begin to take seriously its life style and to ask what witness this is giving to the world and what nurture it is giving to its members. In each situation the church must examine its style of life to find what life style is saying to the world. If we are to reflect the kingdom of God in our own lives that others may be led to salvation, we must develop and express in each Christian community the quality of life which is sensitive to the whole community and to the whole created universe.” In his book, *The church before the watching world*, Francis Schaeffer (1972) writes that “Christian conduct of life is today not only scrutinized by the local community, but through the mass media and television. That, which Christians do or neglect to do, is displayed to a world-wide community. Whatever happens in the congregation and is mutually experienced by its members is also observed by the surrounding community. The congregation has to give witness to the fact that every relationship in which it stands has been changed fundamentally by its relationship to God in Christ.”

Outsiders, according to the Apostle Paul (1Thess 4:12; Titus 2:8), have to be convinced by the dedicated way of life of the believers. Therefore, Christians have to check their words, deeds, and attitudes constantly so that they may further the course of the Gospel instead of hindering it. In most cases, the conduct of members of the African Pentecostal Church seems to play a vital part in the spreading of the Gospel and the constant growth in membership.

#### 4.5.2.3. Healing.

Using information gleaned from the interviews (Interviews, 2008), writings of exponents and observation of the healing phenomenon, one begins to understand the role of healing, and thus to uncover the dynamics of African Pentecostalism in Zambia. Healing is one of the major factors in recruiting new members in these churches. Healing is employed as a form of pastoral care, because it aims at restoring disturbed persons to proper functioning order. The view taken is that healing recovers for Zambian Christianity important dimensions of the Christian message of salvation that has everything to do with spiritual and physical well-being. Prayers for healing may be accompanied by some form of touch or laying on of hands and / or anointing with oil. The belief that illness may be set in motion by sin is inspired by such biblical texts as James 5:14-16:

“Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven. Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.”

On the basis of this and other passages, Zambian proponents of the healing phenomenon generally believe firmly in a causal relationship between sin, the work of demons and sickness. This is why healing is tied to deliverance. In the Zambian healing and deliverance discourse, being able to defy traditional gods and taboos is seen as one of the ultimate signs of a delivered and hence empowered Christian. For the individual, healing means total liberation.

Diverse views on demonology, healing and deliverance provide evidence of practical differences between African Pentecostal thought and the inability of traditional Protestant churches to respond acutely to the theological questions raised by African Christians. According to Mbiti, the gap between the African and Western theologies is illustrated in a hypothetical story involving a Western-trained African theologian. He had acquired all there

was to know about Western philosophy and theology and, yet returned home completely alienated from his people and unable to translate his theology into practice. The following is Mbiti's illustration:

“...the young man returned to his home after nine and a half years of theological training with a PhD in theology and excess baggage to confront the realities of his people whose hopes he incarnated. At the peak of the celebrations marking his return, his sister fell to the ground, possessed by the spirit of her great aunt - and they looked to him to exorcise the spirit. But all he could do was to demythologize her suffering according to Rudolf Bultmann” (1976: 18).

Mbiti concludes this story narrated in the context of the relevance of healing to African Christian theology by noting that the young theologian had forgotten among other things that “God's kingdom comes with power.” Indeed healing is an area in which the African Pentecostal churches have distinguished themselves as churches whose spirituality is relevant to the needs of the indigenous context.

#### **4.6. Healing and deliverance: Case studies from Grace Outreach Ministries International, Chipata Centre.**

The following reports were written after interviews (interviews 2008) with some of the members (who once suffered) at the centre:

##### **4.6.1. Case 1: Mwatitha Mbewe (40)**

Mwatitha was delivered from demons after being bound for 10 years. On 15<sup>th</sup> July 1994, there was a revival service at a village called Cilobwe in Chipata - the eastern part of Zambia. After the sermon, people responded by coming to be prayed for. Among the people who came for deliverance, was the woman named Mwatitha Mbewe, who appeared to be pregnant. When she was asked about her pregnancy, she responded by saying that she had been in that state for the last ten years. She explained that she had a dream one day in which someone gave her meat and she ate. When she woke up, her stomach was paining and began

to expand like one who was expecting. After prayers for her deliverance, she asked to be permitted to go to the toilet. When she came back from the toilet, her stomach had become normal. Mwatitha Mbewe acknowledged that after prayer, she was delivered and healed, her health had greatly improved. Now she is fine.

#### **4.6.2. Case 2: Grace Banda ( 35).**

Grace visited the GOMI Centre on the 13<sup>th</sup> August, 2000, with a medical report from Mwami hospital (Chipata). According to the report, Grace had a growth in her stomach and, that she was to be operated upon within seven days or she would die.

After sharing the word and much prayer, the Bishop convinced Grace that she needed deliverance because she was possessed by demons. Then the deliverance session started. The Bishop commanded the demons possessing Grace to come out in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth. Then the demons spoke through her, saying, “We are the ones responsible for Grace’s health problems.” The Bishop commanded the demons to leave and Grace was delivered. The pain and the swelling disappeared. Grace acknowledged that she was delivered and healed. However, she was advised to go for a check-up to the same hospital (Mwami). Later that month, the doctors, at Mwami hospital, confirmed that Grace was healed. This was after some examinations had been carried out and they could not find the growth in her stomach. Grace is now free and totally healed.

#### **4.6.3. Case 3: Mary Ndlovu (38).**

One Sunday morning on 10<sup>th</sup> November, 2002, as the Bishop and the intercessors were praying, Mary approached the Bishop on crutches for help. Mary told the Bishop that some time before she had begun to experience pains in her left leg, which continued for a year. Soon she noticed that her left leg was becoming short. She went to the hospital for examinations, and was told that she was lacking fluids in the joints, and that was the cause

of the pain. The doctors also recommended that she should undergo an operation which was going to be extremely expensive.

The Bishop encouraged her to believe that the Lord Jesus Christ would heal her and restore her left leg to normal. Mary was asked if she was willing to surrender her life to the Lord, which she did. Then Mary's deliverance and total healing session began. It took four days of continuous prayer for her to be healed. The source of her problem was revealed to be evil spirits. When they had been exorcized, she was completely healed and her left leg was restored to normal. To date, Mary is alive and well and walking fine without crutches.

#### **4.7. Conflicting views on healing and its place in the mission of the church today.**

Different schools of thought hold conflicting views on the subject of the supernatural gift of healing. One school of thought believes that the gift of healing ceased to operate when the period of 'redemptive history' was replaced by 'church history'. This is argued at length by Oscar Cullman (1956) in his book, *The Early Church*. Another school of thought has questioned as to whether miracles continued into the modern age, and whether supernatural healing was needed after the discovery of medicine. In his article entitled *Apostolic Healers Proclaiming the Total Gospel*, Allen E. Anthony (1991:5), complains that "it is unfortunate, but largely true, that the congregations of the church have abandoned healing and healthcare delivery to the medical establishment. Even where churches have been involved in medical missions, these have been relegated to medical professionals and divorced from the day-to-day mission of the local congregation." He says that the "problem is that churches have been conditioned by the dualistic influence of the Western philosophy of Descartes, who claimed that the body on the one hand and the mind and spirit on the other, though co-existing, have no influence whatsoever on each other." Allen argues that "basic to Western thought is materialism, which denies the importance or reality of the human spirit. Thus we have

tended to be guilty of a 'schizophrenic' or split-mind approach, isolating our members' use of medical science, as well as psychology, from the realities of spirituality and the need of the church to be a healing community." He argues strongly that "health is not the business only of the medical profession or of psychologists. It is the business also and in fact definitively so, of the church." Some would disagree with Allen, but I totally agree with him if we take the Scriptures as a basis of our function. Our function becomes apparent in the Gospel of Luke 9:1-6; 10:1-11. These verses form our theological cornerstone of commitment to the ministry of healing as a mandate from our Lord Jesus Christ to be obeyed. This mandate comes from the very will and love of Christ Jesus. Jesus sends his disciples (and we are his disciples today), not only to "preach the kingdom," but to "heal the sick" as well. As a result of the split-mindedness of Western thought which holds the "either-or" approach to body and mind, matter and spirit, the "both-and" approach of biblical theology has been rejected by some. Therefore, healing as salvation must be expressed in word and deed as we preach the total Gospel, no longer neglecting the ministry of healing. However, it is not my purpose here to pursue this line of argument; but my own experiences coupled with an extensive reading of literature leads me to the conclusion that healing is the most convincing demonstration to people that God is "with us" ( Mulungu-alinafe), that He is not " out there" beyond the reach of human compassion.

According to Philip Jenkins (2002:125), "from the earliest days of the European missions, the promise of healing was at the heart of Christian successes. Today, the rising African churches stand or fall by their success in healing." The purpose of healing is therefore, to fulfill the purposes of the kingdom of God. Wimber, who depends on George Ladd and James Kallas for his understanding of the kingdom, argues that God's purpose in healing is to further his kingdom (Wimber, 1987:40-41, see also, C. Peter. Wagner, 1988:92-99). Sin, the origin of sickness, originates in evil and Satan's kingdom; therefore, sickness proceeds from Satan. And through healing the sick, Jesus defeated Satan and demonstrated his rule

over sickness. Healing is the pronouncement of victory over the dark kingdom of Satan (Wimber, 1987:15, 36, 37).

Unlike Wimber, Wagner, in his book (1988), *How to Have a Healing Ministry without Making Your Church Sick*, bases his understanding of the purpose of healing on principles he extracts from the Lord's Prayer. Ministry is focused on making earth like heaven; Ministry is a battle to restore the values of the kingdom to a fallen creation. Wagner further emphasizes the importance of the cosmic battle in understanding the purpose of healing.

Differing with both Wimber and Wagner, Jack Deere (1993: 120) starts with God's compassion and mercy. He says that Jesus' compassion was aroused so that "he did not give them theological platitudes; he *healed* them." Deere points out how miracles manifest in the kingdom. He asserts that demonstrable power over illness and demonic force is "essential" to the kingdom (1993:225). Deere's explanation of the place of miracles in the kingdom does not emphasize the cosmic battle as heavily as Wimber and Wagner do. In his chapter entitled *Signs and Wonders*, however, he twice notes his complete agreement with Wimber's explication of the kingdom (Deere, 1993:34,36).

All three of the authors, Wagner, Wimber, and Deere agree on the importance and the place of healing in the mission of the church today. Power evangelism, as popularized by Wimber, is evangelization with the power of God as the tool. In discussing the appeal of Christianity to the Romans, Wagner (1988:79) points out that "while Christianity was being presented to unbelievers in both word and deed, it was the deed that far exceeded the word in evangelistic effectiveness."

As shown above, these authors link the purpose of healing in mission with the purposes of the kingdom. However, the importance of the kingdom of God in explaining the purposes and place of God's healing in the mission of the church today should be more fully investigated. Indeed, the more recent treatments reference the kingdom of God as important in a theology of healing. Our theology of healing should be enriched by our understanding of the kingdom of God. We must conclude, then, that unless we hold that healing was only

meant for the early Christian community as a special grace to get the church established, the healings characteristic of the early church should somehow continue happening in our day.

#### **4.8. Conclusion.**

The African Pentecostal Churches were birthed in innovative mission initiatives unprecedented in the history of mission, motivated by a compelling need to preach and even more significantly, to experience a new message of the power of the Holy Spirit. These churches have emphasized the manifestation of divine power through healing, prophecy, speaking in tongues and other Pentecostal phenomena. Healing and protection from evil are among the most prominent parts of the liturgy in their evangelism and mission. As Cox (1995:247) has observed, in Africa, Pentecostals “provide a setting in which the African conviction that spirituality and healing belong together is dramatically enacted.”

Therefore, according to Melvin L Hodges, in his famous book, *The indigenous Church* (1953:132), “the foundation for Pentecostal mission and the reason for its continued expansion is the ‘person filling of the Holy Spirit’ who gives gifts of ministry to untold thousands of indigenous ‘common people’, creating active, vibrantly expanding and indigenous Churches all over the world.” And the African Pentecostal churches, like the ones highlighted in this study, are some of the indigenous churches in Zambia which are creative, active and vibrantly expanding as a result of the Holy Spirit; who is giving gifts of healing, exorcism, and prophecy to the ministry.

Finally, the Holy Spirit revival is important to the ongoing life of the church - the story of Pentecostalism which traces its beginning from the Azusa Street Mission proves the point. Pentecostalism has changed the face of twenty-first century Christianity worldwide. From time to time the church needs a new infusion of life from the Holy Spirit. This infusion from the Holy Spirit is intended to put the church back on its mission track. In his book, *I Believe*

*in the Holy Spirit*, Michael Green (1975:12) speaks of the neglect of the Holy Spirit under the provocative subtitle: *The Spirit: unknown or domesticated?*. He says that “there is one group of Christians to whom the Holy Spirit is virtually unknown, due to their lack of expectancy with regard to his intervention in their every day lives.” He suggests that this “neglect of the Holy Spirit among another group may be characterized by the efforts to circumscribe his activities and hem him in with respect to his charismatic activities.” These persons attempt to “domesticate” the Spirit, for the purposes of avoiding his influence.

And Harry Boer, under the title *The Reticent Spirit*, discusses the question as to why the church is not aware of the Spirit’s ministry as the source of its witness. He gives possible reasons why the doctrine of the Holy Spirit tends to be neglected, especially in an age which is strongly influenced by empiricism and rationalism. He says that “in relation to the other persons of the Trinity the Spirit has remained in the background, being overshadowed by the more concrete figures of the Father and Son in theological reflection.” Furthermore, Boer points out that “*Perhaps it is because of the hidden role which the Spirit plays in redemption that he has been given a name which, as contrasted with that of the Father and the Son, allows of no concrete representation or association in our minds*” (1961:134) (Italics mine).

Boer argues that “while the church has produced developed theologies and christologies, there has been no unified and clearly circumscribed pneumatology developed.” (1961:130-131). Perhaps the very systematic and controversial theological context in which pneumatology has developed has contributed to the ‘silence on the Holy Spirit.’ And despite the theological controversy that has surrounded the Holy Spirit, Roland Allen states (1960:21) that “it is in the revelation of the Holy Spirit as a missionary Spirit that the Acts stands alone in the New Testament.” And Allen speaks of the cruciality of the book of Acts in the following way:

“In the Acts it (the missionary role of the Spirit) is the one prominent feature. It is asserted, it is taken for granted, from the first page to the last...*it is necessary to any true apprehension of the Holy Spirit and his work that we should understand it and realize it...if we ignore it...we lose sight of the perfection of the Spirit.* Our view is necessarily



one-sided, our understanding of the past is robbed of its true foundation, *our conception of our present duty is incomplete*, and our hope for the future is rendered doubtful and indistinct.” (Italics mine).

The Book of Acts, according to Allen, reveals a major role of the Holy Spirit, His missionary role. For Allen, if the Church disregards this role it amounts to “mission impossible.” Therefore, the forces that threaten the church today, like poverty, HIV/AIDS, witchcraft, etc, and the responding cries for revival, point to the need for a new infusion of life from the Holy Spirit. And African Pentecostal churches have taken a lead in this direction.



# **CHAPTER 5: THE IMPACT OF PENTECOSTALISM ON THE REFORMED CHURCH IN ZAMBIA.**

## **5.1. Introduction.**

Much has happened consciously in the lives of African Christians, especially the Zambians, since the first contact with Western European missionaries. It must be acknowledged, however, that Western European missionaries contributed significantly to the Christianization of Africa, especially through the translation of the Bible in vernacular (local) languages. However, in the the process of the contextualization of Christianity in Africa, Africans found unsatisfactory the tendency of Western European missionaries to explain away the supernatural found in the Bible, including God's ability to counter the reality of evil. In response, the African Pentecostalism initiated what some scholars interpret as "renewals" in mainline Churches. This chapter will focus on the "renewals" as a result of African Pentecostalism in the Reformed Church in Zambia.

## **5.2. A brief historical background to African Pentecostalism.**

What happened at the Azusa Street Revival in 1906 among a small circle of Christians, led by an African American Pastor, William Joseph Seymour, caused Seymour to become a national phenomenon, and thereafter, a global phenomenon. That experience led to what is called "Pentecostalism". Historically, Pentecostalism as we know it today traces its roots, according to Hollenweger (1985: 3 – 12), "in the spirituality of nineteenth-century African American slave religion." The emergence of African Pentecostalism was mainly based on the spiritual hunger that needed to be assuaged in a truly African expression of Christianity, and not merely a Western importation of it (Anderson Allan, 1991: 29 – 31). Many of the early manifestations of Pentecostalism were found in the religious expressions of the slaves

and were themselves a reflection of the African religious culture from which they had been abducted (Anderson Allan, 1991: 27). And, Leonard Lovett (1975:138) says:

“It may be categorically stated that black Pentecostalism emerged out of the context of the brokenness of black existence...Their holistic view of religion had its roots in African religion. One cannot meaningfully discuss the origins of contemporary Pentecostalism unless the role of black is clearly defined and acknowledged.”

Similarly, Mac Robert (1988:31) points out that “the influence of African religious ecstaticism and spirit possession is evident not only among black Pentecostals, but also in an attenuated form among the white Pentecostals.” Therefore, the rise of Pentecostalism gave a certain authenticity to American Black holistic Christianity with its motor manifestations. As Horn (1990: 22) points out, “Seymour and his black followers carried their ideals and the liturgy of black Christianity with their emphasis on freedom, equality and community and a good liturgy of shout, song, dance and motoring into the Pentecostal Movement.”

This does not imply that early Pentecostals had a syncretistic understanding of the Holy Spirit. Yet Pentecostalism with its roots in Afro-American religion transplanted its central tenets into South Africa in 1908, and later reached Zambia in the early seventies. This Pentecostal movement certainly had African influences which made it easier for it to flourish in the African soil. In a critique of mainstream Christianity, the World Council of Churches in August 1971 pointed out that:

*“The emergence and growth of Independent Churches in Africa, of Pentecostal Churches and of Pentecostalism within the established churches could point to some deficiency of traditional Roman Catholicism and Protestantism. Theology and practice of these churches has to a large extent neglected the Holy Spirit affirmation about his continuing presence. The doctrine of the Holy Spirit and even more the sensitivity to his active presence in the church and the world were and still are underdeveloped in the Western traditional of Christianity.”* (Williams, 1981: 95) (Italics mine).

The theological neglect of the Holy Spirit and the lack of sensitivity to his active presence in the church and the world are still prevalent in Western traditional Christianity due to the

influence of scholastic thought. According to Pomerville (1982:227) “the post-Reformation period, under the impact of the Enlightenment, produced a scholastic theology.” He says that the “view of scholastic theologians was that they were working with a ‘finished’ theological deposit. And he argues that “in its systematic form, theology consisted of propositional statements rather than an ongoing, dynamic process where biblical revelation was constantly interacting with historical and cultural contexts.”

In an article entitled *The Holy Spirit in Christian Theology* (1979:69-74) William Menzies surveys the development of pneumatology in the history of the Western church and points out areas in which pneumatology is underdeveloped. He gives possible reasons as to why the doctrine was neglected. Tracing the historical development of pneumatology, Menzies shows that until the Reformation the doctrine only in terms of the essential being of the third person of the Trinity (1979:69). The historic creeds of the church, as well as some Western systematic theologies, are testimony to this underdevelopment (1979:71, 74). Little is said concerning the mission of the Holy Spirit in theology in this particular period of the church. Menzies gives two possible reasons for this lack of development: firstly, a practical or ontological subordination of the third person of the Trinity, and secondly, the contextualization of theology in the period; the fact that theology focuses on the issues and questions of the historical moment, and therefore theological development reflects this narrow focus (1979:71). And a third possible reason is that not only does theology naturally narrow its response to certain issues, but also there is often a reaction against certain questions and issues. “Selectivity” is an active principle in theological development, both positive in terms of response to issues and negative in terms of avoidance of other issues. The subjective dimension of the Spirit in Christian experience was one such issue that was greatly avoided. Such avoidance, Menzies points out, was due to excesses that occurred with regard to the experiential-subjective dimension of the Christian faith, both at the beginning of the period (due to Montanism) and at the end of the period (the "Schwärmerei") (1979:73).

Menzies notes however that this neglected dimension began to receive attention in the theological traditions which represent the roots of modern Pentecostalism-Wesleyan holiness and Keswickian theology of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (1979:74-75). However, in this thesis, I will allow the African Pentecostal phenomenon to speak for itself as much as possible.

### **5.3. Defining the term “African Pentecostalism.”**

There is a great deal of discussion among scholars over which terminology is appropriate. And, it seems that whatever term one applies will cause controversy. “African Pentecostal” churches are churches which express and form a distinctively African Christianity. This term, despite its inadequacies, simply refers to African churches which emphasize the “role of the Holy Spirit in the life and mission of the church; particularly with ecstatic phenomena like prophecy, speaking-in-tongues and healing”. My definition and use of the term “African Pentecostal” is therefore intentionally a narrow one. In my narrow definition of “African Pentecostal,” I refer to those “African Pentecostal churches” which share sound historical and theological foundations with the mainline Protestant churches; but that broke away from the mainline Protestant churches. This term, specifically speaks of African Pentecostal churches that have a more definite Pentecostal identity in terms of history, theology and liturgy - African movements initiated by Africans.

Therefore, “African Pentecostalism” is the form of Christianity which can be called, to use Anderson Allan’s term, the “African Reformation” (Anderson, 2000). I would add to this that African Pentecostal churches were not only “reforming” the mainline churches, but also “restoring” that which was lacking in mainline Protestant churches.

### **5.4. The impact of African Pentecostalism on the mainline Reformed Church.**

While it is true that Pentecostalism has been present in Zambia for many years, its greatest impact was felt from the 1980’s. The mainline churches like the Anglican, Lutheran and

Roman Catholic churches are still in existence; but the fact remains that many of these mainline churches, in particular the Reformed Church in Zambia, have been transformed (impacted) by Pentecostalism. At first, the African Pentecostals were looked upon with disdain and disrespect. They were a laughing stock without a strong theological background. The mainline churches took them for granted and never wanted to have anything to do with them. But today the mainline churches are accommodating themselves to the African Pentecostal way in order to avoid the loss of members to the African Pentecostal churches. According to Richard Shaull and Waldo Ceasar (2000:85), “The arrival of Pentecostalism provoked in a certain way a return to the spirit of controversy in relation to the Protestant as well as the Catholic church, producing new manifestations of antagonism and similitude between Pentecostalism and other Christian churches”. Gifford (1999:329) says that “countless thousands are leaving the mainline Christianity to join the Pentecostal churches because mainline Christians do not take seriously divine and demonic interventions and do not seriously expect to replicate New Testament miracles today”.

These mainline churches could not afford to continue losing their members due to the fact that they were not able to provide for them the needed remedy for their problems. So, they had to accommodate Pentecostal practices in order for them to maintain their membership. Johnson Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu (2005:30) calls this the “Pentecostalisation” of mainline churches.

#### **5.4.1. The Pentecostalization of the Reformed Church.**

The renewal which has been happening in Zambian Christianity has been so infectious that even churches standing in historic continuity with western mission and their rationalistic, systematic and credal forms of Christianity have undergone a renewal which has changed their faith and style of worship. These renewal developments have led not only to the “Pentecostalization of the mainline churches”, but also, to the impasse resulting in schisms. According to Gifford (1998:232). “most famously, in 1993, a part of the United Church of



Zambia Youth Wing broke away on dispute over Pentecostal practices, to become Grace Ministries Mission. Then eight years later, in 2001, another split happened over Pentecostal practices; this time in the Reformed Church of Zambia, to become Bible Gospel Church in Africa.

#### **5.4.1.1. The Renewal movements in the church.**

The need for renewal movements in the church is for the purposes of reshaping worship, and revitalizing the mission of the church. The Zambian churches, especially the Reformed Church in Zambia have been undergoing change, reshaping as a result of renewals. In his book, *Signs of the Spirit*, Howard Snyder (1989) helpfully traces God's renewing work, focusing on four movements that illuminate what he describes as "the reshaping of the church: Montanism, the church's first charismatic movement; German Pietism under Johann Arndt's leadership; Moravianism: Count Zinzendorf and the Hermut Community; and Methodism and the cell-based structure initiated by John Wesley".

Except for the Roman Catholic and Anglican versions where the expression "charismatic" is retained, renewal movements in Zambian mainline churches are called "Prayer Groups". Their purpose is to renew churches through restoring effective and fervent prayers, the study of God's word and openness to the manifestations of the Spirit of God.

According to Johnson Kwabena Asamoah – Gyadu (2005: 32,33), "Revival, like renewal, presupposes articulating a response to flagging zeal and spirituality. It also aims at the reformation of what religious innovators may consider an inadequate ecclesiological belief system in order to make it conform to biblical Christianity as they understand it. Such reformation however, tends to put a lot more emphasis on the Holy Spirit. To speak of 'renewal' therefore, is to speak of a response to that which has become static, staid, institutionalized, legalistic, bureaucratized, formalized, reutilized or moribund in the religious and spiritual life of the individual and of the church. Renewal is thus a response to

the church's perceived loss of life and vitality leading to a stultification of her growth and mission." He continues that "in many countries across the world, the Pentecostal movement appeared as a protest movement against 'dry denominationalism' seeking to reverse perceived trends towards 'carnality' in the churches" (2005: 33).

#### **5.4.1.1.1. Renewal prayer groups.**

Renewal prayer groups are established for the purposes of reshaping the faith and life of the mainline churches. The main task of renewal groups is to achieve and provide close, caring, weekly fellowship among the members, and to edify and strengthen the Christians in their "walk with the Lord" (Colossians 1:10). According to Roberts Wuthnow (1994: 347), the "small group movement makes sense only against the backdrop of this emphasis on individual responsibility in matters of faith. It presupposes that members are concerned about developing their spirituality." Spirituality in this context therefore refers to the way in which renewal groups express or live out their faith. This is so because the norm of these groups is to encourage the individual spirituality. And according to Johnson Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu (2005:243 – 244), "Authentic renewal must also place as much importance on practical action against injustice, poverty, oppression, unemployment and economic deprivation as it does on the personal experience leading to new life in Christ and spiritual empowerment."

#### **5.4.1.1.2. Renewal Bible study groups.**

The impact of Pentecostalism on the Reformed Church in Zambia began to be felt through small groups like Bible Study groups. In these Bible study groups, members began to experience new life in Christ which resulted in "spiritual growth and empowerment". This Bible study group fellowship meets weekly for the purpose of studying passages from the Bible, biblical themes, and or inspirational books based on the Bible. The study is what

makes the group distinct, and what gives it a reason to exist. It is also something that the members take seriously. They make God's word come alive in the stories they tell about their everyday lives. What makes this group distinctive is the following three components:

- Bible study
- fellowship
- prayer

The abovementioned three are synthesized to help each individual member to develop a personal relationship with Jesus, which is the group's primary goal. Therefore, small-group methods in the form of Bible studies, and other expressions hold promise to bring "renewal" in the church. Calvin Guy (1979:127) contends that "In the small, caring communities where Christians listen to the Word, share...uphold one another in prayer, and witness...faith will flow as in the first century."

#### **5.4.1.1.3. Renewal youth fellowship groups.**

The primary purpose of the youth fellowship group, like any other group, is to have fellowship together through studying the Word, prayer and sharing testimonies in order to build up one another in faith. This is a place where youths also discover and develop their identity and gifts. The youth fellowship group is one of the renewal movements in the church due to the youth being exposed to Scripture unions at their various schools, attending the crusades, and attending organized youth camps where teaching on the Holy Spirit, prayer, new life in Jesus, etc. are taught by born-again pastors. As a result of these exposures, youth groups experience a new spiritual vitality. A feature of church renewal of this kind is a very significant increase in youth ministry in terms of evangelism. In this way, many young people, when they are 'born again' spend more time in prayer, Bible study, fasting and fellowship. It is essential therefore to offer young people pastoral care and a biblical grounding in their spiritual experiences and growth; so that they are trained how to, for example, evangelize in the streets, schools, etc. and how to engage in unrehearsed person



to person evangelism by personal testimony. This training takes place in these youth fellowship groups and youth camps.

## **5.5. Renewal in worship causes conflict: focusing on praise, prayer and preaching.**

### **5.5.1. The ministry of praise.**

The Gospel according to Dr Luke frames the history of the foundation of the church between fundamental events which were sustained by adoration and praise: A cosmic company of the heavenly host greeted the new-born child at Bethlehem and saluted the Saviour who brought good news and great joy for all the people (Luke 2:10–13). Furthermore, in concluding his narrative of the birth of the church, Dr Luke in the very last sentence of his Gospel makes this very important statement: “And they stayed continually at the temple, praising God” (Luke 24:54).

And ever since, songs, hymns and prayerful powerful worship have borne witness to the greatness of God’s salvation, bringing the praise to reverberate to the ends of the world. Praise is therefore seen as the appropriate response to what God has done for us. It comes from the joy of received blessings. Which means that praise is rooted in something beyond our own potential, beyond our emotions and sentiments.

The joy and gladness of the Lord’s salvation generates spontaneous praise and thanksgiving among the people of God. The Psalmist says, “It is fitting for the upright to praise him” (Ps. 33:1). Praise is a sacrificial offering by the congregation to God (Heb 13:15). In the Old Testament, God is seen as being “enthroned on the praises of Israel” (Ps. 22:3). And, praise for the Hebrews involved noise-making and raucous shouting (Ps. 27:6; 32:11; 33:3), singing and playing musical instruments (Ps.66:2; 71:22; 100:2), hand-clapping and dancing (Exod. 15:20; Ps 149:3; 150:4).

Commenting on this aspect of spontaneous praise, C.S. Lewis (1958:94-95) says the following:

“I had not noticed either that just as men *spontaneously praise* whatever they value, so they spontaneously urge us to join them in praising it. The Psalmists in telling everyone

to praise God are doing what all men do when they speak of what they care about. I think we delight to praise what we enjoy because the praise not merely expresses but completes the enjoyment; it is its appointed consummation.” (Italics mine)

Ultimately, the primary purpose of congregational spontaneous worship is to permit the expression of “full giftedness” for the believers as priests in the church. As Robert E. Webber (1982:127-128) succinctly and passionately pleads, “If worship is a meeting between God and his people, then return worship to the people.” In his book, *Let the church be the Church* (1928:120), Aarflot Andreas says that “Christian praise both individually and collectively in the hymns of the church thus constitutes a confirmation of the fact that the Christian Community takes God seriously and gives homage to Him.” He further states that “in this way a singing church may become a missionary church.”

### **5.5.2. The ministry of prayer.**

Prayer, according to Richard J.Foster (1988:30), “is communication or fellowship with God, and many are persuaded it is the most lofty work of the human Spirit.” Prayer expresses the broadest spectrum of response to God, this includes praise (1 Sam.2:1), thanksgiving (Dan. 6:10), loving adoration (Ps.116:1), devotion issuing in a prayer (1 Sam. 1:11), communion (Ps.42:8), confession (Dan.9:4, 20; 1 John 1: 5-10) petition and/or supplication (Eph.6:18-19), and intercession (Num.21:7; Rom. 8: 26-27). But above all, prayer, according to Walter L.Leifeld (1986:931) is worship, and “the ultimate object of prayer in both the Old and New Testaments is not merely the good of the petitioner but the honour of God’s name.”

Prayer is private as well as spontaneous in order to express the trust in and the devotion for God. Verbal or non-verbal, prayer reveals the intense personal bond between God and his people. Prayer, therefore, is a result of the relationship with God: Firstly, prayer is rooted in the knowledge that God is the mighty creator and merciful redeemer ( Neh. 1: 4-11; Isaiah 63: 15-16). Secondly, prayer is rooted in the knowledge that God is holy ( Ps. 25: 4-7;

Isaiah 6:3; 1 Peter 1 :15-16; Rev. 4:8-9). And finally, Prayer is associated with sacrifice in the Old and New Testaments (Genesis 13:4; 26: 25; 1 Peter 2:5). In his book, *Themes in Old Testaments* (1979:167), William Dyrness states that, “in the Old Testament, private and communal prayers are always complementary.” On the question of private and communal being complementary, Walther Eichrodt (1967:175) notes the following: “There is no need for real and living piety to take refuge in private prayer, but real adoration and lively religious feeling lend force even to public worship.”

This is what the prophet Isaiah (Isa. 56:6-7) foresaw when he prophesied that the Lord’s temple would be a “house of prayer for all nations”. Therefore, a powerful house of prayer is a church that has discovered the value of prayer. Like the Apostle Paul who knew the value of prayer to such an extent that he commanded the believers in Thessalonica in his letter (1Thess. 5:17) to “pray without ceasing.”

Therefore, prayer is, according to Orlando E.Costas (1979:34) “the means by which we express our dependence on the Holy Spirit, seeking his guidance, and submit to his will. Thus through submission and intense supplication we may claim the empowering presence of the Holy Spirit and thus we may anticipate...being motivated for witness.”

### **5.5.3. The Ministry of preaching.**

The primary purpose of preaching is to communicate the word of God with the “demonstration of the Holy Spirit and of the power” (1Cor. 2:3-5), so that the word penetrates the mind with full power. The business of a preacher is, therefore, to communicate the word of God in such a way that the word is clearly understood by the listeners. This, combined with personal conviction and authenticity, makes the message acceptable. The Apostle Peter demonstrated this in the Book of Acts chapter two. The force and persuasiveness of his preaching and the strong conviction in what he was saying

under the anointing of the Holy Spirit, led to the winning of three thousand souls in a day (Acts 2:14-41).

The ministry of preaching is one area that must be strengthened in churches if souls are to be won for Christ. Many preachers today are using preaching as a form of entertainment. The audience, it must be remembered, is not in the church to be entertained, but rather to be edified and inspired through the word of God. In his book, *The Integrity of Mission* (1979:33), Orlando E. Costas says that ‘The Word of God, rightly proclaimed and taught, awakens the evangelistic conscience of the church. It reminds believers that evangelism is not a ‘take it or leave it’ affair but a *must* in the life of every Christian.’ He further asserts that “it is neither a ‘franchise’ nor the sole responsibility of the ordained ministry. Rather, evangelism is the responsibility of the *laos*, that whole people of God.”

“A sermon,” according to Dietrich Bonhoeffer (1965:20) “is relevant only when God is there. He is the one who makes its message concrete.” Jean-Jacques Von Allmen (1962:31) agrees with Dietrich Bonhoeffer by declaring that “without the work of the Holy Spirit, the word which God has spoken to the world in his Son can not be effectively translated or made present.” And this is the reason for the preacher-teacher to be a prayerful person. In his book, *Preaching and Preachers* (1971:9), D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones says that “the work of preaching is the highest and the most glorious calling to which anyone can ever be called.” He further asserts that “the most urgent need in the Christian church today is true preaching.” In his preface to Volume One of *Studies in the Sermon on the Mount* (1966: vii) D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones writes this:

“A sermon is not an essay and is not meant, primarily, for publication, but to be heard and to *have an immediate impact upon the listeners*. This implies, of necessity, that it will have certain characteristics which are not found and are not desirable in written studies. To prune it of these, if it should be subsequently published, seems to me to be quite wrong, for it then ceases to be a sermon and becomes something quite nondescript.

I have a suspicion that what accounts for the death of preaching at the present time is the

fact that the majority of printed books of sermons have clearly been prepared for a reading rather than a listening public. Their flavor and form are literary rather than sermonic.” (Italics mine).

In concluding this section, there is need to mention that the impact of Pentecostalism on the Reformed Church in Zambia, was through profound spiritual renewal. The core of this renewal was the transformation of the “Reformed worship” towards the Pentecostal style of worship. This Pentecostal spiritual renewal impacted upon the “Reformed worship” to such an extent that during worship services, people began to praise and dance, mass prayers were done and people began responding to preaching in the form of “Amens” and “Alleluias”.

The “Pentecostalization” of the Reformed worship services has not only brought “freedom in worship”, but also bitter opposition to this “freedom” which is considered as “disorder” (*chisokonezo*, a Chewa word meaning, ‘confusion’) from the Reformed Perspective. As a result, this spiritual renewal movement (*Dziwani*, 1995:15) in the Reformed Church in Zambia which ‘Pentecostalized’ some of the congregations, brought tension, conflicts and breakaways.

## **5.6. Schismatic churches/ministries from the Reformed Church in Zambia: Focusing on the historical developments leading to the birth of GOMI and BIGOCA.**

### **5.6.1. Introduction.**

Historically, recorded and unforgettable events have brought changes or imprints which have shaken the very foundations of the established churches. Such events did not just occur spontaneously, abrupt or accidentally, but had been there, latent and boiling for a long time, waiting for an opportune time to erupt like a volcano. One such event was what is today called the Reformation, initiated by a Roman Catholic monk by the name of Martin Luther, who in 1517, courageously and putting his trust in God and his Word nailed “the Ninety-

five Theses” on the Church door in Wittenburg, Germany (Harold J. Grimm, 1954: 109-112).

Another event of this kind is what is globally known as Pentecostalism, initiated by an African American, the son of former slaves, by the name of William Joseph Seymour. He was reared in a Catholic home. In 1906, after many years in prayer, and teaching his followers “the baptism in the Spirit”, he became the initiator of the revival that came at the Azusa Street Mission (Cecil M. Robeck, Jr, 2006:4-8). Harvey Cox (1995:46-47) describes William Seymour and his small band of followers as “praying that God would renew and purify a Christianity they believed was crippled by empty rituals, dried-up creeds, and the sin of racial bigotry.” He further says that “when the fire finally did fall” at Azusa Street, “a spiritual fire roared forth that was to race around the world and touch hundreds of millions of people with its warmth and power.” Like the Reformation, Pentecostalism has become a global movement impacting and bringing change but also facing fierce opposition in many established mainline churches, causing tensions, conflicts and breakaways.

### **5.6.2. Grace Outreach Missions International (GOMI).**

The Reverend Samuel Nathan Phiri (interviewed, July 2008) was a minister of the Word and the sacrament in the Reformed Church in Zambia for many years, and until 1992, when he became “born-again” and started to conduct crusades (under the name “Jesus the Same Ministries”) within the Reformed Church. The Reverend Samuel Nathan Phiri’s life and ministry were transformed through his own first-born son, Paul Phiri. Pastor Paul Phiri (interviewed, July 2008), before going for pastoral training, was an instrument God used to touch and change the Reverend Samuel Nathan Phiri through the word of witness and prayers.

When Reverend Samuel Nathan Phiri began living the life as a ‘born-again’ Christian, he faced opposition from within the church. This opposition grew to such a point that he was summoned by the Synodical disciplinary committee to be disciplined for “confessing his sin

publicly”. This unfair disciplinary action by the church caused him to resign from the Reformed Church as a pastor. Historically, the Reverend Samuel Nathan Phiri, ministered in the Reformed Church for many years (from 1981 to 1991) without having a personal relationship with Jesus as Lord and Saviour. However, several historical circumstances and spiritual developments gave birth to GOMI under the Bishop Samuel Nathan Phiri as the founder: The developments were as follows:

- The Reverend Samuel Nathan Phiri’s radical and unsophisticated message of new birth and holiness, was viewed with disdain by church leaders who eventually stopped supporting him financially;
- His teachings on being “born-again and being filled with the Holy Spirit” with the evidence of speaking in tongues brought bitter opposition and ridicule from the church leaders;
- His revival campaigns or crusades within the Reformed Church in Zambia – it was his desire and effort to bring renewal and make the church more relevant to the needs of the daily people’s life - did not receive much-needed support;
- His gift of healing and deliverance was not appreciated, in spite of the growing demand by some people who needed healing and deliverance from demonic spirits;
- The Reverend Samuel Nathan Phiri’s preaching always ended with an invitation to accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour – which is known as the “altar call.” This again was contrary to Reformed preaching practice;
- The Church which reared him and trained him at Justo Mwale Theological College, and sponsored him to go to the United Kingdom for further studies and later appointed him to be the Director at Madzimoyo Lay Training Centre; now turned its back on him – for becoming a “born-again” pastor.

- The Synodical Central Committee (Bungwe la Sinodi la pakati) wrote a letter to summon him to appear before it to answer charges in order to be disciplined for “confessing his sins publicly”.

When the Reverend Samuel Nathan Phiri was summoned to appear before the Synodical Central Committee to be disciplined for accepting Jesus Christ after confessing his sins publicly; he decided not to go to the disciplinary committee, but to “go out” of the Reformed Church. So, he resigned as a Reformed Church Reverend.

After his resignation, he joined Grace Mission Ministry International (G.M.M.I), a church which broke away from the United Church of Zambia in August 1993 (Shaw, 1996: 284). As a pastor, the reverend Samuel Nathan Phiri served and ministered in this ministry (G.M.M.I) for seven years. He resigned from Grace Mission Ministry International in 2001, after attending Amsterdam 2000, a Billy Graham Evangelistic Conference in Holland. In August 2001 he finally launched his own ministry under the name of Grace Outreach Missions International, with its headquarters in Chipata, Zambia.

### **5.6.3. The Bible Gospel Church in Africa (BIGOCA).**

Much of the information regarding the historical circumstances and spiritual developments which led to the birth of BIGOCA comes from the Reverend Moses Odinga Kanyenda, who has written a book entitled *History of Bible Gospel Church in Africa: The First Five Years of Its Existence, 2001-2006* (Interviewed, March 2009; Kanyenda, 2008: *BIGOCA: The first five Years*). Kanyenda was one of the longest-serving General Secretaries of the Reformed Church in Zambia. He was elected as General Secretary in August, 1987 and he was in this position until the day he was excommunicated for being one of the advocates of Pentecostalism, on 3<sup>rd</sup> March, 2001. For over thirty years, the Reverend Kanyenda served as a Minister in the Reformed Church of Zambia.

Since history has a way of repeating itself regardless of how long it may take, the same was true of the birth of BIGOCA from the Reformed Church in Zambia (R.C.Z.). The R.C.Z. is

one of the mainline Churches in Zambia, and was founded by Dutch missionaries from South Africa who came to Northern Rhodesia (now Zambia) in July 1899 (Gerdien Verstraelen – Gilhuis, 1982:41). According to Kanyenda (2008:4), prior to the actual birth of the Bible Gospel Church in Africa, “there were a number of unsubstantiated accusations and counter accusations as to who was behind the wind of Pentecostalism that was blowing in and among some congregations.” In such an environment, Kanyenda said that, “it became so easy to suspect some pastors (Abusa) as being behind the Pentecostal move”. This atmosphere became the source of influence on the decision of the August 2000 Synod of the Reformed Church in Zambia (Kanyenda, 2008: 4). But it seems as though these accusations started as early as 1996. In 1996, the official Reformed Church in Zambia magazine (*Dziwani*) quoted the Reverend Peter Phiri saying:

“Some pastors were saying that some of their fellow pastors, must be kicked out of the church because their preaching was disregarding the church tradition. These pastors are...preaching Jesus Christ, organizing over-nights, intercessory prayers and other types of prayers as the Scripture teaches, gifts of the Holy Spirit, revival meetings, shouts of hallelujah and Amen” (Dziwani, 1996:13).

However, the Reverend Cephas Mbewe (*Dziwani*, 1996:18-19), responded to the Reverend Peter Phiri and wrote that from the Synod resolution, “he learnt that there is a great need for the definition of our reformed tradition... Pentecostalism in the Reformed Church in Zambia is a reaction to cold, stereotype, robot-like methodologies”. And he concluded by saying that “it is the beginning or continuation of defining our so-called Reformed tradition.”

#### **5.6.3.1. The August 2000 Synod of the R.C.Z.**

Prior to this synod, a number of secret meetings were organised by some Lusaka Presbytery elders who were against Pentecostalism (Kanyenda, 2008:4). Elders meeting in these secret meetings made sure that “the decisions passed at the meetings were implemented to the letter”. Before the August 2000 Synod meeting, some of the pastors suspected to be

“Pentecostals” experienced nasty times in their congregations, especially those in Lusaka, such as Garden, George and Chawama. In some cases, the elders told the pastors not to preach or pastors found that elders had locked the church main entrance with a message on the door: “No worship service today” (Kanyenda, 2008:5).

The main fear of the elders and others, argues Kanyenda, was not that “Pentecostal practices were bad per se because not many people in the church really understood what such practices were and why there were practiced; but, *they were protecting the long-standing and idolized Reformed tradition and identity which they were afraid was definitely going to crumble down if left unchecked*” (2008:5) (Italics mine).

The delegates at the August 2000 Synod were divided, according to Kanyenda (2008:5) “on the mode of worship even before the issue was tabled.” And, according to the Synod committee report (SC 2000/70, pg 46.), “after a lengthy debate on the issue of Pentecostalism, Synod resolved the following:

- A committee comprising for and against Pentecostalism be appointed to look into this issue thoroughly and come up with a balanced thought;
- The committee should advise the church whether to have one liturgy or more;
- The appointed committee should report their recommendations to Synod for approval or rejection.”

After the Synod, as the dust gradually settled down, the Moderamen went for a quick retreat at Ibis Gardens, which is situated along Great North Road, on 11 September 2000. But the same “divisive spirit” experienced at the August Synod meeting again manifested itself at this retreat - this time, concerning a controversial pastoral letter, addressing the issue of Pentecostalism arising from the Synod meeting, and which was already in circulation in congregations. This letter had an insertion which divided the Moderamen. The division was on this issue:

*“ to have an Ad hoc committee was not a Synod decision, but rather an insertion into the minutes by the Moderator and the General Secretary”* (Kanyenda, 2008:7) (Italics mine).



Therefore, from the retreat, Kanyenda asserts that “it was becoming every day clear that soon and very soon people would be reading the writing on the Reformed Church in Zambia wall for an inevitable split.” The split, argues Kanyenda, “ was openly caused by the division of the moderamen; the Moderator and the General Secretary on the one hand and the Vice Moderator, the two Synod Secretaries and the Actuarius on the other” (2008:7-8). These developments as displayed by top leadership brought “division” and “stagnation” in the Reformed Church in Zambia. According to Kanyenda (2008:14) “on the 27<sup>th</sup> January 2001, the other four members of the Moderamen met at Justo Mwale Theological College and resolved to suspend the Moderator and the General Secretary, on the following charges:

- For bringing ‘disunity in the church’,
- For having ‘abrogated the Constitution’.

#### **5.6.3.2. R.C.Z. elders’ secret fellowship on 14<sup>th</sup> October, 2000.**

The secret meetings or fellowships held by elders resolved to draw up a manifesto which they decided to implement systematically. So far the following have been implemented:

- A court injunction against the General Secretary was taken out;
- One case against the ten Lusaka-based ministers was filed at the High Court, although it was unfortunately thrown out by the High Court as baseless;
- Meetings of elders were convened, disguised as Bible studies;
- In congregations overnight prayers and praise teams were banned’ (Kanyenda, 2008:13).

#### **5.6.3.3. The Madzimoyo Extra-ordinary Synod 2 to 4 March, 2001.**

This was the extra-ordinary meeting of the Synod of the Reformed Church in Zambia that birthed the **Bible Gospel Church in Africa (BIGOCA)** after taking certain decisions against “the nine ministers whom it labelled as ‘trouble-makers’ or perhaps as

‘confusionists’ and originators of the problems the church was going through” (Kanyenda, 2008:18). The problems were identified as “Pentecostal practices.” At this meeting, on the 3<sup>rd</sup>, it was announced to the delegates who packed the Madzimoyo church to capacity that “they are presently ministers who are trying to:

- Change the liturgy of the church, thus the way and mode of worship;
- That Pentecostalism is being advocated in the church, which is against the Reformed tradition and identity;

So this meeting has been called in order to find a lasting solution to this ‘development’ which has so far affected the general life and unity of the church.” (Kanyenda, 2008:18).

After this announcement, immediately “the names of ministers suspected to have fuelled ‘the confusion and disunity’ in the church were called out, one by one, and a charge was laid against each one of the nine. Charges ranged from accusations of being a “Pente” (a short form for Pentecostals) to the abrogation of the constitution through to the insubordination to authority.” (2008:18).

It must be remembered, that before this extra-ordinary meeting took place, on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of January, 2001 the *Times of Zambia* newspaper carried an article on its first page saying:

“Two factions of the Reformed Church in Zambia (R.C.Z)’s Garden township church in Lusaka exchanged blows and whipped each other using sticks and other missiles on New Year’s Eve”.

The writer wrote that “the clash was as a culmination of a long standing wrangle which has rocked the congregation since 1998”. The writer added that, “The elders, most of whom have been ex-communicated, are demanding the immediate removal of the Reverend Cephas Mbewe whom they accused of introducing the Pentecostal system of worshipping. And the elder, by the name of Mwenda, said, his group was against the Pentecostal mass praying and baptism by way of immersing the whole body in the pool of water which Reverend Mbewe had introduced.” (*Times of Zambia*, 2 January 2001, p.1.).

Kanyenda (2008:19) said that “so as each name and the charge against that name were read out, the meeting was asked by the chairperson for its opinion in the local language, ‘Sinodi atani?’ (meaning what does the Synod say?). And the response was, ‘Adulidwe!’ (meaning excommunicate them). The Synod further concluded that those suspected pastors who failed to attend the extra-ordinary meeting were actually excommunicated.” According to Kanyenda, the nine ministers who were excommunicated are as follows:

- The Reverend Peter R. Ndhlovu – Moderator of R.C.Z (Now Bishop of BIGOCA)
- The Reverend Cephas M. Mbewe.
- The Reverend Elias E. Phiri.
- The Reverend Joram A. Munyunki.
- The Reverend Jefferson D. Nkhata.
- The Reverend Isaac C. Mwale.
- The Reverend Stephen D. Lungu. (deceased)
- The Reverend Abel M. Siwamezi. (deceased)
- The Reverend Moses O. Kanyenda - General Secretary R.C.Z (now a retired administrator of (BIGOCA).

#### **5.6.3.4. The birth of the Bible Gospel Church in Africa.**

Knowing about the decision that the highest body in the Reformed Church in Zambia had taken and that it was practically impossible to lodge an appeal against the decision, the above-mentioned excommunicated ministers decided there and then to proceed “to work on the document required by the office of the Registrar of Societies to register their ‘New Church’.” (Kanyenda, 2008:21).

The “New Church” was registered as *New Reformed Bible Church in Africa* but the Registrars’ office could not proceed with the registration with the name “Reformed”. Therefore, they registered the “New Church” under the name: *Bible Gospel Church in*

*Africa* and it was launched and commissioned on the 6<sup>th</sup> March 2001 at the Chinese Restaurant Hall, in Lusaka, Zambia' (Kanyenda, 2008:22-23) (Italics mine).

### **5.7. Assessing the response from the Reformed Church on the impact of African Pentecostalism.**

The response to Pentecostalism within the established Reformed Church in Zambia should have been very cautious. Instead they banned and excommunicated pastors and others, because they were doing things differently from the norms or tradition of the Reformed practice. The Reformed Church's attitude and response to Pentecostalism can be understood when one reads *the Reformed Church in Zambia Theological and Current Affairs Committee Report and Recommendations*. According to the *Report (2000)*, the Synodical Central Committee met on 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> of November, 1999 "to request the Theological and Current Affairs Committee to study 'these so-called Pentecostal or charismatic trends' and advise the church accordingly."

In my assessment of this *Report (2000)*, I will focus on the impressions and observations of members of the Theological and Current Affairs and their recommendations. The report reveals that the committee "visited a selected *sample* of congregations in Lusaka." On 21<sup>st</sup> May, 2000, Chilenge, Chelston, Northmead and Matero were visited; and on 28<sup>th</sup> May 2000, Garden, Chisomo, Mtendere, Kamwala, Sinai, Kanyama and Kafue Estates.

After a committee (comprising of ten members, of whom five were doctors in theology) visited the abovementioned "sampled" congregations, the following observations were made of what was taking place in some of the congregations visited:

- "Unstructured; normal order not followed; important elements, like the law, creed, are omitted;
- Total control by the lay people;

- Theatrics, singing with clapping of hands, dancing, whistling and ululating leading to mass prayers dominating the service;
- “Praise Team” is treated with favour and given extra-ordinary power and the team leader manipulating the congregation;
- Uncritical imitation in decorating of the liturgical space, distracting the Word which is slowly and systematically being suppressed;
- Strange insertions into the liturgy (e.g. Hymn 158 with a prayer in tongues or the leader abruptly kneels and some congregants imitate);
- Services were highly emotionally charged with some people crying and rolling. There is a strong emphasis on, and manipulation of emotions.
- In the service, some walk about, others shouted repeatedly, Jesus, Jesus, Jesus or in the name of Jesus, in the name of Jesus or Alleluia, Alleluia, etc. Others clinched their fist, while others were clapping, others scratching walls, others crawling around, others acted as though they did not approve of what was going on;
- Worship service was characterized by pathologies of prayer that carry the notion that human effort in prayer causes God to do things. The more and louder the people pray the more the results;
- A completely different order of service, which depended on songs with strong emotional appeal, had been imported and implemented.” (Report, 2000:1-2).

According to the report, there were some congregants whose views were in favour of Pentecostalism. They said that “Pentecostalism is good because there is power in it.” While others said, “This way of worship is more appealing since there is full participation of members and it is not pastor-centered.” But some congregants whose views were critical of Pentecostalism said that “Reformed liturgy has been shelved completely. Preaching comes very late when some people are switched off and the leaders are not time conscious.” (2000:2). So, after many deliberations by the committee, on Pentecostal developments and

on tradition and Reformed identity, the following recommendations were issued based on Reformed theological considerations:

1. ‘The *importance* of the liturgical service as *expression of Reformed identity and theology* be emphasized and honoured by all ministers and members;
2. The *importance of careful planning, thorough preparation and responsible conducting* of the whole liturgical service and all constituting elements be accepted by all ministers;
3. The *standard official liturgical order* of the Reformed Church in Zambia be honoured and followed in every Sunday service and that no liturgical element be omitted or marginalized;
4. The *church calendar* be carefully *followed* throughout the year as celebration of the salvific events of the Christian faith and as expression of unity with God’s people world-wide;
5. The role of the *minister as primary liturgical leader* and the *supervision* of the service by the *church council (resting and serving elders)* be emphasized. The Kalata A and B Report to Presbytery must include reference to this;
6. The role of *non-ordained people* as liturgical leaders be carefully considered by Synod and the access of *preachers from non-Reformed churches* to pulpits be subjected for approval in writing by an official meeting of ruling and resting elders;
7. The following *practices* in the liturgical services be *strictly forbidden* with immediate effect as they are not expressive of Reformed spirituality and its underlying theology:
  - Whistling,
  - Rumba dancing,
  - Mass prayers (one member of the committee objected against this recommendation),
  - Wall scratching and beating,



- Theatrical bodily movements, crawling, rolling on the ground, stamping of feet, shivering, misbehaving in preaching,
  - Prolonged singing of one sentence from a hymn or chorus.
8. A word of caution be raised against excessive use of the following practices in the liturgical service:
- Altar call,
  - Testimonies,
  - Saying of meaningless Amen's, alleluia's, yes, and unnecessary comments,
  - Dancing and clapping of hands,
  - Electrical musical instruments,
  - Playing of music during prayers.
9. The role of the so-called *praise teams* and their *leaders* be curbed in proportion to the actual service of the Word which is the focus of the Reformed worship and be *limited* to a maximum time of thirty minutes. The leader of the praise team is not allowed to say the votum.
10. A stern word of *caution* and *appeal* be issued to *ministers* who have become self-styled "Pentecostals" and agents of disturbing liturgical innovations to:
- Recognize the paradigmatic theological shifts underlying their practices;
  - Recognize the disruptive effect of their practices on the unity of the Reformed Church in Zambia;
  - Display integrity and either (i) adhere and submit to the official Reformed Church in Zambia liturgical policy, or (ii) join a church with a theological tradition congruent with their liturgical practices.
11. All *ministers* in the Reformed Church in Zambia be *required* to witness to their wholehearted acceptance of the Reformed confessional identity and official liturgical tradition and practice by *signing* a document to this effect at the 2000 August Synod meeting.



12. The *Theological and Current Affairs Committee* to (i) guide pastorally and theologically those ministers who have presented genuine objections in writing to recommendation 11 and (ii) make a clear and firm *recommendation* to the Synod Central Committee meeting of November 2000 regarding progress and possible disciplinary measures.
13. The *education* of ministers and congregants in (i) the theology of worship, (ii) the principles of Reformed liturgy and (iii) the theology and practice of the church calendar be emphasized as of utmost importance and be *assigned* as a joint venture to Justo Mwale Theological College and MCLTC.
14. *No liturgical innovation* be allowed without express Synodical approval. All liturgical renewal must be preceded by (i) in depth research, (ii) theological substantiation and (iii) official Synodical approval.

From the impressions and recommendations, one would assess that the Reformed Church in Zambia took a hostile stand towards ‘Pentecostalism.’ The *Report* does not mention that the Committee made any efforts to call a reconciling meeting for the purpose of meeting the so-called self-styled “Pentecostals” in order to try and resolve doctrinal issues which brought disunity in the church. And all fourteen recommendations reveal that there was/is no room for compromise or negotiations; it is either “they” adhere and submit to the official Reformed Church in Zambia liturgical policy, or “they” join a church with a theological tradition congruent with their liturgical practices (see recommendation 10 above). I believe that these recommendations became a recipe for the breakaway that took place from the Reformed Church in Zambia in March, 2001. On the 3<sup>rd</sup> of March 2001 the Reformed Church in Zambia (RCZ), at Madzimoyo in the Eastern Province of Zambia, took the drastic decision that has changed the history of RCZ - the decision to excommunicate nine ministers, self-styled “Pentecostals” for the “disruptive effect of their practices on the unity of the Reformed Church in Zambia.” (see recommendation 10 above). These ministers, whose intentions were not to leave the church, were forced to leave.

At the launch of the Bible Church in Africa, the Reverend Peter Ndhlovu (former Moderator of the Reformed Church) now Bishop of the new church explained the reason for the excommunication by the RCZ saying that

“We are happy that we are excommunicated from the RCZ *not because we sinned, but because we stood for the truth.* We shall not hate members of the RCZ because they are our brothers and sisters. We shall continue to pray for them” (Kanyenda, 2008: 22-23) (Italics mine).

This indeed constitutes a sad chapter in the history of the church in Zambia. It remains an open question if the issue could not have been settled in another fashion, if the leaders from the two sides had reached out to one another in a spirit of understanding and reconciliation. More closely listening to God, both churches may have discovered new things that God, through his Spirit, wanted to teach his Church in Zambia. That the BIGOCA has lessons to learn from the situation, is evident. But the Reformed Church in Zambia is also challenged to respond to the “Pentecostalisation” of the church, with an understanding of the “flow of the Spirit.” The nature and causation of renewal movements require a balanced and relevant theological examination.

### **5.8. Entering into a dialogue with African Pentecostalism in Zambia.**

Entering into dialogue between African Pentecostalism and Protestantism will have ecumenical significance and obvious and far-reaching results. The kingdom of God as the ultimate criterion for spirituality and justice, the evidence of the in-breaking of God’s will over all of God’s creation, is the entry point for Protestants and Pentecostals in their search for common ecumenical foundation of mission and social concern. Entering into this dialogue with the African Pentecostal churches will demand equal commitment and openness from both sides.

In order to have a fruitful dialogue, Pentecostals need to come out of their isolationist cocoon and participate actively: but the Protestants as well. need to emerge from their

protectionist cocoon. As dialogue progresses, love recognizes unities of spiritual experience. In his book, *The Go-Between God*, Taylor (1972:186-7) says that “dialogue must probe beyond the glad discovery of similarities to the more painful recognition of differences that are mutually exclusive.” He adds that “the deeper the appreciation of the other faith the greater the knowledge of what these disagreements really are... let no one belittle those disagreements.” He argues that “...to stop at the disagreements is to lose faith in the Spirit’s gift of communion and communication. To move on from the stage of disagreement to that of a more profound mutual understanding is the most important step in a dialogue and the most important act in Evangelism.”

Ecumenically, it is highly significant that - with all of their differences in doctrine, ecclesiastical structure and spiritual traditions, often faced with mutual suspicion and conflict especially on the “mission field”, with charges of proselytism abounding - participants will find it mutually healthy to enter into dialogue in order to find a common theological ground for the sake of the kingdom of God.

The following are missiological issues which the Pentecostal churches bring to the table for dialogue with the mainline Protestant Churches in Zambia. I believe that if Protestants enter into dialogue with openness, willing to listen and understand, to seek also the wellbeing of others, talks will succeed.

### **5.8.1. Spirit possession: an African reality.**

Spirit possession is not a phenomenon just confined to the Chewa people of the Eastern Province of Zambia, but it encompasses the whole of Africa. Many researchers have written of spirit possession among the Africans, for example, Bourdillion (1987), Gelfand. M. (1965), John Mbiti (1969) and others. Mbiti presents some descriptions of rituals performed by a spirit medium in chapter fifteen of his book, *African Religion and Philosophy* (1969). Gelfand (1965) explains the role played by the spirits in general.

Bourdillon's (1987) anthropological observations of the positive social functions of spirit possession among the Shona people in Zimbabwe, is cited by Bucher (1980:94), who reports that "the possession provides the Shona with an opportunity to express, under the protection of the dissociated trance state, inclinations which they would not normally be allowed to manifest in public." This aspect of spirit possession is in sharp contrast to Ter Haar's (1992: 117) definition of spirit possession:

"Western possession beliefs generally consider spirit possession to be involuntary, a harmful experience which should be avoided if possible. In common speech, this negative attitude is reflected in a way people refer to someone as being "possessed" meaning in a hysterical state, acting as though mad, and in general having taken leave of one's senses."

This is a negative Western understanding of possession which does not portray any of the liberation elements of African spirit possession. However, there are notable theological perspectives on possession which have relevance to the African experience. Hastings, who is quoted by Pauw (1988:25), acknowledges the reality of the African metaphysical world of "unexplained illness and misfortune, of spirit possession and fears of bewitchment..."

Nevertheless, it should be noted that the phenomenon of spirit possession which is positively acknowledged as possessing power in African traditional religion, is widely regarded as victimisation by evil spirits in many Christian circles. I agree with Pauw (1988:29) who describes possession as "the complete taking over of the whole person by demonic forces." Pauw also quotes Oosthuizen as acknowledging the reality of demon possession and yet warning against demonising every misfortune (1988:36). Pauw (1988:38) furthermore acknowledges the reality of demonic powers which manifest in amphibious ways and appear as ancestors in some cultures, but he still contends that lessons can be drawn from spirit possession for Africans in search of God.

Possession by lion spirits, for example, signifies possession of power by the host, which is not just an abstract entity. The use of power bestowed on a medium is accepted by the Chewa community. This acceptance is demonstrated by rituals and ceremonies performed on the initial possession and subsequently. The spirit mediums act out aspects of the spirits while responsibility for their actions is laid on the spirits (Bourdillon, 1991:328). Thus, the medium, ng'anga, enjoys a prestigious position in society. As host of a powerful lion spirit, or even a lesser spirit for that matter, the ng'anga is connected with the metaphysical world. This factor lifts the ng'anga from most, if not all, social, cultural, or human limitations. Hence, the possessing spirit has some significant impact on the host's social life, especially considering Oosthuizen's (1968:136) observation that:

*“In the traditional African world everything is controlled by the spiritual world which determines and awards weal or woe, abundance or want, illness or health, continuing life or death.”* (Italics mine)

Thus, the Chewa cosmology of spirit possession (as discussed in chapter two) has brought to light the fact that ng'angas have been pivotal and central in African traditional religious beliefs and communities. It can therefore be argued and concluded that spirit possession provides a model of African empowerment.

The similarity between traditional prophecy and Christian prophecy as dealt with in this thesis, has led some scholars to conclude that the African Pentecostals are copying traditional devices under the guise of Christianity. However, a look at the nature of possession, the choice of hosts, the mood of possession, the gifts from the spirits and the limitations of possession may help to distinguish a traditional medium, ng'anga, from a Christian prophet or healer.

It is my contention that churches in Africa, like the African Pentecostal churches, can draw from the liberative model of African empowerment in traditional religion. The prominent

position of ng'angas in traditional religion can be used as a model for the inculturation of Christianity in Africa.

According to Oduyoye (1986:69) “Acculturation [is] used to refer to the efforts of Africans to use things African in their practice of Christianity, *inculturation as the manifestation of changes that have come into the African way of life as a result of the Christian faith.*” (Italics mine). Acculturation led to the realisation and recognition of the positive dynamic thrust inherent in African independent churches (Pauw, 1995:13). Young argues that “Without acculturation, Christian theology is not African; without inculturation, African theology is not Christian.” (Quoted in Cohn-Sherbok, 1992:98).

The emerging African Pentecostal Churches’ spirituality in this study may indeed be described, in the words of the IAMS Report (1985:76), “...as valid and genuine expressions of religious initiative and creativity with a missionary thrust in their own right.” (Quoted in Pauw, 1995:14). Their missionary initiatives are described by Pauw (1995:14-15) as follows:

“...a case of a positive response to, on the one hand, the total life situation within which people find themselves, as well as, on the other hand, a response to the Gospel and to Christianity as experienced and reinterpreted in their our context...as a people’s response to the Christian message as understood, interpreted and applied by people in their own particular context of change and as expressed in terms of felt needs, threats and challenges.”

It becomes, therefore, inevitable for serious African theologians to take the phenomenon of spirit possession as a resourceful departing point in the formulation of an African Pentecostal theology of spirituality. The Protestant church in Africa, too, in its search for that which is liberating, should wrestle with the question: “**How does the church address the traditional Africa spirit world?**” Working out the relationship between the ancestral spirits and the Holy Spirit has become a major theological problem in churches in Africa today as has been discussed in this thesis.

## **5.8.2. African Pentecostal Churches and the Holy Spirit.**

Spirituality may be understood as the power or energy by which one lives and which links one's worldview to one's style of life, according to Oduyoye (quoted in King, 1994: 363).

The missionary work of the African Pentecostal churches illustrates how, through the Holy Spirit, they have transcended the theological deficiency which Western Christianity presents to African Spirituality.

Although African Pentecostal churches emerged from mainline Protestant churches, they trace their Pentecostal influence to Pentecostalism in Europe and the United States of America. The whole Pentecostal movement has its roots in the Holiness Movement which separated from Methodism in the United States of America at the end of the nineteenth century, according to Dicharry (1983: 91-92). Central to African Pentecostal churches is the Holy Spirit and his accompanying gifts.

The gifts bestowed by the Holy Spirit manifest in the power to perform miracles. Attention in this thesis focuses on the African Pentecostal churches' possession by the Holy Spirit. These African Pentecostals are taken beyond their limitations into the spiritual realm of power ready for what Pauw (1988: 28) calls "power encounter."

The African Pentecostal churches understand themselves as vehicles through which the Holy Spirit works. They are instruments of the Holy Spirit who enables them to do extraordinary work for God. These are the African Churches liberated from the constraints imposed upon Africans by andocentric Christian and African traditions. Their mission to the masses who look up to African Pentecostal churches for deliverance from sickness, barrenness, anxiety, chronic poverty, misfortune and harassment by evil spirit places them in a "limelight" category. They have ascended the social, religious and, to some extent economic ladders as instruments of the Holy Spirit. The African Pentecostal Churches depend totally on God for the empowering Spirit who requires "a life of vigorous fasting,

prayer and rejection of the world” (Elizabeth Amoah. 1986). Hence, possession by the Holy Spirit provides the African Pentecostal churches with a quick exit out of cultural, religious or socio-economic prisons of exclusion and marginalisation in which the other churches denying the ministry of the Holy Spirit are trapped.

The need to pay attention to pneumatology arises from an understanding by African Pentecostal churches, of the Holy Spirit as a comforter and source of power for the down-trodden African. This has significance to Africans in the African Pentecostal churches of this study because of the cosmological and anthropological boundaries they are helped to transcend through possession by the Holy Spirit. Hence, the need to outline the nature and work of the Holy Spirit in the Bible and, to evaluate how this has been appropriated within the African context.

### **5.8.3. Some Aspects of the biblical teaching of the work of the Holy Spirit.**

In his book, *The Holy Spirit in the Old Testament*, Wood (1976:14) reminds us that “The Holy Spirit is the Third Person in the Godhead: God the Father is the first; God the Son is the second; and God the Holy Spirit is third. Although these three Persons are equal in power and honour, they are different. Their difference has been illustrated by the events surrounding Christ’s baptism. While God the Father spoke in heaven when God the Son, Jesus Christ was baptised in the Jordan river by John the Baptist; God the Holy Spirit descended upon Jesus ‘like a dove’ (Mathew 3:16). Luke, the author of Acts and the Gospel of Luke, quotes Peter who uses the name of God for the Holy Spirit (Acts 5:3,4). And Paul in 1 Corinthians 3:16, says that a Christian is called “the temple of God” because the “Spirit of God” dwells in him/her. The Holy Spirit has divine attributes such as omnipotence (Romans 15:19), omniscience [1 Corinthians 2:10,11] and omnipresence (1 Corinthians 2:10, 11) and omnipresence (Psalms 139:7-10).

Wood further argues that, the Holy Spirit is not just a force or power, but a Person who is intelligent (John 14:26; 15:26); emotional (Isaiah 63:10; Ephesians 4:30) and has a will (Acts 16:7; 1 Corinthians 12:11). He is portrayed as the “comforter” (John 14:16, 26). He



teaches (Luke 12:12), convicts (John 16:8), speaks (Acts 2:4), commands [Acts 8:29], helps (Romans 8:11), intercedes (Romans 8:26), performs miracles [Romans 15: 19], searches (1 Corinthians 2:10, 11) and inspires (2 Peter 1: 21). The Holy Spirit also effects other divine works like creation (Genesis 1:2), regeneration of the sinner (John 3: 5, 6) and the resurrection of the saints (Romans 8:11) (Wood, 1976: 15-16).

### **5.8.3.1. The work of the Holy Spirit in the Bible.**

While the ministry of God the Father is that of serving as supreme planner, author and designer; and the Son's is that of serving as supreme creator and giving revelation of the Godhead; the ministry of the Holy Spirit is that of bringing to final form that which has been brought into being by the Son at the Father's command (Wood, 1976:16). In Genesis 1:2-31, we see the Holy Spirit present and active in the creation of the universe.

The Holy Spirit, according to Wood (1976:35) "also brought humanity into existence. Thus, the plural pronoun in Genesis 1:26, 27 "Let us make in our own image, after our likeness" is regarded as referring to the Trinity of God. "The Holy Spirit imparts new life in a person through regeneration. This begins with Christ's incarnation." And Wood (1976: 16, 35) argues that "it was the Spirit who prepared the body of Christ in the womb of Mary (Luke 1:35) and directed and empowered Him in his activities (Matthew 4:1; 12:48; Luke 2: 27; 4: 14, 18). "The Holy Spirit, Wood further argues, "also forms and empowers the church (1 Corinthians 3:16; 12:4-11; Ephesians 2:22). He teaches and guides Christians (John 14:26; 15:26; 16:13, 14; Acts 5:32)."

In conclusion, the centrality of the God the Holy Spirit is well emphasised by Davies (1995:187), who argues that "Christology grew out of pneumatology." Davies adds that "the Christian movement arose from the Pentecost event." The African Pentecostal churches in this study understand their ministries to be pneumatologically founded and empowered. It is, therefore, the Holy Spirit who shapes their spirituality through healing, prophecy,

teaching preaching and praying. Hence, a general evaluation of pneumatology in Africa will shed more light on our understanding.

### **5.8.3.2. Pneumatology in an African Context.**

Pneumatology occupies a central place in many African Pentecostal churches primarily due to the rather holistic African worldview (Anderson, 1993: 109). According to Anderson (1991:38), "Pneumatology in Africa is enacted at least as much as it is articulated; the enacting of pneumatology is seen in the various and multiplied manifestations of the Holy Spirit." Anderson asserts that the African needs "divine involvement" because "as the spirit pervades all things according to the African worldview, the Holy Spirit is understood as a pervading Spirit." (1991:8). When received, the Holy Spirit is manifested by various extraordinary abilities such as to heal, prophesy, exorcise, speak in tongues, teach and preach. Hence, the centrality of pneumatology in African Pentecostal Churches is in continuance with African cosmology.

While Sundkler (1961:244) claims that "in African Independent Churches, the Spirit is recognised as a power which is independent of most of the Orthodox signs of Christian behaviour", Daneel (1988:19) argues contrarily. He asserts that "the Holy Spirit is not a manipulatable force as is the case in African traditional religion. God takes the initiative during inspiration or revelation by the Holy Spirit.' And according to James N. Amanze, "the Holy Spirit is understood in many African Independent churches as the power of God in the churches for the edification of the church." (1998:117).

Oosthuizen is, however, concerned that in the African Independent churches the Holy Spirit is misunderstood and is confused with the ancestral spirits. He notes that the 'Umoya' theology, or the theology of the Holy Spirit, is a fundamental concept in practically all indigenous and Pentecostal movements in Africa, and he is concerned that there is frequently in these movements a lack of relationship between the Word and the Spirit. When

this happens, free rein is given to all sorts of odd ideas and the unique biblical concept of the Holy Spirit is lost.

Oosthuizen insists that checks and balances must be employed when claims are made of the work of the Spirit. He suggests that anything which does not have biblical support is of dubious character and he furthermore insists that unless a clear distinction is made in the Independent churches between the Holy Spirit and the ancestors then syncretism has occurred to such a degree that these churches can no longer appropriately be called Christian (1968:119-138). Martin (1964:161) agrees with Oosthuizen by concluding that “there is little difference between the Holy Spirit and ancestral spirits in African Independent churches which, therefore, have a false pneumatology.”

Daneel, on the other hand, whose research has proved that there is no affiliation between the Holy Spirit and ancestral spirits, but a discontinuity, argues as follows:

“This orientation to the traditional worldview could create the impression that the prophet’s motive is to preserve the old mentality. That this is not the case is evident from the fact that the spirit is branded a demon and its claims on the patient - especially if these involve ancestor worship - are rejected and the spirit is exorcised. Here the Holy Spirit and the ancestral spirit are usually diametrically opposed and it is a matter of confrontation rather than identification...We are dealing with a Christian spirit-inspired confrontation that reaches into the traditional worldview at a far more existential level than was possible for the historic churches with their Western theological norms and doctrinal purity” (1987: 261-262).

These words remind us that missionaries often have tried to look into the African worldview through Western-hued spectacles. The images appear to be distorted; and so what is not understood is relegated to a mysterious African traditional spirit world that is considered “demonic”. Mbiti (1969:3) observes that “Christianity will fail to be meaningful in an African context unless it fully occupies the whole person at least as much as traditional religions do: The whole environment and the whole time must be occupied by religious

meaning, so that at any moment and at any place, a person feels secure enough to act in a meaningful and religious consciousness.” Anderson (1991:79) agrees with Mbiti by warning the church that “A Christianity which fails to speak into this existential spirit world of Africa, and which fails to provide solutions to the problems inherent there, does so at its peril.”

It can therefore be concluded that African experiences of the Holy Spirit should not be dismissed as resurgences of traditional religion. They should be interpreted in the light of biblical revelation, the African spirit world and charismatic spirit experiences all over the world (Anderson, 1991:99). Therefore, if there is a greater concern with the Holy Spirit in African Pentecostal churches than there is in mainline Protestant churches this does not necessarily mean a distortion of Christianity. The African cultural and religious background partly explains this interest and, again, it may be a question of assisting the African Pentecostal churches to put pneumatology into an overall theological perspective.

#### **5.8.4. Some aspects of the Christian ministry of healing, exorcism, and prophecy.**

Religion and culture remain a major source for a relevant understanding of Christian life and faith in an African context, as Verstraelen argues:

“While the Bible, the Scriptures, remains the sole source for Christians, African traditional remains the basic source for Christian faith and life, there are other sources such as African anthropology and African traditional culture and religiosity, which indeed cannot establish the Christian faith, but can open vistas for an appropriate understanding of the biblical message in an African setting” (1998:97).

According to Verstraelen (1998:83) the relevance of the Bible “is facilitated by the realisation of important elements of African religious heritage like dreams, the reality of witchcraft and spirits present in the Bible.” Mbiti (1977:35) concludes on the same note that: “The Bible is close to African people because of the many items in common between their cultural life and the cultural life of the Jewish people as contained in the Bible.” However, Mbiti (1977:39) asserts that “while culture and the Gospel may work as allies, it

is the responsibility of the Gospel to knock down the cultural idols and chains which may otherwise detain man from reaching the promised land of his faith in Christ.” He argues that “the Christian is a cultural pilgrim and not a settler, moving even with his cultural luggage towards the eschatological goal of the Gospel.” (1977:39).

Parratt, in his book, *Reinventing Christianity* (1995:27), argues (against those who would say that Black Africa’s theology is largely cultural) that ‘Theology throughout Africa finds its common ground in three basic elements - in the Bible and Christian tradition, in African culture and religion, and in the contemporary sociopolitical situation.’ He continues that “If we alter...and consider the three elements as five, we see that only one is of marked significance in much of African Christianity today, and that is the Bible, treated in a very non-critical way.” Therefore, it becomes necessary to reflect briefly on the biblical portrayal of the Christian ministries of healing, exorcism and prophecy which the African Pentecostal churches in this thesis have laboured to appropriate.

#### **5.8.4.1. A biblical basis for healing.**

In an analysis of the witness of the Hebrew Scriptures, Brown (1995:19) describes “God as the divine Healer of Israel.” And, according to Kee (1986:12) “Healing is portrayed as a central image for depicting God’s work in creation.” God, in Exodus 15:25-26, identified himself as “Yahweh your healer,” mainly because of his great love and compassion for his people.

There is a strong connection between sin and sickness running through the Old Testament with just a few exceptional cases. These unique cases include the raising of the widow’s son in Zarephath (1 Kings 17:17-24); the raising of the Shunammite’s son (2 Kings 4:8-36) the healing of Naaman (2 Kings 5) and the healing of King Hezekiah (2 Kings 20:1-11). All these cases involved the prophets Elijah, Elisha and Isaiah. And all these cases show God’s willingness and power to intervene in human affairs in answer to prophetic supplication and faith (Brown, 1995: 106).

While there may be points of discontinuity between Old Testament healing and New Testament healing, such as the rare association of Satan and demons with sickness in the



Old Testament as opposed to the New Testament, the whole Ministry of Jesus Christ is marked by healing and deliverance. This is evidenced by the many references in the synoptic gospels (example, Mark 1:32-34; 3:10-11; John 5:1-9; 9:1-7). And Acts 10:38 describes how Jesus Christ went about “doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil.”

Jesus’ Ministry of healing was extended to people oppressed by demons which caused physical disabilities like blindness and deafness (Matthew 12:22); curvature of the spine (Luke 13:10-12) and fever (Luke 4: 38-39). Hence, his ministry of healing and exorcism are inseparable. The link between human suffering and disabilities with Satan and his cohorts is apparent.

According to Brown (1995: 216), healing and deliverance in Jesus’ ministry, “were not an end in themselves, but a means to an end which was to announce the in breaking of the reign of God.” Brown (1995:219) further asserts that, “it was by the Spirit that Jesus preached, healed, and delivered.” And writing about the connection between, healing and the Holy Spirit in Jesus’ ministry, Davies (1995:77) argues that “He presented himself as possessed by the Spirit of God and in that persona forgave sins and otherwise encouraged his clientele to believe that God had acted to cure them.”

It can, therefore, be concluded that Jesus could heal people because he presented himself as the manifestation of God on earth. Arguing for an understanding of healing as proclamation of the Gospel, Brown (1995: 244) questions the inconsistency in Christians’ aggressive fight against malignant killers such as cancer, heart disease, and HIV-AIDS, using all medical means available while at the same time adopting a spiritual stance of acquiescence to these health destroying conditions. While it may be true that some modern proponents of divine healing have often sensationalised and commercialised the ministry of healing of the sick, the opponents of divine healing have generally thrown out the baby with the bath water. As Brown (1995: 244-5) argues:

*“In their zeal to correct the excesses and abuses of the faith healing movements, they too have misread the Scriptures, denying the reality and promise of an unbroken continuum of divine healing power.” (Italics mine)*

The truth, however, is that healing is demonstrating the Kingdom of God here on earth. We today as disciples of Christ are commissioned to heal the sick as part of proclaiming the kingdom of God. According to the Gospel of Luke, the healings of Christ are preceded by his proclamation. “When the crowds learned it, they followed him and he welcomed them, and spoke to them of the kingdom of God and cured those who had need of healing” (Luke 9:11). As a manifestation of the kingdom of God, Christ’s healing shows that in the kingdom we are freed from the oppressive reign of sin, Satan and suffering, and come under the liberating, healing reign of God. Therefore, if we are labourers seeking to extend God’s kingdom; if we are to be truly vehicles of the kingdom in deeds as well as words, then healing is to be part of the church.

#### **5.8.4.2. A biblical basis for exorcism.**

Twelftree (1993: 137), in his survey of the sayings and narrative material in the synoptic Gospels, concludes that exorcism was a part of Jesus’ ministry.

Jesus’ ministry of exorcism is extended to the Gaderene demoniac (Mark 5: 1-20), to the Syrophenician woman’s daughter (Mark 7:24-30) and, to the epileptic boy (Mark 9:14-29).

It is, therefore, not surprising that Jesus’ exorcism ministry led many people to conclude that he was possessed by an evil spirit and inspired by Satan (Mark 3:22), hence the Beelzebub controversy.

According to Smith (1978:221), “the opponents of Jesus capitalised on basic similarities between Jesus’ miracles, especially exorcism cures, predictions, and those of common magicians.” Differences between Christ and the magicians, however, were multiple.

Jesus as an exorcist employed various techniques. He could heal from a distance (Mark 7:24-30; Matthew 8:5-13). His approach to evil spirits was confrontational. Jesus evoked a disturbance in the demoniac, hence the man screamed out (Mark 1:23). The demon threw

the boy into convulsion and “he fell on the ground and rolled about, foaming at the mouth” (Mark 9:20).

The Gadarene demoniac ran, fell on his knees in front of Jesus and shouted out when he saw Jesus (Mark 5:6-7). One of Jesus’ techniques included his words of power. According to McCasland (1951:112), “Jesus cast out demons by his personal command, not by means of any kind of formulae, incantations, ritual or magical objects.” Some of his words of power are found in the Gospel according to Mark (Mark 1:25; 5:8; 9:25; 5:9; 9:25).

It can be concluded, therefore, that although exorcism was not the only aspect of Jesus’ ministry, it was of paramount importance. Twelftree (1993:228) argues that “...he believed the first stage in the defeat of Satan and his kingdom was taking place in order that the kingdom of God could come.”

Hence his commission to the disciples to exorcise and heal (Matthew 10:1; Mark 6:7; Luke 9:1; 10:17-20). This, however, has indeed generated considerable discussion on exorcism in the church.

#### **5.8.4.3. A biblical basis for prophecy.**

In his book, *Beyond the Curse*, Spencer (1985:103) reminds us that a prophet is

“...someone who receives and speaks forth a message from God. A prophet can both foretell as did Agabus (Acts 11:27-28; 21:10-11) and forth-tell in the manner of Silas and Judas (Acts 15:32). According to 1 Corinthians 14, a prophet speaks to people during worship for their upbuilding, encouragement and consolation (v.3). In contrast to people who speak in an angelic language, prophets use their minds. Prophets convict the outside and instruct the Christian (vv. 15-19). Everyone preaches (Kerusso) the good news, but only some are prophets. The prophet functioned in the service as does a contemporary preacher.”

The phenomenon of prophecy in Israel was enormously diverse in its manifestations. Thus, many non-prophetic figures are described in a way which attributes prophetic function to them. Abraham, for example, is called a prophet (Genesis 20:7). Childs (1993:109)

describes a prophet as “one raised up by God and given God’s word directly as it was with Moses at Mount-Horeb.” Hence, a prophet is described as mediator by Brueggemann (1997:622) who argues that “Prophecy as a mode of mediation begins in the inexplicable appearance of individual persons who claim to speak Yahweh’s revelatory word.”

Brueggemann further explains that, “there are hints that these several individuals are recipients of odd, psychic experiences, being visited by the ‘supernatural’ in odd ways such as dream, vision and trance.” For this reason, Barton (1986:261) describes them as “non-establishment figures who will not be silenced.” They speak about possible futures and new possibilities in desperate situations. In conclusion, Brueggemann argues that:

“It is not surprising, then, that the high claims of the prophet to be an authentic mediator of Yahweh are not always accepted, but are often dismissed or challenged by those who resist the utterance and who wish to remain undisturbed within certain beneficial construes of reality...”

The validity of both the prophet and the prophetic word is still questioned to date. However, it should be noted that the ability to distinguish or judge spirits is one of the gifts of the Spirit to the church (1 John 4:1-6; 1 Thessalonians 5:19-21). Therefore, the same Spirit who gives the gift of prophecy, also generously gives the much needed gift of discernment. Wagner (1979: 102) describes discernment of spirit as: “The special ability God gives to some members of the body of Christ which enables them to know with assurance whether certain behaviour purported to be of God is in the reality divine”.

### **5.9. Continuity and adaptation of some cultural religious expressions.**

The reason African Pentecostalism is appealing to Africans, and has succeeded in attracting people where and when traditional Protestantism has not, is its ability to continue and adapt some cultural religious forms of expression of the local popular culture. In his book, *Pauline Methods of Missionary work*, Taylor, W (1994:174) argues that “the goal of Pauline Mission is independent churches that are self-supporting. entrusted with their own

governance, and committed to an evangelistic style that enables them *to grow according to their own cultural patterns*” (Italics mine). And, according to Cox (1995:259) “The great strength of the Pentecostal impulse is its power to combine, its aptitude for adopting the language, the music, the cultural artefacts, the religious tropes...of the setting in which it lives.”

The style of “freedom in the Spirit” that characterizes African Pentecostal liturgy has undoubtedly contributed to its appeal and is one of its effective mission methods. This spontaneous liturgy, which Hollenweger (1999:36) has identified “as mainly oral and narrative with an emphasis on a direct experience of God through his Spirit, resulting in the possibility of lifting ordinary people out of their mundane daily experiences into a new realm of ecstasy, aided by the emphases on speaking in tongues, loud and emotional simultaneous prayer, and joyful singing, clapping, raising hands and even dancing in the presence of God.”

The worship of African Pentecostal churches is truly African in its character, with local lyrics, music and instruments. These African Pentecostal churches have been accused of being syncretistic. But, it must be noted that they are in fact even more zealous than Protestant Churches in defending the ‘purity’ of the gospel, and the uniqueness of Christ. They have refused to compromise with traditional religions, and have destroyed fetishes and symbols of sorcery.

Missiology in its attempt to apply scientific principles to human cultures and languages has sometimes assumed that there is a pure message free of cultural constraints, and that when the purity of the gospel is affected in some way by cultural adaptations, the result is syncretism. This word is often used in a negative way to suggest that the gospel has somehow been corrupted by culture. But, as Sepulveda (1997:167) points out, “the concern for preserving the ‘purity’ of the Gospel has always been stronger than the desire to incarnate (or ‘inculturate’) the Gospel in a particular situation.” He argues that “we cannot

grasp any meaning without the help of our precious cultural categories, and so ‘purity’ is not given to us. Some sort of Syncretism is inevitable.” Sepulveda (1999:133-4) sees the ability of Pentecostalism to indigenize Christianity as a process of its incarnation in local cultures:

“The rediscovery of pneumatology by modern Pentecostalism has to do mainly with the spiritual freedom to ‘incarnate’ the gospel anew into the diverse cultures: to believe in the power of the Holy Spirit is to believe that God can and wants to speak to peoples today through cultural mediations – other than those of Western Christianity. Being Pentecostal would mean to affirm such spiritual freedom.”

Therefore, a sympathetic approach to local life and culture and the retention of certain indigenous practices are undoubtedly major reasons for their attraction, especially for those overwhelmed by urbanization with its transition from a personal rural society to an impersonal urban one. At the same time, indigenous Pentecostals confront old views by declaring what they are convinced is a more powerful protection against sorcery and a more effective healing from sickness than either the existing Protestant churches or the traditional rituals have offered.

In Africa, it must be remembered that most Africans operate from a background which is little affected by the Western Enlightenment; for most Africans, witchcraft, spirits and ancestors and spells are natural categories of interpretation. For Africans, according to Horton (1971:85-108), religion “is concerned with the explanation, prediction and control of space-time events.” Yet most African Christians who have an “enchanted” worldview are members of mainline mission churches which officially embrace a non-supernaturalistic theology affected by the Enlightenment.

My experience has taught me that there is real danger that Christianity, if not disentangled from this type of Western theology, will become largely irrelevant to most of the people in Africa. In Africa, people came to regard Western missionaries with their logical presentations of ‘theology’ as out of touch with the real, holistic world which they experienced. Their deepest felt needs were not addressed; their questions remained

unanswered. However, the African Pentecostal churches have gone a long way towards meeting the physical, emotional and spiritual needs of Africa, offering a solution to life's problems and a way to cope in a threatening and hostile world. They proclaim that the same God who saves the soul also heals the body. This God is interested in providing answers to the fears and insecurities inherent in the traditional worldview.

And Gifford (1998: 330) speaks of 'the tension between the two Christianities, one expressed in terms of a primal vision, and the other which is affected by the Enlightenment is highlighted by the experience of Zambia's Archbishop Milingo, who was forced to operate in Europe.' He argues that "in 1996 Milingo was banned from holding services in the Archdiocese of Milan, precisely because of fears that he might have encouraged a 'credulity which explains all psycho-physical ills as due to the influence of the devil, and leads people to expect exorcisms, healings and miracles'." He further argues that "...Cardinal Martini of Milan, one of the Catholic Church's foremost biblical scholars, was simply not prepared to have Milingo's Christianity promoted in his diocese." Gifford is of the opinion that "for some, especially those influenced by cultural relativism, an 'African' theology such as Milingo's is to be encouraged" (Gifford, 1998:330). And Cox expresses the view that "the flowering of primal spirituality is a sign of hope, because Western liberal Christianity has run into the sand." (Cox, 1995: 82-83).

#### **5.10. A comprehensive analysis of Grace Outreach Missions International, and Bible Gospel Church in Africa.**

Grace Outreach Missions International and the Bible Gospel Church in Africa in this thesis illustrate how African Pentecostal churches have ascended heights in religious, social and economic orders as Christian ministries, breaking many man-made barriers. The founders and leaders of African Pentecostal churches and movements in a way reflect the leadership

of Africans in African Pentecostal Christianity. These African Pentecostal churches offer an alternative solution to the existential realities in which African people live.

Bishop Samuel Nathan Phiri, the founder of Grace Outreach Missions International (GOMI), may be described as one of the pioneers among charismatic pastors with the gift of healing and deliverance after he became born-again in 1991 and before resigning from the Reformed Church in Zambia. He received no admiration, sympathy or support from the Reformed Church when he confessed to “having an extra-marital affair with another woman” (Interview with Bishop Samuel Phiri, August, 1994). His marginalization by the Reformed Church should be understood from the perspective of the colonial church structures of post-independence. When Reverend Samuel Nathan Phiri emerged as an African pastor full of charismatic leadership potential, his expulsion from the Reformed Church was inevitable. The Reverend Samuel Nathan Phiri was “the tip of an iceberg”, a fore-runner in the break away from the Reformed Church which became a reality in March, 2001, known as BIGOCA. The Bible Gospel Church in Africa was established in 2001, under the leadership of Bishop Peter Ndlovu, a Reformed Church pastor, but “born-again” and filled with the Holy Spirit.

The leadership of both BIGOCA and GOMI trace their denominational background to the same Reformed Church in Zambia. GOMI, like BIGOCA, believes in the baptism of the Holy Spirit, speaking in tongues, the power of prayer and laying on of hands when administering healing. Both GOMI and BIGOCA, believe that the free gift of healing and deliverance and witnessing are the primary methods for the recruiting of new members into their churches. They claim that they are Bible-centered, Christ-centered, and salvation-healing centered. And both have discontinued the baptism of infants. Immersion is the mode of baptism which has been adopted in these African Pentecostal churches. In conclusion, BIGOCA and GOMI have more things in common than differences. Thus, GOMI and

BIGOCA, represent an African Pentecostal spirituality which ushers in not only a new religion different from the African traditional religion, but also a new wave of Christian spirituality which differs from the Protestant Christianity as well as from the average African Independent Christianity.

Both BIGOCA and GOMI are totally convinced of the importance of the ministry of healing and deliverance as being more dynamic in terms of contextualization of Christianity in Africa. They understand how healing brings relief to affected people as a result of Christ-like care and compassion. People find their spirituality attractive in as far as it offers deliverance, healing, prosperity and protection. They also regard themselves as God's ambassadors responding to crises in their respective communities in Zambia.

### **5.11. A missiological evaluation of the African Pentecostal churches.**

In this thesis, we have seen that African Pentecostal missiology is grounded in its spirituality: a conviction that the Holy Spirit is the motivating power behind all mission activity. And, according to Grant McClung (1986:72) "The very heartbeat of Pentecostal Missions is their experience with the power and person of the Holy Spirit." Steven Land (1993:29-52) says that "Pentecostalism cannot and should not be simply identified with a rationalist or scholastic type of evangelicalism. The 'starting point' for Pentecostal theology, is in its distinctive spirituality: the Holy Spirit who is 'God with us'." According to him, the central Pentecostal concern is "to emphasize the lived reality of the faith, the life and service of the people of God who are organically constituted as the body of Christ by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit." He adds that at the heart of this spirituality is prayer: "the prayerful response of persons to God."

Land identifies the Wesleyan and African-American streams as "perhaps the most important spiritualities which formed the originators of Pentecostalism...and gave rise to this movement of participation in the Spirit." Walter Hollenweger (1972:505-506), who agrees with Land, says that "early Pentecostals overcame doctrinal differences by forging an



ecumenical bond whose basis was the presence of the living God, the reality of the Holy Spirit, which people looked forward to receiving in conversion, sanctification, the baptism of the Spirit and the gifts of the Spirit.” He pointed out that these Pentecostals had only “a single legitimate aim before the second coming of Jesus on the clouds of heaven: to sanctify and unite the children of God and to evangelize the world within a single generation.”

Therefore, in evaluating these African Pentecostal churches, I shall briefly focus on **three factors** which have contributed to the growth of these churches, since missiology is concerned with the process of church growth and mission. The three factors are signs and wonders, evangelism, and worship.

#### **5.11.1. Signs and wonders.**

Pentecostals believe that the coming of the Spirit brings the ability to perform “signs and wonders” in the name of Jesus Christ to accompany and authenticate the gospel message. The role of “signs and wonders”, particularly that of healing and miracles, is prominent in Pentecostal mission praxis and reflection. Pentecostals all over the world, but especially those in Africa, see the role of healing as good news for the poor and afflicted. The church life and worship of many African Pentecostal churches portray Christ as the powerful conqueror of sickness and affliction. McClung Grant (1986:74) points out that “divine healing is an ‘evangelistic door-opener’ for Pentecostals, asserting that ‘signs and wonders’ are the evangelistic means whereby the message of the Kingdom is actualized in ‘person-centered’ deliverance.”

According to Penney (1997:66) “signs and wonders in Acts perform the dual function of authenticating the word and of leading to faith in the word”. The Pentecostal understanding of the “full Gospel” is that the preaching of the Word in evangelism should be accompanied by these “signs and wonders”, and divine healing in particular is an indispensable part of

Pentecostal evangelistic methodology (Saayman, 1993:46). Indeed, in many cultures of the world, particularly in Africa, healing has been a major attraction for Pentecostalism.

From the Biblical perspective, power manifestation is not a historical monument to be fossilized in Church history. In both the Old and the New Testament, God's power and his presence are demonstrated through his deeds (signs and wonders). In his book, *All the Miracles of the Bible*, Herbert Lockyer (1974:48) says that the "the deliverance of the Israelites from slavery in Egypt was only made possible through a series of power encounters between God and the gods of Egypt. The ten plagues were a demonstration of God's (YHWH's) supremacy over the gods of Egypt." God had told Moses that He would do signs and wonders, which would compel Pharaoh to release his people (Exodus 6:1-13; 7:1-12). YHWH said that He "made Moses as God to Pharaoh" (Exodus 7:1). This was significant because the Pharaohs were regarded as god-rulers. Therefore, Moses was God's representative to Pharaoh as his equal. The magicians from Pharaoh's court initially tried to rival the signs performed by Moses, but their gods were impotent before God (YHWH). The exodus became a benchmark in Israel's history. From the very beginning of their journey from the land of slavery, YHWH's presence ("God with us") was with them as their guide. Signs and wonders as manifestation of God's presence, protection and provision in the form of the "pillar of cloud that guided them by day and the pillar of fire by night did not depart from before the people" (Exodus 13:21-22), as Herbert Lockyer, puts it, these were a "miraculous, visible manifestation of YHWH's presence." (1974:60).

In the New Testament, Jesus' ministry is filled with signs and wonders. John, the writer of the Gospel of John, stated that if all the details of what Jesus did were written "even the world itself would not contain the books which would be written" (John 21:25). And Merrill Tenney, in his book, *John: The Gospel of Belief*, (1972:30) posits that the miracles which John recorded revealed the characteristics of Jesus' power and ministry. He says that "John recorded these signs so that his readers may believe and have life in his [Jesus'] name." He continues that "this may be John's purpose in writing his gospel account, but he was also

very aware that there were those who responded to the signs in belief and others who responded in unbelief.”(1974:312). See Merrill Tenney’s table below from *The Signs in John*, p.312.

Reference	Sign	Jesus’ Power Over	Belief	Unbelief
2:1-11	Water changed to wine	Quality	Disciples believed (2:11)	
4:46-54	The healing of the nobleman’s son	Space	Man believed word (4:50) Man and household believed (4:53)	
5:1-18	The healing of the man at the pool	Time	Belief implied by actions (5:9)	Reaction from the Jews
6:1-14	The feeding of the 5000	Quantity	Acknowledgement of Jesus as prophet (5:14)	Departing of many (6:66)
6:16-21	Walking on water	Nature	Willing to receive Him into the boat (6:21)	
9:1-41	The healing of the blind man	Misfortune	Progressive belief (9:11,17,33,38)	Reaction of Pharisees (9:16,24,29,40,41)
11:1-44	The raising of Lazarus	Death	Martha (11:27) Jews (11:45;12:11)	Plot of Pharisees to kill Jesus (11:53)



Ridderbos, who quotes Christian De Wet in his article, *Biblical Basis of Signs and Wonders*, says that “these signs and wonders were proofs that Satan’s power had been broken and that the Kingdom of God had come.” So, Christians need to realize that they have been given the authority by Jesus Christ and empowered by the Holy Spirit to do signs and wonders in Jesus’ name for the purpose of establishing God’s kingdom.

Therefore, from the missiological perspective, signs and wonders are needed for effective ministry in non-western cultures, especially in Africa. Charles Kraft [1989:3-6] writes about his own frustration as a missionary in Nigeria because his Christianity was powerless against the spiritual practices of the natives. Kraft has not been alone in his experience; many more have found themselves in the same predicament, like Peter Wagner. Wagner [1982:77] had a similar experience during his sixteen-year term in Bolivia. He recognized that the Evangelicals did not prepare their missionaries “to deal adequately with a culture where spirit powers were seen to be at work in every area of life, and where the clash between divine and satanic power often was felt.”

The non-western world has a concrete mindset. To these people, especially Africans, God has to be immanent. Their spirit world is very real and concrete. Hence, signs and wonders point to a powerful God who answers prayers. Before an African changes his/her allegiance from ancestral religion to Christianity, he/she has to be convinced that God is more powerful and will protect him/her from the spirits of the ancestral religion. The Bible presents such a God, and so do the African Pentecostal churches. This emphasis on healing is so much part of African Pentecostal evangelism, that large public campaigns and tent crusades preceded by great publicity are frequently used in order to reach as many “unevangelized” people as possible. Peter Wagner (1973) says that “probably the greatest contribution that Pentecostalism has made to Christianity in general is restoring the miracle power of the New Testament.”

### 5.11.2. Evangelism.

According to Grant McClung (1986:71), “Pentecostal mission theology has tended to be ‘theology on the move’, its character often having been more experiential than cognitive.” In some parts of the world, especially in Africa, Pentecostals are notorious for their aggressive forms of evangelism. In her book, *People Movements in the Punjab*, Stock (1975: 219) contends that God is definitely interested in numerical church growth. She argues that we are called not just to be faithful, but to win people. She says quantity as well as quality should be our goal in mission work. And from its inception, Pentecostalism was characterized by an emphasis on evangelistic outreach, and all Pentecostal missionary strategy places evangelism as its highest priority.

In order to understand Pentecostal Evangelistic strategy, the value Pentecostals attach to the Word and to the Spirit must be put in focus. The issue of biblical authority determines the Pentecostals’ understanding and approach to missions. They are the people of “The Book.” And while some may question their use of the “Book”, the Bible, Pentecostals are always seeking to be guided by the Scriptures as well as by the Holy Spirit in their evangelistic efforts. The Pentecostals’ favourite textbook for evangelistic strategy is the Book of Acts. From this textbook the Holy Spirit emerges as the Supreme Strategist in missions.

The role of evangelism, therefore, is crucial for Pentecostal mission theology. However, while the goal of evangelism should be pursued, Pentecostals should not lose sight of the biblical, holistic view of mission. Witness and service should both be involved in mission practice. According to Grant McClung (1986:75), “Pentecostals see aggressive evangelism in the pages of the New Testament and feel that they must respond accordingly.” Pomerville (1982:353) says that they “examine Paul’s strategy and observe him planting churches, training leaders, and trusting the Holy Spirit to equip and develop the church in its native setting. Therefore, it is this “biblical pragmatism” which characterizes Pentecostal missions strategy and leads Pentecostals to emphasize that which they find in Scripture in

their missions approach.” Grant McClung (1986:51) however points out that early Pentecostals had a “last days mission theology” as follows: “Premillennialism, dispensationalism, and the belief in the immanency of Christ’s return forged the evangelistic fervor of the movement in its infancy.” We can only guess at what incredible mistakes early Pentecostal missionaries must have made. As Saayman (1993:42) rightly observes, most Pentecostal movements “came into being as missionary institutions” and their mission work was “not the result of some clearly thought out theological decision, and so policy and methods were formed mostly in the crucible of missionary praxis.” But, it must be acknowledged that despite the seeming naiveté of many early missionaries, their evangelistic methods were flexible, pragmatic and astonishingly successful. Saayman (1993:51) says that “Pentecostal Churches were missionary by nature and the dichotomy between ‘church’ and ‘mission’ that for so long plagued other Christian churches did not exist.” This “central missiological thrust”, says Saayman, was clearly “a strong point in Pentecostalism and central to its existence.”

Pentecostals have tended to be very practical and literal in their missions strategy. Hollenweger (1999:190-1) says that Pentecostals are “efficient evangelists” because of “the power of their experience”. A classical example of evangelism as a dialogical process is the conversion of Cornelius, an example of one invited to evangelize with the evangelist, something that needed to be translated “into present-day evangelistic practice” (1999:190-1). Although we may regard some manifestations of Pentecostalism with amusement, disdain or even alarm, we dare not ignore this enormous factor in missiology.

### **5.11.3. Worship.**

Worship, according to Orlando E Costas, is the church’s reason for existing. In his book, *The Integrity of Mission*, Orlando argues that “there is no dichotomy between worship and mission.” Worship and mission, he further argues, “are not two dimensions of a single reality.” He disagrees with some who have gone as far as saying that “a centrifugal, going,

missionary church cannot be also a centripetal, coming, liturgical community.” He argues that “this is both a theological non-sense and a practical fallacy.” He asserts that “Liturgy without mission is like a river without a spring. Mission without worship is like a river without a sea. Both are necessary, without the other one, the other loses its vitality and meaning.” (Orlando, 1979:91). African Pentecostal worship has undoubtedly contributed to the appeal of the church and the attraction of many people into its fold. This is due to its spontaneous liturgy, which is mainly oral and narrative with an emphasis on a direct experience of God through his Spirit; and which has become one of its most effective mission methods.

The Swiss Reformed theologian Emil Brunner, in his book, *The Misunderstanding of the Church* (1952), maintains that “the original Christian community of the New Testament was a totally free, unorganized spiritual fellowship, where the Holy Spirit was calling forth spontaneous expressions of life and witness.” He points out that “something went wrong as they started to develop fixed offices and structures in the congregations. Out of the living congregation of Christ there emerged a church with ecclesiastical law as its foremost mark. The juridical framework of the church became the substitute for the original fullness of the Spirit.”

African Pentecostal styles of worship and spirituality have come to pervade mainstream Christianity. Harvey Cox (1995) in his book, *Fire from heaven: the rise of Pentecostal spirituality and the reshaping of religion in the twenty-first century* tells the Pentecostal story critically but respectfully. The movement succeeds in the post modern era, he asserts, “because it has spoken to the spiritual emptiness of our time by reaching beyond the levels of creed and ceremony to the core of human religiousness, into what might be called ‘primal spirituality’.” African Pentecostal styles of worship and liturgy are meeting the needs of the people more substantially than the often sterile mainstream Christianity from the West. African Pentecostal Worship provides what Turner (1979:19) calls “a salvaging or rescue function” in relation to the older churches, by “preventing dissatisfied members from

reverting to paganism by providing a recognizably Christian and easily available alternative spiritual home”.

Furthermore, this is available to everyone, and the involvement of the laity becomes the most important feature of Pentecostal worship, again contrasting with the dominant role played by the priest or minister in the mainline churches. Grant McClung (1986:73) says that “Pentecostal worship allows the participant to be involved in a personal and direct way with the manifestation of God among his people in the congregation.” Therefore, as Albrecht (1999) puts it, the “fundamental goal of the Pentecostal service” is “experiencing or encountering God.” (:149). For him, “this is the essence of Pentecostal/ charismatic spirituality” (:238). And Cox 1996:81-83) says that Pentecostalism is expanding because “it has spoken to the spiritual emptiness of our time by reaching beyond the levels of creed and ceremony into the core of human religiousness.” He adds that which “began as a despised and ridiculed sect is quickly becoming both the preferred religion of the urban poor and the powerful bearer of a radically alternative vision of what the human world might one day become.”

### **5.12. What is mission?**

There are many answers to this question. But, fundamentally, mission is not man’s action, but God’s. David Bosch writes that “mission is, primarily and ultimately the work of the Triune God...for the sake of the world...the church is privileged to participate. Mission has its origin in the heart of God. This is the deepest source of mission.” He adds, “There is mission because God loves people.” (1991:389-393). So, mission is bound up with the sole purpose of the Triune God towards the universe. And this purpose will only be realised when the universe, all in heaven and on earth, is brought into a unity in Christ Jesus (Eph. 1:10). This mission is, according to John V Taylor (1966:11-26) “the announcement that something entirely new has come to pass. And for this reason, only the action of the Holy Spirit brings home to the individuals the new thing which Jesus Christ has accomplished for



the whole universe.” Therefore, the mission of the church is to carry out God’s purposes to every creature. As Gerald Anderson puts it, “the supreme aim of mission is to make the Lord Jesus Christ known to all peoples in all lands as their divine saviour, to persuade them to become his disciples and to gather these disciples into Christian churches; to enlist them in the building of the kingdom of God.” (1967:242).

In his book, *What is Mission?* Andrew Kirk gives the missionary definition of the church.

He says that:

“Mission is so much at the heart of the church’s life that rather than thinking of it as one aspect of its existence, it is better to think of it as defining its essence. The church is by nature missionary to the extent that, if it ceases to be missionary, it has not just failed in one of its tasks, it has ceased being church. Thus, the church’s self-understanding and sense of identity (its ecclesiology) is inherently bound up with its call to share and live out the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the ends of the earth and the end of time” (1999:30).

Mission, therefore, consists of more elements than signs and wonders, evangelism and worship. It has to do with kerugyma, the preaching of the Word, koinonia, the planting of new churches and nurturing of the believers and diakonia, the caring for the needs of the people. An example is the Bible Church in Africa. Through its department called “Fathers Heart Africa” it strives to ensure that quality education and sustenance of good health are provided in the communities. It has given, despite challenges, special attention to meeting and addressing some of the basic needs of the underprivileged in our various communities across the country (Zambia, see appendix A, p.204) as part of its community social responsibility’ (Kanyenda, 2008:39-42; see appendix B, p. 205). Evidently these aspects, kerugyma, koinonia, and diakonia, are being implemented in African Pentecostal churches (see chapter 4 above).

### **5.13. Conclusion.**

“The church” according to Emil Brunner, “exists by mission as fire exists by burning.” (1931:108). And Snyder Howard (1989:291) says that “a church needing renewal is focused inward. A renewed church focuses outward to mission and service in the world.” He adds that “Genuine renewal will include missiological renewal.”

Great renewals have taken place in the past. But the age of renewal and revival by the Spirit of the living God is not over. According to 1Peter 2:5-9, the principle of priesthood of all believers provides a vital key to church renewal. All believers, according to Apostle Paul (in Ephesians 4:11, 12) are called, and should be equipped and empowered for ministry. Spiritual renewal movements, like Pentecostal/Charismatic renewals, will remain for a long time a serious threat to the mainline established churches, like the Reformed Church in Zambia, if the renewals are viewed from a negative point of view. Therefore, the essence of Pentecostal/Charismatic renewal is best understood not as bringing the church, as Mc Grath (1975:34) puts it “something she does not have, but to release what she already possesses, to deepen commitment to Christ, to widen expectation of how the Spirit comes to visibility in the Charisma within the life of the church.”

Therefore, in order to understand and fairly evaluate Pentecostalism, it must be done from the renewal point of view. Pentecostalism must be evaluated as a movement reacting to a neglected dimension of the Spirit’s ministry in mainline Christianity. This view will help mainline churches to assume a positive attitude towards Pentecostal/Charismatic movements and also to dispose of their Holy Spirit-phobic attitudes.

## **CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS.**

### **6.1. Introduction.**

The dimension of the spirit in the West appears esoteric in nature when compared with the comprehension of that dimension in Africa. The African Pentecostal churches among the Chewa people in Zambia, as an example, illustrate that comprehension. These African Pentecostal churches also point out another element in evaluating the Christian validity of African movements in which they emerge.

The discovery of a Pentecostal expression of faith was not a resurrection of traditional religion; and not a bridge to syncretism. It was the discovery of an expression of Christianity which spoke to the needs of the African in his/her cultural context, and provided Christian means to deal with the spirit-world. The discovery of the supernatural or miracles has become an impetus for the African Pentecostal churches.

### **6.2. The research goals of this thesis have been reached.**

The main goal of this thesis - to explore the liberating elements in African Pentecostal spirituality and in the African traditional context - has been reached.. The similarities in both forms of spirituality prove the hypothesis concerning the liberative elements of African Pentecostal spirituality, to be correct.

This work has established how African Pentecostal spirituality is contributing to the contemporary mission theology. As renewal churches emphasizing “experience” and “power encounter” the African Pentecostal churches are addressing a basic theological issue which has been, for a long time, neglected by Protestant mission theology. This basic theological issue concerns the demise of the “experiential dimension” of the Christian faith,

due, to a great extent, to the influence of the “Enlightenment”. The hypothesis has been proved true: that the “pneumatological hiatus” (Pomerville,1982:v) which exists in Protestant mainline churches and which significantly affects missions, does not exist in African Pentecostal churches, which have shown phenomenal growth in Africa, and in Zambia in particular. This study has proved that African Pentecostal churches are providing a relevant theological orientation and perspective to contemporary mission issues that Protestant Mainline churches must not ignore.

### **6.3. Summary of chapters.**

This study investigates the spirituality of the emerging African Pentecostal churches in Zambia’s Christian and traditional religious contexts. In this study, spirituality is defined as “the abiding presence of God the Holy Spirit” (in Chewa, 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 in the inner life and mission of the African Pentecostal Churches. The study examines the impact of African Pentecostalism in Zambia on the mainline churches, in particular the Reformed Church in Zambia, causing tensions, conflicts, and schisms; resulting in the formation of Grace Outreach Missions International (GOMI) and Bible Gospel Church in Africa (BIGOCA) (*Chapter 1*).

In order to understand the idea of “spirituality” as used in this study, the concepts of Christian and of Pentecostal spirituality are explored, focusing on a sanctified Christian life; and the Pentecostal understanding of Christian spirituality is distinctively highlighted. With reference to John Wesley, the Afro-American Pentecostalism which arose from Joseph William Seymour’s Asuza Street experience in 1906 and which was influenced by the Evangelical and Puritan traditions, is examined. The emphasis of their spirituality 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 an understanding of the traditional African religious beliefs, 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 world-view is also examined; and the need to develop an African theology is mentioned (*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 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*).

A study of the African Pentecostal churches highlighted 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 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. As a result of 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 a 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 its spirituality. Recommendations to the churches and, to the universities and colleges for the purposes of dialogue and for further research are included in the conclusion (*Chapter 6*).

#### **6.4. Recommendations:**

At the end of my research I would like to make the following recommendations for the attention of the churches as well as institutions of theological training:

- The mainline churches in Africa should renew their efforts to maintain a dialogue with the Pentecostal churches recognizing that they bring with them a diversity of spirituality, which may enrich the body of Christ worldwide.
- It is of the utmost importance that universities and seminaries, in developing their curricula, should take the African context seriously, and allow for the contribution that all traditions, also the Pentecostal churches, can offer
- . The Reformed Church in Zambia should be open to a dialogue that will bring about a healthy relationship between Pentecostal churches and themselves. Forums must be put in place for discussions for the sake of all the churches in Zambia.

#### **6.5. Conclusion.**

African Pentecostalism is at a cross-roads in Zambia. There is no doubt about the fact that it has “broken” many grounds. However, there is still much to be done, if it is to continue to be successful and fully take foothold. What has happened in Zambia among some of the mainline churches, in particular the Reformed Church in Zambia, is phenomenal, not just

because of the remarkable church growth, but because of the impact of Pentecostalisation which has brought the transformation of many mainline churches to the Pentecostal way of understanding spirituality.

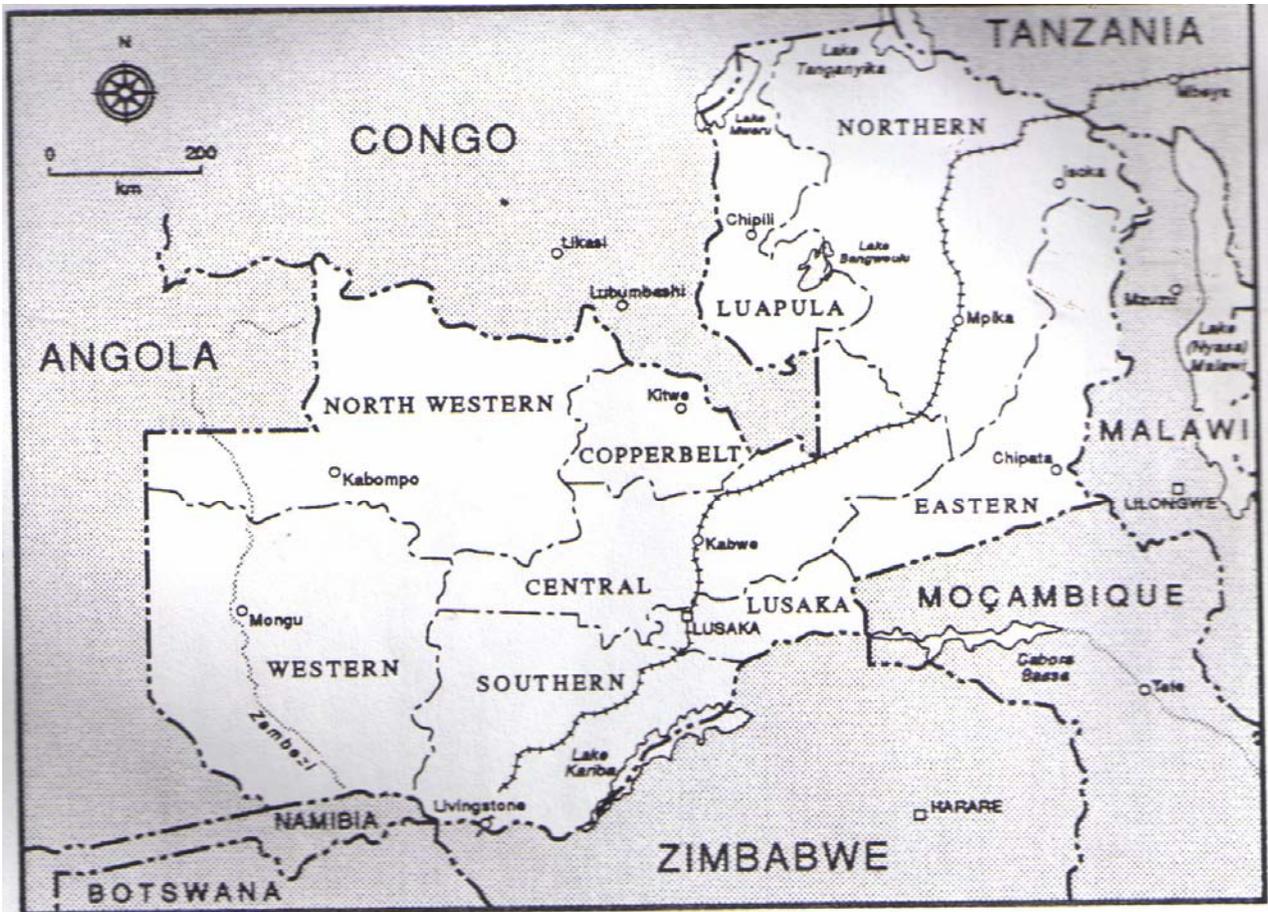
The experiences of spiritual encounter, of visions, revelations, signs and wonders, and other manifestations of the Spirit's presence and power were the source and the impetus for the Pentecostal missiology in which the early Pentecostals were engaged; and African Pentecostal churches are engaged today. And throughout the history of the church, the experience of the renewing, reviving work of the Spirit is the very dynamism that breathes vitality and re-formation into what is prone to degenerate into empty ritual and institutionalism. Therefore, the reviving work of the Spirit is not confined to "The Second Great Awakening" of the eighteenth century.

Anderson Allan (1999:223) concludes: "One thing is for certain: the face of global Christianity...throughout the world will never be the same since the Pentecostals came on the scene a century ago. Whatever protests we might have about the lack of 'sophistication' in Pentecostal praxis or the cultural or political insensitivity of some of the movement's emissaries, we must reckon with this rich diversity of Christian expression with a dynamic message that will surely continue to attract multitudes of people globally well into the next century."

The Pentecostals, therefore, have a responsibility to see to it that this "move of God continues to gain momentum" if they are to continue attracting the masses globally. Their responsibility is not to slumber or "quench the Spirit", but to continue being revived; for this renewing, reviving work of God the Spirit has been, for thousand years, an *awakening work of the Holy Spirit*.

## APPENDICES.

### Appendix A. Map of Zambia.



Zambia

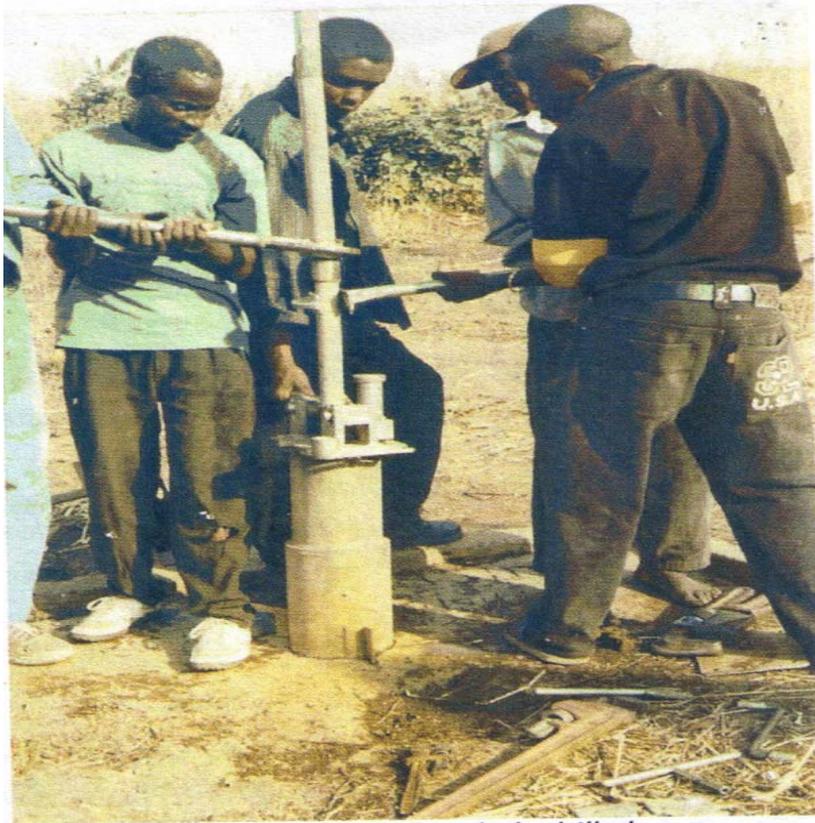
**Brief facts about Zambia** (see World Book Encyclopedia, w-x-y-z Vol. 21, p. 588-9).

- Zambia is the only country in the world surrounded by eight neighbouring countries. It is one of the world's largest producers of copper.
- Most Zambians are Africans who speak Bantu languages. There are more than 70 ethnic groups represented and eight major local languages spoken in Zambia, English being the official language.



- The majority of Zambians are Christians, but traditional beliefs still strongly hold on many people.
- The country is divided into nine provinces. The Chewa ethnic group is found in the Eastern Province (see the map above).
- Zambia's only university, the University of Zambia, which is in Lusaka, was founded in 1965.
- The AIDS catastrophe has devastated the population (estimated to be 12 million) and brought health services to a point of collapse.

**Appendix B. Community borehole being drilled.**



**The Bible Gospel Church in Africa - Community Social Responsibility (CSR).**

The above picture, as an example, shows how the Bible Gospel Church in Africa through its department of Community Social Responsibility (CSR) is addressing the needs in the community. Although a lot still remains to be done, the church has given special attention not only to preaching the message of repentance, conversion, but also to meeting and attempting to address some of the basic needs of the underprivileged in communities across

the country (Zambia) as part of fulfilling its community social responsibility. (The above picture is from Kanyenda, 2008, page 42.)

### **Appendix C.      QUESTIONNAIRE.**

1. What is your view of Pentecostalism?
2. What is your understanding of prosperity?
3. What is your view of Pentecostal preaching?
4. When people discuss Pentecostal churches what comes to your mind?
5. What is your view of Pentecostal churches, what comes to mind?
6. Have Pentecostal churches through its mission got any contributions in the betterment of the welfare of humans?
7. Do you think the Pentecostal churches are involved in improving the communities?
8. How are the born again Christians participating in social transformation issues?
9. What is your view of break-a ways as sections in the mainline churches?
10. In your view what is the Bible?
11. If the mission of the church is transformation of human how does this transformation achieved?
12. When did you last hear a sermon on topics of change and transformation?
13. What is your view on calling people to the altar in order to surrender their lives to Jesus during the service?
14. In your view, are there reasons as to why breakaways are taking places in mainline churches?
15. Are spiritual gifts mentioned in the Bible still in operation today?
16. In your understanding, what does 'slain in the spirit' mean?
17. Who or what is the main influence on people's decision to accept Christ?
18. How can the mission of the church bring healing to the human society?



19. What kind of things should the church be doing to be an agent of transformation?
20. Is it every Christian responsibility to witness and win souls?
21. What is your view on ‘mass- prayer’ during worship service?
22. Pentecostalism has taken root in the world today. And there have been various forms of praying in the Pentecostal churches, what are your views about the form of praying in the Pentecostal circles today?
23. In the Pentecostals and the charismatics, the followers believe in the infilling of the Holy Spirit and speaking in tongues. From your understanding what are your views concerning this subject?
24. From the beginning of time, the presence of God has been so evident among his people. God related with Adam, His presence was always with him (Adam). How do you understand the presence of God, and what does it mean?
25. The subject of casting out of demons and being set free has been a borne of contention for/between mainline churches and Pentecostals. What do you understand about this subject?
26. The mode of worship in the mainline churches and the Pentecostals is different in so many ways. How do you worship in the churches today?
27. The Gospel according to John in chapter 4 verse 24 records that “God is the spirit, and his worshippers must worship in spirit and in truth.” What is your understanding of this verse?
28. Prosperity teachings have been widely spread in the charismatic and Pentecostal churches. Many mainline churches go against these teachings. They claim that to be holy is to remain poor, humble and without any material wealth. What are your views and comments concerning this issue?
29. God’s kingdom is about the king, the kingdom itself and the people. And in the world today people have different believes systems concerning the kingdom of Gad. How would you view the kingdom?



30. What is your understanding of people being “slain in the Spirit” during worship?.
31. There have been different views concerning the deity of the Holy Spirit. What would you say concerning the deity of the Holy Spirit?
32. Demon possession has been quiet a debatable subject. Many mainline churches do not believe in this; but most charismatics and Pentecostals believe that a person can be possessed with demons. What are your views on this?
33. Miracles and lying on of hands is another source of concern in the churches today. Many mainline churches do not believe in the miracles. How do you look at the subject of miracles?
34. Why do the people give or tithe in the church?
35. Being born again is one of the subjects many people struggle to understand, what does it mean to you to become born again?
36. Dreams and visions are another aspect the church does not understand today. What is your understanding about dreams and visions?
37. People talk about doing the will of God. What is the will of God when it comes to healing?
38. Is illness or sickness God’s will in order to humble his people?
39. Is it a curse or a blessing to have riches?
40. Is breaking-away from the church, God’s will or not?



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